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## Spirit's Day Studies

The Writings of Jane Lead

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*Shake, shake your earthly dust away  
Now it's the Spirit's Day,  
that will admit of no delay.*

The Eight Worlds

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Abbreviations used in this study

[www.janelead.org/SDS\\_Abbreviations.pdf](http://www.janelead.org/SDS_Abbreviations.pdf)

## The Two Covenants

And their Relation

### Chapter 2 of The Two Covenants by Andrew Murray

"It is written, that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondmaid, and one by the freewoman. Howbeit, the one by the bondmaid is born after the flesh; but the son by the freewoman is born through promise. Which things contain an allegory: for these women are two covenants." Gal. 4:22-24.

There are two covenants, one called the Old, the other the New. God speaks of this very distinctly in Jeremiah, where He says: "The days come, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, not after the covenant I made with their fathers" (Jer. 31:31-32). This is quoted in Hebrews 8:13, with the addition: "In that He saith a new covenant, He hath made the first old." Our Lord Himself spoke of the New Covenant in His blood. In His dealings with His people, in His working out His great redemption, it has pleased God that there should be two covenants.

It has pleased Him, not as an arbitrary appointment, but for good and wise reasons, which made it indispensably necessary that it should be so, and not otherwise. The clearer our insight into the reasons and the Divine reasonableness of there thus being two covenants, and into their relation to each other, the more full and true can be our own personal apprehension of what the New Covenant is meant to be to us. They indicate *two stages* in God's dealing with man—two ways of serving God: a lower or elementary one of preparation and promise, and a higher or more advanced one of fulfillment and possession. As that in which the true excellency of the second consists is opened up to us, we can spiritually enter into what God has prepared for us. Let us try and understand why there should have been two, neither less nor more.

The reason is to be found in the fact that in religion, all intercourse between God and man, there are two parties, and that each of these must have the opportunity to prove what their part is in the Covenant. In the Old Covenant man had the opportunity given him to prove what He could do, with the aid of all the means of grace God could bestow. That Covenant ended in *man proving* his own unfaithfulness and failure. In the New Covenant, *God is to prove* what He can do with man, all unfaithful and feeble as he is, when He is allowed and trusted to do all the work. The Old Covenant was one dependent on man's obedience, one which he could break, and did break (Jer. 31:32). The New Cov-

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enant was one which God has engaged shall never be broken. He Himself keeps it and ensures our keeping it—so He makes it an Everlasting Covenant.

It will repay us richly to look a little deeper into this. This relation of God to fallen man in Covenant is the same as it was to unfallen man as Creator. And what was that relation? God proposed to make a man in His own image and likeness. The chief glory of God is that He has life in Himself; that He is independent of all else, and owes what He is to Himself alone. If the image and likeness of God was not to be a mere name, and man was really to be like God in the power to make himself what he was to be, he must needs have the power of free will and self-determination. This was the problem God had to solve in man's creation in His image. Man was to be a creature made by God, and yet he was to be, as far as a creature could be, like God, self-made. In all God's treatment of man these two factors were ever to be taken into account. God was ever to take the initiative, and be to man the source of life. Man was ever to be the recipient, and yet at the same time the disposer of the life God bestowed.

When man had fallen through sin, and God entered into a covenant of salvation, these two sides of the relationship had still to be maintained intact. God was ever to be the first, and man the second. And yet man, as made in God's image, was ever, as second, to have full time and opportunity to appropriate or reject what God gave, to prove how far he could help himself, and indeed be self-made. His absolute dependence upon God was not to be forced upon him. If it was really to be a thing of moral worth and true blessedness, it must be his deliberate and voluntary choice. And this now is the reason why there was a first and a second covenant: that in the first, man's desires and efforts might be fully awakened, and time given for him to make full proof of what his human nature, with the aid of outward instruction and miracles and means of grace, could accomplish. When his utter impotence, his hopeless captivity under the power of sin had been discovered, there came the New Covenant, in which God was to reveal how man's true liberty from sin and self and the creature, his true nobility and Godlikeness, was to be found in the most entire and absolute dependence, in God's being and doing all within him.

In the very nature of things there was no other way possible to God than this in dealing with a being whom He had endowed with the Godlike power of a will. And all the weight this reason for the Divine procedure has in God's dealing with His people as a whole, it equally has in dealing with the individual. The two covenants represent two stages of God's education of man and of man's seeking after God. The progress and transition from the one to the other is not merely chronological or historical; it is organic and spiritual. In greater or lesser degree it is seen in every member of the body, as well as in the body as a whole. Under the Old Covenant there were men in whom, by anticipation, the powers of the coming redemption worked mightily. In the New Covenant there are men in whom the spirit of the Old still makes itself manifest. The New Testament proves in some of its most important epistles, (especially those to the Galatians, Romans, and Hebrews) how possible it is within the New Covenant still to be held fast in the bondage of the Old.

This is the teaching of the passage from which our text is taken. In the home of Abraham, the father of the faithful, Ishmael and Isaac are both found, the one born of a slave, the other of a free woman; the one after the flesh and the will of man, the other through the promise and the power of God; the one only for a time, then to be cast out, the other to be heir of all. A picture held up to the Galatians of the life they were leading, as they trusted to the flesh and its religion, making a fair show, and yet proved by their being led captive to sin, to be not of the free but of the bond woman. Only through

faith in the promise and the mighty quickening power of God could they, could any of them, be made truly and fully free, and stand in the freedom with which Christ has made us free.

As we proceed to study the two covenants in the light of this and other scriptures, we shall see how they are indeed the Divine revelation of *two systems of religious worship*, each with its spirit or life-principle ruling every man who professes to be a Christian. We shall see how the one great cause of the feebleness of so many Christians is just this—that the Old Covenant spirit of bondage still has the mastery. And we shall see that nothing but a spiritual insight, with a wholehearted acceptance and a living experience of all the New Covenant engages that God will work in us, can possibly fit for walking as God would have us do.

This truth of there being two stages in our service of God, two degrees of nearness in our worship, is typified in many things in the Old Covenant worship—perhaps nowhere more clearly than in the difference between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place in the temple, with the veil separating them. Into the former the priests might always enter to draw near to God. And yet they might not come too near; the veil kept them at a distance. To enter within the Most Holy Place was death. Once a year the High Priest might enter, as a promise of the time when the veil should be taken away and the full access to dwell in God's presence be given to His people. In Christ's death the veil of the temple was rent, and His blood gives us boldness and power to enter into the Holiest of all, and live there day by day in the immediate presence of God. It is by the Holy Spirit, who issued forth from that Holiest of all, where Christ had entered to bring its life to us and make us one with it, that we can have the power to live and walk always with the consciousness of God's presence in us.

It is thus not only in Abraham's home that there were the types of the two covenants (the spirit of bondage and the spirit of liberty), but even in God's home in the temple. The priests had not yet the liberty of access into the Father's presence. Not only among the Galatians, but everywhere throughout the Church, there are to be found two classes of Christians. Some are content with the mingled life, half flesh and half spirit, half self-effort and half grace. Others are not content with this, but are seeking with their whole heart to know to the fullest what the deliverance from sin and what the abiding full power for a walk in God's presence is, which the New Covenant has brought and can give. God help us all to be satisfied with nothing less. (*See Note A below on the Second Blessing.*)

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## Note A. Chapter 2

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### The Second Blessing

In the life of the believer there sometimes comes a crisis, as clearly marked as his conversion, in which he passes out of a life of continual feebleness and failure to one of strength, and victory, and abiding rest. The transition has been called the Second Blessing. Many have objected to the phrase as being unscriptural, or as tending to make a rule for all what was only a mode of experience in some. Others have used it as helping to express clearly in human words what ought to be taught to believers as a possible deliverance from the ordinary life of the Christian, to one of abiding fellowship with God and entire devotion to His service. In introducing it into the title of this book, I have indicated

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my belief that rightly understood, the words express a scriptural truth, and may be a help to believers in putting clearly before them what they may expect from God. Let me try and make clear how I think we ought to understand it.

I have connected the expression with the Two Covenants. Why was it that God made two Covenants—not one, and not three? Because there were two parties concerned. In the First Covenant man was to prove what he could do, and what he was. In the Second, God would show what He would do. The former was the time of needed preparation; the latter, the time of Divine fulfillment. The same necessity as there was for this in the race, exists in the individual too. Conversion makes a sinner a child of God, full of ignorance and weakness, without any conception of what the wholehearted devotion is that God asks of him, or the full possession God is ready to take of him. In some cases the transition from the elementary stage is by a gradual growth and enlightenment. But experience teaches, that in the great majority of cases this healthy growth is not found. To those who have never found the secret of a healthy growth, of victory over sin and perfect rest in God, and have possibly despaired of ever finding it, because all their efforts have been failures, it has often been a wonderful help to learn that it is possible by a single decisive step, bringing them into a right relationship to Christ, His Spirit, and His strength, to enter upon an entirely new life.

What is needed to help a man to take that step is very simple. He must see and confess the wrongness, the sin of the life he is living, as not in harmony with God's will. He must see and believe in the life which Scripture holds out, which Christ Jesus promises to work and maintain in him. As he sees that his failure has been owing to his striving in his own strength, and believes that our Lord Jesus will actually work all in him in Divine power, he takes courage, and dares surrender himself to Christ anew. Confessing and giving up all that is of self and sin, yielding himself wholly to Christ and His service, he believes and receives a new power to live his life by the faith of the Son of God. The change is in many cases as clear, as marked, as wonderful, as conversion. For lack of a better name, that of *A Second Blessing* came most naturally.

When once it is seen how greatly this change is needed in the life of most Christians, and how entirely it rests on faith in Christ and His power, as revealed in the Word, all doubt as to its scripturalness will be removed. And when once its truth is seen, we shall be surprised to find how, throughout Scripture, in history and teaching, we find what illustrates and confirms it.

Take the twofold passage of Israel through water, first out of Egypt, then into Canaan. The wilderness journey was the result of unbelief and disobedience, allowed by God to humble them, and prove them, and show what was in their heart. When this purpose had been accomplished, a second blessing led them through Jordan as mightily into Canaan, as the first had brought them through the Red Sea out of Egypt.

Or take the Holy Place and the Holiest of All, as types of the life in the two covenants, and equally in the two stages of Christian experience. In the former, very real access to God and fellowship with Him, but always with a veil between. In the latter, the full access, through a rent veil, into the immediate presence of God, and the full experience of the power of the heavenly life. As the eyes are opened to see how terribly the average Christian life comes short of God's purpose, and how truly the mingled life can be expelled by the power of a new revelation of what God waits to do, the types of Scripture will shine with a new meaning.

Or look to the teachings of the New Testament. In Romans, Paul contrasts the life of the Christian under the law with that under grace, the spirit of bondage with the Spirit of adoption. What does this

mean but that Christians may still be living under the law and its bondage, that they need to come out of this into the full life of grace and liberty through the Holy Spirit, and that, when first they see the difference, nothing is needed but the surrender of faith, to accept and experience what grace will do by the Holy Spirit.

To the Corinthians, Paul writes of some being carnal, and still babes, walking as men after the flesh; others being spiritual, with spiritual discernment and character. To the Galatians, he speaks of the liberty with which Christ, by the Spirit, makes free from the law, in contrast to those who sought to perfect in the flesh, what was begun in the Spirit, and who gloried in the flesh—all to call them to recognize the danger of the carnal, divided life, and to come at once to the life of faith, the life in the Spirit, which alone is according to God's will.

Everywhere we see in Scripture, what the state of the Church at the present day confirms, that conversion is only the gate that leads into the path of life, and that within that gate there is still great danger of mistaking the path, of turning aside, or turning back, and that where this has taken place we are called at once, and with our whole heart, to turn and give ourselves to nothing less than all that Christ is willing to work in us. Just as there are many who have always thought that conversion must be slow, and gradual, and uncertain, and cannot understand how it can be sudden and final, because they only take man's powers into account, so many cannot see how the revelation of the true life of holiness, and the entrance on it by faith out of a life of self-effort and failure, may be immediate and permanent. They look too much to man's efforts, and know not how the Second Blessing is nothing more nor less than a new vision of what Christ is willing to work in us, and the surrender of faith that yields all to Him.

I would fain hope that what I have written in this book may help some to see that the Second Blessing is just what they need, is what God by His Spirit will work in them, is nothing but the acceptance of Christ in all His saving power as our strength and life, and is what will bring them into, and fit them for, that full life in the New Covenant in which God works all in all.

Let me close this note with a quotation from the introduction to a little book just published, *Dying to Self: A Golden Dialogue*, by William Law, with notes by A. M.:

"A great deal has been said against the use of the terms, the Higher Life, the Second Blessing. In [William] Law one finds nothing of such language, but of the deep truth of which they are the, perhaps defective, expression, his book is full. The points on which so much stress is laid in what is called Keswick teaching, stand prominently out in his whole argument. The low state of the average life of believers, the cause of all failure as coming from self-confidence, the need of an entire surrender of the whole being to the operation of God, the call to turn to Christ as the One and Sure Deliverer from the power of self, the Divine certainty of a better life for all who will in self-despair trust Christ for it, and the heavenly joy of a life in which the Spirit of Love fills the heart—these truths are common to both. What makes Law's putting of the truth of special value is the way in which he shows how humility and utter self-despair, with the resignation to God's mighty working in simple faith, is the infallible way to be delivered from self, and have the Spirit of Love born in the heart." †††