

## THE PROMISED SEED

CHRIST our Lord is the “seed” promised from the fall of man. This subject is one of deepest interest, for by means of it God first gave the fallen race hope. God’s holy, immutable law, existed in full force even in paradise, and the first pair broke it when partaking of the forbidden fruit. “The wages of sin is death.” They stood under the sentence of death. But, thank God! this is not all of it. “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23. Man was not *long* left hopeless. For even in the sentence pronounced against Satan and the guilty pair, bright rays of hope were mingled with the awful sentence of condemnation: the *promised “seed”* was held forth as the star of hope. When God addressed that “old serpent which is the Devil and Satan,” He said: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Gen. 3:15.

In this all-embracing prophecy, so full of hidden meaning, so resplendent with hope to the race and fearful with terror to the tempter, lies couched the first germ of gospel light. This serpent had seduced from her allegiance the mother of the race. He seemed to accomplish his purpose with comparative ease. But he is informed that from this woman a “seed”—a child—should come which would crush his head. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.” Heb. 2:14.

It was a great crisis in the history of the race,—a fall from innocence through the deception of the great apostate leader of the fallen angels. God is proclaiming the consequences of this rebellion, this acceptance of Satan as a leader in place of God and Christ. While constant enmity should be found between the seed of the woman and his seed, and he should cause constant temporary annoyance, suffering, and even temporal death, implied by the expression, “Thou shalt bruise his heel,” utter extermination is implied by the statement that this promised “seed” should bruise, or crush, his head. The

persecutions brought to bear upon Christ the followers of him in all ages of the world, are here symbolized by the bruising of the heel. But utter ruin, irreparable and eternal, will overwhelm the arch-apostate and his followers, in the lake of fire, the second death. Such is the ultimate end of this sentence couched in these symbolic words.

Through Satan and sin the race has fallen, and a blight is placed upon the world. Through the “seed” promised, evil and all its abettors will be extinguished, and the world will be brought back to more even than its original glory. In the development of the scheme of redemption, there are three promises of the “seed” of peculiar interest; each marking an era in it, and becoming more and more definite and explicit as time passes: the promise at the fall; the one made to Abraham, and the one to David.

The promised “seed” is to be from a literal descendant of Abraham. No one of any other race could be the progenitor of that “seed.” Third, he must come through one of David’s family. “Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. *His seed* shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me.” Psalm 89:35, 36.

Here the circle has become much more circumscribed. The “seed” is one and the same in all these promises, but the narrowing down renders it far more easy for those expecting this personage than if it had been left as broad as in the first prediction, or even as in the second. When Christ came, we see how carefully the genealogies are given tracing His ancestry back to David, Abraham, and Adam (Matthew 1 and Luke 3), to show that the promise in each case was literally fulfilled.

When did the promised “seed” appear, and these three special predictions culminate? From the very beginning, when the promise was first made, those who believed it watched eagerly for the coming of the promised Seed. When Cain, the first little baby, was born, and his mother Eve said, “I have gotten a man from the Lord,” she earnestly hoped that she held in her arms the One who was to be her Saviour. But how sadly disappointed she must have been when, as he grew up, his pride and jealousy and hatred of his brother showed all too

plainly that he “was of that wicked one.” Instead of the Son of God, they had got a son in their own image.

Many years passed before the promise of God was fulfilled, and no doubt many a mother, like Eve, longed that the precious Seed might be given to her care. So that His people should not lose hope, God often repeated through His prophets the promise of the Seed.

There is only one possible time when this long-expected, much-desired, and most auspicious event could occur,—when Mary, the favored virgin of David’s royal lineage, a daughter of Abraham, and Eve’s most favored descendant, gave birth to the Son of God. There the three promises must center. The “seed of the woman” becomes such when *born* of the one woman intended in the promise of God. The Son of God becomes Abraham’s “seed” when given birth by the one daughter of the father of the faithful. There was no other time when He could have been “David’s son” till born of Mary, the daughter of David. No other incarnation is possible in the great scheme of human redemption. He became the promised “seed” by virtue of His human birth. Here He took “our nature,” and not that of angels. Here He became “Immanuel”—“God with us” (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23)—when “a virgin” brought forth a Son. Here the prophet’s words were fulfilled: “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” Isaiah 9:6

And at last, “when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son; born of a woman.” Galatians 4:4. You all know the story, how the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, and told her that she should have son, and the Holy Child “the Son of God.”

Think of the wonder of His love, not only that God should give His only begotten son, but that Jesus, who was “in the form of God,” and had all the riches and glory of heaven, should give it all up for our sakes, and come into this world of sorrow and take the form of sinful man.

A lesson from the seed that we learn is each thing must grow “after its kind.” And so Jesus, the Son of God, although He no longer had the form of God, but “was made in the likeness of men,” grew up in this earth just as perfect, pure and holy, as He was in heaven. And as “the child grew and waxed strong in spirit,

filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him,” His loving mother and those who watched Him knew that He was indeed the Son of God, so Godlike was He, so loving, gentle, kind, and obedient.

But it will not do us any good to know that Jesus once came and lived in this earth, unless this precious Seed be sown in *our own hearts*. Jesus, the Word of God “was made flesh and dwelt among us;” He lived here as a little child like you, just to show what you may be, what sort of plant you will become, if you let Him, the Word of God, the good seed, dwell in your heart. “As many as received Him, to *them* gave He power to *become the sons of God*, even to them that believe on His name.” John 1:14.

The Spirit of life, the Spirit of Jesus, is in the precious seed of the Word, just as it is in the seed that is sown in the earth. And so when you listen to the Word of God, and believe it, and receive it into your heart, the power which makes the seed spring up out of the earth, each “after its kind,” will “form Christ within you,” and fill you with His pure and holy life, just as naturally as roses grow on rose bushes, and apples on apple trees, and grapes on the vine.

The seed is being multiplied,—how we may get many, many seeds from one. There is something that must take place before this can be done.

Jesus said: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth *much fruit*.” John 12:24.

Here is the very first lesson of botany—plant life. The seed must *die* before it can be *multiplied*. It can give birth and life to other plants only by giving up itself, by the sacrifice of its own life.

The new plant that is to spring from the seed is in most seeds only a tiny part of the whole seed. All the rest is for the nourishment of the young plant when it shall awake and spring up. But the seed must die and change before the new plant can spring up and feed upon it.

So you see that the seed really gives up its own life in order to give life. But is it lost? No: it is *multiplied*. Many plants, bearing many seeds exactly like it, come from it. If it should not die, but keep its life all to itself, it would, as Jesus

said, "Abide alone," and at last perish and be lost indeed. But by giving its life, it saves and keeps it.

And now, what is the Gospel message that our Heavenly Father has written for us in all this? When He first promised to give His only begotten Son to save all from the power of Satan, God called Him, the *Seed*. And many times, when this promise was repeated, Jesus was called by the same name. He is, "the Seed of the woman;" "the Seed of Abraham;" "the Seed of David." But except the seed "fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

If you had the seed of a very rare and choice plant, would you think it too great a treasure to be sown in the ground? No, the more you valued it, the more anxious you would be to sow it, so that it might not "abide alone," but that you might get many more like it.

And so God did not keep back "His only begotten Son," but gave Him freely, so that He should not "abide alone," but that He might "bring *many sons* unto glory."

In the place of the one seed that is put in the ground, we get many seeds exactly like it. In the place of the one Son whom He gave, God the Father will at last, when the harvest shall come and all the seed shall be gathered, get many sons, many children, all in His exact image.

The seed dies that it may give life. Jesus died that He might give life to you that you might feed upon His life, and grow into His image, and so be one of the *many* children that through His sacrifice He will bring to glory. He died so that He might not "abide alone," but that you might abide with Him for ever.

CHRIST is "the Beginning;" He is the source of all creation, visible and invisible, whether in heaven or on earth. Oh, that men could realize the absolute reality of this fact! Without Him there is not one thing. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:28. Most people accept these Scripture statements, but in an accommodated, unreal sense. They do not realize that they are literally true, and that there is no material thing in existence outside of Christ; that outside of Him there is no existence whatever. He is; His name is "I Am;" and He is the only One who is. That which is not in Him, is not at all.

Nothing is more true than that the religious life of many consists largely in the repetition of certain phrases, the meaning of which they do not comprehend, and which very often have no meaning. All this comes from the habit of making a distinction between the literal and the spiritual,—of separating the ordinary, practical, everyday life from the spiritual, religious life. As a matter of fact, the spiritual is the only reality there is. That which is seen only with the natural eyes is temporal; only the unseen is eternal.

CHRIST, the Word, is the Seed to whom the promise of God is made. All who “put on Christ” are the seed in Him. When seed is sown it multiplies. That is why it is sown. So Christ, the Word, being received into human hearts lives, as He comes in the person by the Holy Spirit, He multiplies Himself. Every one in whom He thus dwells is transformed, and lives a new life. This is the new birth, which is accomplished by the Word of truth. Christ becomes the ruling factor in the life. The life is no longer ours, but His: He takes complete possession, so that He thinks and acts through us, using the organs of our body for the accomplishment of His will.

Just here comes in the trouble with many people who would gladly live this perfect Christian life, or allow Christ to live it in them, that the thing seems so intangible; they cannot sufficiently grasp the idea that Christ can dwell personally in them. It seems to them a name, a theory, rather than a fact. Now the Lord has anticipated this difficulty, and has put the Gospel into visible form, so that we may continually have an object lesson before us. In the seed that the farmer sows, God has provided us a lesson concerning the reality of the Seed by which we are begotten anew, and in the fruits of the earth He teaches us of the fruits of righteousness.

We cannot see the life that is in the seed which is sown, neither can we see it in the corn that we eat, no matter at what stage we view it. But we can see that the corn grows. We place a single seed in the ground, and we see that it multiplies, and produces thirty, sixty, or even a hundred grains. Each one of these grains has the same life that the original seed had, and just as much of it. We take the corn, and make it into bread, and eat it, although we can see no life

in it; but we know that there is life in it, for we receive life from it. The life of the corn becomes our life. All this is a common, everyday occurrence. We have been familiar with it all our lives. We cannot understand the secret of the life in the *seemingly* lifeless grains of corn, nor can we understand how the life becomes ours; but we know the fact, and are content with that.

Now it is just as easy for us to comprehend how Christ can dwell in us, so that His life becomes ours, as it is to comprehend the fact that we can get our life from the food which we eat. Indeed, the comprehension of the one is the comprehension of the other. Remember that Christ is the Seed, the origin of all things. He is the Word of God, by whom all things came into existence. In Him is life. That seed was the Word. It was the life of Christ, the Word, that made the earth fruitful. There is no life but His, for He is *the life*. John 14:6.

So when we eat the grain and fruits which the earth brings forth, and get life from them day by day, we are literally receiving God's chosen method of providing the life of Christ to us. The life which we assimilate, and which becomes ours, is none other than the manifestation of the life of the Word of God, which was in the beginning, is now, and is to come. With this simple, easily recognized fact in mind, we can see how literal were Christ's words when He took bread in His hands, and said, "This is My body." In eating bread, we are partaking of the life of the Lord.

The Israelites in the desert of Sinai ate bread, which they called "manna." It was their daily food for nearly forty years. It was "bread from heaven," yet just as literal food as that which we eat every day. But it was "spiritual meat." 1 Cor. 10:3. They did not eat by faith, hence they died; but if they had eaten by faith, discerning how God was providing for their sustenance by the body of Christ, they would not have died. John 6:50, 51. "The just shall live by faith." By living faith, we become transformed into the perfect image of Christ. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Romans 10:10. We live by eating. If now we ate by faith, we would live by faith, and so be righteous. Consciously yielding to Christ, that He might live in His own way the life which he gives us, our life would

be not simply modeled after, but the actual reproduction of His life. The Seed abiding in us, would keep us from sin. 1 John 3:9.

How easy and plain is the way of life! It consists simply in the constant recognition of the great fact that Christ is the Seed, and consciously eating of Him. "O, taste and see that the Lord is good!" Psalm 34:8.