

# SOUL HELP

by Beverly Carradine

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*Carradine's practical spiritual work emphasizing God's availability through prayer, describing prayer as a communication channel connecting the human soul to divine assistance and guidance in times of need.*

9 Chapters

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## SOUL HELP

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## Chapter 1 ~ The Soul

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### THE SOUL

AMONG the mysteries there is none profounder than the human soul.

Everything about it savors of the unknown. The inexplorable and unexplainable meet us at every turn in spite of much that is known, and that is being discovered.

Every night hundreds if not thousands of telescopes are pointed at distant stars and planets in the endeavor to understand better the nature, and to discover new secrets about these faraway rambles in space. Some things have been learned about them, but much remains to be found out. The vastness of their distance from us is the explanation of our ignorance concerning them.

In like manner the gaze of innumerable eyes and the energies of countless minds are directed in investigation of the human soul. Hour after hour, and minute after minute, the telescopes of thought and study are turned upon it, and while much has been discovered, much remains to be revealed concerning the invisible stranger, that, unlike the stars, is in a few inches or feet of us, and yet in many respects is as profoundly unknown.

Mystery after mystery rolls up before us in the questions, What is spirit, and how can it act independently of matter? And when does the soul begin its existence; and is it generated or created? Does it exist seminally, or is it a direct creation of God in the womb?

Then, where is its location in the body? That it is there we do not doubt, but in what part of the body? Does it fill the physical frame, or is it in the perineal gland, as Wesley thought, or in the brain, or nearer the heart, or where?

Then other puzzling thoughts arise as to the nature of the soul's existence

when separated from the body, and whether it has powers which correspond to speech, sight, hearing and other faculties, as well as members of the body. And has it a shape? And does it possess color? etc., etc.

But everywhere we are confronted with closed doors, which are not only shut, but locked, and refuse to open to our knock and call. An unsolvable mystery is near us yes, in us; and there is no more answer to us from that viewless inhabitant about some things we want to know, than if it was a dweller upon Jupiter or Saturn.

And yet we know something about this invisible tenant of the body. We have sailed along part of the coast lines, explored a few of the bays, and stood upon some of the capes and hilltops. We have made a little chart concerning what has been discovered, with a wavering line showing what we know, and great white spaces marked "unknown," "unexplored," etc., declaring what we do not know. We mention a few things that we know: First, It is distinct from the body.

We discover that it has longings and desires that are not physical, but spiritual. In the midst of a life of bodily gratification, it is itself perfectly miserable. The bodies lies down satisfied, while this nature starts up unsatisfied, full of unrest, and plaintive inward cries. This is the soul, which has a hunger as keen as that of the body, which thirsts and wants rest like the physical being, and failing to obtain will surely lead the man to despair and deeds of desperation.

Second, It is a thinking something.

We have a thought nature in us. It commenced running away back yonder at its beginning, and is destined to run forever. We are told that when reason is dethroned and one tramps the cell of a lunatic, yet thought goes on; wild, disordered, disconnected, it is true, but not the less is it thought. The mental machine works on faithfully.

As far as the soul has been traced and followed from the body, it is found to be thinking. It thinks in death, and, according to Christ, thinks after death. The rich man's agony in hell sprang partly from the fact that he remembered his brethren on earth, and the effect of his life upon them. We can conceive of no greater torture than to be compelled to endure the slow, deliberate, steady, faithful grindings of the mind machine, which reproduces all the scenes and events of a sorrowful, sinful, misspent life, and keeps this up forever.

Third, It is a beautiful something.

As we have said, we neither know its shape or color. The general opinion is that it is white. A confirmation of this thought is that whenever the soul is aroused, there is a flash of light in the face.

But of one thing we feel assured, and that is, that every human spirit is beautiful. Doubtless in this respect the king has no advantage over the beggar, the civilized man over the heathen, nor one race above another. Made in God's image, they are all compelled to be lovely.

As we view the human family, after an external fashion, we see great differences produced in face and form by clothing, old age, disease, poverty and suffering. And so consciously and unconsciously a very great variety of treatment is rendered to people. But the eye of God pierces these externals of accident and misfortune, and sees within every human form a beautiful soul. And those who are filled with God's Spirit have a measure of the same discernment and recognize the loveliness and preciousness of this hidden something within, called a spirit. As Angelo saw an angel in a stone, so they see a beautiful possibility beneath a hard and unattractive exterior. They know that an invaluable gem is in these crumbling walls of clay.

The soul is lovely. Its Maker, and the likeness in which it was fashioned, proves that. But also, its swift and vanishing appearance in the face puts

the matter beyond question. Who has not seen it tremble on the lip, laugh in the eye, and at times stretch out its arms to you?

When the soul is allowed to have continued rulership over the animal life all have observed the cultured, attractive look that appears stamped on the countenance. Then there are moments when under the mighty influence of truth perceived or received, some great deed of moral heroism, some sacrifice to man or God, some great influx of the divine life and glory, the soul appears fairly looking at you out of the face, which is in itself transfigured by its glorious presence. It is noticeable that even the homely become attractive, and the naturally beautiful sweep beyond that into an angelic appearance, when the soul, aroused by the Holy Ghost, stands gazing out into the world through the face, as one stands and looks out from a window.

Fourth, It is a lonely something.

It came into the world alone; it leaves the world alone, and is made to stand alone before the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is fenced off from all other beings in a body which encases it, and looks out of its clay prison upon the world, as a man on an island gazes upon the ocean washing around him.

This fact, in addition to others, produces the indescribably solitary feeling which every soul has felt with bitterest pangs, and at times came near sinking under.

Fifth, It is a friendless something.

We do not mean that a soul does not love, and is not loved. We do not say there are no such things as attachments and warm, true friendships. Such a statement would be absurd and false. And yet we reiterate the fact of the profound friendlessness of the human spirit.

When we recall that a deep religious experience is to place one at once into a place where opposition comes alike from friend and foe; when we

remember that our own loved ones, with a mistaken affection, try to bring us into amusements, employments and places which are simply ruin and death to the spiritual life, some idea of the soul's friendlessness begins to dawn on the reader.

Sixth, It is a restless something.

No argument is needed here. A glance within, and the study of human life without, confirm the statement. This invisible spirit wants rest, and is after it. Its actions prove it.

The trails in the forest lead down to springs and brooks. The physical thirst drives animal life to the seeking, finding and frequent return to streams of water. In like manner the soul, impelled, not to say driven, by its own yearnings, is seen going in every direction for satisfaction. It leaves its trail everywhere. Its track is found by the side of every earthly pool and cistern of pleasure. The pity is that it makes such amazing blunders in searching after spiritual rest and gratification. The marvel is that an animal is truer in its instincts than a spirit in its reasonings and judgments.

The only perfect rest for the soul is to be found in God. It was made for Him, is restless without him, and will be wretched as well as undone forever if it does not find Him. It seems to require years for the soul to discover that the eye and ear are never satisfied with seeing and hearing, that the spirit may be infatuated for a brief while, but never inwardly contented and filled by an earthly object. When the discovery takes place, then the life of the misanthrope, and recluse or the suicide is often the result. Tell the disappointed, soured, embittered man that the cause of his unhappiness, heart emptiness, and life failure is that he has missed God, and likely as not he will laugh the informer to scorn.

Astronomy tells of numerous small bodies flying through space and circling about the sun. They originally came from that great shining orb,

and their only hope of rest is to fall back into the place from whence they came.

The parable is plain. We came from God. He saw to it in our creation that enough of His nature was implanted in us to make us restless and unhappy until we returned to Him, fell in his embrace, and found that blessed repose and perfect heart-contentedness only to be realized in God Himself, through Jesus Christ, His Son.

[Transcriber Note: Either the printer or author mistakenly placed two "Sixth" points in the original text. The second of those two "Sixth" points follows this inserted comment.]

Sixth, It is a dreadfully imperiled something.

There is no danger in the universe, frightful as it may seem, that can be compared for a moment to the peril which threatens the soul. The ruin and destruction of a soul demands, as some one has said, that the heavens are veiled, and the stars hung with crepe.

Let the reader think for a moment of what a world we are living in. It is a vision of the weak flying from the strong, every form of life trying to escape some kind of danger and death. The insect is avoiding the bird, the dove is flying from the hawk, the fish is rushing from the angler, the smaller animals running from the larger, the larger from the hunter, and destruction and death is on every breeze. The trap, dead fall, baited hook, net, spear, sword, musket and cannon are seen everywhere, and blood is trickling in every field and wood, and life is being gasped out everywhere. Dreadful as is the spectacle, yet the heart-chilling thought at once comes up, that none of these dangers and deaths can be likened to the peril and ruin that threaten the soul. A doom and destruction is on the track, and in full pursuit of the human spirit, which transcends in horror all the others beyond words to describe.

A world of devils are unified to accomplish this destruction. Sin in every

conceivable form is at work to get control of and damn the spirit made in God's image. Temptation is lurking on every side to spring upon and drag it down. Traps, pitfalls, baited hooks, painted decoys, every imaginable device of hell, is set to deceive, bewilder, overcome and undo forever the soul made in the image of God. The wonder is how any one can escape, And none would be saved but for the grace of God.

Seventh, It is a boundless something.

We mean that the invisible Spirit within seems to be endowed with inexhaustible capacities. As long as we observe its life it is learning. Its possibilities seem to have no end. In a strange sense it has bottomless depths and topless heights.

Men but faintly realize the value of the soul. If they did, better care would be taken of it. Christ knows its worth, and declares that a man could be the eternal loser, if he exchanged it for the whole world. According to the Bible, the soul is more precious than the entire earth, with its continents and seas, its forests and harvests, its gold and silver mines, and stores of precious gems.

The way that the soul can receive knowledge of all kinds; the systematizing and classifying; the ticketing, labeling and putting away in mental drawers for future use; the constant addition of facts with no sense of plethora, but ardent desires for more and boundless room for more, constitutes one of the amazing things about the human spirit.

It is evident that the soul from its very nature can make the choice of having a bottomless abyss experience within, and an eternally sinking in itself; or it can have the topless height, and be forever rising in all that is pure, true, holy and divine.

If a life of sin is chosen, the man will find, sooner or later, that he has a soundless pit within him; and the steady fall from day to day, the constant sinking from mean, meaner to meanest, from vile, viler to vilest, with

yawning depths far beneath the present evil doing, and to which he feels he is going — all this will serve in a measure to show the boundless capacities of the soul.

We have a river in the South, whose broad powerful current slices off hundreds and thousands of acres of land, sometimes whole plantations at a time, sucks them up in its swirl, and sweeps them far off into the distant ocean. Then we have a stream in the mountains which suddenly disappears and carries with it whatever is floating on its bosom, never to be seen any more. Besides, we have read of a hole in a large natural cavern that seems to be bottomless: you may drop a stone and listen for the fall, but you will listen in vain. Again, we all know that if a rock could be cast from the earth, and laws of gravitation suspended, that rock would fall forever. Into the deep, black, empty, infinite space which underlies the universe, it would enter, and sink, sink, sink, forever and forever.

It requires all these figures and illustrations to show what is meant by a fallen and falling soul. We have all seen sin, like a Mississippi River, cutting away the spiritual acres of a man's life. Truth was washed away; honor, honesty and purity were swallowed up; reputation departed; and character disappeared.

We have also seen iniquity like a sinking hole in the spiritual life.

Everything said to and done for the transgressor went immediately out of sight. Sermons, prayers, conversations, entreaties, warnings, rebukes, tears, all alike fell into the cavernous character, and were heard of no more.

We were calling into and trying to fill up a bottomless pit. There seemed nothing within to catch and hold up a Gospel message or personal appeal.

Then we have seen the sinner falling like the stone descended through infinite space.

There is no doubt that when Christ spoke of hell being a bottomless pit, he was thinking not so much of locality as a spiritual state or condition.

His mind was upon the everlasting sinking into darker moral depths of a lost soul.

This falling, while going on in life, is unquestionably retarded by the restraining grace of God, and by many extraneous things, like music, literature, public opinion and church influence. But the hour comes when the soul, leaving the body and entering eternity, will find itself stripped of all these things, and is left to follow its own bent, which is a perpetual inclination to sink. There is no doubt that when the spirit of a man has broken beyond the law of spiritual gravitation and commenced falling, it will continue to fall eternally. The centripetal power of God's grace has been cast off; the centrifugal force of self-will set on fire by sin alone operates, and means that the man gets farther from God every minute, hour, day, year, century, cycle and age, and through eternity itself. He is falling, falling, falling; lower and lower; deeper and deeper; sinking on himself; sinking in himself; and finding to his horror that he himself is a bottomless abyss.

On the other hand, if the soul chooses God and good, then we begin to see what is meant by topless heights in the spirit life.

All of us have marked the improvement, development and steady advancement of a soul after its conversion and sanctification. The progress in some instances was remarkable and in others wonderful. When filled with the Spirit we walk in the light steadily and faithfully with God, there is a constant growth and rise in the spiritual life all the while. People see it, and the soul feels it. It stands thrilled with the consciousness of its unfolding powers; while the months and years are accentuated and marked by the realization of greater wisdom, deeper love, increased gentleness and tenderness, with a commensurate firmness and power in the things of God. A few years ago, at a college commencement, we saw a schoolgirl who had come to the place of learning from a back country neighborhood. Both face

and manner showed the mental and social lack. Grace, knowledge and instruction had separate works to do in her behalf. About that time her soul was converted and sanctified, and then followed the training of mind and heart and enrichment of both. Some months ago we met the same girl, 12 but had to be introduced to her. The crude schoolgirl had disappeared, and in her place stood an elegant young woman with refined manners, cultured mind, deeply spiritual face, and noble Christian life. And yet this marvelous change is but the beginning. Eternity lies before this young maiden, with its everlasting progress and development, and as one of the daughters of the King, she will actually add grace to His palace, and with an increasing glory and honor forever.

In one of our largest cities a burglar, who was imprisoned for theft, was converted to God in a cell while reading one of Moody's sermons in a newspaper. After his release, he was sanctified and joined the M. E. Church, South. His life became irreproachable, and his face familiar at a number of holiness camp-meetings. He had been such a bold criminal, and such a terror to the police, that for months and even years after his change, the officers of the law kept watchful eyes upon him. But all at last marked the change in his life, and above all the wonderful transformation in his face. We have seen two photographs taken of him, one while he was in the depths of sin, and the other after he was sanctified and a devoted member of the church. The contrast was simply amazing, and constituted a powerful sermon in itself. The contrast was so dark, lowering, vicious, animal-like, and even devil-like, that it was hard to believe that the other photograph, showing a noble, open countenance, full of gracious light and love, could be the same man. And yet it was, and thousands who have seen the pictures and know the man as did the writer, can vouch for it. And yet this improvement is but the beginning. Other heights of grace still tower above this redeemed man, and remain for all redeemed men. There

are peaks of knowledge, dizzy elevations of glory, and mountain tops of grace and goodness and love and holiness, that shall be seen ascending one above another through the never-ending ages of eternity. And we are to ascend them forever. Topless heights in heaven over against bottomless depths in Hell. An eternal ascension of the soul in holiness and happiness above, as well as the everlasting sinking of the spirit in wickedness and wretchedness below.

It fairly dazes the mind to think what God's redeemed ones will be and look like in Heaven, a thousand or ten thousand or a million years from now. It does not yet appear what we shall be; we only are told we shall be like Him. But what will He, the King of Glory, be like? So the mystery is not cleared up. The Glory has not yet been described.

A hint comes to us in Revelation, when John falls down to worship a transcendently glorious being, whom he sees and mistakes for a divine personage. The rebuking words to him were, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, one of thy brethren, the prophets."

May God help the reader to guard and preserve a soul which has such a wonderful appearance and is to enter upon such a glorious destiny above the stars.

## Chapter 2 ~ The Way of Salvation

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ONE of the marvelous facts in the spiritual life is the possibility of communication with the invisible God. The eternal world can be heard from. A cable has been laid joining earth and heaven and its name is prayer. Upon this line flits the human cry, and back flashes the divine message perfectly understood by the one to whom it is sent.

Before such a fact, the telephone wire of hundreds of miles and the telegraph cable of a thousand leagues sink into nothing, for by this remarkable medium God and man are put in connection, and tidings flash from the invisible world, and eternity and time, in a sense, are linked together.

Of course the natural mind fails to believe and receive this great truth, and professes to be amused at the bare idea; but those who have heard and still hear from God in this manner have their confidence in no wise shaken by the unbelief of men, and continue to receive the blessed heart-thrilling messages from the skies.

The result of these answered prayers is deliverance from sin, transformation of character, usefulness and victory in life and heaven at last. This fact should cause men to study it carefully, and especially note certain points observed by a man who was signally successful in supplication. In other words, the kind of person who gets in touch with God and the invisible kingdom of glory.

Christ tells of a certain man, a Publican, who came upon the earth end of the heavenly cable and sent a message, and obtained a response that not only saved the individual himself, but filled the earth with his fame. Now as there are many who are skeptical about the possibility of such a divine interview, or whose souls have but barely entered upon the alphabet of

heavenly communion and spiritual experiences, it is not only well and wise for them, but their duty to study this victor in prayer and see what things are mentioned about him, and what practices he observed which may be lacking in themselves, the performance and fulfillment of which will bring the lacking knowledge and glory to their own souls.

One thing Christ said about the Publican was that “He went up into the temple.”

It is true that God is accessible everywhere, but some places are peculiarly favorable, for getting in touch with heaven. If there had been no need of the temple, tabernacle, synagogue and church, God would not have provided them, and that man is wise who places himself in the most favorable and helpful surroundings while he seeks salvation.

The very fact that the Publican went up to the temple showed a certain amount of faith in God to begin with, and in addition, that he recognized and bowed to the appointments and ordinances of heaven. The spirit of separatism from the church is certainly not taught here, while the individual who laughs and scoffs at the church gets a withering rebuke in this parable where the temple is seen to be a door of heaven to the seeking soul. The house of God has proved the same to millions of souls since that day.

A second thing said about the man is, that “He went up to pray.”

The Savior says that two men went up for that purpose, but one evidently forgot his original intention, and instead of supplicating, fell to praising himself. This individual was a Pharisee.

He is not the only person who seems to have misunderstood the character of the church, and has forgotten that Christ said that His Father’s house was one of prayer, and made it a social hall, a lounging place, a Chautauqua auditorium, a Sunday rendezvous ground for friends and acquaintances; in fact, anything but what it should be a gateway to the skies and a vestibule

of glory.

It has ever been a lovely sight to the writer to see multitudes of people flocking to the churches, even though many went not with the best motives. It is a good place to go, and a right thing to do, and blessings innumerable and unspeakable have resulted from it to countless thousands who even attended with little or no expectation of being blessed.

If, however, like the Publican, one goes up with the avowed purpose of prayer, blessing is certain to come.

A third fact appearing about the spiritual victory was his humility.

This is made manifest in the man's standing afar off, and in the casting down of his head. Poor heartsick one, he little knew that he was in the very best position to hear from heaven. Doubtless he did not know that the Bible said, "God resisteth the proud," and "the proud he knoweth afar off." Perhaps he had not even noticed the defeat of the boasting Pharisee in the court above him. He did not stop to reason how disgusting and shocking is the swagger and strut of any man in the presence of God; nor consider that outside of grace, the human soul has every reason for abasement in the dust and none for self-exaltation.

All these things were true, but the Publican doubtless never thought of them, he only knew he was a soul-sick, miserable man wanting deliverance, but feeling perfectly unworthy of anything at the hands of God. Hence the pathetic attitude in the outer court of the temple.

We have marked scenes wonderfully like this one of Christ's own drawing, and have had the eyes to fill and the heart to melt at the sight. If the spectacle of a heartbroken man with head bowed on his breast in some remote shadowy corner of the church, should so move us, how very tenderly will God regard such a drooping, grieving figure.

A fourth feature of life shows the man not only thoroughly humble, but deeply convicted. The Bible says "he smote upon his breast."

This alone plainly declares an inward, mental state of unrest and suffering. The naturalness and eloquence of the act is such that it needs no enlarging upon. Conviction had seized upon him, and the man was miserable.

When men get really convicted they will soon find God. The burden is so great that they must obtain relief, and as none but a divine hand can give this, that hand must be found. People with any spiritual knowledge worth speaking of know this, and are sighing for the return of that mental and spiritual distress which fell upon men not only under the preaching of the apostles, but of the Wesleys and Whitefields, and still later under the preachers who swept this land one and two generations back.

It is a blessed sight to see men smite their breasts, and fall down and struggle in agony on the ground. This is much more impressive and awe-inspiring; than the sight of a congregation of perfectly composed looking people signing cards to the effect that under the circumstances and considering all things they would like to be Christians.

To see the genuinely convicted man today, one has to attend a full salvation meeting where men preach with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Some of us are very familiar with the sight of men and women rushing up the aisles, falling down at the altar, beating their breasts, and filling the air with cries which pierce every heart. And we also know that when people get this far they are exceedingly close to salvation.

A fifth feature in the case was the man's confession. He called himself a sinner.

It is to be remembered that the individual who went up to the temple with the Publican spent quite a while in complimenting himself. He was very thankful that he was not like other people, etc., etc. The record is that he went down as he came, empty, and doubtless much emptier and worse in heart.

The condition of hearing from heaven and having God speak to the soul is

an honest admission or confession of what we are in the moral world. Herein is the explanation of many an unanswered prayer, and the greater, less, or utter failure of certain meetings held in churches and tents. The preachers and people tried to fool God. They presented the wrong ticket at the gate. They appeared at the door with non de plumes and aliases. They were not what they seemed. They tried to make God a partner to deceit and hypocrisy. They tried in this condition to press through a door over which hung such words and sentences as, "Nothing that maketh a lie can enter in," "They that do his commandments may enter in through the gates."

We all know that the worst of characters can be saved and all — and to come into the kingdom of grace. But the condition is that all sin must be left at the door. One may appear at the threshold as a liar, thief, fraud and hypocrite, but to cross it, all lying, theft, deception and dissimulation must be left on the earthward side of the door. Confession of sin and separation from it is indispensable to entrance. Honesty with God is absolutely imperative.

To insist on admission into grace, the possession of the divine favor, and walking with God in the ostensible light of a character which we do not possess, is to make God smile on fraudulency and take liars and impostors as companions.

If we want the word "Son!" to ring over the heavenly cable to our delighted souls we must first send the cry along the wire — "Sinner!" If we want God to come down in power on the meeting, we must uncover hearts and lives and tell the Almighty what kind of a crowd is calling upon Him. He insists upon truth. He demands that we call ourselves, and the things we have done by their true names, and then He will come. He will not have fellowship with deceit of and kind. A falsehood is the same to Him, whether it is covered by a broadcloth coat, silk dress, jeans garment

or the rags of a beggar. We must be true, we must uncover, we must confess.

A sixth fact in the Publican's case was that he asked only for mercy. His brief, but heart thrilling cry was, "God be merciful."

The man out of and away from God might as well learn the force of this truth. It is the only cry for a sinner to make. If men pleaded for justice the whole world would be damned. In all our wrongdoing we are without excuse. We have sinned in the face of knowledge, privilege, providence and grace. So the man who wants to hear from God in his pardon and adoption, or in his restoration to divine favor, must come with the single plea, "Be merciful." This, of course, brings the victim on the cross into sight, for Calvary, dreadful as it is on the heavenward side, is mercy on the earthward side. Christ is the mercy of God to this world, and we can only come to God through Him.

A seventh feature of the case was the strictly personal nature of the prayer, "God be merciful to me."

To draw the mind in from all others, to turn the attention from many disturbing and distressing things without, and fix it on the peril and present spiritual necessity of the soul is a victory in itself and means a speedy answer from heaven. We find many not only shut out from pardon, but from the blessing of perfect love, because they allow the spiritual condition of friends and family to divert their gaze from their own need. It is not selfish to say, God be merciful to me, God save me, God sanctify me. It is the quickest way to bless others, the nearest road to the salvation of the family.

The eighth feature in reward to the spiritual victory was that the man used his voice.

We have been a close student for quite a number of years of people who are seeking salvation, and find a most remarkable difference as to clear and

immediate results between those who bow in gloomy silence at the altar, and those who cry aloud to God for mercy. Whether the calling intensifies the desires of the soul, strengthens faith, and builds a wall between the man and the old life, we do not stop to answer; we only know that such a method pursued by the seeker meets with an amazingly swift response from God, who has already stated in his Word, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it," "Call upon me and I will deliver thee."

In looking back upon the Bible conditions necessary to obtain the heavenly answer, and the life interview between man and God, we see no mention of dress, position, accomplishment, learning, influence, culture, grace, dignity or any of the things so magnified by men. One needs not to be a gentleman by birth, a graduate of a college, or possess fine standing in church or state. But if any man will put himself in the way of truth and duty, will honor God's house and divinely instituted means of grace; if he will call on the Lord humbly, earnestly, continuously, with his eyes fixed on that unspeakable mercy of God, Jesus Christ, Heaven will catch the cry, the King will receive it, the skies will bend and smile, while the celestial cable will flash the message of pardon or purity back to earth, and another miracle of grace be beheld in our midst.

## Chapter 3 ~ Christian Service

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THERE are many kinds of employment, or services on earth. There are numbers of them which, while perfectly proper, legitimate and honorable, will do nothing for the soul in the way of enlargement and improvement. Cotton picking, corn pulling and selling goods are all right in themselves, but there is nothing in them to develop the intellectual and spiritual nature. If nothing besides these as factors are introduced into the life, that life is compelled to be an arrested one. Hence all of us have seen the man of the desk or counter remain the same little, narrow, shut up and shut in individual; twenty and thirty years seeming to make and mark no change. Different from all the employments of earth is the service of God. To enter upon it is to feel at once its ennobling, transforming and transfiguring influence and power; and as the years roll on, the moral elevation, the spiritual broadening, the heart cultivation and the whole uplifted life is not only a conscious fact to the Christian himself, but equally evident to the outside world.

Two sisters may be born and raised about the same hearthstone, and up to the age of nineteen possess similar advantages in the way of education and accomplishments. Now, let one of them be converted to God and be parted for a year. One goes into the world and becomes the refined, polished woman of society. She never says or does a single coarse or inelegant thing. And yet with all the social culture she possesses, in spite of all her pleasant speeches and affable manners, there is a painful sense of the artificial, a hollowness in the voice; a lack of sincerity, and absence of real heart and soul under the elegant bearing that makes one think of veneering on furniture, marble statues and moonbeams on an icy surface. On the other hand, the converted sister has been for twelve months in the

service of God, and it has left its unmistakable mark in the life, in the gracious beautiful lines on her face, expression in the voice, light in the eyes, soul in all that is said and done, and God's transforming grace evidently in complete possession of the woman. The difference between social and soul culture would be evident at a glance, and the remarkable superiority of the latter over the former unquestionable.

So great is the reflex benefit of the Christian service upon the soul that no man can afford not to enter upon it. It is to rob one's self of that spiritual development which can only come that way. In the study of the causes of this life transfiguration we find the following explanations:

The first reason is to be found in the constant spiritual contact with Jesus Christ.

A service which throws us with the Savior is bound to tell on the appearance, manner, conversation, spirit, profoundly affect our hearts and lives. It is not more sure with refined, cultivated people will change our manners for the better, than frequent touch with Christ will profoundly affect our hearts and lives. It is not more sure that when one passes through a garden filled with flowers that a perfume will be brought out on the garments, than if we come in daily contact with Jesus we will bear away with us some of the fragrance of His beautiful, perfect character and life.

It is said of the disciples that when arrested and stood before the Sanhedrin that "they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." The aroma of His life was in their lives, the gleam of His holy nature was reflected in their faces, the calmness of His spirit was felt in their presence, and the sublime fearlessness of the crucified rang out in their voices. In a word, it is impossible to be with Christ, to talk, to walk with and work for Him without its being recognized in face, voice and actions of the life.

In the South before the war we had two kinds of slaves the field hands and the house servants. The latter were selected from the former. They were brought up to what was called "The Big House," or the family mansion, and entered upon their domestic duties. In a few weeks the difference would be manifest to all between them and the class they left. They not only purposely patterned after the master and mistress in manners, speech and dress, but almost insensibly became more refined in many respects. It was these same house servants that the hotels and steamboats wanted as cabin boys, chambermaids and waiters.

So we are brought from the field to the Big House. We talk and walk with God. The eye continually rests upon Jesus. We drink in His spirit, while we follow, obey and imitate Him. Who can wonder at the soul improvement and its ever-growing likeness to Jesus under such circumstances?

The second reason for spiritual development can be found in the contact by the worker with human souls.

That the soul is beautiful we doubt not. That it is not only a treasure but a treasure house we are equally certain. That it is the most wonderful of God's creations we feel assured from plain statements in the Bible and the study of its nature and never ending possibilities Christ speaking of it says that it would be better that a man lose the whole world than his soul. Its value far transcends the worth of this globe, though the earth may wave with harvests, be robed with gold and silver and sprinkled with rubies and diamonds.

Christian service brings us into the midst of souls to work for their salvation. It stands to reason that we could not labor with and for these marvelous creations of God withheld benefit. Corn, cotton and dry goods cannot communicate any good to us from their very nature, but immortal spirits made in God's image exert a very different influence. They teach

us, while we try to instruct them, and we gather profitable and eternal lessons from the humblest among them. We discover that what we have regarded simply as a field of labor is also a school of Christ. We awaken to see that men help us while we help them, and that in a true, deep sense we are debtors to every man.

It is enough to thrill and renew the heart of every discouraged worker who is ready to give up, and craving to die, to think for a moment of the marvelous objects which claim his attention, energy and sacrifice. From the windows of moving trains that command a view of the landscape we see the farmers walking breast deep in barley, rye and wheat, and then suddenly remember with a swelling, rejoicing heart, that we toil for an everlasting harvest; for souls which God made, Christ died for, and that will flourish on the uplands of heaven in fadeless beauty and glory forever.

The very thought is sufficient to revive the spirit and make the jaded servant of God push with new hope and vigor onward through the years. The third reason for the soul's development is to be found in the character of the service performed.

To help human spirits in the matter of salvation means a constant demand on the noblest powers which we possess. It means calls not only on our love, patience, gentleness, meekness and long suffering, but on every fruit of the Spirit in us. The faculties of the intellect, the rich sensibilities of the heart, and the regal force of the will, all are placed under tribute and called into play in the work of bringing men to Christ.

The more difficult the work, the harder and more obdurate the sinner, and the more unyielding the community, the greater the drain upon us, and the greater result therefore in good. Ingratitude, perversity, opposition, persecution, with many other forms of sin, are anything but attractive and agreeable to deal with. And yet this very state of things calls on us for greater measures of kindness, pity and forbearance, and so becomes a

blessing to the soul.

As muscle is brought out by exercise, so faith is increased by use, and the character strengthened in all its virtues by the very discipline it receives and the demands made upon it.

The chiseling made upon us by the world's treatment is anything but pleasant, but something far lovelier than a marble statue is the inevitable result. The social and domestic sand-papery which we get, not once but repeatedly, awakens a protest on the part of nerves as well as spirit, but there comes a polish and shine from it, if the trials are borne, which is seen even in this world by every eye. The constant demand on strength and time, the monopolizing of the life itself, our inability to have our own way, to follow our peculiar preferences and to advance our own interest, all this looks like a wrong and suicidal course to many sensible people; but out of it all comes the most beautiful and Christlike of characters.

The breaking up of a stony, neglected field is a spectacle not to be forgotten. The rocks are broken to pieces and cast out; the stumps and logs are burned up; the great sub-soiling plows rip up its bosom; the harrows tear its breast; the hoes knock the clods to pieces; the hoofs of animals and feet of men walk over its surface in the process and progress of its improvement; the seed is sown and then there is the dragging of a heavy block up and down the rows of beds. This is followed by the cold and heat of changing seasons. There is also a time when the field seems left to itself; the laborers go away, and the farmer looks upon it from afar. But it is all right. The owner knows what he is about, and is filled with a sense of joy over the knowledge of labor well spent, and the assurance of a thirty, fifty and hundred fold yield in the crop which first heaves like a sea of green, then tosses later like a billowy yellow ocean, and still later covers the plain and hillsides in almost endless lines and rows of stacks and shocks of material plenty. But beautiful as is the scene, it cannot itself feel

the glow and sweet rapture of the man or men who lean against the fence and, looking upon the outstretched harvest field, know that this is the work of their hands. The very toil put forth has made them not only healthier and stronger, but even happier.

God is at work on us and in us while we labor for others in the Christian life. No matter what may be the strain and drain; no matter how numerous the rocky hearts we encounter and the hard conditions which surround us; no matter how trying the plowing, planting, hoeing, weeding and waiting seasons may be; yet there is certain to come a double reward. First on the outside in the human harvest, and second in ourselves in what the labor itself did for us. We under the grace of God are made by the work. A delightful spiritual strength leaps in the veins, the face shines with moral health, the lips laugh from a sweet gladness within, while upon the retina of the eyes beaming upon you one can almost see the waving, abundant harvests of redeemed lives made by this faithful workman of God.

## Chapter 4 ~ Christian Pay

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THE fact of service suggests the thought of remuneration. A certain equivalent is given in the world for labor and called pay. When a man undertakes toil for another the understanding is that he is to be recompensed.

This universal observance is not dropped in the spiritual life, and is found working there with greater results and richer satisfaction than anywhere else. Christ is discovered to be the best of paymasters. He does not propose that a man should serve Him for nothing, and he who hangs back from the Christian life for fear of loss shows that he has not read the Bible nor studied the lives of God's people. Christ not only pays, but remunerates abundantly, and in many ways besides.

The pay day is not necessarily Monday, Wednesday, or Saturday; nor at the end or first of the month. One of the peculiar features connected with Heaven's way of rewarding is seen in its suddenness and unexpectedness. The soul may be weary and discouraged, when, in another instant, it is thrilled and delighted with a blessed enrichment from the skies, in heaven's best coin, which goes rolling, clinking and sparkling all over the tables of the heart.

Moreover, this pay of Christ does not consist of one kind of coin; for even the nations of the earth have gold, silver, copper and paper, but heaven has all this and more beside to make up the celestial currency. It is not, however, the financial part of the reward that we speak of in this chapter, although there is no question but that it pays to serve God in this world, even for material reasons. It is the more spiritual side of the question we would now dwell upon.

One pay is realized in sudden influences of peace and joy.

Not more certainly does a tide sweep into a partially emptied bay or harbor, nor a delightful breeze pour itself through the gates of the west 26 with reviving, exhilarating power into a sultry evening, than that divine influences are made to breathe upon and sweep over a fainting Christian soul.

The change seen upon the face of Nature is not more remarkable than the transformation in the man or woman. A sweet, new strength is in the heart, a new light seems falling on the earth, while a new willingness to endure burdens and perfect victory for the time being, over all thing, is in the soul.

Now it is we say, if in the regenerated experience, we will go in the strength of this meat forty days and nights; we will not worry any more about our troubles; and we fully intended to do as we said. But the manna melted by nine o'clock, the meat lasted but one day, the water gave out in the wilderness, and the old time murmurings were resumed. So we went on our way until we obtained the higher form of Christian remuneration an abiding joy in the soul.

A second kind of pay is the gracious renewing of the spiritual life.

A tide or mighty wind sweeping in is one thing, while the dew falling silently on the grass and a zephyr stealing from the skies is another.

In like manner there are gentle manifestations of divine power. There are influences breathed upon us by the Holy Spirit, which for tenderness, quietness, and yet completeness of heart renewal would defy all description. David alludes to this when he says, "He restoreth my soul."

Sometimes we are exhausted by a day of toil or we may have talked too much; anyhow the soul has been hurt in some manner. A weak, dispirited feeling is upon us; the discouraging whisper is in the heart, "You have failed again!" Just then, while brooding upon the matter, we feel the divine touch, a gentle, reviving influence comes upon the soul, and lo! we are

made whole again!

It might have been in the house of God; or in the closet of prayer; or with Bible in hand; or while sitting thoughtfully by one's self without any conscious act of worship or effort made to touch the Lord, when suddenly we were made whole. It was done so gently, graciously and satisfyingly that the eyes were filled with happy tears, and the soul lost in wonder, love and praise.

A third pay is a habitually restful heart.

The Christian who possesses the secret of full salvation well knows this peculiar reward of Christ. The world cannot give it. Money cannot purchase it. Success cannot guarantee it. These conditions of life may bring spasms of gladness, thrills of temporary pleasure, but Christ alone can give the restful soul.

It is certainly a marvelous blessing to wake up in the morning, not only without the old-time heavy load on the heart, but with a deep, sweet peace in the soul. In spite of every changing circumstance of life it is our privilege to awaken each morning with a song in the heart. This is the pay that Christ gives every one of His followers who have followed Him not only to the cross, but tarried in the upper room for the baptism with the Holy Ghost.

A fourth payment is felt in the consciousness of being a blessing to others. It is a great thing to help in any way an immortal being made in the image of God. It must make a very soft death bed pillow to the philanthropist or to any benevolent man who has made life easier and sweeter to his fellow creatures by the gifts of his hands in material mercies.

And yet there is something beyond this in the character and duration of benefits. The soul is far greater than the body, and he who brings that soul to Christ, or if it be already saved, will do that for it which enlarges, ennobles, strengthens, and in different ways blesses it, that man is doing

even more for his brother, a something that money and food cannot do, and that will endure as a work when suns have burned out and stars have dropped from their sockets.

It is impossible to be a true follower of Christ without being such a blessing to others. And, moreover, we are permitted to see a part of our labor; and this is in itself a wonderful pay. Who can look for a moment on a man pardoned and sanctified, comforted and blessed under one's own words and influence without the sweetest joy in the soul.

Sin pulls men down. The sinner is compelled to look at the ghastly spectacle of human beings dragged down in different ways by himself.

This is some of the wages of the transgressors and a sad pay it is.

Christianity builds up and sets fallen men on their feet, and so a part of the Christian pay is to see a procession of happy faced men and women on their way to glory, whom, under God, he started for the better world through his devoted labors.

Dr. C.K. Marshall, one of the most gifted preachers in the South, was sitting in his garden one day with an unusually heavy heart. He found it impossible to shake off the gloom. Glancing at a church paper in his hand his eyes fell on the obituary column, and he began reading about the triumphant death of a Christian lady in Arkansas. The notice ended by saying, "This godly woman was saved under the ministry of Dr. A. K. Marshall." At once the tears gushed to the eyes of the preacher, and a delicious joy filled his soul. All sadness was gone in the thought that he had led a soul to God and heaven. In other words, Christ dropped some of His pay into the soul of His drooping servant, and, judging from the happy tears, swelling heart and beaming face, that pay was eminently satisfactory.

A fifth payment is the friendship and love of the people.

Some Christians are given to talking of their sacrifices for the gospel, what

they left and what they gave up. If they would begin to count up what they have gained they would be amazed.

We have certainly added to our fathers and mothers; for while leaving one we have had given us scores in the Gospel, whose tenderness and affection we cannot doubt, and whose trembling hands have been laid on our heads in blessing as fervently as if our natural parents.

We have also gained in brothers and sisters; for in leaving four or five we now have them by the hundreds and thousands. Moreover, they prove their love, and some of them have been kinder, gentler, more affectionate, and even more liberal to us than our own flesh and blood.

We have gained in homes. We left one, perhaps none, and lo! hundreds of houses over the land stand with hospitable doors wide open for our coming. To be a true Christian is to have a knife, fork, something to eat, a bed, and above all a cordial welcome at many a lovely and excellent home. Sin cannot and does not pay this way, but Christ can. We have never in our life heard of the doctor's room, or the lawyer's room, in any home in the land. But the "preacher's room" is a household word.

It began with a woman in Shunem, who as she observed the holy life of Elisha said to her husband, "Let us build a room for him, and put in it a bed, stool, table and candlestick." This is the first record of the prophet's chamber or preacher's room, but who can count them today? There are family circles that talk about the absent man of God. They write to him and send him word: "When are you coming? we all want to see you!" This is part of the pay of Christ.

A gentleman was going down the Ohio River to Cincinnati and southern parts beyond. He was a Christian, but a different and reserved one, and so held himself aloof from the other passengers. On arrival at Cincinnati he found that the boat would have to stay nearly two days before going on her journey down the river. Every passenger but himself was leaving the

steamer. The prospect of the two days' lonely waiting was not enviable; so, with a sudden rush of courage, he leaned over the guards, and, speaking to the throng of passengers crowding the gangway in their departure, he cried, "I don't know one of you, but if any man out there loves the Lord Jesus he is my brother!" Instantly several gentlemen returned and shaking him by the hand cordially invited him to spend the two days with them instead of remaining at the hot, noisy wharf on the river side. He received three invitations in as many minutes to good Christian homes. The name of Jesus was the power which rolled the coin of a loving regard and welcome before him.

A sixth payment is the divine honor placed upon the follower of Christ. We have all listened to lectures, addresses and discourses that were everything in an intellectual way. They received the admiration and applause of the audience, but it was evident that the favor of God was not upon the speaker.

On the other hand, we have listened to personal testimonies and sermons that fairly dripped with unction. Nothing brilliant or remarkable was said, but something undoubtedly was being done. The Lord was putting His hand upon His servant and setting His seal upon his every utterance. If this great honor could be purchased with money how quickly some would offer the price. But it is a coin in itself, and is given in exchange for a certain commodity, and that commodity a completely surrendered human life.

A minister once said of another who thus stood before an audience, full of the holy strength, confidence and independence born of such a relation with heaven: "He speaks as if what he said was true, and could not be denied. He towers up there in the pulpit like a giant. He acts as independently as if he were a king."

Yes, all these things are characteristic of rich people, and a man with the

blessed coin of heaven ringing in his soul, sparkling in his eyes, and rolling all over the table of his heart, might be excused if he feels rich, acts independently, thinks he is a giant, and looks like he is a king. Especially should this be so when his feelings and convictions are corroborated by the plain statement of the Bible which says that he is rich, that he is an heir of God, that he is equal to a thousand, and that he is a king here, and is to be a still greater one in the kingdom of glory.

This is part of Christ's pay. O, that the people of the world who have been defrauded by the devil, cheated by his broken banks, and fooled with his numerous counterfeits, would come to Christ and receive a reward which is not only perfectly satisfactory in this life, but is to be an hundred fold more in the world to come!

## Chapter 5 ~ The Uses of Temptation

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ONE of the features of a probationary state is the fact of temptation. It may come directly from an evil spirit, or from a pleasing object. It maybe felt as a brooding horror upon the soul, or approach with a promised delight to the body. In its assault upon the citadel of a man's life, the Will, temptation travels upon various routes. Its form is seen moving upon the emotions of the heart, along the sensations of the body, and endeavoring to steal its way up the channels of all the senses, and every appetite known to the race. It has been a wonder to many why God should permit temptation to come to immortal creatures, who if they prove faithless and fall under the attack, make shipwreck of happiness and character, and finally if sin is continued in to the end, are ruined forever. The wonder grows when in full recognition of the momentous consequences of yielding to the evil suggestion and movement, the Bible says: "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." The Scripture does not say fall under, but "into." Just as it does not say, Blessed is the man who is tempted, but who "endureth temptation."

Moreover it is remarkable that the apostle was writing to Christians when he said these things. The verse reads, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations." Evidently there is a moral use of temptation to the Christian. It is this fact we call attention to; not to the necessity of temptation as a feature of moral probation on earth; but to the use of these strange and perilous influences upon the soul of the child of God.

God of course does not and can not tempt, but He allows us as His people to be tempted. Why does He permit it? What is the advantage and good which He expects to come out of it and which in many cases is

undoubtedly derived?

One is the knowledge of self.

Very many Christians do not know themselves, and never would but for temptation. The Scripture says the children of Israel were led about in the wilderness for forty years, that they might know what was in their heart. In like manner through the probings, motions and assaults of temptation we are made to see the barely suspected evil, and the vulnerable place in our nature and character.

Peter never dreamed at first that he was capable of denying the Lord, but under circumstances of testing in which we find involved man fear, self-interest and self-protection, he went down. Saul, the king of Israel, had a new heart and started out humble enough, but temptations to pride and self-will soon came in sufficient number and force to show him he was not really as lowly as one would have supposed when he was found "hiding in the stuff." David, in spite of his beautiful psalms and leaping before the ark of God, had a weak place in his character and there was most likely to fall. In due time the circumstance came which revealed the vulnerable spot. He got to know himself under the sad power of temptation.

In war a battery is often placed upon a hill and the guns trained upon the surrounding woods. It is called "feeling for the enemy." This is what temptation does; it discovers for us the hidden foe of the heart.

In dental matters, when a man has an uneasy feeling in a tooth, the nerve of which he thought had been killed, he places himself under treatment.

The dentist has a number of drills and very fine, sharp, needle-like instruments which he uses to discover the little particle of nerve matter which may have been left. When he finds it, the patient in the chair instantly knows it without being told.

So we may honestly think we are sound and all right in the spiritual life. It

is the province of temptation under the overruling power of God to find and touch the remains of the carnal nature, and the weak places of the moral character. If the man is not thoroughly sound, by and by the drill and probe of the Tempter will reach him.

This does not mean necessarily a fall into sin. Far from it. Many are thus tempted, stand self-revealed in some unsuspected weakness and yet do not fall into transgression. Nevertheless they get to know themselves, which is a great gain and triumph in itself.

We recall the grave look of older Christians when they have sometimes to listen to the swaggering, boastful talk of young Christians. These younger followers of the Lord have mistaken the cannon-shooting of the Fourth of July for the siege of Vicksburg. They have been in the battle of Lexington, but know nothing of the fearful trials of Valley Forge. So they talk and so the older Christians listen, grave, thoughtful and oftentimes silent altogether. The young fledgling has the floor or rather the barnyard, and is talking about the great upper air currents, when he has never been higher than the hen-house in which he was born. He speaks indignantly about certain things, and tells us what he would do under such and such circumstances, and what should be done to parties who had said and done certain things. Meanwhile older Christians listen silently and often pityingly. Not that they tolerate sin, or would do wrong or have done wrong; and they have been higher than the hen-house, and felt the blast and rush of spiritual wickedness in high places against them. They have been far away from the barnyard with its simple history and relationships, and met a bear in a cave, struggled with a lion in the woods, and had a battle with a giant in the mountains. They killed them all, but they know what the paw of a bear is, the strength of a lion's jaw, and the awful power of a giant. They have gone through experiences, and obtained self-illuminations, and drank cups, and borne burdens, which add ten years

to one's life in a single day. In other words they have got to know themselves, and in this discovery of self are now better able to meet the onsets of the world, the flesh and the devil.

A second benefit is compassion for others.

Those are very tender and beautiful passages in the Word which speak of Christ having been tempted in every respect yet without sin, and of His being touched with a feeling for our infirmities, and having compassion on the ignorant and on them who are out of the way. He can feel for us, because He has been assaulted by the power of Hell, and knows our anguish in like conditions.

As we study men who have gone astray or lapsed in any way in the spiritual life, we notice that nothing touches them more deeply and is more potent as a human instrumentality in lifting them up and bringing them back as genuine compassion.

Another fact that strikes me is that it is very hard to understand and feel for people in certain mental and moral conditions when we have never been there, or realized any temptation to be there.

If a person could be raised in a state of seclusion from the world and not brought in contact with any of its forms of sin and sorrow, such an individual would make a wretched comforter and adviser in this heartbroken world. So not to feel certain forces of evil to beat upon the heart for admittance, is to make certain classes of our fellow beings perfect mysteries to us. We would not know how to counsel, cheer or otherwise assist them.

A woman who never lost a child makes a poor comforter to the bereaved mother next door. It is the woman who has seen the life go out of first one and then another of her little ones, whose voice moves and very touch brings comfort and strength.

An unconverted preacher knows not what to say to the weeping penitent

at the altar. So in the matter of temptation, ignorance of its changes, phases and forces would make one a failure as a sympathizer and helper of men in this world.

A number of times in life, the writer has felt in his breast a perfect surge of what he recognized to be Satanic influence, to do something desperate. He never dreamed for an instant of yielding, but the dark, awful pressure of those moments has been the means of creating a very tender, pitiful feeling in his soul for Christians who have been similarly assailed.

Again we recall a time in our early ministry when we were on our way to speak with an eminent preacher on the subject of a peculiar and distressing trial in the life, when we were distinctly and profoundly impressed by the Holy Spirit not to go to him, but to another person altogether. The last one, it is needless to say, understood the case and gave the help needed. The first one we see today would have frozen and discouraged the soul from lack of sympathy and appreciation of the case. A man not tempted in certain lines would stare with cold wonder at the confessions of a visitor who came to get instruction and direction about a matter of which he knew nothing. But if he has been tempted himself, there would not only an understanding attention be given to the confession, but a most pitiful and compassionate attention. He himself has not sinned, but he can see why and how the other man did. He remembers the tug and pull at his own heart, an hour when he wrestled not with flesh and blood but with principals ties and powers in high places, and when Satan with a troop of dark spirits tried to beat down the door of the will and get possession of the life. Hence it is that he listens with patience and pity, and is able to give helpful counsel to those who have been bewildered, saddened and hurt by the devil.

A third benefit accruing from temptation is humility.

To go down under the Tempter brings condemnation, self-abasement and

gloom. To be tempted without yielding brings to the mind and heart a much better state of things. Humility is a beautiful plant to flourish in the soul, and God is pleased to allow temptation to be one of the means for its development. The conviction after many and varied temptations is certain to be wrought in the mind, that but for the grace of God we would have been overwhelmed a thousand times. If this does not make the soul feel lowly, then what effect is produced?

The emotion of grateful, humble joy which swept through the heart of a preacher in England, when he saw a drunkard staggering before him, and said, "There goes John Newton," but for the grace of God, is the feeling of a man who has come successfully out of heavy temptations, under which many of his fellow creatures have fallen. He is glad but also humble, remembering who saved him, and how he was saved.

A fourth result of temptation is increased prayer and watchfulness.

A truly saved man learns to distrust himself. The strongest in the kingdom becomes more and more cautious, and realizes the need of supplicating as not all do, "Lead us not into temptation." How full of significance in its very position in the prayer is the next sentence, "But deliver us from evil."

So truly is it the case with many that temptation ends in evil, and so properly self-distrustful becomes the very saintliest in the kingdom of Christ, that while recognizing the good which can and does come from temptation, yet the child of God very naturally and properly dreads each new and powerful temptation, and thinks with thankful joy of the life and world where no such things exist forever.

Hence the discovered weakness of human nature, and the power of Satanic influence drives the Christian to renewed and redoubled watchfulness and prayer.

It is said that a man is no stronger than his weakest point. If this is so, then truly all of us have need to watch and pray. Not to do so is to invite

the world and the devil to take possession of us.

A fifth result is increased ability to help others.

It is a blessed thing to be able to assist immortal beings as they struggle through a thousand difficulties, discouragements, and besetments along the path of duty to heaven and eternal life. Happy indeed is the man who can speak the word which will put hope again in the sickened heart, and strength in the faltering feet. There are such people, and we have invariably observed that they are individuals who have been tossed about in many a spiritual storm, and walked in furnaces of fiercest moral trial.

If the reader will turn to the biographies of the most devout men he will be struck with their description of sore temptations, and dreadful personal attacks of Satan upon their souls, which would have swept them from their feet, but for their steadfast looking to Christ and calling on God.

Concerning the preeminent usefulness of these men, history leaves not a shadow of doubt. To such Christian characters we would rather go for help in time of great spiritual trial than to any other class of God's people.

When the writer felt the call to preach over twenty years ago, and with the call came all those bewilderments of mind, heart and conscience which Satan brings to confuse a man, he did a very foolish thing when he went for advice to a friend who was an unconverted man. How could a natural mind understand the things of God? The counsel he gave was of course absurd and could not be followed.

Equally great will be the failure to obtain information, comfort and strength in times of deep spiritual gloom from some converted people.

They have not been where you have been. They have not prayed, suffered and achieved enough in the Christian life to bring the devils in great awful rushes of darkness down upon them. The words Gethsemane, Gabbatha and Golgotha only refer to historic sites to them. So they do not know what you mean when you speak of soul travail and spirit desolation.

Some temptations told to one of these rocking-chair, or hothouse plant kind of Christians would fairly take the breath from him or her, and he would think you had never been regenerated.

Who of us have not heard the following expressions from the canton-flannel and catnip-tea kind of religious character, as he or she speaks to a faithful and successful worker in the gospel:

“What! You tempted!”

Just as well might one say to a captain or colonel who led the charge in a great battle:

“What! You shot at!”

Yes, of course he was shot at; and one hundred more guns were pointed at him than at any single soldier in the ranks; and the numerous bullets were fired because he was a captain or leader.

An illustration arises in my mind. It is another scene in a barnyard. A young bantam is sitting on top of a chicken coops giving a lecture to some old motherly hens about how to avoid contracting the disease called the “pip.” An old rooster with one eye gone is half dozing and half listening from under a neighboring hayrack. At times his head is turned thoughtfully to one side, and again his remaining eye scans the heavens for a hawk. He lost his eye in a fight with an owl one night; and most of his tail feathers in a struggle with a mink; besides he has run miles and miles in his life to save his carcass from the dinner pot. He has had many battles and victories in his line for years, and has a glorious right to crow, and does crow. But the bantam lecture seems to be too much for him this afternoon, and as he listens he appears to be too full for utterance. But my! how much more he knows about things in particular as well as in general than the little Bantam Theologue and Preacher on the coop. The “gaps” and “pip” do not been so dreadful to him who had two dogs, a mink and a darky all after him in one night. In a word, for perfect information about hawks, eagles, owls, weasels

and other enemies of the barnyard, it would be better to go to the old rooster than to the young bantam.

Ever since the writer has been a Christian he has felt that the battle-scarred veterans of the cross, the men and women who have had frequent and awful fights with Satan, were the best counselors, and so he always went to them, and invariably realized help and comfort. Many and varied temptations had prepared them to be helpers indeed.

There are some Christians of a bandbox and lavender style of piety, and they are preachers of a feminine make-up as to constitution, temperament and habits of life, and are perfectly powerless to assist certain classes of their fellowmen, because utterly unfamiliar with their peculiar trials and temptations.

As to soul edification and life deliverance give me the Christian to talk to who has fought the owls, hawks and weasels of hell and ran many a time to save his soul from the black dinner pots of the devil.

All this being so, we can see the deeper, fiercer and more varied the temptations are which come into one's life; and the man does not fall under them, but "endures" them, the more is he fitted to become a kind of human high priest among men. Like his Lord he is touched with pity for others, has compassion on the ignorant and on them who are out of the way, and finds himself a consoler of human sorrow, a helper of the weak and tempted, and a blesser of his race in many ways every day that he lives.

A sixth benefit from temptation is a constantly increased spiritual strength.

Of course we do not mean temptation that is yielded to, but endured, resisted and overcome.

With every triumph in this line comes not only a sweet and delicious inward joy, but a realization of growing power. In this manner we go from

strength to strength in no way can we more quickly come into greater measures of spiritual vigor than by victory over temptation. It is the gymnasium where moral muscle is developed, or the campaign experience which makes the veteran.

We read that David first killed a bear, after that a lion, and later still a giant. So it is still; we begin with small victories, but we grow mightier with every triumph and finally get to slaying giants easily.

Under such a progressive life, the things which moved us a few months or years ago cannot do so now. Plains are traversed, rivers crossed and mountains climbed we once thought impassable and insurmountable. A wall is leaped over, a troop is run through or overcome, Satan's attempted bonds are snapped like thread, and the head fastened to the wall is jerked triumphantly away carrying pin and beam with it.

Suppose it was so, that the strength of every conquered athlete should go into the victor: then by and by who could stand before him! And suppose that the physical force of every animal slain would go into the body of the hunter and slayer; what a marvel of physical power the man would become, and nothing could withstand his onset.

Something like this takes place in the spiritual life. The force of the thing conquered becomes in a deep wonderful sense our own; and with every new triumph we advance still farther with increasing strength, until finally with bears, lions and giants conquered and dead behind us, and filled with a blessed sense of victory over every new foe, and all foes, we cry with John, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." and "who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

## Chapter 6 ~ The Compensating Experience

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WITH certain Christian people the expression, I have “a satisfying portion,” seems to excite wonder and disapproval. To some it savors of boasting, to others it sounds unscriptural, and to still others it betrays ignorance of the laws of growth and that constant advancement in divine things which should mark the course of the child of God. The idea of the objectors is that such a statement in its application to religious experience precludes all possibility of development and improvement, and means virtually a standstill, and so spiritual stagnation and death.

These objections are made in the face of clear statements of the Word of God to the contrary, and in strange failure to distinguish between the spiritual progress of the soul which goes on forever, and a divine grace and blessing nestling eternally in that same soul which is developing forever. If a constant growth and improvement in the spiritual life prohibit an abiding satisfaction and joy on earth, then that same advancement in eternity would prevent a glad, satisfying experience in heaven.

But the Bible is clear about fullness of joy in both worlds; and while saying that in the skies we hunger no more neither thirst any more, being led to fountains of living waters by the hand of Christ, it also says that even in this life a well of water can be placed in the soul, springing up into everlasting life, and having that, we “never thirst.” If this is not a satisfying portion what can it be called?

In closer study of the Scripture we find that it holds up just such a blessing, and that when men receive it, from that moment they seem to possess something which comforts them in every sorrow, supports them in every trial, cheers them in every peril, consoles them in all suffering and loss, and, in a word, proves the compensating blessing of life.

Given to the disciples in the Upper Room, and to others later, all who read the Book of Acts and the Epistles will see that the followers of Christ obtained an experience which prepared them not only for living but for serving, preaching, suffering and dying. No matter what was said about them, or done to them; no matter whether slandered, scourged, imprisoned or slain — yet through the trial and to the end there was such faith, holy triumph, and rapturous joy that all could see that beyond the tormented body were spiritual regions where the earthly tortures could not come. That back there and up there was a something which consoled and comforted and compensated the suffering followers of Jesus beyond all words to describe, and thought to understand.

As an experience it affected and does still affect God's people like wine. The multitude honestly supposed for a time at Pentecost that the one hundred and twenty were drunk. The "new wine" explanation of that day is not held to now, but the spiritual intoxication, as exhibited in gleaming eyes, shining face, shouts, laughter, weeping and physical demonstrativeness, is supposed to be the result of cerebral excitement, mental frenzy and wrought up physical conditions. Men seem to be as slow to understand God's works today as they were in the beginning of the first century.

Nevertheless the experience is with us still, a great, glad, upwelling, perfectly satisfying joy, whether people understand it and us or not. Who in such a weary, heartbreaking world as this would not have it? Who on hearing of such a grace could ever rest content until its obtainment?

There are certain occasions when this satisfying portion, this compensating blessing is especially precious to us. Blessed at all times, yet there are hours and occasions when it is thrice blessed.

One is a time of persecution.

It is noticeable in the gospel narrative that whenever the disciples are

called upon to endure great suffering for Christ's sake, that a mighty spiritual uplift would be granted them, and they would burst forth into songs of praise and shouts of victory where usually groans and lamentations would be expected. Beaten with stripes they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ; and unjustly condemned and cruelly handled they sang praises at midnight in a dungeon. It seemed that they possessed something in their souls God-given and constantly replenished, which extracted the sting from human maltreatment, and richly repaid them for all pain and shame suffered for the Son of God. When we thus describe the experience of the early Christians we are simply drawing a picture of what is going on in hearts and lives today. It is the same gospel, and the same Holy Ghost. To live godly is still to suffer persecution, but with the detraction, misrepresentation, ostracism and all the many and varied trials which befall the devoted man or woman, there comes instantly the gracious sustaining power and reward in the breast, and the filling of the soul with an experience so sweet, tender and satisfying that the man is beyond all question far happier than his persecutors, and seems to be caught up in a third heaven of holy calm and victory.

When a boy we remember that our mother was accustomed to make in addition to her pickles and preserves a certain amount of blackberry cordial. She placed the rich, sweet, fragrant fluid in bottles and stationed them in a row on a shelf in the closet. To this day I can recall their soldier-like appearance with white paper labels on their black sides, containing the words "Blackberry cordial," written in my mother's beautiful handwriting.

The cordial was a kind of panacea for children's maladies and troubles. More than once, on account of failing appetite, or some bruise or cut received by a topple from the fence or a fall from a tree, a sip of the cordial

would be given the weeping youngster, and his lips smacked with enjoyment, and a pleased smile would overspread his face while the tears still rested in heavy drops on the eyelashes.

So God has a cordial which is a compensation for the blows, cuts and bruises received at the hands of men. It is quickly placed to the lips when cruel words have been spoken, or heartless blows have been struck, and at once the pangs are forgotten, the soul is warmed and fired, the mouth is filled with laughter, and we walk unburned in the furnace, and in rapturous communion with the "form of a fourth" which is that of the Son of God. Who of us have not felt these things, and can testify that our happiest days have been when men were saying and doing all manner of evil against us!

Another time that the compensating experience is realized is in the hour of earthly loss.

The day is certain to come when reputation will be struck at, influence in certain quarters be seen to wane and fail altogether, and friends grow cold and fall away. These losses may take place not from wrongdoing, but for faithfulness in the Christian life. The Savior Himself perceived that he had no reputation with the rulers of the church, felt that He was cast out, and saw great numbers of His followers leave Him. We cannot expect to fare better than He did, and, indeed, if true to Him, will enter upon similar sufferings.

That experience certainly must be blessed which sustains one in such hours; and not only keeps us undismayed as friends grow cold and fall away, but even rejoicing; while we say with Christ, "Will ye also go away yet am I not alone, for the Father is with me."

We once read of a little girl who was an orphan, and raised in a large household where she was continually domineered over by every member of the family. Her wishes were never consulted, her rights were ignored,

while her few playthings were constantly snatched from her by the hands of the older and stronger children. She had become so accustomed to yielding and giving up everything that when she had anything in her hand she held it with a loose grasp, as if she did not expect to keep it long.

This is the spiritual attitude of the true follower of Christ. What he holds in his hands he does with a light grasp. He is ready for God to take any material mercy from him when He will, and not only that, but even when men strip him of rights, privileges, enjoyments, comforts and other blessings of life, he will have that left in his soul in the way of grace and glory to amply compensate him for the loss of all.

A third time that the great satisfying joy is felt is in the time of sorrow.

We knew an elderly preacher in a Southern State who was sanctified.

When he was eighty the greatest trouble of his life befell him. One morning he learned that his son, a promising young lawyer, had been murdered by a Negro man for the sake of a few dollars. The peculiarly agonizing feature about the crime was that the young man had been shot and left for dead in the woods, but had lived four days stretched on the ground alone in the forest. A hunter discovered him a little while before he died, and received from his dying lips the name of the murderer and the manner of the crime.

When the news reached the aged father he sank upon his knees on the floor in prayer; and in a few moments gasped out, "The Book! the Book!"

The Bible was handed him, and, opening with trembling fingers the pages, he began reading aloud with shaking voice, in the midst of the sighing, sobbing household, from the fourteenth of John: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God: believe also in me. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again" — and lo! while reading these last four words the glory of God filled him, shouts burst from his lips, and a dozen awestruck souls saw how God can so comfort a tortured, agonized spirit that its burden is carried like a feather

weight, grief is flung to the winds, while heaven itself seems to have descended, filled and fairly transfigured the man.

Another time the compensating blessing is observed as well as realized is in old age.

There is something exceedingly pathetic in the sight of one who has outlived most of his generation, and is now dwelling in the midst of a new one. Friends, companions, playmates, schoolmates and oftentimes the family itself have preceded him into the graveyard and the other world, and he is left with scarcely a single soul with whom he started out in life. It is a situation of unenviable loneliness, a life of peculiar trial. The old find themselves forgotten, overlooked, thrust aside, and often feel sadly in the way. Among the peculiar features of that time of life is the habit of waking up a good while before day. One can imagine the heaviness and sadness of those early wakeful hours, unless heaven has a grace to sustain and cheer. Thank God there is such a blessing for the old which gives them songs in the night, a holy joy though overlooked, and prevents them not only from souring and becoming bitter, but causes their protracted stay on earth to be a blessing to the family, and the very thought of their departure one of unspeakable pain.

We recall in our early ministry a lovely old patriarch of Methodism who was nearing his ninetieth year. He had a way of waking at three o'clock in the morning, and from that hour until day he spent praising God softly in the night, rubbing his hands in the great joy which filled his soul, and alternately laughing and crying with the rapture which flooded him. He had the compensating blessing.

A final time when this peculiar grace becomes evident is at the hour of death.

The Scripture says let wine be given to him who is ready to die, alluding to a custom that was thought then to be humane. In a deeper and better sense

God has a wine experience for His dying children. It is a blessing to be obtained in life, so that the man can carry around in him the preparation for death, and so sudden dissolution will be instant glory. The people who enjoy this grace are ready to go at a moment's warning, and always "die well."

It is no ordinary death. The cup is at the lip, the draught is deep, and the blazing inward joy flashes in the eye, and gleams in the face in a way unmistakable.

In fact, it is not death, but a departure, not defeat, but victory, not dissolution so much as translation, not a man going down before the last enemy, but a human spirit disentangling itself from the ruins of the falling body, and with rapturous smile and lifted head and hand saying, "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and though, after my skin worms destroy this body yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom mine eyes shall behold and not another."

No Christian need fear death who obtains this blessing. With its marvelous living and yet dying grace, he is ready for the yoke, or the altar; ready for the battlefield of conflict and also prepared for the gaping wound, the litter and open grave. There is something about the grace which robs the sepulcher of its terror, takes the sting out of death, and causes its possessor to go down into the grave not only with calmness and assurance, but with smiles and shouts of joy, so that the scene looks like a beginning instead of the end of life. The tomb itself seems a doorway through which, as the triumphant spirit passes, the light of the glory world streams and, falling upon the dying face, lights it up and tells, in its silent but all impressive way, of the certainty and blessedness of the world which has just been entered.

## Chapter 7 ~ The Rod of Moses

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WE read in the Bible that God was about to induct Moses into a great work for which he had been preparing him for years. The self-distrustful man had pleaded his slowness of speech and conscious inability to perform what was expected of him whether he went to the people or stood before Pharaoh. It was then God asked him what he had in his hand. Moses replied, "A rod." Then followed at that moment and in succeeding days a series of most astounding works, wrought at the command of God, through that same simple rod.

The teaching evidently was that the rod was nothing, as Moses himself was nothing, but with God using one or both, anything could be done by them. The main end was to secure a devoted man who would obey God, and go forth to work for Him with anything that heaven directed. If this could be done, then nothing could be made something, and something could equal everything; and all this because God used the nothing or the something. Such a procedure also had the effect of developing faith on the part of the worker, keeping the human instrument humble and at the same time bringing all the glory to God as men saw plainly that He was taking "things that were not, to bring to naught things that are."

This divine method has not been discontinued. Whenever God can get a man completely surrendered, He thus uses him and puts a rod in his hand for conquest. Sometimes the gifted and great of the earth will not resign themselves to the will of the Lord, and He is compelled to employ ordinary and common instruments; in a word, things that are despised, called weak, and considered nothing in the judgment of the wise of this world.

God's main effort is to get a man completely given up to Him, who is

willing to say anything, do anything, be anything, and go anywhere that the Lord commands.

When such a cleansed, humble, perfectly obedient life is found, two things becomes immediately apparent: first, that God uses the man; and, second, that the smallest, simplest agencies and instruments in such a man's hands become powerful and effective. He goes forth with what men would agree to call weak weapons, and yet accomplishes far more than others who appear on the field with arms of approved pattern and recognized superiority.

For instance, we have seen a man who was a graduate of a great university, also of a theological college, possessed several degrees, was a polished speaker, dressed immaculately, had elegant manners, was intrusted with the pastorate of the largest churches, and yet utterly failed to lead men to salvation in his own church or elsewhere. We have seen this same man followed in the pulpit or on the platform by another who had never been to college, and only a short time to school, felt his disadvantage in this and other particulars, bore himself meekly, preached plainly, and yet in ten minutes had brought heaven down to earth, and in twenty minutes more had the altar filled with penitents, while the fire was falling and salvation rolling like a flood.

At the same time little groups of preachers could be seen discussing the spiritual phenomenon before them, and asking how was it, and how could it be. The man had nothing, so to speak, in his hand. The sermon had not a single new thought, not a flash of genius, no rolling period, or glittering sentence. It was a mere stick, And yet look at this line of weeping, agonizing, praying, shouting, rejoicing men and women at and around the altar!

They were correct in saying the sermon was a stick, but then a Moses was behind it. The man wielding it was of ordinary powers and maybe slow of

speech, but he had been up in the mountain and seen God. He had taken the two degrees of the Christian life. He had been to Mt. Calvary and obtained the pardon of his sins, and then gone to Mt. Zion and tarried in the Upper Room and received the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire. So God filled the man and used him, and the divine-human influence flamed in what was a stick of sermon, and lo! it became a wand of marvelous power.

It is simply amazing to look over God's arsenal and see the simple weapons and instruments which He has used in His kingdom for the achievement of great victories over His enemies. We find such things as ram's horns, trumpets, pitchers, lanterns, rods, jawbones, musical instruments, handkerchiefs, slings, stones, hammers, nails, a vision of blood, water, a sound in the trees, and other strange and manifestly inadequate things. And yet with these same weapons we behold toppling walls, sacked cities, destroyed armies, terrified nations, and kings, queens and the mighty ones of earth brought down trembling, horrified and overwhelmed before God.

In the present day the simple instruments are still used, and God is still getting glory from the very feebleness of the weapon held in the hand of His servant.

As truly as ever God could ask the question of his devoted and victorious follower, "What is that in thine hand which has split seas, cracked rocks, brought down the lightnings of heaven, and filled the breasts of the hardest with terror and their lips with mourning?"

The answer would also still be the same, "It is a rod."

Yes, it was a mere stick. The sermon, prayer, song, talk, gesture, cry, shout, look, tone, were nothing in themselves. But a true man had hold of the stick, and God had hold of the man, and so something always happened.

We once witnessed the discomfiture of a large camp ground over the failure for nearly a week of a number of star preachers to bring down the power of Heaven. One afternoon a man entered the pulpit whose every look showed that he walked with God. He preached a short sermon, and one that, examined critically by logicians and orators, would have been severely handled. They would have pronounced it a poor affair, a mere stick, and so it may have been, but God made it bloom and blossom, and break rocks, and call down floods of glory as it was lifted to the skies. Over two hundred people ran to the altar, and heaven and earth rejoiced and hell mourned over the work done that afternoon.

All the preachers on that occasion who did not go to the altar examined the rod in the preachers tent, and said they could not see what there was in the sermon to produce such a wonderful effect. They failed to recognize the connection between the stick the man and God.

We recall an old hymn which a circuit preacher used to sing. Weighed in the poetic and musical balance it would have been found sadly wanting in some particulars. Critics would have rejected it, but the man never sang the song with his rapt, faraway look, and Spirit-touched voice but hundreds were melted.

We remember another preacher whose sermons were simple and ordinary, but when in preaching he became filled with the Holy Ghost he had a laugh so loud, exultant, triumphant and indescribably awe-inspiring to the soul, that it invariably sent a panic to the hearts of sinners and backsliders, and yet God's people to shouting. No trumpet blast on the battlefield ever produced a more remarkable effect. Something was incarnated in the laugh that thrilled Christians, and literally terrified the ungodly and backslidden. Some fled from the tabernacle, some sat rooted with awe in their seats, and others came rushing to the altar. God in some way was in that laugh, and gave it its marvelous power. If the Holy Ghost had left the man, the laugh

would have had a flat, hollow sound, creating hardly a thought, and certainly no conviction. It would have been a stick again. But the Spirit was in the man, affecting the membranes of the throat, and hurling out the laugh upon the listeners with a strange, piercing force and overcoming power until it was like a projectile shot from a cannon in heaven. The sound was like a javelin in the heart, or a scepter of authority, waving before the eyes of the people.

We knew another worker of the Lord who sent forth a peculiar cry when his heart was full of holy joy. It was so unmistakably genuine, so full of a great inward rest, and bubbling gladness, with such a note of complete victory in it, that whenever it shot forth from the lips of the Spirit-filled man it always brought conviction to sinners and quick, overflowing responses and shouts from the people of God.

Then we recall a man who had simply the word "Amen;" but when filled with the Holy Spirit he said it, or, rather, cried it aloud, it was equal in service to the charge of a platoon of the White Horse cavalry of heaven. It always lifted the mercury of the meeting and sent a thrill of hope, faith and joy over the audience.

Still another we remember who had the simple word "Yes." It was a little word, and is uttered millions of times unnoticed by people, but when that man with clear, joyous, yet choking, trembling voice, said it, it went through the audience like a Damascus blade.

We knew still another man, who had a leap. He rarely gave it, and only did so when he reached a point where words were utterly unable to express the joy and swelling triumph of his soul, and then he would give one of those jumps. When it took place unpremeditated and Spirit-inspired, it never failed to electrify sinner and saint, and God's presence was always strangely and powerfully felt.

Let the reader gather up the rods and sticks, count them, see how few they

are, and how evidently weak and insignificant they are; then observe what God has done with them in faithful hands, and the result is to give God all the glory.

The power of the instrument, of course, sprang from its peculiar connection of the stick, the man and God. If the man slipped out, the stick was simply a pole in the forest or lay an overlooked fagot on the ground. If God slipped out, neither the man nor the rod could do a thing.

We have seen a man who, in his faithful days, had wrought wonders with mere sticks, yet afterwards drift from God and break the connection. Then we have seen him use the old-time weapons with which he had achieved so many victories. The same sermon was preached, the song sung, the shout raised, the leap made that had been so effective in other days, and lo! they all fell flat. The stick with God's blessing on it was a wand of power; but the wand without God became a lifeless fagot.

God long ago taught this painful lesson to the view in the matter of the ark. They had got to thinking that the power was in the sacred vessel, so when it was brought into camp prior to a great battle how they shouted. But God had left them, and that day the Israelites were defeated, the priests slain, Eli fell dead, and the ark, which without God was nothing but a box, was taken.

Many we not forget that even Paul is nothing, and Cephas is nothing apart from Christ? What shall we say, then, of a rod, weapon or instrument of any kind in their hands?

The stick is nothing without God. The sermon, song, shout and cry are nothing but puffs of wind without God. Or, they are like handfuls of dust blown away by the breath of men at whom they are hurled.

But if God is in us, and with us, that despised dust becomes a sandstorm of the desert, covering caravans. The breath from those consecrated lips is felt to be a hurricane of moral power. The stick is transformed into a

scepter of power waving before the astonished eyes of the people,  
prevailing with God, opening and closing seas of difficulty, and bringing  
the fires of heaven to run along the earth until the enemies of the Lord  
plead for mercy and the people of God are led forth with a great and  
perfect deliverance.

Well may we pray to the Lord to preserve the unity of the trinity of the  
stick, the man and God.

## Chapter 8 ~ The Limp of Jacob

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Jacob, in the face of a great trouble looming up in the near future, had met God on the side of the brook Peniel. The prayer of that night in its length, agony, wrestling spirit and great triumph has swept up to a first place among all victorious supplications.

At daybreak the man of God crossed the brook as a conqueror in the spiritual realm, and called by the Lord himself a prince. As he left the place of his triumph and went on his way, the effect of a touch given him by the Almighty became manifest. A conqueror went forth, but he was lame. He was a prince, but he had a limp.

The Bible says he halted upon his thigh. This statement, quietly made in Holy Writ, is to the mind of the writer full of significance. It arouses one to observe the curious fact, that all of God's princes on earth have limps. They are, however, far from being the same. There are several classes of them.

One is God-given.

This was the case with Jacob. The same fact is seen in the slow or stammering speech of Moses and the thorn in the flesh sent to Paul. It is a rare thing to meet a man much used of God, one who is evidently a prince and prevailer in the spiritual life, without being impressed with the fact of the limp. We do not mean sin, or even weakness of character. We refer to something that is God-given or God-permitted.

These things appear very plainly in the biographies of men who were great in goodness. Sometimes it was a physical blemish, or a delicate constitution, or a domestic trial or sorrow. It was certainly melancholy to see a man who had been aflame for an hour or more in the pulpit, swaying the crowd as God willed, suddenly sink down on the floor with face white

as death with acute suffering, or lip and handkerchief crimsoned with blood streaming from the lungs. It was sadder still to see a man towering like an intellectual and spiritual giant before a spell-bound audience, and an hour afterwards behold him in the privacy of a friend's home with his head bowed dejectedly on his breast, crushed and heartbroken over a history of shame and sorrow in his own family.

A gifted speaker we recall who would be afflicted at times with inability to connect his thoughts. He would be irresistible on a number of occasions and then at some important hour would be profoundly humiliated before a great audience through confusion of ideas, loss of memory and lack of command of language. The prince had been seen, but just as unmistakable was the limp.

We cannot give in this chapter a full enumeration, much less a description of these various "limps." When we add to what already has been mentioned, the lack of eloquence, logical power, offhand speech and mental concentration, we have only made a beginning of the list.

The question at once arises as to why God permits all this; and the answer is readily given now, and has been given long before by one who was thus afflicted. He said, "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me."

This covers the ground. The prince is in danger. He might be puffed up by his own gifts and with the earthly and heavenly honor he receives. So the laming touch is given him as a kind of anchor to hold him down, or ballast to keep him steady, or a rope to prevent the balloon from flying away.

The reader will remember the story of the eastern king who had a man to follow him about and remind him again and again that he was mortal and would soon be in the grave. So this messenger of pain and humiliation has a language and message of its own. Remember who you are, it says. Do

you observe your limp?

Moreover, the limp is given or permitted to show the people that the man is not divine. There is such a tendency to hero-worship in the human breast. Such a disposition to bow down to gifts in others with almost the first appearance of superiority, genius, or success the cry is made the gods are come down to us, and straightway the garlands and oxen are brought out for gifts and sacrifices.

Not all humanly applauded men will do like the apostle and cry out: "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you." The trouble is that many individuals love to sniff such incense and will not correct the people in their unwise and wrong adulation. So God gives a limp to the prince.

A second class of limps is recognized in character weakness.

Such lameness, of course, God is not responsible for. The man himself is alone to blame.

We have all seen this person. He has a royal mind and a gifted tongue. He is heaven-honored again and again in his work, and yet is observed afterwards doing and saying things which puzzle, humble and distress the church of God, and cause the tongues of worldly people to go at a great and mortifying rate.

Such limps are beheld in foolish speech, giddy actions, buffoonery, imprudent conduct and a score of similar things. The limp is also seen in untidy dress, a slovenly kept house, a disposition to borrow money and an indisposition to pay debts.

The people saw him do well in the pulpit. He prayed powerfully in the meeting. He talked well, convincingly and convictingly at church, when, lo! the next hour or day as he went forth and crossed the brook everybody saw him limp. We recall such a preacher of whom we heard much as a boy. Every one spoke of his great gifts in the pulpit. The people were proud of

him on Sunday, but during the balance of the week he was a mortification to them. One of his weaknesses was a continual hinting for gifts. One of his members, a most excellent man, in speaking of him uttered these remarkable words:

“When I see him in the pulpit I think he ought never to come out of it; and when I see him out of it I feel he ought never to go back into it.”

In a word, the prince limped.

A third class of limps consists of conditions for which the man is not responsible.

He never had the benefit of an education, and is made keenly to feel it in the midst of his useful and successful life. At times, just the memory would bring embarrassment and create a sense of mental halting in him. He felt as he spoke his burning words that he occasionally limped. He knew also that scholarly men in the audience saw that he halted. This, of course, deepened the pain of his heart.

A fourth class of limps seen in princes is a certain lack of refinement of manners.

The style of eating is coarse, the speech blunt and rude. The finger nails are cleaned in public, often during divine service; the hand is sometimes manipulated as a napkin, sometimes as a handkerchief, and the fork used as a toothpick.

No one thinks of calling these practices sins. They simply jar and grate on certain sensibilities. They act as a sudden letting-down of exalted conceptions. The man who looked like a prince in the pulpit, as he crosses the brook into social everyday life, is seen to halt upon his thigh. He is a limper as well as a prince.

The shock is so great to some people that previous good done is neutralized, while others, who feel the grandeur of the man in spite of his

limp, can but wish that the lameness could be cured. As we meditate upon these phenomena in the pew and pulpit we draw some conclusions.

First, a prince who has a limp given by the Lord will likely never be delivered from it in this world. Paul prayed fervently in this regard, but the Lord would not remove the thorn, while at the same time he assured his servant that his grace would be sufficient for him.

Second, when men possess only the limp and have not the prince nature as a kind of compensation for the lack of the spiritually great and good in them, the case is simply intolerable.

Third, much of the human limp we can be delivered from, and so we should strive to correct ourselves at those points where we offend good taste and shock a true culture.

Fourth, if the choice has to be made, we would far rather be a prince with a limp, than no prince at all.

Fifth, whatever else happens, let us all see to it that we are princes. Through grace any one can be a prince in the kingdom of God who will.

Sixth, if we have to carry a limp, let us see to it that it shall not be one of our making, but of divine manufacture.

Seventh, meantime let us exercise the greatest of charity toward all limpers when the lameness has no moral or rather immoral root.

Perhaps, if we could see how little we look to others towering above us; if we knew what intellectual pygmies we were beside the angels; if we realized how little we knew, we would be glad to take a lowly place among the band of halting ones we have mentioned and adopt as our escutcheon and coat of arms a couple of broken thigh bones.

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