

Milk & Honey

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Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

As He Is

William MacDonald

“...as He is, so are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17b)

Here is one of those New Testament truths that shocks us by its sheer audacity. We would not dare to utter the words if we did not see them in the Bible. But they are gloriously true, and we can revel and rejoice in them.

In what sense are we like Christ in this world? Our minds almost automatically think first of the ways we are not like Him. We do not share with Him the attributes of deity, such as omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. We are full of sin and failure whereas He is absolutely perfect. We do not love as He loves, or forgive as He forgives.

How, then, are we like Him?

The verse explains. “Herein has love been perfected with us that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, that even as he is, we also are in this world” (Darby). God’s love has so worked in our lives that we will not be terrified when we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The reason for our confidence is that we have this in common with the Savior—judgment is behind us. We are like Him with respect to judgment. He bore the judgment of our sins on the Cross of Calvary and settled the sin question once for all. Because He took the punishment of our sins, we will never have to take it. We can confidently sing,

“Death and judgment are behind me,/ grace and glory lie before,/ all the billows rolled o’er Jesus,/ there they spent their utmost power.”

Just as judgment is forever past for Him, so it is past for us also, and we can say,

“There is no condemnation,/ there is no hell for me,/ the torment and the fire,/ mine eyes shall never see./ For me there is no sentence,/ for me death has no sting:/ because the Lord who loves me/ will shield me with His wing.”

We are like Him not only with respect to judgment but also with respect to acceptance before God. We stand before God with the same favor that the Lord Jesus does, because we are in Him. “Near, so very near to God / I could

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A Lesson In Love

David Logan

It was a Sunday evening in the busy Emergency Department where I was on duty with other physicians. There had been an accident in which a pickup truck had overturned. The occupants, three young men, were brought in for evaluation and care. One of the young fellows was so drunk he could give no coherent account of what had happened, nor if he hurt, nor where.

The patient’s vital signs were stable and evaluation by the doctor who had assumed his care, revealed no apparent major threat to life nor limb. The situation, however, was frustrating from a medical standpoint because important indicators of significant injury could be concealed due to the effects of the alcohol. The plan was to keep a close eye on him, let him dry out and do periodic rechecks. When his treating physician went off duty, he asked me to take over on the patient’s care.

I found the young man still quite drunk and reeking of alcohol. He was filthy. His response to any question I asked him was either an unintelligible mumble or a inept effort to make a wisecrack. He was uncooperative and efforts at gently cleaning a wound he had were effectively thwarted by his overreaction to the slightest touch. I was disgusted with him but thankfully the Lord gave help in controlling my irritation and words.

After I had finished the care of his wound, his mother came in. She stood at the side of the stretcher gazing down at him. I glanced at her. Tears were streaming down her face. Her expression was one of overflowing love and compelling sorrow mingled together. What to me was a repulsive individual was to her an object of immense love.

“God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).” Eph. 2:4-5.

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” 1 John 4:10-11. *

OUTSIDE THE CAMP

Hebrews 13:13

Bob Gessner

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. (Heb. 13:13 KJV)

Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. (NKJV)

Therefore let us go forth to him outside the camp, bearing abuse for him. (RSV)

Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. (ESV)

1. What is the camp? It is anything where Christ is in name, not in reality, not enthroned supreme. I care not how ancient the authority may be. It may have all the authority of the law that Judaism claimed for itself; it may have all the antiquity which Rome claims for itself; it may have rules and regulations which appeal to men's judgment as being right and proper; but wherever there is a human organization which displaces Christ, which is not according to the word of God as given us in the New Testament, - above all, wherever Christ is not directly and immediately recognized in absolute control by His Word and Spirit, - there you have the camp. (S. Ridout)

"Inside the veil" and "outside the camp" go together. Necessarily, for the true heavenly tabernacle has been always outside. While Judaism in the strict sense is what is here, yet every legal system comes under it in principle. Properly, there is indeed no real going back to Judaism. No one can reinstate it, or go back where prophets and holy men of old once were. That is impossible. To bring it back into Christianity was, as the Lord Himself has taught us, to make a synagogue of Satan (Rev. 2:9;3:9). Of course, we have to remember that people now are brought up in systems of such a character, and that many of the Lord's people are entangled in them. The system, of course, is no less evil for the lapse of centuries. It is rather the reverse. (F.W. Grant)

All earthly religious things are of the flesh, which has been forever rejected of God. Let no man build it up by religious forms, lest it prove his doom. My brother, church "membership" and "Christian service" will not do in Hebrews. "Within the veil....without the camp," describes and almost defines God's saints here. Does it describe you? (W. Newell)

Summary: The city of Jerusalem became to the Jews what the camp was in the wilderness for the Israelites. Although the glory of the presence of God had left the city long ago, they still maintained that God could only be found there. Outwardly, the Jews had changed dramatically since the days of the Judges and the Kings. They no longer practiced idolatry. The temple, although it would be destroyed by the Romans in

a few years, was still there. All the outward practices of the Old Testament, and many more added later, were rigorously and daily performed. The ritual was there, but the reality of God's presence was missing. This is religion and the religious world of today is not different. One of the first real signs that the Spirit is working in the heart of a believer is the desire to get out of the religious system of ritualism. One of the first signs of spiritual decline is the desire to substitute ritualism for the inner working of the Holy Spirit.

2. What does it mean to go forth to Him? It is that which marks our separation. We talk about separating from this and that, and we must separate from many things; but, after all, the whole question of separation is settled for us by one word: we go forth "unto HIM." It is a small matter whether you have left this company of people and associated yourself with that company, but it is everything if you are identified with Christ in His reproach. If we have come outside the camp, we are not thinking so much of what we have left as the One to whom we have come. We go forth unto Him, and it is His presence that marks the separation from everything that is not of Him. (S. Ridout)

It is not without importance to understand that our Lord is here presented, not as the objective channel of the grace we ever need, but as the unrivalled leader and completer of faith in the whole extent of its course. He is viewed as leader and perfecter in the race of faith in its entirety. In a world departed from God the believer's course lies through persecution, detraction, and hatred; and thus he must make his way with endurance or patience. (F. W. Grant)

Summary: The emphasis is not so much on being outside the camp, but rather on going forth to Him. Obviously, the New Testament makes it clear that if we make Him our object and we go forth to Him, then we will be outside the camp. Christ is not accepted in the camp; He was crucified outside the camp (Heb. 13:12). "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated youIf I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (Jn. 15:18,24). We cannot be in two places. If we are going forth to Him, then we cannot be accepted in the religious camp.

3. What does it mean to bear His reproach? If there is anyone despised or reproached on earth, it is one openly holding a hope of heaven, yet having no connection with human "religion." Any man or woman who knows the true gospel is in a world where he will bear His reproach. "All that would live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Let it be known that you believe the mere profession of "the Christian religion" to be a delusion, and you will at once find yourself bearing His reproach. The

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The Cost of Misplaced Affection

Isaiah 1 (Part 3)

Warren Henderson

After highlighting Israel's vain religiosity in His opening message, Isaiah conveys the solution to all Israel's problems: brokenness, repentance, and restoration. Originally, God considered Jerusalem a faithful city (probably speaking of her initial condition under David's and Solomon's reigns), but now she was adulterous, exemplifying all the evil that afflicted the land (1:21). Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea also invoke the imagery of the virgin wife of Jehovah (Israel) becoming a lascivious harlot to speak of her moral filth and idolatrous ways. Previously, God had greatly valued her purity, but now the Jewish nation was as repugnant as watered-down wine and worthless as dross metal (1:22-23).

Watered-down wine was distasteful to the pallet and dross has no value; likewise Israel had been intermingled with those things which weakened their purity and destroy virtue. As a result God promised to exile His people. This punitive act would cause them to realize how intolerable they were to Him in their degenerate state (1:24). It is a somber thing to hear God refer to His people as His enemies and adversaries; however, the terminology conveys the heartache, jealousy, and anger God has when His people depreciate Him and have misplaced devotion. From God's perspective, Israel's behavior was adulterous!

The New Testament contains a similar warning for believers. God hates worldliness in the Church today as He did in Israel in Isaiah's day (Jas. 4:4). It is vitally important to realize that lusting in our hearts for what God hates is no less offensive to Him than actually engaging in it. The Lord Jesus taught that adultery in the heart is disloyalty from God's perspective; unfortunately, we are all guilty of this form of infidelity (Matt. 5:28)!

Passion is the evil in adultery. If a man has no opportunity of living with another man's wife, but if it is obvious for some reason that he would like to do so, and would do so if he could, he is no less guilty than if he was caught in the act. Augustine

Consecration to God demands purity in thought and deed because He is worthy of such contemplations and behavior. We must keep ourselves clean from worldliness (Jas. 4:4), humanism (Col. 2:8), from unlawful lusting (Gal. 5:16-17), and the deeds of the flesh (Col. 3:5). A holy life is essential for dedicated service to the Lord and it is our affection and appreciation for Christ, the Head of the Church that motivates us to be holy. The loss of love for Christ and

enjoying His presence results in unholy living and apostasy which then prompts His displeasure.

The first two chapters of Revelation contain an important example of what happens when the Church's affection for Christ wanes. In order of digression, the church at Ephesus left its first love – Christ (Rev. 2:4), as a result “the deeds of the Nicolaitans” (Rev. 2:6) developed in that church, which then led to “the doctrine of the Nicolaitans” in the church at Pergamos (Rev. 2:15). With Christ supplanted as head by a clergy system, the next compromise was that a woman named Jezebel was being allowed to teach and lead the church at Thyatira (Rev. 2:20). Following next is the church at Sardis, unto whom the Lord says, “thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead” (Rev. 3:1).

The Church engages in dead works when Christ is not the center and head of its gathering, hence six times the Lord demands that these four churches repent of their wicked ways. Not only is the Lord worthy of our affection, undefiled love for Him will safeguard us against worldliness and engaging in false doctrine. What often begins as a permissible trickle becomes a torrent of misplaced devotion in time; it is best to stop what will draw us away from Christ before ever starting it!

In summary, the outcome of God's litigation against the Jewish nation is that the repentant will be purified, restored, and blessed, but the rebellious will be punished forever. Ultimately, God will have a holy people solely for Himself and be fully vindicated of the wicked. God's indignation will be satisfied and then peace, righteousness, and prosperity will govern the man's habitation with God. May the Church learn the ills of Israel's vain religiosity and misplaced affection and be altogether caught up with Christ and nothing else, including religious form, vain prayers, and worldly trifles.

A true revival means nothing less than a revolution, casting out the spirit of worldliness and selfishness, and making God and His love triumph in the heart and life.

Andrew Murray*

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not nearer be./ for in the Person of His Son,/ I am as near as He.”

And finally, we are like Christ because we are loved by God the Father, just as Christ is. In His high-priestly prayer, the Lord Jesus said, “...thou... hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (John 17:23b).

Thus, it is no exaggeration for us to say, “Dear, so very dear to God,/ I could not dearer be./ The love wherewith He loves His Son,/ such is His love to me.”

So it is blessedly true that as Christ is, so are we in this world. *

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world will not have Christ Himself set before them as their Creator God, as the Redeemer at the cost of His own blood; as their appointed Judge. (W. Newell)

Let us be willing to be accounted the off scouring of all things (1 Cor. 4:13), not worthy to live, not worthy to die a common death. This was his reproach, and we must submit to it; and we have the more reason because, whether we go forth from this world to Christ or no, we must necessarily go forth in a little time by death; for here we have no continuing city (Heb. 13:14). Sin, sinners, death, will not suffer us to continue long here; and therefore we should go forth now by faith, and seek in Christ the rest and settlement which this world cannot afford us. (M. Henry)

Summary: No one likes being disliked. We naturally strive to be well-liked by as many people as possible. "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people" (Ps. 22:6). This is a position no man desires, yet this was the position of our Lord when He was here on earth. He was the Son, full of favor in heaven and He became the despised One here on earth. We are called upon to share His reproach. Moses greatly valued this place. "By faith Moses...refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,..... esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward." (Heb. 11:24,26) When we have passed from this scene to the next, the applause of this world will no longer be heard and the memory of it will seem fleeting and foolish. When the King finally takes His throne here on earth, what a privilege it will be to have shared a part of His reproach while He was rejected. "These are the names of the mighty men whom David had (in the time of his rejection)" and one by one God lists them all (2 Sam. 23). Will we be among them??? *