

A Few Words on the Scriptures

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The Scriptures are the means by which God speaks to our consciences. They speak judgment on all around. The knowledge of them brings us into new things, into a new place. They give us the mind of God; our God providing the fulness of His own mind to detect the evil that is around us. They lead the saints on in their circumstances here. "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). When truth comes from the Spirit, it is truth *in Jesus*, glorifying Christ; truth *set up in Him*, and that is truth. The child of God can rest on it. The character of the Spirit's teaching is, *Jesus risen*. When we get into the truth of Jesus set in heaven, we never lose it (Eph. 1: 18, etc.). This is a standing thing for a child of God never to lose, and that is the Spirit's teaching. The power of this truth enabled the apostles to witness against apostate things, and brought them into the hope of future things.

IN the close of Matthew 12, we find our Lord passing condemnation on the generation of the flesh. Though He had before been subject to His parents, yet now, having taken a new standing, and being in new standing and circumstances, He looks at the new family and says, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." The new thing that we get into now is, in principle, the "whosoever." Matthew 13 brings out all the principles of this. We get the mystery connected with the field, and we get the children gathered out of it; and here we see the double character of mystery. We get first Christ and the Church in it, and we have Satan's working too; and that is what is going on in the field in connection with the present dispensation. One is set up in the *resurrection*, connected with the mercy of God; the other is set up in the flesh, and therefore cannot get beyond the flesh. It is the *other side* of the flesh, that our Lord begins the parable of the sower. The word was planted *in them*, it was quickened in them, the word communicated life to them. The parable of the sower brings out the grace of God, and the enemy's effort to neutralise it. But the disciples had no intelligence about it. They had not got beyond the flesh. When our Lord spoke to them about the cross, they were offended, they did not know what they were brought into. They did not understand then the love of God to the sinner, as meeting him in all his misery; they did not know anything about the resurrection. The word of the risen Son of God gives nothing to the flesh, tells the saint to mortify it, and brings him beyond it. The word to the Church at Smyrna was, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Here was the grain of mustard seed. It was sown, but it grew badly; it grew into a great tree. The Son of man would not rest in it, but the birds of the air lodged in the branches of it. Now they could not have lodged in a grain of mustard seed, but they could in a great tree. This was a warning given to the saints, not to rest in it. The parable of the woman hiding the leaven, I believe to be parallel with the woman in Zechariah 5. These parables, I do not think, are preceptive, but prophetic. It is the Lord telling His disciples what the enemy would do. The treasure which the man found and hid, I believe to be the children of God; they get their resting-place, their names are written in the Lamb's book of life. He hid them; the field was not hid, but the treasure found in it. Satan may try and spoil the field, but our comfort is He "knoweth them that are his," and the Lord's own are hid in a hidden place of blessing.

In these parables therefore we get two things, — the Lord's working, and the development of the working of Satan. Let us beware of everything of Satan's working; we see much of it in these days. Temperance, for example, is a good thing, and the children of God are to be temperate in all things; but if there is an association for temperance, set up in the flesh, and the name of the risen Jesus is not in it, then it becomes a bad thing. Judas could not get any fruit from his intercourse with Jesus, because he did not get beyond the flesh.