

FAITH IN GOD'S LEADINGS

(Discourse by Pastor Russell, at the Hershey, Pa., Convention, 1915 Convention Report, Supplement, Page 154.)

I would take for my text today, dear friends, the words of the Lord through the prophet Malachi: *“Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up (put in power); yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.”* These words seem to describe a condition of things that very considerably prevail at the present time. There are very many that are saying these very things.

We look back over a generation or two and we perceive that many of God's people, even though they did not have the light and knowledge that we have today, even though they did not have the blessings of today—a great many Christian people of a generation ago were very sincere, very earnest, and very devoted to the Lord, so far as we can judge from their words and conduct. God's name was taken very reverently by them. Songs of praise to God were sung on Sunday. The Sabbath day was kept because they thought God wished it to be kept, and many things were done in the way of Bible Study and all that; and then came a time when prosperity had come to the world in a large measure, when the people of God were zealous and the Bible seemed not to make as much progress as the worldly people. Those who did not reverence God got along better in the world than they did, and then they began to say, What profit is it that we serve God? What advantage is it to us? It is really a disadvantage, for many of those people that thus trifle with God, they are being established in influence and power, and we are not prosperous in our worldly affairs. And then again, they say that, they are careless respecting God's ordinance and God's will, and yet, they are getting along much better than we who are trying to walk reverently before the Lord. The proud seem to be the ones that the Lord is blessing. It is as though God had said—Blessed are the proud; they that work wickedness shall be set up; they that tempt me shall be delivered. As a consequence, we find today, just as in the days of Malachi's prophecy—only it was then with the Jews—we find a great tendency to worldliness, and little attention is paid to religion, which is only of a formal kind, and not too deep. Attend more to business, they say, more to the lodge, more to such things, and you will get along much better; God is not paying much attention to the people who are trying to please Him. This is so, in general, not only here in Canada, but all over the world. So, there is less piety today, except among certain classes. Those who have reverence for God, and are being strengthened, are coming to be known as Bible Students, and it is separating them out from all denominations. We are looking for as many as are sincere and genuine, and God has some encouragement for them, giving them to see some of the heights and depths,

and lengths and breadths of His great plan. We will wait patiently on the Lord. In His own time and way He will give us the blessings that He thinks are best for us.

So, then, this class is more particularly represented by the next statement, “Then they that feared [reverenced] the Lord spake often one to another.” You see they became separated from the masses and were brought together; and now they speak often one to another. They talk to each other about these good matters. They have a fellowship of spirit, and often sing,

“Blest be the tie that binds,
Our Hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.”

These are the experiences we are having as spiritual Israelites. We are not being blessed necessarily in outward things. Perhaps, as a whole, we have less than the average person of the world. Yet, when have I seen any of the Lord’s saints begging for bread? Never. Yet I have not seen very many great and wealthy. It would not be well for us to have too many of the good things of this present life. In harmony with my own experience, so long as they were in business and prosperous in their worldly affairs, they were inclined to have a worldly spirit, and God greatly favored them by taking from them much of their earthly prosperity. One dear brother told me: “I was in the grocery business. Every moment of my time was necessary to make my business a good success. I was putting all of my life’s energies right into it. From a Colporteur I got the Scripture Studies, but I put them on my shelf because I had no time for them. Brother Russell, the Lord gave me a great fall. I broke my leg, and after it was set and I had to wait for the bones to knit together, I said, I can’t attend to my business, so now is the time to read those books. I did read them, and I want to say that, all that God had given me previous to that time, could not compare with the blessings that came as a result of breaking my leg. I would have gone on the same old way, except this had taken place.” So we see that God is giving us what He sees is best, for us as new creatures. He is not thus dealing with the world. The world is indeed subject to a general supervision and a certain restraint, in that He says “Thus far and no further,” but He is not treating them as a shepherd deals with his sheep. He treats them more as goats. Let us thank God because we as His sheep are under His special care. Wisely and tenderly He holds back from us some of the good, earthly things. It is in harmony with this, that Jesus says, I am the vine, ye are the branches. Every branch in me that beareth fruit, the Father pruneth it that it may bring forth more fruit. He prunes the vine that it may bring forth more fruit. I inquired of some who had made a success of cultivating grape vines, and they informed me, that it is the tendency of this vine to spread out everywhere and have plenty of branches, and the strength of the vine is inclined to go out that way. The result would be a few grapes but not very large. But when the vine-dressers wanted this vine to produce better fruit, they would break off the suckers, and anyone who is a husbandman can tell whether it is a

fruit vine or whether it is a sucker. He breaks off the sucker. And then when the vine shows the signs of fruit, he will break off the vine entirely a little beyond the bunch of grapes. This looks as though he was spoiling the grape vine. But is he spoiling it? No; he is bringing the juice right into that very bunch of grapes. If you want a vine that will produce much fruit, you must know how to do it. Now, our Lord says, in connection with that parable, "Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit." He wants the fruit. The leaves represent profession. Of course, you have to have some leaves. So it is right to have a good profession, but our lives should not be all profession and no fruit. No; No; The Lord wants fruit from the vine—good bunches of fruit. The Father will be glorified by your bearing much fruit. Anyone who would understand the growth of grapes, would get out large quantities of grapes. He is the good husbandman. So, in this way, the Father wishes you to bring forth much fruit. This will be to our advantage and to His glory. These branches that have no fruit buds at all, but are called merely suckers, are illustrative of those who come into the church, make a profession, and never produce any fruit. They are not really of the church class. God only calls fruit-bearers. Those who have the real matter at heart and have a desire to bear much fruit, if the Lord shall knock off some of the tendencies to go out and take in the worldly things, we are not to think that this is strange. The Lord will pinch off this tendency to worldly things, and this will be for your good, not for your injury. You have noticed how the little branches take hold of anything they can reach. So we have a great many things that we are inclined to take hold of: a little pet dog, flowers, a little ground, a little business; taking your strength and energy away from the one thing that is the most important to you. That is the way with the vine. If the Lord shall cut off some of these tendrils, this is to our advantage.

But we should bear in mind, that the Lord is not thus dealing with everyone, but only with a special class. We need to make a sharp distinction between the church and the world. We often hear the expression, The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, as though we were all one brotherhood and all members of the family of God. This might be true from a worldly standpoint, but it does not represent the real truth of the matter. When father Adam was created in the image of God he was the son of God and had a chance of bringing into existence a race of sons, but when he disobeyed God he was cut off from sonship, and his children are therefore, not sons of God. The contrary thought of the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man is nothing but a worldly tradition. The Bible does not speak of the brotherhood of man in such manner. This thought is contrary to the Bible. We have a general relationship one to another, so that we are to do what we can to help those in trouble, even as the Bible says, We are to do good unto all men as we have opportunity, but especially to the household of faith, because the household of faith are the real sons of God. God having discarded Adam and his family, has adopted a new family. When? Where? And How?

This new family began with Jesus. He was begotten again with the Holy Spirit. None preceded Him. Jesus was the first one who was begotten with the Holy Spirit. It came at

the time He made a full consecration of Himself. From that time on, He was a new creature—begotten to a new nature—the divine nature. This nature was perfected when He was raised from the dead. He was put to death in flesh and quickened in spirit, as the Apostle puts it. Jesus was the first, and so, opened up the way for a certain class. Many? No; not many. It is a little flock. God does not wish many. God is limiting the number. Do we know what the number is? Well; He has intimated that the bride of Christ will be made up of 144,000. It will be limited to them. Why should he limit it? In the same way that we might limit the number of invitations to a wedding to a certain number. In the army, so many men constitute a regiment. It is limited to that number. Say, 1,010 shall constitute a regiment. When you get that number, it is full and you can no longer join that regiment. So God has provided for a certain class, and only the required number can come into that class. It has taken all the Gospel Age to find this class. God has been sending out the message for 1,800 years. Simply telling them the message. Those who have responded and make their calling and election sure, when that number has fully come in, then the door will be shut. No more can then get into that class or company.

So then, dear brethren, those who are now being begotten are members of the bride class. It is not open to any and all. It is limited to those who respond in this way. He is dealing in a general way with the world, in that He says, Thus far and no farther, but beyond this general supervision, He is not dealing with the world at the present time. He will deal with them in the Millennial age. But now He deals with the elect of God, and this is the class that is spoken of as being the sons of God. All who are begotten of the Holy Spirit are the sons of God. The world is not begotten of the Spirit. Not all Christians of all denominations are begotten of the Spirit. Very few of them claim to be spirit-begotten. I am sure you will find some of the best of them know very little about spirit begetting. Our Methodist friends years ago used to make much of this, and spoke of most of the people as being born again. They misrepresented the matter. What they really meant to say, was, that those only are the sons of God who have been begotten of the Spirit, and that those thus begotten to sonship must grow in character, grow in grace, grow in the likeness of Christ, and then, in the first resurrection they will be born again, and be sons of God in the full sense. Jesus was the first-born from the dead. So with us, we will be born in the first resurrection. Those are the only sons who are the sons of God. Is that according to the Bible? Yes; none others are called sons of God. John 1:12, is one of the Scriptures on this point, “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God. Jesus came unto His own, and His own [people, the Jews] received Him not.” They had wrong expectations. They were not Israelites indeed, because they did not have the true Israelite spirit. The majority of them rejected Him. They were not true Israelites. Some were Israelites indeed, were loyal to God in their lives, and of them the Apostle speaks when he says, “To them gave He the power, or privilege, of becoming the sons of God.” That privilege came to them at Pentecost. They did not have this privilege before. He put His Spirit upon them and they acted as His representatives beforehand, but not until Jesus had finished His sacrifice and appeared in

the presence of God for us, not until then would God recognize them and give them the Holy Spirit. He said, tarry; I have made you to be my representatives to go into all the world to witness, but tarry at Jerusalem until ye be endowed with power from on high. After Jesus had ascended up on high and there presented his sacrifice, and had been accepted, then the Father granted Him the privilege of recognizing these as His children. The effect was the begetting of the Holy Spirit the same as Jesus was begotten at His baptism.

So it has been all the way down. As many as are the sons of God, they have received the Spirit of God, and if any man have not the Spirit of God, he is none of His. We did not get the Spirit in the same manner as Jesus did at the river Jordan, but the effect was the same. That was an outward demonstration for the benefit of John the Baptist. Neither did we get the Spirit in the same manner as did the disciples at Pentecost. That was an outward demonstration for a double purpose. It taught the Jews that the Father was specially with these, and it convinced the church that they were received of the Father. And then, what was that blessing they got? It was the gift of the Holy Spirit. This gift came to everybody who became a Christian. Some had several gifts. St. Paul could speak with tongues, could interpret tongues, and had the gift of healing, etc. Everyone in the church had a gift bestowed upon him as an evidence that he had been accepted by the Lord. But this did not continue. Why not? Not because the church fell away, but because the church progressed and grew in knowledge. They were then in the primary department, and had primary lessons and illustrations the same as you give a child primary lessons. Thus it was with the early church, and after the early church passed away, the church passed into another stage; and so the Apostle says, "Whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be prophecies, they shall fail"—they shall all pass away. Then would come the fruits of the Spirit. As soon as the church had been established by the gifts of the Spirit, then came the period for the fruits of the Spirit, and it is this fruitage of the Spirit that has constituted the riches and blessings of the church ever since. All down through the Gospel age, those who have been begotten of the Spirit, are expected and exhorted to bear the fruits of the Spirit. These fruits are "meekness, gentleness, faithfulness, longsuffering, patience, brotherly kindness, love. If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour." These fruits were the important things. Not those who have the gifts of the spirit will get into the kingdom. That was something from the outside. The Apostle showed a difference between the gifts and fruits of the Spirit. St. Paul shows that a man might have these gifts of the Spirit and not really be any account at all. He might give all his goods to feed the poor, but if he did not have the real motive of love, (the fruit of the Spirit is love), it would profit him nothing. He might give his body to be burned in some religious cause, but if it were not prompted by love, God would not appreciate it. Though one might speak with the tongues of men, or of angels (He had already spoken of the speaking with tongues as a

valuable gift of the Spirit), if he should speak with these tongues, and did not have love, it would avail him nothing. The gifts by themselves would count for nothing apart from the necessary character, but if these things were done from the motive of love, they would be acceptable to the Lord, they would then be pleasing to Him. If one should speak the truth at the cost of self-sacrifice, that would show that one had a large development of the fruits of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit in an individual manifests itself in an effort to do God's will.

Now then, all the way down, this class has been bearing fruit, more or less, and our Father is being glorified by bearing very much fruit. The fruit grows gradually. The next day after giving your heart to the Lord, you will not have a large bunch of grapes. So with the vine. It does not grow grapes at once. The fruit buds first appear, having small flowers, and very shortly these flowers pass away and the little grapes appear. You can see these under the microscope. Afterwards they develop and grow. So it is with the Christian. This is the will of God, that we should develop these fruits—the fruits of the Holy Spirit. What kind of fruits are these? Are these merely the distribution of tracts? That might be a sign of good fruit—that you were willing to distribute tracts. Would preaching be an indication? That might be a very good sign. But the fruits of the Spirit are really more than these activities in the Lord's vineyard. They are those qualities of heart such as meekness, gentleness, etc. God is more anxious to know how meek you are than the number of tracts you distribute. God is more anxious to know how much love you have. These two things really go together. Our service for the Lord depends very much upon the growth of the Spirit. At first you might have a feeling of pride. Must I give this tract? I cannot do that. Why not? You did not have enough meekness to go out with the tracts. As the meekness grows, the person will get out with the tracts. Not the tracts but the meekness is the thing that counts. You might be sick and not be able to give out tracts, but if you have the spirit of meekness and the desire to do it, God looks at that spirit or intention. If we get these fruits of the Spirit well developed, such as meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly kindness, love, they will cause us to be that much more active in God's work. But at first we may have the activity without the proper spirit. You may have noticed this perhaps in some of your earlier efforts to serve the truth. When I first began to see the truth, I would go up to some of my friends and hit them with the texts of Scripture, and would knock them down with the texts. When they got up, I noticed that they were not especially friendly. They would keep away from me so as not to get hit again. I said to myself, you are not getting the people to understand the Bible, they are simply shy of you, you have knocked them down; I must have this thing wrong; I must be doing it in a wrong way. I then began to study how to do it better, how to speak the truth in love, instead of knocking them down, to just get them to sit down themselves. If one sits down and finds out where he is wrong, that one is getting a blessing. You have, no doubt, noticed that in your experiences the same as I did in mine. Sometimes it is the husband who has this wrong way, and sometimes it is the wife. They have asked me why they did not have better results. I have generally told them that it is because they

did not handle the Scriptures right. If you jack people up they will feel sore about it. We are to avoid this knocking way, and this pin-pricking presentation of the truth, and we must try to cultivate the Lord's way and spirit. His spirit is love. And by the time your heart becomes imbued with the spirit of the truth, you will not be thinking about showing off, but will rather forget about yourself and want to honor the Lord. If you are going to be somebody, God can't use you in His service. We must be nothing. Just as we often sing:

“O, to be nothing, nothing,
Only to lie at His feet,
A broken and emptied vessel,
For the Master's use made meet.
Emptied, that He might fill me,
As forth to His service I go;
Broken, that so, unhindered,
His life through me might flow.”

This is very important. The Apostle puts meekness first. If we have not that, we cannot make any progress. We must have meekness if we are to be used of the Lord. I don't know what may be your difficulties. We all have them—imperfections. But we should fight a good fight with ourselves. You do not need to fight the Germans, Russians, French or English, but fight yourself. Get yourself into the full line with what the Lord wants, and the Lord, by His providence, will help you. You might be inclined to get discouraged. Brother Russell, said one of the friends to me, at the beginning of this year I was desirous of making a good start for the year. I said, which one of the fruits of the spirit do you think you lack most? I believe that I need patience more than any of the others. I need all the others, of course. So I prayed that the Lord might grant me a special blessing this year in the way of cultivating this quality of patience, and asked Him, for those experiences that would help me to develop patience. Well, he said, I had the queerest experience. For three months I was wondering why I was having more trials every day. It seemed that I was getting more trials on the line of patience than anyone. I could not understand it. Finally, I thought of my prayer for patience, and I began to see that the Lord was giving me these, so that I might cultivate the quality of patience. As soon as I saw that, it made me rejoice that I was having these trying experiences, in order that I might cultivate more patience. I then began to rejoice in all these various trials. It turned out very fine at last. This is an illustration.

It maybe that your imperfection is along the line of meekness. He might try you along this line so as to show you how much you lack in that respect; or, it may be along the line of gentleness—you being rude and not doing things in a kindly way. The Lord may be giving you these tests or trials in order to give you an opportunity of developing those fruits in your character. So with the tests of love for the brethren, for the family, for one's neighbors. The Lord might hide His face from you for a time to give you a test of love

for Him. All these things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. That is not the world, you see. The world are not called according to His purpose. Those referred to are the ones who have heard and accepted His invitation. They are the ones who are called according to His purpose. Everything is working together for good to them. This does not mean the world, although He is making everything in the world get ready for Messiah's kingdom. For the present, it means the church, for they are the ones who have consecrated their lives to the Lord. They are the ones who are desirous above everything else of becoming copies of God's dear Son. With these then, the Lord is now dealing. When does this matter begin? It began with their begetting. When will it end? It will end when they die.

But can't one say, I have fought a good fight, and have finished my course, before one dies? Must we be wondering all the time? You may have this confidence. You have entered into a covenant with the Lord. You have given to Him your time, talents, strength, everything. He has given you in exchange for them the begetting of the Holy Spirit, his providential care, and His exceeding precious promises respecting the future. Are you still in this condition? Are you still seeking to walk in the footsteps of Jesus? Surely then, all is right for you. Do not be afraid. Do not say, I am afraid He will back down. If anyone backs down out of the contract, it will be you, not God. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it. God is sure to carry out His part, so that the failure can be only on our part. Thus we may have confidence according to conditions. What am I to do? If our hearts condemn us not. If your heart condemns you, then it is not all right with you. For what does your heart condemn you? If you have not been living up to the full extent of your ability, then your heart condemns you for that. God is greater than your heart. So, what your heart condemns in you, God will condemn. What does that mean? It means that it is time for you to get right while you can. If you are to have a share with the bride class, you must be more zealous. You must be studying your character. You must see to it that you develop these various qualities. It would mean that you resolve that, I am going to see to it tonight: how much I have cultivated these fruits: the faith that goes with love, the patience that goes with love, the brotherly kindness that goes with love.

(I want to refresh your memory, dear friends, and bring some influence to bear upon your hearts and lives that will be for your good and God's glory.) You should say, throughout this day, I am going to keep watch over my thoughts, what my hands are doing, how my time is spent, what my words are. That would be a terrible thing to have to be so careful about these things, wouldn't it, Brother Russell? Oh no; not if you have a proper love of the bridegroom, the proper appreciation of what He has done for you, and the proper appreciation of what He will still do for you. If you have not worked all this embroidery on your robe, you will be glad to take all these stitches with care. This is your wedding robe that you are preparing. Every stitch tells me of the love of the one who gave me this robe. It tells me about the bridegroom, and the bride class. It all brings up thoughts

about God, and about Christ, and about the glorious things He has in reservation for those who love Him—love Him more than anything else. This is the class mentioned in our text when it says, “They that reverence the Lord spake often one to another;” at the Conventions, in Dawn studies, prayer meetings, every Sunday for worship; they want the Watch Tower, they love to study the Studies in the Scriptures, and know all the various parts of the plan; they observe the daily Manna texts: that is the way they will do. They that reverence the Lord spake often one to another. What of it? “And the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared (reverenced) the Lord and thought on His name.” What does He hear when He comes into your meeting? Did he hear you say anything proud or boastful; anything slanderous or unkind; talking about other people’s business? Did He see you study His Word, and desire to develop the fruits of the Spirit? Then be glad and rejoice. You have that much evidence that you are on the Lord’s side. And if you are seeking in everything to do His will, you have the full assurance of faith. Continue in that way and you are sure to get the prize. If you will continue that way, it is absolutely sure that you will get the prize.

God has not required anything from you that is impossible. Just do to the best of your ability what you have agreed to do, with that full assurance of faith, the fine needle work on the embroidery of your wedding garment, and this fellowship with the Lord’s people—that is a very happy condition. No one else is in such a good condition. Some have their lodges, various kinds of meetings and socials, but they are not very deep and heart-satisfying. They are pretty empty things. They are froth and foam. We have the best there is—those that speak often one to another. You will remember the Apostle Paul in speaking to us, says, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.” So much the more. Of course you can go to an extreme in attending meetings, but we are not likely to go to an extreme. You have duties at home toward your families and you are not to neglect these, but, having these special privileges, you are to accept them, and thus grow strong in the spirit.

When the Lord hearkened and heard, what did He do? A book of remembrance was written before him. It is not the thought that God had to write down so as not to forget, but it gives us the thought that He does not forget, and that He loves that class. He loves the world with a broad, sympathetic love, but He has a special love for the church, those who have consecrated themselves to Him at the present time. “The Father Himself loveth you,” and in one of the Psalms, it is written, that we are as dear to Him as the apple of His eye. Think how carefully you would guard your eyes. If anything is going to hurt them He will take care of it. That is a beautiful thought. “They that reverence the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and a book of remembrance was kept of those that thought on His name.” In olden times the name stood for character more than it does now. Now we give names too often at random. Too many times we give the name meaning King, or meaning Noble one, to a person who may be very ignoble. But in

olden times they were very particular to attach names to the one to whom it would fit. They called His name Jesus because it was He that would save His people from their sins. God's name. What does it stand for? It stands for all that great character of God. Not very many people think about the character of God. Why not? Because the religious teachers have described His character in such a way as to make it very undesirable to think much about Him. They have the thought that He is going to punish people so much, that the name Jehovah stands for one who is to be feared for His great power in throwing them over to the devil, rather than one who is to be loved because of His great love for all His people. But with His dear children, this is not so. They love God and study about His name and character. They think about His care for them. They are trying to be like their Father in heaven. And He is showing to them His character more and more. Some of the lengths and breadths, and heights and depths of His love divine is being shown to this class, and they are wanting to know more of His character all the time, and consequently are trying to learn more of His plan. In that way we are learning more about His character by knowing more about His plan. When we see the plan of God for the church, and for the world, we are then thinking about His character. So, by and by the world will be made to know about this great plan. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the whole world. We get this knowledge of Jehovah's character beforehand. Because in coming into the family of God we have entered the school of Christ, and He is teaching us and showing us these things, and they are written in the Bible for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come, in order that by knowing Him in the full sense we may be ready for everlasting life.

What does the Lord think of this class? "They shall be Mine saith the Lord in that day when I make up my jewels." Here is the possessive case. "Mine" saith the Lord. I have taken a long time to select them and care for them and husband them as a vine that they might bear much fruit. Like one who cares about precious jewels, he takes care that no one shall steal them. So with the Lord. They shall be Mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels. I will make them up. I will care for them. How will He make them up? This is the picture. The one who handles jewels first sees that they are properly polished, but they would not look well except they were mounted. The mounting has much to do with the beauty of the jewels. God is now cutting these jewels. Jesus was the first Great Jewel. The twelve Apostles were twelve large jewels, fine grained and beautifully cut. Some small, and some large ones have been cut all the way down during the Gospel age. Now, we have this privilege of being jewels. God is going to mount them presently. He is going to make of them a diadem, set in gold, symbolizing divine nature, the mounting is to be done in the resurrection. It will give them the proper setting in the divine nature. The resurrection work is the work of mounting. According to the statement of the prophet Isaiah, "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." Is He going to wear it? That is what people generally do with them, Will God wear them? Will God do this? Oh no; we could not add to the charms of God's perfection at all. He needs no diadem of any kind

to glorify Him. Ye shall be a royal diadem in the hand of our God. We will be in His hand. We will be shown to the angels, and to men, as a piece of fine work that God has done. He did not use force about it either. These are some of the poor daughters and sons of Adam. See what I have made of them, and in doing so, God did not pull, or push them, but simply directed them by the spirit, the exceeding great and precious promises. Promises. No driving nor throwing. Just the promises. Some did not care for the promises, and consequently did not come. What about them? They can stay away. God is looking for those who want to come, just as a piece of steel is attracted to the magnet.

According to the best knowledge we have, the knowledge of God's word, we have now come down to the close. The bride will soon be complete. Today? I don't know. Next month? I don't know. Many months? I cannot tell. "God kindly veils mine eyes." Don't you wish you could tell? No; the flesh would say that. The spirit says, I do not want to know anything that God does not wish me to know. I am sure I am better off without the knowledge, since it has not pleased Him to give it. If it had been better to have this knowledge He would have given it

We have seen that Elijah is a type of the gospel church. Elijah's experiences correspond with those of the church in many ways. Read the second volume on this. We have pointed out there wherein Elijah may be viewed as the type of the church. You remember, at the close of Elijah's experiences God sent him to this place, to that place, and to the other place, and then was the time when He would take up Elijah, but God did not take him up at any of these places. So God sent us to look at 1875, and then to 1881 as a specially marked time in His great plan. He then sent us to look at the close of Gentile times, but He did not say that we would be taken up at that time. So it was with Elijah. He sent him here, there and beyond, but God did not take him at any of these places. So God has not taken us at any of these places. We do not know where we are now. He has not given us any other time. In the case of Elijah and Elisha, we read, "And it came to pass, AS THEY STILL WENT ON, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." It was while they were still going on that they were separated by a chariot of fire. The Elijah class is the bride class, and the chariot of fire is a symbol of trouble. Fire is always a symbol of trouble. This does not look like being carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease. It is more like a bed of thorns. I don't want to alarm anybody. I trust you will not have any alarm in connection with anything the Lord has given. That Chariot is something that will come very suddenly. It will catch away the elect class, leaving the non-elect class in the church like Elisha.

Elisha was left and Elijah was taken, and so, some fiery experiences will come upon those who will be taken. I am not prophesying. I am a poor guesser. As far as I can understand what is written, I am pleased to talk about it, but when I don't understand, I shall just wait awhile. A large bump of imagination may cause us to make God's Word

mean most anything. But we are content to wait. Whenever God has anything to say, I believe He will make it so clear and so plain that we will have no difficulty in knowing about it. But no prophecy is understood very long before its fulfillment. Hardly any prophecies were understood until they were fulfilled. Jesus told His disciples about the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness, but they did not understand it until after His resurrection. It was after He appeared and explained that it behooved the Son of man to suffer, before they could begin to understand. It was after its fulfillment that they were able to understand. So, I think it will be with us. The Lord does not wish us to see very long in advance, but when the chariot comes, I hope we may be in it. I think it means great tribulation. The whirlwind means what? Not anything good. It generally signifies trouble of some kind. We are having a great whirlwind now. Whether that one will take us up, or not, I don't know. It may be. I don't know. God kindly veils mine eyes. So on we go, not knowing, not wishing to know what God does not wish us to know, but content that Our Father who has lead us these years, will lead us still.

And thus, my dear brethren, I trust our experience will go on favorably for us and prepare us for what is coming. So far as I can observe, God's people are being well exercised by their experiences. I feel God is favoring me in enabling me to do some more work on the robe, and to receive some more polishing. We will leave it all in God's hands. May He do with us what seemeth to Him best.