

BR 125

.W38

Copy 1

PURE GOLD

G. D. WATSON.

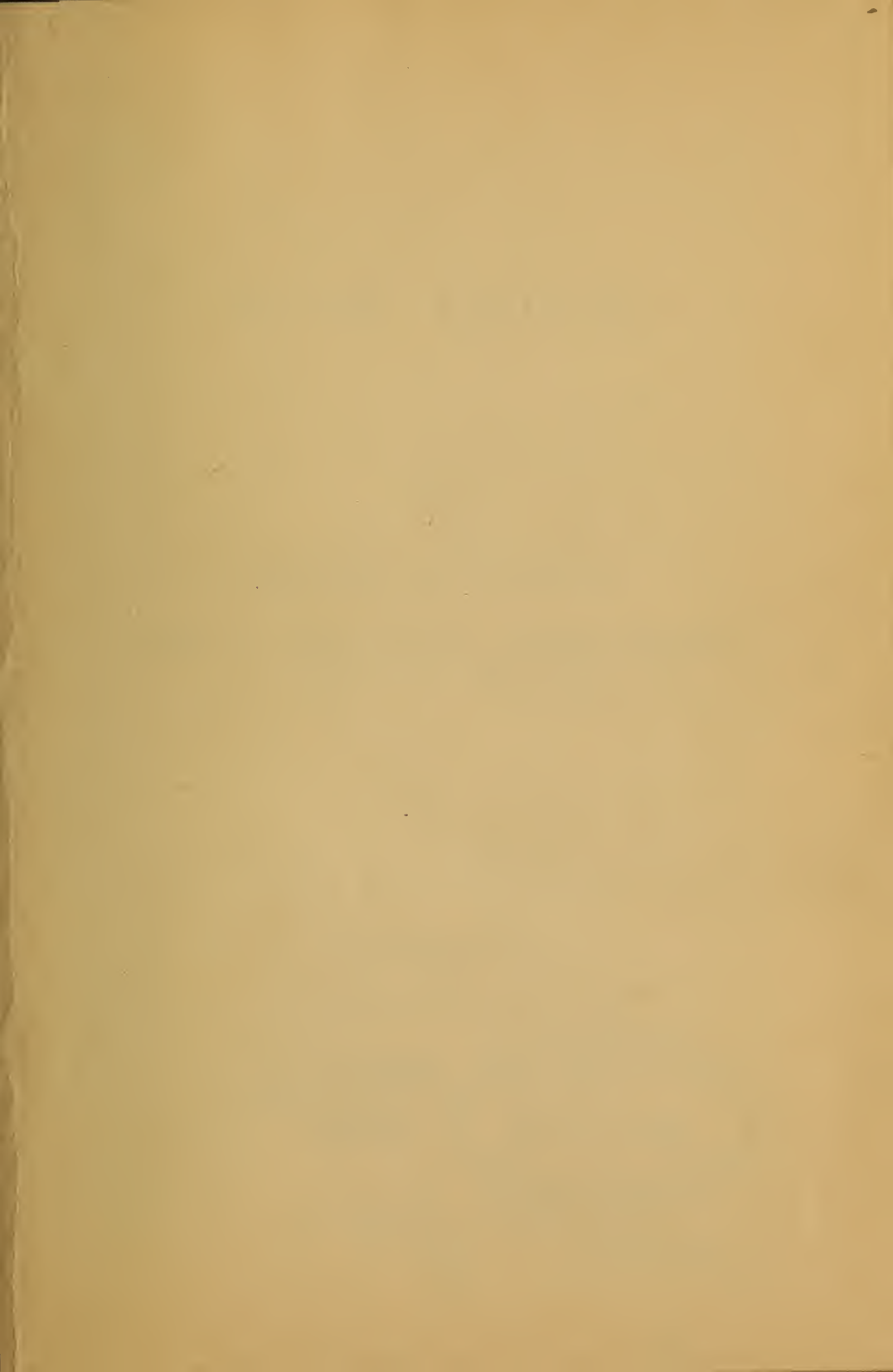


LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

BR125
Chap. Copyright No.

Shelf . . . W 38

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



PURE GOLD,

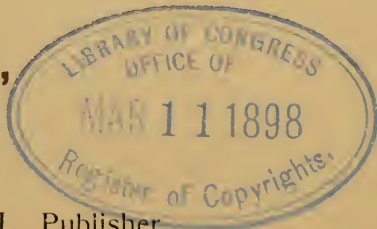
BY

✓
GEORGE D. WATSON,

Author of "White Robes, "Holiness Manual,"
"Soul Food," Etc., Etc.

Copyright, A. W. HALL.
1898.

2nd COPY,
1898.



A. W. HALL, Publisher,
SYRACUSE, N. Y.
1898.

H.

16598

BR 125
W 38

3938

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Pure Gold	I-10
The Order of Melchisedec	10-16
The Awfulness of Sin	17-23
How to Die to Self	23-30
Jesus and Moses	30-37
Learning Spiritual Lessons	38-45
Tenderness of Spirit	45-51
The Banquet at Bethany	52-62
Purple Finger Nails	63-71
A Critical Spirit	72-80
Spiritual Glimpses	80-86
Blessed Poverty	86-93
The Dangers of Prosperity	93-98
Signs of Answered Prayer	99-104
Take Time	104-108
Paul's Thorn	108-113
Human Religion	114-120
Wrinkles	120-127
Who Love His Appearing	128-131
Dreaming of Jesus	132-137
Demoniac Possession	137-145

PURE GOLD.

We are told twice in the book of Revelation that the city of God is pure gold like unto clear glass, and then we are told in the same chapter that this city is the Bride of the Lamb, composed of sanctified, souls represented by the typical number of one hundred and forty-four thousand. (Compare Revelation, chapter 14 and 21.) Throughout the Scriptures gold is a type of divine character, of God's holiness imparted to his creatures. God has put into every created thing, into all minerals, and gems, and flowers, and insects, and birds, and animals, a peculiar meaning known only to himself, a divine and beautiful language, which he alone can interpret, and when he condescends to unveil to us the typical significance which lies veiled in all these things, our minds are dazzled with the poetry of infinite wisdom, and our hearts are fed with truth coming to us through so many varied forms. Thus God created gold with just that combination of attributes, in substance, and color, and unalloyableness, to set forth his idea of the incarnation of his own blessed character in created souls, Hence gold is pre-eminently the type of Christ Jesus, that is of God incarnate in humanity, and hence a type

of God's nature imparted to believers through Jesus. Gold is known to exist in three modes of existence, as it exists in the quartz, and then as it exists in commerce and then as it exists in chemistry and science. In each of these forms it typifies the existence and progress of the divine life in the soul.

I. Gold in the quartz is a type of the Christ-life imparted to the penitent believer in the new birth. In this respect let us notice that gold is created. It is not produced by growth or development from other metals, but was fashioned by an infinite will amid the furnace heats when God wrought in the geological ages.

In like manner the changing of a sinner's heart into a new character is a divine creation. The washing away of our sins, and the reversing and changing of our affections, causing us to hate sin and to love and to long after holiness, is a stupendous act of the Holy Spirit. The life of God is never grown into us, nor developed out of human affection, but an inexpressible miracle of life infused from an uncreated fountain.

In the next place the gold as it exists in the mine or quartz is not amalgamated with other substances, though it is in close proximity to baser metals, and existing in the same lump with rock, or iron, or sand, yet it is always gold, and nothing but gold it never loses its inherent character.

In like manner the Christ-life in the regenerated heart may be surrounded by other and antagonistic moral elements, yet it is never confused or blended

with them, but always possesses its peculiar divine character. That which is born of the flesh remains flesh, that is, it can never be turned into the spirit, and that which is born of the Spirit remains spirit, that is, it never degenerates into flesh. So that though the spiritual life be-gotten of the Holy Ghost, may live in proximity with native Adamic evil, yet it is never amalgamated with that evil, but, true to its divine instinct, craves that which is spiritual, and it seeks to have all uncongenial principles expelled from its presence. In the next place the gold in the quartz is just as good an article in itself considered as it ever will be. It is true that it must undergo many processes before it reaches its highest forms of value and utility, yet nevertheless its essence, its inherent worth, will never be changed; it is gold and nothing but gold, and will remain gold as long as the Creator pleases to preserve it.

In like manner the love of God in the heart, the precious Christ-life imparted to the penitent believer is celestial gold, and is just as good an article in itself considered as exists in the heart of an angel or a glorified saint.

The work of sanctification will purge out the unholy and incongruous human sinfulness, and thereby give the Christ-life the whole space of the moral nature, and lift it to higher degrees of power and usefulness, but this sanctifying operation does not change

the nature or quality of that holy golden life which comes from God in the new birth. And as gold possesses a certain number of attributes, and certain inherent beauties which can never be changed in their essence or number, whether it exists in the hidden mine or glitters in the crown of a king, the qualities remain the same, so the life of God in the soul, even in its earliest stage, possesses all the attributes and inherent graces, both in number and quality which it ever will possess through eternal ages. The perfect cleansing of a believer does not multiply his Christian graces, but removes the unholy opposites of those graces. Hence nothing in our moral history can surpass the magnitude of that work of grace which forms within us the golden life of the Son of God.

2. Gold in commerce. This is the form in which gold exists in currency and utensils of art and beauty. Now in passing from its original form in the mine to these higher modes of existence, it must pass through certain processes, which have their beautiful counterparts in the processes of transforming grace. In most cases it must be ground or crushed into a fine meal, that it may thereby be liberated from the earthly substances which cling to it. But in this crushing the whole aim is not to crush the gold, but to pulverize the quartz and earthly substances in which the gold is found, in order that the gold may be liberated. This is true of the mixed believer. God must lead him through a process of pulverizing in order to crush the

flinty elements in his will, and tempers, and disposition, not with a view of grinding the spiritual life in him, but that the natural Adamic life in the soul, which is hard and cold and uncongenial to God, may be crushed into powder, that the Christ-life may be emancipated from it. And as all quartz is not equally hard or flinty, so all believers are not equally stubborn or self-willed, and some will go to pieces under the hammer of God's word more readily than others. Yet, nevertheless all the Adamic quartz must be ground in order to separate it from the true spiritual life. In the next place the crushed gold quartz must be washed. It is by this washing that even the finest particles of gold are separated from the dust and sand of common rock and earth. This is a beautiful and accurate illustration of the washing of the believer from that earthliness of nature which separates human depravity from the gold of divine grace. No believer reaches the point where he can be washed from all inward sin, until he is first broken down on all the points of his self-will.

It is the mighty hammer of God's truth, sometimes in the form of law, or in the form of severe judgments, or in the form of searching truth, or in the form of trouble and sorrow; these are but the shapes of God's flint mills which break down the toughness of our natural wills, and then we are ready for the flood gates of cleansing power to be turned upon us, to wash us from the crushed fragments of our own

choices and dispositions and ambitions and carnal desires. It is then that the gold which was given us in the new birth gets liberated from its Adamic mixture. In the next place this washed gold is melted and formed into blocks of pure gold without earthly admixture.

In like manner just as soon as the omnipotent Sanctifier washes out our native quartz and carnal mind by the precious blood of Jesus, the blessed Holy Ghost then melts our whole heart, and understanding, and will, into a warm flow of inexpressible love and sweetness and power. When the Comforter thus comes in, it seems our whole being will dissolve in a furnace of spotless love. All the fountains of our being are broken up and overflow their banks. He then reveals to us that the love in our souls is made perfect, like a block of pure gold. In the next place these blocks of gold are minted into coins, or made into articles of usefulness or beauty, in which state it goes out over the world as the gold of commerce. And so the sanctified believer, after receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, is minted into divine currency, and into spiritual weapons, and utensils of divine power and beauty, and sent forth among mankind to show forth God's grace in testimony, in love, in good works, in the enduring of manifold tribulations, and thus the golden life of God is manifested to others, that they also may become transformed and made "partakers of like precious faith."

3. Gold in chemistry and science. Not until the nineteenth century have scientific men, after many experiments, found the art of refining gold to that height of perfection and beauty which was affirmed of it in the first century by the Holy Spirit. For generations learned skeptics, in hunting for arguments against the infallibility of God's word, used the passage in Revelation 21 about gold being "like transparent glass," as a supposed proof of Scriptural error, they stoutly affirming that gold never was and never could be transparent. But the time came when God had a chemist who experimented with the refining of gold, until he brought it into a state of transparency and found in looking through it that it had a beautiful green color like an emerald. This proved that the science in the Bible is many centuries ahead of the science of men. Water seems colorless, yet in looking into deep, clear water, it presents a green color. So glass seems colorless, yet in looking through very thick glass it reflects a beautiful green tint. And so yellow gold when made transparent refracts the light like a beautiful emerald. To make gold reach this lofty state requires an enormous degree of heat, which in a certain sense glorifies the gold, and purges it from its own self. This is a type of a real process of annealing and furnace-testing through which the Holy Ghost leads those who are the chosen spouse of the Lamb of God. The Scriptures in multiplied forms of teaching set forth the truth that after believers are ful-

ly sanctified they are led through processes of severe trials, hot furnace-testings, which put to thorough proof every virtue and every grace of their hearts. There are conflicts with powers of darkness, corresponding with the seven years' war of the Jews in Canaan. Sometimes like the desolations of Job, or like the imprisonment of Joseph, or like the Spirit-baptized David fighting his way to a throne, or like Daniel in the lion's den, or like the apostolic sufferings after Pentecost. These extraordinary testings may sometimes be external, or sometimes internal; they may be mostly in the physical nature, in other cases mostly in the mental, in other cases they may be purely spiritual, but in whatever shape the furnace may be, the result that God is aiming at is the same, namely, the complete mellowing, melting, transforming of the whole nature, into a beautiful, celestial transparency and sweetness of Christ-like character. This is the fine art work of the Holy Ghost. When sanctified believers pass through this furnace refinement, they take on a more intensified form, and a more heavenly type of mind than ever before. The work of perfect love is marvelously intensified, and broadened, and made more profound and simple in all its characteristics.

In this state the love of God glows in the heart like a sweet, steady, spicy flame. There are less vicissitudes in the experience. It is a state of wonderful simplicity; everything is transparent. The words are

few. A divine stillness pervades the mind, not the stillness of death, but the stillness of a hot summer noon. The understanding is lifted into a divine atmosphere where it sees God in every thing and every event. As looking through gold in this highest state of perfection it seems green, so the mind in this highest state of the sanctified life is in a state of perennial verdure. The Holy Spirit fills the thoughts with the verdure of perpetual spring. The understanding is flooded with divine beauty.

Another trait of this gold is its exquisite softness, so much as to render it unfit for commercial purposes. In like manner the soul under the melting of burning love is filled with an unearthly tenderness. There is a gentleness of speech, and a slow, soft, measured walk with God. Loudness and impetuosity are gone. Harshness of judgment is melted away. The mellowness of a beautiful autumnal ripeness settles down on the whole being.

Another trait of gold in this state is, its incredible expansiveness. A single cubic inch of it we hear can be hammered out to cover several acres of ground, into a veil so thin as to be invisible to the natural eye, and yet with a texture so fine as to hold itself together.

In like manner, the soul that has passed into a real heavenly state of living has an immensity to it in every direction, a vastness of thought, a broadness of charity which envelops the world round and round; a magnitude of delicate sympathy for all sufferers

whether human or animal, a keen, far penetrating stretch of vision, which makes the soul feel as if it was standing on some lofty mount of observation scanning with utmost ease all the affairs of earth, and looking out unto the glory lit regions of the heavenly world.

These are the crowning qualities of pure gold, and these are the blessed characteristics of those believers who are to compose that living, portable city which is the Lamb's wife.

II.

THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC.

The epistle of Paul to the Hebrews stands pre-eminently above all the other epistles in one particular feature, and that is it is crowded with arguments and illustrations from the Old Testament to prove Christian perfection.

To converted Hebrews no argument for sanctification would prove so cogent and powerful as those drawn from their own Scriptures. And in this respect the epistle to the Hebrews transcends any other book in the New Testament. In the third and fourth chapters is the argument concerning crossing the Jordan into the promise of soul rest.

In the fifth chapter is the argument of weaning the child, and the difference between liquid and solid

food. In the sixth chapter is the argument of leaving the a b c, and being borne unto perfection. In the seventh chapter is the argument of the two ranks of priesthood, the order of Aaron and the order of Melchisedec. In the eighth chapter is the argument of the two covenants, the one written in stone, and the other written in the heart. In the ninth and tenth chapters, is the double argument of the two veils in the tabernacle and the difference between the daily sacrifice in the holy place and the annual sacrifice for the most holy. In the eleventh chapter is the biographical argument and illustration of perfect believers. In the twelfth chapter is the argument and marvelous parable of the two Pentecosts, the one at Mt. Sinai, the other at Mt. Sion. Each of these arguments contain proofs and illustrations, so rich in suggestion that to elaborate them all with confirmatory proof texts, and apply them to the realities of conscious experience of the spiritual life, would make a volume. In several chapters there is an allusion to Melchisedec, who was king of Salem (afterwards Jerusalem) and a priest of God in the days of Abraham.

In the 110th Psalm we have the prophecy that Paul elaborates in the seventh of Hebrews concerning a priestly order, higher than that of Aaron. But the force and beauty of the argument can be understood only when interpreted in the light of Christian perfection, and as teaching that the elect followers of Jesus are to advance from the initial Christian life typified

by the Levitical order into perfect spiritual union with Jesus, by which, as sharing the oneness of Jesus, they graduate into the Melchisedecian order. There are three or four strong points in the chapter to prove that this priestly order applies to the true saints of Jesus.

Paul says that Melchisedec was first by interpretation king of righteousness, which in the Greek is the same as justification, and after that he was king of Salem, which implies perfect peace. This proves that Paul's logic was driving toward the doctrine of Christian perfection, or an inner life of perfect peace, which comes after the work of justification.

He then proceeds in the same chapter to present four points in which the priestly rank of Melchisedec was superior to the Levitical order.

I. It was superior in the point of life long service. A Jewish priest could not begin his public ministry till twenty-five years of age, and unless he were a high priest his public ministry closed at the age of fifty. Hence there was great limitation in his service as to time. But in the case of Melchisedec there was no such narrow restriction. He did not inherit the priestly office from his ancestors, nor did he have to relinquish it at any special age to a successor; doubtless he was a prophet and priest from a young man, and continued so as long as he lived; and as he had his call and commission directly from the Holy Ghost, and not from any ecclesiastical establishment, so in this respect he was in his ministry without pedigree, and

without a specified time of service. There was a perceptible parallel to this in those believers who by the full baptism of the Spirit enter into the true priestly life of Jesus. Before the believer is filled with the light and the liberty of the Spirit, he is, as Paul says in Galatians, "under governors and tutors," as to times and seasons, and his inner religious life is subject to specified beginnings and endings, corresponding to the outward life of the Levitical order. But when he is set free from all spiritual bondage, and flooded with the liberty wherewith Christ sets him free, he enters the Melchisedecian order, and if he apprehends his full privileges and will advance in the Spirit, he is lifted beyond the rules of superannuation, and of waiting on the slow rules of a human priesthood, and so does not wait for Sanhedrim orders to begin saving souls, nor terminate his flaming ministry at any specified age, "But like unto the Son of God, he abideth a priest continually." These emphatic words of Paul have a far-reaching meaning, extending into the coming millennial age, which is abundantly confirmed by other Scriptures, that the Melchisedecian order of saints are to be the priests under Christ in the millennial age.

John declares that "God hath made us kings and priests unto God, forever and ever," and when we are linked in perfect union with Jesus, our priestly office is to be perpetual, both in this life and the life to come.

2. The next point of superiority is, that the Melchisedecian order is world wide, for all nations and

kindreds, regardless of caste or creed. The Levitical priests could serve God only for their own membership. How many thousands of Christians in all ages have lived and died who felt they could have no liberty in religious service, except in the pale of their own denomination. In a hundred different ways this spirit of imperfect religious experience manifests itself along lines of caste, or creed, or mode of dress, or position in prayer, or manner of song, or preaching, or taking the Lord's Supper, or something sectarian, which reveals a cast-iron narrowness in religious thought and worship.

A Levite could offer sacrifice only for a Jew, and all who are of that order of believers are in some respects so limited still. But Melchisedec was subject to no such limitation, he could offer sacrifice and intercession for any man, of any nation, or any creed under heaven.

The whole world was his parish. When a believer enters into the real scriptural fulness of God, he passes from the Levitical order, which is like a landlocked river, into the Melchisedecian order, which is the limitless ocean of divine love, where names and sects and party lines vanish, and he can serve God in boundless liberty, with believers of any name, without hanging to any mode of prayer, or mode of baptism, or mode of communion. This is the real priesthood of Jesus, and those who are to reign with him in his coming kingdom will be only those who are baptized

of the Spirit out and beyond all national and race prejudices, and all sectarian narrowness.

For only such will be qualified to be priests and princes in all the earth. Psalms 45:16.

3. The next point of superiority is that the Melchisedecian order are both kings and priests united in the same person. In the Jewish economy, a Levite could not be a king, and the princely tribe of Judah could not serve as priests. But Jesus was born of Judah, and yet he was made a priest, and this union of the two offices in himself lifted him beyond any example in the Jewish church, and in this respect he was like Melchisedec, who was both a king and a priest. This same argument applies to us. It requires a second work of grace, and the full baptism of the Spirit, to bring us where we enter the twofold life of princely power with God, and princely intercession for other souls, and the student of Scripture will notice, in those places where we are called "a royal priesthood," and "kings and priests unto God," it is in connection with the work of sanctification. There are vast multitudes of believers in every age who serve God in a lower order of divided power, as in the Jewish economy, but to be among those who form the Bride of the Lamb it is essential that we be lifted into the union of spiritual power, where all the princely and priestly functions are both combined, as in the case of Jesus and Melchisedec.

4. The last point of superiority is, that the

Melchisedecian priesthood was instituted with an oath. "If perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, what further need was there for another priesthood after the order of Melchisedec?" Verse 2. Proving the whole argument was for Christian perfection.

We are told in verse 21 that the Levitical priests were made without an oath, but the Melchisedecian order was made "with an oath." This oath is nothing more or less than that entire and irreversible consecration to the eternal will of God which no one but a child of God can make, and by which, according to Moses, there is a double avouchment. We avouch ourselves to be utterly and everlastingly the Lord's, and he avouches himself to be our everlasting God. Deut. xxvi: 17. A man can be born and grow up to be a citizen without taking any oath of allegiance, but when he joins the army, and unites the office of a soldier to that of a citizen it must needs be with an oath, because the very idea of soldier implies laying down one's life and requires a degree of loyalty greater than that of mere citizenship. Conversion makes us citizens of God's kingdom, and the sanctifying baptism of the Spirit constitutes us soldiers, but we enter this higher rank of loyalty with an oath of eternal fidelity. This is the order of Melchisedec.

III.

THE AWFULNESS OF SIN.

We are living in a world of sin, so enveloped by it and have been so possessed by it, and so accustomed to its innumerable manifestations, that it is impossible for us to form any adequate conception of its utter horribleness and wretchedness while we live in this world. And even when we are cleansed entirely from it, and so filled with divine love that every form and expression of sin gives us a loathsome heart-sickness against it, we still fail to apprehend all its enormity.

We can mark our progress in holiness by our feelings toward sin. At first we turn away from the effects of sin, then we dislike its outward manifestations in crimes and injuries, then we get tired and disgusted with the inward principle of sin, then as our light increases we revolt from the finer shades of sin that come out in what passes for innocent amusement and gayety of human nature; farther on we detect its almost infinite virus, then we discern in finer degrees the universality of its poison and its implacable enmity to God, then we are drawn into an abiding heart sickness toward the very essence of the least sin, until having to live in a sinful world becomes a constant sorrow of spirit. To form some idea of the enormity of sin, let us look at the following items:

- I. Get before the mind a picture of all the hor-

rible sins which are being committed every day in the world, the millions of crimes of every known variety which are embraced in the three classes, those which are earthly, and those which are sensual, and those which are devilish; think of the billions of woes, pains, degradations, that these sins are causing; and yet this horrible picture does not give the horribleness of sin. For only think that all these effects flow from the bitter fountain of sin that lies in human souls, and this unseen fountain of iniquity in human hearts and minds is capable of producing all these outward sins and crimes, in a million fold, throughout all eternity. The mere fact is beyond all our imagination.

2. Have we begun to estimate the appalling corruption of human nature in its implicit hatred to God. This hatred to our ever blessed Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer is very seldom explicitly stated in so many words, but it lies implicitly coiled in every natural heart, like a venomous rattlesnake, ready when occasion requires to turn in bitterness against its best friend. See how God is ignored by the mass of men in their writings, their business, their politics, their conversation, their thoughts, and plans, how the very thought of God is pushed as far away as possible. Notice how people in any mixed company seem embarrassed and even irritated at the very mention of God's name, or his character or his service. The very sight of God's commandments, or

a disclosure of his sovereignty, seems to enrage the most of mankind, and they manifest their secret hatred to God by improprieties of language or some ugly behavior.

Notice the facility in which human nature, in a sly way, denounces God, blames him with all ill, criticises his providence, seems to take a fiendish delight in misquoting and perverting the plain teachings of his word. If you carefully watch the average man he will in various ways manifest enough hatred to God in one week, that if the same amount of hatred was manifested by any one toward himself he would think it an outrage. Even converted people, not yet perfectly purified, will have spells of peevishness against God, which if thoroughly analyzed is nothing less than implicit hatred to his character, or government, for just as long as the carnal mind remains in the soul it is enmity against God.

3. Look at the subjective ruin that sin produces in our nature. See its effect upon our hearts, corrupting every affection, perverting the desires, begetting a restless hanker for excessive gratification, for unlawful things, making self the center, and wanting to twist everything in life in some manner to the gratifying, the magnifying, the exalting of self. See its work in the mind, clouding the perceptions, blotting out clear distinctions between right and wrong, perverting the reason, stultifying the judg-

ment, intoxicating and polluting the imagination, dragging all the mental faculties from the sweet play in the sunshine of God's truth to gross and ruinous exercises. What a wreck it has wrought in the will, filling it with rebellion against pure law, impatience of restraint, instability of holy purpose, vacillation and weakness of holy decision. The heart, mind and will is the trinity in the soul, corresponding to the Father, Son and Spirit, and created to live in blessed union with those Divine Persons, but sin turns all these powers into a trinity of hell.

4. Another terrible trait of sin is its facility of blending itself with sickness, and through manifold diseases of the body working against grace. Notice how when the body is diseased the mind becomes depressed, faith is enfeebled, the will loses its courage, the spirituality even of good people seems to pass under a cloud. It is in times of broken-down physical conditions that the devil makes his harvest time of tempting and troubling God's children, as if sickness was Satan's pasture for his black angels to feed upon. This proves sin and sickness to be twin brothers.

5. If we investigate the extent of sin we find that it penetrates to every part of man, and to every expression of his being in looks, tones and gestures, to the deepest fountains of his inner spirit, and then spreads itself out like a muddy Mississippi over all the banks of human nature, deluging the animal king-

dom, causing the dumb brutes to partake of its conduct, and lifting itself into the very frame work of nature in abnormal storms and floods and drouths, and then soaking itself down into the soil of the earth, preventing the ground from yielding its full harvest, and poisoning the seed germs into briars and thorns.

O, what will it be to enter a bright, beautiful world, where there are no sinners or sin, and where the smell of sin cannot be detected in all its products, or in the sweet movement of its musical seasons and mechanism. In this respect we are like children born and raised in a dark, damp coal mine, and we have no measurements of the unutterable thrill of the blessedness it will be to be lifted into the sun-bright flower gardens of a spotless world, where everything will only be some form of the variegated splendor and sweetness of infinite love.

6. Another trait of sin is its extreme deceitfulness and subtlety. It can steal into the finest crevices of life, and in a thousand ways blend itself with things that are good and harmless of themselves. It insinuates itself into art, and science, and eloquence, and music, and smiles, and social affections, and flowers, and a taste for the beautiful; it sneaks into every avenue of business, and government, and legislation; it seeks to put a poison into every blossom, and a pain into every joy, and self-seeking into every lofty motive. No one, less than God, can search out its infinite refinements and burn out its venom.

7. Sin grows with horrible rapidity. It is like certain poisonous or vile insects that multiply with incredible speed. See how fast sin gets hold of every power of the soul and body. When even spiritual people have imperceptible leakages of grace and begin to backslide, with what lightning velocity evil can grow in them, and how quickly they may become seized upon and controlled by demons. How rapidly sin will develop in young persons, and more swiftly in this age than ever in the world, making multitudes of them old and hardened in sin before they grow a beard. See how in a few years any one passion will absolutely despotise a person, and if people were allowed to live for a century or two, with these inconceivable growths in sin, what monsters in iniquity men would become. Think of one man living in New York, to only an average age, under a boundless passion for money, getting possession, within just a few years, of over two hundred million dollars, one of the greatest sums of wealth ever acquired by any one person since the world was made. If that man had lived two centuries would he not have managed to steal the globe?

The same idea is true of every one of the passions. Hence short life is an infinite mercy with such rapid possibilities of sin. Awful as these facts are, they prove the unlimited capabilities of the soul, for surely God never created us for sin, and it must be abnormal to us, whereas we were fashioned for holi-

ness; and if our nature has such facilities for what is unnatural to us, shall we not have much greater facilities in the spotless and boundless love of God, which is the proper soil and clime of our creation? Even sin itself preaches eloquently to us of the necessity and blessedness of being holy and harmless and undefiled, like our blessed Jesus, and that our only true home is in the bosom of God, and our only true estate is to be flooded with his love.

IV.

HOW TO DIE TO SELF.

Many deeply spiritual persons who allow their faith to be molded by the words of Scripture, and by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, instead of a narrow human theology, are clearly convinced that there is a real death to self which comes after the work of sanctification.

They detect many manifestations of the creature life, which are not clearly sinful on the one side, nor yet really Christ-like on the other side, but a middle zone of creaturely activity and self, which the Spirit shows them must be passed beyond or crucified, in order to reach deep abiding union with God, where there is "none of self and all of Christ Jesus." The very persons who deny this state of grace, are the

ones who most positively manifest in manifold ways their need of being dead to self. I am writing this not for those who have any theory to maintain, but for the humble and simple-hearted saints who really hunger to sink out of self into God. I remark in the first place, that there are some false notions as to how to die to self.

One false notion is, the conceiving of a wrong hatred to ourselves. The more we are divinely illuminated the more minutely and astonishingly do we apprehend the almost infinite blindness, foolishness and meanness of our past lives. Unless we are kept very mellow and subdued, this sight of our meanness may tempt us to form a bitter, revengful feeling toward ourselves, and under such an impression, we may feel like punishing ourselves in some unnatural way, or by the making of unscriptural and rash vows. This is the source of cruel and unnatural penances.

Another false notion is the choosing of some line of mortification for ourselves, or the selection of some special cross. This will defeat the very end we want to attain, which is the loss of our will in all things. But the very act of choosing a cross for ourselves keeps alive our own preferences and furnishes a secret nourishment to self-will, and furnishes a little place for self to live under the very pretext of dying to self.

Another erroneous view is that we can sink to a deeper death by over work, by engaging ourselves to a heavier task than we can reasonably accomplish, and

even if the extra work be of the most religious kind, still it supplies a field for self-activity. It is in this respect that St. Paul speaks of persons under a false zeal, going to every extreme of self-imposed poverty, and even burning at the stake, yet all under the principle of self-action, and not that complete abnegation of self which is caused by being entirely possessed by divine love.

Another false notion is that we are to indolently leave ourselves to the mere law of development, and if we can only be kept from well defined sins, we are not to tax ourselves with anything deeply spiritual, but leave ourselves to grow without a diligent attention to growth. This is the opposite error from some of the foregoing. It is to be feared that this last error is the one that most persons drift into. But now let us face the real question, how to die to self, and let Christ be all and all in us. In the first place, do we really believe such a state is attainable? Have we looked at the blessed Christ until we have obtained a clear conception of what it is to lose ourselves in union with him? Have our spiritual eyes surveyed this blessed possibility, until its attainability in this life has become a settled conviction with us? Then have we calmly, deeply, irreversibly settled it that there shall be none of self and all of Christ. Are we prepared to make that the motto of our lives, do we think it, dream it, pray it, breathe it, drink of it, bathe ourselves in it, until it becomes a subtle, steady, all-

prevailing passion in our minds, none of self and all of Jesus? As we tread this golden shore, let us go slow and walk softly on these shining sands; let us not launch out in those fathomless waters without duly counting the cost and without ample ballast in our ships. If we have determined to make this celestial excursion entirely out of self into the depths of the divine nature, let us remember that the first step toward this perfect death is to have a pure divine motive, and that motive must be nothing less than the ever blessed triune God himself, that is, it must be the seeking of God as our all and in all, our last end, our exceeding great reward, so that it will be for his glory, his beauty, and praise, through us, and by us, and that we have no desire to exist except as a channel for his outflow, a chosen vessel for the embodiment of his life, and the outbeaming of his glorious attributes through us. The deepest death to self lies in the motives and intentions, hence this all-consuming motive to want to be nothing but a capacity for Christ to live in, lies at the foundation of the death of self, and the highest life of Christ. With this pure motive fixed in the heart, we are to habitually and willingly accept of every occasion for humiliation and self-abasement, which God's providence brings to us. While on the one hand we are neither to make or seek a cross, on the other hand we are to sweetly and willingly accept of every blow, or mortification, or inconvenience, or painful annoyance,

which comes to us in the order of God's providential will. Humiliation is the very quintessence of the Christ-life, and we must appreciate every opportunity of sinking into humility. Hence when reproaches, unkind treatment, poverty, loneliness, persecution, mental distresses, seeming failure in our work, disappointments, deep perplexities, or any disagreeable thing comes to us, if we are in a state of divine recollection, we are to calmly face these things, as appropriate occasions for losing our own will and letting the omnipotence of God take charge of them, and we can thereby in these humiliations be more delicately and firmly knit to the will of God.

Another effectual method of dying to self is to be exceedingly careful not to receive human honors or praise into our hearts.

If we are worthy of having enemies, who will seek opportunities of humiliating us, we will also have some friends who will love and honor us; and, as a rule, the more bitter our enemies are, the stronger our friends will love us, and there will be times when we will be honored in spite of ourselves. But if we open our hearts to receive this honor and in our thoughts feed upon it as a social honey, or if we allow human praise to inflate our thoughts, it will instantly breed a human self-esteem, and this becomes a hot-bed of the self-life.

It requires great humiliation and divine reconciliation for evangelists, preachers, holiness teachers, and singers, and writers, not to lose the Christ-life at this

point. Another step in the death of self is to seek in everything to be child-like, and extremely simple in our manners, words, dress, tastes, and interior experiences.

Self naturally feeds on complexity and things grand and large and loud, but Christ is the very embodiment of divine and eternal simplicity. The deeper we sink into the Christ-life, the more we become disappointing to the people; our learning, or talents, will not show off to such fine advantage. We talk less, we live more quietly, and interiorly, our labors are less ostentatious. We do more hard fighting with fewer dress-parades. We bring things to pass through prayers and faith in God more than by outward showy methods. We love to live like God, a profound hidden life, in which people think we don't amount to very much. This is one of the tests of sinking out of self.

Another step in the death of self is the living more keenly by pure faith, depending less on all spiritual phenomena, and the clear apprehension by pure faith that the three persons of the Godhead possess and pervade us, and that every atom of our lives is in the grasp of his will, and that by a perpetual act of entire abandonment we are by the simple act of believing most blessedly united in the deep of our being to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Whenever we enter a new and higher region in the Christ-life, there will be some distinguished marks

of grace, some memorable and blessed manifestations of the Holy Spirit, working within us, in the shape of conscious fulness, or a flow of sweetness, or spoken words, or bright mental illuminations, or prophetic premonitions, or abounding joy; some gracious phenomena, which will serve as a memorial, or a spiritual land-mark; and to linger too much on these things, or to rest on them, will furnish a refined nourishment of the self-life. Hence the deepest conformity to Jesus will lead us to be weaned from ecstasies, and bright inward lights, which are very essential in their place; but to be constantly drinking the Christ-life by an act of pure faith is the path to the deepest death of self.

Another way of dying to self is to thoughtfully avoid making our religious life an unnecessary burden, or cross, or tax, to our families and loved ones. Sometimes those who want to be real Christ-like, for lack of wisdom, adopt some mode of life, or devotion, or theory of sanctity, which is a source of positive peevishness and disagreeableness to those with whom they live. This is exactly opposite to Christ, and feeds self instead of killing it. We should seek to be yielding, and pliant, obliging and accommodating.

In all non-essentials, where a well defined principle of right is not involved we must surrender our little choices and tastes and ease, for the well pleasing and gratification of others. To be rigid and stubborn on non-essentials is simply self-righteousness, and a stronghold of self.

Lastly, in everything we are to seek our nothingness and the allness of God. This is to become a daily habit of our motives and intentions, to distrust ourselves, to ignore our own wisdom, to look to Christ for the most minute guidance that we may be one in all things.

V.

JESUS AND MOSES.

One night recently while lying awake and engaged in mental prayer in the quietness of midnight, I got to meditating on Jesus and Moses, and the similarity in their lives, and yearning that I might be sunk down into the fathomless meekness and gentleness of spirit which was in those blessed characters. In a few moments the Holy Ghost opened to my mind as in a vista or panorama the most remarkable parallel in the lives of Jesus and Moses; and the words quoted by Stephen in his burning speech, recorded in the 7th of Acts, that Jesus was to be a prophet like unto Moses, was unfolded with startling beauty and an immensity of significance and a minuteness of detail which fairly bewildered me. The following items of comparison in their lives and ministry was forcibly shown to me one

by one. I have never seen in print or heard from any one these points of similarity before, and I give them to you just as the Spirit gave them to me.

1. In their infancy, they were both under the ban of death. Moses was born at a time when there was a cruel edict to kill the Hebrew male children. And soon after the birth of Jesus Herod issued an order for the slaughter of the male infants of Bethlehem. So they both began life under the awful shadow of assassination.

2. They were both admired in their infancy by royalty. The wise men who came to hunt for the infant Jesus were very probably pious old kings from the far east.

This is the tradition of the Church and the early fathers, and the word "wise" should be "great men," or more literally "majestic men." And when Moses was looked upon by Pharaoh's daughter she instantly loved him.

One version tells us that the infant Moses was "very fair," but the Greek says when he was born "he was beautiful to God," and God made the royal daughter to be smitten with his infant charms. So the singular thing occurs that while both infants were under a royal edict of murder, both of them were loved and admired by royalty.

3. Both of their infant lives were protected by the kingdom of Egypt. Little Moses, in spite of the death warrant against him, found a sheltering place

under the very crown that had ordered him to be killed, and God providentially arranged for the infant Jesus to be protected by the same government from the rage of Herod. How this subtle and wide sweeping network of God's providences should impress us with his omniscient care.

4. They were both trained by their mothers for great and special work. How perfect was the wisdom of God in arranging for Moses's mother to be his nurse and teacher. She must have been an extraordinary woman, deeply taught of God, and she diligently poured all the traits of her character into her child. And while we have no sympathy with Romish Mariolatry, yet I have no doubt but the mother of Jesus stands at the head of all the women of humanity, and on the other side the boy Jesus received the most perfect maternal training of any one who has lived. God mysteriously blends the material and the supernatural, the human and the divine, in all these matters of special training for special service.

5. In both Moses and Jesus there was a divine passion, an all-consuming enthusiasm to deliver and save the Hebrew race.

It is evident that Moses manifested from his youth an ardent interest in his people, and as soon as he could he began to exert himself in their defense. And the boy Jesus had such an overflowing zeal for the spiritual deliverance of his people that it broke loose like a cataract at twelve years of age.

6. They were both rejected by their people for whom they had such love and zeal. This is the one strong point of comparison which Stephen cites in his address. Jesus was crucified and buried by the Jews under sanction of Roman law. And so Moses was virtually crucified in being rejected by his people, when at forty years of age he offered to be their deliverer.

And just as in killing Jesus, they used the political power to kill him, so the Hebrews, in rejecting Moses, threatened to use against him the very political power under which they were oppressed. In both cases the Jews were living under the oppression of a foreign power which they used against their leaders.

7. In both cases, after being rejected and crucified, they left their people and went up to God. Moses went to Mt. Horeb, which is distinctively called "the mountain of God," and lived a life hid with God, a life of quietness and rest and great intercession of prayer for his people. And so Jesus went up to the right hand of the Father, where he is interceding for his people, still pleading for the very race that crucified him, and quietly resting in the divine sunlight of the heavenly Mt. Horeb until the very people that rejected him shall be humble enough to be his footstool.

8. When Moses returned to his people in Egypt he did not go in weakness or humiliation, but with the tread of a universal monarch and with the rod of miraculous and manifold power, and clothed with the

authority of Almighty God to scourge the Egyptians and to overwhelmingly convince his own people. In exactly the same way when the Gentile age is up, typified by the forty years' absence of Moses, Jesus will descend from the mountain of God, not in humiliation and grief, but with absolute and overwhelming authority to scourge all the sinners in the world, to let loose the ten plagues of the great tribulations, and to prove himself the Almighty God to his own people, both of the Jews and Gentiles. The rod that Moses used in scourging Egypt is a perfect type of the "rod of iron" which is so often spoken of in connection with the second coming of Jesus. Rev. 2:27.

9. When Moses returned to Egypt it was to gather out the elect of the Lord and take them up into God's country, and at the same time severely punish the wicked Egyptians. The divine sword which he handled had a salvation edge for the people of God and a damnation edge for the sinners.

This was exactly the prophecy concerning Jesus at his second coming with a two-eged sword. Rev. 1:16. He will gather out the elect who are converted, sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit, and raise from the dead those who in their life time were qualified to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand and gather them up into the mountain of the air, and when he thus gathers out his elect who have his own likeness in them, all the nations of the earth will be left with unutterable trouble and anguish in every

single family, like the Egyptians, who were mourning over their dead in every house, while the happy Jews were rejoicing under the pillar of fire.

10. There is a remarkable incident recorded, where Moses and his officers and the seventy elders of Israel, which were representative of their whole body, went up into the mount of God and saw an open vision of the God of Israel, with his feet resting upon a glittering sapphire pavement, and in that marvelous interview with Jehovah, they partook of a feast—ate and drank in God's presence. Ex. xxiv: 9-11.

This is a clear, prophetic type, that when Jesus gathers out his saints from this Egypt-like earth into the mountains of the air, there will then take place the beatific vision of God and the banquet of the marriage of the Lamb, which is so abundantly spoken of by Christ in his parables, and so definitely described in the Songs of Solomon, and the 19th of Revelation. So in this respect there is a perfect likeness between Moses and Jesus. While the elders returned back to the camp, Moses remained shut in with God forty days and forty nights, and it is likely that the marriage supper will last forty years.

While Moses was thus in the glory of God the land of Egypt was writhing in anguish under God's judgments; the effects of their sin. In like manner, while Jesus and his elect are at their banquet, the nations of the earth will be passing through the great tribulations. The student will please study the two

suppers in Revelation 19, one in glory with the Lamb and the other a supper of fowls, i. e., devils feasting on the slaughter of war among the nations of the earth; and both taking place at the same time.

Thus Moses being wrapped in glory, while Egypt was wrapped in woe, will be repeated in that prophet who is like unto Moses, and with the impenitent nations like unto Egypt.

11. Moses formed the Hebrew people into a most beautiful, organized and portable city, with three tribes on the north, three on the east, three on the south and three on the west, and in the large hollow square he constructed the matchless tabernacle in which God lived, and from that divine center, outward along the avenues to the outskirts of the camp, every detail was arranged with wondrous symmetry and beauty; every tribe and family and man being arranged in his appropriate place. This same thing will be repeated when the Lord Jesus gathers unto himself those who are qualified to be among the hundred and forty and four thousand, and in the mountain of the air, he will arrange in everlasting order and beauty the sanctified millions that will compose the New Jerusalem, giving to each one his proper locality in the organic army, and the standing that each one will have in that the living structure.

12. Moses, having organized his portable living city, began moving right to Canaan, with a view of taking absolute possession of its territory, extermin-

ating its incorrigible sinners, spreading the twelve out over that fair land; and through them God designed to evangelize, subdue and govern every nation on earth. You will find this conception amply confirmed by the marvelous promises in Deuteronomy, that if the Hebrews obeyed God, his plan was to make them "the head of all nations and not the tail," and they should be a kingdom of princes and priests over all nations.

We all know their great failure, but the Lord Jesus will not fail; and after organizing the bridehood of the Lamb into that immortal army and living city, so often spoken of in Scripture, he will descend from the mountains of God to that same Palestine and stand with his elect on Mt. Zion and take absolute control of this world, and the members of his glorified bridehood will be scattered through all the earth to institute his millennial reign, and to superintend with inflexible authority the minutest welfare of all mankind.

O, the vastness and beauty of God's design! I cannot intimate in cold print the splendor of this analogy, as the Spirit opened it up to my mind, but I have a cloudless conviction that all will be fulfilled. If seven of these points have already proved correct, so the other five will be.

VI.

LEARNING SPIRITUAL LESSONS.

It is impossible for us to conceive the grandeur of having an infinite and ever blessed God for our constant teacher, to apprehend ourselves as little frail creatures, going to school to limitless Knowledge, cloudless Light, and boundless Love. As our Creator, Preserver, and Savior, what multiplied lessons has he to teach us, through his providence, his word, his Spirit, and how often we have to learn the same lessons over and over again, from every angle of vision, in varying degrees of light and shade, in multiplied forms of joy and sorrow, in manifold relations of society and solitude.

The word "disciple" signifies a learner, and to be a true disciple covers the entire range of religious life, from its infancy to glorification. There are three kinds of knowledge, the physical, intellectual, and spiritual. We acquire material knowledge through our senses, coming in contact with eternal objects. We obtain intellectual knowledge by the exercise of reason, preception, memory and judgment. We learn spiritual things through the operation of revealed truth and the agency of the inner spiritual being, the conscience, the affections and the will.

Spiritual knowledge is of two kinds, that which is revealed by instantaneous flashes of the Spirit upon

our spiritual understanding, and that which we learn by oft repeated experiences of the action of God's discipline and truth upon our spiritual faculties. The Scriptures speak of a great many things as being revealed to us, as "having Christ revealed in us," and "having the arm of the Lord revealed to us." They speak of other things as having to learn them, as "learning the meek and lowly heart of Jesus," "learning in whatever state we are therewith to be content."

Laban "learned that God blessed him for Jacob's sake." The revelations of the Holy Ghost to us are flashed directly upon our spiritual intuitions, and are always instantaneous, and are independent of the action of our five senses, and far beyond our slow process of reasoning; they are pre-eminently supernatural.

But in learning spiritual lessons, there is the gentle interblending of our spiritual intuitions with the action of our intellectual faculties, of memory, judgment, comparison, and analysis. This action of our mental powers of divine things accounts for the slowness of our learning, and for the necessity of having the same lessons to go over and over again, until the whole mind has been spiritualized, and brought under the sweet and luminous control of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is what Paul refers to by having our "thoughts and imaginations" such as the building of air castles, curiosity, excursive reasonings, and such like, "brought in perfect subjection to Christ." The

learning of these things is a very different thing from the instantaneous works of regeneration and sanctification, and is reached by repeated interior crucifixions, and by divine habits of mental prayer, and the recollection of the divine presence. The general rule of learning spiritual lessons is by contrasts, the bringing together of opposite extremes; as, we are told, the movement of the delicate machinery in a watch is produced by putting it first into a freezing and then a burning temperature, and then back and forth, until the machinery sweetly behaves itself in either extreme of temperature. This thought of learning by abrupt and sharply defined extremes is the very one Paul mentions, when he learned how to be abased, and how to abound, how to suffer hunger, and how to be filled, how to sleep on a bed of down in a palace, and on a hard board in a barbarian's hut; and by these sharp contrasts he learned to die equally to both, and the delicate mechanism of his spiritual life kept unvarying time in all zones and temperatures. This thought of spiritual contrast is the key by which we can unlock nearly all the lessons of the spiritual life.

When Christ is going to teach us a lesson of the riches of his inner nature, or of the enormous wealth of his imparted life to us, he will lead us around through a desert place, and by a combination of inward and outward circumstances show us our utter poverty and destitution of nature, until in our innermost being we feel poor and pinched, and pale and

pauperfied. Then there will soon open to us such a mine of spiritual wealth, bright, glittering thought, sparkling gems of holy desire, soft and sweet attractions of pure love, a smooth glassy flow of peace, glowing expansions of hope, exquisite magnetisms in the divine personalities, until it seems we are walking through mines of gold and rubies, and feel so rich in God that we want to give away millions of blessings to the starving souls around us.

When we are to learn some great lesson of faith, it will be preceded by having our little faith tested to its uttermost. God will allow Satan to throw a strange darkness around the mind, and for a time his black wings will shut out the sun, moon and stars, and along with this a great many things in our outward circumstances will miscarry, our most solid expectations will fail to materialize; God's great, broad, bright promises seem to have an indistinct and awkward appearance, while regiments of difficulties, like armed cavalry, charge down upon us. Amid this storm in the outward phenomena, and the dull gloom upon the mental faculties, faith will act like a little ship in a heavy sea. It groans in every fiber, and slowly climbs the waves, it careens away over, as if it would surely capsize. A mast may snap, and a few ropes get broken.

Then we consent to make death reckonings, and reach the point of "though he slay me" yet I will not doubt his love. In a short time we find the billows

smoothing down, the cloud lifts, the wind changes and it seems that every power within us takes on a believing frame. Faith seems to spread itself out in a bright, victorious extravagance through all the soul. We can then not only believe all the written promises, but also the secretly whispered ones which the Holy Ghost pronounces in the depths of our spirits. We seem so full of faith that we wonder why it should ever have groaned and struggled so in the storm.

In taking deeper degrees in humility the soul is led through horrible temptations, and disgusting mortifications. In one sense it is dangerous to pray for the very deepest humility, unless the soul is strong enough for extraordinary trials and mortifications of various kinds.

It is related that George Whitefield, on his way to America was led to pray the Lord to fill him with great humility of spirit. In a few days he was seized with most vile and terrible temptations, which greatly agitated the mental appetences, and convulsed his sensibilities, till he was almost on the verge of despair; and before they passed away he loathed himself, and looked upon himself as the most detestable wretch on earth, and all other people seemed good and heavenly compared with himself. But he learned his lesson, and came through with the consciousness of his utter littleness and frailty, which is the very essence of perfect humility. This is the curriculum through which the very lowliest minded saints have passed.

What shall I say of learning the lesson of love, bright faced, large eyed, mild featured, sweet voiced, soft toned, gentle spirited, long suffering, noncombative, summer breathing, boundless love? That love which constitutes the essence of heaven, the quality of religion, and the focalizing of all the graces in one must not only be imparted to us by a supernatural act of the Holy Ghost, but wrought out into every part of our life. And this requires the learning of love's lesson over and over, deeper and deeper.

When the Holy Spirit opens a new chapter of love in our nature he permits our affections to be sorely taxed, with things which are just the opposite of love. He permits most cruel misunderstandings, unexplainable coldness, harsh treatment, the seeming or real loss of old friendships, heartless and uncalled for betrayals of tender heart confidences; sometimes actual and severe cruelties upon the body, or estate, or reputation. All sorts of unlovely and painful things occur, to test what love we have, to make us see whether we have the pure, gentle, unlimited charity of Christ, that we thought we had.

Love is a sweet mantle of pure linen, and if there be any cotton or woolen threads mixed up with it they will scorch and burn in the fiery furnace of love's testings, and when our charity for all mankind is going through the flame, we can tell by the smell of burnt wool whether our love is all pure linen or not. Mere human love is wool, God's love is asbestos linen, and

utterly indestructible. The more it is burned, the broader and sweeter it gets. Just after passing through some long and terrific strain upon pure love, it comes out into a broad ocean of mildness and tenderness inexpressible; it is then vast enough to mantle the world round and round with its compassionate, sympathizing, forgiving and pitying folds.

There is another peculiar lesson in the spiritual life, which I may call periodical enlargement. There will come seasons when everything in our life seems put in a narrow place. Our experience, our view of things, our interior play of spirit, our outward circumstances, socially or financially, our avocations and industries, the utility of our gifts, all seem cramped, and as the days and weeks go by, we seem to be pushing through an ever narrowing place, till we feel in a number of ways so cramped, as St. Paul says, "pressed beyond measure," until we have the feeling of being literally tied hand and foot, straight-laced and gagged. But when this phenomenon of experience reaches its extremity, suddenly the cords that bound us are snapped, or quietly untied, and we find the whole atmosphere of things changed. Without any effort, we find ourselves in a wide place, all our inner restraint expands into the sweetest liberty, gloomy circumstances put on bright faces, forgotten friends unexpectedly turn up, our industries and financial matters move as if oiled, social things assume their old-fashioned cheerfulness, the sky is blue, and it seems so easy to live and grow and fulfil our mission.

All these various lessons, and a great many more, have to be learned over and over again. The initial Christian learns them in faint degrees, and the purified and perfect believer goes through them many times, and from many standpoints, until he becomes familiar with the methods of his heavenly Teacher, and can tell at the beginning of each lesson what the glorious outcome will be.

VII.

TENDERNESS OF SPIRIT.

It is much easier to convince a human soul of its natural impurity than to convince it of its natural hardness, and utter destitution of heavenly and divine tenderness of Spirit. The very essence of the gospel is a divinely imparted tenderness and sweetness of Spirit. Without this, even the strongest religious life is a misrepresentation of the true Christ-life. Even among intensely religious people, nothing is more rare to find than a continuous, all-pervading spirit of tenderness.

1. Tenderness of spirit is preeminently divine. It is not the delicacy and soft sensibility of a mere gentle make-up of body and mind, which some persons naturally possess in a high degree. Neither is it the tenderness of mind and manner, which results from high

culture and beautiful social training, though these are very valuable in life. But it is a supernatural work throughout the whole spiritual being. It is an exquisite interior fountain of God's own sweetness and tenderness of nature, opened up in the inner spirit to such a degree that it completely inundates the soul, overflowing all the mental faculties, and saturating with its sweet waters the manners, expressions, words, and tones of the voice: mellowing the will, softening the judgments, melting the affections, refining the manners, and moulding the whole being after the image of him who was infinitely meek and lowly in heart. It cannot be borrowed, or put on for special occasions; it is emphatically supernatural, and must flow out incessantly from the inner fountains of the life, and resembles having every atom of our being soaked in sweet oil.

2. Deep tenderness of spirit is the very soul and marrow of the Christ-life. Without it, the most vigorous life of righteousness, and zeal, and good works, and rigid purity of morals, and missionary reform, and profuse liberality, and ascetic self-denial, and the most blameless conduct, utterly fail to measure up to the Christ-life unveiled in the New Testament. It is impossible to see the infinite excellence and necessity of real heavenly tenderness of spirit unless it is specially revealed to us by the Holy Ghost. It takes a direct revelation from God to enable us to discern what is the very marrow and fatness of Christ's character, the

inexpressible tenderness and gentleness of his nature which is always the heart inside of the heart, the soul within the soul, of the Christ-life. What specific gravity is to the planet, what beauty is to the rainbow, what perfume is to the rose, what marrow is to the bone, what rhythm is to poetry, what sublimity is to the ocean, what the pulse is to the heart, what harmony is to music, what heat is to a human body, all this and much more is what tenderness of spirit is to religion. Without tenderness of spirit the most intensely righteous, religious life is like the image of God without his beauty and attractiveness. It is possible to be very religious, and stanch, and persevering in all Christian duties, even to be sanctified, and be a brave defender and preacher of holiness, to be mathematically orthodox, and blameless in outward life, and very zealous in good works, and yet to be greatly lacking in tenderness of spirit, that all-subduing, all melting love, which is the very cream and quintessence of Heaven, and which incessantly streamed out from the eyes and voice of the blessed Jesus.

Many religious people seem loaded with good fruits, but the fruit tastes green; it lacks flavor and October mellowness. There is a touch of vinegar in their sanctity. Their very purity has an icy coldness to it. They seem to have a baptism on them, but it is not composed of those sweet spices of cinnamon, and calamus, and cassia, which God told Moses to

compound, as a fragrant type of the real sweetness of the Holy Spirit. Their testimonies are straight and definite, but they lack the melting quality. Their prayers are intelligent, and strong and pointed, but they lack the heart-piercing pathos of the dying Jesus. The summer heat in them is lacking. They preach eloquently and explain with utmost nicety what is actual and original sin, and what is pardon and purity, but they lack the burning flame, that interior furnace of throbbing love, that sighs and weeps, and breaks down under the shivering heat of all-consuming love.

3. This all pervading tenderness of spirit is not a novitiate grace. It is not a product of April but of October. It is not the sap that flows up in the grape vine in early spring, but it is the sweet wine, the pure, unfermented juice of the grape, which is crushed out under the mighty squeeze of the winepress. Real tenderness of spirit can never be known except through great suffering. Nothing but the wine-press of sorrow can yield it, and it matters not what shape the trial may be, whether an unutterable sorrow for sin, or extreme poverty, or great physical pain, or relentless persecution, or the wear and tear of a thousand daily annoyances, or the agony of unrequited love, or life-long loneliness, or heart breaking disappointment, these or any other forms of sorrow, only constitute the shape of the wine-press, but the result may be the same, and that is the sweetness of heavenly wine from the grapes of crushed

red hearts. There is no saintly character recorded in the Bible or outside of it who did not pass through the wine-press to reach universal tenderness and sweetness of spirit.

It is in connection with Job's manifold and strange sufferings, that he says "God had made his heart soft." It is said that the illustrious Jenny Lind never could melt the hearts of her hearers with her inimitable singing, until her own heart had been crushed with sorrow. Madame Guyon says that while we are purified from sin by the blood of Jesus, yet the attributes and constitution of our nature must be utterly broken under the manifold cross of suffering, to render us divine-like in our feelings and sympathies. And Paul says the weight of glory that will weigh us down, depends on the afflictions through which we pass to work out that result. We often come across Christians who are bright and clever, and strong, and righteous; in fact a little too bright, and a little too clever, like the pertnatural brilliance in a black eye, which precedes insanity, and there seems so much of self in their strength, and their very righteousness is severe and critical. They have everything to make them saints, except the crushing weight of an unspeakable crucifixion, which would grind them into a supernatural tenderness and limitless charity for others. But if they are of the real elect, God has a wine-press prepared for them, through which they will some day

pass, which will turn the metallic hardness of their nature into gentle love which Christ always brings forth at the last of the feast.

4. Divine tenderness of spirit has a behavior to it which is superhuman and heavenly.

It instinctively avoids wounding the feelings of others by talking on unpleasant things, wrangling in an argumentative way, by referring to painful and mortifying subjects. It carries its point by ceasing to contend, and wins its opponent by seeming to let him have his way. It cannot scold, or scowl, or threaten; it has lost the power of quarreling. It instinctively buries and forgets all bad things. People who live in hot climates bury their dead very soon after death; in like manner tenderness of spirit lives in the torrid zone of God's love, and quickly buries all putrid things out of its sight. No scene in the Bible opens up a greater vista into the tenderness of the spirit of Jesus, than where he stooped and wrote on the ground, as if his modest and loving heart did not want to hear the horrible account of evil. As we gaze on the soul of Jesus at that time, we see infinite politeness, both toward the accused and accusers; not a trace of unkindness, or severity to either party. His whole manner and speech and disposition filled the whole air, as with a very sea of refinement, gentleness and inexpressible sweetness of spirit. This and similar acts of Jesus is like an opening between mountains, through which we look far off on an out-

spreading silver sea of love, whose every undulation presents a new phase of unspeakable tenderness toward the poor sinner he came to save. Tenderness of spirit makes its home in the bosom of Jesus, and from that holy castle looks out upon all other creatures, good and bad, through the hopeful, pleading medium of the heart that was pierced on the cross. Tenderness of spirit is in divine sympathy with the poor and down-trodden and unfortunate and hated classes of mankind.

It feels for the poor Chinaman and the Negro, or any that are the common butt of worldly scorn. Whenever it hears any of these spoken of in a harsh and bitter way, it feels a dagger pierce its own heart and a tear of sympathy comes to its eye, and a piercing silent prayer ascends from it, to that God who hears the sighing of the prisoner, and the cries of the unfortunate. It feels all things from God's standpoint, and lives but to receive and transmit the spotless sympathies and affections of Jesus. It understands the words of the Holy Ghost, "Be ye tender hearted forgiving one another." Tenderness must be in the very nature, and forgiveness is but the behavior of that nature.

VIII.

THE BANQUET AT BETHANY.

One morning recently while reading on my knees from the 12th chapter of John, the blessed Spirit suddenly opened up to my heart a wondrously rich and soul-nourishing illumination of the supper which was made for the Savior in Bethany, just one week before his death. The three characters shine out with peculiar light as forming parts of one whole.

Martha, Lazarus and Mary are each significant types, not so much of three different persons as of three different stages through which Jesus will lead a true believer that entertains him. And then the three actions of these three persons are very significant of the states through which we pass in the Christ-life.

Martha served, Lazarus sat, Mary anointed. We find as we progress in the life of the Spirit that we pass through the Martha life of diligent outward service, and then through the Lazarus state of death and burial and rising up into a life of quietness to sit at the table with Jesus, and then when Christ's love rises to an overflow or a burning flame in our hearts, the Mary state of pouring ourselves out in extravagant devotion, and the breaking of costly alabaster boxes. It takes all of these three forms of service to consti-

tute our full banquet with Jesus. They are worth analyzing and applying to our hearts.

1. Martha served. Martha had the faculty of governing, managing details, of industry and taste, an eye to outward duty, exact method, civil courtesy, social decorum, and great punctuality in performing outward duties. She loved to serve. She had more joy in waiting on the table than in sitting with the guests. It was the gift of her nature, and the element in which her mind moved. Her outward service typifies a whole field in the religious life, which every true Christian must learn in the beginnings of his experience. Outward acts of service lie at the basis of Christian life. The act of bowing on the knees, praying audibly with the tongue, reading the Scriptures, attending places of worship, taking up the outward duties of a Christian in detail, and perseverance, all this seems so strange to a penitent, and so new, and sometimes a little awkward to a young convert. But all this is very needful, and unless these outwards acts of service are entered upon, with the distinct determination of persevering along all lines of known duty, there will be no firm basis for higher experiences. Now the ruin of many young beginners is to get their eyes on the mere performing of these various duties instead of getting their whole attention fastened upon the lovely Jesus.

The reason why Martha served with such assiduous taste and such swift decorum, neglecting noth-

ing, anticipating every need of the occasion, was because her thoughts were all the time fixed upon the blessed One for whom all these outward duties were being done. Had she performed all those outwards acts with her eyes fixed merely on the actions, its true name then would have been drudgery. But when those acts had direct reference to one she so ardently adored, then the duties flowed from her deft fingers as sweetly and easily as raindrops from an April cloud. The identical same act may be a drudgery, or a devotion, according to the inner soul that vitalizes the act. Thousands of young Christians have their attention directed so exclusively to the mere performance of certain church duties, simply as duties, without being led to do all duties out of a personal affection for Jesus, that their service for God has no charm or drawing magnetism in it, hence it becomes stale and wearisome. No outward service will have that firm, outward diligence of Martha to propel its way through a thousand resisting mediums, unless it flows from individual love for Jesus. Nevertheless there must be a conscientious thoroughness in all outward obligations and duties, financially, socially, devotionally, for these things make up the body of religious life of which personal love for God is the warm, inward soul which animates the body. Unless we know how to serve with the true, humble, painstaking spirit of a real servant, we shall never reach the higher altitudes typified by Martha's brother and sister.

2. Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus. This presents us with a form of experience which is the appropriate outcome of death and resurrection. Lazarus was a quiet, reticent man, and with a nature peculiarly fitted to emblemize all freedom from worry, suspicion or precipitancy. His words are not recorded. He was of a passive more than of an active nature. He utterly yielded himself up to the sway of God's providences, and was acted on more than acted. God's dealings with him in allowing him to die, and be buried, and then raised to life, and then untrammelled from grave clothes, and then sitting at the table with Jesus, is all in perfect accord with the make-up and gifts of the man. It is all a beautiful mosaic, wrought in the black colors of sickness and death, and in the bright colors of life and an evening banquet, in which the Holy Spirit has beautifully spelled out the form of that heavenly life of purity and restfulness of soul. Lazarus was sick and died. He had passed through the strange mystical valley, had seen all creation fade from his vision, had entered the divine world, and seen the things of God.

In like manner, we are to add to the Martha service that unquestioning yielding up to all of our Father's unknown will to enter the Lazarus form of life. We, too, must grow sick of ourselves. We must faint under the burden of our internal heart-leprosy, our carnal nature, and self-will must expire; we must close our eyes in a mystical death, upon all

the things of earth, and open our vision to the real life of heaven. We, too, must enter the silent grave where we see ourselves as utterly nothing, and where we are shrouded about with the mantle of God's will.

When Christ came to raise Lazarus, Martha thought the decay of the body would render it too offensive to have the door removed from the sepulcher. That lovely brother had become painfully offensive in the grave. And so in a very significant manner when we yield ourselves up to be utterly crucified in our nature, God deals with us according to his unsearchable purposes and leads us into a death to sin and the world, and then he lays us into a silent grave, where we become like dead men out of mind, and where, alas, we become very offensive to those still living in the world, and where even our loved ones feel like keeping a distance from us. All true saints must pass through life, where they become sick of themselves, and then become loathsome, or contemptible, to unsanctified human nature. It was out of this death and resurrection experience that there came to Lazarus that deep, unruffled stillness of soul, that reticence of speech, that longing, dreamy, far-away look in the eye, as if he saw perpetually the outspreading blaze of the divine presence, and the sweet splendors of the heavenly world, where he had spent four ecstatic days. So the very act of sitting with Christ at the table sets forth great calmness and restfulness of spirit. He had gotten through with wrestlings of self,

the tossings of a fevered will, death and the grave had thoroughly conquered him, self-righteousness, self-esteem, self-seeking, self-resentment, self-agitation had been left in the grave, and henceforth he was the deep, quiet, loving channel for the outflow of a real heavenly life. All this must be true in us, if we indeed and in truth sit at supper with our Lord. If our nature is not perfectly conquered how can we quietly sit with divine restfulness and gaze upon our Savior with ease and freedom?

We are told that by reason of Lazarus being raised from death, many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus. Our power to cause others to believe on Jesus depends on what we are in the very core and disposition of our spirit. There is a supernatural impression that flows from a soul that has been thoroughly crucified with Jesus and raised into a state of heavenly love and peacefulness of heart and life.

Let us settle it, that to sit with Jesus in real, loving fellowship is not a mere thing of option, but is a thing of profound interior fitness of nature. There must be the bringing of the soul through whatever steps of trial or losses, or crucifixions, or utter self-abandonment to God, where it is conquered, washed white and clean, softened into tender love, and hushed into a divine stillness, and had the very fountains of being flooded with Jesus, to prepare it to take that seat at that table, and eat with that holy, infinite One.

3. "Mary took a pound of ointment of spikenard,

very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment." This presents a still higher form of the Christ-life, that overflowing, outpouring extravagance of love service, which brooks no cost, breaks alabaster boxes, which runs out in missionary zeal, and a sweet, holy frenzy of devotion to Jesus. Mary was the fitting character for this type of service. Her heart was utterly abandoned to Jesus. She seemed to despise all other things in comparison with him. She sank at his feet and drank in the deep, ocean meaning of his words, and gazed into the depths of his Spirit, and the magnitudes of his coming kingdom, until she saw the contemptible littleness of all that the world prizes, until she was well-nigh beside herself with divine fervor, and she yearned to give the highest possible expression of her personal love for the Master. Her act at the banquet beautifully illustrates those believers who reach the highest state of divine contemplation, and whose love becomes a burning flame. Her act is so significant, we need to analyze it.

In the first place it was prophetic. Jesus says she anointed Him for His burial. Just one week from that time Christ was buried, and although Mary probably little dreamed of Christ being crucified so soon, yet the Holy Spirit impelled her to act wiser than she knew, and as love can see farther than anything else, she doubtless felt a great, sad premonition and wished to

show the Master a last signal expression of her unutterable affection for Him. This is still true of souls who enter her state of all-consuming love for God. They have divine premonitions concerning the true body of Christ, they discover the subtle drifting of spiritual or satanic currents, they have a deep instinctive feeling whether others are advancing or receding in the divine life, they detect the dark and cool shadow of approaching crucifixion and trouble, they have forethrobbings of the coming of the Jesus, and prophetic glimpses shoot through their mind of the majestic sweetness and glory of Christ's coming reign. They are in a prophetic region of life and often speak or do things far more wise and penetrating than ever their intellects could calculate.

In the second place, there was not the least reserve for self in any way. In the account given by Matthew and Mark, they tell us this banquet was given in the house of Simon the leper, and Mark tells us that Mary broke the alabaster box containing the sweet perfume that the box might never be used for any other purpose. This is the outpouring of life to the uttermost, that asks no pay, that has no reservations in any direction, but a fountain of love, bent only on expressing itself at all costs, all hazards, even through the casket of life should be shattered to pieces in the outflow. To reach a state of constant, flaming love for God, we must be willing to break all the boxes in which is bound the subtle essence of our lives. Sometimes it

is a box of some secret, almost unknown, reserve in the will, a half timid, half fearful holding back ourselves from some line of suffering, or from some lonely and strange-looking path, or from some heroic duty, or from some overwhelming manifestation of God. There are often scarcely perceived and deep reservations, even in very good people, from a boundless abandonment to God. This is a box to be broken.

Another is the social box, our standing with friends. Every saint who ascends the spicy mountains of burning love and holy contemplation will find at every epoch in their experience that they have to snap some social cords, and over and over again break some beautiful white alabaster encasement of human esteem, and the judgment of dear friends, in order to pour out the last drop of loving obedience at the feet of our blessed Jesus. Some must utterly break the financial box and lovingly consent to a life of poverty; nay, even rejoice in being poor, that thereby the pure spikenard of the Christ-life will have no hiding place, but all poured out in a life of faith on all lines. Others must break the box of human affection, and have all earthly loves so rent asunder, or utterly shut off, as to have no other love but the all-melting, spotless, boundless, disinterested love of God flowing through them without hindrance.

Mary lived to see that her alabaster box was a fitting type of the spotless body of Jesus, which was utterly broken; and the spikenard of His life was poured

out to the last drop for her redemption. It is an axiom that the very life of the infinite Christ is poured through us in proportion as we are broken, and even after we have known great and wonderful operations of the Spirit, there will often be forms of will or desire, or religious ambition that seem as pure to us as alabaster, but burning love will, in its extravagance break them all for Jesus.

In the third place the ointment was very costly. Estimating a Roman penny to be fifteen cents of American money, the little box of nard was worth about fifty dollars. It resembled the attar of roses. Pure, ardent love gives its very best and delights in what seems to others a reckless waste of itself for the glory of God. There is a place of personal love for Jesus where the soul positively enjoys fasting in prayer, and self-denial, and almost goes wild in a holy ignoring of self that it may pour the very essence of its inner heart out to the Lord. It always puts God first and gives Him the best.

A fourth feature is that the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. In like manner, when Christ broke his alabaster-like body the whole earth and all heaven was filled with the perfume of His gentle, loving spirit. In the same way it is as we break the boxes of our human nature and self-love, there is liberated from us the very odor of the Christ nature. The Holy Spirit tells us that the very name of a divinely good person is like ointment poured forth. The

most fragrant characters in the world are those who most thoroughly broke themselves, and poured their life out most extravagantly for the Lord. But see, in wiping His feet with her hair the perfume came back upon her own head. What a world of truth lies in this. Those who give all receive the most. What we pour out in loving service to God now will some day settle back as sweet odor upon our heads. The compensations of God are infallible, and minute, and as far-reaching as the white, shining years of eternity.

The last feature of her act was, it utterly shocked the conservative and calculating spirit of some of the apostles. Judas was the principal critic but the other evangelists tell us that some other apostles found fault with Mary's excess. Those who love God perfectly will always shock the conservatism of colder disciples. And even among the holy ones, those who get a furnace experience of burning love must endure the criticism of God's people who cannot fully understand the seeming waste and extravagant breaking of many precious things for what seems a mere sentiment. Yet this hot-hearted pouring of ourselves out on all lines for Jesus, turns out in the end to be the very wisdom of God, the discretion of heaven, and is rewarded by being rehearsed wherever the gospel is preached. This is the last and sweetest stage of the Christ-life on earth.

IX.

PURPLE FINGER NAILS.

When people are very ill, and we are watching for them to die, there are certain symptoms of approaching death which we note with painful thoughtfulness; such as an attack of hiccoughing, or fumbling with the bed clothing, or a ravenous hunger, or the drooping in the corners of the mouth, or great coldness in the extremities, or a deep purple settling in the finger nails.

In like manner, when the spiritual life begins to decline, and the pulse of holy love beats fickle and slow, when Christ-like zeal is cooling at the heart, there are certain symptoms of the approach of lukewarmness and spiritual death corresponding with the purple finger nails, the sad harbingers of decay. Let us look carefully at the ten finger-nails on the hands of our Christian life, and see if they have a good healthy flesh tint, or if they indicate any approaching death.

First. One of the purple nails of the waning of holy love is a dispositoin to greatly incline to easy things and to shrink from mortification and hardship. There is a positive leaning toward things that are well cushioned, and amiable, and soothing. And though when trials and severe crosses have to be met, there may be no outspoken rebellion, there is a slight whimper in

the soul, a childish whine in the spirit, a conscious shrinking from heroic endurance. The soul wants to be patient without having anything to suffer, it wants to be gentle without being snubbed and contradicted it wants to be lowly without having its beautiful honor and integrity called in question, it wants all the virtues without any homely self-abasement, it wants to be a real saint without taking the trouble to be one. It is delicately alive to guarding itself, it inclines to self-preservation, it serves God cautiously for fear of compromising itself on some lines, it leans to the advice of friends who are not red hot with religion, it thinks there is no necessity of being over righteous, and so tries to solve the problem of how to live a sanctified life with as much ease as possible. This purple nail indicates that spiritual decay has struck the center of the soul.

Second. There is a discounting of the real power of the Holy Spirit in the demonstrations which belong to the living gospel. In every Christian generation the outpouring of the Holy Ghost has been accompanied with signs and demonstrations of God's power, such as loud weeping and strong crying, or bodily shakings, or falling in trances, or visions and revelations of things in heaven and hell, or physical prostrations, or raptures and shoutings of joy. These things were common in the days of the apostles, and with the saints in the middle ages, and in the days of Fox and Wesley, and in many places where the modern revi-

val of holiness is of a stalwart type. But when spiritual decline sets in, there is great shyness about these demonstrations, they are discouraged, or criticised, and alluded to depreciatingly, and there is particular emphasis given to things "being done decently and in order," by which is meant the decency and order of the man-side more than of the God-side.

How sad to think that there are millions in the visible church who have never seen one clear demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit in all their lives. If we are afraid of the demonstrations of God's power on any line he may choose to send it, it is a purple finger-nail, and a symptom of spiritual heart-disease.

Third. Another purple nail is growing fondness for looking at spiritual truth in a philosophical, theoretical, and argumentative light. When the Holy Ghost floods a person, truth comes like lightning bolts, in short, epigrammatic, positive assertions, with square edges, and sharp points, without any studied effort to interweave it with the philosophies and the theologies of men. But when spiritual fervor begins to cool, the lightning tames down to a tallow candle, the truth is rounded on the edges, and decorated with flowers. And then you will hear such persons descanting on the "philosophy of holiness," trying to reconcile revelation with the whimsical and ignorant systems of depraved men. There is a tendency to argue more than to pray.

If you find your mind searching the Bible to support a creed more than to get nourishment for your own spirit, it is a proof of the loss of a divine appetite. A good way to test our spiritual life is to hold the Bible midway between our hearts and our heads, and if we find that the word of God gravitates more towards our heads than our hearts, it is an ill omen for our souls. If we are hot with divine love the Bible will gravitate to our hearts, that is, it will be devoured for spiritual nourishment far more than for mere doctrine or debate. It is often the case that the more we grow in orthodoxy the colder we are in grace. Beware of the purple nail of a philosophical religion.

Fourth. Another symptom is waiting for extra prompting in the doing of good. This is the quintessence of spiritual idleness. Nothing creeps on the soul with such a soft, cat's paw stealth as religious laziness. Everybody in the world gravitates to idleness, and this is more true of the spiritual life than of the temporal. The Holy Ghost bids us to be diligent "in season and out of season," rain or shine, hot or cold, whether circumstances are propitious or forbidding, and not to wait for special impulses, or a gush of feeling to prompt us to the doing of good. But when holy love weakens, it watches for favorable circumstances, it is afraid to precipitate religion upon people, it waits for some angel to trouble the waters, it does not step boldly by pure faith, but languidly looks for encouraging indications. It leans on second causes,

and not directly on the Holy Spirit. It watches for the river Jordan to subside before boldly stepping in. If you are lazily watching for times and seasons, you have lost the life-spring of active godliness. Holy love not only seizes opportunities for doing good, but makes them as well.

Fifth. Another purple nail is undervaluing the gifts, graces, and labors of others in God's kingdom, who may not belong to our little set. This is one of the most delicate touchstones of deep piety to be found anywhere. Go into any religious company on earth, among ministers or laymen, and listen to their words; in a few moments you will likely hear expressions that indicate marked depreciation of either the piety or the fruitfulness of other people. There is no more universal weakness of believers on earth than this one. Those Christian workers who do not belong to our sect, who do not teach exactly as we do, whom God has called to emphasize certain truths which either our blindness or cowardice prevent us from emphasizing, who do not pronounce our shibboleth, yet if they are casting out devils and doing God's work, do we find our hearts praising God on their behalf, do we fully appreciate their gifts and labors, do we grieve over our own defects and lack of fruit far more than we are inclined to dis-esteem others? On the other hand, do we speak slightingly of others in God's vineyard, do we in the least speak reproachfully of them, even in our private thoughts do we minify them or

their labors? If so, we ought to run at once for our Divine Physician, for it is evident that we need his heavenly medicine. Every depreciating thought that we have of others is a secret magnifying of ourselves. Exactly as we undervalue others, in that proportion we exalt self.

Sixth. Another symptom is the glorifying of sectarianism. This can be done in a thousand subtle ways, of which persons are utterly unconscious. It is very painful to a true lover of Jesus, to constantly hear, and see in print, the word "church" put where the word Christ ought to be. The very air rings with such expressions as "Being true to your church," "A lover of your church," "Being the servant of the church," "Commissioned by the church," "Raising money for the church." "Being loyal to your church." In all such instances, if the word "Christ" were put where the word "church" is, it would be Scriptural, but otherwise it is a species of idolatry, for each man means by the word church his own sectarian body.

When persons who have been baptized with the Holy Spirit begin to wane in their inner life it is often manifested by this purple finger-nail of growing very churchly, they feel a special mission to take care of the church, that is to jealously defend the wonderful dignity of some sectarian body. In the same proportion that we get churchly we lose our zeal for the thorough holiness of the individual members of the church.

Seventh. The policy spirit is so ubiquitous and

refined, and can assume such multiplied forms, it is hard to define or describe it, but it is a sure sign of approaching death. The policy spirit lacks independence, boldness, individual obedience to God, cloudless conviction of God's will, firmness of decision, and a readiness to do God's will and let God take care of results. The policy spirit walks in a mist, it is not sure of what is real duty, it has to consult a great many others, and is very shy about consulting the most spiritual, it leans to the conservative side on every question, it frankly admits that Christ would do a certain thing, but says, "We are not living in Christ's day and circumstances are different," it thinks it safest to go with majorities, it looks at how certain things would appear, and not at the eternal truth involved, it is easily scared, if it does right it half-way apologizes for it; it acts in a mean, unbrotherly way and then says, "I hated to act that way, but had to do so for the sake of appearances, or to stand in with other people, or to protect myself from misinterpretation." Is anything on earth more mean, or sneaking, or contemptible to the Holy Ghost than this policy spirit in professing Christians, and especially in professors of holiness? It is a purple sign of a dying spirituality.

Eighth. Another purple nail is a lack of perseverance. We quit too soon in our devotions or labors, or enterprises for good. Our faith is brittle, and snaps under a continual strain. We close the meeting just before something would have been accomplished.

We stop the prayer just a little short of prevailing with God. We allow bad weather, great opposition, lack of sympathizers, the absence of outward signs of success, to dispirit us, and grow peevish with God for not smiling more largely upon our labors. These are all symptoms of leaning on the creature, instead of drawing our inspiration directly from the sweet, eternal fountains of the Holy Spirit. And when we lean on creatures, our inner life wanes.

Ninth. Another purple nail is to look with criticism and unbrotherly suspicion upon experiences in advance of our own. It is the almost infinite self-conceit of human nature to make self the criterion of experience, and that what we don't know is not worth knowing, and that any degree of piety or a divine manifestation which we have not had is readily stamped as wild fire and extravagance.

A soul in its first love, or a believer fresh from the bath of purification, or a sanctified soul under the blaze of some new and large disclosure of God is remarkably free from casting reflection on deeper experiences. They are in a condition then to believe great things of God; but when they begin to cool down they make their experiences the standard, and so brand unfavorably anything that does not tally with what they have passed through. This is a bad symptom of religious life. The true attitude of deep piety is to encourage the greatest fulfilment of God's promises, and if we do

not habitually do this there is something wrong at the core of our life.

Tenth. A secret reserve with God. Unconfessed and perhaps unrecognized, yet a deep, subtle holding back from duty, or service, or love, a growing conservatism toward God. There is a secret fear that God may ask too much of us, that he wants us to give too much money, or put ourselves to too much trouble to help his saints, or that he will put too heavy burdens on us, or that he will not love us as much as he does somebody else, or that he may want us to serve Him with too much exactness in little things. There is a lack of utter abandonment to the Holy Spirit, a want of sweet, joyous, overflowing enthusiasm in his service. Hence we see how cautiously people pray in public or preach God's truth, or testify to his grace. All these things show the soul life is contracting, and resemble the pinching of the features which often precedes death. Can we find one atom of reservation in the life and death of Jesus for us? Was not every act a boundless abandonment of himself for our welfare, and is it less than a positive meanness in our nature to have any reserves in serving such a Savior? We need to examine ourselves, to see if our spiritual fingernails are turning blue.

X.

A CRITICAL SPIRIT.

There is no disposition of the soul which more quickly and completely destroys the flavor of holy love than the spirit of criticism. The only persons who are competent to criticise are those who are full of spotless love, and of all persons on earth these are the most tardy to perform that office. A critical spirit may be described by the following features:

1. It deems itself gifted from God with particular genius to detect and correct evil in others. With every step in the advances of grace, there is given to the mind a new degree of light to discriminate finer shades of right and wrong. But unless there is a continual increase of love which keeps fully abreast, or even runs ahead of this added light, the foolishness and weakness of human nature will turn this power of discrimination into a death-dealing instrument.

There is an inveterate frailty in human nature to assume the throne of God in judging others. Because God gives religious persons the power to discriminate, a great many misinterpret the gift and conclude that they have a special mission to detect defects and to exercise a police authority in correcting others, and hunting down wrong-doers. So much is this true that some eminently religious people think that

all the religion on earth would go to wreck if they did not diligently exercise their gift in setting others right.

Many such persons, before they die, pass through ordeals of experience which show them the utter foolishness of their self-appointed mission, for a critical spirit is always a proof of a raw experience.

2. The critical spirit hunts for defects in non-essentials.

Like the Pharisees, it puts annis and cummin above the weightier matters of mercy and life. A critical person is disposed to eye you from head to foot, and scan carefully your clothing, your eating, your facial expression, your voice, and gesture. He is on the hunt for something wrong and is bound to find it and sooner than miss his prey, he will convert a newspaper by the roadside into a stately ghost, for he is bent on being scared. If such persons can detect a foible, they seem restless, and as full of nervous vigilance as a cat watching a mouse, until they have pounced upon you and given you their estimate of your piety. Such persons will go out of their way to investigate the sins of others, they love to inquire into the shortcomings of their neighbors, they think it a great stroke of piety to unearth evil.

The most awful thing about it is the satanic delusion that such a horrible spirit is a part of holiness. It is a proof of a weak mind or weak spirituality, to get the attention absorbed upon a collateral or non-

essential, and this is always a significant trait of a critical spirit.

3. The spirit of criticism is invariably a legal spirit.

It takes the technical law side of every thing instead of the love side. It magnifies systematic theology above the Bible, it puts doctrinal statement above the very essence of God's life in the soul. It will spend a great deal more zeal in hunting heresy than it will in secret prayer. It has a strong propensity to pitch into people and things generally. It scans with eagle eye the writings of others, not to get spiritual nourishment, but ferret out any trace of false teaching. It matters not how holy or useful a person may be, if they make any statement by voice or pen which does not fit in with the critic's cast iron theology, the offender is at once pounced upon, and his supposed inaccuracies are peddled to the world, while the real worth of the life and service are ignored. It magnifies cooking utensils above food, and farmer's implements as greater than the harvest; it spends more time fixing boundary lines than to improving the county; it clings to a definition of religion more than to its experience, and can even stake out the exact limits of the first and second blessing with more fervor than it cleaves to the meek and lowly mind of Jesus.

This severe, critical, legal spirit resembles a very thin, bony man, sparsely clad, shivering in a cold day,

spending his strength on how to build furnaces and stoves, instead of warming himself at the fire.

4. The critical spirit puts a wrong construction on the best things.

It imparts its own barrenness of heart to the actions of other people. It thinks there must be a mean motive in every act, and a treachery in every vow, and a thorn in every flower, and hence wherever its eye falls its vision is based with foregone constructions. It is inclined to construe all cheerfulness into levity, and all deep seriousness into moroseness, and true economy into stinginess, and liberality into wastefulness. It seems unable to find the right key to unlock things with, and so breaks the lock to force an entrance. The eye of criticism is always a misfit, and it is always hitting at the wrong object.

5. A critical person must invariably make himself the meter of other persons and things.

And this is just as eminently true in the region of religious experience, as in other departments of life. And so many Christians size up all God's children by the phenomena in their own case. They judge of the repentance, or consecration, or spiritual experience of other people, just as it tallies in outward technicalities with their own. If a gold ring, or a watch, or loud screaming, or a bright vision, or a ten cent novel, or any other particular phenomenon, happen to figure in their lives, they make such incident the touchstone to other people's religious ex-

perience. They are disposed to criticise any one's experience which either does not fit in with their own, or which seems to fall below it, and especially are they vehement against experiences which go beyond their own. Nothing less than to be completely crushed into humility, and broken into boundless, lowly love, will ever show such persons their narrowness and self-opinionatedness. It is an infallible law of the spiritual life that our severity in judging others marks the lowness of our own spiritual state.

Let us notice some of the effects of the critical spirit:

First, it blinds the eye to the beauty of God, both as to his attributes and as to his image in others. A life of holiness that does not have in it a perception of the beauty of God, a sweet heavenly vision that puts a gentle spell upon our faculties, which secretly entices us to love God more and to love all His creatures, and to love his manifold image as pictured forth in his saints, is unscriptural and pitched on a wrong key. A real holy heart is forever finding God, in his Word, in secret prayer, in the poetry of creation, in the interblendings of providence, and also in the lives of his children. It is a notable fact that when religious people are suddenly flooded with the Holy Spirit, they will affirm that everybody looks beautiful to them.

I have often heard persons in a testimony meeting, under the fulness of love, rapturously exclaim,

“How beautiful all you people seem to me.” Such experiences are only faint touches of what Heaven will be, where every single soul will be so enraptured with divine love that every creature he gazes upon will be an object of transcendent beauty, and a separate mirror reflecting in some unique luster the perfection of God. In the same proportion that this spotless love leaks out of the heart, will the soul see the deformity of its fellows, and not see its own defects. Just as we pity the few deformed minds that can see nothing fascinating in little children, so that professed saint is to be pitied who can see no beauty of God shining in his children.

But nothing so utterly blots out this heavenly attractiveness from God’s people as the spirit of criticism. While no enlightened believer will be ignorant of the natural infirmities of all God’s children while living in the flesh, yet if we fail to see in them the attractions of the Christ-life, it proves our lack of the very essence of that life in us, which is gentle love.

Criticism disfigures other people in our eyes, it imputes an ugliness to them, and then scourges them for the very ugliness which jaundice eyes have given them.

Again, the critical spirit eats out, like a burning acid, the very sweetness of spiritual life. There is a mysterious quality of heart-gentleness and mental and soul-sweetness in a truly crucified believer, which

cannot be defined. It is a thousand times beyond mere sanctification orthodoxy, it is far more than outward correctness of life, it is fathoms deeper down than the exact proprieties of behavior, it is more than a profession, and infinitely more mighty than holiness preaching or correct doctrine.

It is the breath of Jesus in the heart, the vapor from the river of life, the perfume of the rose of Sharon, the elixir of prayer, the marrow in the bone of truth, which is far more in the sight of God than all the outward hulls of religious form and teaching which only serve as the alabaster box to this divine spikenard of heavenly love.

But one hour of critical thinking, or one severe utterance in a critical spirit, will strike through this inward purity and sweetness like the touch of gall. And because the spirit of criticism is so universal among Christians, is the reason why it is so rare to find a real saintly soul who is charged with divine sweetness of spirit.

In the next place a critical spirit chokes up the channel in us, and thereby prevents the flow of the Holy Spirit through us upon other souls. God designs every believer to be a channel of his life, and he will pour a stream of his attributes and graces through us according to our capacity to transmit the blessed tide. And our capacity for such transmission will be in proportion to our purity, our spiritual dimensions and in proportion to that nameless quality

of divine tenderness which is in us. There are persons who rank as perfectly orthodox and very correct both in their outward life and teachings, yet through whom there seems to flow no celestial current.

In addition to this, persons may be free from all sin, technically so called, and yet they may not be pipes for conveying a large stream of divine life to others. They lack volume. There is an interior choking somewhere, and if all their heart nature were thoroughly explored, it would be found there was a lack of kindness, a smallness of charity, a severity of spirit, a precipitancy of judgment, a subtle spiritual dictatorialness, a premature decision about things and persons, a something in the delicate machinery of their inward dispositions, which strangled the arteries of the spirit, and prevented the full, sweet flow of God through them.

Lastly, the critical spirit invariably poisons other persons. It is satanically contagious. Other persons feel our spirit far more swiftly and accurately than they do our words or our deliberate actions. The soul is larger than the body and our spirits are larger than our souls. Wherever we move we carry an unpronounced and indefinable spirit with us. The dominant inward dispositions of the inner being are infallibly transmitted through the body, the gestures, the tones, and even the very nervous organism of the eyes and face. A critical spirit can be felt by others

in spite of all effort to conceal it. Our only safety against this malady is to live in the very heart of Jesus.

XI.

SPIRITUAL GLIMPSES.

There are certain characteristics which belong to the revelations of the Holy Spirit. One is, that they come unexpected, without premonition or warning. Another is, that they are quick, like a flash of lightning. Another is, that they are imparted to the intuitions of our spirits, far more than to our intellectual faculties. Another is, that though they are but instantaneous flashes, they remain indelibly impressed upon the memory, they seem to be burnt into our imagination and recollection. Another characteristic is, they come almost invariably when we are in a frame of earnest prayer.

In the spring of 1895, I sat one day reading over again the life of Madame Guyon, by Dr. Upham. After reading a certain passage I laid the book down and bowed for a season of prayer. Just as I began to pray there was flashed into my spirit a marvelous vision of the death of Jesus. It was a momentary flash of light, in which I saw with great distinctness, Christ on the cross, just at the instant that his soul left the body, and his head

dropped forward upon his breast. I saw a pale, purple tint in his face, the closed eyes, the thin, sorrowful features, and yet the whole suffused with transcendent loveliness.

I did not seem to see his death from the outward, human side, so much as from the internal, divine side. I intuitively perceived the utter abandonment, obedience, humility, gentleness, and boundless love, which was poured forth in that dying moment, when Jesus breathed out his own life and left his body to hang limp on the cross. I was so affected by the vision that I burst into tears, and for nearly half an hour exclaimed, "O, precious Jesus, O, beautiful death," repeating the words over and over, while my soul was dissolved in love. I never dreamed that such a death of agony could be seen in the light of such unearthly beauty. I seemed to have a faint glimpse of how beautiful the self-surrender and death of Christ were to the eye of the Father. After two years that momentary flash in all its details of tenderness and loveliness abides fresh in my spirit.

In May, 1896, while holding services in Bro. Kauffman's Mission, in Grand Rapids, Mich., one night they sang for the opening hymn, "Open the pearly gates and let the Redeemer come in." And just as I bowed in prayer I had an instantaneous spiritual glimpse of the pearly gates and the city of God, with its walls of enormous costly gems, and all suffused with dazzling light, and of the radiant, hap-

py throngs that moved like soft, swift, shining clouds through its blazing portals. The sight was so attractive that it seemed a great cross to stay any longer in a world like this. The sight lingers with me yet, and the most beautiful things on earth seem wretched and deformed in contrast with that vision of the entrancing beauty of the New Jerusalem. It was an abiding vision like this that Abraham had of the city which hath foundations, and which made him despise all earthly cities. Heb. xi: 10 and 16. Could God's people get one look into Heaven it would cure them from wanting to pile up worldly trash in this age.

In June, 1896, while at a camp meeting in Toronto, one morning as I bowed at the pulpit in secret prayer, just as my knees touched the straw there was given to my spirit a most wonderful illumination of those words of Jesus, "If any man thirst let him drink of me, and out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of the Holy Spirit." John vii: 37-39. It seemed a vast interior vision by which I discerned the personal Christ as a fathomless fountain, located in the bottom of my spirit, and that out from him, not out from my creature nature, but that out from the eternal Son living in my heart, there flowed out a soft, sweet river clear as light, like that spoken of in Revelation, as clear as glass, flowing out from the throne of the Father and of the Lamb. I have no words to describe the accuracy and fulness of meaning which I saw in the

words of Jesus, but the great prominent perception was that the Holy Spirit does not flow out from us as creatures, or from our faith, but that he eternally flows out from the Father and the Son like a warm gulf stream of liquid light, and that when the personality of Jesus is in reality enthroned in our hearts and taking possession of our whole being, then out from that divine indwelling fountain, as from a great artesian well, there flows out through the various channels of our being, through our words and voices, through our personality and magnetism, and through our very expression of face, the subtle, penetrating streams of divine lightnings of the Holy Ghost. In that flash of light I could see clearly the difference between my creature soul and the outflowing divine fountain, as plainly as you can distinguish the sandy bottom of a clear spring, from the water which flows up through the sand. I saw that the creature was only as the sand, and that the spotless, indwelling Christ was the perpetual fountain, moment by moment, out of whom came all pardon and cleansing and illuminating, and holiness and healing, and that every blessing of every sort, which the creature can possibly receive is never deposited in any measure in the creature, but incessantly imparted from him, who is the exhaustless fountain. This wonderful interior perception has greatly aided me in the understanding of many Scriptures.

It is one thing to see this truth intellectually, but

a very different thing to see it in the Spirit. When we discern a Bible truth like this in the flashlight of the Holy Spirit, it comes home to us with power, it takes possession of us, it sweetly despotises our faculties and is more real to us, if possible, than the outward material facts around us.

The very day I had this spiritual glimpse my attention was called to the conversation of Jesus with the woman at the well, in which the word "well," as used by the woman and by Christ, are in the Greek different words. The woman used the word which means a "cistern," but Christ used the word which means a "fountain." A cistern which can be filled and emptied, which can leak and get out of repair, is the poor creature's highest conception of a blessing. But God's idea is infinitely beyond that; namely, that of an eternal fountain, that can never be drained, never can be polluted, never get out of order, and never know any scantiness. Jesus offers to plant himself like a great ocean spring in the hidden depths of our nature, and from his personality to pour forth continually streams of holiness, love, peace, joy, light, humility, charity, perseverance, prayer, and every holy virtue, like crystal rivulets, through our whole being.

This vision of Christ, as a veritable fountain in us, will work marvels in our faith and experience, it will save us from depending on our conversion, or our sanctification, or our healing, or our wisdom, or

our perseverance, but centers our faith every moment on himself, and from him we consciously drink of the outflowing Spirit. How it thrills us through and through to perceive how intimately we may be united to that eternal fountain of Being, out of whom all worlds and all angels, and all the ages have their origin.

In January, 1897, while helping Bro. Kinard in a meeting, in Greenwood, S. C., one day as I went to the hall and bowed for a season of silent prayer, I had an instantaneous vision in my spirit of the formation of the Bride of the Lamb, into a lovely portable city of souls, as typified by the arrangement of the twelve tribes, in their tents at Mount Sinai. I seemed to be suspended about a thousand feet in the air, in the vicinity of Mount Horeb, and saw spread out under me in the most beautiful order the tents of the twelve tribes of Israel with three tribes on the north, three on the east, three on the south and three on the west, with long, beautiful avenues between the rows of tents, and in the center, or hollow square, the beautiful tabernacle, with a soft purple cloud hanging over it, and in the distance, the great, rugged, rocky mountain range, and over all the cloudless sunlight falling, like a charming spring morning. It was a most beautiful sight, and is still fresh in my mind. Just as this vision was flashed into my spirit, it came to me with great force, that was a type of Christ gathering his sanctified ones, out from the dark Egypt of

this world, into the heavenly regions and forming them, generation upon generation, and rank above rank, into that living, portable city, which John says is the Lamb's wife, having the glory of God, and shining like a palace, built of rubies and sapphires and diamonds. Rev. xxi: 9, 11. These powerful glimpses which the Spirit gives us of things in his word, gives us a sense of their reality and satisfy us, as no instruction of speculative reasoning could do. True we must begin all our knowledge, first with the use of our senses, and after that by the exercise of our reasoning faculties, but to reach divine certainty and to be confirmed and settled in Bible truth, it must be revealed to our inner being by the direct agency of the Spirit.

XII.

BLESSED POVERTY.

There are four classes of poor people. First, those who are utterly destitute, and seem to have no desire to improve their circumstances—lazy, shiftless, almost stupid, concerning their own interests. Second, those poor who fret and chafe against it, bitterly complaining against God and their fellows, who hate the rich, and make fuel for anarchists. Third, those poor who, while seeking to better their condition, are resigned to God's will and do not covet the wealth

of others, but endeavor to make their poverty a means of grace to their souls. And fourth, those who are poor from choice, who have been lifted into such an understanding of divine things that they see things in the cloudless light of eternity and God, and are so flooded with God himself that earthly riches are a positive hindrance to them, and they are triumphantly poor.

They are the exceeding few who do as Christ told the rich man—give away all they have and spend their life for God and souls, preferring to live by faith.

What an infinite difference there is between the views of Jesus and men as to the importance attached to wealth. There are very few persons on earth even among Christians, yes, even among the sanctified ones, very few who get so far weaned from all things on earth, from the fashions, and laws, and ideas, of human beings, and so far out into the ocean of God's mind as to see things in the pure light of a heavenly mind. Everything in this world is exactly opposite in the mind of Jesus to what it is in the mind of men. Most Christians will admit that there is a disagreement between the mind of Christ and the mind of mankind; but it is rare to find one that can discern that the mind of Christ and the mind of man is exactly the opposite in everything in the world. And this applies to poverty as well as to all other things.

In the four classes mentioned above, Jesus from

an eternal choice, selected poverty for his earthly estate, not merely to put himself in sympathy with all the poor ones of earth that he might win them to himself, but also he saw how utterly perverted the whole human mind was concerning the importance of wealth, and because earthly riches would have been a very clog to him, and a shackle to the free play of that boundless, triumphant life, that overflowing ocean of spotless love, which instinctively preferred to pour itself through channels of self-sacrifice, and riches would have cramped the victoriousness of his love for mankind. There are in each generation a few rich persons who give themselves up entirely to God, and who manage their property with an eye single to God's glory, and who love to give to the work of God, and who enter into a deep and blessed life in the Holy Ghost. Such persons are very dear to God, and will receive a great reward, for it requires an extraordinary operation of grace for rich people to be deeply spiritual. Such persons have a great many hindrances to a divine life, which poor persons do not have. Riches bring all earthly comforts, fine homes, soft clothing, beautiful furniture, elegant pictures, rich food, horses, carriages, servants, travel to the mountains or the sea, the flattery of other people, the obsequiousness of hangerson, honors, and all these things form such a thick padding around the poor soul, that it is well nigh impossible for the arrows of eternal truth to reach the heart. Also riches blunt

the spiritual sensibilities, deaden the conscience, choke up the channels of love, make people self-conceited, and overbearing, and critical, with a severe and domineering spirit, and thus Jesus is hedged out from the mind.

On the other hand, poverty, by denuding the soul of outward ease and luxuries, and, as it were, taking the roof off and exposing it to the out door life of God, gives ample scope for prayer. By making the body a beggar to a certain extent, it makes the soul a real beggar at the throne of God, and, under the touch of grace, leads the soul to pray for supplies for all needs, both inward and outward.

Poverty also allows of ample scope for faith—not only faith for salvation, but faith on other lines, for providing ways and means: faith for healing of disease, for the opening of providential doors—faith in the smallest details of life. The rich can exercise faith only for their spiritual needs; but the poor have two hemispheres for their faith to travel over, including both the spiritual and the temporal life. Hence the Holy Ghost tells us that God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith; proving that they have a far wider range for trusting their heavenly Father than could possibly be the case if they were rich.

Then, again, poverty, when under the operations of grace, opens up the fountains of sympathy and benevolence to others. Thousands of instances have occurred where little boot-blacks and pauper children

and very poor people have manifested a sympathy and liberality for those of their class, in surrendering their little morsel of food or comfort to the needs of others. Nearly all the great benevolences on earth are carried on by the poor. Very few rich people are liberal—hardly one in a thousand really gives anything worth called giving. So rare is this that a liberal rich person is the wonder of the city or neighborhood. Poverty not only opens up great fountains of prayer and a vast scope for faith, but it serves to arouse the mind—it leads to deep thinking, to searching into the warp and woof of God's providence, a deep study of the dealings of the Lord. It sharpens the gift of invention, it inspires wisdom in the use of scanty means to accomplish the best results, it puts more forethought into the spending of a dollar than would be exercised with a full pocket. All this is adding wealth to the mind. Whoever heard of rich people being great geniuses or inventors or missionaries or reformers or founders of states or churches or vast revival movements? Through all the ages the poverty of the body has been the riches of the mind.

We must remember that poverty in and of itself does not work out these results, for penury under the reign of sin has a whole class of curses attending it, just as riches under sin has many curses attending it; but that taking both riches and poverty and putting them under Gospel light and the working of the Holy

Ghost, poverty furnishes a field for a golden harvest of results which riches will never yield.

Not the least of the blessings of poverty is the facility it gives for weaning the soul from earth and leading it to place its thoughts and affections on things in heaven. The roots of the heart, having no territory in this world in which to fasten, can more readily be planted in the soil of the heavenly world, where they can spread and grow to an unlimited extent, and from which they will never be uprooted.

Yet there is something for the soul in the Christ-life far beyond all these thoughts. It is an altitude which a few saintly souls reach, both among the rich and the poor, where all earthly wealth is voluntarily abjured, where the soul has such light and unity with the eternal Son of God, that, like him, it has a sweet passion for poverty. It sweetly despises riches, and looks upon all the fine things of earth with a silent contempt, not because they are contemptible in themselves but because they are so far infinitely below the splendor of a divine life that they are looked upon as a nuisance and a meddlesome hindrance to the immensity of a heavenly life.

To form some idea of what I mean, imagine a beautiful angel, radiant with heavenly splendor and enraptured with the uncreated beauties of the blessed Trinity, putting on broad-cloth or decking himself with earthly ornaments, and encompassed with velvet furniture and hired servants! The very mud in the street

were just as appropriate to him as these things. How utterly absurd and repulsive would it be for us to imagine our blessed Jesus riding through Palestine in a fine carriage, with kid gloves and fine clothes, and living in a stone house, with elegant furnishings, and feasting on big dinners. The very association of these things with him would be loathsome and degrading, and just as incongruous as adding tallow candles to the sun or putting white paint on a diamond.

Riches would only have hemmed him in from the human race, and made him a private citizen, instead of being the universal man of all ages and all nations. The excessive wealth of the infinite life and love which was in him makes all earthly riches as common as the dirt.

Now apply this line of thought to those who are the most like Christ, the old prophets, and the apostles, and we get a glimpse of a state of life where we are not only resigned to being poor but endeavor to bear it patiently, but we see that lofty condition of soul in God where we can be perfectly triumphant over all poverty or wealth, where we are sweetly and sublimely indifferent to the pinchings of penury, and gladly make it a channel for the outpouring of a life of prayer and love and good works, having no anxiety for ourselves, spending our strength in looking out for the interest of Jesus and leaving all our earthly wants to his care, taxing our heart only to know how we can love him more and do more for him.

This is the feeling John Fletcher had when the king offered to reward him for some little service of his pen and he replied, "All the reward I want is more grace."

And the great Daniel said to the King of Babylon, "Let your rewards be for others."

This is victory over the world and all the things in it. Such souls possess the whole of God, and they own all material riches in the same way that Christ owns them. "He is rich who owns God, but he is richest of all who owns nothing but God." -

XIII.

THE DANGERS OF PROSPERITY.

It is very difficult for us to conceive of the magnitude of evils which sin has wrought in our nature. In addition to everything that properly belongs to sinfulness, it has wrought horrible effects in the direction of deformity and foolishness. There are many things in us which are more properly speaking deformities more than direct sinfulness, and this should lay a broad basis for charity. And then in a thousand ways sin has made us foolish, and as on the ocean after the storm has passed, the disagreeable waves still roll on, so after sin, properly speaking, has been removed from the soul, the effect of its foolishness is still perpetuated in the mind. This lack of well balanced

wisdom and depth of spiritual discernment is almost universally manifested in the fact that a little prosperity on any line, spiritual or temporal, seems to upset us, and draw the heart away from God. There is nothing on earth more ruinous than uninterrupted prosperity, that is, using the word prosperity in the human sense; and the very persons who insist that success does not hurt them, are the very ones most ruined by it. The greatest fool is the one who will not admit his foolishness. There is a danger not only in outward prosperity of health and finances and social standing, but the principle is just as true when applied to religious experience; that is, having no trials or crosses to sink the soul in self-abasement.

Prosperity is not always a token of God's favor. There is an awful meaning to the words of the Holy Ghost in speaking of persons who have things cozy and prosperous when he says, "Thou hast already received thy reward." Can there be a darker curse in eternity than the one couched in those words? And yet millions not only of sinners, so-called, but professed believers are intensely eager to grasp the fulfilment of those awful words. When prosperity is given us of God it is mostly because he condescends to our childish weakness, because he sees we have not the strength to endure hardness; and what people call success is often permitted to us of the Lord because of our infantile weakness of faith.

It requires great inward strength of heart to en-

dure great losses and privations, and what seem to others sore failures, and to be cut off from all creature comforts and consolation, and yet all the while be tightening the hold on God, and sinking into self-depreciation, and believing that God is doing every thing for the best. Temporal success has a wonderful tendency to weaken our faith, because it attaches our trust to creatures and circumstances, whereas adversity shuts our faith up to God above. God becomes dear to us in the same proportion that we are shut up alone to him. Again, prosperity gives us a false estimate of ourselves, by a growing conviction that it was our skill or wisdom, or righteousness of character that brought it to us. Like the ancient king we say, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built?" with an emphasis on the "I." Prosperous people, by an unavoidable law of comparison, must note the contrast between themselves and the vast multitudes who fail on the very lines where they succeed; and seeing only the operation of natural causes, they are led imperceptibly to form a very high estimate of their faculties, or their industry, and to secretly pride themselves on their advancement; and this leads to a host of vices such as self-conceit, self-righteousness, impatience with persons of less success, and a lack of charity for those of less attainments. Hence it develops a habit of esteeming people as to their real worth by their amount of success; and just in the same proportion as prosperity gives us an over-estimate of ourselves,

it gives us an under-estimate of others who are not so prosperous; and this corrupts the very fountains of character. This is why prosperity in a thousand ways lays the foundation of its own ruin. This principle is true when applied to individuals, or families, or churches, or nations. There never has been known a nation, or a church, or a family since the fall of Adam, that prosperity has not proved in the end its degeneration, and in most instances its utter downfall. There is a fascinating mist that success brings to the eyes, which blinds people to the very causes which produce success. These causes are humility, perseverance, sobriety, self-denial, painstaking, and consideration for others; but success causes the soul to forget these very things, and to cease their practice, and as there comes a gloating over the effects, there is a simultaneous neglect of the cause. Many a preacher begins his life-work in humility, much secret prayer, self-denial, searching of God's word, and after these things have brought success, he neglects the Bible for philosophy, neglects secret prayer for conversation, self-abasement for the receiving of honors, and loses all his power, and becomes an empty figure-head. Even when God blesses a believer with great spiritual joy, and bright visions of heavenly things, there is a subtle tendency in the mind to lean on its spiritual blessings, and to call in the sentinels from picket-guard.

Hence Satan watches God's children to make an onslaught upon them just after a spiritual banquet.

Eternal vigilance in the prince of liberty, and this is true in the spiritual life as in the political. In most cases the absence of chastisement in one's life is anything but a proof of God's love, for he himself declares, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." The soul learns things under God's chastisement which it is utterly and eternally impossible for it to learn otherwise; and those who disagree with these declarations are of a light and superficial experience and mostly of a trifling mind. Prosperity makes people shallow, in their thinking, praying, self-knowledge, in their Scripture insight, and in their interior knowledge of God, so that what is popularly called prosperity, is in most cases real failure; and what mankind looks upon as utter failure, turns out to be with God, and in eternity, in many cases, the grandest kind of success. We shall never know who have made the greatest achievements till all the human race render up their account before the great white throne. Only see how a little success makes people dictatorial, and critical, and overbearing toward others. This proves a terrible danger. At the very time that thousands of people insisted on making Christ a King, and when his popularity was at the highest pitch, he withdrew himself that same day from everybody and spent the night alone in the mountain praying to his Father. Here we see infinite wisdom. For every wave of success, he sought a deeper self-abasement, and more complete solitude with the Father. Here is the pat-

tern for all believers. If for every little touch of prosperity we have, we seek in some way to deny ourselves and get closer to God, and sink in deeper humility, and strip ourselves of every thought of self-merit; this would save us from the danger of prosperity; it would preserve what blessings we have acquired, and yet keep us in heart so detached from those blessings, and so broken and poor in spirit, that our Father could safely increase his benefactions. If we had the wisdom to practice this, there is no telling how much God would bless us. We are worth more to God than the blessings he bestows upon us, and if those blessings are going to wean us from him, and make us play the fool, then his infinite wisdom compels him to take them from us, for just as soon as God's blessings begin to take the place of God, they become a curse, and just as soon as prosperity lifts us up, it prepares the way for our failure. Will we ever learn to intensely and continuously and increasingly love our God for his own sake, and to secretly, with a supernatural discernment, despise other things in comparison with him?

XIV.

SIGNS OF ANSWERED PRAYER.

When we enter a life of real, prevailing prayer, we are lifted into a supernatural world. It is indeed a real spirit world, with its revolutions, its seasons, its laws and phenomena, as distinctly marked as those of a material world. Prevailing prayer has its beginnings, its progress, its maturity, in which state there are certain signs by which we may conclude that the prayer has been accepted by our heavenly Father. I may not specify all of these signs, but among the tokens that our prayer has been answered, I will mention the following:

1. A vehement impulse to pray for a certain thing, especially when it is disconnected from self-interest, or private, personal ends of our own, may be taken as a sign that the Holy Spirit is carrying out some of the Father's designs through us. The Holy Spirit is an incessant fountain of prayer, and he selects certain souls through whom to pour certain special prayers. With infinite wisdom and love he arranges a fitness between the prayer and the soul with whom he burdens it. God would not inspire a prayer which he did not intend to answer, and when the petition increases in sweet intensity, the soul may rest assured that it has been chosen as a channel of God's

will in offering the prayer, and that the answer will be granted.

2. When the praying one has a firm confidence amounting to a moral certainty, that the prayer is in perfect accordance with God's will, he may take it as a conviction that the prayer is answered. This sign is generally in the shape of a firm confidence, without knowing any special cause for it. The outward circumstances are still unchanged, mountainous obstacles may seem in the way of the prayer being answered, the soul may have no outward evidences of the answer, and yet the mind has a calm conviction, and the heart has a restful assurance, that in some way the subject matter of the prayer will come out all right. As a rule in such cases, the soul has no idea how the prayer will be answered; it has no plan as to the mode of the answer; perhaps it would be puzzled to invent a way for the answer; but in spite of its darkness, and all appearances, there is an unaccountable conviction that the thing will be done.

3. Another sign of answered prayer is a deep, strangely sweet indifference as to whether the prayer is answered or not. This is not the dull, stupid indifference of death, but the sweet, vivacious, joyful indifference of intense life. It is accompanied with an ardent love for God's will. There may be a sudden burst of passionate attachment to God's will, which it sees to be infinitely preferable to all its own desires, so that it is lifted out of its own petitions and away

from any special choice into the vision of the sweet and boundless will of God which makes it seem for the time being utterly indifferent of its own petitions. I know a man who, in great financial straits, was pleading with God for weeks for relief. Suddenly, one night, he experienced a sweet, joyful indifference come into his spirit as to whether he was relieved or not. From that moment he knew that his prayer was answered, and the sequel abundantly verified his conclusion.

4. Another token is when the prayer is entirely taken from us, so that we have no inclination to pray it and even forget at times to mention it in prayer. Sometimes the soul will feel a gentle check upon it not to offer the petition. The burden of prayer has been like a storm which has gathered itself into great vigor and swept through the soul for days or weeks with its rending wind and torrents of rain, but when the storm has passed all is still; the birds come out to sing, the raindrops glitter on the leaves, the rainbow floats on the receding cloud, but every element of the tempest has disappeared. This is sometimes the likeness of a tempestuous prayer which has spent itself through the soul. In such a case, when we attempt to offer the prayer we find ourselves forgetting to plead, and an involuntary thanksgiving springs up from the depths of the inner spirit. We cannot force ourselves to keep on begging, for a great calmness has

come, and happy thoughts, like singing birds, flit through the mind.

5. Another sign of answered prayer is a victorious laughter of the heart. It may be difficult to describe this phenomenon, yet it is Scriptural, and, in some instances, a marked experience in prayer. This particular sign is apt to come to the soul when praying in great distress or against seeming impossibilities. We have an instance of this in Sarah, who, with her husband, had long been praying against the seeming impossible, and the answer to her prayer was preceded with triumph and laughter. Isaiah records a similar experience when he and Hezekiah were praying to God against the besieging army of the Assyrians. This is the word which the Lord hath spoken concerning Sennacherib: "The daughter of Zion has despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn." It is evident that Isaiah felt that strange, divine laughter go through his soul. Sometimes, when I have been pleading for an hour or more for God to do a work seemingly against all earthly odds, I have felt a sweet ripple of inexpressible laughter go through my spirit and found myself involuntarily smiling through my tears. Just as there are different signs, so there are different kinds of prayer. I think it will be found that particular kinds of prayer will be accompanied by particular signs of the answer.

6. Sometimes God gives a mark of answered prayer in the shape of a great rebuke or a deep cutting

humiliation. In such cases God greatly honors the soul by putting its faith to a severe test. We have Scripture samples of this in the case of Hannah, whose prayer was so ardent and spiritual that it surpassed words, and only her lips moved, and Eli severely rebuked her as a drunken woman. Another instance is that of the mother of Jesus at the marriage in Cana, whom Jesus seemed to speak to in a severe manner, when she requested him to produce wine. Another case is the Syrophenician woman, whom Jesus compared to a little dog. Please notice that in all these instances the humiliation, mortification and rebuke preceded the most remarkable and abundant answers to prayer. These answers are still repeated in spirit. Sometimes in great agony of prayer we feel as if God is treating us coldly, as if we are spurned from His presence, and our hearts feel lacerated with severe rebukes; yet, instead of these feelings driving us from God, we run to him and crouch the closer still, and feel perfectly willing to bear any reproach, or stigma, if he will only hear our cry. With these seeming rebukes there is given a greater fervency of prayer, so that in the apparent rebuff there is an intuitive persuasion that if we persevere the petition will be granted. We are not to seek for any of these signs, but to earnestly seek God for the things needed, and let him send the signs according to his loving will. We must be careful not to fret our hearts or minds

about the answers to our prayers, for all such worry and fret only delay the answer.

The very climax of prayer is where the most vehement desire in the spirit is conjoined with the most restful patience upon the movement of God's will. The foregoing signs are some of the telegrams which the Holy Spirit dispatches into us that our petitions are granted through the infinite merit of Jesus.

XV.

TAKE TIME.

Precipitancy is one of the weaknesses resulting from our fall.

To rush forward in our thinking and speaking and acting, proves a lack of faith, and want of apprehending the presence and dominion of God over all things. It is true in a thousand different things, that he that believeth will not make haste. To act prematurely is a characteristic of infancy, it shows a rawness of the mind. Hence one of the lessons which we learn more and more as we become intimately acquainted with God, is the celestial art of walking slow. To learn to move slowly with God is not laziness, nor over-lateness, for it is the very highest type of zeal, which is a watchful promptness.

The fault of being behindhand is one of the effects of over-hastiness of spirit. Whereas the most

perfect vigilance which keeps its eye ever on God, and moves with him in the present moment, is too wakeful to be rash, and too prompt to be over-hasty. To learn how to take time, will introduce the soul into a whole world of progress in the religious life.

We must take time to pray. The greatest lack of Christian life to-day, even among people professing holiness, is a lack of taking time for deep, thoughtful, exhaustive prayer, that is taking time to pray any subject out in all its details before the Lord, taking time to put our whole heart and mind intensely in the prayer, and then taking time for the Holy Spirit to speak to us in the depths of our spirit and reveal to us the will of God.

If all the time that Christians spend in anxiety, or in seeking advice from other people, or in foolish speculation, or in making plans and building air castles, was spent in patient and thoughtful prayer, what vast fields of satisfactory light and clear divine guidance would be opened up to them. They would learn the knowledge of God's will on all lines, such as would give a deep, restful assurance which would make them spiritual giants. If ministers and evangelists, who are supposed to give their time to soul-saving, would take time to spend hours each day in prayer to God they would acquire more light on divine things, and a brighter range of scriptural knowledge, and an interior vision into all creation and providence which all the universities of earth could never impart, and also

they would obtain a depth of sweetness of experience which would make them channels of divine life to other souls.

It is amazing how little time even ministers, yes even holiness preachers, spend in secret prayer. This is because we foolishly imagine that we have so many other things to attend to that we cannot take time to pray; but some day we may find that time was the raw gold, and that prayer was the mint in which moments were coined into heavenly wealth.

Take time to prepare for our work. The greater the work we are to do, the longer preparation does God give us for it. How eager human nature is to get into an enterprise, or a field of work, before there is a thorough preparation. To be prepared for a great mission is a great deal more than to go through a school or to learn a trade or to pass a good examination; the preparation must go deeper, and enter into the very qualities of the heart and will. There must be the patient endurance, the breadth of apprehension, the quickness and sweep of mental vision, the balancing of the judgment, the impartiality of decision, and a largeness of divine gentleness for those with whom we deal; an inexpressible preparation which oftentimes nothing but suffering, or lonely sorrow, or years of patient waiting can develop in us. What a whole world of knowledge we learn from God by studying how he deals with his creation, and with his servants, in the time con-

sumed in preparing them for his purposes. Volumes could be written on this. He was eighty years training Moses for the work of forty. John the Baptist was thirty years preparing for the work of two years; and the incarnate God was thirty years getting ready for the ministry of three.

It seems to have been the life mission of good old Simeon to hold the infant Jesus a few moments in his arms, and pronounce a glorious prophecy over him; and he was over eighty years preparing for these few moments.

What we call preparation for a life work is often so utterly human, and so stuffed with man-made theories, as to be a positive hindrance to the Holy Ghost. A preparation, according to God's idea, involves many things beyond the grasp of our thought. A short work, with a thorough, divine preparation behind it, will accomplish more than a work of many years with only a human qualification for it.

We should take time to keep recollected in God. That is, to recollect who we are, where we are, what we are doing, and to keep before the mind the divine presence. This will cause us to move quietly and slowly, keeping pace with God's will; it will give us equipoise of soul, calmness amid all circumstances, sweetness of spirit amid many provocations; it will prevent us from uttering rash words or forming harsh judgments, or giving too quick decisions, or by any impetuosity breaking the beautiful flow of the Holy

Spirit through our hearts. How many thousands of times in our past lives we have seen that we made a bargain, or wrote a letter, or gave a decision, or uttered a rebuke, or in a prayer or conversation expressed thoughts just a little too soon; and that, if we had been perfectly dead to all our impetuosity, and in deep, quiet union with God, and taken time to move gently and slowly with his will, almost infinitely better results would have been accomplished.

Who of us are learning the art of walking slow in God's time?

XVI.

PAUL'S THORN.

It is not needful that we should know exactly what Paul's thorn in the flesh was, and the very mist that hangs around it renders it easier for each of us to apply the principle of it to ourselves.

Nevertheless, when we collect all the various allusions to it we can conjecture with some degree of certainty that it was probably the disfigurements and mangled condition of his face and eyes, which he received at the time he was stoned and left for dead at Lystra.

The account of this thorn is given in the twelfth chapter of 2d Corinthians, in which he says the thorn was given him over fourteen years previous to writing

that epistle. Paul wrote this epistle A. D. 60. He was stoned at Lystra A. D. 46, which identifies the time of receiving the thorn with the time he was stoned. It is very evident from a close view of the record, that Paul was literally stoned to death, that his head and face were horribly mangled with the rocks. He was dragged out of the city and left as a dead dog by his enemies, at which time his disembodied spirit went to Paradise and he was permitted to have extraordinary revelations of the heavenly world; things so divine that there were no words in human language to express them. (See verse four, margin.)

His spirit was then sent back in the body, and while the disciples were weeping around his dead body, he was restored to life, and sufficiently healed to rise up and walk, and the next day take a long journey and preach. But notwithstanding all this, there were horrible scarifications left about his eyes and features which made his face repulsive to look at, and this was a constant mortification to him.

This will account for so many allusions in his epistles; such as, "His letters, they said, were weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak." In his epistle to the Galatians, he says that they did not despise his temptation to the flesh, nor reject him with contempt (see Greek), and that if it had been possible they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to Paul. This proves that the disfigure-

ment was connected with his eyes. Again he says in the same epistle, "You see in how large letters I have written unto you." Most of his epistles were dictated and only signed by Paul, but as the Galatians had partially backslidden, to more effectually win them back to holiness, he wrote a short autograph letter, and owing to the affliction in his eyes, he had to make the letters very large, which would be a proof to the Galatians that Paul actually wrote it. The common version which says he wrote a large letter is incorrect, and should be, he wrote in large letters.

Again in concluding the Galatian epistle he says, "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the brand of the Lord Jesus." (Greek, stigmata.) This stigmata was the fire brand with which masters branded their slaves. Sometimes slaves would fly from their merciless masters, and take refuge in some heathen temple and sell themselves to the god of the temple; then the priest of the temple would brand with a hot iron such a slave, as the special property of that temple, and his old master could never more trouble him.

Paul uses this to illustrate to the legalized Galatians who had drifted back into the bondage of the ceremonial law that he had fled from his merciless master, the Jewish law, and had fled to Jesus the new Master, and sold himself to Christ, and that Jesus had put on him his brand, and from henceforth his old master, or any old Jewish teacher, should not trouble him. This

disfigurement of his face and eyes, which he received or Jesus's sake, was the brand or stigmata he referred to.

From this account we see that the thorn in the flesh was given to Paul several years after his conversion and sanctification. It only illustrates the vast ignorance among Christian people, when we find persons in every part of the country who affirm that Paul's thorn was original sin. Paul received this thorn, the messenger of Satan, to buffet him, after reaching the highest states of grace and the deepest insights into glory possible for a mortal man to receive; hence it could have no connection with the "old man," or the sin principle.

From all the foregoing we learn that just as long as the human soul is in this world there is an element of danger in it, and that even when all sin is purged away, and the soul filled with heavenly things, that there is an element of danger in the very excesses of grace and the abundance of revelations. The Infinite Searcher of spirits saw a liability in Paul of over exaltation which he was utterly unconscious that he had. He says, "Lest I should be exalted above measure, a thorn was given to buffet me." There were liabilities in Paul which he himself was not aware of, but God saw the liability, and saw the mortification which was needful to tone him down. In every age this has been true of devoted persons, the most ardent and highly favored saints.

It is a common thing for the holiest of people to manifest in their spirit tendencies to dogmatism, domineering, display of authority, and a dictatorial censorship over others, of which they are unaware, and cannot believe that such is true when it is told them.

The fact is, no human being understands the workings of his own spirit, except as it is revealed by the Holy Ghost. Good people, holy people, absolutely need crosses, and trials, and sorrows, and sometimes a horrible disfigurement to keep them at that high water gospel mark, where self is the minimum and Christ is the maximum.

We learn again from this experience of Paul that there is a something in the three-fold constitution of man, of spirit, soul and body, a nature, or a characteristic, which is neither sin on the one side nor Christ on the other, which needs to be chastened, and corrected, and brought into perfect harmony with Christ.

Paul's thorn did not eliminate any sin, but it served to grind into a finer flour the natural grain of his make up.

But the greatest lesson we get from this is, that the soul can be so subdued and filled with unspeakable humility that it will actually take delight in thorns and crosses and humiliations.

When Jesus revealed to Paul his design in giving him the bodily disfigurement, with its painful inconvenience, and that Christ's strength would be made perfect in that very weakness, then Paul got

another vision of the blessedness of suffering and exclaimed, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." This is a degree of spiritual victory even beyond the visions of Paradise. Humility in its fulness and all its details of practice toward God and toward our fellows—humility in thought, in purpose, in behavior, in speech, and tone, and gesture—unostentatious, unpretending, unbounded humility, is a thousand times more essential to us in this life than the visions of Paradise.

It is true we need all the heavenly visions and all the bright outlets into God, which his mercy is pleased to grant us. I simply say we need boundless humility more than these. When we can welcome as a treasure those persons, those hard circumstances, those pains and mortifications, those treatments of our fellows, or those sad limitations in our lives, which always humble us into the dust, nay, even rejoice in these things, knowing that they drive us deeper into the sweet mind of Jesus, then indeed we have gotten the victory.

From that time on, our thorn, whatever it may be, like Aaron's dry almond rod, will blossom and bear sweet almonds, and this rod which blossoms and bears fruit, will be laid up in the ark of the covenant, and preserved through eternal ages, as a memorial of praise to the transforming power of grace.

XVII.

HUMAN RELIGION.

The world is full of human religion, and judged off from the New Testament, great multitudes who profess to be Christians seem to have been only galvanized by human ecclesiastical methods into a sort of mechanical Christianity, with whom the first principles of a divine life seems utterly unknown. The more intimately we become acquainted with God, the more delicately and sharply we can distinguish the shades of human character and the lines of truth and error. There are moments of great spiritual vision in which we seem to look out from our heavenly Father's bosom, and through the luminous atmosphere of his presence upon the peoples and nations of the earth, and upon the different shades of nominal Christianity, like great outspread plains stretching far off in the gloom, with here and there a hill top, made a little brighter by its elevation in the glimmering star-light, and our minds are stretched with great questions as to the destiny of these surging millions, and our hearts ache with inexpressible pity and longing to rescue all we can; and in our utter helplessness the tears will flow and the prayers ascend that the precious right hand that was pierced with the nail would be stretched out to save as many as possible. And amid

this pitiful condition of things it is more pitiable still to see the myriads of professed Christians, headed by throngs of elegant, cultured, ease-loving, self-seeking preachers, who are only playing at religion. In the light of eternity the great bulk of the visible church are like little children who play that they are gladiators, with rolls of paper for swords, and little kittens for lions. And the worst of it is, so many who seem to be real sincere Christians are blinded and misled by this human religion, and seem to think that out-and-out holiness, and a life of real self-sacrifice, is carrying religion a little too far.

Human religion has a great many marks about it. It depends on human means, and resorts to the tactics of the creature, to the skill, the planning, the wire-pulling, not to say the downright trickery of unregenerate human nature. It is managed by committees, and majorities, and votes, and resolutions, and influential persons, and man-made legislation. This human religion is born of ecclesiastical assemblies, ecumenical conferences, and parliaments of the world's religions. It must live on big things, big churches, great preachers, fine music, esthetic culture, college diplomas, stained glass, dignity, churchly starch, ministerial pomposity, high-sounding titles. It preaches human progress, the glory of man, the inventions of the age; the telegraph, the steamship, the diving-bell, the phonograph, submarine cables, vestibule trains, oil-wells, mines, the meteorology of shooting stars, the

weather report, the anatomy of a fly's wing, the X ray, the splendor of poetry, the brilliance of college training. These are the things that fill the mind of human religion, and are forever dropping in silvery accents from its voluble tongue. It goes in for show and noise, and making startling effects, whether it be a funeral, or a picnic, or a wedding, or a brass band revival, or a sacramental service, or a baptismal performance, or a church dedication, or corner stone laying (in which it calls to its aid the abominations of secret lodges), or in the gathering of its legislative bodies, or in the publishing of its church literature, or in striking attitudes in the pulpit; whatever it does, it must swell and show off, because unlike God's appointed feasts, it lives on leavened bread, and is full of yeast, and therefore it must puff and swell and strut. This is the stuff that is palmed off on the world as the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus, who went about weeping and casting out devils, and transforming wretched lives.

Human religion must needs be hedged in by all sorts of human wicker-work, social coteries, circles of old friends, social sets, ecclesiastical rings. People who have human religion must needs be held together, like the staves of a barrel, by outside hoops and bandages. Such persons cannot stand alone with God. One single frosty morning of misfortune, or great distress, will wither its fair flowers, and thousands of such religionists combined into one could not endure for one

hour the cyclone of desolation that swept around Job. This is why, when persons who have human religion, leave their social surroundings and their little sectarian church-circles, and are thrown on the rough waves of the world, they flounder and fling away their religion, because it was not centered in their hearts, but only put on. It was a house plant, and had to be nursed by prosperity, and human friendships, and narrow, earthly loves; and when these things are stripped from it, the roof is taken from off its head and it cannot live in the great universal outdoors of God's kingdom.

A preacher of human religion must be flattered, and puffed in the papers, and voted for as a delegate to his sectarian church assemblages. He needs toasting, with invitations to big dinners, carriage drives in the park, summer vacations, winter trips to a warm clime. He must needs have presents and religious bon-bons, and if he were peeled down to old-fashioned primeval vicissitudes, to walk with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with no cable to hold him but faith in God, all his religion would likely evaporate. Church members who have human religion must receive many attentions from their pastors and other church members. They must be coaxed to attend prayer meeting, politely bowed to a half a square away, they must be visited for every headache, their whims must be consulted, they have sore toes that are easily tramped on, they either want to be excused from taking any

part in religious service, or else want to be invited to take the lead. Is there anything so abominable as human religion? Its very prayers are stuffed full of humanism, and various forms of self. This human religion is always anxious about results. It knows nothing about living by faith. It is always in a fever about accomplishing great things. It frets over small congregations, or rainy Sundays, or difficulties that prevent its plans. It is anxious about good collections, and about having the sermon to take well, and the hymn to be nicely rendered, and the prayer meeting to pass off smoothly. It does not have a giant's tread, but walks as if on eggs. It is over cautious, easily frightened, full of compromise, uses human policy as a substitute for divine love, just as the tower-builders of Babel used mud-shine as a substitute for lime plaster.

When human religion gets up a revival, it must have from five to twenty churches of heterogeneous creeds and sectarian bodies go into a great union effort. It must have a mammoth choir, with great musical instruments, and many preachers, and multiplied committees, and each committee headed by some banker, or judge, or mayor, or millionaire's wife. It signs cards as a substitute for the broken-hearted cries of Scriptural repentance. It must count its converts for a few days' meetings by the hundreds. It must apologize for natural depravity, and plead for its existence in the soul till death, and by professing

to top off a few big branches of sin it only feeds and fattens the monster of heart-corruption at the very center of the soul.

Human religion thinks it will conquer the world; it denies holiness, ignores the omnipotent, personal agency of the Holy Ghost, steers clear of all divine manifestations, is terrified at the supernatural in grace, discounts personal testimony, is afraid of weeping, is terrified at a hallelujah, thinks that the sobs of a penitent should be stifled with a lavender scented handkerchief.

Human religion curls its lip at holiness, caricatures divine healing, antagonizes the premillennial coming of Jesus, thinks the world is growing beautifully better, puts outward reformation for soul-salvation, runs off on lines of humanitarianism as a substitute for the indwelling Holy Spirit, is forever forming itself into fresh organizations of "leagues" and "endeavors" and "boys' brigades." It dreams of bringing the millennium by social reforms, it denies that Jesus will come and reign on the earth, but seeks to usurp his place and build for itself a kingdom over the world. It is an ease-loving, jovial, laughing, fun-making, fun-loving, superficial thing. Its motives are bounded by time. All its enterprises have an atmosphere of earthliness about them. It despises the day of small things, it scorns little, humble people, and lonely ways. It is eager to jump to the height of prosperity, it is domineering and popish in its assertions over the

poor, and yet at the same time cringes like a puppy before the rich and the great ones. Its music has no pathos in it, its laughter lacks divine cheerfulness, its worship lacks supernatural love, its prayers bring down no huge answers, it works no miracles, calls forth no criticism from the world, it has no light of eternity in its eye. It is a poor, pale, sickly thing, born of the union of the heart of the world with the head of Christian theology—a mongrel, bastard thing, with a backslidden church for its mother and the world for its father.

. This human religion will be everlastingly wrecked at the appearing of Jesus. Woe to that human being who has a human religion.

XVIII.

WRINKLES.

The Holy Spirit reveals to us in the Epistle to the Ephesians that those believers who shall reach a degree of grace sufficient to be among the Lamb's bride must be sanctified and filled with the Spirit to such a degree as to be "without spot or wrinkle." Spots indicate positive impurities and wrinkles indicate negative imperfections, or those defects which mar the symmetry and loveliness of character. Spots are washed out and wrinkles are ironed out. When ap-

plied to a living body spots are cleansed off, and wrinkles are prevented by being fleshed out with nourishing food and exercise. There are six kinds of wrinkles, all of which apply to the soul as well as the body.

I. Dwarf wrinkles. When for any cause a child does not grow to full size as the years of maturity pass by, the stunting of growth is indicated by wrinkles on the features. The pattern of the skin is too large for the flesh and hangs like a loose garment upon the body. I saw a midget once twenty years old and only eighteen inches high. The skin on her face and hands was wrinkled like a very aged person's. There are dwarfs in Christian life who have never advanced beyond the dimensions of childhood. They were born with a divine pattern of full, plump Christian character, but owing to various maladies, which are forms of the Adamic life, their progress has been stunted. They put on the aspects of maturity, wear long clothes, assume the conversation and airs of full-sized Christians, but as to the Christian graces of humility, love, boldness, perseverance, long-suffering, spiritual discernment, prevailing prayer, personal testimony, breadth of spiritual knowledge, unwavering trust, or calmness under trial, they are found to be little, shriveled dwarfs, with tiny, pinched features, and little, squeaking voices, and pale, sallow complexion, which renders them pitiable in the eyes of adult believers. Spiritual dwarfs, like physical ones, form a melancholy species by themselves, known

by their wrinkles and piping voices ; while they have the years of grown people they are always relegated to the nursery to play with the little children. The wrinkles of spiritual dwarfhood consist in great ignorance as to the indwelling of the Holy Ghost and deep Bible truth, a contentedness to play with ecclesiastical toys, to be tickled and pleased with things only half way religious, to be upset by trifles, to live on the emotions, to having fits and spells of being blessed, to being led about by various whims and doctrines, to being taken up with every new religious fancy, to being captivated by the senses, and a universal babyishness on lines of Christian thought and stability.

II. Starvation wrinkles. When persons have gone a long time with scanty food the flesh decreases and the skin begins to wrinkle upon the body. This truth has its counterpart in the spiritual life. There are Christians who have full-sized souls, and their moral faculties will respond to the presentation of deep Scripture truth. They are honest-hearted, well-meaning souls, but are starved almost to death for lack of clear, strong spiritual instruction. They are hid away by the thousand in the various branches of the nominal church. Vast multitudes are so walled in by a network of religious and social circumstances in such a manner that they have never heard a clear presentation from the Scriptures of the fulness of saving grace, or ever read a book which luminously set forth the full indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They are plod-

ding souls, living in the backwoods of spirituality, in religious log cabins with tallow candles, and practically know nothing of the palatial dimensions of perfect love, or the electric light of the indwelling Spirit. The wrinkles on their spiritual features are different from those on the dwarf. They would be fat and flourishing if they had the proper food, but being penned up in their several ecclesiastical cribs they know of nothing better than the wheatless straw which is dealt out to them by those who are equally pinched with spiritual poverty. Starvation wrinkles include such things as discouragement, a depressed, moping disposition, living on good resolutions, making New Year vows, measuring one's self by the seventh of Romans, harping on old threadbare platitudes, depending on growth instead of the Holy Spirit, hoping for deliverance in the dying hour, being afraid of anything supernatural and startling in Christian experience, thinking that the age of miracles in healing and spiritual revelation ended with the apostles. These wrinkles can be detected upon the souls of great numbers in the various churches who have been slowly trudging on in an old beaten way for many years. Scolding them will do no good. They are weak from sheer starvation. Under proper enlightenment and patient, loving instruction as to Scriptural perfection, some of them at least would fatten out into strong, healthy character.

III. Sickness wrinkles. There are persons who

are neither dwarfs not starved for lack of food, but are sick with various maladies, so that they cannot eat, and the wrinkles have gathered upon them from the effects of disease. So there are Christians who have access to ample spiritual light and facilities of progress, but who are smitten with spiritual fevers and rheumatisms, and consumptions, which take away their vital forces and reduce them to a form of skeleton religious life. These wrinkles are in the form of poor spiritual appetites which cannot digest strong preaching or deep spiritual books; they take the form of evil habits, churlish manners, worldly associations, secret societies, Sunday visiting, using tobacco, fashionable dress, egotism, fretting, combativeness, an argumentative spirit, harsh judgments, touchiness, a gloomy, sulky disposition, self-defense, a desire for praise, wanting to be honored; these and such like things indicate spiritual disease, which produces a disagreeable sick room condition throughout the whole life, and cover the soul with many wrinkles. There is need for a divine cathartic to purge the entire nature, and bring the inner man to a state of health, where strong food can be taken that will swell the features into the roundness of beautiful, fresh life.

IV. Agony wrinkles. Persons in great torture will have wrinkles upon their face from sheer pain. In like manner there are Christians who are the subjects of awful demoniac attacks, and who undergo such severe mental torture as to present an abnormal con-

dition of the Christ-life. These agony wrinkles are such as melancholy, extreme asceticism, making religion to be of the monk and nun type, looking at all things from the unhopeful side, seeking high states of grace through penance instead of through a loving faith, failing to see the good in persons who do not adopt our religious modes. If these agony wrinkles lead the soul into a deep, loving death to self, they become the means of a deep and blessed experience of heavenly mindedness, but if allowed to continue too long, they seem to petrify the soul into hard, cold, repulsive forms of religion without any sweetness, or attractiveness, and so repel all persons except a few of a bluish, abnormal type of inward life.

V. Frown wrinkles. There are persons who have formed habits of facial expression, such as frowning, twisting the mouth, snapping the eyes, curling the lip, and similar disfigurements, until they render themselves very disagreeable. There is a counterpart to this among Christians. There are spiritual wrinkles which come from habits of religious disfigurement, religious frowning, a spirit of criticism, finding fault with other people's religion, stickling for nonessentials, a sort of spiritual snobbery, theological narrowness, a pitching into people and things that do not just measure up to our peculiar notions, discounting other people's good work because not done in our way, a miserable unpleasant habit of making spiritual frowns that destroy the beauty of the inner life and break up

the placid sea of the soul's bright face into ugly scowls. How rare it is to sit down in any religious company and talk five minutes without finding some one upon whose spiritual features there does not come forth these unpleasant frown-wrinkles of narrow, critical, unloving expressions, which plainly manifest that the soul is not fat with pure, gentle love. A really fat soul, living on milk and honey and heavenly wine, cannot frown. It can weep, and suffer, and fight bravely for Jesus, but it cannot sputter, or snarl, or break up its beauty into peevish wrinkles. Hence all critical souls are lean, and, being lean, they frown, and produce those wrinkles which will never be admitted at the wedding supper of the Lamb. Frowning Christians, like the foolish virgins, betray a lack of oil, which disqualifies them for the heavenly banquet.

VI. Age wrinkles. In our natural life the wrinkles of age are unavoidable, and may be honorable, but still they show weakness and decrepitude. In the spiritual life there is no provision for old age. On the other hand, the Christ-life in us is one of everlasting youth, growing fresher and stronger as the years flow softly over our heads. The apostle tells us "that though the outward man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day." The man Christ Jesus forever wears the dew of youth, and his elect bride is to share the beauty of his unfading youth. But there are Christians who seem to get old in their religious life,

and have age wrinkles on their soul. These kind of wrinkles comprise such things as tradition, old beaten habits of thought, old theological prejudices, denouncing Scripture truths which seem new, but have been in the Bible for centuries, only not brought forth, the being led by formulated theologies and man-made catechisms, instead of the pure word of God, the being influenced by persons and books and ideas just because they seem to have the weight of human authority and the musty complexion of old age, the going on in a rut of old experiences and dreading any degrees of salvation that interferes with the old forms. The word "wrinkle" is a translation of the Greek word from which we get the word "rut" and "routine." So those who are without spot or wrinkle are those who are saved from spiritual ruts. These are the various wrinkles which are to be taken out of us by the inflow of the fulness of the Christ-life filling all the faculties, making the affections fat with heavenly love, oiling the soul's features with gentleness and sweetness of expression, making the very fountains of the heart young and tender and joyous, from the uncreated springs of the Holy Spirit. Just as the spots are removed by an inward washing, so the wrinkles are to vanish by an inward fulness that smooth out the features and makes the soul beautiful to God with the incrowning of his own grace.

XIX.

"WHO LOVE HIS APPEARING."

It is evident there is some difference between loving Christ and loving his appearing. It is one thing to love Christ as a Divine Being and personal Savior, and a slightly different thing to have the heart set with longing affection on the personal appearing of Christ in glory to gather his elect and set up his kingdom on the earth, just as there is a difference between having Christ's kingdom set up in a few hearts and having that kingdom set up over all the world. The one is the love of a Person, the other is the love of an act or public manifestation of that Person.

The Apostle Paul, in his last words just before martyrdom, mentions a distinct form of love for Jesus when he speaks of a crown of righteousness which the Lord would not only give to him in the day of his coming, "but unto all them also that love his appearing."

There are thousands of believers who profess to love Christ, yet are not assured that they love him with their whole heart.

And then again, there are many who testify to loving him with all the heart, who express no particular love for his personal appearing back to this world.

It is both Scriptural and experimental, that there are a great many degrees of love for Jesus.

There is no such thing as a dead level of love and devotion among believers. To love Jesus as our Saviour, then to love him as our Sanctifier, then to love him with increasing degrees of personal attachment as our constant Friend, our spiritual Bridegroom, to love every relationship he sustains to us, to love his Divinity and Humanity, to love every attribute of his Being and every quality of his matchless character, to love his glory and coming kingdom, and then to piningly and vehemently love his precious appearing in the clouds of heaven—this is the high-water mark of the love mentioned by Paul just before he was beheaded.

Unless a believer has reached the experience of a definite, passionate affection for the personal appearing of Jesus, his love is not up to the full measure of love as set forth in the Songs of Solomon, the Epistles, and the Revelation.

It is a singular fact that throughout the New Testament we are not taught to fasten our eyes on the grave, but on the coming of Jesus.

“As oft as ye do this, ye do show forth the Lord’s death”—not until you die—but “until he comes.” “Occupy”—not until you die, but “till I come.” And again, “Hold fast”—not till you die, but “till I come.”

Over and over again we are told that we are to serve the living and true God, and to wait, not for the grave, but “to wait for his Son from heaven.” I Thess: 1:10.

It is true many generations have died and the

present generation may die before the Lord comes, but the Scriptures always speak of the Lord's coming as "at hand;" and every successive generation of saints have been commanded to keep their eyes on the coming of Jesus and to lovingly and longingly wait for his appearing.

But how many thousands of good people there are, even many who have heart purity, who if they should at this moment be compelled to honestly answer the question at once, "Do you now love the appearing of the Lord Jesus—is your heart set on it; would you be glad to see him riding down on a bright cloud; can your whole heart say, 'Return, return, O Shunamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee?'" who would find it very difficult to give a prompt answer in the affirmative. The ardent love of our Lord's appearing is a form of experience which gives great vividness to the personality of Christ. It gives a distinctness to heavenly things which otherwise seem so far away as to be almost unreal. And as a telescope does not create heavenly bodies or multiply the objects on their surfaces, but simply draws them closer to us and renders them far more real and impressive, so this particular form of love for Christ's appearing pierces the misty veil that hangs over heavenly things and events and draws them close to us in spiritual apprehension and gives them a Scriptural reality.

This degree of love brings us into more con-

scious fellowship with the humanity of Jesus and works sweet and wondrous transformations in our minds, preparatory to actually seeing him as he is.

It also makes Christ more emphatically our last end. It strangely focalizes all the currents of our life upon him.

There are many portions of Scripture which have a vague, misty meaning in them, like the dreamy outline of undistinguished mountains until the appearing of Christ becomes a blessed reality to our faith and our hearts leap with the hope of seeing him appear; and then that immense, gauze-like veil, that mantled so many Scriptures, is at once lifted and whole regiments of texts wheel into the line of clear interpretation.

Christ's personal reign on the earth, the gathering together of the Jews, the Apostles sitting on twelve thrones, the glory of God filling the earth as the waters cover the sea, and many similar prophecies, assume a common-sense, practical form.

There are many who say they never bother themselves about the coming of Jesus—that the main thing is to be ready.

Very true; but according to the New Testament no one is really ready for the coming of Christ who is not in the heart attitude of waiting for him and who does not love his appearing. When we really love to see Christ come it will be no bother to us. If we do not love the appearing of Jesus we are just that much short of a full New Testament life.

XX.

DREAMING OF JESUS.

I have no doubt that in every generation there are thousands of Christians who have had wonderful dreams of Jesus or of the heavenly world. I have met with many of God's children who have had gracious visitations of heavenly truth and heavenly beings in their sleep. For various reasons such experiences are seldom related, except to confidential friends. There are many more wonderful things taking place in the lives of God's children than the world at large, or even the Church, know anything about. God is just as really our God when we are asleep as when we are awake. He never for one moment lets go his hold upon those who are entirely in his hands. The Holy Spirit holds all the faculties of the mind in his power, and he has absolute right to all the avenues of the soul, both sleeping and waking, and in all ages he has sent special dreams for the enlightenment, or encouragement, or special guidance of his children.

Four times in my life I have dreamed of seeing Jesus. These dreams have made indelible impressions upon my mind. Some of them I do not feel at liberty to relate, but all of them I found afterwards to be in harmony with certain portions of Scripture, and the things which I saw and heard in my dreams

were especially helpful to me at the time, and afterwards.

In January, 1896, while in Indianapolis, Indiana, I had a dream of Jesus which I have often felt impelled to relate. I dreamed I entered the door of a large, plain room, containing no furniture except a low bed in the farthest corner, upon which I saw a man lying with a pale face. The instant my eyes fell upon him I said to myself, "That is Jesus, but why is he lying in bed?" and immediately the words were mentally repeated to me, "He was crucified in weakness." I instantly fell on my knees in the door, and to my left there seemed to be a few of the disciples holding a prayer-meeting, and John the Baptist was leading in prayer; but my eye was so riveted on the Person lying in bed, that I did not turn my head to the other part of the room to see the disciples. I will say here that the face of the man in bed, was the same face which I had seen in my other dreams of Jesus, some fifteen years previous. It was a face which I have never seen one just like it, and in all the paintings of Jesus, I have only seen one resemble or in any way correspond with the one I saw in my dream; it was a face of sadness, but of inexpressible tenderness and sympathy; there seemed to be a soft, bright, purple tint in it. As I fell on my knees, there came over my whole spirit a sacred fear, and at the same time an inexpressible attraction to go to the One I saw. My feelings resembled what philosophers speak of, as two

kinds of attraction, that of cohesion and that of gravity; the sense of holy dread made me almost afraid to move, and yet the sense of attraction seemed irresistible. The Person I saw uttered no audible word, but spoke to me mentally, and articulated his thoughts in my mind more distinctly and powerfully than any pronounced words could have done. He bade me to come to him. I went about half way from the door to the bed, and then stopped under a deep sense of holy dread, but with my eye fastened upon his face, with a charmed, uncontrollable gaze. He then extended his hand out over the side of the bed, and beckoned me to come closer, with a slight smile upon his features, but the mental articulation "Come closer" was uttered with a peculiar emphasis which seemed to possess my whole mind. I immediately went forward on my knees to the bed, and then sat on the side of the bed, and then under the sweet, persuasive influence, I leaned myself back upon his bosom, with his left arm under me. Song 2: 6. As I did so there was an indescribable sensation passed through my whole being. It seemed to me that the soul of my Savior extended out from his body and passed through my soul and body, like the sensation of warm, sweet water; every atom of my body seem pervaded with a sweet, hot sensation, and at the same time, a bright flame of a soft, white, cream color enveloped my body about two feet thick. I can never describe the mental and spiritual sensations of that moment. It seemed that my

whole being, body, soul and spirit, felt a sensation of absolute satisfaction.

There was not a desire, or wish, or thought, or recollection, or sensation, of my whole being, which was not filled with inexpressible contentment and bliss. My memory was so filled that I could recollect nothing but Christ, my imagination so flooded I could conceive of nothing but Christ, my affections so dilated I could love nothing but what was of Christ, my understanding so illuminated I could think of nothing but Christ. He seemed to fill to the uttermost extent, every appetite, affection, desire, thought, recollection, imagination, so that there was no room for even a ripple to pass through it. As I lay in that state, the thought was distinctly uttered in my mind, "This is just the way I shall feel in heaven." I lay in that condition apparently five minutes, and then felt an impression it was time to go. As I got off the bed I mentally asked the Savior to give me some gift of his love. He put his right hand around to his left side, where I saw the wound that the spear had made, and seemed to take something from the open wound, though it was invisible and intangible, but he held it between his thumb and fore-finger in the right hand. I held my right hand and he seemed to deposit the gift in the palm of my hand, and my fingers closed over it. Almost immediately I was horrified to see a lot of vermin crawling on the floor, and mentally called his attention to it. I thought he rose with great alacrity

and began killing the vile things, and then he spoke to me mentally, saying, "The gift I put in your hand was the power to kill these same things," so I at once began crushing them. Then there was opened up in my mind a very clear apprehension of the types of the animals and insects. I seemed to understand intuitively, that certain animals, as swine, goats, bears, tigers, peacocks and serpents, were distinctive types of certain kinds of sins. And that the insects, flies, mosquitos, bugs and vermin were distinct types of the little meannesses, jealousies, envies, harsh words, self-conceit and narrowness and over forwardness, and various other faults which are among the people of God. And it was solemnly impressed upon my mind that Jesus wanted me to set forth a type of spiritual life and instruction, which would not only save men from the great and well classified sins, but a type of self-abnegation and love and Christ-likeness of spirit which would kill out the petty meannesses which we see most everywhere among good people, and which often manifest themselves among Christian workers in religious meetings. With this thought I woke, but for days and weeks the dream lingered with me in great vividness. And though many months have passed away, that face I saw in that dream, and the mental articulation of that spiritual voice in my mind, and the sensation I had reposing on his bosom are still distinct in my memory. I have no doubt that many believers have had similar dreams, and I would

not relate this except for the purpose of urging all who read it to approach just as close as possible for us to get to his heart; there is an infinite welcome in that heart for every yearning soul, and let us see to it that we cultivate a type of piety which not only kills out the beasts of wickedness, but all the little mean insects and faults that mar the Christ-likeness of the soul.

XXI.

DEMONIAC POSSESSION.

The subject of demoniac possession is one frequently referred to in the Scriptures, and especially in the New Testament. The phenomena of demoniac possession are manifold, and when we are sufficiently illuminated to detect and classify them, we find that all the statements in Scripture are perfectly verified. The following items will be found true.

First. The agency of demons is always brought more conspicuously into notice in proportion to the manifestation and power of God's work among souls. When the Son of God was manifest in the flesh it called forth the activity and outspoken agency of demons more than ever before, and we often see instances in Scripture where the approach of Christ, or of a Spirit-filled apostle to some possessed person, would mightily stir the demon in him. Just as the approach

of summer causes vegetation to sprout, the same heat also stirs the snakes into motion. So as God approaches men in his Son, or in his disciples, it stirs the latent demonism that otherwise lies cold and dormant; and oftentimes the more powerful the divine manifestation, the fiercer will be the demoniac exhibition.

Secondly. Demons are of a multiplied variety. They are of various types, greater in diversity than human beings, and these demons always seek to possess a person congenial to them, in some characteristic. The Bible tells us of unclean demons, deaf and dumb demons, witch-craft, and fortune-telling demons, of insanity, of drunkenness, of gluttony, of idleness, of wonder or miracle working, of various forms of sickness, despotic demons, theological demons, screeching and yelling demons. There are demons that act more particularly on the body, or some organ or appetite of the body. There are others that act more directly upon the intellect or the sensibilities and emotions and affections. There are others of a higher order that act directly on man's spiritual nature, upon the conscience, or the spiritual perceptions. These are the ones that act as angels of light, and side-track and delude many who are real Christians.

Third. These demons seek to fasten themselves on to human beings as parasites, like ticks in cattle, or mistletoe on a live tree. They seek out those whose make-up and temperament is most congenial to them-

selves, and then seek to fasten themselves on to some part of their body, or brain, or some appetite, or some faculty of the mind, either the reason, or imagination, or perception, and when they get access they bury themselves into the very structure of the person so as to identify themselves with the personality of the one they possess. In a great many instances they do not get possession of the individual, but obtain such a hold on some part of the mind as to torment the person with periodical attacks of something strange and abnormal, out of all proportion to the general character and make-up of the individual.

Fourth. These demons feed themselves on the person with whom they are allied. There are three great realms of law—the natural and the supernatural, and between these come a strange middle realm called the perternatural. This middle realm embraces a vast range of phenomena, which cannot be definitely classified or ranged under the regular facts of nature or grace, but a strange medley, like the vast swarm of asteroids that float in space, and which, striking against the atmosphere, produce the shooting stars we see in November. This is the realm of clairvoyance, second-sight, hypnotism, mind-reading, insanity, and abnormal passions. It is in this realm that a large class of demons find their favorite hunting ground. There are allusions in Scripture, and facts gathered from experience, sufficient to prove that certain varieties of demons live on the juices in the human blood,

or they absorb to themselves some of the natural affections, so that a person thus possessed will lose their natural affection for husband or wife, or children, or brothers and sisters, because the demon has absorbed that affection to himself.

We are told in the Apocrypha of a demon that desperately loved a young woman, and killed the man that she married, and repeated this several times, until he was banished of the Lord by an angel. We are told by the prophet that in the awful dark days of Jerusalem, the demon-possessed women would go into a secret chamber in the temple to mourn for Thamuz, who was a demon that had so possessed their bodies as to turn them from their husbands, and infatuate them with unnatural passions. It is absolutely certain that whisky and opium are the inventions of the devil, and through these millions of demons have fastened themselves upon poor human beings.

Fifth. There are religious demons, not holy, but nevertheless religious and filled with a devilish form of religion which is a counterfeit of true, deep spirituality. These pseudo religious demons very rarely attack young beginners, but they hover around persons who advance into deeper experiences, and seek every opportunity to fasten themselves upon the conscience, or the spiritual emotions of persons of high states of grace, and especially if they are of a vivid or energetic temperament. These are the demons that play havoc among many professors of holiness. The way they

get hold of persons is as follows: A soul goes through a great struggle and is wonderfully blessed. Floods of light and emotion sweep through the being. The shore lines are all cut. The soul is launched out into a sea of extravagant experience. At such a juncture these demons hover around the soul, and make strange suggestions to the mind of something odd, or outlandish, or contrary to common sense and decent taste. They make these suggestions under the profession of being the Holy Ghost. They fan the emotions, and even produce a strange fictitious exhilaration, which is simply their bait to get into some faculty of the soul. For example, one man said that just after receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as he would lie in bed at night, a strange, wild sort of exhilaration would shoot through his mind, and a sudden impulse to jump out of bed and go screaming all over the house, which, if he had yielded to once, would likely have given the demon an access to his brain, which might have ruined him.

A very holy and useful woman says that soon after receiving the baptism of the Spirit, there came to her, one night in the church, a wild and abnormal impulse to throw the hymn-book at the preacher and to run over the church screaming, and it took all her will-power to keep her hand from throwing that book, but she had the common sense to know that the Holy Spirit was not the author of such a crazy freak. If she had yielded to that sudden feeling, it would have

likely given that fanatical demon admission to her emotional nature, and ruined her life-work. She is a person who knows the mighty demonstrations of the Holy Spirit, and understands God sufficiently to know he is not the source of wild and indecent conduct.

Another good man said he felt like running around the camp-ground, and climbing every tree, but had enough discernment to "try the spirits," and found the impulse was not of God. But another person at the same camp meeting felt the same impulse, and yielded to it, and went yelling and screaming through the woods, climbing trees, tearing his clothes, exhausting his body, and in a short time became utterly useless to the work of God. Another person said he felt like rolling on the floor, and groaning and pulling the chairs around, but he distinctly perceived that the impulse to do so had something wild in it, and a touch of self-display contrary to the gentleness and sweetness of Jesus, and as quick as he saw it was an attack of a false spirit he was delivered, and the tide of pure love flowed on through his breast. But another man had the same sudden impulse, and fell down groaning and roaring, beating the floor with his hands and feet, and the demon entered into him as an angel of light, and got him to think that his outlandish conduct was the Holy Ghost, and it became a regular habit in the meetings he attended, until he would ruin every religious meeting he was in.

It requires great humility to try these spirits and

detect the false ones. The most dangerous demons in existence are those pseudo pious ones who soar around the high altitudes of the spiritual life, like eagles around great mountain tops, and seek to fasten their talons upon lofty and conspicuous prey. These are the demons of spiritual pride, of religious ambition, of false prophetic vision, of strained and far-fetched illuminations, of wild and fantastic notions, of strange and abnormal affections. These are the demons that flit over the sun-lit regions in the land of Canaan, and attack very seldom any but advanced believers.

Sixth. The effects of being possessed by this sort of demons are manifold, and plainly legible to a well-poised mind. Such possession causes people to run off into things that are odd, and foolish, and unreasonable and indecent. It leads them to adopt a peculiar voice or twang, or an unnatural shouting, or some senseless shaking of the body, or the striking of certain attitudes, or the adopting of some silly whim, such as a man's wearing long hair, or parting it in the middle to imitate pictures of Jesus, or some other peculiar crotchet in wearing apparel, or eating, something that locates the man's religion in the physical and not in his heart. Or such a possession is manifested by peculiar heresies in the mind, of which there is a nameless variety. It produces a certain wildness in the eye, and harshness in the voice. Such persons invariably break the law of love, and severely condemn people who do not conform to themselves. As a rule

such persons lose their flesh, for demoniac possession is very wearing on the vital forces, and produces a terrible strain on the heart and nervous system.

There are many persons who are truly godly and want to live holy lives, who have failed to discern these evil spirits, and under strange impulses have allowed some kind of demon to take hold of them, and though they are still conscientious servants of God, are sufficiently influenced by evil spirits of a high order as to utterly ruin their usefulness.

How can such persons get delivered? They must frankly admit to themselves, and to God, and others, that they have been misled, and then request the saints to pray God to cast the demon out. To detect the agency of evil spirits and then to have the humility to frankly acknowledge it, is more than one-half the victory. It requires a self-abasement to make such a confession as very few persons are willing to undergo. The great skill of a demon is to hide himself under the guise of the Holy Ghost, or of another's personality, and the greatest triumph over evil spirits is the power to detect and try them. To do this, the greatest requisite is humility—not a professed humility, but a radical, searching humility that gets into dust and ashes, with uncovered head, and scrapes itself with a potsherd, and is willing to be esteemed by any and everybody as the filth and off-scouring of all things; a humility that does not scorn to sit with Job on the ash-heap, or with ragged Lazarus and the dogs, and look

up from the bottom of self-abasement into the pitiful eye of God, and look to him alone for compassion and help.

This is the humility that is nauseating to a demon, and makes him fly. For the lack of this fathomless humility is the reason why not one fanatic in a thousand ever gets delivered and restored to sanctified common sense, and to that peaceful and loving spirit which is the fountain of true usefulness.

BOOKS

BY GEO. D. WATSON, D. D.

Holiness Manual, - - - **25 cts.**

Containing twenty-five Bible readings giving proof texts for the various stages of grace. Specially helpful for young converts.

White Robes, - - - - **50 cts.**

Giving clear definitions of the difference between pardon and purity, cleansing and growth, partial and perfect love.

Coals of Fire, - - - - **50 cts.**

Expositions from the Old Testament on the deep things of God, including the experiences of Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, etc. A book for advanced Christians.

Secret of Power, - - - - **50 cts.**

Expounding the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in His relation to the human faculties.

Love Abounding, - - - **\$1.00**

Containing sermons stenographically reported and expositions on select portions of Scripture.

Seven Overcomeths, - - - **25 cts.**

A series of discourses from the book of Revelation.

Soul Food, - - - - **50 cts.**

Treating of the interior life of faith in relation to thought, and language, and affection and suffering, and prayer, and special providence. A book that strike sthe popular heart of Christian people.





Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2005

PreservationTechnologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 088 603 8

