

September 18

My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. Exodus 33:14

THE Lord is ever present with His people. He is always thinking of us, looking out for our interests, guarding us in danger,

providing for us in temporal and spiritual things, reading our hearts, marking every impulse of loving devotion to Him, shaping the influences around us for our discipline and refining, and hearkening to our faintest call for aid or sympathy or fellowship with

Him. He is never for a moment off guard, whether we call Him in the busy noon hours or in the silent watches of the night. How blessed the realization of such abiding faithfulness! And no real child of God is devoid of this evidence of his adoption.

R5547 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

JEHOVAH'S ABIDING PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

--EXODUS 33:14--

THE children of Israel had come out of Egypt; they had crossed the Red Sea, and had come to Mount Sinai. Moses had gone up into the Mount, had received the tables of the Law, and had come down and found the nation in idolatry, worshipping the golden calf which they had made. While Moses was still in the Mount, the Lord had told him that Israel had already turned aside from the true God to idols, and was offering sacrifice to a molten calf as the god who had brought them forth out of Egypt; and He instructed Moses to go down to the people. The wrath of God was hot against them, and He proposed to Moses that He consume them and make of him a great nation. But Moses besought the Lord for Israel, and the Lord was entreated of him and spared the nation from annihilation, and promised him that he should still be their leader.

Then Moses went down from the Mount. He realized that Israel had grievously sinned, and his anger was kindled against them. He cast down the tables of the Law, which were in his hands, and broke them, when he saw and heard the dancing and feasting and shouting around the idol which they had set up for themselves. Here was a nation delivered by God from Egyptian bondage. The Red Sea had opened for them to pass over, by the power of Jehovah. They had also received various blessings along their way, notable proofs of Divine guidance. Yet in spite of all this, here was rebellion and idolatry! What could he expect of a people who had so little appreciation of God, that they were quickly turned aside? Even Moses' own brother, Aaron, led astray by the insistence of the people, felt it necessary to co-operate with them in the making of the golden calf.

Then Moses took the calf which they had made, and burned it in fire, ground it to powder, scattered it upon the water and compelled the children of Israel to drink of it. He reproved Aaron, and then stood in the gate of the camp and said to all the people, "Who is on Jehovah's side? Let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men."--Exodus 32:26-28.

MOSES' CRY AND ITS ANSWER

The day following, Moses explained to the people how great was the sin of which they had been guilty and told them that he would go to the Lord in prayer, if peradventure he might make atonement for their sin. Then he went to the Lord in earnest supplication, pleading that if God would not forgive His people, He would also blot out *his* name from His book. But God answered, "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." He promised to send His angel before Moses, but assured him that He was not yet through dealing with Israel for their iniquity. He instructed Moses to tell them of their stiffneckedness and to command them in His name to put off their ornaments, that He might know what course He would pursue with them.

The people obeyed God. They laid aside their ornaments, and humbled themselves and worshipped the Lord. Moses, heavy of heart, felt that unless God would in some special way give him the necessary wisdom and grace for the great task of leading so perverse a people into the inheritance which the Lord had promised them if they would serve Him, he would be utterly insufficient for the undertaking. So he again appealed to God in earnest prayer. He told Him of his trepidation and his earnest desire for His sustaining help

and His presence with him in all the way, pleading, This is too great a work for me!

Then the Lord assured Moses that He would go with him, that he should have His presence throughout the entire journey to the Promised Land; for he had found grace in His sight. He said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Moses then besought the Lord, "Show me Thy glory." It was here that God put Moses into the cleft of a rock and covered him with His hand while He passed by and let Moses see His glory from behind, saying, "No man can see My face and live."

When God speaks of His presence with His servants we are not to think of His being with them in His *bodily* presence, but by His Spirit and through His angelic messengers, sustaining, blessing and guiding them. He protects them from whatever will harm them. He watches over their every interest and tenderly cares for them.

IDEA OF GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE

AN ERROR

It is a common, but erroneous, thought that God is actually present in person everywhere. We do not understand the Scriptures to so teach. This generally prevailing error that God is everywhere present in person, and at the *same time*, has led many to think of Him as being not a person at all, but merely an influence. We understand the Bible presentation of the matter to be that God has a personal, bodily presence, aside from the power and influence which He exerts; and that He has a central seat of government, where He resides.

"Heaven is My Throne, the earth is My footstool," says Jehovah. The One who has His seat in Heaven and whose footstool is the earth is a great God! But this is, of course, a forceful figure of speech, showing His all-embracing power and control. God does not actually sit in a certain part of His Universe and have His literal feet in another part. The language of Scripture accommodates itself to the mind of man, and speaks of God as if He possessed the same bodily members as humanity. But actually we know not what a spirit body is like. "It doth not yet appear," even to the saints of the Lord who are still in the flesh.

We understand that the bodily presence of Jehovah is in Heaven. Everything in the Bible teaches us that He is very great--infinite in power. We read that "the Lord looketh down from Heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of His habitation He looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth." (Psalm 33:13,14.) He has beheld men in their distress, and has provided for their deliverance "in due time." But we should clearly distinguish between this thought of God's looking down from Heaven and the thought that He is personally present on earth. We can see a mile off, or five miles off, by the power of our sight. We can be a hundred or more feet away and be present by the power of our voice; or aided by the modern invention of the telephone, we can be present by our voice several hundred miles away. In that sense of the word the Lord is present everywhere throughout His mighty Universe, and His power can be exerted everywhere. He has means by which He can be cognizant of all earthly affairs and of matters pertaining to all His great domain.

We have these powers only to a very limited extent. The telegraph, the telephone, the telescope, etc., are all means by which our presence, power and influence are extended to a certain degree; but our powers are limited to this small planet, except as we further extend them by means of prayer, and thus set in motion influences whose extent we are not now able to fathom. But this latter privilege

is only for a few at present. Not many thus have access to the Power which controls the Universe. And these who have the privilege of coming to the mighty King of Heaven may come only in His appointed way, subject to the conditions which He has made.

We can place no limitations upon the power of Jehovah. The inventions of this Time of the End, which have increased our powers of communication, and so have united all parts of the globe, give us but a very faint conception of the infinite powers of the Almighty God. These inventions, we believe, will continue to increase and multiply through the incoming Age, thus adding more and more to the powers and blessings of mankind. These will give mankind a greater and greater appreciation of the majesty, glory and might of their Creator as they come to know Him as He is and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Yet no human mind, even in perfection, will be able to comprehend the Mighty Maker of the Universe.

GOD'S GUIDANCE THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

So God promised Moses that His presence, His power and sustaining grace should go with him all the way. He wished Him to understand that he was not to perform his great work alone, without all-sufficient backing. "I will be with you," was the promise. The Lord's presence was indeed with the children of Israel in a very marked manner --continually with them from the time they crossed the Red Sea, guiding by blessings or by chastisements, as they should need. He was with them in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, and by His presence in the Shekinah glory which covered the Mercy-seat in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle. After the Tabernacle was set up by God's instruction, these manifestations of His presence, His power and His watchful care never failed. The pillar of cloud and of fire guided their journeyings; and when these rested, it was an indication from God that they were to abide where they were until the pillar of cloud or fire again moved from its place.

Moses had said to the Lord, "If Thy presence go not with us, send us not up hence"--this is too great a task for any man to accomplish alone. But if Thy presence will continue with us, if I can be shown Thy will and be continually directed by Thee, then I will be able to lead this people through the wilderness journey to the land of Canaan. Frequently the Lord spoke to Moses through the Tabernacle. Thus we see that the promise of His presence with him was fulfilled. The Lord gave him rest. He lived to be one hundred and twenty years old, yet was not his strength impaired nor his eye dim. We remember that there was a time when Moses realized that the work of judging the people was too great for him. He took the matter to the Lord, and seventy judges were then chosen to share his burden. The matters that were too difficult for them they brought to Moses. He went to God with all his difficulties and burdens and he had continual blessing.

THE LESSON TO SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

The experiences of Natural Israel have very important lessons for Israel according to the Spirit. A people originally a part of the world, we have been invited to come out from the world and to journey to a new Country, to come into a Heavenly inheritance. We are marching toward the glorious Kingdom promised us if we are faithful. There are trials and difficulties along the way. But our God has promised us, as He promised Moses His servant, that His presence shall go with us. Sometimes He *seems* to withdraw from us and to leave us to ourselves; but He does not really do so. He tests our loyalty and our faith in Him by withholding the *sense* of His presence at times.

Shall we, then, like Israel of old, conclude that God is no more with us, and turn again to the gods we formerly worshiped--gods of wealth or of pleasure, gods worshiped by the nations around us? Shall we give ourselves up to revelry, worldly merry-making and sin? Shall we forget all the way by which our God has led us, all the great deliverances which the past of our lives have recorded? Shall *anything*--either "tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, or any other thing in creation, be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" Surely not!

The closer we live to the Lord, and the greater our faith, the more we shall realize the Divine direction, and the more we shall make use of the means He has provided for our strengthening and upholding. We may call upon Him in time of trouble; we may go to Him in prayer; and He never fails those who put their trust in Him and earnestly seek to walk in His appointed way. This being true, we may go forth upon our journey in perfect trust and confidence. Having consecrated our all to the Lord, we are to seek for His guidance, for His presence is with us, in all the affairs of our life.

Few have such mighty burdens to carry as Moses had. But all of God's children have burdens to bear, and important responsibilities are resting upon each of us who have taken upon us the vows of our God. Each member of the Body of Christ, the true Israel of God, is privileged to have the continual guidance of the Lord in every experience of our wilderness journey. Heavenly Manna is furnished for our daily sustenance. The Water of Life flows out to us for our daily refreshing, from the smitten Rock of Ages. Our Father's chastening rod restrains us when we are in danger, or when we wander into any forbidden path. How lovingly He brings us back into the right way, and heals our wounds, and graciously forgives our stumblings and weaknesses! Surely we may have implicit confidence in our Heavenly Guide. Thus we may rest in Him and be kept in perfect peace. Our hearts can truly exclaim with the poet:

"He has guided my steps where I could not see,
By ways that I had not known;
The crooked was straight and the rough made plain
As I followed the Lord alone.
I praise His name for the pleasant palms
And the water-springs by the way;
For the glowing pillar of fire by night,
And the sheltering cloud by day.
"There is light for me on the trackless wild
As the wonders of old I trace,
When the God of the whole earth went before
To search me a resting place!
Hath He changed for me? Nay, He changeth not;
He will bring me by some new way,
Through fire and flood and each crafty foe,
As safely as yesterday."

He who so faithfully cared for Israel after the flesh, who were a perverse and fickle people, will surely care more abundantly for His true, Spiritual Israel, who love Him supremely and are daily seeking more fully to know His will that they may do it.

The Apostle Paul, in warning Spiritual Israel not to fall after the same example of unbelief of Natural Israel, and thus lose their hold on the Lord, says, "We who have *believed* do enter into *rest*." (Hebrews 4:3.) It was unbelief that led to the disobedience and perversity of Israel after the flesh, and that led to their final rejection by the Lord as His favored people, to whom should apply the most precious promises. They have lost forever as a nation the special place of favor which was theirs by inheritance. What a lesson this should be to Spiritual Israel! And yet we see that today the great mass of Spiritual Israel are falling "after the same example of unbelief." And they, too, will lose the chief place of favor, which was offered them when it was taken from unbelieving Natural Israel. Only a faithful "remnant" of both Natural and Spiritual Israel will gain the great inheritance held out to them by the Lord.

THE GLORIOUS INHERITANCE OF SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

Those who prove faithful during the present Dispensation shall inherit the most precious things which God has to offer, the secret things which were for ages kept hidden, but are now revealed to the true saints of God. The faithful of past ages shall inherit the earth as rulers and princes over mankind, during the glorious Reign of Messiah. Gathered to these will be Natural Israel then living. They shall have a rich heritage. What remains for them in the ages of glory to follow, we may not know with certainty, but it will be a blessed portion, we may be sure.

The faithful of the present Age have been raised to "sit in Heavenly places with Christ Jesus"--"the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

These faithful ones are the twelve tribes of Israel who are to reign with Him. These--only a Little Flock, in all 144,000--are of the faithful remnant of Natural Israel, who were gathered at the beginning of this Gospel Age, and the faithful remnant from the Gentile Church of this Age. (Revelation 7:4-8; 14:1-5.) These have "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," and which none others can know. "My peace I give unto you," whispers the Master to these. We have a rest of faith now; and we are assured that we who have entered into this rest shall in due time, if we faint not, enter into the complete "rest that remaineth for the people of God." This rest we shall enter into when we experience our glorious "change" in the First Resurrection, when we are transformed in body and made like our Lord, and shall see and know as we are now seen and known of God. We shall then be blessed with the exceeding glory which He has promised--immortality, His own nature--and a seat with our Savior in His Throne.

The God of Israel is indeed ever present with His true people. He never forgets us, but is constantly looking out for our interests,

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"CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY"
--COLOSSIANS 1:27--

LANGUAGE is but a medium for the communication of thought, and words are but symbols of ideas. When words are so framed in sentences as to express an impossibility or an absurdity, when considered literally, but do forcibly illustrate a known truth when symbolically interpreted, we instinctively recognize the figure, and are instructed by it. In this way many of the deep things of God--the spiritual things--are expressed to us, since they are often forcibly illustrated by things familiar to us on the natural plane. Thus, for instance, the resurrection, both natural and spiritual, finds an illustration in the processes of vegetation (1 Cor. 15:35-38); and the processes of the beginning, development and final perfecting of the spiritual sons of God find a remarkable illustration in the begetting, quickening and birth of the natural man. (James 1:18; Eph. 2:1; John 3:3.) But if, when we read these symbols or illustrations of spiritual things, we pervert and dishonor our God-given reason by accepting palpable absurdities as their interpretation, we deceive ourselves, and in so doing are not blameless. In parables and dark, symbolic sayings our Lord opened his mouth and taught his disciples, expecting them to use their common sense in either interpreting them themselves, or in judging of the correctness of any interpretation offered by others as they should become meat in due season. And when on one occasion, instead of using their brains to draw from it the implied lesson, the disciples asked for the interpretation of a parable, Jesus suggestively and reprovingly replied, "How then will ye know all parables?" (Mark 4:13.) He would have us think, consider and put our God-given mental faculties to their legitimate use.

Bearing in mind these wholesome reflections, together with the fact that the Scriptures abound in these symbolic expressions of truth, let us consider the Apostle's meaning when he speaks of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." He uses the same figure again in his letter to the Galatians (Gal. 4:19), saying, "My children, whom I am bearing again, till Christ be formed in you," etc. Here the Apostle is likening his care and labor and endurance for those who had been begotten by the Truth to the new nature, to the physical endurance of a mother in nourishing and sustaining the germ of human life until the new human creature is formed and able to appropriate for itself the life-sustaining elements of nature, independent of her life. So the Apostle sought to nourish and sustain those germs of spiritual being with his own spiritual life until, apart from his personal work and influence, they would be able to appropriate for themselves the God-given elements of spiritual life contained in the Word of Truth;--until the Christ-character should be definitely formed in them.

In no other reasonable sense could the Apostle bear those Galatian Christians; and in no other reasonable sense could Christ be formed in them, or in us. The thought is that ^{1}every true child of

guarding us in every time of danger, providing for our every need, both temporal and spiritual, whatever is best for the interest of the New Creature. He reads every thought of our hearts; He marks every impulse of devotion and love to Him; He shapes all the influences surrounding our lives for our disciplining and refining, and hearkens to our every cry for aid and comfort and sympathy and fellowship with Him. He is never for even a moment forgetful or off guard. "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." (Psalm 121.) If we call Him in the busy hours of the day, or in the silent watches of the night, He is near to uphold and sustain and protect, whether we can realize His presence at all times or not.

How blessed the assurance of such constant, abiding care and faithfulness! No real child of God is devoid of these evidences of his precious relationship to the Father--the God of Israel. And the saints who have been called with the Heavenly Calling, and are faithfully responding, are His true Israel in the highest sense, heirs of all His choicest promises. How goodly a heritage is ours!

God must have a definite individual Christian character which is not dependent for its existence upon the spiritual life of any other Christian. He must from the Word of Truth, proclaimed and exemplified by other Christians, draw those principles of life, etc., which give him an established character, a spiritual individuality of his own. So positive and definite should be the spiritual individuality of every one, that, should even the beloved brother or sister whose spiritual life first nourished ours and brought us forward to completeness of character fall away (which the Apostle shows is not impossible--Heb. 6:4-6; Gal. 1:8), we would still live, being able to appropriate for ourselves the spirit of Truth.

Paul feared, and had reason to fear, that the Galatian Christians had not yet come to this condition of established character--that the Christ-life was not yet definitely formed in them. He said, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain" (Gal. 4:11); for already they were giving heed to seducing teachers and departing from the faith, showing that they were not established in the Truth, and consequently not established in the spirit of the Truth, which is the spirit of Christ, and, hence, that Christ was not yet formed in them.-- *Verse 19.*

Alas, how often we see among those who bear the name of Christ, and who have truly received the spirit of adoption as sons of God, that Christ is not yet formed in them! that they have not yet reached that degree of development which manifests a distinct spiritual individuality! They depend largely upon the spiritual life of others, and if their spiritual life declines these dependent ones suffer a similar decline; if they go into error, these follow, as did many of those Galatian Christians to whom Paul wrote. How is it, beloved, in your several cases? Apply the question to yourselves--Is Christ formed in you so fully that none of these things move you? that, however they may grieve you at heart, they cannot affect your spiritual life? This is what it is to have "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

A cloak of mystery and superstition has been thrown around this expression of the Apostle, evidently by the great Adversary of the Truth and the Church, to the effect that in some secret way, known only to the initiated, Christ personally comes into the consecrated soul and uses that soul simply as a machine; and that, consequently, the machine is about infallible, because Christ is using it; that for them to speak, or think, or act, or interpret the Scriptures, is for Christ to do it, in whose hands they are merely the passive agents. With this idea they generally go further, and claim that Christ personally talks with them and teaches them independently of his Word; and some go so far as to claim that they have visions and special revelations from the Lord. Some speak of this presence as Christ; some as the holy Spirit; and some speak of them interchangeably.

While there is a semblance of truth in all this, and while we remember that Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments and

^{1} Sept. 7 Manna, Col. 1:27

keepeth them...shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him;...and we will come unto him and make our abode with him" (John 14:21,23), it is true that a more serious error could scarcely be entertained than this idea of personal infallibility because of the supposed mysterious presence of another being within.

Notice that this promise of the abiding presence of the Father and the Son is to those who *have* and *keep* the commandments of the Lord Jesus. Those, therefore, who ignore the Word of the Lord and have not his commandments--who do not know what they are, and hence cannot keep them, but who hearken to the voice of their own imaginations and note all the changing states of their own feelings, mistaking them for the voice of the Lord and follow the impressions arising from this source, instead of the commandments or teachings of the Lord--are quite mistaken in claiming this promise. Under their delusion they are following another spirit than the spirit of Truth; and unless recovered from the snare they must inevitably plunge deeper and deeper into superstition and error.

The first difficulty we meet in attempting to dispel this delusion from the minds of those infatuated with it, is the claim that this is a higher attainment in the spiritual life, up to which we have not yet measured. If the testimony of the Scriptures bearing on the subject is brought forward they say, "Oh, I see you have the head-knowledge, but you have not the Spirit, you have not Christ in you." They then proceed to tell how Christ is in them, and that he is "teaching them wonderful things," which we shortly discover to be quite out of harmony with the Word of God. The case is indeed a sad one when all Scripture testimony contrary to their belief is set aside with claims of superior revelations of Christ or the holy Spirit which other children of God do not enjoy, and that Christ personally dwells in them, etc., etc.

Who but these deceived ones cannot see that, if their theory be true--if God talks with them and answers all their queries aside from his written Word, the Bible, through mental inspiration, or by dreams, or by audible sound--then the Bible is to such a useless book, and time spent in its study is so much time wasted. Who would "search the Scriptures" as for hid treasures, as the Lord enjoined and as all the apostles searched, if they could shut their eyes, or kneel, and have God make a special revelation to them, respecting the information desired. Surely any sensible person would prefer a special revelation on a subject, rather than to spend days and months and years examining and comparing the words of our Lord and the apostles with those of the prophets and the Book of Revelation ("searching what or what manner of time the spirit did signify"), if they could ask and have an inspired and infallible answer in a moment. None of God's consecrated ones should be thus misled of the Adversary. It is the stepping-stone to pride and every evil work;--to *pride*, because those who are thus deceived soon feel themselves honored of God above the apostles, who even in conference judged of the mind of the Lord as read in his Word and in his providential leadings in harmony with his Word (Acts 15:12-15); to *every evil work*, in that those thus puffed up fancy themselves infallible, and, separated from the anchor of truth, the Bible, Satan can soon lead them rapidly into the outer darkness of the world, or into yet darker delusions.

But the testimony of the Scriptures is quite contrary to this vaunting spirit. Paul says, "Know ye not...that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" and then he exhorts that we examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, or whether we have rejected the faith and thus become reprobates-- no longer acceptable to God. (2 Cor. 13:5.) Every *true* child of God has respect to the commandments of God: he searches the Scriptures that he may know them, and is not left in ignorance of them; and, learning them, he endeavors to keep them, and the abiding presence of the Father and the Son is with all such so long as they continue to hold and to keep (obey) his commandments--to hold the Truth in righteousness.

To have the Truth and to keep it is not merely to accept it on the recommendation of some friend, and because it gives some comfort and costs nothing, and to hold it until some other presumed friend dazzles the unsettled mind with some fanciful theory. The

promise of the abiding presence of the Father and the Son is not to such. Christ is not in them; Christ is in the humble and sincere ones. He and the Father love and abide with them.

But how? To illustrate--a friend accompanying another to a railway station said, as he was about to board the train, "Remember, I will be with you all the way." He meant that his thoughts would be with his friend and that he would be concerned for his welfare, etc. In a similar, and yet in a fuller and broader sense, ⁽²⁾the Lord is ever present with his people. He is always thinking of us, looking out for our interests, guarding us in danger, providing for us in temporal and spiritual things, reading our hearts, marking every impulse of loving devotion to him, shaping the influences around us for our discipline and refining, and hearkening to our faintest call for aid or sympathy or fellowship with him. He is never for a moment off guard, whether we call to him in the busy noon hours or in the silent watches of the night. And not only is the Lord Jesus thus present, but the Father also. How blessed the realization of such abiding faithfulness! And no real child of God is devoid of this evidence of his adoption. Sometimes it is more manifest than at others; as, for instance, when some special trial of faith or patience or endurance necessitates the special call for special help, and forthwith comes the grace sufficient with a precious realization of its loving source. Thus

"E'en sorrow, touched by heaven, grows bright,
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

Every true child of God has these precious evidences of sonship, and the roughest places in his pathway are so illuminated with divine grace that they become the brightest, and memory continues to refer to them with thankfulness; and faith and hope and love grow strong and inspiring.

⁽³⁾Our Lord always links the progress and development of our spiritual life with our receiving and obeying the Truth, and every child of God should beware of that teaching which claims to be in advance of the Word, and that Christ or the holy Spirit speaks to such advanced Christians independently of the Word. The snare is a most dangerous one. It cultivates spiritual pride and boastfulness, and renders powerless the warnings and exhortations of the sacred Scriptures because the deluded ones think they have a higher teacher dwelling in them. And Satan, taking advantage of the delusion, leads them captive at his will.

These symbolic expressions of the Scriptures must be interpreted as symbols, and to force any unreasonable interpretation upon them manifests a culpable wilfulness in disregarding the divinely appointed laws of our mind, and the result is self-deception. When we read, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 Jno. 4:16), the only reasonable interpretation is that we dwell in the love and favor, and in the spirit or disposition of God; and that his spirit or disposition dwells in us. Thus God by his indwelling spirit works in us to will and to do his good pleasure (Phil. 2:13); and we are reckoned as not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in us.--Rom. 8:8,9.

Let us endeavor to have more and more of the mind, the Spirit of God--to have his Word abide in us richly (John 15:7; Col. 3:16)--to have and to keep his commandments, that the abiding presence of the Father and the Son may be with us; and that, realizing that the Christ-character and life are definitely formed in us, the hope of glory may be ours; for our Lord said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) How careful then should we be in seeking both to know and to do the will of God. Many indeed will come forth with the plea of their wonderful works, hoping to be admitted into the Kingdom, but only those will be recognized who have done the will of the Lord, and who have no theories or works of their own whereof to boast.

⁽²⁾ Sept. 18 Manna, Ex. 33:14

⁽³⁾ Sept. 19 Manna, John 17:17