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THE REALITY OF THE DIVINE INTIMACY

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To speak of "intimacy" in reference to the relationship between the Lord of Glory and the humble believer redeemed by the precious blood-shedding of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary would seem almost to verge on irreverence; but it need not be so, thank God, if we ever keep close to the Word of God with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Lord's own words would encourage us in fact, when He Himself calls us "friends": "ye are My friends if ye do the things which I command you". No longer do I call you "bond-servants" (as the Gk. word is used here) . . . But I have called you "Friends" (John 15:14-16).

Writing to the Galatian church Paul speaks of his (and our) being "crucified with Christ": that is, the old life we once lived in alienation from God has been exchanged for the "New Life" of true intimacy and fellowship with God. Hence "it is no longer I that live", says the apostle, but "CHRIST liveth in me." The same truth is expressed in another form in the apostle's Letter to the Colossians (chap. 2:13); "you, being dead in your sins (which alienated us from God), hath HE quickened (made alive) together with HIM, having forgiven you all trespasses".

There is a further important feature in regard to this divine intimacy, referred to in Romans 8:16, 17. Verse 16 reminds us that "we are children of God: and if children, then heirs of God,

and joint-heirs with Christ". And note that the apostle immediately adds: "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together".

No particular type of suffering is mentioned, but it would certainly apply to such as have to bear persecution of one type or another, or any other kind of trouble because of faithfulness and love to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and His Word. It is to this end God has given us His own Inspired Word, which the apostle James exhorts us to "receive with meekness"—that is, with a willing and ready mind and heart enlightened by the Holy Spirit. The Christian life does not consist of a sort of mechanical routine of religious observances: it is first of all a very real heart experience, for the secrets of true holiness are as invisible to sight as Christ Himself is in Whom they reside.

Closely related to that aspect of the Divine Intimacy, it is of value to note how the apostle presents it in another context in his Letter to the Church in Ephesus (see Ephesians 2:1-10). Verse 6 reads "*GOD hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.*" The whole passage needs to be read carefully in order to get the full meaning of the subject about which the apostle is writing. This exaltation in "the heavenlies" with Christ can be viewed in more than one aspect, in each of which the reality of this intimacy of the risen Saviour and His people individually and collectively is something intensely real and divinely ordered of the Lord for His own blood-bought saints: in other words—for His church as a whole from its very inception to the eternity to come.

It implies a life of very real nearness to God our Father, in Jesus Christ our Saviour, by the indwelling, present ministry of the Holy Spirit our Sanctifier. Intimacy with the world spiritually will of course rob the believer of its blessings—though, thank God, not of "eternal security"—at the Judgment-seat of Christ. But "open the door" says the waiting Christ now, "and I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with ME". Again: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him". The world, or even the worldly Christian can know noth-

ing of such intimacy, or what it has to offer. It is in "the secret place of the Most High," as the Psalmist declares (Psa. 91:1) that He discloses to His own true disciples and friends the counsels of His mind and will. We may well ask our own hearts: what do we know of that "place", and how much time do we spend in it with prayer and meditation?

Furthermore, it implies a life of increasing maturity of soul and mind, and growth in likeness to Christ the Lord. This is the eternal purpose of God, and for which He sent His beloved Son into the world that He might make atonement for sin. "For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that the Son might be the First-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29, 30). The fret and fuss of mere fleshly activity are absent when we are enjoying the reality of the Divine Intimacy. This "inward quietude", as the saintly Upham calls it, is not cessation of service and energy physically, a mere blank stoppage of normal functioning of mind and heart (as the Buddhist tries to teach). It is in fact the harmonious working of our normal faculties in obedience to the gracious counsel and will of the triune GOD: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

From this arises Peter's exhortation in his 2nd Epistle (chap. 1:4-8). "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren (Gk. 'idle') nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ": (read the whole passage). It is because of this divinely ordained intimacy with Christ that the Apostle is free to declare: "We all with unveiled face, reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory as from the LORD the SPIRIT". (2 Corinthians 3:18). And as if to make the facts even clearer if possible so that the worldly-minded shall have no excuse for adopting the world's ideas and ideals he adds in chap. 6:15, 16—"what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for WE are a 'sanctuary' (as margin) of the living GOD; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

In view of such Ideal Intimacy with the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost let us follow with increasing purpose of

heart, mind and will, the same apostle's appeal, first to the believers in Colossae: "Set your mind on the things that are *above*, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory" (Col. 3:2-4 R.V.). Writing to the Ephesian church the Apostle reminds the believers that as such they (and we also) have been raised up "with Christ" and are seated with Him in "*the heaventies*"; "that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus: for by grace have ye been saved through faith" (Eph. 2:7 and 8).

The question arises in the heart of any true believer: How much do we manifest in true humbleness of heart, but with real courage in the face of opposition of whatever kind it may be, the reality and joy of THE DIVINE INTIMACY—with The Triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, forever Blessed?

THE BOOK OF JOB

A. NAISMITH, M.A.

Since an orderly presentation of the outline of any text-book invariably proves helpful to those desirous of making a more detailed study of it, these paragraphs are an attempt to set forth concisely an outline of this rarely studied book. The great German Reformer and Theologian, Martin Luther, said of this book: "It is magnificent and sublime as no other book in Scripture". Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish Historian, Essayist and Philosopher, wrote concerning the book of Job: "I call this book, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew: such a noble universality different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reigns in it. There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit.—A noble book, all men's book". And Alfred Lord Tennyson, one of the most brilliant of English Poet-laureates, called it "the greatest poem of ancient and modern times". Since the book has such an appeal to all men, its doctrines cannot but be