“What Hath God Wrought?”

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J. N. Darby

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Numbers 23:23 (Notes of an Address) The thought here is that our state should answer to the state into which we have been brought. Where the conscience is good this is the case: we enjoy the thing into which we have been brought in the measure in which we enter into it. The soul must be broken down; the pride of man, that would m eet God face to face, must be broken down -- that pride which is the worst of all. (I am not speaking of brutish sins.) In his natural course man has no idea that sin separates him from God. But when w e come to righteousness, it is another thing. We all know we have sinned, and that heaven is a holy place, and yet we expect to get there. Call it mercy, or what you will, but man would rather be som ething else than what he is if going to be judged now. The conscience must be awakened by a present revelation of God. The light comes in, and m akes every thing m anifest, and puts us just as we are in the presence of God. There is no pride in the conscience, when we are before God; pride of heart is just being without God altogether. Whom am I to be afraid of if God is not in all my thoughts? When I have to do with God there is fear, right fear; that is the beginning of wisdom. There is never any pride in the cconscience when we have to do with God. These verses we find the most absolute justification; G od sees no sin at all. When you look at it as it is here -- an absolute judgment outside of what we have done -- what hath God wrought? I do not prescribe any particular course of experience, but the pride of heart must be gone to enjoy this. All the failures of the wilderness had gone before this. (Ch. 23.) Could the enemy, the accuser of the brethren, take up all that Israel had done, and make it a barrier to their entering the land -- hinder our getting into heaven? -- for this is heaven for us. H e could not. (Deut. 9.) They were there at the same moment as when this question was raised by the accuser, Can you go in or not? Well, what is Moses’ account? Incessant murmuring. Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.

What is the normal state of a Christian? The Christian’s path is clearly living up to his privileges -- Christ our life, walking in the Spirit, accepted in him. We must either be before God in the lowliness of the sense of the grace of God, or meet a God who breaks us down. What is man’s place with God? -- Lowliness. And that being so, all the man’s delight is being nothing, and receiving everything.

The judgment of the Spirit in a saint is another thing from the judgment about him. By the Spirit of God I see such a thing was not meekness, no gentleness on my part. The Spirit of God judges me according to what I am; that is all right, but when God judges me it is according to what Christ is. The Spirit of God judges everything in us that is contrary to God; but when the question arises with the accuser, you see what God's judgment actually, absolutely, is about me, and that is according to what Christ is and what He has wrought. "God is not a man that he should lie." All the hostility comes to nothing. Why? Because it met God (v. 21); He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. Why, Moses had seen nothing else! In one sense God had seen it all. Why has He not seen it? Because He has put it away Him self. There is no such thing seen when you come to the judgment of God about us. It was not that He allowed the evils. He had humbled the people, and proved them, to know w hat was in their hearts. They had gone all through the wilderness thus. He had chastened them about their sins. You get all God's gracious dealings with them in Deut. 8. But here it rests u pon G od Himself, and I find Christ there, the Lamb that was slain, in the presence of God. Suppose I am broken down, and humbled, and go to God about it, what do I find there? I find the Lamb slain there; a man there. What tale does that tell? That Christ has finished the work and gone back there, and put our sins away. Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. If I come at the beginning or at the end, I find Christ there. God does not see iniquity in me. Why? Becau se Christ has put it aw ay. It is -- what God has wrought, not what I have wrought. He undertook that work, and there I find that by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Christ could not allow sin. Well, then, did He put me away? No; He put my sin away! We cannot judge ourselves too much and too earnestly. The converted man loves holiness. The question is now, Is God satisfied with what He has wrought? That, of course, is simple. It over-rides all experience. Experience is the wo rk of the Holy Spirit in us, but that is desert work. Thou hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed. Experience is right; but when you com e to the end of all experience, it is -what has God wrought? Num. 24:6: "As the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted." W ell, He has wrought in our hearts that we should follow H im in righteousness and

true holiness. When God has wrought, that is the effect. He has taken m e in hand, brought me out of Egypt. Who is to condemn? Condemn yourself when you are wrong. But wh at matter who condemns if God justifies; that is the true side. Are you satisfied with yourself? Then you do not know G od at all. Satan may accuse, so as to bring chastisem ent for our good, bu t not judgment. Num . 23:24. N ow you get strength. "Behold the people shall rise up as a great lion." There I get power. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death {Rom. 8:2}. Consequent on this w e get pow er against the evil. Reader, is your heart or conscience on that groun d? W hen you stand before the judgment seat of Christ, are you there in your heart according to what God has wrought? or are you looking to the ground of your acceptance for what

you have done yourself? A re you judging of yourself, by yourself, down in the wilderness, or by God, up in the mount? It is God that justifies; the whole thing is God's work; that is a blessed thing. Our hearts are able to rest and see there is an end, an utter condemnation of all that is of the old Adam state. The whole thing for the heart to rest in is, "What hath God wrought." The human heart kicks against that, for man likes to be something. The more we look into it, the more we shall see the value of it. Let us judge ourselves, and walk according to what God has wrought in practical holiness. I am g oing to be like Him. W ell, I must be like Him here, bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. The Lord break us down thoroughly; emp ty us of ourselves, of all thought that we can do anything; and keep us in His presence, that we may know that joy now; that we m ay stand there in peace! Helps in Things Concerning Himself, 1892, vol. 2, pp. 40-45.