

in the: "I in them and Thou in Me." A unity sealed of God.

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"FOR THE SPIRIT OF GOD RESTETH  
UPON YOU."

It was a wonderful word which Jesus spake—one which still pours balm into many wounds, and revives courage when ready to faint; a word which has made heroes and martyrs, and has strengthened and comforted them—when at the end of the beatitudes he said: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."

This word reaches farther than the prophecy, that prison and martyrdom awaited the disciples. These would be limited to certain periods in the struggle of Jesus' church. But what is not bound to any age, but always goes on, is the malice and hatred, the mockery, scorn and disdain, from which the world can not restrain itself, whenever the Lord's people gather strength to oppose it and courage to resist it. Persecution unto blood is exceptional. This other persecution, which with the lancet of scorn and abuse, strikes at the heart, goes on in all ages. And therefore, this beatitude of the Lord enters so deeply into our human life. It betrays the tender sympathy of Jesus for what awaited his own. It finds application, now here, now there, every day. No day passes but it imparts courage and comfort. It does not mean

that we should defiantly meet the world that is offended at Christ, but it aims to inspire the disciples of the Lord to stand their ground when they would retreat, and to remain unmoved in the face of slander and disdain.

But do not forget that this word has its dangerous side, because it has often been misquoted and misapplied. This depends upon that which in your actions and words makes people disdain and persecute you, and to say all manner of evil against you. It may be true zeal for the cause of the Lord, but it may also be exaggeration, eccentricity or loveless bigotry; or, worse yet, it may be the gap that yawns between your confession and practice, hypocrisy which, in part, disfigures your life. And even if in the latter case the reason of resisting the world may be zeal for the cause of Jesus, yet, in fact, so much of self mingles with it that the "for my sake" with which Jesus conditioned his beatitude, only partially applies to you. Yea, it may, and does happen, that the mockery, disdain, and slander of the world, is invited almost so exclusively by your own sinful alloy, that even not a few of your fellow-believers are bound to take the part of the world against you, and far from calling you blessed in Jesus' name, feel instinctively that your example has hampered rather than helped the cause of the Lord.

Understand this well. It does not mean to say that you are only right, when the world honors your loveableness of character, acknowledges

your honesty and uprightness, and pays homage to what is called your philanthropic and ethical nature. The world has demonstrated this differently in the case of Jesus himself. When we do nothing else in the name of Jesus than what the world can praise, that which is characteristic in our confession and in our life is gone. On ethical grounds nothing could be said against the Apostles of the Lord, and yet the world has disdained them, and has not rested until it had hounded them to the death. In our confession, life and zeal there must always be that which the world can not tolerate, which offends it and compels it to resist. Only, what may never be wanting, if the beatitude of the Lord may be applied to us, is what Peter (I-4:14) states as follows: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you." This must be so. The Spirit of the Lord must rest upon you, the Spirit of the Lord must speak both from what you do and from what you leave undone. It must not be against you, but against the Spirit of the Lord, that the fierce anger of the world turns itself. Then you are reviled for Christ's sake, and from this disdain springs the blessedness which your heart craves.

The question here again is whether you are "near unto God," for when you are near unto God, God is near unto you, and then the world turns not against you, but against God, and only against you, in the measure in which you are near unto

God, and God is found near unto you. The proof of this is, that as soon as you let go your hold on God, the world is ready at once to turn its scorn into praise, and its disdain into applause. There is undoubtedly hatred against the neighbor in the sin of the world. This began with Cain. But only insofar as the personal hatred of egotism operates against one's neighbor, the fire of this hatred is brought to burst out into flame by the passion for personal profit, by material interests, by the struggle for position, by willfulness and jealousy. This hatred of the world is not turned against Christian people in particular, but operates at large in the world itself.

But in the lowest parts of the sinful human heart there is no hatred against the neighbor, but against God. Thus it began with Satan, and thus he has transferred it into the hearts of mankind. This hatred against God may in a general way express itself covertly, and only rarely turn into open denial of God and blasphemy. But it is this hatred, which propels the stream of the life of the nations. The never-satisfied passion for emancipation. The ambition to be one's own lord and master, and to own no God as Lord and Master above self. To be as God and to be God himself, and unwillingness to bend the knee, is the evil germ from which all sin grows. And because the Lord's people oppose this, and loudly plead for God's majesty, the world turns on these people, to stop their mouth, to rob them of influence, and to doom them to inactivity.

But the fire of this hatred only breaks out fiercely and unsparingly, when the world perceives that it is no more you who speak of God and bear witness for him, but that the living God himself speaketh in you, because he dwelleth in you, and when for this reason it can strike in you at God himself and at his Christ. When the world perceives that the spirit of the Lord rests upon you, it can not tolerate you, and puts the choice before you between letting go of God and its deadly hatred, which shall not rest, until it has spiritually or morally destroyed you.

To be near unto God, so near, that he has made your heart his temple and has come to you with the Christ, in order to take up his abode with you in the Holy Ghost, is glorious, blessed, sweet mysticism of the soul; but there is more. The heart can be no bushel to hide the light that shines in you. When the Spirit of God truly rests upon you, that light shines out, and he who hardens himself against that light will come not at once but gradually to discover, that you are one who stands in contact with the living God, and that he who has dealings with you, of himself comes to have dealings with that holy power which is the Lord's. And then opposition follows, not on account of secondary interests, not because of accidentals, but because of what is highest and most glorious in you.

When Asaph sang of the blessedness of being near unto God, his mind was engaged with this antithesis between the world and God. This

antithesis can not be separated from the nearness to God. The nearer we are to the world, the farther away we are from God. And the nearer we are to God, the greater the distance between us and the world. If it were possible for us to go out from the world, after we have come near unto God, there would no conflict break out in the heart and no hatred in the world against us. But this cannot be. "I pray thee O Father, not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that in the world thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). The grave significance of the Christian position is, that with God in the heart, life has to be lived in the midst of a world, the heart and life of which reacts against God. It has indeed been tried, as Christian so to appear, that the world hands out a passport and grants you an honorary diploma as one who "though Christian, can be tolerated;" but this seductive exhibition of favor is not bought at anytime, save at the price of dulling the sharp edges of our confession.

If the world could make such separation between you and the God whom you profess and whom you serve, that it could prosecute its opposition to God without touching you, it would readily do so. The world still feels itself bound to you as man. But with true followers of Christ, this can not be done. They are so near unto God, that the eye of the world discovers no more distance. And therefore it attacks you personally by making the most of anything wrong it discovers in you, by mocking at every

unsanctified utterance, which is observed in you, and then falsely and slanderously saying all manner of evil against you. To be near unto God and to bear this trouble, belong together. In such a way however that it must never be courted; the world must never be incited to it by your desire after the martyr crown. Only what is altogether natural and springs up of itself is inwardly true and has merit before God. And then blessedness ensues not only later on but is already tasted in the midst of oppression, and then God's angels see and God's children perceive already here, that in the midst of trouble the Spirit of glory, the Spirit of God resteth upon you.

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### ONE AFTER THIS MANNER, AND ANOTHER AFTER THAT.

There is an evil among devout friends of the Lord, which must be resisted. In spiritual things each desires to impose a law of his own upon the other. Piety is said to be bound to a given form. One's own way of piety must be the standard for every one else. Minor differences may be tolerated, but in the main the same sort of piety must manifest itself in all God's children alike. And so it follows that the piety which they practice is the standard for all their spiritual examination and criticism.

That pride may have a part in this, can not be doubted. But in this instance, at least at