

## **Chapter V**

### **The Scattered Sheep Sought After**

#### **Preface**

“My people have committed two great evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that cannot hold water.” —Jeremiah 2:13

This was the complaint of the Lord concerning Israel, from the beginning to the end. The Lord delighted to beget, nourish, and bring up that people for himself; but they were almost continually revolting from him and rebelling against him. He did mighty things for them, but they still forgot him. He redeemed them by his outstretched arm; he fed them, he defended them; but they knew him not. Isaiah 1:3. Instead, they adorned themselves with the ornaments he had given them, and then lifted up their heel against him. Ezekiel 16:7 and Deuteronomy 32:15. In plain terms, they took what knowledge they could from him into their own vessels, and then they set it up for themselves. They lived out from themselves, without the fresh flowing of life from the spring from whence their knowledge came.

The priests did not seek the Lord, but thought they could handle the law and teach the knowledge of it without him; and the prophets could prophesy by another spirit. Jeremiah 2:8. And thus the Lord God of life lived not in them; but rather they lived upon those things which once came from the life. They, being separated from the spring, were dead, and nourished only the dead part in them, that which was estranged from God. Therefore, although they professed great things, and they multiplied prayers, sacrifices, and fasts, and drew nigh to God with their lips, yet their hearts were far from him. They had forsaken the fountain; they drank not of the waters of the spring, of the rock that followed them; but they drank of the waters of their own cisterns. They set up that knowledge of the law for their light which they had hewn out with the tools of their own understanding, without the Spirit that wrote it. This was Israel's error of old: they drank very zealously of the waters of the law; but they drank it not from the spring, but rather out of the cisterns which they had hewn.

And as it was then with Israel of old, so has it been with Israel since. The Christian Israel has been always backsliding, always forgetting the Lord. They still take what they can from him to live of themselves, but they refuse to live by him. They get what knowledge they can from the Scriptures without him; they get what they can from their exercises and experiences, but neglect the spring of their life. And so this Israel also withers and dies and becomes a scorn to the heathen. For though they speak great words about their God; yet they are in many ways like the heathen. They are uncircumcised like them, unacquainted with the virtue and power of life like them, always striving against sin with that which cannot conquer sin; and so they also are slaves to their lusts and corruptions. Like the heathen, they do not know the truth which makes one free indeed.

Alas, alas! Babylon has prevailed; her king has reigned. Zion has been held in bonds; and that which has sprung up with her name has been the filthy offspring of Babylon. These have brought forth sour fruit, loathsome fruit. The fruit of Babylon is finely painted to the view of the natural eye, but it is loathsome in its nature. This has been the state of the apostasy since the days of the apostles, wherein that which has not been of God has reigned, and that which has been of God has suffered and been reproached.

The deep awareness of this has afflicted my soul from my youth, whenever the eternal witness awakened in me, and the eternal light manifested the darkness unto me. At this time I knew not that it

was the light, but I went about seeking to measure its appearances in me by the words which the light itself had formerly spoken to others. In this way, I set up my own understanding and comprehension as the measure, although I did not then perceive or think that I did so. Therefore, through ignorance, I continually slew the life, and settled for such an appearance of life as my intellect could judge most agreeable to Scriptures.

Then such a day, or rather a night of darkness and distress overtook me, as would make the hardest heart melt to hear the relation of. Yet the Lord was in that darkness and he preserved me, and was forming me to himself. And the taste I had then of him was far beyond whatever I had known in the purest strain of my religion formerly. The Lord powerfully shut up my intellect and preserved my life from the betrayer. Nevertheless, the thing upon which the tempter does his work was not perfectly destroyed in me, and the Lord allowed him to lay a snare. My feet were soon entangled unaware, my simplicity was betrayed, and the fleshly part grew wise by those exercises with which the Lord had tried me. This poisoned me and hurt me. This struck at the root of my life, and death insensibly grew upon me. The devil, the envious seedsman, deceived me, opening my intellectual part (by the subtlety of temptation and deceit) which the Lord had been destroying; and he let in what the Lord had shut out. Thus, the way of life was stopped up, and the way of death opened. This was my standing for some time, when at last the Lord drew his sword upon me and smote me in the very inmost of my soul; by which stroke my eyes came to be opened. Then I saw the blindness of that eye which I thought to see so far, and the narrowness of that heart and spirit which had seemed so large and vast in comprehending. And my soul bowed down to the Lord to slay this, to starve this, to make a fool of this. Indeed, my desire was as great after the death of this, as after the enjoyment of life in the Lord.

And now this has opened a fresh spring of sorrow in me, a mourning over the just One which has been slain by me. Oh how cruelly, how often have I murdered that which came to give me life! How often have I sought to have my own understanding, my own comprehension, my own will and affections in religion live, and the righteous, pure, and immortal one die! (Although I did not then call it my own, as other men do not now; but rather took it to be of God, and to be the thing that was meant to live.) For I too was deceived, and thought the first son was to inherit the promise; not knowing him to be the bastard, but thinking him to be the right heir. And my soul is exceedingly burdened in me towards those who at this day lie under the power of the same deceit; who have slain the Lord of life as I did, and in whom the contrary nature lives under a covering. These cannot possibly see (until the true eye be opened) that the nature which now lives in them is not the heir.

The life that was stirring at the beginning of the trouble of this nation was very precious. It did unite to God; it did unite to one another. It kindled a universal sense of the captivity, of the bondage, of the great oppression of Israel, and a joint cry went up to God for deliverance. And God heard the cry, and arose to deliver, and did begin to break the yoke, both outwardly in the nation, and inwardly in people's spirits.

But the tempter also set himself again to entangle God's Israel. To this end he brought forth painted images and likenesses of that which Israel desired and was seeking after. He brought forth several forms of worship, with which to allure some; several sorts of notions, with which to allure others; several fresh appearances of love and liberty, to tempt the people of God aside from following that Spirit which rose up to deliver. Thus the enemy comes forth and prevails. He divides in Jacob and scatters in Israel, drawing one part to this form, another part toward that form; one to this notion, and another to that notion; one to this image, another to that spiritual idol; and all away from the life, away from the power, away from the Savior, and so the true work stops. It stops in the nation, and it stops in people's spirits.

And now where is the people whom the Lord was redeeming? Where is the praying people, the panting people, the mourning people, the people that would have traveled from sea to sea to have had the will of God revealed? Are they not run into the earth? Is not the spirit of the earth come over them? The inward Jew, the renewed nature is sunk, lost, made a prey of. The heathenish spirit has risen up and seated itself in a form of worship, or in some high notions of knowledge, on which that spirit which knows not the tree of life loves to feed. Some are stark dead, with no sense at all in them, but their life is quite swallowed up by death. Others perhaps are still pressing toward the kingdom; but in the wrong nature, in that nature which shall never obtain it. These may meet with some enjoyments, but not true enjoyments from the true thing, but rather the likeness which the enemy has painted to deceive them with.

Now in true love my life offers this to you all, as the proper and only way of recovery and redemption: Come to that which can judge you. "Zion is to be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness." If Zion is to be redeemed, if the Seed will again be raised, then that spirit which has got up above it and keeps it down must be judged and brought under by judgment. How was Israel of old to be recovered from her idolatries and harlotry except by acknowledging and coming to that light in the prophets which manifested and judged them? You also have worshiped idols. You also have played the harlot and run from the Lord, and have been inflamed with idols under every green tree. Every new thing, every fresh appearance, every lively idol, has tempted you to turn aside from the living God. When one way of worship has seemed dry and barren, you have left that. When some notions have appeared empty and shallow, you have grown weary of them. But the next new idol, under the next green tree, has drawn you aside into the bed of fornication, where you have lost true fellowship with the true God of life. You have betrayed the seed of life, which he began to quicken and raise from the dead.

Now come to that which judges the idol, the idol-maker, the harlot spirit, and that which tempts aside from the true husband. Let these be cut down by the judgment, and then the true seed of life will spring and flourish again. There is no other way; be not deceived. Something must be awakened in you which can judge you, and it must bring forth its judgment in you unto victory if life will ever rise in you and get the dominion over death. And that spirit which now rules in you, and keeps the life down, knows this very well and therefore endeavors all it can to keep you from acknowledging the judgment. Indeed, it seeks to keep the light in others from judging you. "Do not judge," says he; "for all judgment is committed to the Son." True; but should not the light of the Son judge? Shall not the light of the candle, which the Lord has lighted in one heart, uncover and judge the darkness in another heart? Light makes manifest, and its manifestation is its judgment. As long as it is light, wherever it shines, it cannot help but discover and judge the darkness it meets with.

And now, you poor lost souls who feel your need of judgment, wait first for the rising of the Judge of Israel in your hearts; then wait for the joining of your hearts to him; both of which are to be done by his eternal light which manifests and gives his life. In the lowest shining of this light there is the judgment, and there is the King himself. Bow down to him, kiss his feet, know the nature of the thing, and be subject to it. Worship him here in his humiliation; receive him in his strokes, in his smittings. Observe and turn from that thing in yourselves which smites him, and you will one day see him in his majesty, in the power of his love, in his everlasting healing and embrace. These are words of tender love, and they will also be words of true life, wherever the Father's earth opens to drink them in.

### **Some Propositions Concerning the Only Way of Salvation**

1. That there is no way of being saved from sin and wrath eternal but by Christ alone who died at Jerusalem. There is no name, virtue, life, or power under heaven given by which lost man may be saved but his alone.
2. That there is no way of being saved by him, but through receiving him into the heart by a living faith, and having him formed in the heart. Christ saves not as he stands without at the door knocking, but as he is let in. And being let in, he brings in with him that life, power, and mercy, which break down the wall of partition, unite to God, and save. The Jews could not be saved formerly by the mere belief of a Messiah to come, with the observation of all the laws and ordinances of Moses, nor can anyone now be saved by the mere belief of a Christ already come, with observation of all that the apostles commanded or practiced. Rather, a man is saved by the receiving of him into the heart, who there works out the salvation.
3. That there is no way of receiving Christ into the heart, and of having him formed there, except by receiving the light of his Spirit, in which light he is and dwells. He who keeps out the light of his Spirit keeps out Christ. He who lets in the light of his Spirit, lets in Christ. For the Father and the Son are light, and are known and received only in the light; but never outside of it.
4. That the way of receiving the light of the Spirit into the heart (and thereby uniting with the Father and the Son) is by hearkening to and receiving its convictions of sin there. The very first operation of the Spirit towards the man lying in sin is to convince him of that sin. The one who will not receive the convincing light of the Spirit, in this one the work is stopped at the very beginning and Christ can never come to be formed in him. Such a man may talk of Christ, practice duties (pray, read, and meditate often), gather comforts from Scripture promises, run into ordinances, be exceedingly zealous and affectionate in all of these, and yet perish in the end. Yes, the devil will let him alone (if not help him) in all of this, knowing that he has him the surer thereby.

Objection: But I may be deceived in hearkening to a light within; for while I think that I hearken to the light of the Spirit, it may prove to be the light of a natural conscience.

Answer 1. If it be only the light of a natural conscience, and yet still draws you from sin which separates from God, and thereby prepares you for the understanding, believing, and receiving of Christ; this is not a very bad deception. However, if it should prove to have been the light of the Spirit, and all your life you have taken it for the light of a natural conscience (and so have despised, or at least neglected it), you will then find this to be a far worse deception.

Answer 2. I can show you by express Scripture that it is the work of the Spirit to convince of sin. John 16:8. And again that the law, which is spiritual, manifests that which is corrupt and carnal. Romans 7:14. But where can you show me from Scripture that a natural conscience can convince of sin?

Answer 3. If any man gives heed to the light in his heart, he will find it to uncover his most inward, most secret, most spiritual evils, which a natural light cannot do. For that which is natural cannot discover that which is spiritual.

Answer 4. The apostle says that it is grace which has appeared to all men, which teaches not only godliness, but also sobriety and righteousness. Titus 2:11-12. The light of the fallen nature is darkness, and can teach nothing of God. What any man learns now of the true knowledge of God, he learns by grace, which shines in the darkness of man's nature to leaven it with the true knowledge. Even so man, being darkness, can by no means comprehend it, and so cannot give it its true name. Therefore take

heed, lest (through ignorance) you blaspheme the holy light of the pure Spirit; calling that natural (looking on it with the carnal eye) which, with the spiritual eye, is seen to be spiritual.

Man, by nature, is dead in trespasses and sins; quite dead, and his conscience is wholly dark. That which gives him the sense of his death and darkness must be another thing than his own nature, even the light of the Spirit of Christ shining in his dark heart and conscience. It is the seed of the woman which not only destroys, but also uncovers all the deeds of the serpent. Now this seed, this light, is one in all, though there have been various dispensations of it. One dispensation to the heathen, in whom it springs up in hidden manner. Romans 2:14. Another to the Jews, in whom it was more rigorously stirred up by a written law given; who by types and shadows, and righteous exercises according to the law, were to be awakened to the living principle. Micah 6:8. Another to the Christians, in whom it was brought forth in light and life by a special dispensation of grace. But under all these dispensations, the great majority of men have fallen short of the glory of God and missed the substance. Therefore the Lord God is now bringing forth the substance itself, but under such a veil as hides it from the eye of man's wisdom. To some it seems natural; to others legal; to some it seems from the power of Satan. Thus men guess at it in the wisdom of their own comprehensions, lacking the true plumb line to measure it by.

Do not shut your eyes now, O you wise ones! But open your hearts, and let in he who knocks there, who can and will save you. For it is not a notion of an external Christ (together with practices of self-denial and mortification) which can save; but Christ heard knocking, and let into the heart. Only this will open the Scriptures aright; yes, this is the true key which will truly open words, things, and spirits. But he that opens without this key is a thief and a robber, and will be made to restore all that he has stolen in the day of God's judgment. Woe to him who, when he is stripped of what he has stolen, is found naked.

The Scriptures were given forth to the people of God; part to the Jews, part to the Christians. He that is born of the life has a right to them, and can read and understand them in the Spirit which dwells in the life. But he that is not born of the Spirit is but an intruder, and only steals other men's light, and other men's conditions and experiences into his carnal understanding. The Scripture was not intended for this, but only to be read and seen in that light which wrote them. And all these carnal apprehensions of man (with all man's faith, hope, love, knowledge, exercises, prayers, tears, fasts, and other imitations), will become loss to him when God recovers his Scriptures from man's dark spirit (which has torn them, and exceedingly profaned them with his own conceivings, guessings, and imaginings), and restores them again to his people.

The prophets and apostles who wrote the Scriptures first had the life in them: and he who understands their words, must first have the life in him. He that understands the words of life must first have life in himself. The life is the measurer and discerner of the words. The words do not measure and discern the life. And when the Scripture is interpreted by the life and Spirit which penned it, there is then no more quarreling and contending about it.

Now here is the true problem: the dead spirit of man reads Scripture, and from that wisdom which is in the death (not knowing the mind of the Spirit), supplies its own meanings. And then, from believing and practicing the things there spoken of, it gathers a hope that all shall be well at last. However, it does not feel and experience the purification, the cleansing, and the circumcision which cuts off the body of sin and death. Neither does it know the entrance into the everlasting kingdom, where the King of Righteousness is seen, known, and worshiped in spirit.

## **A Short Catechism For the Sake of the Simple-Hearted**

Question: What is the estate and condition of all men by nature, as they are begotten of the seed of the evil-doer, and come out of the loins of the first Adam?

Answer: A state of sin and darkness; a state of death and misery; a state of enmity against God; a state accursed from God; exposed to his wrath and his most righteous judgments, both here and hereafter.

Question: What brought Adam to this estate? And what keeps the sons of Adam in it?

Answer: Feeding on the tree of knowledge, from which man continues to feed to this day, though he is excluded from the tree of life.

Question: How did Adam at first, and how do men still now, feed upon the tree of knowledge?

Answer: From a lustful appetite and desire after the forbidden wisdom, sown in their hearts by the envious enemy of their souls; who is continually coiling around this tree and tempting men and women to eat of it, persuading them that the fruit there is good for food. Indeed the fruit is very desirable to their eye, and promises to make them everlastingly wise, but fails to do so.

Question: What is the forbidden fruit?

Answer: It is knowledge without life. It is knowledge in the earthly part; knowledge acquired from below, not given from above. This promises to make men like God, and to give them the ability of discerning and distinguishing between good and evil, which is God's peculiar property. Eating of this fruit was the ruin of Adam, the ruin of the Gentiles, the ruin of the Jews, and the ruin of the Christians. All of these have fed on the tree of knowledge and departed from the life in their various dispensations.

Question: How is this fruit the ruin of man?

Answer: The wisdom and knowledge gathered here and fed upon perverts him. It makes him wise in the wrong part and exalts him against the life. It dulls the true appetite and increases the wrong appetite, leaving him with not so much as a desire after God in truth. By this means, whatsoever was afterwards ordained to life, became death to man.

So it was that the Gentiles refused to retain God in their knowledge, but provoked God to cast them off and give them up to the vanity of their imaginations. Similarly the Jews, whom God had chosen, were given up to their own hearts' lust, and were rejected from being a people. And the Gentiles, whom God ingrafted into the true olive tree in the Jews' stead, they also, after the same manner, fell in their dispensation. Thus each of these fell by gathering wisdom from the letter, but missing of the life in each of these dispensations.

Question: What is the food which man should feed on?

Answer: The tree of life; the word which lives and abides forever, which is in the midst of the garden of God. This very word was made flesh for man's weakness' sake, on which flesh the living soul feeds, and whose blood the living spirit drinks, and so is nourished up to eternal life.

Question: But did Adam have this food to feed on? And was this to be the food of the Gentiles, Jews, and Christians, in their several dispensations?

Answer: God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Nothing less than life itself could satisfy his soul at first, nor can it to this day. Every word of God that comes fresh out of his mouth is man's food and life. God speaks often to man, showing him what is good. But man cannot relish or feed on this, but rather desires something else, through the error and alienation of his mind. The word is not far from any man, but men's ears are generally stopped against it by the subtlety of the serpent who at first deceived them.

Question: But did not the Jews seek for eternal life, in reading and studying the Scriptures under their dispensation? And do not the Christians now seek for life, and to feed on life?

Answer: Yes they did and do in their own way, but they refuse it in God's way. Thus Adam, after he had eaten of the tree of knowledge, would have fed on the tree of life also, but he was shut out then, and so are Christians now. And if ever they will feed on the tree of life, they must lose their knowledge; they must be made blind and be led to it by a way that they know not.

Question: This is too mysterious for me. Give me the plain, literal knowledge of the Scriptures.

Answer: Is not the spiritual substance always a mystery? And is not the life in the substance? The letter of any dispensation kills; it is the Spirit alone that gives life. A man may read the letter of the Scriptures diligently, and gather a large knowledge from there, and feed greedily there; but it is only the dead spirit which feeds in this way, but the soul underneath remains lean, barren, hungry, and unsatisfied, which, when it awakes, it will feel.

Question: But may not the dead spirit also imagine mysteries in everything, and feed upon his imaginations?

Answer: Yes it may; and the error here is greater than the former. But in waiting in humility and fear to have the true eye opened and the true mystery revealed to the humble and honest heart, here there is safety. And in receiving from the demonstration of the Spirit, outside of the wisdom of the flesh, here there is no error, but rather the true knowledge, which springs from life, and brings life.

Question: How may I come to this mystery?

Answer: There is but one key that can open it, and but one hand that can turn that key. And there is but one vessel, one heart, one spirit, which can receive the knowledge.

Question: How may I come to that heart?

Answer: In the same way that you have been touched by the enemy, and did let him in, and did not turn him away with the power of that life which was stronger than he; even so now, when you are touched and drawn by your friend, and thereby find the beginning of his virtue entering into you, give up in and by that life and virtue, and wait for more. And as you experience it calling and growing upon you, follow on in it, and it will lead you in a wonderful way out of the land of death and darkness, where the soul has been a captive, into the land of life and perfect liberty.

Question: But can I do anything toward my own salvation?

Answer: Of yourself you cannot; but in the power of him that works in you both to will and to do, you may do a little at first. And as that power grows in you, you will be able to will more, and to do more, even until nothing becomes too hard for you. And when you have conquered all, suffered all, and performed all, you will see, and be able to say with understanding, that you have done nothing; but the eternal virtue, life, and power, has wrought everything in you.

Question: I perceive, by what has been said, that there is a Savior; one who has virtue, life, and power in him to save. But how may I meet with him?

Answer: Yes, he that made man pities him, and is not willing that he should perish in the pit into which he fell, but has appointed one to draw him out, and save him.

Question: Who is this Savior?

Answer: He is the tree of life that I have spoken of all this while, whose leaves have virtue in them to heal the nations. He is the plant of righteousness, the plant of God's right hand. Have you ever known such a plant in you, planted there by the right hand of God? He is the resurrection and the life, who raises the dead soul, and causes it to live. He is the spiritual manna, upon which the living soul feeds. Yes, his flesh is food indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. And he that is raised up in the life feeds upon, and finds the living virtue in them, which satisfies and nourishes his immortal soul.

Question: But does not this Savior have a name? What is his name?

Answer: It would be better for you to learn his name by experiencing his virtue and power in your heart. Yet, if you can receive it, this is his name: the Light; the Light of the World. He is a light to enlighten the Gentiles, that he may convert and make them God's Israel, and become their glory. And according to his office, he has enlightened every man that comes into the world. Men, however, have neither known the light that comes from him, nor known him from whom the light comes. And so, even though the light is so near them, they remain strangers to it, and unsaved by it.

Question: Why do you call him the light? Are there not other names every bit as proper whereby he may also be known?

Answer: Yes, but only by receiving him as the light do we come to know his other names. He is the life, the righteousness, the power, the wisdom, the peace, etc., but he is all of these in the light, and in the light we learn and receive them all. None of these can be known in spirit except in and by the light.

Question: How are the other names of Christ known in and by the light?

Answer: By letting in the light (which convinces of and wars against sin), the life stirs and is felt. And the life leads to the experience of the Word which was in the beginning. And in the Word, the righteousness, the peace, the wisdom, the power, the love are experienced; and he is made all of these unto those who are led into and kept in the light. And when the powers of darkness appear with mighty dread, and when there is no strength to withstand them, this lifts up a standard against them, and calms all the tempests, and cures all the wounds and diseases of the soul, anointing it with the everlasting oil. Thus I can now sensibly say, and with clear understanding call him my Savior, the Captain of my salvation, my Christ or Anointed, my Husband, my King, my Lord, and my God.



Question: Where does this light shine?

Answer: In the darkness at first, but when it has vanquished, expelled, and dispersed the darkness, it shines out of it.

Question: What is that darkness wherein the light shines?

Answer: The darkness is man, man's heart, man's conscience, man's spirit. This is the world of which Christ, the Sun of righteousness, is the light, in every part where he causes the rays of his light to shine. However, in no part can the darkness comprehend the least shining of his light.

Question: How then can the darkness ever be converted by the light?

Answer: The darkness is not to be converted. Every man in this state is reprobate, and the wrath abides on him. Therefore, the darkness must be rejected, along with the man in the darkness. But the soul that is touched by the light, and made sensible of it, follows it in the life and power which it begets, and is drawn out of the horrible pit, and saved.

Question: How may I find the light in the midst of the darkness of my heart, which is so great, and this seed so small?

Answer: By its uncovering and warring against the darkness. There is something which uncovers both the open and the secret iniquity of the corrupt heart, finding it under all its coverings of zeal, holiness, and all appearances of humility and self-righteousness. That which wars against the darkness to bring people off from all false foundations to the true and living foundation, this is the light; and thus you may find it, at some time or other working in your heart.

Question: Having found the light, how may I come to experience the saving virtue and power of it?

Answer: By believing in it. For the virtue and power springs up in the heart that believes in it.

Question: But how can I believe in it? Am not I dead?

Answer: There is a creating, a quickening power in the light, which begets a little life, and this can answer the voice of the living power.

Question: If I could find such a thing begotten in me, then I might be able to believe. But surely my dead heart never can.

Answer: Have you never experienced a true, honest breathing towards God? Have you never found sin to be a real (not imaginary) burden? This was from life. There was something begotten of God in you which felt this. It was certainly not the flesh and blood in you, but something from above. And if you had known the spring of its life, you would have fed upon, and grown up in, the virtue and power of the spring from whence the life came.

Question: If this be true, then all men have power to believe.

Answer: In the light which shines in all, and visits all, there is the power to believe. This power strives

with the creature, and seeks to work itself into the creature; and where there has been the least breathing after life, there has also been a taste of the power. But the great deceiver of souls lifts up man's mind in imaginations to look for some greater appearance of power, and so man often slights and overlooks the day of small things, and neglects receiving the beginnings of God's power. Waiting in that which is low and little in the heart, the power enters, the seed grows, the kingdom is felt and is daily more and more revealed. This is the true door; beware of seeking to climb in another way.

Question: What is it to believe in the light?

Answer: It is to receive the light's testimony concerning good or evil, and so either to turn towards or away from it, in the will and power which the light begets in the heart.

Question: How will this save me?

Answer: By this means: that which destroys you, and separates you from the living God, will be daily wrought out, and the heart daily changed into the image of him who is light. And you will be brought into unity and fellowship with the light, possessing it, and being possessed by it. This is your salvation.

Question: We thought salvation was a thing to be bestowed upon us hereafter, after the death of the body. But if this be true, then salvation is experienced here.

Answer: So it is, even in all that are saved. For there is no working out of salvation hereafter, but here it is wrought out with fear and trembling. And the believer who is truly in unity with the life is daily changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Question: Demonstrate more particularly how faith, or believing in the light, works out the salvation.

Answer: 1. First it causes a fear and trembling to seize upon the sinner. The Lord God Almighty, by the rising of his light in the heart, causes the powers of darkness to shake, the earth to tremble, the hills and mountains to melt, and then the plant of the Lord springs up out of the dry and barren ground, which by the dews and showers from above, thrives, grows, and spreads till it fills God's earth.

2. In this fear and trembling the work of true repentance and conversion is begun and carried on. There is a turning of the soul from the darkness to the light; from the dark power to the light power; from the spirit of deceit to the spirit of truth; from all false appearance and imaginations about holiness, to that which the eternal light manifests to be truly so. This is a time of deep mourning, while the separation is working within; while the enemy's strength is not yet broken and subdued in the heart, and while the heart is now and then feeling itself still longing after its old lovers.

3. In the belief of the light, and in the fear placed in the heart, there springs up a hope, a living hope, in the living root, which has manifested itself and begun to work. For in the soul that is truly turning to the light, the everlasting arm, the living power is felt. And this becomes the anchor that stays the soul in all the troubles, storms, and tempests it meets with afterwards; which are many, yes, very many.

4. Faith, through the hope, works righteousness, and teaches the true wisdom. Now the benefit of all the former trouble, anguish, and misery begins to be felt, and the work goes on sweetly. All unrighteousness is in the darkness, in the unbelief, in the false hope. Faith in the light works out the unrighteousness, and works in the righteousness of God in Christ. It makes one truly wise, wise in the living power, a wisdom which man cannot learn elsewhere.

5. In the righteousness, and in the true wisdom which is received in the light, there springs up a love, and a unity, and fellowship with God, the Father of lights, and with all who are children of the light. Being begotten by Christ, a unity is soon felt with God the Father, and with those who are born of the same womb, and partake of the same nature. And here, in this love, there is a willingness and power felt to lay down one's life even for the least truth of Christ's, or for the brethren.

6. Belief in the light works patience, meekness, gentleness, tenderness, and long-suffering. It will bear anything for God, anything for men's souls' sake. It will wait quietly and stillly for the carrying on of the work of God in its own soul, and for the manifestation of God's love and mercy to others. It will bear the reproach of sinners, seeking their good, even while they are plotting, contriving, and hatching mischief.

7. It brings peace, joy, and glory. Faith in the light breaks down the wall of darkness, the wall of partition, that which separates from the peace, that which causes anguish and trouble upon the soul, and so brings it into peace. Christ is the skillful Physician; he cures the disease by removing the cause. The unskillful physicians heal deceitfully; crying peace, peace, when there is no peace, while that which breaks the peace is still standing. But Christ does not do so, but rather slays the enmity in the heart by the blood of his cross, so making peace. This is true and certain peace.

Now finding the clods of earth removed, and the enemy, trodden down, the sin taken away and the life and power present, the soul is brought into peace. Here is joy, unspeakable joy! This is a joy which the world cannot see or touch, nor the powers of darkness come near to interrupt. Here is now no more crying out, 'O wretched man!' and 'Who shall deliver! etc.', but a rejoicing in him who has given victory, and made the soul a conqueror; indeed, more than a conqueror. Wait to feel this, you who art now groaning and oppressed by the merciless powers of darkness.

This joy is full of glory, a glory that increases daily by the daily sight and feeling of the living virtue and power in Christ the light. Here the soul is continually transformed and changed, out of the corruptible into the incorruptible; out of the uncircumcision, the shame, the reproach, into the circumcision, the life, the glory.

Question: Does the light do all of this?

Answer: Yes, in them that turn towards it, give up to it, and abide in it. In these it cleanses out the darkness, and daily transforms them into the image, purity, and perfection of the light. And this nothing can do but the light alone.

Question: What makes men generally so hostile to the light?

Answer: Their unity with the darkness. The light is an enemy to all darkness, uncovering and disturbing it.

Question: But wise men, knowing men, men who are looked upon as having the most light, these also are enemies to this light and speak disparagingly of it.

Answer: Was it not always this way? Did any of the rulers or wise scribes and teachers of the law believe in him formerly? Is it any wonder if such do not believe in him now?

Question: What is the reason why the wise have not, and even now cannot, believe in the light?

Answer: There are two great reasons for it.

1. Because they cannot comprehend it. They can comprehend a kind of knowledge which is gathered out of books of nature, or out of the books of the law and prophets, or out of the books of the evangelists and apostles; but they cannot comprehend the light to which all these testify. There is a kind of knowledge that they can receive; but the light they cannot receive; for it is not comprehended by man; but rather gathers into itself, and comprehends all.

2. Because true light is an utter enemy to them. It will not wink at the smallest of their evils, nor speak peace to them while they remain in darkness. Their own gathered knowledge may speak peace to them; but the light will not. In this way the Jews could speak peace to themselves with their temple ordinances and sacrifices; though they walked in the stubbornness and uncircumcision of their hearts, always resisting the checks and motions of the Holy Spirit there. And thus the Christians can now speak peace to themselves from a belief in Christ's dying at Jerusalem, though they do not know him in them, nor receive his power in checks and reproofs for sin.

Question: But there are many professors, strict professors, who, without a doubt, have once tasted of the living virtue. What makes them now such enemies to the light?

Answer: 1. Because they are fallen from what they once had. For if they were in that living seed which once gave them a true taste of life through the Scriptures, they could not help but know and acknowledge the light. For the light was the thing which gave them the taste, and would have preserved the savor had they known how to turn to it and abide in it.

2. The light is a witness against all their knowledge, their religious practices, and the imitations they have gathered out from the Scripture. The light witnesses against what they believe and practice outside of the light, in their unrighteousness, even in that part of man which cannot know or be the worshiper. And can you blame them for turning against it, when the light is so great an enemy to them? How is it possible that, having slain and murdered the just one in themselves, they should acknowledge and give him his due honor in others?

Question: But have the strict professors, who claim great things in honor of Christ, murdered him in themselves?

Answer: Yes, truly, just as truly as the Scribes and Pharisees and Jewish people put him to death at Jerusalem. For what they do to the least appearance of his light in their hearts, they do it unto him. Indeed, our Lord Christ, at this very day, is as really crucified in their spiritual Egypt and Sodom as he was outside the gates of Jerusalem. And his righteous blood cries just as loud against the professors of this age as ever it did against the Jews. But men now are hardened against him by a conceited knowledge that they have gathered from the Scriptures by their imaginations. And their eyes can no more see it now than the eyes of the Jews could see it then.

Question: Surely if they knew the light to be the only living way, they would not be such enemies to it.

Answer: Yes, I believe concerning them (as was said concerning the Jews) that if they knew it, they would not crucify the Lord of glory. For I bear many of them record that they have a great zeal, though not according to knowledge. But at present how very sad is their state; for the god of the world has

blinded the eye in them which alone can see the truth.

Question: But is it not possible for men to obtain eternal life by reading the Scriptures, without knowing or acknowledging this principle of the light?

Answer: The true objective of reading the Scriptures is to turn men to the light. The Scriptures contain messages concerning God, concerning Christ, concerning the Spirit, the goal of which is to turn men to the power and life which alone can work for them and in them. 'The Word is nigh to you in your heart, and in your mouth' says Moses to the Jews, says Paul to the Christians. And to what end do they tell them it is there? But that there they should wait upon it, to hear its voice, and to obey it.

Now mark well, even if a man could practice and perform all things mentioned in the Scriptures, yet not being turned to this light, they are not in the way of salvation. For the way of salvation is not a peculiar path, or a course of ordinances and duties prescribed in the Scriptures; but it is a new way, a living way, a way that the wisest professors, by their wisdom, never knew ("I will lead them in paths they have not known"). So that while men do not know, nor are turned to, the light and power of which the Scriptures testify, all of their reading of the Scriptures, praying and practicing ordinances and duties are but in vain. In the end these will prove to be but a false covering, and not the covering of the Spirit.