



Of God

*An Address delivered by George Müller at the Conference of Christians at Clifton,
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The passage from which the subject has been taken is evidently the 19th verse of the 5th chapter of the first epistle of John, which I will read: "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" or the Wicked One. The first point suggested to us is this, - "We know that we are of God." We have then to ask ourselves, - "Do we know we are of God?" How can I come to this knowledge? Not, by some particular impressions I may have had! Not, by waiting for some dream, or some powerful application of a certain passage! But we have, on the ground of what we find in the Holy Scriptures, to settle the matter. As about all spiritual things we have to come to the Divine testimonies, and only to the Divine testimonies, to settle matters; so regarding this point in particular also, if I am to know I am "of God," I must be able to put my hand on what is written in the Holy Scriptures, and by the Divine testimonies settle the matter, that I am "of God."

The next point is, - What does it mean, to be "of God." The connection in which this verse stands will teach us the meaning of the opposite. "We know we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the Wicked One." Naturally we all belong to the latter part of the verse. We are all naturally in the Wicked One; that is, by nature we are the children of wrath, the children of Satan - the devil. This is to be clearly before us, that we are not naturally the children of God, but the people of the devil, serving him, being led about by him according to his will, and our hearts naturally being in sympathy with the evil one, obeying him, and acting according to his bidding. This is our state naturally, and thus, therefore, we are doing things contrary to the mind of God. We seek to please ourselves, we serve the world, we serve the flesh, we obey Satan instead of obeying the word of God. That is our state naturally. Now the very opposite of this is to be "of God."

How then may we be "of God?" First, we have to trace it all up to the councils and purposes of God from eternity. He did choose us in Christ. He did apprehend us in Christ. He predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His dear Son. He arranged from eternity for our salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. But all this, while true, would not give us the enjoyment of our being "of God," the blessedness practically of our being "of God"; and, therefore, in order to this, we have to obey the Gospel, we have to believe the Gospel, we have to put our trust for the salvation of our souls in the atonement made by the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is through faith in the Gospel, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, through receiving Jesus, through resting on Him alone, that the enjoyment comes of our being "of God" that the blessedness thereof comes to our souls. We are, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, "begotten again," according to the 3rd verse in the 1st chapter of the gospel of John: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power," - the right, the title, the privilege, the blessing - "to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Thus we become the children of God, as to enjoyment, as to the power, as to the blessedness, as to the practical enjoyment, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we have to believe the testimony of God regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, we have to submit to the Gospel, we have to receive the atonement, and to rest on it alone as the ground of our acceptance. Again, in Gal. iii. 26, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." That is, the enjoyment, the blessedness, the realization of our having been predestinated of God, and chosen in Christ Jesus, comes through faith. Again, in the 1st verse of the 5th chapter of 1st John, we have this portion, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." I have therefore to believe that the despised, the rejected, the crucified Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, the Saviour, and I have to depend on Him as such. And this settles the matter that I am "born of God," that I am "born again," that I am "begotten again," that I am a "child of God."

Now comes, in connection with this, the responsibility of all such. "Born of God!" A "child of God!" ,Oh, what it implies!

"Our God and Father, we beseech Thee that by the power of the Holy Ghost Thou wouldst help us to seek to enter into it! O God, our Father, we Thy children know a little of it, and we Thy children can speak a little of it, and can enjoy it in some little measure, - that we are Thy children, that we are "of God." But all this is yet but little. We know little of the power of being "of God," of being Thy children, and we pray and entreat Thee, by the power of the Holy Ghost, so deeply write this on our hearts, so deeply impress it on our hearts, so deeply affect our hearts by the consideration of being "of God," of being Thy children, that from this evening and henceforward it shall be uppermost in our hearts to our last moment on earth. We ask it for Christ's sake.

Now, for a few moments, let us ponder this. We are "of God," we are the children of God, not nominally, but really, for we partake of the Divine nature. We have obtained spiritual life, whilst once we were dead in trespasses and sins. And this life is eternal life. We shall not perish. We are really the children of God. What a wondrous blessing this! "And if children," according to the Scriptures, "then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs through Christ." Now, let the soul enter into it, - I am a child of God. Oh, how the things of this world vanish as nothing - as nothing in comparison with what I have already as a son of the Most High, as to what I shall have in heaven - all as nothing in comparison with what I am as a child of God! All this world, with its honours, with its pleasures, with its grandeur of every kind, - all is as nothing in comparison with what I have, and with what I am as a child of God. And therefore what we have to do, beloved fellow-saints, is this: to seek in our inmost souls to enter into it, and in childlike simplicity believe everything God has in the riches of His grace revealed concerning us as His children, as His heirs, as joint-heirs with Christ. When the soul contemplates this, - that Jesus will, ere long, come again and take us to Himself, that "where He is, there we shall be also," that He will share the crown with us, and the throne, and we shall be engaged in the judgment of the world with Him, - when the soul enters into it, how the heart is filled with gratitude to God, and says, "What can I do in return to Thee, my God and Father, for having done so much for me!" It only needs the realization of what we receive as the children of God. In a former address at one of these Conferences, I mentioned how it wrought with regard to my own soul. It was in February, 1830, that for the first time my inmost soul was powerfully wrought upon by the realization of what it was to be a child of God. I had been a believer for many years, but I had not, up to that time, sought to enter into what it was; and I cannot tell you what an impression it made on me. Oh, how it deadened me to the world! Oh, how it filled my heart with love to my heavenly Father, with love, to the Lord Jesus Christ through whose atoning death I was brought into this blessed position, by the power of the Holy Ghost, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now let me affectionately urge my fellow-believers to seek to enter into it, to understand it, to pray over it. And ask God graciously to be pleased to open your hearts fully to receive what He has been pleased to say regarding us as His children.

Then one word more. Are we all "of God?" We are met here as the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is the fullest reason to believe that by far the greater number here present are such. But, peradventure, there may be a few here present - indeed one has reason to fear there are a few - who as yet are not "of God." Let me affectionately say one word to such. Oh! how long will you continue in this state, seeing one Conference after another passing away, and yet remaining of "the world which lieth in the Wicked One." And as year after year passes, and you are at last brought to the close of life, what then, if not "of God?" Be assured, if you pass out of the world as not being "of God," that is, without having rested for the salvation of your soul on the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not be where Jesus is, you will not be in the Father's house, you will not spend a happy eternity with the people of God with whom you are now meeting. But we long that you too may be "of God." We wish to spend a happy eternity with you. We are not satisfied to meet you only at these happy Conference Meetings, we want to meet you in heaven. But this cannot be except your heart is changed by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You must own you are poor miserable sinners. You must pass sentence on yourselves. You must accept what God has so graciously provided for you in the Gospel, in the gift of His Son. But one peradventure says, "You have been telling us that believers are "of God" primarily as regards election and predestination, and I can do nothing to save myself, but must wait till God does it for me." This is Satan's trap for the poor sinner. It is quite true that you cannot elect yourself; it is quite true that you cannot predestinate yourself; it is quite true that you cannot save yourself. Quite true! But

what God expects is, that you should receive, as a poor lost sinner, what He has so graciously provided for you in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you say, "Oh, I wish I could believe!" well, I grant it, you cannot if left to yourself. But you can groan out to God, "Lord, help me to believe." If you say – "My heart is full of sin, and I cannot cleanse it," - I grant it. But you can groan out, "Help me, O Lord; look on me, a poor, wretched, guilty sinner, through the Lord Jesus Christ;" and as truly as you desire anything from God, will you find He is more ready to bestow the blessing than you are to receive it. Look at the whole life of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ. Did any ever come to Him really desiring blessing, and be denied? Assuredly not! Whether they came as regarding sight, or the use of the arm, or the power to walk; whatever it was, He always received them. It was only the Pharisees and Scribes, those who were full and did not want to be blessed by Him, but who only came to tempt Him and to set Him at nought, who went away without His blessing. But the poor, the wretched, the miserable obtained blessings at His hands. So come you, poor, wretched, miserable ones, and pour out your groans before God; and tell Him at the same time that you want Christ, that you want to be saved by the Lord Jesus Christ; and ask Him pitifully and compassionately to help you, and assuredly you will not be sent empty away. Then, when you have found Jesus, tell other poor sinners what a precious Saviour you have found.

And let us, fellow-believers, seek individually, just in our measure, and according to the ability and opportunity God gives to us, to spread the truth, one in one way, one in another, and all seek to do something to spread the truth. If all cannot, in the like measure, be actively engaged, all can give themselves to prayer, and that is the most mighty weapon we can wield to the praise and honour and glory of God.



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Registered Charity no. 1066832 Company no. 3471812
Registered Office: Müller House, 7 Cotham Park, Bristol BS6 6DA
Tel: 0117 924 5001 Email: admin@mullers.org