

DEBORAH

The astronomy of Deborah, or Deborah's horoscope

What star are you born under?

"LET THEM THAT LOVE HIM BE AS THE SUN WHEN HE GOETH FORTH IN HIS MIGHT."

This is one of the ending stanzas in Deborah's song found in Judges 5. These are the closing words of Deborah, who was the great prophetess of Israel. These words, in their context, are found in sharp contrast to the battle which throbs through the rest of Deborah's song, along with its stern approval of the act of other women, by the name of "Jael," who delivered the Israelites by killing an enemy king by the name of Sisera, and delivering the Jews from annihilation.

Here is the contrast: "SO LET ALL THINE ENEMIES PERISH, O LORD, BUT LET THEM THAT LOVE THEE BE AS THE SUN WHEN HE SHINETH IN HIS STRENGTH." Here, in these last notes of this song, we have the anticipation of the highest and the best truths touching on the true principle of Christianity. "LET THEM THAT LOVE HIM BE AS THE SUN WHEN HE GOETH FORTH IN HIS MIGHT." If we think of this song of Deborah's and the singer herself, and of the age in which she lived, and when she sang this song, and the occasion for this song, you will see the beauty of the significance of the true concept of Christianity.

The woman, "Deborah," has been brought to this point in her song through the Word of God, known at that time as "the Mosaic Law." Her faith had been fed, as it were, by forms or shadows of the "Good things to come." She lived in the midst of a world filled with cruelties and torture and heathenism, at a time when Israel was at an all time low.

At this point God raised up various judges, and as long as the judge was alive, the people followed the leading of the judge and they were fine. But when each judge died, the commentary reads, "Everyone did that which was right, in their own eyes." Into this chaotic environment we find Deborah and Deborah's song.

Deborah, in this environment of hostility, forced her way all the way through this and laid hold onto the vital center of everything. And there amidst the cruelty and murder, among the abominations of her day, and the terror of heathenism, in the center of a rigid ceremonial, retaliation-type of system, this woman's heart spoke out, and not only spoke out, but taught us one of the deepest of all principles of commandments.

Prophetess she was. Fighter she was. And she burst forth into a triumphant approval of Jael's brutal killing of King Sisera, the Jew's enemy. Yet with the same lips, and heart and soul, she could speak this profound word, "Let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

She learned this long ago from a passage that we have in the book of Deuteronomy, which the Jews call the "SHAMAH." "THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL THY MIND."

This sums up for us all the duty, the responsibility, and the beginning of anything good that we can find in man. This precept found an echo in her heart whatever part of her spiritual development may have played a part by the externalities of the cere-

monials of the Mosaic Law, **she had pierced through to the core of true spirituality.**

Now, even our advanced critics admit the antiquity of Deborah's song. This closing stanza, which I have chosen, witnesses to the existence, at the early part, of a **highly spiritual conception of the relationship between God and man.** Deborah reached the point in a moment of exaltation and insight, to the point where the apostle John had reached, even though her thought was strangely blended with the fierceness of the times in which she lived. We can see that she felt the fierce desire and the throbbing of her heart for vengeance and at the same time in her soul there was also the fierce throbbing of "THEM THAT LOVE HIM."

"Them that love Him" is therefore the Alpha and Omega of everything. Now we know and are taught that **love must depend upon knowledge.** But it is interesting that **Deborah's knowledge** at the time in which she lived **was a mere skeleton outline as compared to ours.** If you contrast the fervor of her emotional affection with the poor, cold pulsations which we dignify by the name of love, the contrast has to put us to shame. **Deborah outloved us.**

In our country today there is a religion of **fear** which dominates hundreds of professing Christians. There is also in our country today the religion of **form**, which contents itself with the externals of religion. That is the religion of many women and men in all of our so-called churches today. There is also a religion of **faith**, in its narrower and imperfect sense, which lays hold of a lot of believers to the doctrines of Christian Truth, and **they have never allowed their faith to pass into love.**

Christianity is not he that comes to God and "believes that God is," and comes with formal service and an alienated or negligent heart, not he who recognizes the duty of worship, and discharges it because his conscience pricks him, but has no buoyancy within him bearing him upwards towards the object of his love, not he who comes before the dark shadow which some call "God," **but**

the one who comes, trusting, knowing, and who, of a recipient heart, and loves Him in return, he, and only he, is a worshipper in spirit and in Truth.

We must learn this lesson that Deborah learned below the trees of Lapidoth. And if we want to understand what a man really is, recognize that **he is a man who loves the Lord. That is a real man.**

Then notice the character that Deborah states that such a love produces. "Let them that love Him. BE AS THE SUN WHEN HE GOETH FORTH IN HIS STRENGTH." In the time in which this was written, we are talking about people in an ancient time who lived mainly out of doors under the fierce eastern sun. The description of those conditions are "sunbeams like swords," and they spring up from the east and rush to the zenith, and nothing is hid from the heat thereof. A sun like that, of which we, in our cloudy skies, never see or feel, but which, to the Oriental, is the very emblem of splendor and of continuous, victorious power.

There are two things of importance mentioned here, radiance and energy and light and might. "AS THE SUN WHEN HE GOETH FORTH IN HIS MIGHT," i.e., strength. The Scriptures say that "The Lord God is a Sun and a Shield, and He gives GRACE and glory and He will not withhold one good thing from you if you walk uprightly."

Now, Deborah was a prophetess, and people always say, "What did she prophesy?" Well, **she actually prophesied the heart of Christianity.** That is in regard to its essence, and also to its effects. Her words are just a partial anticipation of Christ's sayings. He said, in His Words, in His time, "Ye are the light of the world." His disciples also declared the same thought when they said, "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light."

The direct tendency of what we venture to call love to God, meaning whereby we turn our whole soul to Him in aspiration, admira-

tion, longing for the likeness and practical imitation, is to elevate, ennoble, and illuminate the whole character. **The true way to elevate, ennoble, and educate our souls is to cultivate love to God.** And when we are near to Him, and held by Him, and are continually occupied with Him, when our being is one continual aspiration after our union with Him, and we experience the glory and rapture included in the simple word "love," then it cannot but be that we shall be like Him. That is what Paul meant when he said, "Now are ye light in the Lord." **Union with Him illuminates. The true radiance of saintly character will come in measure in which we are in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.** "As we walk in the light, as He is in the light, and in Him is no darkness at all, we have fellowship one with another."

Deborah's astronomy here was not her strong point. The sun shines but its own light. We are planets, and are darkness in ourselves. It is only the reflection of the central sun that ever makes us look silvery white and radiant before men. But though this light be derived, it is none the less our light, if it has passed into us, as it surely will, and if it streams out from us, as it surely will, **in the measure in which love to God dominates our lives.**

If that is so, and it is, then the shortest and the surest way to have our faces shining like that of Moses when he came down from the mountain, or like Stephen's when he "saw the heavens opened," is to keep near the Lord and maintain fellowship with Him. We then question ourselves. Are Deborah's aspirations fulfilled about us? "AS THE SUN WHEN HE GOETH FORTH IN HIS STRENGTH." Would anybody say that about my Christian character? Well, why not? Well, only because the springs have run low, and only because the love is cold, and the light is feeble.

But there is still another principle here, and that is that there is power in sunlight as well as radiance. Now on that truth Deborah has laid her finger when she said, "AS THE

SUN WHEN HE GOETH FORTH IN HIS STRENGTH." Now, Deborah, in her day, did not know what we know today. That is that solar energy is the source of all energy on this Earth. And, as in the deepest of all spiritual matters, the fact is also true, that "there is no power but of God." So, in the material region we may say that the only force is the force of the sun, which not only stimulates vegetation and brings light and warmth, as the pre-scientific Deborah knew, but in a hundred other ways, unknown to her and known to modern science, is the author of all change, the parent of all life, and the reservoir of all energy.

So we come to this thought: **The true love of God is no weak, sentimental thing, such as narrow and sectional piety has often represented it to be, but it is a power which will invigorate the whole of a man, and make him strong and manly as well as gentle and gracious, being, indeed, the partner of all the so-called heroic and of all the so-called saintly virtues.**

"THE SUN GOETH FORTH IN HIS STRENGTH," rushing through the heavens to the zenith. And as another portion of the Old Testament declares, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more until the noontide of the day." Again, we must note with interest, the contrast in Deborah's song. It is a strange thing that so fierce a battle chant should, at the end, settle down into such a sweet swan song as this.

It is a strange thing that this woman's soul should throb in the delight of battle and almost delight in killing and deliverance. Then these lofty words of love come forth with love's effects upon the human race. But we must learn Deborah's lesson well, that **true love to God means heart-felt hatred to God's enemies. And that that kind of love will always be militant and sometimes stern, and what people even may regard as fierce.** So amidst the amenities and sentimentalities of modern life today, there is much necessity for remembering that the

apostle of love, John, was a "son of thunder" also.

Here is Deborah, with her lips summoned Israel to fight, and chanted hymns of triumph over the corpses borne down by the rushing kishon, which also said, "Let them that love him be as the sun when he shineth forth in his strength." **If you love God, you will surely be a strong man as well as an emotional and affectionate Christian.**

That energy is continuous. The sun that Deborah saw day by day springs from his station in the east, and climbs the height in the heavens, and rays down his beams, has been doing that for millions of years, and it will probably keep doing it for uncounted periods still. And so the Christian man, with continuity unbroken and progressive brilliance and power, should shine, "More and more till the unsetting noontide of the day."

Now this brings us to the future, past the prophesy of Deborah. Here is a prophesy which apparently Deborah was unaware. She sings, after the destruction of the slaughter of King Sisera by Jael. "SO LET ALL THINE ENEMIES PERISH. O LORD. BUT LET THEM THAT LOVE THEE BE AS THE SUN WHEN HE SHINETH IN HIS STRENGTH." She contrasts the transiency of the lives that pit themselves against the Lord, with the perpetuity that belongs to those which are in harmony with Him. Now this is an eternal Truth and probably went further than Deborah knew. Certainly it was further than what Deborah was singing at this time.

Let us widen them by other words which use the same metaphor and say, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." We can further widen and deepen those words by the words which Jesus Christ Himself de-

clared. Jesus Christ laid down this old metaphor and describing the time when all the enemies shall have perished, said, "THEN SHALL THE RIGHTEOUS SHINE FORTH LIKE THE SUN. IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER." This will be with a brilliancy that will fill heaven with new splendor, bright beyond all that we see here amidst the thick atmosphere and mists and clouds of the present life.

There is no need to even stop here, for Jesus Christ not only laid hold of this metaphor in order to describe the eternal glory of the children of the kingdom, but at the last time that the human eye saw on Earth the Lord Jesus Christ, the glorified Christ is described with this selfsame metaphor. "His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

Now love always tends to likeness. And **love to Christ will bring conformity with Him.** The perfect love of heaven will issue in perfect and perpetual association with Him.

Science tells us that the light of the sun probably comes from its contraction, and that that process of contraction will go on until, at some point, within the bounds of time, though far beyond the measure of our calculations, the sun himself shall die. The ineffectual beams will be paled, and there will be a black orb, with neither life, nor light, nor power. And then, then and after that forever, They that love God shall continue to be as that dead sun once was, when "he went forth in his hot might."

We are the light of the world and the salt of the Earth. One of the "*Women in My Life*," Deborah, in the Hebrew meaning, the Word. You can learn a lot by knowing Deborah. Have you met her? I have. What a wonderful woman!!!