

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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THE CHILD OF LIGHT WALKING IN LIGHT.

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## A Sermon

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“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”—1 John i. 6, 7.

THE apostle warns us against *saying* more than we have made our own by experience. He hints at the solemn difference between empty profession and gracious reality. To have fellowship with God is a great matter; but merely to *say* that we have fellowship with him is a totally different thing. John warns us that if we *say* that which our characters do not support, we lie. He leaves it just so, without a word of softening or excuse. Between saying and being, between saying and doing, there may be all the difference in the world. There is a tendency among men, if there be a good experience, to say that they possess it; if there be a high privilege of grace, to say that they are enjoying it. What a folly is this! It is akin to madness. To unsound minds a precious original suggests a desire to fashion an imitation. To the untruthful mind the genuine is an invitation to be the counterfeit. Let us be upon our guard that we do not flatter ourselves into saying more than is true. Let us not stretch our arm beyond our sleeve, nor boast beyond our line. Every profession will be tried with fire; let us, therefore, see to it that we put in no claim which will not endure the severest test.

There were certain in John's day who said, “We have fellowship with God.” How they had come by it they did not explain; perhaps they claimed to have reached it by philosophical speculation, by exact reasoning, or by long-continued meditation. Whatever the road, they said that they had reached the city of God, and were in communion with the Great Being. John saw that they walked in darkness, rejecting the light of divine revelation from above and the pure light of the Holy Spirit within; he saw also that they themselves were not true, and that their lives were not pure, and therefore he warned them that they were speaking and acting a lie. Their life was a lie, for they were not

walking in the truth; and their profession that they had fellowship with God was another lie, for God can have no fellowship with falsehood. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"; and, therefore, he cannot hold any communion with darkness. John draws the lines very tightly, and judges with unflinching fidelity: he is not inclined to the boasted charity of latitudinarianism, but he curtly dismisses false claims with that plain word "lie." The disciple whom Jesus loved spoke like the Son of Thunder that he was, when he had to deal with shams. It is the part of true love to be honest, and to expose that which would be injurious to those it loves. He who will gloss over a falsehood loves but in word only. Learn, then, that if men boast of fellowship with God, and do not receive the revelation of his word, they lie, and know not the truth.

Let us now speak of the real thing, the fellowship with God which comes of walking in the light. The Christian life is described as walking, which implies *activity*. Christian life feeds upon contemplation, but it displays itself in action. Fellowship with God necessitates action: since to be with God we must "walk with God." The living God is not inactive, motionless, aimless. "My Father," saith Jesus, "worketh hitherto, and I work." Chiefly in the character of active workers or in that of willing sufferers we must maintain fellowship with God. Walking implies activity; but it must be *of a continuous kind*. Neither this step, nor that, nor the next, can make a walk. We must be moving onward and onward, and remain in that exercise, or we cease from walking. Holy walking includes perseverance in obedience, and continuance in service. Not he that begins, but he that continues is the true Christian; final perseverance enters into the very essence of the believer's life: the true pilgrims of Zion go from strength to strength. From strength to strength, did I say? This suggests that walking implies *progress*. He that takes one step and another step, and still stands where he was, has not walked. There is such a thing as the goose-step, and I am afraid many Christians are wonderfully familiar with it: they are where they used to be, and are half inclined to congratulate themselves upon that fact, since they might have backslidden. They have not advanced in the heavenly pilgrimage, and how can they be said to walk? My hearer, is your life a walk *with* God and *towards* God? If so, our subject has to do with you. May the Spirit of all grace lead us into the heart of it!

The things we shall consider this morning will arise out of the text in the following order: First, *the light of our walk*: "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light." Secondly, *the communion of our walk*: "we have fellowship one with another." Thirdly, *the glory of that communion*: "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

I. Consider, first, THE LIGHT OF OUR WALK. True believers do not walk in darkness; they have found the road, and they see it before them. They know whom they have believed, and why they have believed, and so they go forward intelligently. How unhappy are those who are sure of nothing but a groping for the way, and wandering in endless circles of hope and fear! True believers walk onward, because a light shows them their path, and makes them sure of safety and

progress. What is meant by walking in the light? It is somewhat singular that last Sunday morning our subject was "The Child of Light walking in Darkness." That darkness is very different from the darkness with which we deal this morning. Children of light may for a time walk in the darkness of sorrow; but from the darkness of untruthfulness, ignorance, sin, and unbelief they have been delivered. In these respects the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. Moral darkness is contrary to their new-born nature: they cannot endure it. We must distinguish between things that differ, between the darkness of sorrow and the darkness of sin. A metaphor may be used for many purposes, and that of darkness has a wide range of meaning.

What is this light, then, in which the Christian walks? I answer, first, *it is the light of grace*. In our natural state we are in darkness, and under the dominion of the Prince of Darkness. The apostle says of us Gentiles, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." When the grace of God comes, the day-spring from on high visits us. The Holy Spirit brings us out from under the dominion of the old nature by creating within us a new life, and he brings us out from under the tyranny of the Prince of Darkness by opening our eyes to see and our minds to understand celestial truth. The opening of our blind eyes and the pouring in of the light of truth are from the Lord. This is a work in which he is as fully seen in the glory of his Godhead as when in the natural creation he said, "Let there be light," and there was light. The entrance of God's word into the mind by the power of the Holy Spirit gives us light as to ourselves, our sin, and our danger. With this comes light as to the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, and light as to the mind of God concerning our sanctification. True knowledge takes the place of ignorance, and a desire for purity becomes supreme over the love of sin. Paul says, "Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." We accept the revelation of God in the inspired Book; by the attending witness of the Holy Ghost it becomes a revelation of God to our own hearts; and thus all our position—our past, present, and future—is set in a new light. With the driving out of our natural darkness old things pass away, and with the coming in of the divine light all things become new. Blessed is that man to whom the eternal light has come by the effectual working of the Spirit of God, who bringeth to us the light wherein we see God, and Christ, and life everlasting! This is the secret beginning of all our light: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

The result of this light is seen in various ways. It causes deep sorrow in the beginning, for its first discoveries are grievous to the conscience. Light is painful to eyes long accustomed to darkness. Anon the light brings great joy, for the soul perceives deliverance from the evils which it mourned. Thus light and gladness in the end go together, as it is written, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Ever, in each condition, you observe conspicuously

that the light of grace is seen as *the light of sincerity*. Until grace comes into our souls we have no heart for the things of God. We may be fussily religious so far as to be attentive to every outward form of worship; but there is no heart-work, no light of truth in all our devotion. But when once the divine light comes in, then we become intensely real in our dealings with God. Hypocrisy and pretence fly before sincere belief and feeling. "Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners," no longer passes our lips flippantly and thoughtlessly; but we are indeed miserable on account of sin. When we seek for mercy we mean it, and do not play at confession and repentance. Our eye is single, and our whole body is full of light: we see what we are at, and arouse ourselves to do it in earnest. We know what we are praying about, and there is no question as to the deep sincerity of our cries and tears. We desire with the whole force of our nature to find pardon and acceptance through the precious blood of Christ. We do not merely say that we desire salvation and eternal life; but we feel that we must have them, and cannot be denied. We cease from playing fast and loose with God. We no longer halt between two opinions, but one thing we seek after, desiring it of the Lord: we would be right with God in all respects. The man that is walking in the light is thoroughly sincere. The shadows of pretence have been chased away: he is in downright earnest in all that he does. O my hearers, many of you have never come so far as this; though this alone is not far. By being in a place of worship you show an outward respect to divine things; but are you worshipping God? Did you worship him just now in the prayer and in the praise? You are listening to me while I talk of the highest things that ever occupied the human mind, but do you long to be a partaker of these things? Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Those who are walking in the light are free from pretence, and are living in real earnest: is it so with you? Contentment with unreality is a sign of dwelling in darkness. Careful keeping up of shams, diligent puffing out of wind-bags, and constant creation of make-believes—all this is of the night and its dreams; but to be what you seem to be, to be true in all the phases of your life, this is surely seen in those who walk in the light of God? What can God have to do with shams? What cares he for empty professions? Everything must be true which is to come under his eye.

Next to sincerity I regard *a willingness to know and to be known* as an early result of walking in the light of God. The ungodly come not to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd. There are matters about which they desire no light, but rather say, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Where ignorance affords them a present peace they count it folly to be wise. Alas! it is too commonly the case that men have no inclination to obtain a knowledge which might involve humiliation, repentance, and a retracing of steps. "Let well alone," cry they. How many will say, "Well, we have been Christians after our own way for a good many years, why need we question ourselves?" They look upon a faithful preacher with suspicion: he comes a deal too close home. When he begins to deal with the heart and conscience, they look at him as if he were a dog hunting about for a rat. Truly the emblem is not so very unlike; for wherever

there is a self-satisfaction which is afraid of light, we suspect that the rat of hypocrisy is not far off. Beloved, we must not rest content with anything which will not bear the light of day. A religion which we will not submit to the test of self-examination cannot be worth much. No one is afraid to have a genuine sovereign submitted to any test: it is the coiner who is afraid. "Look!" says a man, "I hold a certain creed; my grandmother held it; it has come down to me as an heir-loom. You invite me to examine that creed by the Word of God, but I would rather not. I am not disposed to learn anything which might cause me to change. If you speak too strongly I shall go and hear somebody else, for I cannot bear to be disturbed." This is a foolish prejudice, is it not? Yes, and it may prove the man's ruin. This is the kind of thing that makes a man go out angrily from a sermon, and say, "I will not listen to that man again; he is too personal, and too severe." Nay, friend, can anyone who loves your soul be too severe? Do you wish to be flattered? Do you not know that plain-dealing is more precious than rubies? Would you not say to your physician, "Put me under the severest examination, and let me know the truth"? Would you pay him a fee that he might deceive you. As to your soul, do you not desire to know the very worst of your case? If you would rather be comfortable than be safe, then you and I are not of one mind; for I want to walk in the light, free from deception, knowing truly and thoroughly my own place before the heart-searching God. I would rather not cry, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace. The comfort which grows out of delusion I do not desire. Brethren, we must build on truth, and nothing else but truth.

When men walk in the light they cease to take things for granted, and look below the surface. Certain things have been labelled with the mark of truth, and have passed current; but men who are in the light disregard the labels, and look at the goods themselves. We cannot afford to risk our souls on hearsays: we need personal knowledge. For one, I desire a salvation which will bear the test of the closest examination. I would be saved in such a way that I am neither afraid of conscience, nor of death, nor of the judgment-seat of God. I would be saved in the light. I would be known and read of all men, and I would know even as I am known. We wish to conceal nothing; we can conceal nothing, "for all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." We would lay bare our bosoms and sincerely cry, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

A still surer evidence of grace is the *mind's perception of revealed truth and its obedience to it*. Then has true light shone on a man's walk when he perceives the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit in sacred Scripture, and receives it into his heart with a child-like spirit. He that receives Christ also receives Christ's words, and the doctrine which we believe is by no means a matter of indifference. Whatever may be said, brethren, we have received a revelation from God; which we know to be "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." The Lord God has broken through the veil of silence, and has manifested himself to the sons of men. Through the darkness of their minds the carnal cannot see what God

has revealed, neither will they believe his truth. The truth of God is spiritual, and the natural man is carnal, and therefore the natural man will not receive the teaching which comes from God. By this test shalt thou know whether the true light is shining upon thee: Dost thou believe what God has revealed in his word? or art thou thine own teacher—maker of thine own faith? He cannot be a disciple who does not learn, but invents. Dost thou hear the teaching of the Lord Jesus, and believe it? I repeat it, thou must not only *say* that thou believest it, but thou must indeed and of a truth believe the things which God has revealed. By this shalt thou know whether thou be a child of light, or a child of darkness. Are the doctrines of grace essential verities with thee? Whatever God has said about sin, righteousness, judgment to come, art thou ready to accept it at once. Whatever he has revealed concerning himself, his Son, his Holy Spirit, the cross, life, death, hell, and the eternal future, dost thou believe it unfeignedly? This is to walk in the light. All other teaching is darkness.

How many correct and amend, and so betray the gospel! They take the garment of truth, and dip it in the blood of their own thought, till it is so distained that they might almost say unto God himself, "Know thou whether this be thy son's coat or not?" If thou be one of those who would twist the Scriptures, and force thine own meaning on them, thou art not in the light. If thou wouldst make them mean other than what God intended them to mean, thou art in the darkness, however learned a philosopher thou mayest be. He only is in the light who distrusts his own wisdom, and bows before the wisdom which cometh from above. If thou wilt sit at Jesus' feet like a child, and hear his words and learn of him, then hath the true light shone upon thee; for he is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The Holy Spirit comes not to help us to think out a system of belief of our own, but to lead us into all truth, by taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto us.

Brethren, there is a truth and there is a lie, and no lie is of the truth. Can light commune with darkness, or truth with falsehood? I make no claim of implicit faith for what *I* say. God forbid that I should ever become so presumptuous; for that were a sort of blasphemy. But I claim implicit faith for what *God* says. Believing the gospel to be the revelation of God, I claim for it implicit faith. Believing the Lord Jesus to be an infallible teacher, I claim immediate faith in all that he has said. If this implicit faith be refused, it is because there is no light in you. To walk in the light is to know, to love, and to live the truth. To walk in the light of God is to receive our instruction from God. To me the end of all controversy is "Thus saith the Lord." Only let me know that the Lord hath said this or that, and though the revelation should seem impossible to believe, and though it should come into conflict with all my previous notions, I will bow before it without a question. "The Lord hath said it," stands to us instead of all reason, and argument, and evidence; yea, we believe God in the teeth of supposed evidence and reason, saying, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." God will not have fellowship with us if we reject his light; but on the ground of absolute truth he can and will meet us.

If we come unto the light, and believe his witness to the truth, then are we where God can walk with us, and where the precious blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

This, beloved brethren, leads to a *transparency and simplicity of character*. Walking in the light produces Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile. Those who are full of deceit and craftiness upon any subject are not walking in the light of God. God will not have fellowship with any whose minds are crooked and deceitful. Some persons are so warped that nothing is straight to them; their minds seem to see things crookedly; long practice in untruthfulness has given them an evil bias. This is not the case with the man in whom the light of grace is shining. The man who does in reality what he seems to do; the man who says what he means, and means what he says; the man who is truthful, artless and sincere in all his general dealings both before God and man, he it is whose conduct leads us to hope that the light of grace shines within.

This is very evident in *the man's cessation from all guile towards himself*. Remember how David pronounces him blessed "in whose spirit there is no guile." He knew painfully what it was to be full of guile. See him! He has gone astray most grievously. His mind is in the dark. What does David do? There is a foul sin committed: he tries to make himself believe that it is not so very horrible; he labours to hoodwink his conscience. His sin is likely to be seen, and he tries to cover it. He brings back Bathsheba's husband. When he declines to go to his house he must be made drunken. The design has failed. David is afraid, but he is not penitent; on the contrary, he hastens to still greater crime. Uriah is in the wars, and there he is wantonly exposed to death, and is slain in battle. His death is ascribed to the fortune of war. David did not see that it was murder, for he was not walking in the light. He was still in darkness, and therefore he kept all this while acting a deceitful part with his God and his own conscience. His conduct would not bear the light, and so his one idea was to keep out of the light. How changed was all this after Nathan had said to him, "Thou art the man"! When the light of heavenly conviction had penetrated the night of his soul, he made no more excuses, he practised no more subterfuges. He stood in the light, ashamed and confounded. Amazed at the sight of his sin, he abandoned all idea of covering it, and fled at once to the mercy of God crying, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness." In the sobbing and sighing of the fifty-first Psalm he lays bare his heart, and in plainest terms he cries, "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation." He is in the light now, for deceit has gone, and now God can speak comfortably to him, and wash him and make him whiter than snow.

The man who is walking in the light, as God is in the light, is full of *abhorrence of sin*. Sin is practical falsehood; it is moral darkness. The man that abhors evil and injustice; the man that would do good if it cost him his earthly all; the man that would not do wrong though the world should be his reward for doing it—this is the man that walks in the light, and he is the man that shall have fellowship with God, and a sense of cleansing from sin. We cannot attach too great

importance to the condition of our minds in reference to sin; for if we wink at it, or take pleasure in it, or persistently practise it, we are abiding in the darkness, and we are under the wrath of God. John says, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." Forget not this practical truth.

I fear I have scarcely brought out the fulness of the meaning. They that are in the light will know what I mean: those who are in darkness cannot imagine what life in the light must be.

II. I come, secondly, to THE COMMUNION OF OUR WALK. Those who are in the light shall not be alone. God himself will be with them, and be their God. The words, "we have fellowship one with another," constitute a wonderfully condescending expression. John would not have dared to coin such an expression; it must have been minted for him by the Spirit from above. Think of God and his people having mutual intercourse! What honour! What joy is this! Thus is the mischief of the Fall removed, and Paradise is restored.

God in the light and man in the light have much in common. Now are they abiding in one element, for they are dwelling in one light. Now are they both concerned about the same thing, and their aims are undivided: God loves truth, and so do those who are renewed in heart. It has come to pass that the great Lord and his enlightened ones see things in the same light. God with his great vision beholds more than we can, yet he does not see more than the truth; and we with our narrow perceptions see the truth, and falsehood we cannot tolerate. Now we can speak with God, seeing we speak truth; and he can converse with us, seeing we are ready to hear the truth. In prayer and praise we are no longer false, and therefore the Lord can hear us. His word falls also upon an honest mind, and so its meaning is perceived. Now also we can act together: the great God and his poor feeble children are striving together for truth and righteousness. Our poor little work he might overlook if he were not so good; but being infinitely condescending, he works through us whenever he sees that our work is done in truth. If our works were works of darkness, he could not co-operate with us; but now that we walk and work in the light, he is able to make us labourers together with himself.

Now we partake with God in sympathy, having a fellow-feeling with him. Does the great Father mourn his prodigal child? So do we mourn over sinners. Do we see Jesus weeping over Jerusalem? So do we mourn for the perishing who will not be saved. Again, as God rejoices over sinners that repent, so do we rejoice in sympathy with him. By coming into the light of love as well as into the light of knowledge we have received power to enter into sympathy with God. Is not this a very wonderful thing? But it is as clear and true as it is wonderful. We would fain bring the whole world into the light. We daily pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." Our will has grown to be like God's will according to its measure, seeing we have come into the same light as that in which God dwells.

Do you know, dear brothers and sisters, by experience what it is to be honestly dealing with eternal things, to be no longer playing, and toying, and counterfeiting, but to be in real and blessed earnest with God

and spiritual facts? Then you have come into fellowship with the great God, for he is in earnest, and in him there is no trifling nor make-believe; but he is acting with intense reality, acting with his whole heart in his contention against sin, his desire for the glory of his Son, his purpose for the salvation of his people.

III. But now I come, in the third place, to that which strikes me most in the text, and it is this—THE GLORY OF THIS COMMUNION: "We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Here am I a poor creature reading this text. I find that it is possible for men to walk in fellowship with God, the great and ever blessed. I rejoice to learn this, and my heart responds, "If there is any fellowship with God to be known, I will know it. If I can be reconciled to God, and be at friendship with him, I desire it beyond everything. But how can these things be? I see that a great stone lieth at the door. I cannot get out of my prison to begin this walk, because this great stone of sin shuts me in." Then the Lord comes in, and he says, "I saw that this hindrance was in thy road, and so in this very verse I have shown thee how I have taken it away. Precious words! The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." I gather from the way in which this sentence grows out of the text that this very thing, which looks as if it were the death of all communion with God, is made by infinite grace to be a wide and open channel of communion with him. This stone is rolled away from the door of the sepulchre, and the angel of communion sits down upon it as on a throne. God justifies his people in broad daylight, in a way which defies inspection, and then, by the very method of clearing away their sin, he enters into the nearest and dearest fellowship with them.

To begin with, *here is sin!* What an evil thing it is! How our soul hates it! It is uncleanness to us: a loathsome and abominable evil. You that are in the light know how every beam of light makes you see more of the heinousness, blackness, and accursed nature of sin. Even to feel a tendency towards it in your members makes you groan out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me." Listen! You are having fellowship with God in this. In him is no sin, but in him is great abhorrence of sin. If you hate sin, God hates it also; and herein you are agreed. The very thought of iniquity, uncleanness, or falsehood, is abhorred of God. His holy nature detests it; and in proportion as you feel the same loathing and detestation, you have fellowship with God. This comes to you by walking in the light, as God is in the light. "Horror hath taken hold upon me," saith David, "because of the wicked that forsake thy law." David was as much in fellowship with God in that horror of sin as he was another day when he could speak of God as his exceeding joy, and rejoice in the mercy which endureth for ever. Yes, beloved, our horror for sin drives us into fellowship with the great Father in that loathing of sin which made him hide his face from his Only-begotten because the sin of man had been made to meet upon him.

Let us go a step further. Sin being once perceived, the next step is that it should *be got rid of*. "Ah!" say you, "I wish I could be cleansed from it; cleansed from all of it; but how can this be? It is

not possible for me to purge away my sin." I thought I heard you singing just now :—

"Could my tears for ever flow,  
 Could my zeal no respite show;  
 All for sin could not atone,  
 Thou must save, and thou alone."

This also is God's thought about sin : he knows how hard it is to remove its pollution. He saw that nothing of ours could remove the horrible blot. Brethren, I know of a surety that all the waters of all the seas might be encarnadined by my scarlet sin, and yet they could not wash out the fatal stain. Not even the fires of hell could burn out the defilement of sin. In this persuasion we have fellowship with the pure and holy God, who saw that there was no means of removing sin but one ; he must deliver up his own Son to death, or the sin of man could never be purged away. The sacrifice of the Only-begotten is the unique hope of sinners. The laying of our iniquity upon him who deigned to be the great scape-goat of his people is the sole means for the taking away of the sins of the world. That inward persuasion of the impossibility of the purgation of sin by any doings or feelings of our own, and the consequent perception that in Christ only lies the help of men, has brought us through the light of truth to walk in fellowship with the thrice holy God.

Now go a step further. *The glorious Son of God condescends to become the atonement for sin.* He is taken to the tree ; our sins are made to meet upon his blessed head, and there he dies the just for the unjust. He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Standing by the tree of doom, we look up to that blessed Saviour with all-absorbing admiration and love. We admire him as the masterpiece of divine wisdom, grace, power, and truth ; and, admiring, we love him ; we pledge ourselves to him. Herein we have entered into fellowship with the great Father indeed and of a truth ; for the Father loves his Son infinitely : he greatly delights in him. No thought of Christ that the most rapturous enthusiast ever had can reach half way to God's thoughts of Christ. See how holy Bernard seems to go into a delirium of love when he talks about his divine Master ! O Bernard, thou canst not tell how the Father loves Jesus, how he delights in his sacrifice, how he takes pleasure in his exaltation ! In the putting away of sin by the blood of Jesus the Father has an infinite content, and so have we. Beloved, we rejoice in the divine satisfaction for sin ; it is a well of divine delight to us. This satisfaction is not accomplished by anything being hushed up and concealed ; but, walking in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with God in the one glorious sacrifice. Suppose I could persuade myself that sin is a trifle, I should not be walking in the light, and I should have no fellowship with God. Suppose I said, "Pooh, pooh ! sin can easily be forgiven, I am sure it requires no atonement," I should not be walking in the light, and I should have no fellowship with God. Suppose I said, "Though Jesus died, his death was only the close of his life, and no special reference need be made to it as a sacrifice for sin," I should not be walking in the light, and I should have no fellowship with God.

A step further. Beloved, many of us have come to Jesus Christ by faith; we have looked to him, and have accepted him as our Saviour *cleansing us from all sin*. Joy, joy, joy for ever: the brightest day that ever dawned on us was that day when we saw all our sins numbered on our blessed Scapegoat and carried away into the wilderness of forgetfulness! When God saw the blood of old he passed over Israel, for his justice was satisfied; and it is so with Jesus. How glad and content we are to see how Jesus finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness! Brethren, the death of Jesus is a cleansing from sin which will bear the light: it is no hole and corner business, no winking at evil, no suspension of law, no making out that sin is no sin. No, the debt is acknowledged, and what is better far, it is paid. The guilty are punished in their substitute, and in him are thus justly set free. We shall all appear before the judgment-seat; and I am glad it is so, for the stain of our sin is so effectually removed by the blood of Jesus that we are clean every whit, and even the eye of divine justice will see no spot in us. We rejoice in perfect whiteness, for the Lord has made us whiter than snow. Yes, we have fellowship with God in this cleansing, for God accepts us in the Beloved. God that made him to be the Lord our Righteousness, God himself justifies us in his Son. He will in the last great day make the whole universe a witness to the righteousness of the salvation of believers. All intelligences shall see that in Christ all who are in him are truly justified, and most justly saved. How the Lord God and his people will have fellowship in their common joy in the work and person of Jesus, as they see the perfection of it, and the way in which all sin is removed by it! Our salvation in Christ is in the light in the most eminent degree: it will bear the full, fierce light of Sinai to be turned upon it, and yet no flaw will be found in it. This is wonderful! This is glorious! Do you wonder that God is well pleased in him! And are not we well pleased! Blessed be his name. Do you not see how we thus have fellowship one with another. Oh, that I had strength to set forth before you the thoughts which fill my soul!

Brethren, we are now at one with God in his master-purpose. Was it not in his heart to create beings with whom he might have fellowship? He made the heavens and the earth; he made the angels; he made all things; but he could find no companionship in all these things. Our Lord, like Adam, found no help-meet for himself in any of the creatures he had made. He desired to produce and bring to himself an order of beings who could be glorified without danger of pride, who could think and feel as the First-born would do; in fact, would become the friends of the Son of God. How were these creatures to be produced? Not by an immediate fiat of creation. Angels he could speak into being by a word; but in the constitution of these beings there would need to be an experience and a discipline to fit them for their lofty position. Their model was to be the Son of Jehovah's love. He was to be the First-born among many brethren. It was needful for these creatures to know sin, and yet to hate it more fully than if they had never known it; to know the love of God, and to be bound by it for ever to an unsinning obedience, which would fill them with boundless happiness. Behold the process by which this new creation, this new order of

creatures should come forth. Consider the processes which by the Fall, the incarnation, the Cross, and the new birth work out the sacred result! When you have read the past in this light, then gaze into the future. Now we see how throughout eternity we shall walk in the light, as God is in the light, and have fellowship one with another—fellowship culminating in Jesus Christ the Only-begotten, and the cleansing from all sin by his blood. The blood-washed are to be the friends of God, with whom he shall speak face to face, as he speaks with no angel or seraph. With these he will dwell, and he will be their God, and they shall be his people; and in them and through them he will make known the glories of his Son to wondering worlds. This great purpose has been wrought out to a considerable extent by the Lord's having already made us to walk in the light, as he is in the light, and by washing us in the precious blood; but it doth not even yet appear what we shall be. This much we practically seek after: henceforth we live for Christ! Henceforth our chief glory is the cross! Henceforth our beau-ideal of glory for ourselves is to see Jesus glorified! The torrents have swept us away! We are no longer bound to this earth! We are borne along by the irresistible force of eternal love! God has achieved his purpose in our blood-washed souls; walking in the light we are now in harmony with his master purpose, and we cry: "Father, glorify thy Son"!

I have done; but oh, I wish that all your hearts were brought into the light of God at this moment! Oh, that you would quit the dark ways of self-righteousness, carelessness, thoughtlessness, and sin, and come into the light of truth! Oh, that the light may come to you as to Saul of Tarsus, and at once transform you! May the Spirit of God bring you to know God and his Son Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal.

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 John i. and ii.

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