

Abide

Summer 2004

Volume 4 Issue 1

It Is Finished...



The New Covenant

Our Mission

- To encourage youth to mature in the Lord.
- To challenge youth to seek the reality of God individually.
- To testify of a life that radiates the power of God.

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Blood & Fire: Missions
Rejoice In The Lord

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Stayed Upon Jehovah

Three hymns from the spiritual life of Frances R. Havergal

By Eric M. Pazdziora

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879) is a well-known name in hymnody and devotional writing. During her short life, she had a prolific literary output and many of her books are still read today including the classic, “Kept for the Master’s Use.” She was also well known for her deep personal commitment to the Lord. J. Gilchrist Lawson wrote, “Many Christians sincerely desire to know the secret of such a life as hers, and to attain its lofty heights of joy and peace.”



Frances was born to Christian parents—her father was an Anglican minister—who provided her with a good instruction in the Scriptures. When she was six years old, Frances began to have an intense concern over the state of her soul. She was reluctant to tell anyone about her fears, however, so she did not accept Christ until she was a young teenager. At that time, she finally confided in a teacher at her school, who posed the simple question, “Why cannot you trust yourself to your Savior at once?” “I could surely,” replied Frances with delight, and immediately did so.

For the rest of her life, Frances served the Lord with diligence and dedication. Her gifts as a musician and author were used by the Lord to bless many people. However, she continued to long for a deeper, closer walk with God and a fuller experience of His peace. Three of the many hymns she wrote during her spiritual journey give a glimpse of this struggle and how it was resolved.

The first hymn, written when Frances was in her early twenties, is in fact rather disheartening. However, it is worth a close analysis, as it reveals many things about the kinds of doubts and dis-

couragements the young Frances struggled with.

It begins with these lines:

*I gave My life for thee,
My precious blood I shed,
That thou might'st ransomed be,
And quickened from the dead.*

*I gave, I gave my life for thee,
What hast thou given for me?*

One stanza is enough to give the flavor; it continues like this for three more that can still be found in certain hymnals. The problem with this hymn is not its sincere sentiment but its flawed picture of the Savior. That Christ freely gave His life, an infinite gift for me, is not under dispute. To this truth, however, the hymn adds a further idea. Christ has given infinitely for us, and that fact by itself is supposed to motivate us to give something for Him.

Why cannot you trust yourself to your Savior at once?”

“I could surely,” replied Frances with delight, and immediately did so.

Notice that these words are put into the mouth of Christ. He presents the facts, and we feel that if we do not give something back in response, we will be considered ungrateful. Yet, as portrayed in this hymn, He offers no help, not even a word of encouragement. He stands by and waits for our feelings, our pity for Him, to move on us and compel us to give. In plainer terms, He gives us a guilt trip. Worse, His gift was infinite; how could

“It was made plain to me that He who had cleansed me had power to keep me clean; so I yielded myself to Him.”

we hope to give anything that will meet that standard?

This portrayal of Christ is sadly misinformed. It makes no mention of our living in Christ, or of Christ’s living in us. The focus is all on us, looking at Christ’s gift and trying our best to live up to it. It makes no mention of the Lord working in us, and His power flowing through us. It is all our work.

The effects of this conception of Christ on a sensitive person are easy to imagine. In her book *Gleams and Glimpses*, written in 1858 (the same year as this hymn), Frances wrote, “—gleams and glimpses, but oh to be filled with joy and the Holy Ghost! Oh, why cannot I trust Him fully?”

A few years later, in 1865, she elaborated on these thoughts: “...I seem borne back into all the old difficulties of the way, with many sin-made aggravations. I think the great root of all my trouble and alienation is that I do not now make an unconditional surrender of myself to God; and until this is done I shall know no peace. I am sure of it.”

Her sister, Maria, observed, “She was gratefully conscious of having for many years loved the Lord and delighted in His service; but there was in her experience a falling short of the standard.”

Frances’ spiritual life continued in this state until late in 1873. Then someone gave her a copy of a small book entitled “All for Jesus.” Frances was electrified: the book described exactly the kind of spiritual life she felt she did not have. She wrote a letter to its author, who responded with a few words on the power of the Blood of Christ, stating that Jesus keeps all who abide in Him from falling. Frances realized that this truth was described in 1 John 1:7, “The blood of Jesus

Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

The effect of this realization was immediate and definite. Her sister reported that this event “lifted her whole life into sunshine, of which all she had previously experienced was but as pale and passing April gleams compared with fullness of summer glory.”

Later, in conversation with her sister, Frances described it in this way: “Yes, it was on Advent Sunday, December 2, 1873, I first saw clearly the blessedness of true consecration. I saw it as a flash of electric light, and what you see, you can never unsee. There must be full surrender before there can be full blessedness. God admits you by the one into the other. He Himself showed me all this most clearly...First, I was shown that ‘the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,’ and then it was made plain to me that He who had thus cleansed me had power to keep me clean; so I just utterly yielded myself to Him, and utterly trusted Him to keep me.”

These ideas of “full surrender” and “utter yielding” became the subject of Frances’ best-loved hymn, which she wrote at about this time. The song begins “Take my life and let it be / Consecrated, Lord, to Thee,” and progresses in similar



couplets to its resounding conclusion, “Take myself, and I will be / Ever, only, all for Thee!” It remains greatly popular to this day, and it is easy to see why. The joyous prayer for consecration has a universal appeal that cuts across boundaries of tradition. It is hard to read words like these without joining in the desire for the Lord to take ownership of our lives as well.

Notice, however, in this second hymn the revolution of thought that has occurred since the writing of the first hymn. In the first hymn, “Jesus” demands, “What hast thou given for me?” In the second hymn, however, Frances (and anyone who is willing to pray with her) says to her Lord, “Take my life.” It is no longer the Lord expecting us to give what we can; we are the ones expecting the Lord to take what He will. This is surrender. The one who performs the action is “Not I, but Christ.”

(Galatians 2:20)

Frances had realized at her conversion that her only responsibility was “trusting yourself to your Savior.” Now she realized the same about the surrender she had longed for. Surrender is not a work that requires effort. Surrender is a renunciation of works and possessions to one who has shown he has a better claim on them.

“It was that one word ‘cleanseth’” (Frances wrote, referring to 1 John 1:7) “that opened the door of a very glory of hope and joy to me. I had never seen the force of the tense before, a continual present, always a present tense, not a present which the next moment becomes a past. It goes on cleansing, and I have no words to tell how my heart rejoices in it. Not a coming to be cleansed in the fountain only, but a remaining in the fountain, so that it may and can go on cleansing... The utterly unexpected and altogether unimagined sense of its fulfillment to me, on simply believing it in its fullness, was just indescribable. I expected nothing like it short of heaven.”

This sense of hope and joy is described in one of Frances’ finest pieces of writing, the great hymn “Like a River Glorious,” composed in 1874. In it, we see the results of a heart settled not upon our work, but upon God Himself. Note especially the phrase, “Perfect peace and rest.” There is no longer the sense of working desperately toward an unattainable goal. The peace that comes from

this trust is itself victory and the fullest blessing imaginable. Frances’ own words are the best conclusion:

Like a river glorious is God’s perfect peace,
Over all victorious in its bright increase; Per-
fect, yet it floweth fuller every day, Perfect, yet
it groweth deeper all the way.

Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand,
Never foe can follow, never traitor stand; Not
a surge of worry, not a shade of care, Not a
blast of hurry touch the spirit there.

Every joy or trial falleth from above, Traced
upon our dial by the Sun of Love. We may trust
Him fully all for us to do, They who trust Him
wholly find Him wholly true.

Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest,
Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

Quotations from the writings of Frances and Maria are taken from Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians by J. Glichrist Lawson (reprint, Barbour Publishing 1999).

The New Covenant

From “The Two Covenants” By Andrew Murray

“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”—Jeremiah 31:33–34

In words the New Testament (Hebrews 8) takes as the divinely inspired revelation of what the New Covenant is, God’s plan is revealed and we are shown what it is that He will do in us, to make us fit and worthy of being the people of which He is the God. Through the whole of the Old Covenant there was always one trouble: man’s heart was not right with God. In the New Covenant the evil is to be remedied. Its central promise is a heart delighting in God’s law and capable of knowing and holding fellowship with Him. Let us mark the fourfold blessing spoken of in these verses:

1. *“I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.”* In our heart there are no separate chambers in which the law can be put, while the rest of the heart can be given up to other things; the heart is a unity. No; in the heart is the disposition, the love, the will, the life. Nothing can be put into the heart, especially by God, without entering and taking possession of it, without securing its affection and controlling its whole being. And this is what God undertakes to do in the power of His divine life and

operation: to breathe the very spirit of His law into and through the whole inward being.

At Sinai the tables of the Covenant, with the law written on them, were of stone, as a lasting substance. It is easy to know what that means. The stone was wholly set apart for this one thing—to carry and show this Divine writing. The writing and the stone were inseparably connected.



And so the heart in which God gets His way, and writes His law in power, lives only and wholly to carry that writing, and is unchangeably identified with it. So alone can God realize His purpose in creation, and have His child of one mind and one spirit with Himself, delighting in doing His will.

When the Old Covenant with the law graven on stone had done its work in the discovering and condemning of sin, the New Covenant would give in its stead the life of obedience and true holiness of heart. The whole of the Covenant blessing centers in this—the heart being put right and fitted to know God: *“I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto Me with their whole*

The heart in which God gets His way, and writes His law in power, lives only and wholly to carry that writing.

heart” (Jeremiah. 24:7).

2. *“And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”* Do not pass these words lightly. They occur chiefly in Jeremiah and Ezekiel in connection with the promise of the everlasting Covenant. They express the very highest experience of the Covenant relationship. It is only when His people learn to love and obey His law, when their heart and life are together wholly devoted to Him and His will, that He can be to them the altogether inconceivable blessing which these words express, *“I will be your God.”*

All I am and have as God shall be yours. I, the Almighty One, will each moment work all in you by My mighty power. I, the Thrice-Holy One, will reveal My sanctifying life within you. I will be your God. And ye shall be My people, saved and blessed, ruled and guided and provided for by Me, known and seen to be indeed the people of the Holy One, the God of glory. Only let us give our hearts time to meditate and wait for the Holy Spirit to work in us all that these words mean.

3. *“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.”* Individual personal fellowship with God, for the feeblest and the least, is to be the wonderful privilege of every member of the New Covenant people.

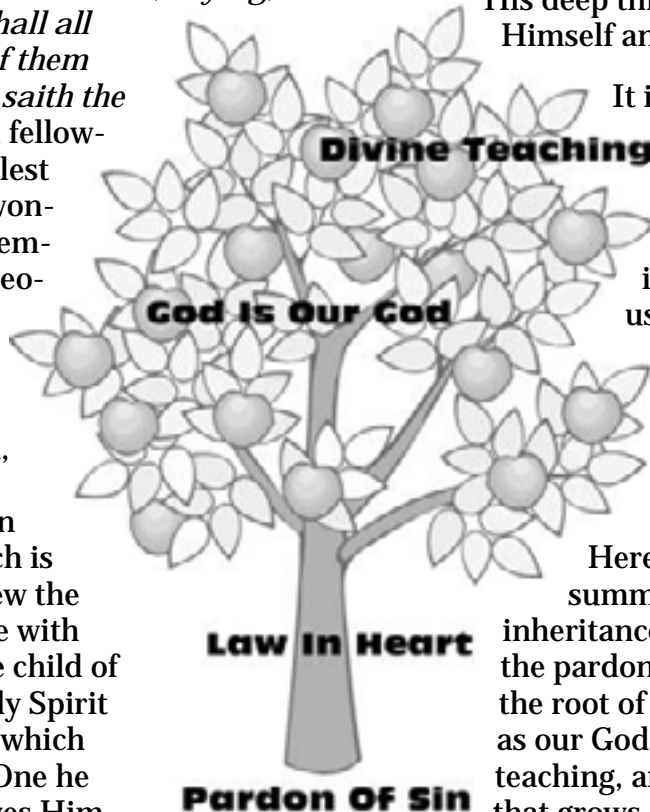
Each one will know the Lord. That does not mean the knowledge of the mind, but with that knowledge which means appropriation and assimilation, and which is eternal life. As the Son knew the Father because He was one with Him and dwelt in Him, the child of God will receive by the Holy Spirit that spiritual illumination which will make God to him the One he knows best, because he loves Him most and lives in Him. The Holy Spirit’s teaching will fulfill the promise, *“They shall be all*

It is on the state of the heart, it is on the new heart itself, as given by God, that the New Covenant life hinges.

taught of God.” God will speak to each out of His Word what he needs to know.

4. *“For I will forgive their iniquities, and I will remember their sin no more.”* The word *for* shows that this is the reason of all that precedes. Because the blood of this New Covenant was of such infinite worth, and its Mediator and High Priest in heaven of such Divine power, there is promised in it such a Divine blotting out of sin that God cannot remember it.

It is this entire blotting out of sin that cleanses and sets us free from its power, so that God can write His law in our hearts, and show Himself in power as our God, and by His Spirit reveal to us His deep things—the deep mystery of Himself and His love.



It is the atonement and redemption of Jesus Christ wrought without us and for us, that has removed every obstacle and made it meet for God, and made us meet, that the law in the heart, and the claim on our God, and the knowledge of Him, should now be our daily life and our eternal portion.

Here we now have the Divine summary of the New Covenant inheritance. The last-named blessing, the pardon of sin, is the first in order, the root of all. The second, having God as our God, and the third, the Divine teaching, are the fruit. The tree itself that grows on this root, and bears such fruit, is what is named first—the law in the heart.

The central demand of the Old Covenant, *Obey My voice, and I will be your God*, has now been met. With the law written in the heart, He can be our God, and we shall be His people. Perfect harmony with God's will, holiness in heart and life, is the only thing that can satisfy God's heart or ours. And it is this the New Covenant gives in Divine power, "*I will give them an heart to know Me; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people; for they shall turn to Me with their whole heart.*" It is on the state of the heart, it is on the new heart, as given by God, that the New Covenant life hinges.

But why, if all this is meant to be literally and exactly true of God's people, why do we see so little of this life, experience so little in ourselves? There is but one answer: Because of your unbelief! We have spoken of the relation of God and man in creation as what the New Covenant is meant to make possible and real. But the law cannot be repealed that God will not compel. He can only fulfill His purpose as the heart is willing and accepts His offer.

In the New Covenant all is of faith. Let us turn away from what human wisdom and human experience may say, and ask God Himself to teach us what His Covenant means. It is our Covenant right. Let us count upon it.

It is only by a God-given faith that we can appropriate these God-given promises. And it is only by a God-given teaching and inward illumination that we can see their meaning. When God teaches us the meaning of His promises in a heart yielded to His Holy Spirit, then alone we can believe and receive them in a power which makes them a reality in our life.

But is it really possible, amid the wear and tear

of daily life, to walk in the experience of these blessings? Are they really meant for all God's children? Let us rather ask the question, Is it possible for God to do what He has promised? The one part of the promise we believe—the complete and perfect pardon of sin. Why should

We consider the glory of the New Covenant to consist in the redeeming work of Christ, and not equally in the sanctifying work of the Spirit.



we not believe the other part—the law written in the heart, and the direct Divine fellowship and teaching?

We have been so accustomed to separate what God has joined together, the objective, outward work of His

Son, and the subjective, inward work of His Spirit, that we consider the glory of the New Covenant above the Old to consist chiefly in the redeeming work of Christ for us, and not equally in the sanctifying work of the Spirit in us. It is owing to this ignorance and unbelief of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as the power through whom God fulfils the New Covenant promises, that we do not really expect them to be made true to us.

Do let us turn our hearts away from all past experience of failure, as caused by nothing but unbelief; do let us admit fully and heartily, what failure has taught us, the absolute impossibility of even a regenerate man walking in God's law in his own strength, and then turn our hearts quietly and trustfully to our own Covenant God.

Let us hear what He says He will do for us, and believe Him; let us rest on His unchangeable faithfulness and the surety of the Covenant, on His Almighty power and the Holy Spirit working in us; and let us give up ourselves to Him as our God. He will prove that what He has done for us in Christ is not one whit more wonderful than what He will do in us every day by the Spirit of Christ.

A Beloved Son

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

Genesis 2:7

I cannot comprehend God’s love for humanity as He lovingly formed the clay. Why would He create someone who would fall and cause Him such pain? Why would He create man, knowing the price to redeem him?

Why this loving impartation of Himself? And why the creation of another that would prove to be so undeserving? One who would reject Him and His love? There is one reason: He longs for a people who desire fellowship, intimacy, and a love relationship with their Creator.

A Tragic Illustration

The people of Israel were crying out from the bondage of Egypt. After 400 years of slavery and oppression the nation of Israel was a sorry sight. In this state, they lifted a cry to the God they had all but forgotten. God was waiting for their cry. Surely His hand of deliverance would bring the love, devotion, and surrender He longed for from His people.

With an outpouring of miracles and a display of power, He freed them from slavery and brought them through the Red Sea. Finally, the day came when He would bring the entire nation into the intimacy He had intended for man! He brought them to the foot of Sinai to meet with them.

They failed to understand that God wasn’t interested in more servants. God had created man for fellowship.



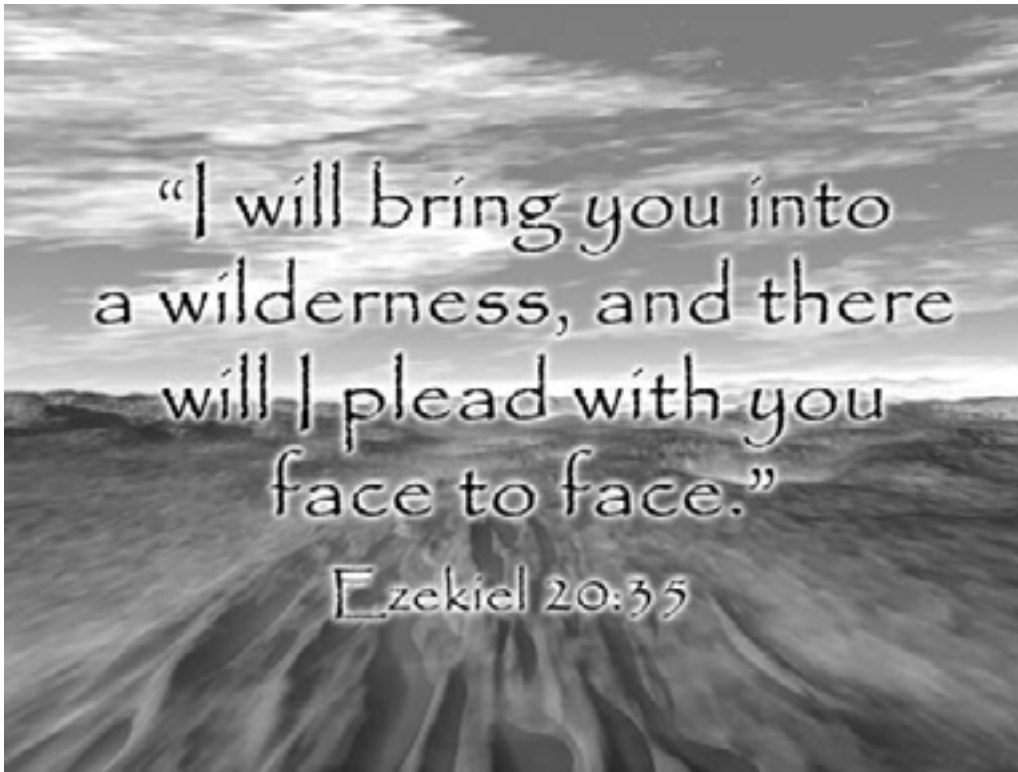
By Tyler Griffin

The mountain began to burn and smolder as Almighty God, creator of Heaven and earth, descended upon it. Then God began to speak in an audible voice to not one, but millions of people. He began to share with His people His eternal standards of holiness. Once they understood His holiness and their sin, through a blood covenant they would enter His presence and fellowship with God.

But at this moment, something happened. Before God’s eyes, the people He dearly loved withdrew from His presence. God must have listened in grief as they told Moses, “We do not want to hear the voice of God. You go to God for us, and tell us what He says.” (Exodus 20:19)

It is easy to slip over what really took place here. Through this act, in essence the people were saying; “We appreciate all that you’ve done for us. It is wonderful to be free from the miserable bondage of Egypt! We love the mighty miracles, the morning manna, and this man, Moses. But this coming into your holy presence, well, it is uncomfortable and scary! Besides, we are just people—lumps of clay, and You, well You are God! Just give us your laws through Moses and we will obey them. We will be your servants and do everything you tell us.”

The Israelites desired to please God and show Him their gratefulness. “*And all the people answered together, and said, ‘All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.’*” (Exodus 19:8a) However, they failed to understand that, although God desired obedience, He wasn’t interested in more servants. He had untold millions of angels to do His bidding. God had created man for fellowship.



Sadly, Israel plunged forward and entered Canaan still having a false concept of God and what he wanted from them. Joshua's plea to consider that God was a holy God who demanded far more than human performance was ignored. (Joshua 24:19-22)

Nine hundred years later, the prophet Ezekiel had a message from God for Israel (Ezekiel 20). God would give Israel the opportunity their fathers had spurned. In verse 35, He says: *"I will bring you into a wilderness, and there will I plead with you face to face."* In other words, "I will make you totally desolate and barren, so you will see that your striving brings death." However, despite God's pleading, Israel pushed on in their religious striving until they killed the very One who came to bring them life.

For many years I was much like Israel. I understood when I was lost I could not make myself presentable to God, but needed Christ's blood to cleanse me. As a Christian, however, I thought through striving to obey and serve God I could live a life that was pleasing to Him. For nearly seven years my life revolved around this one word—striving. My goal was simple: I longed to be a son who pleased God.

I became very involved in church. I spent time

reading my Bible and praying. I went out street witnessing. I did door-to-door ministry. I started a children's ministry. I strove to live according to the Scriptures and follow God's will for my life. These are all good things, but my whole Christian life revolved around *me* trying to please God. I had missed the essence of the Christian life.

Some months ago, I reached a crisis. I came to a place of absolute frustration and failure. It seemed, no matter how hard I tried, I could not measure up to a standard pleasing to God. I was sitting on my bed one

Saturday morning as I faced all of this, when suddenly God spoke to me. It was not audible or envisioned, just a quiet simple word spoken directly to my heart.

"Tyler—quit trying to be a son who pleases Me!"

"What!" I cried, "This is the focus of my life!"

The answer came, "You cannot and never will please Me. There is only One Son who ever has pleased Me, and One who ever can please Me—Jesus. All you need to do is enter in and live in His life and you are perfectly pleasing!"

The purpose of God's redemption is simply for Him to have a people who know and love Him. True, if we love Him we will obey Him, (1 John 2:3) but that is not the essence of Christianity. Christianity is not about a way of life, a list of

"There is only One Son who ever has pleased Me, and One who ever can please Me—Jesus. All you need to do is enter into Him!"

rules, or even a life of service. It is about the Mystery of the Ages, God dwelling in man. (Colossians 1:26-27)

It is not about striving to perform, it is about resting in Christ. Our striving produces death. One of the commands of the Old Testament was to rest on the Sabbath. The punishment for breaking this command was death. In the New Testament, Christ is our Sabbath rest according to Hebrews, and the penalty of not resting in Christ is spiritual death.

We live a dry Christian life when we try to produce the fruit of the spirit with the arm of the flesh (Gal 3:3). That is why death with Christ is so beautiful. We finally end the life of dying (striving under the law), and we begin to experience the real life of Christ! Our striving under the law kills the life of God within us! If we only knew what God intended the Christian life to be, we would abandon our striving immediately! God's Spirit dwelling in *me!* The life of Jesus lived through *me!* How can this be?

All of the power and authority available to Christ during His earthly life is available to me! Why would I want to strive for something that is already mine in Christ? Please do not think I am making any excuse for sin. Rather, I am removing it. In Christ no sin should have dominion over us! (Romans 6)

How the devil wants to keep our eyes blinded to the fullness of the New Covenant life! When we see our position in Christ, there is no power of hell that can stand before us. Sin, our flesh, and the devil are under Christ's feet. In Christ, they are under ours as well. Hallelujah!

Dear friend, if you desire a life of victory, but it has eluded you, I want to share one reason why you may not have it: If you are trying by your own striving to live victoriously, you will find nothing but failure. Romans 8:8 says; *"so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."* The only way to victory and true holiness is to abandon all of your efforts, and come to Christ as you came for salvation.

Colossians 2:6 says *"As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him."* We came to Him with nothing but our broken lives. So, we

must continue to come to Him as only a vessel, for it is only He that created us who can take and make us again into His image. May our daily cry echo that of the songwriter; "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling!" For in Christ, you are **a Beloved Son**.

"His divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness...whereby He hath granted unto us His precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the Divine nature..." 2 Peter 1:3b-4a



I'm entering into the Promised Land
Where milk and honey flows from the Father's hand.
Here I'll live, here by faith I'll stand
Living in this blessed Promised Land.

Where all is peace, and no more strife;
Partaking of Your heavenly life.
I've traded my fleshly striving for the life of Christ;
I've traded my emptiness for the fullness of Life.

So long I've tried to be free from sin;
Yet all I saw, is wickedness within;
Until I found, it's all been done—
You knew I couldn't do it, so You sent Your Son.

"It is finished," was His cry
As He bowed His head and died
Now He longs for us to see in Him we're justified
So we can enter the Promised Land and be His bride.

I'm entering into the Promised Land
Where milk and honey flows from the Father's hand.

Three Things to Ponder

Excerpted from "Christ's Finished Work", April 4, 1861

By Octavius Winslow, D.D.

1. What a spring of comfort flows from Christ's finished work to the true Believer amid his innumerable failures, flaws and imperfections. What service do you perform, what duty do you discharge of which you can say, "It is finished"? Alas, not one.

Your service is imperfect, your obedience is incomplete, your love is fluctuating—yes, upon it all are the visible marks of human defilement and defect. But here is the work which God most delights in, "finished." *"You are complete in Him."* Turn, then, your eye of faith out of *yourself* and off of all your own doings and deal more immediately, closely and obediently with the finished work of Immanuel.

Come away from your fickle love, from your weak faith, from your little fruitfulness, from your uneven walk, from all your shortcomings and imperfections and let your eye of faith repose where God's eye of complacent love reposes—on the finished work of Jesus. God beholds you only in Christ—it is not upon *you* He looks, but on His Beloved Son and upon you in Him, *"wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved."*

2. If Christ's atoning work is finished, what folly and what sin to attempt to supplement it! What vast numbers are doing this! Away with your tears, your confessions, your duties, your charities, even your repentance and faith, if these things dare to take their place side by side with the finished work of Christ. See that you attempt to add *nothing* to it.

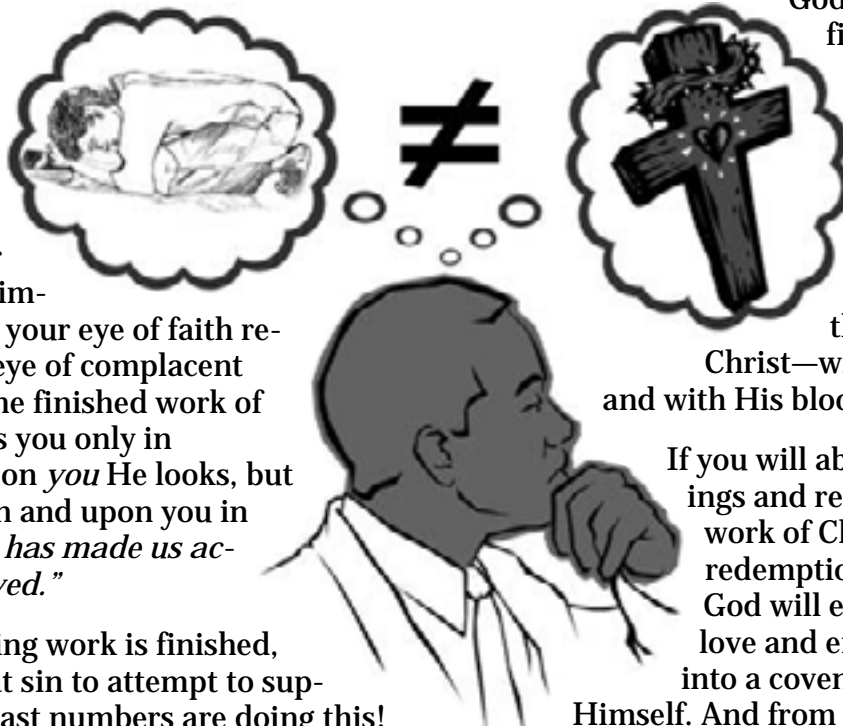
3. In a similar strain of exhortation let me warn

you of the utter worthlessness and fallacy of all grounds of faith and of all human hope that comes in conflict with the finished work of Christ. My dear Hearers, you have nothing to do in the great matter of your salvation but to accept in faith the one offering made once for all by God manifest in your nature.

Cast your deadly doings at the foot of the Cross. Cease from your own works. Cease from your own righteousness. Cease from resting in your confessions, in your tears, in your prayers, in your going to your Church or your Chapel. Cease from all this and in simple faith accept—take hold of—the Divine work of Jesus Christ!

God wants no more sacrifices. God asks no other atonement. God looks for nothing on your part to propitiate His regard, or present you with acceptance. He is satisfied with the Divine work of Christ—with His obedience—and with His blood.

If you will abjure all your own doings and rest in the finished work of Christ—the One eternal redemption He has offered—God will expand His arms of love and embrace you, take you into a covenant, filial relation to Himself. And from that moment your path to eternity will be like the sun, growing brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. All is done! Christ has done all. Christ has suffered all—all He asks of you is in faith to receive His glorious Sacrifice. Believe in Him and be saved!



It Is Finished



“It is finished!” loud He cries,
“It is finished!” while He dies.

What is finished? “*Full atonement!*” can it be?
While we know this is what Jesus meant when He said this, we often, in our own lives, think we still have to make ourselves presentable to God. In short, “Now that Christ has done His part, I now need to do my part.” We think we need to do something to make God happy.

We must root out this false thinking or way of living that often slips in. Faith is not doing what pleases God, hoping it makes Him happy. We may catch ourselves thinking we need to live a life pleasing to God in order to be truly saved and perfectly reconciled to Him.

It is true we need to live a life pleasing to God. But do not be deceived—the only life pleasing to God is the life lived in His Son. The only thing that pleases God is Jesus Christ. Why does God save sinners then? The reason is very simple. Jesus died to save sinners, and since “*The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand,*” (John 3:35) God saves sinners because of what Jesus did for them, not because of what we have done for ourselves.

Charles Wesley puts this concept into verse in his hymn, “Arise, My Soul, Arise.” It is written with such force. God’s relationship to His Son is displayed almost dramatically.

God saves sinners because of what Jesus did for them, not because of what we have done for ourselves.

A Theological View From Classic Hymns By Andrew Rocke

*Five bleeding wounds He bears, Received on
Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers, They strongly
plead for me
Forgive him, oh, forgive they cry, Forgive him,
oh, forgive they cry,
Nor let the ransomed sinner die.*

We see Jesus praying for sinners as He dies on the cross; praying that because of His wounds, God would forgive us. Next, we see God and how He responds to His Son:

*The Father hears Him pray, His dear anointed
One;
He cannot turn away The presence of His Son:
His Spirit answers to the blood, His Spirit an-
swers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.*

So why does God forgive us? God forgives us only because of the blood, work, and Person of Christ. “*Boasting excluded, no merit had I, Mercy had saved me, or else I must die.*” Therefore, our only hope before God is the blood and righteousness of Christ.

*When He shall come with trumpet sound, o,
may I then in Him be found; clothed in His
righteousness alone, faultless to stand before
the throne. On Christ the Solid Rock, I stand; all*

The Bible clearly states the only response which has ever pleased God is faith. “The just shall live by his faith.”

other ground is sinking sand.”

We know that God calls us to serve and obey Him, but we cannot, we must not let ourselves believe that this improves our standing with God. “*We love Him because He first loved us.*”

What kind of response do we make to God then? If we can do nothing for our salvation what do we do? The Bible clearly states the only response which has ever pleased God is faith. “*The just shall live by his faith.*”

Isaac Watts presents our response to God in two of his hymns. I shall give some of the verses from each of the hymns and then explain what I think he is trying to say:

“Alas and did my Savior bleed? And did my Sovereign die? Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I? Was it for crimes that I had done He groaned upon the tree? Amazing pity! Grace unknown! And love beyond degree! Well might the sun in darkness hide, and shut his glories in, when God, the mighty Maker, died, for man, the creature’s sin.”

How can we possibly respond to such love and grace? Can we even think that we can do anything that God would be pleased with compared to the suffering of His Son? How foolish and proud to think that we could. Now we will see the only response that can be made to God, the response of faith.

“Thus might I hide my blushing face, while His dear cross appears; dissolve my heart in thankfulness, and melt my eyes to tears. But drops of grief can ne’er repay the debt of love I owe; here, LORD, I give myself away; ’tis all that I can

do.”

How wonderful would it be if we could ever see the love of God so clear that it would make us all weep! That our heart would dissolve in thankfulness and our eyes melt to tears! Yet, “*Tears un-availing, no merit had I.*” Tears will not pay the debt of love nor can anything else we do.

Watts puts it this way: “*Here, Lord, I give myself away; ’tis all that I can do.*” All that we can do is to give ourselves to God, which is such a tiny thing; yet, it is all that we can do. Faith is definitely active. It is the putting of our lives entirely into the hand of God.

Imagine taking your heart and placing it in the hand of God and leaving every decision up to Him. That is faith. When our heart is in the hand of Christ, then He can wash it, cleanse it, and fill it with His Spirit. God is pleased with the work of His own hand.

To explain it in yet one more way we read in Watts other hymn:



*“When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory
died, My richest gain I count
but loss, And pour contempt
on all my pride. Forbid it
Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ
my God! All the vain things
that charm me most, I sac-
rifice them to His blood.
Were the whole realm of na-
ture mine, That were a pre-
sent far too small; Love so
amazing, so divine, Demands my
soul, my life, my all.”*

What remains for us to do? Nothing. God saves us by His work, yet it demands faith in the working of God.

Abraham’s faith cost him his home, his son, his will, his plans—it cost him everything. He had to put everything in God’s hand and trust Him. This is the response God asks. Trust Him, with your soul, your life, your all.

God does all the work. We hang on His word. Real grace and true faith in action.

The Iris

A Parable

By John Patrick Pazdziora



The knight walked beside his horse, his stride sure and free. The wind blew through his hair and beard, and the sun gleamed off his armor. The green clover spread beneath him; the blue sky spread above him. He walked to the top of the hill and stood gazing across the world. Then he lifted his voice and sang.

*“I stand upon the beginning of the world,
Where trees grow tall, and flowers bloom
But none of these is half so fair
As one plant in my garden.”*

And, almost as if in answer, he heard another voice sing.

*“I love the dear daisies
Because they’re so fine
But I love the Iris
Because it is mine.”*

The knight looked and saw a little girl sitting at the foot of the hill, among bundles of cut flowers. Her golden hair was tangled and long, her clothes torn and shabby. But she smiled and laughed and sang, arranging her flowers in bundles and bunches.

The knight strode down the hill. For a while, he stood before her, watching her little hands make bouquets and take them apart. She gave no heed to him, so at length he spoke.

“What are you doing, little one?”

The girl looked up and saw the light gleaming from his armor.

“I am tending my flowers,” she said.

“And wherefore do you that, little one?”

“Because they are mine,” she said, “I cut them.”
And she sang again.

*“I love the lilies:
Like diamonds they shine.
But I love the Iris
Because it is mine.”*

“Where is this iris you sing of?” asked the knight.

The little girl pointed. The knight saw among the lilies and daffodils and violets a great yellow iris, like a star upon a far horizon.

“Who gave you this iris, little one?”

“I gave it to myself,” said the little girl. “It was in my grandmamma’s garden, so I cut it, and now it is mine.”

“Did not your grandmother mind?”

“My grandmamma, she is dead.”

“You must be sad, little one.”

**The knight looked and saw
a little girl sitting at the foot
of the hill, among bundles of
cut flowers.**

The little girl looked up at him, wide eyed, and said, "Why are you sad?"

The knight hesitated, taken aback. Then he knelt upon the clover beside the little girl.

"I am sad because you are sad, my daughter."

"I am sad," the little girl repeated, puzzled. "But I have my iris."

"Do you not miss your grandmother?"

"I do not have a mother. I have my iris. That is much better." The little girl picked up the flower and kissed it.

The knight stood up. "Come with me, little one," he said. "You shall live in my castle and be my daughter, and my garden will be yours."

"You must like living in a castle," said the little girl, arranging her bouquets. "Would you like a bundle of flowers?"

"Yes," said the knight, "I would like that. And I would like you to see my garden."

The little girl handed him a cluster of violets. "There," she said. "They will stay with you always. I know; I cut them. But you mustn't crush them, but cuddle them—so." She held her iris to her cheek again.

The knight stood looking at her, compassionately, knowing full well the fate of her flowers.

"Will you not come with me to my garden, my daughter?"

"Who would look after my iris?" she asked. "Good day."

"God be with you, little one."

The knight mounted his horse, and rode away. But as he went, he heard her singing.

*"I love the violets
Most all of the time,
But I love the iris
Because it is mine."*

The knight rode far and long, doing great deeds and winning great victories. He fought armies and rescued villages, slew dragons and conquered giants. Many great feats he performed,

many great tourneys he won, and men spoke his name with honor.

When, for a while, his labors had ended, he found himself striding once more up the hillside. It was autumn now, and the sky was gray with clouds. Again, he reached the hilltop, looked about him, and sang.

*"I stand upon the end of the world,
Where flowers fade and trees are bare
But there are green and blossoming things
Still growing in my garden."*

And he heard again another song.

*"I crushed the pansies
All out in a line
But I'll tear the iris
Because it was mine."*

There sat the little girl at the foot of the hill, more ragged and dirty than before. All her flowers were wilted now, and she was pulling them apart, petal by petal.

"I liked your old song better," said the knight.

"My flowers would not stay," said the little girl. "Not even the iris. So I punish them—so!" She took up a flower and tore off the withered blossom.

"That will not help them," said the knight.

"I do not need help," said the little girl. "I shall hurt them!" And she threw the faded yellow iris down, and stamped on it.

"Why do you hurt them when they were once so beautiful?"

"The flowers have hurt me," she said. "They are not beautiful now."

"That is because you have cut them, my daughter," said the knight. "You cannot keep what you have already killed."

"I can keep my flowers; I cut them myself." She pushed her knuckles into her eyes and burst into tears.

The knight knelt beside her. "Do not weep for your flowers," he said. "For see—are not there flowers yet blooming in my garden?"

“That is because you have cut them, my daughter,” said the knight. “You cannot keep what you have already killed.”

“I will not see,” the little girl sobbed. “My iris will not come back. It is dead, like my grandmother is dead. And they will not come back again. I cannot find any garden now.”

The knight put his arm about the little girl and drew her onto his knee. “It is autumn, my daughter,” he said, “and perchance we mourn the fading of the world. Yet that is only a moment, for the world will blossom, and the flowers return.”

“How do you know?” said the little girl. “You cannot know.”

“I know,” said the knight, “because each year in my garden the flowers return in the spring.”

“Will my flowers come back?” asked the little girl.

“Those you have had this summer will not,” said the knight, “for you have plucked them from the ground.”

“So I will weep,” cried the little girl. “See, the flowers will not return. Why do you not weep?”



“Because I have a garden,” said the knight, “and my flowers do not die like yours have done, but stay ever living, fading only to blossom again. Will you not come with me, now? You shall be my daughter, and the garden will be yours.”

“But what will become of my iris?”

“What has become of it? You have thrown it away and stamped on it. But come.” He rose, and held out his hand to her. “I will show you my garden.”

For a moment the little girl looked at her iris, withered and crushed, its shreds of beauty fast fading, and then looked up at the knight and slipped her hand in his.

“I will come, father.”

The knight put the little girl before him on his charger, and they rode over the hill into the sunrise. The little girl could see before them the castle that was her home, and the gardens that withered not. And as they rode, they lifted up their voices and sang.

*“Though trees shall fade and flowers die,
And seasons change beneath the sky,
Though summer pass, still joy is ours
In gardens rich with living flowers.”*

Thoughts From Oswald Chambers

You say—“But God has been unwise to choose me, because there is nothing in me; I am not of any value.” That is why He chose you. As long as you think there is something in you, He cannot choose you because you have ends of your own to serve.

We are apt to say that because a man has natural ability, therefore he will make a good Christian. It is not a question of our equipment but of our poverty, not of what we bring with us, but of what God puts into us; not a question of natural virtues or strength of character, knowledge, and experience—all that is of no avail in this matter. The only thing that avails is that we are taken up into the big compelling of God and made his comrades. The comradeship of God is made up out of men who know their poverty. He can do nothing with the man who thinks that he is of use to God.

As Christians we are not out for our own cause at all, we are out for the cause of God, which can never be our cause. We do not know what God is after, but we have to maintain our relationship with Him whatever happens. We must never allow anything to injure our relationship with God; if it does get injured we must take time and get it put right. The main thing about Christianity is not the work we do, but the relationship we maintain and the atmosphere produced by that relationship. That is all God asks us to look after, and it is the one thing that is being continually assailed.



Perhaps some will wonder about our theme. I must admit I wondered too, when I first considered the idea. For one thing, the New Covenant is something we hear so much about in our churches and among our friends. For another, Abide has tried to steer away from doctrinal aspects of the various themes we address. But it is for this very reason we decided to pursue this theme.

For many of us the truth of the New Covenant has existed only as a doctrine in our lives. That was all it was to me for many years—a postulate—accepted as truth, yet unproven in practical experience.

This truth is so central, so paramount to our Christian lives. The term *testament* or, as used in this issue, *covenant*, has several meanings. One is “a statement of beliefs; in Biblical references, a compact between God and man.” But this is not the most common use of the term. The second definition provides more revelation: “Something that serves as tangible proof or evidence.”

Here we see Christ's meaning when He says “*Abide in Me that ye may bear much fruit.*” The truth of the New Covenant encompasses more than reconciliation. It extends to the words, “*Lo, I am with you always...*” It includes that prophesy “*Greater works than these you shall do...*” The New Covenant is the life of abiding—that indwelling of God's Spirit in man. This truth is the basis for our Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) and our Great Commandment (John 15:12). Without an *experiential* knowledge of this truth, these are both impossible tasks.

I cannot emphasize the importance of this truth enough. Embrace it, rest in it, and live in it. In upcoming issues, we will be turning to themes that often excite us more—missions and life-callings, but these lose their meaning unless we have both understood and appropriated for ourselves the truth and power of the New Covenant.

It is hard for me to believe it has been almost five years since God gave Tyler and I an idea for a magazine for youth. After fourteen issues, my vision has only grown stronger. Yet, I often wonder if Abide is fulfilling its mission.

This spring, I was seriously considering laying down this ministry. We had no funds or submissions on hand, and had had none for some time. I took this to the Lord in serious prayer. I asked God to show me within a week whether to press on or abandon the project. By the end of the week, three donations and another note of encouragement had come in.

It is almost a year since we sent out our last issue. This is due to three factors: lack of funds, lack of material, and absence of editors. We have taken steps to address the last two. After consistently submitting articles for the past year, Eric and John Pazdziora agreed to join our staff as writers. Rebecca Rocke, my faithful sister and layout consultant, has been recognized as an editor. These three will enable us to continue operation throughout the school year.

As to the lack of funds, five of the six staff members are attending school. We cannot cover much of the operating costs at this time, and we will not begin charging for subscriptions. I would love to see this journal go on for a long time. However, Abide Journal is only a tool in God's hands. If it ceases to be of value to Him, it is time to lay it down. We believe that God will provide the funds necessary for production as long as He has a use for Abide.

If you have been blessed or challenged by Abide, please let us know. It is a big encouragement to us to hear from you. For the first time in three years, we received no submissions for this issue. If God is working in your life, tell someone! It doesn't have to be us, but don't keep silent. Remember Acts 4:20: “*For we cannot but speak of the things which we have heard and seen.*”



I see a little child whose eager hands
 Search the thick stream that drains the crowded street
 For possible things hid in its current slow.
 Near by, behind him, a great palace stands,
 Where kings might welcome nobles to their feet.
 Soft sounds, sweet scents, fair sights there only go—
 There the child's father lives, but the child does not know.

On, eager, hungry, busy-seeking child,
 Rise up, turn round, run in, run up the stair.
 Far in a chamber from rude noise exiled,
 Thy father sits, pondering how thou dost fare.
 The mighty man will clasp thee to his breast:
 Will kiss thee, stroke the tangles of thy hair,
 And lap thee warm in fold on fold of lovely rest.

Lord, loosen in me the hold of visible things;
 Help me to walk by faith and not by sight;
 I would, through thickest veils and coverings,
 See into the chambers of the living light.
 Lord, in the land of things that swell and seem,
 Help me to walk by the other light supreme,
 Which shows thy facts behind man's vaguely hinting dream.

In The Next Issue...

Our Hearts: From The Staff

The Return

Zechariah 3

Once I in filthy garments stood
 Before my holy Lord
 And felt ashamed to see His blood
 And trembled at his word,

My righteousness of little gain,
 My works but idle dust.
 I'd lived unworthy of His pain
 And broken every trust.

But in my Father's gentle voice
 I heard no stern reproach
 Nor sorrow at His fatal choice
 To love me overmuch.

He bid His servants standing by
 To bring Him festal robes;
 He said, "My son's returned, and I
 Would have him richly clothed.

And at His feet I knelt and wept,
 His glory round me shone.
 His richest chamber had He kept
 For my returning home.

—JPPazdziora, 2004

**For this is My
covenant unto them,
when I shall take away
their sins.**

Romans 11:27

In This Issue... Stayed Upon Jehovah...The New Covenant...It Is Finished

Abide

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