
On These Things Meditate

William Mealand

GOD CHOOSES US IN CHRIST

BY VIRTUE of glorious grace our place in the mind and affairs of God is among the celestials. There, above all the fleeting pageantry and tortuous circumstance of things terrestrial, God has assigned our sphere. In harmony with God's purpose of the ages, we constitute the great vanguard of His choice, the instruments of His will in this administration, thus truly and perfectly completing the Divine purpose.

How unlike the fevered, tangled aims of man, who would give place and power to human wisdom and strength. Truly, God's thoughts are high, Who so magnificently displays the qualities of His grace. God has flung forth favors which move us to wonder and praise. Again and again does He thrill our hearts by the stirring notes of love's "surprise symphony." He would have us listen to the music of His own making, that we might revel in the chords and phrases of the truest melody, the harmonies of His grace.

Occurring in the opening clauses of Paul's Ephesian letter, we have a beautiful quatrain of Divine grace. It forms a precious prelude to the full realization of God's purpose.

He chooses us in Him.

He designates us beforehand for the place of a son.

He lavishes on us the riches of His grace.

He makes known to us the secret of His will.

Such language nobly befits the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father glorious. Grace rides trium-

phantly, as each phrase opens with and reveals the majesty of God, great and greatly to be praised.

HE CHOOSES US IN HIM

Here we have the *motif* of the whole theme. *He, us, Him.* What an indissoluble union! Chosen in Him. Chosen ere such choice could be marred by shade of sin. Recipients of a favor not moved by caprice, and not determined by the things which so sway the human choice. A choice as perfect as it is absolute. Behind every case the wisdom of God, mysterious, it may be, but ever and always the associate of love. He chooses, and it is for us to acknowledge, appreciate, and adore. And in the face of such choice, all voices are stilled. Human pride, wisdom, and endeavor are outclassed and eclipsed by the effulgence of grace. There is but room for bowed heart and knee in the presence of such absolute favor. We are graced in the Beloved, of Whom the Father could say, "This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight." What an outflow of grace, thus to choose, in spite of that sin which was to shadow the circle of creation for so long! Grace, first on the scene, and the victor at last. He chose, and there are, and will be continual proofs of His choice. It is ever operative, and will be seen again and again, in ways to make us marvel at the manner of His love. Such love is timeless, even as it is measureless and unceasing. And so, as we pass to the harmonies flowing from such love and grace, we revel in the aorist tense in which the words are so finely phrased.

HE DESIGNATES US BEFOREHAND FOR THE PLACE OF A SON

God's high design is here set forth, His sovereign right to select whom He will. We think of Jacob who

did all he could to secure God's blessing, and stupidly deferred it. But love needed a Jacob, even as power a Pharaoh. It is God's prerogative to choose and use men as He will. With God the end is always clearly in view, and the correlated links, as arranged by Him, serve His will to accomplish that end. And how high is the place of a son! To be designated as such is great honor, and rare privilege. We are thus graced in the Beloved, not only with a view to future glory, but that even now we should realize our place and position as sons. Side by side with expectation there should be realization of God as Father. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ should now be our God and Father in realized intimacy and spiritual understanding. In the earthly relationship, a son may not always bow to his father's will, but in the spiritual bond, which is yet more real, highest wisdom, peace, and happiness lie in acceding to our Father's will. The privilege of such a position as "the place of a son" entails responsibility in the call for a display of its power. In line with the will of God, there will always be things we must forego, as we patiently live up to our high place.

HE LAVISHES ON US THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE

In other words, He gives as *God*. Freely, without reserve or stint, our God lavishes on us the wealth of such favor as only He can bestow. O, if we could always take full advantage of such a tide of blessing! Like the oncoming waves of the sea, it would fill every crevice and crack. Every part of our being would be laved with its healing streams. Yet we know that what is now but intermittent, because of frailty, or it may be a thorn of the flesh, shall one day be a glorious, permanent joy. And, interwoven with the riches of His grace are the riches of His kindness, His forbearance and long-

suffering, His wisdom, knowledge, and glory. All these rare attributes are associated with grace, and are exercised for our experience that we may glimpse the vastness of divine wealth.

These riches, so splendidly unfolded by the dispenser, Paul, are not only ours to luxuriate in, here and now, but are set for magnificent display in the oncoming eons. Then will there be an exhibition which cannot but have the richest of results. God's kindness will be seen in such a light as to elicit the full-voiced praise of every happy witness. Emotions which now are fleeting, will then be an abiding expression.

HE MAKES KNOWN TO US THE SECRET OF HIS WILL.

The closing line of our quatrain is in fine sequence. It follows as a perfectly fitting thought, as being in accord with His delight. We all know the pleasure of imparting to a friend knowledge which brings him blessing. How infinitely higher, then, the revelation of the secret of His will! God would not hold back the thought of that wonderful administration of His, which is to grace the universe in future eras.

Now it is man's day, hard, fast, and inexorable; but through it all there runs the golden thread of God's ordering towards His own great day. Unknown as yet by other worlds, the full significance of such a rare, glad secret shall flash upon them when they will know, through us, the resplendent triumph of God, in Christ.

Yet shall they know, and know indeed, that Christ arose in triumph from that "one forsaken grave." The note rings out day by day, "He is risen!" Through the operation of God's mighty strength, He rose to take His seat among the celestials, even at the right hand of God. And there, where Christ is seated, our aspirations have their center, and finally, their realization.

For in such a sphere, among the celestials, our lot is cast.

Reflecting on the wealth of such divine favors, we may well thank the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thank Him again and again, as we seek to appreciate so vast an expression of love, which is ever and always in accord with His delight.

W.M.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to all the saints who are also believers in Christ Jesus:

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ, according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will, for the laud of the glory of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved: in Whom we are having the deliverance through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses in accord with the riches of His grace, which He lavishes on us; in all wisdom and prudence making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him) to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ—both that in the heavens and that on the earth.

(Eph.1:1-10)

LIVING TOGETHER WITH CHRIST

WE REVEL in the riches of God's grace, and in the blessed fact of our exaltation in Christ Jesus. Enthroned with Him, complete in Him, our life hid together with Christ in God, an unparalleled possession is ours. By divine choice and purchase we are lifted to the celestial realm, transferred thereto by the very deliverance of God. The rescue is a great one, and, when fully realized, a thing most wonderful.

But are we living, in the deepest sense, up to so high and unique a privilege? Are we possessing our possession, our celestial Canaan, that "part of the allotment of the saints in light" so graciously accorded us? There is but one way, and to go that way is to know an abundance of spirit life. And it is to know as never before, the measure of our Lord's obedience. We may have *comprehended* something of its character, but now, as we grip the inner meaning of identification with Christ in death, we *apprehend* its immense import.

The death of the cross! From the glory He came to the place called Golgotha. With fixed purpose He set His face toward Jerusalem. And "that set face" was just the index of a set heart. The disciples did not like to hear Christ speak about the cross, the foundation of the holiness of God, the hinge of human destiny. They did not like to think about it, they put it out of their minds, failing to understand it. It was an unpleasant thought even to those who loved Him.

Little did they dream that the Victim would so glori-

ously be the Victor, that Calvary would thus witness the triumph of powerful love over powerless hate. But *it was* so, and *it is* so! The blood-marked way, so like defeat, was an absolute triumph. He won that we might win. He died that we might die, yet live with Him.

The blood of His cross! "The precious blood of Christ, as of a flawless and unspotted lamb" (1 Peter 1:19). And does it not speak for all time, of deliverance, nearness, and cleansing, of perfect peace and overcoming power? Stupendous issues hang thereon. How high its might and marvel ascends, even to realms of an unchronicled and unknown past! And how far forward its penetration to the coming eons! And all its power is for us, even *now*. For is it not the one great insurmountable, inviolable barrier against our foe? It is indeed, and is at once the symbol of his past defeat and bruising yet to come.

The vigorous kernel of wheat, except it die, abides alone. Useful it may be, and very good, but the possibilities of its life are small. But if it *dies* it yields *much* fruit. And death alone could mean such life as He, its Victor, knew. Did He not say in John 12:27, "But therefore came I into this hour"? The hour of death! Yet listen again to our Lord's own account of its glorious outcome. "And *I*, if I should be exalted out of the earth, shall be drawing *all to Myself*!" Here, indeed, is the "much fruit," a rich harvest from the life laid down.

Death, not only *for* sin but *to* sin. That is the conformity we need to know. And we prove its power as its principle is perpetually applied. But why should we die, and to what? Questions like these may assail, even perplex the mind. Yet, if with the apostle Paul we long to know Christ "and the fellowship of His sufferings, conforming to His death" (Phil.3:10), we must be truly

identified with Him in the likeness of His death.

Why should we die? That we might know the superabundant life, ascension life, and power with God and men. Our need is new life, and since there is nothing new under the sun, this wonderful life comes streaming down from above, where are our affections, if we are risen with Him. And to be "found in Him" is to really know life in marvelous newness (Phil.3:9). Whatever the cost, it is worthwhile. Christ deemed it so and could calmly say, "Father, the hour has come!" He knew that glory lay that way. With us, the paths of glory lead but *to* the grave. But with Him, Who left the august glory that He had in the Father's presence, before the eons began, the path of glory led triumphantly *from* the grave.

And that is why He died, even the death of the cross. And thus dying, He forever displays to a wondering universe His title and right to His place preeminent. Tragic in the world's eyes as yet, but with the veil removed, how triumphant to our vision is such a death! In the face of all that it meant and means, conformity to it is a priceless distinction for the saints of God. So thought Paul, God's pioneer of the life among the celestials, as he stretched out "in front toward the goal, for the prize of God's calling above in Christ Jesus" (Phil.3:12). Paul knew *life union* with Christ as the outcome of *death with Him*. And he shows us that the two are inseparable.

"Now if we *died together with Christ*, we believe that we shall *live together with Him* also, having perceived that Christ, being roused from among the dead, is no longer dying. Death is lording it over Him no longer, for in that He died, He died to Sin once for all time, yet in that He is living, He is living to God. Thus you also, be reckoning yourselves to be dead, indeed,

to sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom.6:8-11).

Could words be plainer or more emphatic? Death and life. Dead to sin, alive to God. But to what do we die? Not merely to sin in its many recognized forms, but to those subtle, unrecognized forms of the soul life, the self-life in which some so passionately persist. Only God can ordain and originate the occasion which brings into play the power of Christ's death. *Think deeply of all He died to, and apply the thoughts to the practical details of life.* God can make every phase of the application real and true.

Thus shall we die to live, and in the power and might of Christ's death, die to many things we once keenly lived for. We may be sensitive and self-conscious to a degree. There may be self-pity, self-judgment, self-defense, self-many-things, but to them all we are to die. Yet if, as God reveals, we carry out this divine principle, we shall find the emergence to be life indeed, buoyant and triumphant. For by the cross He triumphed!

Impaled there, His seeming defeat was really victory. By death He mastered death, and triumphantly ascending, lives evermore, our Life and glorious Head. And the death He died was of such a character that for all time it becomes the very root source of life which is to the glory of God. And where victory lay for Him, it lies for us as well.

And do we not long for victory? Is it not ours to realize here and now? Victory in real experience. And this can only be known as we enter into *all that Calvary means*. If Calvary meant death it also was the prelude to life, dominating, abundant life. It was so to Him, our conquering Lord, Who thereby became our exalted Head. And, as members of His body, we are

sharers in His victory. But do we know it? Do we stand in Him for it, as God's will for us? The faith of the Son of God stood steadfastly for all God's will, wherein lay Calvary. Shall we not then, like Paul, be living *in* such faith? It is an *inner life* indeed, a real, victorious life, for insofar as we are dead *to* sin, we are untouched by it.

Let us be willing for God's will; for His revealing of the hidden things of the self-life to which we are to die, and we shall truly find that death is the way of conquest. And to the attitude of others, moved and actuated by the enemy, death is again the pathway of victory. You get victory in your spirit, for the death side is so swallowed up by the gloriously positive life side; so it is in Him, "be[ing] disposed to that which is above" (Col.3:2), that you reach out for this pathway more and more. The old life must go out, that the new may abound, and increase with the increase of God. And to this end we must be identified with Christ in the likeness of His death. It is the power of this union which emancipates us, and how marvelously far-reaching is the glorious freedom which may then be ours!

Shall we not then carry into effect all that Calvary so vitally means? It is a working principle of death and life for all the members of the body of Christ who, like Paul, long to be found in union with Him. It is a death ever and always bound up with life. Think of the Conqueror seated above, the supreme Victor and life-imparting Spirit. And it is life we need, *life in the spirit*. But we must be severed from the earth ties to experience the quickening, triumphant life which dwells and moves in God.

The secret place of the Most High is to be our daily abode. It is there, and there alone that we triumph over the power of the enemy. Thus, with our viewpoint among the celestials, we ride above the earth clouds of

mere human attitudes and outlooks. Moreover, the celestials are keenly intent upon this character of our testimony. For is it not through us as members of the body of Christ that God's manifold wisdom is displayed? Let us not relegate all this power and opportunity to the future. There is an insistent *now* for the warm and close regard of the saints of God.

Calvary stands for this, and so much so in its deepest meaning, that we can never say "*Farewell*" to its vivifying power as productive of life. And God will show us the things we should die to, that we should lay down, and count loss. And He in His own way and time, will bring to our consciousness, the blessedness of it. The dignity, too, and potency, is above measure.

Is it a battle? The battle is the Lord's, and in the strength of His might, you win through. Are Satan and his hosts of darkness against Christ's own? He is a defeated foe, and his hosts with him. And God will crush Satan under your feet swiftly. It is this, and infinitely more, that Golgotha means to us.

W.M.

DO NOT WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING!

“Do NOT worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, that is superior to every frame of mind, shall be garrisoning your hearts and your apprehensions in Christ Jesus” (Phil.4:6,7).

There is an elixir of life in words like these. Touching life at all points, they embrace every experience, and affect every problem. How positive they are, how emphatic! There is no room left for the smallest doubt to intrude. The words are just an exquisite echo of the Psalmist's thought—“*fret not thyself!*”

How complete, how inclusive the injunction is! Do *not* worry about *anything*. Not a single thing. But can we realize it? Is it possible to live up to such a counsel of perfection? A thousand times, yes! And for the great reason that this rare paragraph enshrines a God-given assurance. There is a promise, a pledge of a superior peace—the peace of God, His perfect provision for the keeping, the steadying of our hearts in Christ Jesus.

What an expression of God's solicitude! And for each of us to *make true* in the circumstances of life. How true, rests with the quality of our reliance upon God, in how far we leave things to Him, for His working out. And His appointment is never a disappointment. Therefore, on no account are we to worry. It does no good, changes nothing, nor ever gives us back the thing we prized. It enfeebles and wastes our

strength, keeps the mind excited, the blood feverish, and the heart beating wildly.

If, then, we must not worry, and there are things in life calculated to make us anxious, how may we displace worry? By taking God into our confidence as we voice immediate needs. "With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." Note the proviso—*with thanksgiving*, which in itself affects the burdened mind. Indeed, thankfulness for the simple things of life, the ordinary, forgettable things, means much.

The tragic indictment of the ancient world was that, "knowing God, not *as God* do they glorify or thank Him." Stars in the heaven are thanked, and saints in the calendar, but not God. May we be giving thanks always, for all things, to God. Untold occasions call for it, and a voiced acknowledgment deepens our consciousness of His daily care.

No aspect or department of life is outside the interest of God, our Father. He is at all times an interested Listener. Our requests, therefore, may be unreservedly made known. Let them flow forth, without any concern as to how they will be met. That rests with God's will and wisdom, according to which, all the intricacies of life are appointed. Has He not ordered them, appointing each one, both good and ill?

There are some things in life God would not have us change! And happy are we, if, in the acceptance of them, we see the Father's own rare ordering. Let us so live, in the spirit of a line from a hymn: "I do not ask to see the distant scene, one step enough for me." It suffices that we make our requests known to God, and leave them with Him. This done, with thanksgiving, there will come to heart and mind, God's own wonderful peace.

"And the peace of God, that is superior to every

frame of mind, shall be garrisoning your hearts and your apprehensions in Christ Jesus." Here, in a peace which surpasses all power of thought, lies the strength and joy of Paul's counsel of perfection. It is the peace of God, in contrast with and superior to all human counsel, palliative, or panacea.

Gift of the God of peace; it is the only calm in a world of unrest. But O, how this peace differs from that which the world offers! We see the word used all around us. Yet how little it conveys, how far short it falls, of all that such a word "peace" should stand for! Does it not look lost, as a wandering star from its orbit?

Only as linked with God and His ministering grace, does the Word hold real comfort and consolation. In such union it has vital power, confirming its frequent and heartening occurrence in the calm of a rich content. The peace of God. Grace and peace. Yes, yes. In spite of all around us, and the tangle of daily events. For our hearts shall be as a citadel, gloriously kept. "The Lord is thy Keeper."

What a glad secret of life! One that Christ Himself exemplified. He did not worry or fret impatiently. He *trusted*, He rested supremely in God. He gave Himself completely over to God. He prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass by from Me. However, not as I will, but as Thou!" (Matt. 26:39; cf v. 42).

How sublime an example of utter submission to God's will! There has been but One, and there will never be another so altogether acquiescent to the Father's will. The purpose, will, and majesty of God, the Father, was everything to Him. How much so we have yet to see. In the meanwhile, let us hold by this superior peace. It is resident in Him. *He* is our peace, and He is on the throne, even the throne of the universe.

Therefore, "do not worry about anything." Rather,

“with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” In these two statements we have first a prohibition, then an injunction. Is it not that prayer should be the death of care? It follows, however, that the source or cause of worry should not be self-made. It should be that imposed on us, and not something fashioned by ourselves which we persist in carrying. This we must throw away. Life, to be happily lived, must have in all its aspects, a felt consciousness of God. At all times there should be a sense of God’s ruling. For, not only is God operating the universe in accord with the counsel of His will, but Christ is carrying it on by His powerful declaration. What control is here, and how complete! Just to feel that we are entirely in God’s hands, flung upon His care and control, is to know a peace inviolate.

What small resemblance to the faith of Christ our faltering trust displays! Self looms so large with us, and hence disquietude. Not so with our Lord. He displayed the dignity of complete assurance. Rejecting His disquietude, He puts in its place the thought of the majesty and power of God the Father.

Let us learn of Him to quietly accept our Father’s will. Let us be disposed to that which is above, where Christ is, enthroned at God’s right hand. Then we shall know the peace of God, and how superior it is to every frame of mind. And the God of peace *shall* be with you, in every moment, every hour.

“Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.”

W.M.

On These Things Meditate

LIFE AND PEACE

AGAIN and again in the divine literature we see phrases of power and beauty which breathe contentment and repose. It is as though coming from the fret and jar of city commotion, we enter an old-world garden, rich with fragrant quietude. Immediately the spirit feels the lull of repose, the charm of silence. It is an interlude of calm for the tired or fevered spirit.

In like manner these words of rare intent call us apart from the whirl of life, and bid us rest awhile. And should we luxuriate in the language of Paul, how blessed is the ease of heart and mind! For there is such a wealth of spiritual expression which continually rings true to experience as we open our minds to its power. Truly, "the way of life is above to the wise," and "to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Amid the surge of city life the brain is crowded with many thoughts, and God is easily forgotten. The hum of commerce and its ant-like concern for the visible and tangible things of earth, tends to submerge the spiritual, so that we ever require the "one thing needful" as our happy portion. Therefore we would fain think often of God, and the Son of His love, that life and peace may be truly ours.

Life which is life indeed, and peace which is God's own calm! For the people of God this life and peace has ever existed, and is perpetuated in the spiritually minded. It was the exultant portion of the Psalmist. "Thou wilt show me the path of life! With Thee is the

fountain of life!" And again, "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!"

These thoughts of the infinite One for the children of His choice, are spread as a banquet in the grand area of His Word. There they lie, extended as it were, from valley to mountain, from the mists of early, formative revelation, to the unclouded splendor of the highest peaks of truth. Things spiritual, vibrant with life and peace; and devotion to them an "open sesame" to the mind of God. And the more we are taken up with them the deeper is our joy.

There is a beautiful expression of this desire for God in the sixty-third Psalm. Note the fine sequence:

My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips.

My soul followeth hard after Thee. Thy right hand upholdeth me.

Thirst is followed by satisfaction which inspires keener quest. And so, as we find refreshment of spirit, we see beauties unnoticed before, all of which flood our hearts with the consciousness of God. And as we love them for their own sake, just because they reflect the divine, we are truly taught of God. Thus we read with an ever-deepening discernment and appreciation, reveling in the things which make for life and peace.

God alone can soothe the overcharged heart and His quietness expel trouble. "Be still, and know!" Stillness is requisite for knowledge. It is indeed the "one thing needful," so finely chosen by Mary of old. And to be a student of things divine is to cherish the best kind of knowledge, for the choice carries with it a foretaste of the life of the ages. Other knowledge may be desir-

able, and of some value, but it does not impart life and peace.

Things of earth please for the moment, break as a bubble, and pass. But the life of God is deep and strong. Its endless flow is shrined in calm. Paul knew its grand repose when he penned his fine testimony: "I learned to be content in that in which I am. I am aware what it is to be humbled as well as aware what it is to be superabounding. In everything and among all am I initiated, to be satisfied as well as to be hungering, to be superabounding as well as to be in want" (Phil. 4:11,12). We comprehend the apostle's attitude as we note another declaration: "For whatever promises are of God, are in Him 'Yes.' Wherefore through Him also is the 'Amen' to God, for glory, through us" (2 Cor. 1:20).

What enrichment is ours in the beloved One, for who but He can ensure the peace of earth, and the final calm of the wide universe. Limitless wealth and ability is His. Therefore, in the present evil age we should endure, "as seeing Him Who is invisible." And as we mature in faith we restfully fall in with divine appointments. We find it easier to forego cherished plans, largely leaving the shaping of our course to Him.

Our spiritual blessings among the celestials constitute our highest call to life and peace. Yet even so, "devoutness with contentment is great capital" (1 Tim. 6:6), and there are many humble souls who prove this, to whom higher knowledge has not come. Pure in heart, they see God in so many ways, that their hearts truly sense His rare repose. It is good to know such people of God, for they are life oases in the desert wilds. They just exhale life and peace.

However, apart from such refreshment, we must prove for ourselves the blessedness of God's will. He has revealed so much for head and heart, that we may

well be taken up with the unfoldings of His mind. Therein lies our peace as we ascend faith's mountain. And the life of the ages gilds its crest. The foretaste of glory may be ours, however toilsome the ascent. It was so with Paul. See how he pierces the filaments of sense and space. His pen depicts no earthly potentate as holding him in thrall, but gives the higher view that makes for life and peace.

Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus! He looked beyond the passing moves of men to the prime Mover of all things. He kept his vision clear.

O that we might lift our eyes to the great Invisible, that such poise may be ours as to ensure a light regard for things of earth, and a more deeply rooted affection for things above. For, to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

W.M.

THE WAY OF VICTORY

WAS IT NOT on Golgotha that Christ in the supremest sense asserted His Lordship? From the wilderness conflict onward, He had been invincible, and now, as the Lord, strong and mighty—mighty in battle, He conquers the foe in the most glorious victory earth and heaven ever witnessed.

In cottage and temple, wayside and lonely shore, the battle spirit shone out from those eyes of dignity and steadfastness, as they looked upon the victims of the enemy's power. And to the invisible hosts of darkness, His was the voice of command.

Mighty deeds were wrought in Galilee, at which the people marveled. But mightier still, the Calvary conquest when, "stripping off the sovereignties and authorities, with boldness He makes a show of them," He so gloriously triumphed, even "discarding him who has the might of death, that is, the Adversary." And this is the victory, the power of which we need to know. For it is a power, and with potentialities which opportunities will prove again and again (*cf* Col.2:15; Heb.2:14).

How then shall we realize this power and triumph over the enemy? The place of victory is among the celestials, "up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named." This is the glory sphere in which, in spirit, we are to abide. But we cannot truly abide and know unbroken victory, except we enter deeply the likeness of Christ's death. Only a likeness, but let it be deep and true, and

your spirit will rise to victory (*cf* Eph.1:20,21).

The enemy is powerless, entirely silenced on that high plane. He wars below, and through the force of circumstance, the passions and obsessions of the soul. In these elements the hosts of darkness concentrate, and, as past masters of soul-craft, entice and ensnare. Are we so detached from things of the soul life, so dead to them, that their charm is gone? If not, then at some point we give ground to the Adversary, and defeat comes swiftly.

But we may have, we *should* have, a victorious life. "For if we *died together*, we shall be *living together* also; if we are enduring, we shall be *reigning together* also" (2 Tim.2:11,12).

Paul voiced the power he knew, the power which served him in all the contingencies of his course. And his word comes to our needy spirits—"Be strong in the Lord!" Strong in Him, for is He not "the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle"? We are to know the strength of His might, that very strength which set Him at God's right hand, high above all. Let your spirit rest there, amid all the ebb and flow of things around, and victory will be yours.

God would have us buoyant and victorious, so alive to Him that our spirit arises to Him in the joy and strength of the Lord. Stand then, in Christ! Dread not, be unafraid! Live that your spirit may be in victory. And with spirit triumphant, vision and perception will be clear. But there must be the walk in righteousness, and in faithfulness, step by step, to the light God gives.

We stand then in Christ's victory, and, in the power which raised and exalted Him, exult. For this power alone energizes us in the warfare, and not only places us above the unseen forces which assail us through others, but gives us victory over their subtle attempts to enslave us personally, in body or mind.

And this may be of such a character as to continue for years. There are so many refined forms of the soul life whereby the enemy gets a hold, and then, given a suitable occasion, he can oppress with a vengeance. Then it is that we, in very deed, prove the blessedness of Paul's wondrous enunciation in the sixth of Romans: "Our old humanity was crucified together with Him, that the body of Sin may be nullified, for us by no means to be still slaving for Sin . . ." (Rom.6:6). Here is the basis of victory, the one sure ground.

But if death, then also corresponding life. And with the life, victory and peace. Now this victory is the quiet, unseen mastery which the members of the body of Christ are justly entitled to experience day by day. And the call is upon us to realize here and now the blessedness of its character. Again and again it gives occasion for praise, and is at the same time a testimony to celestial powers concerning the multifarious wisdom of God (Eph.3:10).

A strong spirit, strong to resist, refuse, and endure. Strong, as against soul weakness, with its varied tendencies and impulses. Strong, to resist the enemy's encroachment on our peace, and strong to refuse depression and oppression as they come to our spirit. Strong also, to endure with patience and longsuffering all that is in the will of God for our enrichment.

Ours is a spirit life, spirit fellowship, a spirit warfare. And for true life and fellowship we must know spirit victory. We can only breathe freely on the heights. Below, in the earthlies, we are out of adjustment, finding its atmosphere a frequent pall upon the spirit. The new life longs for the new creation element, and can only flourish therein. Hence the warfare, the contesting of advance.

How then, shall we be mighty in battle, mighty in

breaking through to victory? The onset is from the enemy side and comes in varied form. It may be a heaviness or deadness of spirit, a disquietude or restlessness. But, whatever it is, we know it to be a foreign element that should not be with us. What then? Are we to fight it? By no means. We are to *stand*—stand in Christ, and withstand. And above all else, use the sword of the spirit, voicing a divine declaration as a weapon of God to scatter the enemy's smoke clouds. For at times the air seems thick with their presence, so that we need to stand firmly and as Paul enjoins, "In every prayer and petition *be praying on every occasion*, in spirit, and being vigilant for it with all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints" (Eph.6:18,19).

There we have it. Paul shows us in grand, unerring language, the place of victory, the unassailable position of the victor, and all the riches of his great ascension place. And then, aware of the aerial hosts and their malignant chief, he shows the way of victory.

Let the sword of the spirit then be as a keen Damascus blade, to cut a way through the hosts of darkness. Standing as sons of light, let us be vigilant, pressing into the fabric of our prayer life all the pointed declarations of God which His Spirit prompts to meet the case. And may we not forget the truly ecumenical note which should pervade our prevailing prayer, "petition concerning *all* the saints."

There is nothing finer with which to cut through to a clear sense of victory in spirit than those texts and living declarations of Scripture which so surely and immediately serve to the defeat of the foe. The warfare is spiritual, and a war always on. And just because we are out for God's greatest and best, the Adversary is relentless, and if he could, would bring us down to utter despair and defeat. Let us remember that he and

his are out to silence testimony, especially in the matter of the cross. Anything but death gives him some lodgment, but to die to things we once so keenly lived for, and to have things drop from us as dead leaves, makes the forces of oppression powerless.

Mighty in battle? It must needs be as we stand inflexible foewards; but Godwards, ah, then indeed are we pliant, receptive, and above all, reposeful in that peace which so immovably garrisons our hearts in Christ Jesus. Declarations of God, fiats of the Lord of glory! As such, wield them to the discomfiture of the enemy. Then you will walk in victory, develop in strength, alertness, and realization of God.

How then are we to be mighty in battle, mighty in breaking through to victory? The onset is from the enemy side and is felt by us in many ways. It may be a heaviness or deadness of spirit, a sense of defeat, in that we are not in strong repose and spirit mastery. Take to yourself the great thought that you are a son of God. Live in the dignity of it, lift up your head, remembering that as you stand in Christ, you veritably stand in the presence of God. When alone, audible expression helps, and it works.

Let us remember, too, that in our use of God's declarations, we are not confined in doctrinal sense, as to dispensational truth alone. We can wield all those declarations of our God which His Spirit at the moment gives. And so, again and again will you find expression or exclamation from prophet and psalmist, as sure a weapon as the words of Paul. But there will always be the wondrous adjustment of such words with our position as members of the body of Christ, and with our place of victory among the celestials. For with us they take on the highest meaning possible, and the life in them overcomes the assault of the enemy.

From experience and the testimony of others the writer has proved the possibilities which a stand for victory can see accomplished. It is a wonderfully real thing, a bringing into the immediate present, something of the glory and splendor of the untraceable riches of Christ. Let *your* will, then, be for it, as one in God's great secret administration.

"I *will* extol Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast lifted me up, and hast *not* made my foes to rejoice over me Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall *not* fear. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life! Of whom shall I be afraid?" Then, too, Paul's grand note (2 Cor.2:14): "Thanks be to God Who *always* gives us a triumph in Christ!"

O to prove the mighty power of God—mighty to the overthrowing of strongholds. And this proving will be as we concentrate our thoughts on Christ in all His fullness. But for this we must be emptied of so very much we may have hitherto considered as quite in keeping with our walk. We lose to gain, die to live, and dying with Him, we live with Him. And we live by the faith of the Son of God Who so gloriously triumphed over the Adversary.

Through all that comes, then, seek to know victory, repose in God's peace. For "the God of peace will be crushing Satan under your feet swiftly" (Rom.16:20). Potentially, he is a vanquished foe, and as prince of the power of the air, his time is short. Hence his malignity to all those who are out for God's best. Like Caleb and Joshua, shall we not say, "We are well able to overcome the Lord is with us!"

With these men it was God all the time—His viewpoint, His might. And this is the way of victory, victory personal, victory in spirit over the powers of darkness. Let us, then, rise to it, go all out for it, doing so in the might of the Lord.

W.M.

LIFE IN GOD

LIFE IN GOD. Herein alone is the affinity for which we were chosen in Christ. The realization of God in true sonship. "For whoever are being led by God's spirit, these are the sons of God" (Rom.8:14). And thus led, the outgoings of the heart are ever to Him. We are alive to God, and to all the minute possibilities which life should mean.

But it is life out of death—"for you died, and your life is hid *together with Christ* in God." Let your spirit go out to this great fact of identification with Christ, in death as in life, and you will realize, not only the poignancy of His death, but the empowering virtue of His victory over it (Col.3:3).

This identification gathers force by the repetition assigned to it in Paul's wonderful interpretation of Calvary. "Baptized into His death . . . entombed *together with Him* through baptism into death . . . *planted together* in the likeness of His death . . . we shall be of the resurrection also, knowing this, that our old humanity was *crucified together with Him*" (Rom.6:3-7).

"Now if we *died together with Christ*, we believe that we shall be *living together with Him* also, having perceived that Christ, being roused from among the dead, is no longer dying. Death is lording over Him no longer, for in that He died, He died to Sin once for all time, yet in that He is living, He is living to God" (Rom.6:8-11).

"Be reckoning yourselves to be dead, indeed, to Sin,

yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord." Life out of death. "God . . . vivifies us *together in Christ* . . . rouses us *together* and seats us *together* among the celestials, in Christ Jesus." What an infinite privilege this union confers! It spells out conformity to His death, and again, conformity to the image of God's Son in the regnant life, "far above all" (Rom.6:11; Eph.2:5,6).

But what a death! And are we to be just spectators, to flee the impalement, or are we to be *participants*—sharers of His sufferings? Conformity calls for participation. It honors God by a faith which gets life out of death, glory out of shame, thrones and kingdoms out of decay and ruin. The sons of Zebedee desired great things for themselves. But Christ had to say to them, "Not aware are you what you are requesting. Are you able to drink the cup which *I* am drinking, or to be baptized with the baptism with which *I* am being baptized?" And they replied, "We are able." Yet at Calvary all the disciples forsook Him and fled. Nevertheless, the time came, God's time, when they entered, each in His appointed way, the pathway of real abandonment to the will of God (Mark 10:38).

A soul may go years in the self-complacency which springs from the gifts and graces richly dowered by God. And then, God puts something into the life which shakes the soul to its foundations. Disturbed in its equanimity, the soul is made to see the enormity of self even in its beautiful qualities. It is at such a time that the enemy powers, always on the alert, seek occasion to afflict and torture sensitive souls. And nothing avails but the assertion of the triumph of Calvary, and this must be asserted against the aerial sovereignties and authorities. We must stand in the victory He there accomplished, when He stripped them from Him. "With boldness He makes a show of them, triumphing over them in it."

His was a wonderful death. The powers of darkness fell away from Him, nerveless, undone. Faith must grip the overwhelming grandeur of it all, realizing and maintaining the blessedness of its power. Ours is a hidden life, a life out of death, which the Adversary cannot touch. He and his have nothing to work upon, as such a life, far above all, is steadily maintained. But the self in us, in the manifestations which God will reveal to the receptive, teachable spirit, must go to the death.

He trod the winepress alone! And had not angels ministered unto Him, its agony would have been insupportable. In darkness He died, with no disciples near, no ministering hand or sympathetic eye. And even God withdrew. What a baptism! "All Thy breakers and Thy billows over Me pass!" (Psa.42:7). The death of the cross.

"Thou knowest the sun by his glory —
Thou knowest the frost by her breath —
Thou knowest the fire by its glowing —
Thou knowest His love by His death."

O that this knowledge may be an experience in the very center of our being! And since He was a victor in death, passing to the right hand of God, we too, with Him find our life there. But let us not put this life exclusively in the future. For "the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials" are looking to us *now* for the display of such a life. And as they see the indelible marks of His way with us, they marvel at the measure of His multifarious wisdom. Let us then grip the thought that it is in the deep and tender *now* of present grace that such manifold wisdom is to be made known.

So, then, to live in God as our Possessor, proving His ability to do infinitely beyond all the reaches of our

thought and prayer, is to experience that transmutation of His that Job so finely knew. "He knows the way with me. He tests me; as gold will I come forth" (23:10). Stripped of all that is not of and for Him, our selfhood truly tested in the fire, we come forth cleansed and freed. And, to abide the fire, to let God have all His way with us, is to prove the capacity we have for life as in Him. Our God so wants us to love Him for Himself alone, and to this great end has to wean us from many things.

It may be that we have much light and knowledge. We are clear in thought, well balanced in doctrine, and yet, with all this, we may find ourselves bruised and crushed when crucial awakening comes. It is so possible to live in the realm of the soul, to be absorbed in a routine of life wherein self is unconsciously gratified, that it needs a rude shock to the sensibilities to stir acknowledgment and submission to naked truth.

Think of Peter's denial of his Master. Impulsive, impetuous, he was so sure of his ground. "My soul for Thy sake will I lay down." Yes, but note Christ's questioning reply: "Your soul for My sake you will be laying down? Verily, verily, I am saying to you, Under no circumstances should a cock be crowing till you will be renouncing Me thrice"(John 13:38). But the soulful Peter falls at the word of a woman. What an experience in the revelation of self, and yet, an experience which alone could prepare and fit him for the writing of his epistles. Through anguish and tears, and the death of the self-life was the apostle to the Circumcision led into the greater depths of spiritual understanding.

Life out of death. His death, our death. His life, our life. Impaled on the cross, what had He in common with the world? He was dead to its fascination and charm, even as to its callousness, hatred, and scorn. Do we see

Him there, and espouse His side? It means death, but also deliverance. It is a lone way, but so lofty a flight, that it is well worth while as, *together with Him*, we experience both death and life. We must not only die to our *own merits*, but to our *own life*. Not only to *commence* the true life, but to *continue* the life. The axe of inward crucifixion is to be laid unsparingly at the root of the self-life. So, to this end, God may place us in a situation, there to remain, it may be, a long time, for the express purpose of aiding the process of inward crucifixion. But this inward death is to produce the true life.

Life in God, to the point of "reigning in life." And it is to be a present power and blessing. There is conflict, to be sure, but we stand in the might of the Victor. And in His life at the right hand of God, we should be reigning in a real present sense. It is all "in accord with the purpose of the eons," that the quality of eonian life be apparent here and now to "the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials." The potency of this life is drawn from our great Head in Whom is vested the rulership we are called upon to know, and in spirit to share.

The powers of darkness would have us go under, would keep us in depression and defeat. Knowing so well the power and grip of the self-life, they would keep us in utter submergence. Yet we may not know. But the clarion call rings out: "*Rise from among the dead, and Christ shall dawn upon you!*" (Eph.5:14). Then, seated with Him among the celestials, we shall know a life in spirit which is potent indeed. Let us then, recognize *now*, our high estate!

And the secret? Listen to Paul's words in that grounding, energizing epistle of his to the Romans (8:11). "Now if the Spirit of Him Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is *making its home in you*, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also be vivifying

your mortal bodies because of His spirit *making its home in you.*" The spirit in permanent residence. Here is blessedness indeed! And "God gives us, not a spirit of timidity, but of power and of love and of sanity" (2 Tim.1:7).

And, where God is, there is as much simplicity as power. There is also supreme peace at the center of our being, however turbulent the circumference may be. The sway of the spirit, continuously, and with such quietness and confidence as shall abide the fire of testing, while God is "making the sequel" (1 Cor.10:13). So let us remember that God would only pour the cup of bitterness into the happiness which we have in anything, out of *Himself*—out of *His* own grace and love.

But the soul life must know the inward crucifixion ere the spirit life can ride in triumph. The severing power of the cross must come in for the momentous circumcision of the heart. Emotions and passions, not of Him, must go, for the "unto death" must precede the "reigning in life." The uncrucified self is always ground for the Adversary, and the powers of darkness. There, in the strong, vigorous soul life, they can lead us off the track. There, in the crucial time of testing, they can torture, with an anguish almost unbearable. But stand in Christ, dead to the things of soul life, and choosing just God's will in the matter, and triumph is assured. "Even that Sinai," towering so darkly ahead, flows down at the presence of God.

In His own time and in His own way, God meets His sons' requirements. It may be a long time and a bitter way, but we do pass from Marah to Elim. Yet in what manner? Is the spirit so in control, that we are dead to the siren voice which once so greatly moved the soul? Are our thoughts, reasonings, and reflections in utter captivity to the obedience of Christ? If so, then we live

by faith of the Son of God, experiencing its depth of calm, and resting entirely in the will of God.

Thus, as we die to the soulish things, and are crucified to the world, we live most truly in God. Calvary, and all that it means in its varied applications, is the keynote to this life in God—life out of death. For the possession and maintenance of this life, we must be *found in Him*. Then shall we know the power of His resurrection, the authority of the ascended Christ, grasping that for which we are grasped by Christ Jesus. And from out the glory we shall go forth to the measureless delight of the life in God. To this life are the members of the body of Christ called. And love, God's love, so infinite and enfolding, points the way.

“The depths of love on Calvary,
Was just God's blood-bought way,
To bring us to the heavenlies
In triumph day by day.
He knew the depths of darkness,
The swell of Satan's flood,
So, by the cross He pierced a way
Of victory through His blood.”

W.M.

WHEN GOD IS ALL IN ALL

(1 Corinthians 15:28)

“THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL.” Could clearer or better words be found to set forth the climax of God’s purpose for His vast creation? It is an all-embracing phrase, completely satisfying to the intelligent mind. And it surely expresses, especially to the believer, all that the heart and mind could desire, bringing to perfection the divine ultimate.

How anyone could voice dissent is difficult to imagine. What other speech or writing could replace it, with a consummation of greater wisdom, love and grace? May we not truly say that for beings to be entirely subject to their Creator is at last proven to be their highest blessing? For such subjection is surely the end of overweening, and, indeed, of proud self-life in general. It would also be the end of fear and strife, and the heart-searing dissatisfaction with life which is the bane of so many.

We do well to remember, however, that towards so desirable a consummation there are many stages, innumerable processes, all of which serve to carry our Father’s purpose forward to the rare climax He has in view. But time and space fail us to minutely detail all these steps and stages in so vast a purpose. Let it suffice, then, to believe that such a noble end crowns all. And that the marvelous conclusion so wonderfully depicted by the apostle Paul is alone worthy of God, and alone sufficiently rewarding for the sacrifice of the Son of His love.

Now, it may be of interest here to quote the rare inscription which moved the writer to an unforgettable acceptance of such a lofty truth. A friend had pointed out the significance of Paul's wonderful statement in the first chapter of Colossians (verses 15-20). Wonderful it is, for it shows us, not only the preeminence of the Christ of God, but the might and power vested in Him by the Father of glory. All creation created *in Him* and *for Him*. Stupendous thought! And with what involvement! A wondrous, unassailable peace, every part of which is *through Christ, through the blood of His cross*. And for the reconciliation of all to God, even the Father.

That it is *for Him* should indeed evoke our praise. He is so eminently worthy of so complete a reward. How seemly, that to Him all creation should be drawn, and for so supreme an end—that God may be All in all. For this lofty climax were the eons framed, that stage upon stage God's purpose in Christ might attain fruition. They are the ground whereon God effects His rare design of love, even in Christ, the appointed Heir of the universe.

We see, then, how unspeakably precious to God was the sacrifice of Christ, and how excellent its efficacy, when the end to which it points is of such an exalted character. Its effect is seen not only in the immediate of the life which now is, but also in the perfect ultimate when God is everything to everyone. For creation, at first so beautiful and perfect, is at last even more beautiful and perfect, and all because Christ makes it so.

It is well to bear in mind that so lofty a goal is not the fruition of afterthought. Rather it is the joyous outcome of God's wise and wondrous forethought. Even so, God will do all His pleasure. And what other conclusion could set forth so well the supremacy of God,

and the fullhearted satisfaction of the creatures of His hand?

Was it not for this Christ suffered and bled and died? And as the corn of wheat which falls into the earth, and, dying, brings forth much fruit, so the Victor of Golgotha, in the plenitude of regal grace, will present much fruit to God the Father. But so rich a harvest is cumulative. There is first the exultant gathering of those whose citizenship belongs to the heavens. These, transfigured in conformity to the exalted Christ, are the exponents of God's grace in the celestial realms. Below, in terrestrial habitations, are those on the new earth. But all, above and below, rejoice in God. Enjoyers of His grace, they live, move, and have their being in Him. For, at long last, all are reconciled to God.

God's rare design is now in perfect completion, for there has come to all a gladsome peace and satisfaction. Buoyant life and immortality have become the experience of all. The glory will be wholeheartedly ascribed to God, and as truly attained in the Son of His love.

In view of this august consummation so clearly taught in God's Word, why then the doubt and reticence, even on the part of believers, with regard to so sublime a truth? Why are they not able to believe that God's purpose is of so ideal a character? Is not God the Father of glory well able through the Son of His love, to become All in all?

Disbelief that God's purpose is of such a lofty character can but lead to an unworthy conception of the Father of glory. How can we think that the dogma of endless torment is honoring to God? How could it be the climax of divine purpose? It denies that Christ will draw *all* to Himself, thus ignoring thus ignoring the fullness and grandeur of His sacrificial life and death.

Moreover, it ascribes victory to man's will in conflict with God's, in spite of the fact that many wills have been changed by the experience of salvation, not by man's initiative, but by influences brought to bear on him, as in the case of Paul.

God, Who is love, may be thought of in many ways, and by far-reaching phrases, but His great, far-reaching love cannot be better expressed than by the term "reconciliation." Surely here is a word charged with precious ideas. Reconciliation clearly describes the atmosphere of accord where previous estrangement has existed. Christ has truly made peace "through the blood of His cross." But the clear potency of it is yet to be seen when the ministry of reconciliation has accomplished its beneficent purpose. Then will Paul's great words be perceived in their highest light. "We are beseeching, for Christ's sake 'Be conciliated to God!' For the One not knowing sin, He makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him" (2 Cor.5:20,21).

The salvation of all is at last a wondrous reality. The tendency we see in God's great stream of the eons has widened and enlarged until all are richly blessed by its satisfying power. Its noble volume, now freed of all obstacles, attains a majestic flow. And so, by seemingly strange and inexplicable ways, the God of all grace accomplishes His purpose. For "Grace not in rills, but cataracts rolls." How glorious the stream, and how salutary its miraculous power! Sin has affected all, all but one glorious, sinless Being, and He in marvelous grace triumphs completely over it.

There will not be a single creature, then, above or below, who is not "lost in wonder, love and praise." A scene truly to inspire, and continuously impel to grateful thanks. Transcendent grace indeed, in fullest flow! W.M.

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