

THE PRESENT TRUTH

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The Shout of Triumph—A Glorious Persuasion

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:31-39

Everything for Us. The apostle has asked, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The answer must be, "No one." God is greater than all, and none can pluck anything out of his hand. If he who has power to make all things work together for good is for us, then it is certain that everything must be for us.

But the question often arises in the minds of people, "Is God really for us?" People often wickedly charge Him with being against them; and even professed Christians sometimes think that God is working against them. When troubles come, they imagine that God is fighting against them. Now that question is forever settled by one fact, and that is, that God is he who gives himself for us, and who justifies.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's own chosen? Shall God, who justifies them? Impossible. Well, God is the only one in the universe who has the right to lay anything to the charge of any; and since he justifies instead of condemning, we must be free. We are free if we believe it. Whom does he justify? "The ungodly." That leaves no doubt but that he justifies us.

And what about Christ? Will he condemn us? How can he, when he gave himself for us? But he gave himself for us, according to the will of God. {Galatians 1:4} "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." {John 3:17} He is risen again for our justification, and he is at the right hand of God for us. He interposes himself between us and the death that we have deserved. Then there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

"But," says one, "Satan comes to me and makes me feel that I am such a sinner that God is angry with me, and that there is no hope for me." Well, why do you listen to him? You know his character. "He is a liar and the father of it." What have you to do with him? Let him accuse all he will; he is not the judge. God is the judge, and he justifies. Satan's sole object is to deceive men, and allure them into sin, making them believe that it is right. Be sure, then, that he never tells an unforgiven man that he is a sinner. God does that by his Spirit, in order that the guilty man may accept the pardon that he freely offers.

The case then stands thus: When God tells a man that he is a sinner, it is in order that the man may receive his pardon. If God says that a man is a sinner, then he is a sinner, and ought to acknowledge it, but "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." And this is true, no matter who tells us that we are sinners. Suppose that Satan tells us that we are sinners; we do not need to parley with him, or to stop a moment to discuss the question; we can let the accusation go, and comfort ourselves with the assurance that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin.

God doesn't condemn even when he convicts of sin; and nobody else has any business to condemn. If they do condemn, their condemnation does not amount to anything. Therefore there is no condemnation to those who trust the Lord. Even Satan's accusations may serve as encouragements to us; for we may be sure that he will never tell a man that he is a sinner, so long as that man is in his power. Since God is for us, everything is for us.

Everlasting Love. "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." {Jeremiah 31:3} Since this is so, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" His love is everlasting, and knows no change. And his love is for us; therefore nothing can separate us from it. Our own deliberate choice can reject it, but even then his love continues the same; only we have in that case removed ourselves from it. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he can not deny himself." {2 Timothy 2:13}

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, separate us from the love of Christ? Impossible, since it was in those very things that his love for us was manifested. Death itself cannot separate us from his love, since he so loved us that he gave himself to die for us. Death is the pledge of his love. Sin, that separates us from God, does not separate us from his love, for "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Him who knew no sin be made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." {2 Corinthians 5:21}

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." It must be so, since everything is for us. Since Christ suffered hunger, and distress, and peril, and even death itself, in order that he might deliver us, all those things are for us. It was through death that he gained the victory for us; therefore even in death we gain an overwhelming victory. Those whom Satan persecutes even to death, gain the greatest victory over him. That which seems to be a victory for Satan, is his most crushing defeat.

Behold what a wonderful provision God has made for our salvation! It is easy enough to see that if Satan did not trouble us at all, we should be saved. If our enemy would leave us entirely alone, we should have no trouble. So on that side we are safe. But he will not leave us alone. He goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Very well, God has so ordered it that even his attempts to destroy us help us along. Death is the sum of all the ills that Satan can bring upon us, and even in that we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

A Good Persuasion. "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." {Isaiah 30:15} "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." {Hebrews 3:14} Our faith is the victory. God alone is our strength and salvation. Therefore our strength consists in confidence in him. "Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." {Isaiah 27:5}

The apostle Paul had been "in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft." He says: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." {2 Corinthians 11:24-27} Surely he is one who can speak with the authority of great experience. Hear, then, what he says: "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

No Fear for the Future. Only to those who wilfully reject the love of God is there "a fearful looking for of judgment." Christ says to us, "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow." He does not desire that we should have our minds filled with fear and anxious forebodings. Some people can never be at rest, even under the most delightful circumstances, because they are afraid that something terrible will happen by and by. Now it makes no difference what may come, since neither things present nor things to come can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are assured that things to come, as well as things present, are ours. {1Corinthians 3:22}

If our eyes could be open to discern the fallen angels at work with those who feel at ease and consider themselves safe, we would not feel so secure. Evil angels are upon our track every moment.... God calls upon all, both preachers and people, to awake. All heaven is astir. The scenes of earth's history are fast closing. We are amid the perils of the last days. Greater perils are before us, and yet we are not awake. This lack of activity and earnestness in the cause of God is dreadful. This death stupor is from Satan....

What shall I say to arouse the remnant people of God? I was shown that dreadful scenes are before us; Satan and his angels are bringing all their powers to bear upon God's people. He knows that if they sleep a little longer, he is sure of them, for their destruction is certain.... In these final hours of probation for the sons of men, when the fate of every soul is so soon to be decided forever, the Lord of heaven and earth expects His *people* to arouse to action as never before....

The church of Christ may be fitly compared to an army. The life of every soldier is one of toil, hardship, and danger. On every hand are vigilant foes, led on by the prince of the powers of darkness, who never slumbers and never deserts his post. Whenever a Christian is off his guard, this powerful adversary makes a sudden and violent attack. Unless the members of the church are active and vigilant, they will be overcome by his devices. What if half the soldiers in an army were idling or asleep when ordered to be on duty; the result would be defeat, captivity, or death. Should any escape from the hands of the enemy, would they be thought worthy of a reward? No; they would speedily receive the sentence of death. And is the church of Christ careless or unfaithful, far more important consequences are involved. A sleeping army of Christian soldiers--what could be more terrible? What advance could be made against the world, who are under the control of the prince of darkness? Those who stand back indifferently in the day of battle, as though they had no interest and felt no responsibility as to the issue of the contest, might better change their course or leave the ranks at once. {Christian Service Pg. 81-83}