

## ***Triumph of Forbearing Love***

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### **Forbearing Love with Our Brethren**

*"God... gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God, seeing ye have purified your souls in obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:21-22)*

The whole Christian life is *an* exercise of faith, that we may learn to walk, *in* every circumstance, *as* seeing *Him* who is invisible.

The great failure in the history of Israel began when the people came to Samuel and said, "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations"—let us have a visible king. They got weary of waiting by faith in the Lord of hosts, who was ever ready to help His people when they humbled themselves, after He had humbled them. They grew weary, and desired a king whom they could see and who would lead their battles, without being obliged on their part to humble themselves before their God. "Let us have a king," they cried, "that we may be like all the nations, and that he may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

And now also it is just these shameful desires of our wicked hearts which keep us from depending upon God for everything—these desires to have something, or someone, before our eyes upon which, or upon whom, we may lean for help in critical hours; whereas God sends critical hours on purpose that we may be thrown upon Him and give Him His right place in our daily life and work and conflict. If we have learned more deeply to trust our God and not to lean upon man or circumstances—if we have learned better than ever before to walk and serve as seeing Him who is invisible—I should like to bring before you another subject which is as deeply on my heart. It is that we may see the unseen, invisible Christ in our brother, in our sister.

In some recent meetings in Germany in which I was privileged to take part, the subject was, "Christ in you, the Hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27), Today it came to me that the Apostle does not say, Christ in us—in a way that is simply general—but, "Christ in you." He turns to his brethren who had been brought out from among the Gentiles through the living God, and to these he says, "Christ in *you*, the Hope of glory." Let us stop and consider the form of the expression. Of course, so far as we are children of God, Christ is in us. We cannot be born of God without having Christ in us. Christ must indeed be *formed* in us (Galatians 4:19), but at the very moment we are born again from above He is in us.

Might it not be a very practical test, and a Biblical and Scriptural way of proving that Christ is in us, to get into the holy habit of always seeing Christ in our brother? Even if he were born again but yesterday, or only an hour ago, it is well for us at the very beginning of his Christian life to see in him, through faith, Christ abiding in his heart by the Spirit of God; a being of whom God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—has taken possession.

Let us learn to look at our brother as seeing in him the unseen Christ, and we shall help him in a mighty way to take heed that Christ may shine in his life. By this means he will become conscious of the holy ground on which he stands and moves and walks, by having become a Christian. We who have for years walked with Christ must help the babe, the child, to awake to his high calling as quickly as possible. By recognizing Christ in him, we shall help him to become conscious of the wonderful secret of his new life; and we must prove ourselves to be men in Christ by not stopping short at what we see with our eyes and hear with our ears of the manifestations of the flesh which we may find in the young Christian. We must be able, through Divine love shed abroad in our hearts and free grace in our lives, to look beyond what is seen; we must love our brother through faith in God, that He may bring out the new creation in him in a beautiful way... more beautiful, it may be, than in our own lives.

And, further, instead of looking at our own progress in sanctification—measuring how far we have grown up in Christ—let us rather turn our attention to our young brother in whose life, perhaps, Christ is not clearly seen by the Church and the world: and by thus considering him and exercising Divine love, we shall help him to take his stand

as one in whom Christ lives.

And let us never forget to put the shoes from off our feet when dealing thus with a brother or a sister. It is holy ground—holy because we approach a being in whom Christ dwells unseen—and much may depend on the attitude we take towards him in helping to bring forth in our brother the features of Jesus Christ. In those last days before His decease, the Greeks came to see Jesus (John 12:20-24), and He answered, You have indeed come at the right time. "The hour is come when the Son of Man shall be glorified." And how? By His sinking down, even into the earth. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."

The life of love which the Lord lived was the only true life of love ever lived on earth. But for Him, there would be no life of love seen in the world—no fruit springing out of the corn of wheat which fell into the earth. The moment came in which the Son of Man should be glorified, and that glory—His fruit in them whose faith and hope would be in God—is unfeigned love of the brethren (I Peter 1:22).

Too long we have expected things of our brethren, and so there have been disappointment, grief, and pain.. because our hopes and expectations have been in our brethren instead of in God. We have failed to look for the unseen Christ in them. And because we have seen the old nature still existing in the brethren, we have forgotten that they are also fruit of the corn of wheat which has fallen to the ground. On that account we must help them; and we *can* help them by putting our hope and faith for them in God in such a way that unfeigned love—or, as it might be translated—intense, fervent love may spring forth; because our life for the brethren no more depends upon *their* character, but upon Divine, heavenly glory. God gave Christ glory; and if Christ is in me, there must be glory to triumph over shame, over the spirit of judgment, over the flesh in my brother. I may see only the flesh, but when my hope—the crown of glory—and my faith rest in God, I can overlook what is not like Christ, and by seeing Him who is invisible, despite discouraging experiences with the brethren, I can endure and I can love.

The Incorruptible has power over the corruptible. By faith we overcome the old nature by the new nature given us by Jesus Christ. If the brother cannot let Christ's nature triumph over his own nature, let us older ones, who have known Christ so long, set him the example; and when he finds in us unquenchable love, even when we see little of Christ in him, it will help him to let Christ triumph over him.

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obedience to the truth," you can now have faith and hope for your brother, so that Christ the Truth may have liberty in your hearts and lives to show forth His glory. Unquenchable, unfeigned love; love from a heart rooted in the love of God, grounded in Christ—the reigning, ruling Christ! Thus we are called to love one another: "having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed."

Do you feel paralyzed in your love by what you meet of the corruptible in your brother? Do you not perceive that what you see to be corruptible in your brother is allowed to come before you that you may triumph over it by the power of the incorruptible in you, and so that you may manifest love and faith and hope in God?

Do you not understand these things? We have power to love—power to abstain from our own flesh, from being provoked—because we have been begotten again by incorruptible seed, and we know it. But our young brother does not yet know this—he does not yet see the power he has in Christ; but we—who for ten, twenty, thirty years have known our Bible and the heart of God—we see and are being exercised not to stop short at the seen world, but through the continual exercise of faith to look deeper, even into the unseen.

"Having been begotten again" and redeemed, not with corruptible things but with the precious blood of Christ; begotten, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible; God's wonderful power has created a new world within—a new way in which we cease to look to earthly things for happiness. It is the world of light, seen through the Word of God, which liveth and abideth.

Today you discover in your brother things from which you shrink, and which might have the effect of freezing your love to him; but you do not need to have these feelings. When the current approaches you, go back to the ground of your standing in Christ; the Word of God, which has power to keep you; Jesus the living Word; also, the written Word; and let what you have learned in this Holy Book go forth and prove its power in its moment of conflict. When some corruptible thing appears in your brother, which has the tendency to call forth that which is corruptible in you, go back to your regeneration in God; you, being born of the incorruptible, are to overcome evil by the glory of God. *That is glory.*

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the grass." Our love (to the brother) must not depend on the aspect and the sweetness of the flower—the lovely character which attracts our admiration—all this is corruption. "The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, but the Word of the Lord abideth." And whoever is begotten by this Word of God and has a new nature formed in him can stand the falling of the flower, the withering of the grass.

And if tomorrow you see in your brother things quite different from those to which you were accustomed, your love takes fresh power and springs forth to show your heavenly standing, proving that your faith and hope are in God. When your love grows cold, then you feed the flesh in your brother; but when the love of God in you can stand the test, you help forward the Divine Life in your brother.

"This is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you. Putting away, therefore, all guile, all wickedness, hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings... as new-born babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" (1 Peter 2:1). This salvation is a life of love, and he who loves his brother thus will cease from putting stumbling blocks in his way or being an occasion of his falling. "Love one another from a pure heart fervently."

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