



MEDITATIONS

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With this one I combined Numbers 1, 2 & 3 into one since they were all connected. I combined Numbers 5 & 6 together for the same reason along with Numbers 7, 8, 9 & 10.

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Number 1

MEDITATIONS ON JOSEPH

From the Book of Genesis

Part 1

“But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.”

The above quotation will be found in the 42nd chapter and 20th verse of Genesis. They are the words of Joseph to ten of his brothers when they came down to Egypt to buy corn.

For many months I have had some desire to write some of my meditations on the above scripture, but feeling my weakness and barrenness of mind most of the time I have put it off until now. As I fully realize that writing is like preaching, if it is profitable to the house hold of faith, we must be endured with power from on high.

If I should undertake to write the life and travels of Joseph from early childhood to the time he was made Governor of Egypt, as it is recorded in the scriptures, it would require many pages, even if I were blessed to do so. But I would like to say just here, that as an obedient son of his father and being persecuted by his brothers, tempted by Potiphar’s wife, cast into the dungeon, and then mounted to the throne of Egypt, speaking roughly to his brothers, putting them into prison, storing away corn in the years of plenty to be freely meted out to his brothers without charge in the days of the famine, and then revealing himself to his brothers as their precious brother: in many respects beautifully portrays in types and shadows the work of the Father, who taught us through the law, the Son who suffered for our sins under the law, and the Holy Spirit or Comforter who revealed Jesus to us as the way, the truth and the life.

It will be noticed that when Joseph’s brothers came down to Egypt they made obeisance to him, which was in part a fulfillment of the dreams which he had when he was yet a small boy while living with his father. Joseph called them spies as a reminder of their transgressions. He uses these words to stir up their evil conscience and make them mindful of the sin they had committed. Now Joseph knew his brothers and he was fully aware of the fact that their evil deeds were the cause of his sufferings and sorrows, yet he loved them. Like Jesus who “loved his people with an everlasting love, even we when dead in trespasses and in sin.” He said, “Nay, my Lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.” Joseph spake roughly unto them, and put them into ward (or prison) three days. In my meditations I can see them conversing in sorrow over their past wicked life, when they put their brother into a pit, then sold him for twenty pieces of silver, after which they killed one of the kids of the goats and dipped his coat of many colors into it and sent it back to their father in order to try to cover up their wicked acts. We are told, “Be sure your sins will find you out.” Num. 32:23. And they said one to another, “We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this distress come upon us. “Can you not, dear reader, see from your own experience, how their sins rolled up before them like mountains? Trace your own experience as a convicted sinner under God’s just and holy law, when you came to the end and was shut up under the

law, without God and without hope in the world. The unworthy writer, while under this heavy guilt and condemnation, often looked at the beasts of the field and said I had rather be in their place than in mine, for I could not see how God could justify such a sinner as I felt myself to be. Yet my breathings were like the poor publican, “who stood afar off (in his feelings) and said, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Often when I lay down at night I would wet the pillow in part with tears from my eyes while under conviction of God’s just and holy law.

Now back to my narrative. Joseph spake to his brothers by an interpreter and he continues to call them spies. This expression causes their guilt and sorrow to mount up before them and to further serve to sink them into despair. Yet, they vainly tried to vindicate themselves, saying, “Thy servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.” Again Joseph said unto them, “That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies.” Gen. 42:14.

Now, when his brothers said, “Thy servants are twelve brethren, and the youngest is with his father and one is not,” of course, he knew he was the “one is not.” He now puts the burden of proof on them to prove that they are not spies, by saying, “Hereby ye shall be proved; by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison that your words may be proved.” At this point Joseph modifies his previous statement by saying, “If ye be true men let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison; go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses.” But remember, that he makes it mandatory upon the part of his brothers that they can not get any more corn unless they bring their youngest brother.

Several years ago, after reading the above quotation of Joseph, I wondered in my mind, Just why, he made it imperative that the youngest brother (or Benjamin) must come before they could get any more corn. The thought lingered with me occasionally for a period of about two years. I am convinced, “That the secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and our children forever.” Deut. 29:29. Is it not true that we must be overshadowed by the Holy Ghost today to understand the revealed things of God?

Would it be too much for me to say that the Lord was gracious in revealing to me in a dream who Benjamin represents in the type and shadows? One night while I was asleep, a wheat field appeared in front of me and a voice poked and said, “Benjamin is the corn.” I awoke and meditated over the dream, but I could not understand it. I fell asleep again and a second time, this wheat field appeared in front of me and the same voice said again, “Benjamin is the corn.” I awoke and I said to myself that I cannot understand how that Benjamin could be the corn when his brothers were going down to Egypt to get the corn. A third time I fell asleep and the same field appeared before me. It seemed to be about twelve or eighteen inches high, and the same voice said, “Benjamin is the corn.” It made such an impression on me that I called my wife, and I said, “Mother, I have dreamed three times of seeing a wheat field in front of me, and each time a voice would say, “Benjamin is the corn.” And I cannot make any sense out of it as I thought they were going down to Egypt to get corn, but the voice said that Benjamin is the corn.” Immediately my wife said, “That is plain.” She said, “Benjamin is the evidence that his brothers are not spies.” I still seemed to be at a loss to understand. She said, “Benjamin is the fruit.” All of this was foreign to me, then she said, “Benjamin is the youngest brother.” In a flash, the whole dream was clear before me. Surely Benjamin is “Christ formed in you the hope of glory.” HE MUST COME. Then I could understand what John taught when he said, “And of His fullness have all we received, and grace

for grace.” That is, when you bring grace you get grace, when you bring the evidence you get the evidence, when you bring fruit you get fruit, when you bring corn you get corn. Is not this the same doctrine that John preached in the wilderness of Judea when the Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism, and brought such flimsy evidence that they were the children of God because Abraham was their father! John said, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.” Matt. 3:7-8. Is not love, joy, peace, happiness, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, patience and kindness which Paul says are fruits of the Spirit, always found in the youngest brother? Christ formed in you the hope of glory?

Many people wonder today why it is that we do not seek for large numbers in our churches and because we do not, many have said that we are selfish, but this is not the truth. I will only answer for myself. I like large numbers provided they bring the FRUITS or “Benjamin the youngest brother.” The inspired apostle Paul taught by divine revelation that they were not all Israel that are of Israel, neither are they children, because they are the seed of Abraham, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. He was born out of due season. His mother, Sarah, was ninety years old and Abraham, one hundred years old when he was born, which to my mind is a true type of every heaven-born soul, for the spiritual birth contrary to all human understanding and human reason and all of His people were saved in the mind and purpose of God before the world began, for Jesus said, “Thine they were, and thou gayest them me.” Jn. 17:6. Paul said, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” 2 Tim. 1:9.

While I am writing about this youngest brother I would like to relate a beautiful scene which took place one night during a commencement exercise at our school. My wife and I went into the auditorium and took a seat near the back of the room and there were two girls sitting about three seats in front of us. They looked back at us and bowed their heads. One of them was so full that she began shedding tears. I turned to my wife and said, “There is a child of God.” At that time I did not know either of them. About eighteen months after this I had the gracious privilege of baptizing this same little girl. Now, when she came before the church, was it necessary for her to relate any of the dealings of the Lord with her, in order for us to have confidence in her? My answer is no, for I saw the fruit or evidence the night we were in the school auditorium.

While Joseph’s brothers were yet in prison, it will be observed in Gen. 42:22 that they continue to talk about the sin that they committed against their brother, and moreover, they are branded as spies. All the evidence that they could produce, even the money that they brought to pay for the corn could not appease the justice of their just condemnation. But charity never fails. The love which Joseph has for his brothers is now made manifest in part. Although, while he bound Simeon in their presence and kept him in prison until Benjamin came, he released the others and commanded that their sacks be filled with corn, that they might carry it to Canaan for the famine of their houses and to restore every man’s money into his sack. Let it be fully understood that Joseph did not release them from prison and put them under bond because of any evidence that they gave or even the money which they brought, but it was because of the great love he had for them, their father and families. Is this not agreeable with the language of Peter who said, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers: but with the precious blood of Christ.” 1 Pet. 1:18-19.

March 27, 1945.

Part 2

Some time ago, I was speaking upon this subject, about Joseph's brothers trying each time they returned, to pay for their corn and every time it was put back into their sacks. When the services were closed, a sister came up to me and said, "Brother Adams, don't you believe that we too, try at times to spend a little of this money?" I paused for a moment, then said, "I believe you are right." I can see now, that in my nature I am still possessed with self-works, and self-righteousness. I believe that Peter was possessed with self-confidence the night our Master was crucified. He said, "Lord, I am ready to go both into prison and into death." It is only when we are clothed and in our right mind that we can fully understand the truth of the scriptures which say, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, etc." By grace through faith, and every blessing that we receive is a free gift, without any merit on our part. Joseph taught this lesson over and over again to his brothers about which I hope to discuss more fully later in this article.

They are now on their way back home to carry corn for their families. While they have been released from the prison, yet Simeon is still there, and they dread the thought of having to introduce the subject to their father of having to bring Benjamin back to get any more corn. This was indeed distressing to them. Their conscience stings them severely for taking vengeance on their brother, the man whom they did not know down in Egypt who "spoke roughly to them," also, they realized that they would soon have to face him again, not knowing what the consequences would be. All of the above was enough to sink them into gloom and despair. There is no doubt that they wished they had never been born. I speak this from my own experience, but dear reader, this is the only route of travel to get any more corn, for we must "through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Acts 14:22. So it was with Joseph's brothers, they had a long way to go under God's just and holy law before they could meet Joseph face to face in peace.

Now, they approached their father with the sad news that Benjamin must go down the next time if they got any more corn. Jacob was in despair. He said, "Joseph is not and Simeon is not and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me." At first he refused to let him go. But ah! when the corn gives out and the famine gets to be sore in the land (or soul) Jacob's heart begins to soften, for our God knows how and does make His people willing through suffering in the day of His power. How well do we remember the sufferings that we went through before we were made willing to present the corn (or the youngest brother). If I am not mistaken, the Lord called me one day when I was about thirty-four years old, at about two o'clock p.m., and said, "Show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sin." I said, "Lord, I will die before I will go." Oh, the suffering I went through for several weeks will never be described by mortal tongue. May I ask this question – Are there any volunteer ministers in God's kingdom who can preach the gospel? Are they not all conscripted? Yet, we fully realize that we are a failure without the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Now, let us view the scene a little further and see how Jacob endeavors to appease the wrath of the man in Egypt. He said, "Take the best fruit in the land in your vessel and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, myrrh, nuts, and almonds. And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand, peradventure it was an oversight." You perceive, he is still trying to pay for the corn as well as to appease Joseph's wrath. Now all of this amounts to nothing, but are we not like Jacob? We have to learn this lesson by experience again and again. Jacob's heart is getting much softer at this period, for in Gen. 43:13, he says, "Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man" and his prayer is that

“God Almighty give you mercy before the man.” Judah said before this that “I will be surety for him.” “If I bring him not again, let me bear the blame forever.”

When they came into Joseph’s presence and he saw Benjamin with them, he said to the rulers of his house, “Bring these men home, and slay and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon.” Notwithstanding the fact that Joseph’s brothers presented Benjamin by his demand and manifested his love for them by giving them food and lodging, also had their sacks filled with corn and restored every man’s money in their sacks; he still speaks to them by an interpreter and has not yet made himself known to them. The climax of their suffering is yet to come as will be seen by the finding of Joseph’s silver cup by his steward. He put the silver cup into Benjamin’s sack according to Joseph’s instructions. Is not this cup a type of the law? It was by the finding of this cup in Benjamin’s sack that Joseph’s brothers found out his righteous indignation against them for their evil deeds which they had committed against himself. They were able to present Benjamin which was required by Joseph as true evidence that they were not spies; yet, now they are at their wit’s end, for Joseph has accused them of taking the cup, which of course, each one knew that he did not, but they were not able to prove that the other did not, for the evidence is beyond questioning, as it was found in Benjamin’s sack. Please remember, that this cup is used by Joseph to drink and DIVINE. Read Gen. 44:5. “Is not this it in which my Lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? Ye have done evil in so doing.” Could his brothers when they returned and were in the presence of Joseph, a man clothed in royal apparel, sitting upon his throne, and one who had power to execute judgment, even think, much less express, that they were not guilty? How dare they say that they did not take the cup? The evidence is too plain.

Dear reader, please observe again that this cup is put into Benjamin’s sack for the purpose of divining, and it will serve the purpose for which he had it put there. It brought out the wickedness which was in their hearts before God. For Judah said, “What shall we say unto my Lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants.” They had a sense of their guilt long before Joseph called them spies. But now God has found it out and made them acquainted with the fact that through the finding of the CUP that He knows all about their evil conduct. There is no alibi which they can plead, the secret of their wicked hearts is fully opened up, for God has found it out. They are at their wit’s end; there is nothing to say but GUILTY, GUILTY, GUILTY! Divine justice must be satisfied. Oh, how they felt their just condemnation. “How shall we clear ourselves?” If you, dear child of God, should chance to read these meditations, you may say, “I have not had quite as bitter an experience as you have described.” May I ask: Have you ever heard a still small voice speak in the court of your conscience? – “Guilty, behold, I am vile.” If you have not heard the voice you evidently felt the power of it.

Is not this CUP a clear type of the law? Paul said by the LAW is the knowledge of sin. (Rom. 3:20.) Again he said, “Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law.” Rom. 7:7. I have often said that the law is a straight edge. When it is applied to a sinner it shows him how crooked he is. When I was a small boy, I watched those old hewers of timber. When they cut the tree down, they would stretch a string from one end of the log to the other on the side which they desired to slab or hew off, then saturate the string with lamp black, then pull it up in the middle and let it spring back on the log. This would make a black line from one end to the other. Now, this line did not straighten the log, but it showed the hewers just how crooked the log was. So it is when we are brought under the law, as the log is lying under the line. It reveals the secrets of our heart and causes us to exclaim as Job did, “Behold, I am vile. What shall I answer thee?” Job 40:4.

Inasmuch as the finding of this cup by Joseph's steward in Benjamin's sack, brought the most excruciating pain and sorrow to his brothers, just so, when God's just and holy law was written upon this hard and stony heart of ours, and his continual wrath and judgment poured out upon us, and that without mercy. It brought us down as poor penitent sinners before Him. Through this experience we learned one lesson that we will never forget, that is, to never plead that we are not guilty before Him again. Now, the only thing that we can plead, that is acceptable to God, is the imputed righteousness of Jesus. Our sins were imputed to Him and His righteousness was imputed to us, "He was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." So Jesus said except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

The finding of the CUP in Benjamin's sack (bear in mind that he is their youngest brother) is the cause of their returning to Joseph, so "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" and let it be observed that as they stood before Joseph (the man whom they did not know) sitting upon the throne of His Royal Majesty, that they never again uttered one word to try to prove their innocence, they never muttered again that they were not spies, they did not say again that they were true men; they never said again that we are all the sons of one man and "one is not" They did not say that none of them stole the CUP, all of which expressions they previously used before in order to prove and plead their innocence. Now the finding of the CUP in Benjamin's sack, has stopped their mouths, so when this LAW revealed the secret of our hearts, it stopped our mouths. For Paul says, "Now we know that what things soever the LAW saith, it saith to them who are under the LAW. That every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God." Rom. 3:19.

Now if we try to justify ourselves by continually pleading our righteousness, are we not found to be liars? For Paul said, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." It only remains to be seen that through the goodness of this great and mighty ruler of Egypt, in restoring Benjamin to them is the only hope of ever having any peace now or ever, for he is "their youngest brother." – "Christ formed in you the hope of glory."

Now, inasmuch as God has let them know that He knows all about their iniquity, they said, "We are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found." Now, Joseph brings them into the full extremity of their sufferings, for he said, "God forbid that I should do so: but them and in whose hand the CUP is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father." Now hear the pitiful pleas of Judah, who is spokesman for all. Dear reader, I ask your patience just here, while we see THE SHADOW TURN ON THE DIAL. They are yet experiencing sore trials under this Governor (or law) who sits upon his throne, for Paul said, "The law having a shadow of good things to come." So the good thing is yet to come. Does not Judah now become a type of the Son of God? For his past sufferings made him willing to be surety for Benjamin's safety and return to his father and he manifested it fully by more sufferings when he said, "Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondsman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. Then I shall bear the blame to my father forever. By the opening of the 45th chapter of Genesis we can see from what follows that divine justice has been satisfied, and THE GOOD THING HAS COME.

Do we not see the Son of God manifested in this shadow? Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." Heb. 5:8-9. It may be said that Judah was not perfect. To this

inquirer I will repeat the language of Paul, the shadow is “not the very image.” For proof of this read Gen. 49:8-12.

Now, Paul said, “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.” Please take notice that Jesus is not our SECURITY but our SURETY, for if I become security for someone, this means that I will pay if he fails. Let it be remembered, that the righteous indignation of God against His children was charged to the Son in the mind and purpose of God before the world began. “For lo, in the volume of the book it is written of me, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” So He, Jesus, took all the blame and bore our sins in His own sinless body, (no sin except the imputed sins of His people). He suffered shame and was nailed to the cross, bled and died that we poor, evil, vile and wretched sinners “might have life”, and not only have life but that we “might have it more abundantly.” And through His sufferings you were set free, and I have humble hope that I was remembered in His sufferings too.

Now their suffering has reached a climax and begins to subside while Joseph makes himself known unto them. He is so overcome with tenderness and love for them that he can not refrain weeping aloud, He said, “Cause every man to go out from me.” Dear child, may I ask, was there anyone present but you and Jesus when He made Himself known to you? He said, “Come near to me.” What sweet and gracious words from our elder brother to such sinful and guilty rebels. “I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.” Gen. 45:4. Their great burden of sin and condemnation is gradually being removed by these words. “Be not grieved, for God did send me before you to preserve life.” Could there be any life for Joseph’s brothers except through his sufferings and then mounting to the throne of Egypt, to store away corn in the years of plenty to meet their need in the years of famine? As the type, so is the reality. Was it not through this crucified and risen Savior that we poor mortals are blessed to eat His flesh and drink His blood? Jesus said, “My flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed.” May I ask this solemn question: Have we really been a partaker of the sufferings of Jesus? Have we been made a partaker of His joy after the sufferings? If so, we have eaten His flesh and drunk His blood. We know from experience that all the things on the “menu” are not good to the taste, but ah, bear this in mind that all the things in the listing such as sorrow, grief and trouble are not palatable to our taste like love, joy, peace and happiness, but remember that all of this is good for the body. “For if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” 2 Tim. 2:12.

March 27, 1945.

Part 3

Joseph no longer speaks to his brethren by an interpreter; but he comes to them face to face. Now this wonderful secret which has been kept from them so long is now revealed, “I am your brother.” “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past (law days) unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days (Gospel day) spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things.” Heb. 1:1-2.

Joseph has the keys to the corn houses in Egypt, and he freely hands it out to all of his brothers, as will be seen by the wagons loaded with provisions going back to Canaan, to spread the good news that “Joseph is yet alive, and he is Governor over all the land of Egypt.” He sends for their father, their families and all of their kindred, in the land of Canaan and settles them down in the goodly land of Goshen. Now they eat bread from this great store of CORN, for which they have bestowed no labor.

Lest I forget, I will now mention the charge which Joseph made to his brothers before they left to bring their families – “Also regard not your stuff; for all the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.” Gen. 45:20. Why did he render this charge? He well knew that they had a lot of possessions that they would not want to leave behind, all of which have now become worthless, for the store houses in Egypt are open to meet all their requirements in time of NEED. Furthermore, there is no room in the great store houses of Egypt to shelter such for these houses are filled with CORN.

Now, would Joseph’s brothers question his right and ability to deliver to them this serious and solemn charge – “Regard not your stuff?” The man who sits upon his throne in his royal majesty, and is governor of all Egypt, he also has the gift to divine. Is he not fully qualified to tell them what to bring and what to leave behind. First he tells them to bring Benjamin (the corn, or Holy Spirit); second, bring your families and father and kindred. That is all. Then he tells them, “regard not your stuff.” For this store house in Egypt is a place to get as a “free gift”, and not a place to exchange our “stuff” for corn. Regardless of how we may present our “stuff”, we will never be able to exchange it for CORN, because all our “righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”

That which I have written above is only a faint type, or as Paul said “a shadow of good things to come.” Now, this Great God who sits upon His throne clothed with ALL POWER and authority, who says that “Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool and the cattle of a thousand hills are mine, if I were hungry I would not ask you”, and further says that “the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof, is of the Lord.” Who would question His right and ability to teach and give instruction to us poor mortals, for “all of thy people shall be taught of the Lord” and “great shall be the peace of thy children.” So this Great Giver, who is the giver of every good and perfect gift (Jesus), for “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” “And he spake as never man spake.” How fitting are the words of the poet:

“Keep silent all created things,
And wait your Maker’s nod
My soul stands trembling while she sings
The honors of her God.”

As Joseph administered to his brothers out of the store houses of Egypt so Jesus administers to us out of His great store house of mercy. For John said, “and of His fullness have we all received and grace for grace”, or spiritual blessings of Benjamin. The bringing of Benjamin was all that Joseph required of his brothers for them to get corn, and the only time that we can get corn or Jesus, is when we are made willing through sufferings to present Christ, who is formed in us, the hope of glory. Oh, how often we try to present our “stuff”, such things as good works, self-righteousness, which is compared to filthy rags. We make vows and promises, self-confidence creeps in and many other things too numerous to mention, that we are continually trying to exchange for a blessing (corn). Ah! dear servants of God, was this not a serious and solemn charge that Paul rendered to Timothy, “PREACH THE WORD”! What a contrast between our filthy works and the precious works of Jesus, “who works in us both to will and to do of His own good pleasure.”

Ah! my dear friends, this market or great store house of our God is not a place to exchange our silver and gold, for the precious blood of Jesus. Joseph used the barter system in trading with the Egyptians, but to his brothers, it was a free gift.

When we come to this great treasure house and present our works (stuff) we only find the door closed against us. This is another lesson that I too, have to learn again and again. Often do I feel at a loss when our Master hides His loving face, I get to my wit's end. This is the time that Satan makes his worst attack. He will say to me as Eliphaz, "Thereby good shall come unto thee." Do you believe it? Job's miserable comforter, said to him, "Acquaint now thyself with him." This is what I have tried to do for many years, "And be at peace." This is what I greatly desire. Sometimes I do, "Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth and lay up his words in thine heart." I have made an honest effort to do this. "If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy Tabernacles." How hard I have labored to get away from this iniquity. No wonder Job said, "Miserable comforters, ye are." Acquaint thyself with him, and be at peace. Lay up his words in thine heart. If thou return to the Almighty thou shalt be built up." Job 22:21-23.

WHAT LIES! This may be an exaggerated expression, but I wonder if I could not easily build a world like this just as easily as I could do what this "Tenamite" told Job to do. Those Tenamites and Midianites are a great pest in our lives. They tell us that a "hope is not sufficient, you ought to know you are a Christian;" "you are the cause of so few people joining the church;" "you ought to cry a little louder from the pulpit and spare not." I make the feeble attempt by trying to obey his bidding, but all in vain, only to hear my feeble voice echo back again. Ah! dear child, do not become discouraged, this is just another experience that we have to pass through to learn from "whence our help comes." Now our precious Redeemer speaks, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Now deliverance has come. The joy of God's salvation is restored for a short season, but alas, we again sink down, but we never get out of His reach or hearing. He sweetly whispers these words to us, "Be of good cheer, I have over come the world, for I am he that was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore;" "and as I live ye shall live also." Live where? Right here in the flesh. But how? By the faith of the Son of God, for Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

Now, let us go back just a little and pick up a few threads and see if they are types of our experience. We talk a lot about sin, but first, let us get a well defined answer. Just what is sin? Paul gives the correct definition, "Sin is the transgression of the law, and by the law is the knowledge of sin." There is a vast difference in our experience between a pardon for our transgression of the law and a knowledge of the sin that remains with us after the offence has been committed.

When our Federal Head, Adam, transgressed God's law, it swept the whole human race into death and destruction and our only cure is through Jesus Christ. For Paul said, "Who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification." Rom. 4:25. We too, were tried, convicted and crucified by this same law. But when Jesus died (or laid His life down) and lay in the heart of the earth three days, then arose a conqueror over death, hell and the grave, he brought us back through Him freely justified and put a new law in our heart and mind, a law that gives life and peace, and not a law like the first law that brought conviction, and condemnation, then put us into prison and finally we were sentenced and put to death. Now when we were brought back through Jesus Christ and were put under this new law which Paul says "is the law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus," it took all the guilt and condemnation away from us, for Paul said that "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." Rom. 8:1-2. He further says, "He that is dead is freed from sin." Remember dear reader, that we are not freed from the

KNOWLEDGE of the fact that we were justly condemned for our sins. Joseph granted a free pardon to his brothers for all their sins and transgressions which they had committed against him, but they always were mindful of their sinful and wicked acts, and because of this KNOWLEDGE of their just condemnation under the law, they were continually reminded that they were still sinners for Paul said, “By the law is the KNOWLEDGE OF SIN”. Now when this knowledge of sin continued to revive in them, they began to have doubts and fears. So do we. When they saw that their father was dead, “They said Joseph will per adventure hate us, and will certainly requite us for all the evils which we did unto him”. Gen. 50:15. But Joseph, like Jesus, is always a very present help in time of need (not needs). Now his pledge and promise is renewed again, as will be seen in Gen. 50:21. “Now therefore, fear ye not: I will nurse you and your little ones.” And he comforted them and spake kindly unto them. “Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good.” Such manifested love as this can never be described by mortal tongue.

Now through the suffering and death of Jesus, who satisfied the demands of the law, were we not freed from the sins which we had committed? The unworthy writer felt as though he would never have another evil thought which lasted only a little while, for he had been in bondage for twenty one years. Is it not true that we are out under bond most of the time? But like Joseph’s brothers when he saw fit he put them behind the bars in the prison walls. I have often compared my experience with that of a bird that had been caged for a long time, and when the door was open it flits around from limb to limb, and often soars high in the air, but when it gets thirsty, tired and hungry, it is forced back to earth to get a fresh supply.

Now, I will say just a few more words about this “knowledge of sin.” Paul, the great apostle, through divine revelation left nothing for us to guess, for he brings the subject clearly to the light and said, “Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound.” Among the many things which this law taught us when it entered into our hearts are three important things. First, that we have always been sinners even before we had any knowledge of the law. Second, we are sinners after we transgressed the law. Third, we are still sinners after we are resurrected from the dead, that is, after we have been delivered from our sins, and the reason for this knowledge that we are still sinners is because the offense still abounds. The knowledge of our sins, and the fact that we have to carry a dead body around the remainder of our lives, often causes us to cry out as Paul did and say, “Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.” The very scent of our bodies together with the “knowledge of sin” is extremely nauseating to us at times. It is through those sore trials in the night that we get a little glimpse of the great and marvelous works of God. David said, “Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” Psa. 19:2.

Through this sore affliction we learn a great many lessons, one of which is this, that the great mountains of sin that we could see in our brother has now become a molehill, and the little mole hill that we could only see in ourselves now becomes a mountain of sin. We may fight many battles with our brother and the world, because of SIN, but when the fight is finished we then learn that the greatest SIN always rages most within. Now when we are brought to the knowledge of the fact that the greatest sin rages most within, we can then see that the victory is only won through Jesus Christ. Paul said, “But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 15:27.

And when the fight is finished,
And the battle is won,

Then we can see that Jesus
Was the conquering One.

Through this experience, this scripture sweetly comes to our view: “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Rom. 5:20. Now, it is through the abounding grace of God that we can look over one another for good. It is through the abounding grace of God that we can see the imperfections in ourselves. It is through the abounding grace of God, that we have love for one another. It is by the abounding grace of God that we can preach, pray, hear and sing. It is by the grace of God we can render equal and undivided praise to the everlasting Father, Son and everlasting Spirit. It is through the abounding grace of God that we can get a peep through the lattice work and glimpse the heavenly scene beyond and forget momentarily that we ever committed a sin.

Now what I have written above is some of the sweet meditations that I have had for several years, but mostly for the last three weeks, and I realize that it is like the writer, very imperfect and only to be accepted as far as it is supported by the word of God. But I will say as Paul said, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.” Rom. 11:33. “Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heard of Him? and the thunder of His power who can understand.” Job 26:14.

May I close with the words of the poet:

“Deep in unfathomable mines,
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will.”

March 27, 1945.

Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands: Happy shalt thou be and it shall be well with thee. Psalm 128:1-2.

Number 2

MEDITATIONS ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

“She hath hewn out her seven pillars.”

I do not claim to have superior knowledge over my precious brethren in writing on this or any other portion of God's sacred word. Some have said “the seven pillars” represent the seven churches of Asia. But as we view the natural building of Solomon, we see the building is supported by the pillars, and the pillars get their support from the rock bed underneath. Now the pillars are between the rock and the building, which seems to me to more fully represent the apostles and prophets who were peculiarly fitted and hewn out to withstand the cold, chilly winds, and give succor and support to the children of God by reason of the severe trials and afflictions which they were enabled by the grace of God to pass through. Would you not say that you have many times drawn comfort and peace from their sacred writings, when they were applied to your experience by the Holy Ghost? When the Apostle John was exiled upon the isle of Patmos, he said, *I am your brother and companion in tribulation.*” Remember that it is when you are in tribulation that He is your bosom friend.

The word “seven” is often used to denote fullness. The above views which I have penned seem to me to be in harmony with the inspired writings of the Apostle Paul: “*And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.*” Eph. 2:18-21.

“*She hath killed her beasts.*”

The provisions for one day in Solomon's household was thirty measures of fine flour, and three score measures of meal. Ten fat oxen and twenty oxen out of the pastures and an hundred sheep, besides harts and roebucks and deer and fatted fowl. I Kgs. 4:22-23. Was all of this portion of God's sacred word penned just to make history and fill up space? Indeed no. For we are told that “*whatsoever things that were written afore time were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*” Before this meal and flour was reduced to its present state, the grain must go through the upper and nether mill stones, then kneaded together and baked in a hot oven. The blood must be drained out of the beast and fowls before they were prepared to feed the hungry of the household of Solomon.

What can these beasts and fowls represent? Do they not portray in types and shadows, the suffering and death of the meek and lowly Lamb of God who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification; and they more particularly point to the Gospel day, when we are blessed to sit down in the kingdom with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and partake of the heavenly feast. But before ye are partakers of this heavenly feast, we too must be crucified with Christ (Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ”;) and die under God's just and holy law, and have part in His resurrection, before we can eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood.

“*She hath mingled her wine.*”

Wine is often spoken of to typify the Gospel of Christ. Song of Solomon 7:9. The mingling of wine beautifully portrays the various gifts, which God has placed in the Church for the edification of the saints. “*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit, and there are differences of*

administrations, but the same Lord.” I Cor. 12:45. And God has placed them in order, first the apostles, then prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, “*for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*” Eph. 2:14. One precious saint will often say, “*I had rather hear Elder _____ than any preacher I have ever heard.*” Another one says, “*I had rather hear Elder _____.*” What makes this difference? It is because his preaching is more suited to your experience. How discouraging it would be to the poor servants of God if all the household of faith were to center upon one servant and not a word of encouragement for the rest of us. But our God has so arranged it in His divine providence that each one shall receive his portion in due season, and get the flavor which is best suited to his or her taste.

“*She hath also furnished her table.*” The table which Solomon set was furnished with a great variety of foods with all the necessary vitamins to supply the body with health and strength, but would you suppose that all the food was good to the taste? My answer is no. For my mother often, when I was a small boy, made me eat many things that I did not enjoy so well, but she knew it was good for my body. If I could have had my way I would have begun with the desserts and ended with desserts. I have often said that the children of God remind me of a family of little children seated around a table which was filled with coarser food and a dish of ice cream in the middle, and without the guiding hand of their mother they will almost invariably start on the ice cream and end on the ice cream. Why is this? The answer is because the cream is more delicious to the taste. But the good mother says you all must eat a reasonable supply of the coarser foods, then I will serve you dessert last. It may be that she has a supply of the better tasting food, but she knows that a well balanced diet makes a healthier child.

So our God never questions you and me concerning the kind of food we shall have. If we could have our way, we would live on love, joy, peace and happiness all the time, but all when He sees fit He gives us sorrow, trouble and afflictions. Now you can see that all the food that is listed on the menu is not good to the taste, but is it not good for the body? David said, “*Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.*” Psa. 119:67. Now afflictions were not good to his taste but through this suffering he kept God’s word. Can you not read your own experience here?

“*She hath sent forth her maidens.*” When we are invited to a banquet or feast do we not see the maidens serving the guest? No doubt, but what this was a wonderful sight for the Queen of Sheba to behold in the Temple of Solomon. Everyone serving in the place and order in which this Great King has placed them. Do you know of a more beautiful sight than to see the guests seated around and each humble servant of God handing out to the household of faith such things as his Master has supplied him with? The Lord said to Peter, “*Feed my lambs*” and “*Feed my sheep.*”

The Lord did not tell him to convert a goat into a sheep. But the words are simply this, “*Feed my lambs*” and “*Feed my sheep.*” Jno. 21:15-16. Through the sufferings and death of Jesus under the law, all the preparation was made for the servants or maidens, to serve in the Gospel day. “*For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed.*” Jno 6:55.

“*She crieth upon the highest places of the city.*” It will be noticed in the ninth chapter of Proverbs verse 14, that the foolish woman, “*Sitteth at the door of her house on a seat in the high places of the city.*” But the woman who possesses wisdom “*she crieth upon the highest places of the city*” which is in keeping with the inspired prophet Isaiah, “*and an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called the way of Holiness.*” “*The unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those the wayfaring men though fools, shall not err therein.*” Isa 35:8. What a comfort to a poor tempest-tossed child of God when the Holy Ghost applies the above words to your weary soul and you are lifted up and

sometimes made to feel that you are in the way (Jesus). Abraham's servants said, *"I being in the way the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren."* Could he fail to reach the designated place since He was in the way? Jesus says "I am the way." He taketh His own sheep and goeth before them.

"Who is simple let him turn in hither." How wonderful is the teaching of the Holy Ghost, though you feel to be weak in Intellect, yet by degrees this great mystery is gradually opened up to your poor souls, that Christ Jesus dies for the ungodly. Though you may feel to be a fool, you shall not err therein. We have often heard it quoted "Though fools, shall not enter therein", but the scripture reads *"Though fools shall not err therein."* Isa 35:8. The reason that you can not err therein, is because you are in Christ Jesus. Now we are led from Law to Gospel, and our eyes are opened to view the heavenly scene and receive some knowledge of the fact that He (Jesus) Is made to be sin for us, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Then we can get a glimpse of the truth of the inspired Apostle, that Jesus is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

"As for Him that wanteth understanding she saith to him, come eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled. All of this was written for those who die under God's just and holy law, and their souls are raised up Into newness of life. Then it is that the Holy Ghost reveals Jesus to them as their precious Savior, for the inspired Apostle Paul said that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. 12:3. As the veil is gradually being lifted and we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to get a glimpse through the latticework and view the heavenly scene beyond, we are drawn nearer to our precious Savior, and we can more fully understand that this same Jesus which Phillip preached to the Eunuch was first manifested to us in the person of the Father; second, He was manifested to us in the person of the Holy Ghost.

John said, *"for there are three and bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, And these three are One."* Paul said, *"For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."* Col. 2:9.

Now we can see that the Son is as old as the Father and the Father Is as old as the Son. For John said, *"In the beginning was the word, the word was with God, and word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life and the life was the light of men."* Jno. 1:1-4. This same Jesus which Philip preached to the Eunuch has many names, some of which are recorded by the prophet Isaiah, *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."* Isa 9:6.

The reader may inquire, "How can this Jesus be both the Father and the Son? The term Father means oldest, so in the first administration of the Spirit in our experience, He is manifested to us in the Person of the Father, the Father gives life, then arrests, convicts and condemns us through the administration of the law. Second, He (Jesus) comes to us in the person of the Son. The work of the Son is to fulfill the Law and instruct His people and redeem them from under the curse of the Law. Now when Jesus finished His work in the person of the Son, the Son was crucified and was resurrected the third day, and after abiding here on earth forty days He ascended to the Father.

Now the teaching and instruction which was given to His disciples by this Son Jesus, was concealed in the Law and revealed by Him in the person of the Holy Ghost in the gospel. Before His crucifixion He said, *"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter which is the*

Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Jno. 14:25-26. Do we not see a manifestation of this Son Jesus exhibited in the person of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost? *“and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance.”* Acts 2:4. May I ask this question, has there been any change in the presenting the eternal truth of God from that day until this unless we are overshadowed by the Holy Ghost and the Spirit gives us utterance? The Holy Ghost is the revealer of God’s word. You may ask, what does the Holy Ghost reveal? Answer: The Holy Ghost reveals to the children of God the things which were spoken to them by the Son when He was under the Law. When the Holy Ghost reveals these sacred truths to you, which is often done through and by his servants, you no doubt have said that I knew that but I did not know that I did know it. Why is this? Answer: Those things were taught to you in your experience by the Son as a convicted sinner under the law, and the truth of this teaching is now revealed to you in the Gospel day by the Holy Ghost. Therefore, Jesus said the Holy Ghost *“will bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.”* Many of John’s disciples came to the church at Ephesus, and Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost and they answered that we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost, as they had only been baptised by John with the Baptism of repentance. And when they heard the words of Paul *“They were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them: and they spake with tongues and prophesied.”* Act 19:5-6.

In bringing my article to a close I will only mention a few thoughts in connection with the sixth verse of the ninth chapter of Proverbs: *“Forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way to understanding.”* In looking back through our past experience, as a convicted sinner, when we fled to the law for refuge, we can now see how foolish it was to try to justify ourselves by any works of righteousness which we could do. But, being poor blind mortals we could not see the folly of this work system, nor could we comprehend the truths of the inspired word which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags: and we all do fade as a leaf and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”* Isa 64:6 Ah! how true to our experience, we have to be dispossessed of all our legal good, under the Law, and come to the end of our wits and see the justice of our condemnation, under God’s just and holy Law, before we can know the true meaning of this sacred prophecy. The Apostle Paul, in giving his testimony, which was dictated by the Holy Ghost written to Titus; which said, *“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lust and pleasure, living in malice, and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”* Titus 3:3. What a dark, rough and rugged route we had to travel before we could see the way of understanding. Our souls were enshrouded with darkness, and not one little ray of light could we see. We were like the children of Israel, when they were oppressed by the hand of Pharaoh in Egypt, enshrouded with a darkness which could be felt. Which also must have been the experience of the poor publican, who could not so much as lift up his head, but smote upon his breast, and stood afar off. He prayed and said, *“God, (he could not then call Him Father. I know this was from my own experience) be merciful to me a sinner.”* The scriptures tell us that He went down justified, rather than the Pharisee, who fasted twice a week, and paid tithes of all He possessed, and could not see himself a sinner before God.

In as much as Christ was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification, we too, are crucified with Him. Our souls are lifted up and the Holy Ghost reveals Jesus to us, and for the first time we are given a hope that He is our precious Savior. May I say in my concluding remarks that this hope is so precious that if it were possible you would not exchange it for all the gold and silver that this world affords. Now we can exclaim with the inspired Apostle Paul, *“I am crucified with Christ,*

nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Gal. 2:20. Our eyes are now open, our deaf ears are now unstopped, and our heart is now prepared to receive the true instruction, that salvation is by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, but a gift of God. Is this not the way of understanding?

Humbly submitted,
April 16, 1946.

Signs of the Times
Volume 164, No. 10
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Number 3

MEDITATIONS ON THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

As Recorded in Proverbs

Part 1

Willows Spring, N.C.

“Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.” Proverbs 9:1-6

For sometime I have had a mind to write on the scriptures at the head of this article, but as I have said many times, that if preaching or writing is profitable to the household of faith, it must first be taught in our experience by the Son of God, and then revealed or brought to our remembrance by the Holy Ghost. (John 14:28)

When some one is talking or writing about a great person we are very apt to inquire in our mind, who is this man? Where did he come from? Who was his father and mother? Where did his ancestors come from? In answer to some of the above questions, may I add that was according to Holy Writ, Solomon was the son of David who was king of Israel, his mother was Eliam’s daughter and the wife of Uriah the Hittite. It may be of interest to the readers to know that David had Uriah put in the forefront of the battle so that he was smitten. Then David took Uriah’s wife to be his wife, and she was Solomon’s mother. His grandfather was named Jesse, and his ancestors were of this notable family, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

I have regarded Solomon, in many respects, as being a type of Christ. First, he possessed more wisdom than any other man, and if my memory serves correctly, we are told that none shall come after him that is as wise as he. Second, he was a kind and gentle ruler over all Israel, and rendered just and righteous decisions before the people. “In Gideon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, ask what I shall give thee.” I Kings 3:5. Solomon prayed to God to “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.” So the Lord did not only give him wisdom, but riches and honor also.

When I was a boy I read this scripture and I thought that it was a matter of choice for which he could ask. (Of course it was a matter of choice but not in the sense which I thought.) I had an idea that he could ask for riches, wisdom, honor or anything of his own choosing. In other words, I thought it was about like this, If I should go to town and buy several presents and say to my little girl take any one that you want, and in all probability, I would not know which one she would take before she made her selection. I also thought that I certainly would have asked for riches, then I could discharge all of my obligations and probably give a little to the poor, but make sure that I would reserve a sufficient amount for future use, and there is little doubt in my mind but that Solomon would have asked for riches had he

possessed a carnal mind at the time. But ah! how different do I look at the scene now. Does God ever put the burden of prayer in your heart, before he first makes you feel the need of the thing that he purposes to give you? Can we pray for mercy before we feel the need of help? Solomon felt the need of wisdom more than anything else for he was now beginning to reign in the place of his father, David, and he was conscious of the fact that many perplexing problems would arise among the people, which would require the guiding hand of God, therefore, he said, "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad."

Dear servants of God, have you not had the same experience that Solomon did, many times in your feeble efforts in serving as a servant among the people of God? I know that my dear wife and I have felt this to a great extent in our family circle, in the rearing of our children. Before I was married I thought I knew all about rearing children, and I had a fixed rule in my mind that I would follow which was something like this. If I ever married a wife and any children were born in our family, I would use the lash in making any corrections, but ah! how mistaken I was. May I say that if your child knows but the rod of correction laid on his or her back every time it does something wrong, you have a poorly brought up child, for I have learned by experience that it takes a great deal of patience, kindness and teaching mixed with firmness, to get the proper respect and confidence of our children, in order that they may obey from a standpoint of love rather than fear. When our boys grew up into the teen age, they would come around and say, "Father, I want your car to go to a ball game, picture show or some worldly amusement." My preference was that they be content not to go, but I began to realize that I was once a boy and I enjoyed parties and dances, and I wanted them to have reasonable privileges with other boys lest they think that their mother and I were too strict with them. But the great problem was this, when they repeated this request, which I thought was too often, shall I say yes, or shall I say no, and for fear that I was not in the frame of mind to make a proper decision, I would say, "go and ask your mother," and she would say, "go back and ask your father." We have often been brought into great straits making up our minds, and many times we said, "Oh Lord, decide this matter for us, that we may train our children up in the way that they should go, that when they get old they will not depart from it." The same has been true in regard to our girls.

One notable circumstance which was brought before King Solomon was the case of two women who lived in the same house and each gave birth to a child about three days apart, one of the women overlaid her child and it died. About the midnight hour she laid the dead baby in the bed of the other woman and took the living child and claimed it as her own; the other woman awoke in the morning to give her child suck, and upon finding that she had been defrauded of her child she made complaint to the other woman that the living child was hers, but the other contended that the living child was hers. Inasmuch as they could not settle the matter they brought the case before the highest tribunal on earth. So Solomon heard the testimony of each, both testifying that the living child was hers. No other witnesses were present, which of course made it much harder to decide. I am sure that nothing short of divine wisdom could render a righteous verdict in this case. May I repeat again that King Solomon had prayed and said, "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." He said to his servant, "Bring me a sword," which they did, and the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the King, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my Lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. Then the King answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof." I Kings 3:25-27.

This one decision was published abroad throughout the land, and the people feared him, for they saw that the hand of God was with him. The vast number of horses and chariots, and the great number of beasts that were slain each day to satisfy the hunger of those of his household, and the men servants and maid servants that were in attendance at his command, are beautiful types at the bountiful storehouse of our great Emanuel, who sits upon his throne and metes out justice and mercy to all of his poor, hungry and tempest tossed children. As Solomon was governor over all of Israel who would say that God does not govern the universe from the huge monsters down to the smallest insect. He has said in his word, "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool" Isa. 66:1. "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine and the fulness thereof." Psalms 50:10-12. But ah! before we can fully realize the truth of this we have to be brought down from our throne of self works and self righteousness, then we can appreciate the true value of this inspired word. When the great King Nebuchadnezzar was dismounted from his throne and was made to eat grass like oxen, "and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws," (Dan. 4:33) then he could say with a true and understanding heart that "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he (God) doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Dan. 4:35

I can appreciate and sympathize with our brethren when they get in a low state, and the Lord seems to hide his face. We see so many of the dear fathers, and mothers passing out and so few joining the church to fill the vacancies. We often wonder and feel that we have been remiss in our duty. Such has been my own feelings many times. When we are brought to this low ebb, and darkness enshrouds our souls it is then that Satan makes his worst attacks, but when the day dawns and we are again illuminated by the Holy Spirit, the evil one flees away like the rays before the beaming sun, and as these Temanites were a great pest in the life of Job, you may be sure that they will pester you. How good it is to remember the words of the inspired apostle which was directed by the Holy Ghost, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

The eagle is a faint type of the church and I would not say that during her molting season she is entirely free from her prey, but when she feathers out she soars high above the clouds. The old prophet Elias was reduced to a low state when he made intercession to God against Israel saying, "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto Him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal," and the apostle Paul referred to this and said, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Rom. 11:3-5. Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:32

I will now attempt, if God is willing, to explain what I see in the scripture at the head of this article. "Wisdom hath builded her house." The house which Solomon built, was to my mind a type of the heavenly church which the Lord has or is building for he said, "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16:18. This house was not so large according to the dimensions, but it was an expensive one. It took one hundred fifty-three thousand and three hundred men, seven years to build it. Cedar and stone were the principle materials that were used in the construction of this building. Cedar is a highly typical material because of its long life and preserving qualities. It kept the moths out and the stones made it burglar proof which compares favorably to the language of Jesus, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures

upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.” Matt. 6:19-20. These trees were hewn out chiefly by the servants of Hiram, from the cedars of Lebanon. Each piece of material was so minutely dressed out, “that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was building.” I Kings 6:7. As the type so is the reality when the Lord began his work, you were in the forest of nature, “and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” Eph. 2:3. He first cut you down, and each stroke was indeed necessary in order to hew off the roughage, straighten you out and make you fit for the Master’s use. The reader may inquire, “Have I been properly dressed out?” I have said that this is a fairly good rule by which to tell. If we are back biting, fault finding, contending about trifling things and striving about words to no profit among and with our brethren, it is good evidence that a few more knots need to be slabbed off, which God alone can do. Long before you united with the church you may have thought that there were certain members on the inside that you could not fellowship, but ah! how different when you were carried there on the wings of God’s love. There was then no thought in your mind of who can I fellowship, but the great wonder now is who can fellowship me? How good if we could always be possessed with this spirit.

Several years ago I had an appointment at a church during the week. Upon approaching the ground several brethren gathered around me and said, “Brother Adams, there is a man here that we want you to encourage to unit with the church.” I said, “What is his reason for staying out?” They said, “He stated that there was a member that he could not fellowship.” My reply was, “You had better let him alone until God completes his work with the hewing ax.” About two years later, the unworthy writer was present when this brother came pleading for a home and was happily received into the fold. It will be noticed that when these timbers were hewn out they were floated to Joppa by way of the sea. The word *sea* often when used in the Scriptures signifies trouble. We see the waves and billows as they roll to the shore. David said, “All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.” Psalm 42:7. Dear child of God, have you ever felt any of these waves and billows come over you while you are floating by the way of the sea? If so, be not discouraged for our God has spoken by the mouth of his apostle and said, “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” Acts 14:22. The material that were used in the construction of this building were not dead, rotten or decaying materials. They were sound and seasoned materials. So is the church of God. She is built out of living materials, living by the reason of Christ who lives in her. Peter said, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ,” I Peter 2:5, which is in harmony with the testimony of the apostle Paul, “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself the chief corner stone, *in whom* all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” Eph. 2:20-21.

“She hath hewn out her seven pillars.” I do not claim to have any superior knowledge over my precious brethren in writing on this or any other portion of God’s sacred word. Some have said “the seen pillars” represent the seven churches of Asia, but as I view the natural building of Solomon, I see the building is supported by the pillars and the pillars get their support from the rock bed underneath. Now the pillars are between the rock and the building which seems to me to more fully represent the apostles and prophets who were peculiarly fitted and hewn out to withstand the cold, chilly winds and give succor and support to the children of God by reason of the severe trials and afflictions which they were enabled by the grace of God to pass through. Would you not say that you have many times drawn comfort and peace from their sacred writings when they are applied to your experience by the Holy Ghost? When the apostle John was exiled upon the isle of Patmos, he said, “I John, who also am your

brother, and companion in tribulation.” Remember that it is when you are in tribulation that he is your bosom friend. The word “seven” is often used to denote fulness. The above views which I have penned seem to me to be in harmony with the inspired writings of the apostle Paul. “And are built upon the *foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.*” Eph. 2:20-21.

Signs of the Times
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Part 2

Willow Springs, N.C.

“She hath killed her beasts.” The provisions for one day in Solomon’s household was thirty measures of fine flour, and three scores measures of meal. Then fat oxen out of the pastures and an hundred sheep, besides harts and roebucks and deer and fatted fowl. I Kings 4:22-23. Was all of this portion of God’s sacred word, penned just to make history and to fill up space? Indeed no. For we are told that “whatsoever things were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” Before this meal and flour was reduced to its present state, the grain must go through the upper and nether millstones, then kneaded together and baked in an hot oven. The blood must be drained out of the beast and fowls before they were prepared to feed the hungry of the household of Solomon. What can these beasts and fowls represent? Do they not portray in types and shadows, the suffering and death of the meek and lowly lamb of God who was delivered for our offences and was raised for our justification, and they more particularly point to the gospel day when we are blessed to sit down in the kingdom with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and partake of the heavenly feast, we too must be crucified with Christ (Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ.”) and die under God’s just and holy law, and have part in his resurrection, before we can eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood.

“She hath mingled her wine.” Wine is often spoken of to typify the gospel of Christ. (Songs of Solomon 7:9) The mingling of wine beautifully portrays the various gifts which God has placed in the church for the edification of the saints. “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.” 1 Cor. 12:4-5. And God has placed them in order, first the apostles then prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Eph. 4:12. One precious saint will often say, “I had rather hear Elder than any other preacher I ever heard.” Another one says, “I had rather hear Elder” What makes this difference? It is because his preaching is more suited to your experience. How discouraging it would be to the poor servants of God if all the household of faith were to center upon one servant and not one word of encouragement for the rest of us. But our God has so arranged it in his divine providence that each one shall receive his portion in due season, and get the flavor which is best suited to his or her taste.

“She hath also furnished her table.” The table which Solomon set was furnished with a great variety of foods with all the necessary vitamins to supply the body with health and strength, but would you suppose that all the food was good to the taste? My answer is no. My mother, when I was a small boy,

often made me eat many things that I did not enjoy so well, but she knew it was good for my body. If I could have had my way I would have begun with the desserts and ended with desserts. I have often said that the children of God remind me of a family of little children seated around a table which was filled with coarser food and a dish of ice cream in the middle, and without the guiding hand of their mother they will almost invariably start on the ice cream and end on the ice cream. Why is this? The answer is because the cream is more delicious to the taste. But the good mother says you all must eat a reasonable supply of the coarser foods, then I will serve your dessert last. It may be that she has a supply of the better tasting food, but she knows that a well balanced diet makes a healthier child. So our God never questions you and me concerning the kind of food that we shall have. If we could have our way, we would live on love, joy, peace and happiness all the time. But ah! when he sees fit he gives us sorrow, trouble and afflictions. Now you can see that all the food that is listed on the menu is not good to the taste, but is it not good for the body? David said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now I have kept the thy word." Psalms 119:67. Now affliction was not good to his taste, but through this suffering he kept God's word. Can you read your own experience?

"She hath sent forth her maidens." When we are invited to a banquet or feast do we not see the maidens serving the guests? No doubt, but what this was a wonderful sight for the Queen of Sheba to behold in the Temple of Solomon. Everyone serving in the place and order in which this Great King has placed them. Do you know of a more beautiful sight than to see the guests seated around and each humble servant of God handing out to the household of faith such things as the Master has supplied him with? The Lord said to Peter "Feed my lambs" and "Feed my sheep." The Lord did not tell him to convert a goat into a sheep, but the words are simply this, "Feed my lambs" and "Feed my sheep." John 21:15-16. Through the sufferings and death of Jesus under the law all the preparation was made for the servants (or maidens) to serve in the gospel day. "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." John 6:55.

"She crieth upon the *highest* places of the city." It will be noticed in the ninth chapter of Proverbs, fourteenth verse, that the foolish woman "sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city," but the woman who possesses wisdom, "she crieth upon the highest places of the city," which is in keeping with the inspired prophet Isaiah. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Isaiah 35:8. What a comfort to the poor tempest tossed child of God, when the Holy Ghost applies the above words to your weary soul and you are lifted up and sometimes made to feel that you are in the *way* (Jesus). Abraham's servant said, "I being in the *way*, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren." Could he fall to reach the designated place since he was in the way? Jesus says, "I am the way." "He putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them."

"Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither." How wonderful is the teaching of the Holy Ghost, though you feel to be weak in intellect, yet by degrees this great mystery is gradually opened up to your poor souls, that Christ Jesus dies for the ungodly. Though you may feel to be a fool, you shall not err therein. We have often heard it quoted "though fools, shall not enter therein," but the scripture reads, "though fools, shall not err therein." Isaiah 35:8. The reason that you cannot err therein, is because you are in Christ Jesus. Now we are led from law to gospel, and our eyes are opened to view the heavenly scene and receive some knowledge of the fact that he (Jesus) is made to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Then we can get a glimpse of the truth of the inspired apostle, that Jesus is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

“As for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.” All of this was written for those who die under God’s just and holy law, and their souls are raised up into newness of life. Then it is that the Holy Ghost reveals Jesus to them as their precious Saviour, for the inspired apostle Paul said that “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” 1 Cor. 12:3. As the veil is gradually being lifted, and we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to get a glimpse through the lattice work and view the heavenly scene beyond, we are drawn nearer to our precious Saviour and can more readily understand that this same Jesus which Philip preached to the Eunuch was first manifested to us in the person of the Father; second, he was manifested to us in the person of the Son and third, he was manifested to us in the person of the Holy Ghost. John said, “for there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father the word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” Paul said, “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Col. 2:9. Now we can see that the Son is as old as the Father and the Father is as old as the Son, for John said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” John 1:1-4. This same Jesus was Philip preached to the Eunuch has many names, some of which are recorded by the prophet Isaiah. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6. The reader may inquire, how can this Jesus be both the Father and the Son? The term father means oldest, so in the first administration of the spirit in our experience, he is manifested to us in the person of the Father. The Father gives life, then arrests, convicts and condemns us through the administration of the law. Second, he (Jesus) comes to us in the person of the Son. The work of the Son is to fulfill the law and instruct his people and redeem them from under the curse of the law. Now when Jesus finished his work in the person of the Son, the son was crucified and was resurrected the third day, and after abiding here on earth forty days he ascended to the Father. The teaching and instruction which was given to his disciples by this Son Jesus was concealed in the law and revealed by him in the person of the Holy Ghost in the gospel. Before his crucifixion he said, “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” John 14:25-26. Do we not see a manifestation of this Son Jesus exhibited in the person of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost? “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:4. May I ask this question, has there been any change in presenting the eternal truth of God from that day until this unless we are over-shadowed by the Holy Ghost and the Spirit gives us utterance? The Holy Ghost is the revealer of God’s word. You may ask, what does the Holy Ghost reveal? Answer: the Holy Ghost reveals to the children of God the things which were spoken to them by the Son when he was under the law. When the Holy Ghost reveals these sacred truths to you, which is often done through and by his servants, you no doubt have said that I knew that, but I did not know that I did know it. Why is this? Answer: thee things were taught to you in your experience by the Son as a convicted sinner under the law, and the truth of this teaching is now revealed to you in the gospel day by the Holy Ghost. Therefore, Jesus said, the Holy Ghost will “bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Many of John’s disciples came to the church at Ephesus, and Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost, and they answered that we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost as they had only been baptized by John with the baptism of repentance. And when they heard the words of Paul, “They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid

his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” Acts 19:5-6.

In bringing my article to a close I will only mention a few thoughts in connection with the sixth verse of the ninth chapter of Proverbs: “Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.” In looking back through our past experience, as a convicted sinner, when we fled to the law for refuge, we can now see how foolish it was to try to justify ourselves by any works of righteousness which we can do, but, being poor blind mortals we could not see the folly of this work system, nor could we comprehend the truths of the inspired word which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, “But we are all as the unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Isaiah 64:6. Ah! how true to our experience, we have to be dispossessed of all of our legal good, under the law, and come to the end of our wits, and see the justice of our condemnation, under God’s just and holy law, before we can know the true meaning of this sacred prophecy. The apostle Paul, in giving his testimony, which was directed by the Holy Ghost written to Titus, said, “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.” Titus 3:3. What a dark, rough and rugged route we had to travel before we could see the way of *understanding*. Our souls were enshrouded with darkness, and not one little ray of light could we see. We were like the children of Israel when they were oppressed by the hand of Pharaoh in Egypt, enshrouded with a darkness which could be *felt*, which also must have been the experience of the poor publican who could not so much as lift up his head, but smote upon his breast and stood afar off. He prayed and said, “God (he could not call then call him Father, I know this from my own experience) be merciful to me a sinner.” The scriptures tell us that he went down justified, rather than the Pharisee, who fasted twice a week, paid tithes of all he possessed and could not see himself a sinner before God. Inasmuch as Christ was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, we too, are crucified with him. Our souls are lifted up and the Holy Ghost reveals Jesus to us, and for the first time we are given a hope that he is our precious Saviour. May I say in my concluding remarks that this hope is so precious, that if it were possible you would not exchange it for all the gold and silver that this world affords. Now we can exclaim with the inspired apostle Paul, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Gal. 2:20. Our eyes are now opened, our deaf ears are unstopped, and our heart is now prepared to receive the true instruction, that salvation is by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves, but a gift of God. Is this not the way of understanding? Humbly submitted.

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MEDITATIONS ON THE BOOK OF RUTH

Part 1

We are taught in the scriptures that “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” Rom. 15:4. Again, the apostle Paul tells us that “The law having a shadow of good things to come, but not the very image of the things.” Heb. 10:1.

There are only four chapters in the Book of Ruth, and to my mind the four chapters beautifully portray Jesus, the Church under the law and, also, the Church in the gospel dispensation.

There are eight principal characters whose names are mentioned in this book, namely, Elimelech, Naomi (his wife), Mahlon and Chilon (their sons), Orpah, Ruth, Boaz (a mighty man of wealth) and a little son of Boaz and Ruth whose name was Obed. The other characters were the reapers and maidens of Boaz.

Naomi said, “I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty; why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me?” Ruth 1:21. Now Naomi, her husband and their two sons dwelt in Bethlehem-Judah, and there was a famine in the land, and they went to the country of Moab and continued there. Is not the famine in the soul the reason a convicted sinner moves out of his former state in search of comfort and rest?

After they arrived in the country of Moab, the Lord sent further afflictions on Naomi by taking her husband from her Malon and Chilon took them wives of the women of Moab. The name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

Mahlon and Chilon died; the tender cords of earthly ties were severed; gloom and despair sank deep into her soul. Her husband (the law) was dead, her two sons were dead and all her earthly possessions were gone. What a dark and gloomy picture! Dear Reader, could you witness with Naomi when you came to the end of the law with no hope of Heaven? I can hardly refrain from shedding tears as I contemplate the scene. But suddenly Naomi heard a little good news, how the Lord had visited his people in Bethlehem-Judah, in giving them bread. So she arose with her two daughters-in-law and resolved to make the journey back. The Prodigal Son said, “I will arise and go to my father.” Luke 15:18. Just how far they went before Naomi introduced her subject to them, the scriptures are silent. Would I do violence to the scriptures if I say that they came to the border line of Bethlehem-Judah and Moab?

Naomi said, “Go return each to her mother’s house - are there yet any more sons in my womb?” She brought out the impossible, and said, “for I am too old to have a husband,” meaning that she was too old to bear children and that if it were possible for her to bear any more sons, Orpah and Ruth would be too old for them, and her sons would be too young for Orpah and Ruth.

It may appear from the words of Naomi that she had turned the cold shoulder to her daughter-in-law. Ah! but not so. She was testing the love, zeal and affection they had for her; for she well knew that unless they dearly loved her they would not be willing to face hunger and starvation. It has been said by

our critics that we offer very little or no inducement for people to unite or join with us and that we manifest but little concern for those who are on the outside of the Church, but this is not true. Dear child of God, if you love us, we love you. But like Naomi, we have no worldly attractions to offer, nor earthly amusements for entertainment. We would also like to know if you feel as Moses of old, “choosing rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” Heb. 11:25. “We must, through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” Acts 14:22. “And Naomi said, turn again my daughters: why will ye go with me?”

At this point, Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and went back to her people, “but Ruth clave unto her.” The law rolls back but the gospel moves on. The forceful expression which has found a responsive cord in the hearts of those who are born of God were uttered by Ruth. “Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried.” Naomi “left speaking to her.”

When you, dear brother or sister, see such manifestations of the love of God in the hearts of His dear saints, are you not ready to embrace them into the fellowship of the church and to say to them as Laban said to Abraham’s servant, “Come in thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?” Gen. 24:31.

What a wonderful manifestation of the love of God is exhibited in the life of Ruth. She turned her Back on her earthly parents and kindred in the country of Moab. How beautifully her life compares with the language of Jesus, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also he cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:26.

We are not told, but we would assume that her parents could have provided her with an adequate apartment at the death of her husband and given her the earthly comforts of life (but this does not satisfy the hungry soul). She, like Naomi, was in search of that bread (Jesus) which her mother-in-law heard that the Lord had given to His people after the famine in Bethlehem-Judah. Note, they have not as yet received this bread, but are in search of it, and Naomi has some hopes of receiving it at the hand of her near kinsman Boaz, “a mighty man of wealth” (Jesus). Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt.

Ruth was a young woman and a widow also, and humanly speaking, she could have stepped out far ahead of her mother-in-law who was old and decrepit. She seemed content to travel along with Naomi and share her sorrows through all of the long and lonely journey from the country of Moab to Bethlehem-Judah. Just how far this distance is we are not told but in the experience of the unworthy writer, it was a lonely travel of twenty-one years.

At last, they reached the city. Note the change in the appearance of Naomi. The people could hardly believe this was she. “All the city was moved about them, and they said, is this Naomi?” But she said, “call me not Naomi, call me Mara.” The word Naomi means sweet; the word Mara means bitter. She said, “the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.” She is no more that sweet and lovable character in her own estimation. The Lord has emptied her of self-works and beauty. For she said, “I went out full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.” Notice that she did not say, “He sent me” but, “The Lord hath brought me home”; like David who said, “He brought me to the banqueting house.” Also, the man who fell among thieves was “carried to the inn” by the good Samaritan, and Abraham’s servant said, “I being in the way the Lord led me to the house of my Master’s brethren.” Could the servant have failed to reach the house of his master’s brethren, since he was in the way?” And Jesus

says, "I am the way." And Ruth and Naomi "came to Bethlehem-Judah, at the beginning of the barley harvest."

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Part 2

Beginning with the second chapter of Ruth, first verse, we read as follows: "And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter." We will notice first that Ruth desires to have the full consent of her mother-in-law to go and glean in the field of Boaz. Is it not true, dear reader, that you desire to have the approbation of the church in all of your travels? Not only did she ask permission to go and glean in the field, she asked the servant of Boaz if she might glean after the reapers. This shows that she did not care to be an intruder. Having obtained permission, she gleaned from morning until evening and beat out that which she had gleaned and took it to her mother-in-law, for Naomi was only interested in the good grain. Is this not a type of the gospel field? She left the chaff and straw behind. The church is only interested in the good grain (Jesus). It appears that Ruth had gleaned several days when Boaz made his appearance in the field and the first thing he said unto the reapers was, "The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee." What is the salvation for? Boaz is acknowledging the hand of God in their temporal blessings. The Lord had withheld the first and latter rain for several years, and there was a famine in the land. But now he smiles upon them and they are favored with a bountiful crop. Is this not a true sign of the gospel church today? She will acknowledge the hand of God in her temporal blessings, as well as spiritual. How true is the type; when the rain falls, it must first come through the roots in order for the plant to grow. The Lord said, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall Pistil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." So the heavenly rain must first come through the root, Jesus, for he is the root and the offspring of David, and Paul said, "Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." So all of our suffering, trials and sorrows, as well as our joys must first come through Jesus, for he was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." What a joy it must have brought to the reapers for Boaz to make his appearance in the field and give directions and instructions. Dear servant of God, do you not oft-times feel to be at your wit's end, and do you not long for the Master to come and give you renewed evidence of your call to the ministry and supply you with chords that are fitly spoken, which Solomon says are "like apples of gold in pictures of silver," that they may be for the edification of the saints and in honor and praise to our precious and heavenly Master? In verse five, we see that Boaz takes notice of Ruth, and after the servant gives laity a full explanation of her coming, he says unto her, "Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens." What kind and sympathetic words from this "mighty man of wealth" (Jesus) to a poor, helpless widow and stranger. How unworthy she felt for one so high and lofty to condescend and take notice of her. Read her own words in verse ten: "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" In Solomon's humble petition to God in the dedication of the Holy Temple, he fervently asked the Lord to remember the stranger that "is come from a far country." Chron. 6:32. In the book of Leviticus 19:33-36 we read where the Lord made

provision for strangers. If this script should catch the eye of some poor and tempestuously tossed traveler who so often feels, like the unworthy writer, a stranger, remember that our God has made ample provision for strangers. In verse nine he says, "When thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn." How favorably these words compare with the words of the Savior, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Is not this vessel a type of this old earthen vessel in which, Paul says, we have this treasure in an earthen vessel? Jesus said to the woman at the well of Samaria, the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Is not this young man, Jesus, formed in you the hope of glory? Are we not blessed at times to drink from this vessel? Sometimes when we meet for worship, other times when traveling alone? And often Glen we wake up in the dark hours of night and when this living water flows so sweetly into our souls, can we not witness with David of old, "My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me an the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever?" And again we can say with the poet, "I need not go abroad for joy, I have a feast at home." At meal time, Boaz mill, cone hither and eat bread. This is what Ruth and Naomi had longed for when they left the country of Moab, for Naomi said she *heard* that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread and nor they were partakers of it.

Ruth eats and takes halve to her mother-in-law. When the Lord so wonderfully favors us with a little of this bread, does he not also give us some to take to the church? He also said, dip thy morsel in the vinegar. While I have no special light as to the spiritual significance of the expression, "dip thy morsel in the vinegar," we do know that vinegar makes many foods more palatable. He reached her some parched corn. Would it be well to say that this corn represents Jesus? Before corn is parched, it must be brought through the fire. So Jesus was brought through the furnace of afflictions and trod the wine-press of the wrath of God alone, and of all the people there was none to help. Note, he did not say that no one was present but "there was none to help." Mine own arm hath brought salvation, and long before his crucifixion. Nebuchadnezzar saw him in the fiery furnace when he put the three Hebrew children in and heated the furnace seven times hotter than was wont to be. The king said, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" "Lo, I see four men loosed stalking in the midst of the fires and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." When David's brothers there in battle against the Philistines, he had a great desire to take them some parched corn. How well we know that God's humble poor are in a great welfare today, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh," and we so often feel that the flesh will ultimately win the victory and sink us into despair. The writer has at times all but given up. I have often said to my wife when I would start out to church, "I haven't any subject for today." There are times when I walk into the pulpit and a silent voice will say, "The brethren are ashamed of you. Your life is far below the standard for a minister of the gospel, and the reason they don't tell you to stop is because they hate to tell you so." And I must confess that at such times when I feel so depressed, tired, hungry and faint, I am unable to tell whether it is the voice of the Lord or the voice of Satan. But I am more inclined at such times to believe it is the voice of God. But, ah! when I begin to partake of this "parched corn", it seems to penetrate through my whole being and suddenly gives me such renewed courage and strength, that I can say with the apostle of old, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. When I have such an experience as just recorded (which are few now and far between), I can turn to Satan and say, "get thee behind me; I will never adhere to your suggestions any more." But, ah! I have to be taught this lesson over and over again. Well did the apostle say that some are easel learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Such has been my experience. Boaz said to the reapers, "and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may

glean them and rebuke her not.” Boaz, in his love and affection as will be seen from the narrative, is drawn out to Ruth, and Ruth is drawn out to Boaz. He shares his wealth with her, as will be seen from the words of Naomi in verse nineteen. “And where wroughtest thou?” It wasn’t that she did not know, for she had given Ruth permission to go. But Ruth had brought home so much more barley than usual though the kindness of Boaz that Naomi was anxious for her to tell the whole story, and there is no doubt in my mind that it was an interesting one. How true today, when we see the love of God manifested in the life of the dear little saints, we know that handfuls of purpose have been scattered around in the gospel field and they are partakers, but do we not like to hear them tell their experience in their own manner and way? Naomi now introduces the Subject by telling Ruth: “The man is near of kin unto us.” Ruth did not know this before. What would you say? If a child of God should relate the dealings of the Lord with him and you could see that he had been wonderfully favored, as Naomi could see from the words as well as the gift from Boaz, would you not say that Jesus is near of kin to us? Naomi brings the “us” in because both of them share in the blessings alike. Then she adds, “one of our next kinsmen.” Verse twenty. Notice she did not say the man is our “nearest” kinsman, but, “our next kinsman” or “near of kin to us”. Boaz introduces the subject to Ruth concerning the “nearest” kinsman in the next chapter, which I hope to treat on in my next article if the Lord is willing.

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Part 3

After the barley harvest and wheat harvest had been completed, Naomi proceeded to give Ruth further instructions as will be seen in the third chapter and first four verses. She again reminds her of the fact that Boaz is “our kindred”, and in as much as the barley harvest has been completed, the “winnowing” is to take place that night in the threshing floor. Now, dear reader, do you not remember something about this threshing in the night time in your experience? You may have said, while standing in the field (or under the law) and the wind and storms beating upon you, “Oh, Lord, this is dreadful; I cannot bear any more,” but at last we come through the threshing machine then winnowed. Through this process, the precious is taken from the vile or the wheat is taken from the chaff. We have an example of this in Peter’s denial of his Master the night the Savior was crucified. He went out and wept bitterly, and the Lord turned and looked upon Peter and said, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” He did not say that Peter’s self-confidence would not fail, but “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” Peter had said before, “Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.” How graciously did the Master say, “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me.” Again he said, “before the coals crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.” Now comes the test. The little damsel said, “thou art a Galilean.” Poor Peter is now scared and is now put into the Lord’s sifter which is a part of his threshing machine, and it is operated by Satan, in order to remove in Peter his self-confidence from faith, hope and charity, which always remain in the sieve. “There abideth faith, hope, charity, these three.” Peter must learn again not to trust in self and must learn also the truth of what Jesus said, “without me ye can do nothing.” How often we have to be brought through this experience! So Naomi said to Ruth, “Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor.” According to her instructions, she went down to the threshing floor. “When Boaz had eaten and drunk,

and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn.” Truth came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. What a striking figure! Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and heard his words. She washed his feet and wiped them with the hairs (her glory) of her head. Is this not the feeling of every humble sinner to lie at the feet of Jesus and hear his gracious words as Ruth heard them from the lips of this “mighty man of wealth”, Boaz? She now desires more of his loving kindness. This, she signifies by saying, “spread therefore thy plait over thine handmaid.” Now she relates to him what Naomi has acquainted her with before, “for thou art a near kinsman.” Boaz tells her that she is a virtuous woman and he assigns the reason as being that she followed “not young men, whether poor or rich.” Solomon said, “Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.” Prov. 31:29. The eye of Boaz is fastened upon Ruth. His heart and affection go out to her as if to say, “Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.” Cant 4:7. Boaz now replies to Ruth regarding her kinship to him and he introduces the subject by saying, “Now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.” I ask the patience of my readers while I endeavor to explain, by the help of God, this wonderful mystery. To my mind, this “nearest” kinsman does not apply to our nearest kin in earthly ties, but the first right in matrimony is invested in the elder by reason of God’s law which was given to Moses as will be seen by the words of Laban to Jacob: “It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfill her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.” Now Leah was tender eyed (or nearsighted) . Is she not a type of the law? While “Rachel was beautiful and well favored,” and to my mind is a type of the gospel. Paul said, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another.” Paul did not say that the law was dead, but “ye also are become dead to the law.” He expresses it in this way to show that the law has no power to give eternal life and happiness, for he goes on and says further that if there had been a law given that could have given life, verily, righteousness should have been by the law. Now after we have learned by our experience that the law is a failure, and having come to the end, we are now prepared to receive the following words: “Then said I, Lo, I Go come (in the volume of the book it is written of me), to do thy will, O God.” Heb. 10:7. “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” Now when the day dawns, Ruth takes the six measures of barley which she received at the hand of Boaz and hurriedly goes back to her mother-in-law and tells her how graciously, kindly and wonderfully she has been favored at the hand of this “night man”. Let us take special notice that in all her gleanings and gifts, she always went home and shared her blessings with her mother-in-law. How beautifully this agrees with the language of our Master, “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee.” As we read the eighteenth verse, again, our minds are attracted by the wonderful words of Naomi, “Sit still my daughter.” Is it not good to sit; still sometimes and see what the Lord will do? Moses said to the children of Israel, “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.” Naomi said also. “For the man will not be in rest, until we have finished the thing this day.” As proof of this statement, Boaz went up to the gate of Bethlehem Judah in search of this nearest kinsman and he “came by”. He did not call his name, but said, “Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here.” While it is on my mind, I would like to again reiterate as previously stated in a former article that Naomi is a type of the church under the law dispensation, and all the instruction that she was giving to Ruth was making her better acquainted and bringing her to Boaz. The law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. These words do not signify that you can come to Christ, but they simply mean that you have completed your school under the law and are now prepared for the reception of Christ. Just as a schoolboy, when he finishes the grammar grades, is ready for high school. As Laban said to Jacob, “Fulfill her week” (yeah, the law), then it was legal according to the law of Moses for him to take Rachel also. Let it be fully understood that the nearer kinsman, Boaz, does not have a legal right to marry Ruth until he obtains it

from the court of Israel. This he proceeded to do by taking “ten men of the elders of the city” of Bethlehem Judah, also “all the people that were in the gate” to bear testimony to all that was said between him and the nearest kinsman. The ten elders of the city, to my mind, represent the ten commandments of the law, while those that were in the gate represent the gospel. Remember, dear reader, that both sides must hear all the evidence and be witnesses to every word and to the whole transaction that is made between Boaz and the nearest kinsman. It takes two witnesses in court to establish a thing beyond a reasonable doubt. So it takes the law and the gospel to establish the fact that Jesus proved his right as the legal possessor of his bride. How beautifully this agrees with the inspired prophet of old: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. Boaz said unto the kinsman, “Naomi that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech’s.” He also acquainted him with the fact that he, the nearest kinsman (or law), has the first right to redeem it. So the nearest kinsman said, “I will redeem it.” Then said Boaz, “What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.” Who can this dead signify except dead sinners? “You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sin.” So through this marriage of Boaz, and Ruth, the name of Mahlon was raised up. As the type, so is the reality. Through this conception of Jesus and the church, these dead sinners are raised up. I now return to the nearest kinsman. When Boaz explained the full requirements and the things that were necessary to be done in order to obtain this field, the nearest kinsman said, “I cannot redeem it.” “Redeem thou my right to thyself.” This expression is positive proof and a full acknowledgement that he is a failure. And he further proves this by taking off his shoe. How agreeable are the words of the apostle, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.” Now Paul did not say the law was weak, but it was “weak through the flesh,” for he said that, “the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.” But not so with Jesus, notwithstanding the fact that “It behooved him to be made like unto his brethren.” “Yet without sin” there was no weakness in him. He met the requirements of God’s just and holy law, satisfied its full demands and kept it to a jot or tittle.

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Part 4

After dwelling at some length in my previous article Olson the “Nearest Kinsman” and “Near Kinsman” we will pass on to the marriage of Boaz and Ruth. “So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife” and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. The joy and happiness that came to Naomi and Ruth by the birth of this little son, will never be fully expressed by mortal tongues. Let us go back just a little and review the scene when they left the country of Moab. They were destitute of this world’s goods, husbands dead, sons dead and all their earthly possessions gone. Only one little ray of hope, she heard that the Lord had visited his people in Bethlehem Judah in giving them bread. What a long and lonely journey this must have been. Can you not, dear reader, trace out some of the landmarks in your experience? How fitting are the words of the poet:

“Perhaps he may admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer;

But if I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there.

I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away I know
I must forever die.”

At last the dayspring from on high has visited them. A little son is born. Who can this little son typify but Christ formed in you the hope of glory? His name is Obed; Obed, means serving and how beautifully this agrees with the life of Jesus, who “took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” Phil. 2:7. Our mind is also led to the language of the prophet of old who said, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” Isaiah 9:6. Who are the people that will call his name Wonderful? Are they not the ones unto whom this child is born? Surely, they will call his name Wonderful. Is it not a great wonder of wonders to you, that this meek and lowly Jesus would condescend from his high and lofty state of heaven and take up his abode in you? Surely, you will call his name Wonderful. How wonderful are the words of Simeon. “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.” Luke 1:46-47. “He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent away empty.” Luke 1:53. Is it not true that the same one unto whom this child is born, is the same one that this son is given? His name shall be called Counsellor. Dear child of God, have you not learned the truth of the prophet of old, “And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.” And Jesus himself refers to this prophecy and says, “It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God.” John 6:45. Notice the number of names he has: “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Is there any peace outside of Jesus? “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” John 14:27. How agreeable are the words of Simeon of old. “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” Luke 2:29-30. Is it not true that we find peace every time we are enabled by the spirit of God to embrace this little son (Jesus)? It is then we can behold him in his beauty and holiness. We will now return to the law, which Paul says is “a shadow of good things to come.” Remember, dear reader, that a shadow is not the reality of anything, but if you will follow it you will come to the substance. May I again quote the words in the fourth chapter and 13th verse, “So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife.” How beautifully Ruth portrays the church in the gospel dispensation. She is now married to another, this “near kinsman”, “a mighty man of wealth”. *Even Boaz*. This little son is born, who is the legal heir of all this vast estate that his father possessed in Bethlehem Judah, which I believe is a faint type of heaven, and all that he purchased in the country of Moab which is a type of the earth. So this Son, Jesus, became heir to all that his Father possessed. Heaven is his throne, the earth his footstool and the cattle upon a thousand hills are his. When this little son was born, the women of the city invoked their blessings upon him, “that his name may be famous in Israel.” Can we conceive of any name that will compare with the name of Jesus, except the church? “And this is his name whereby he shall be called, *the Lord our righteousness.*” “And this is the name whereby she shall be called, *the Lord our righteousness.*” Inasmuch as the bride takes the name of the bridegroom., just so the church takes the name of her husband. And inasmuch as Naomi and Ruth looked to his son, Obed, for their natural sustenance, do we not look to Jesus for the jolt of our salvation? Idiomatic true are the words of Peter, “For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12. And the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Philippian brethren said, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is

above every name,” (Phil. 2:9) that in all we do in word or deed, do in the name of Jesus. The women of the city also said to Naomi, “And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life.” To find the true meaning of these words, we will only look back in our experience and see that we are not restored back to our former state, for that was a life of toil and labor, as we have before pointed out in the life of Naomi, in her journey from the country of Tomb to Bethlehem Judah. But she is now a partaker of that bread on which she has bestowed no labor. See how this word restore compares with the experience of David. “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.” David did not ask for salvation, but he wanted the joy of it again. He, Obed, shall be a “nourisher of thine old age.” That is, Naomi and Ruth have the full assurance that this little son will unquestionably, out of the abundance of his vast amount of wealth, supply them with all the necessities and comforts of life. What a consoling thought, notwithstanding the fact that she is old and decrepit and going down the steps of old age, she has something to look forward to. This little son will care for me. “Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom.” May I repeat the words? “And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age.” How beautifully this son typifies the son of God, and listen to his own words: “(For the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.” Deut. 4:31. She has now ceased from her labors and entered into rest. How does this compare with your experience, when Jesus Christ was formed in you the hope of glory, and spake peace to your troubled soul in a feeling sense in words and said, that sins which are many are all forgiven thee, go and sin no more? Now you are no more under the law, but under grace, for the law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus has made you free from the law of sin and death. In bringing this to a close, may I quote the language of the apostle Paul, “For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Heb. 13:5. Again Paul said, “My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Phil. 4:19. The apostle did not say he shall supply all your *needs*, but he shall supply all your *need*. When we are clothed and in our right mind, how fully we realize that we *need* Him every moment and every hour.

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