

ON WALKING WITH GOD

by John Angell James (1785-1859)

“Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.”

—Genesis 6:9

HOW lamentable the fact that so few are to be found who are engaged in this high Christian privilege. We read that Enoch and Noah walked with God (Gen 5:24; 6:9). It must be allowed that many do walk with God *professionally*,¹ some from conviction that it is right and reasonable. They believe there is a God, that His Word should be obeyed—but they know Him not in Christ, they are not united to Him, they have no access to Him, have no desire to have fellowship with Him. Some from education and parental persuasion walk with God in His ordinances, appear outwardly amiable in temper and deportment, but are not created anew in Christ. Many out of form and from a self-righteous spirit, hope to attain heaven and happiness after death by their diligent observance of religious duties.

But the children of God do walk with God *in reality*. And upon this truly interesting subject the attention of the reader will now be called. We connect the idea of “walking” with “life”; and we cannot walk with God unless we have life: spiritual life from Him [in] a union to Him. Few pages of the sacred Scripture can be turned over but some form or figure is to be met with that sets forth the connection between Christ and His Church:

He a fullness, but they empty vessels to receive Him;
He a great High Priest, but His children always in circumstances that need His sympathy and help;
He the Lord our Righteousness (Jer 23:6), and they are naked;
He the great and good Physician, and they the wounded;
He the faithful Friend, and they the friendless;
He the supplying Head of life, and they the dependent members;
He the fountain of light, and they dark chaos;
He the all-sufficient God, and they the poor and needy.

To walk with God, there must be a *knowledge of Christ in covenant*. Mankind has sunk into the very dregs of darkness and ignorance, and all the law of learning helps them not to the knowledge of God in a saving way: a power all-divine is required to rend the veil that covers the minds of men. This is the great work of God to do, which is commenced at regeneration² and carried on by Him that began it. Such are brought blessedly to know that God is their God; that He Who hath loved, chosen, and given them to Christ, He is a God Who pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin. They are favoured with a knowledge of Christ as God over all—forever blessed—as their only Saviour, as their only salvation, as their advocate on high, as their law-fulfilling righteousness, and as their fountain open for sin and uncleanness. They walk with Him by faith, and He makes Himself known to them as He does not to the world. God the Holy Spirit is revealed unto them as the Quickener and Comforter. Saints feel much deadness, darkness, and distress, and He kindly revives and invigorates by dropping as the dew upon their parched soul. He glorifies Jesus in His wonderful Person and work. He mercifully assists the soul to seek an interest in the dear Saviour, to run to Jesus for refuge, to take shelter under His atoning sacrifice, to plead His precious blood for pardon. He carries on the ordained begun work of grace in the believer, and lodges him at last in glory—long ago prepared among those He loved and worshipped with here below, and now no more to part.

They who walk with God will meet with *much opposition*, for they will oppose the course of this world in its fashions and friendships. They will have to maintain a war perpetually against all the sinful solicitations of the

¹ **professionally** – saying that they believe in the Christian faith, but who do not have new hearts and are not truly saved.

² **regeneration** – God’s act of creating spiritual life in a sinner by the Holy Spirit’s power; the new birth.

flesh. They will be decidedly hostile to the Prince of the power of the air, their former master. Their opposition will bring a sea of sorrow upon them, and they will have to bear a continual testimony against the formality of nominal Christians. And all who walk with God dare not [make] a confederacy³ with those who deny the divinity of Christ; who set up man's righteousness for justification before God; who contend that every creature has a power to save himself; who deny the fundamental truths of God; who can indulge in sin, bend the knee to Baal, or question the necessity of the Holy Spirit's grace in effectual calling.

All who walk with God *must be reconciled to Him*, [having] the enmity of their hearts subdued—and in mercy it is done. Every gospel sermon is a proclamation of peace. The great Apostle of the Gentiles, Paul, had a most extensive view of the doctrine of human depravity, and painfully felt the causes and consequences of it, but was brought through grace to believe in Him Who had removed both—whereby peace was made. In his sublime epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, he writes elaborately upon the law-enmity on the part of God and the heart-enmity on the part of man. [He] sweetly sets forth the great Daysman (Job 9:33) Who laid His hands upon both, and brought about an everlasting reconciliation for the elect of God. None can be at peace with heaven but those who live by faith upon the gracious Peacemaker, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has levelled the high partition wall, and blotted out the handwriting that stood against us (Eph 2:14; Col 2:14).

Walking with God is a *distinguishing mark of son-ship* and a seal of adoption, a proof of Jehovah's favour—for none but those Christ shed His blood for will be indulged with this privilege. Such was Abraham and Hezekiah; they walked before the Lord, and with Him here—and are now with Him and will be forever. Children walk and dwell with their parents, have special claims upon them—and friend with friend—so with all related to God. There are special privileges enjoyed, peculiar honours conferred, distinguishing blessings bestowed; they have food to eat the world knows not of. They wear robes and ornaments far more costly than gold can purchase, and have a merit in them that they admit the wearer into the court of heaven above, to sit with the King upon His throne and join in all the pure worship of that better world.

None but those who *love God supremely* can walk with Him, and because they are first loved by Him as the cause, they love Him as the effect. We love the company of those who esteem us, but saints love God for His rich mercy, His infinite wisdom, His boundless power [and] faithfulness, His goodness prepared for the poor; for the invaluable blessings of the ancient covenant, secured by oath and promise; for a ransom price for the liberation of captives; for a meetness⁴ to enjoy all given grace; for the ministration of angels; for electing, undeserved love; for the many unexpected visits of mercy paid; for the faithful footsteps of providence in leading to hear the glorious gospel, opening the heart to receive it—while many are left to oppose, to revile, and to reject it; to persecute its heralds, to slander those who love it, and to vent their enmity against the Author and Object of it.

To walk with God in amity⁵ we shall need *the continual influence of the Holy Spirit* to quicken, incline, and strengthen us in the way. We are like a garden, often needing watering; and like little children, we shall require food continually. We are often shut up, and shall need enlargement. We are prone to wander like sheep, to wither like grass; and none but the Divine Comforter can restore and invigorate. He must unseal the book of God, and explain the heavenly mysteries; give an open ear to hear the Shepherd's voice, and an open heart to receive Him and His love. The abandoned and backslider He only can reclaim and lead to the cleansing blood of Him Who prays for murdering men: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luk 22:34). He converts incorrigible sinners, and alarms those who thought themselves safe while dreaming in danger. He never quits the heart where He once takes up His abode, nor lets go the brand that He has snatched from the burning (Zec 3:2), but will place it before the throne of God to burn and blaze in bliss forever. But it will be found impossible to travel in heaven's highway without this constant Companion; and we are exhorted not to grieve this Sealer up to the day of redemption.

Those who walk with God *cannot be satisfied without friendship with God*. We read in the history of Abraham that God talked with him. And it is one of the high and happy privileges of the saints to hear the voice of God. "He will speak peace unto his people," says David (Psa 85:8). Sometimes He speaks terror by His Law, and the blood of sprinkling speaks pardon and purity (Heb 12:24). Jacob could not be content until a blessing was spoken to his heart: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Gen 32:26), and Christ's sheep hear Christ's voice (Joh 10:27). He passes by and says, "Live!" (Eze 16:6); and millions once dead in sin have heard Him say,

³ **confederacy** – alliance; association.

⁴ **meetness** – fitness; suitability.

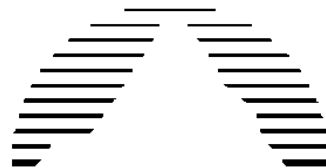
⁵ **amity** – friendship; harmony; good understanding.

“Arise, and follow Me!”; and drowsy, sleepy saints He addresses with, “Awake, thou sleeper, arise and call upon thy God.” National judgments⁶ have a voice to warn man to seek a city more solid than earth can afford, and friendship more firm than can be found below. Death is continually sounding an alarm, “Depart, this is not your rest.” Worldly prosperity, with all its uncertainties, cries, “Happiness is not in me!” But the true Vine—Christ—cries, “Trust in Me and I will give you pleasures without pain, wine and milk without price, that shall cheer the soul now and forever, where there shall be joy forever more.” Here the spiritual senses are sweetly refreshed. As beggars dressed in the robes of God’s righteousness, we forget the trials of this lower land and soar and sing of Him Who ever loved us and made choice of us for jewels to set in His diadem⁷—for He came from heaven to this wicked vale to raise us to a throne. He calls us, walks with us, and talks with us, and is gathering us home in succession to be where He is, to behold His glory for evermore. “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.” (Rev 1:5-6). ∞

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⁶ **National judgments** – God’s judgments upon nations through wars and natural disasters.

⁷ **diadem** – royal crown.