

THE SPLIT ROCK

By Paul Penno Jr.

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Matthew 6:6¹

Long ago a faithful missionary wanted to give the gospel to a tribe of people in South America who at that time didn't know how to read. Pastor Stahl had preached to them, and they could see he was kind and he loved them. They wanted him to stay and teach them the truth about God and His word, the Bible.

But he couldn't stay with them. So he promised them he would send a teacher who would come in his stead, and teach them the same Good News message he had been teaching.

But then they began thinking. How could they know that someone coming who says he is sent by Pastor Stahl is really the true one? How could they be sure they would not be deceived? If he wrote a letter and even signed it, they couldn't read it; so how could they know, they asked him.

Pastor Stahl thought a few moments, wondering what to do. Then he got an idea—that the Holy Spirit must have given him.

He picked up an ordinary stone. Then he cracked it into two pieces. He gave one half to the chief of the tribe who wanted a teacher to come. "Chief," said Pastor Stahl, "I will give my half of this broken stone to the teacher whom I send. Then when he comes, you can put the two halves together. No

other stone in all the world will fit this broken half!" It was a brilliant idea, don't you think?

The people were happy.

Did you know that you yourself are also one half of a broken stone, and the other half is Jesus Himself? If you have a broken stone, you can look all over the world and never find another half that fits perfectly, except that one true half. You are different than any other person. God has created you special; He knows all about your habits and the things about you that are so different from anyone else. He even knows all your thoughts and your secret feelings that no one else, not even your parents, can know. Psalm 139 says: "Lord, You have examined me and You know me. . . . from far away You understand all my thoughts. You see me, whether I am working or resting; . . . even before I speak, You already know what I will say. You are all around me on every side. . . . Your knowledge of me is too deep; . . . Where could I go to escape from you? . . . Even darkness is not dark for You" (verses 1-12).

The one Person who understands you so fully is the other Half of the "broken stone" that is you—Jesus Christ. And even though He knows all about you, He still loves you and respects you. He trusts you. He still believes in you, that you will become the wonderful person that He has called you to be.

When you pray to the Father in Jesus' name, He understands you. Nobody else can, because Jesus has told us, "When you pray, go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what you do in private,

¹ "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

will reward you” (Matt. 6:6). The King James Version says it a little clearer: “Pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”

Jesus tells us, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”²

You might ask, “How can I come to Him? I can’t find Him, I can’t feel Him He’s a trillion miles away, and His yoke seems hard, and His burden heavy.”

Most people don’t know how near He actually is. He says, “It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” That Helper is His Vicar, the One sent in His place. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”³ We are closer to Jesus by the Holy Spirit today than His disciples were then.

And yet many have the idea that Jesus is a mysterious, shadowy figure far away. You don’t see anything in Him. You study your Sabbath school lesson like you take a dose of medicine; you go to church, but you can’t wait until it’s over so you can go home and listen to some rock. You don’t see Him. And you can’t be blamed for what you don’t see!

Many see Christ as Isaiah describes Him, “a root out of dry ground.” All that many youth see is a desert with this ugly root sticking out. “There is no beauty that we should desire Him.” “He has no form

nor comeliness.”⁴ Why? An enemy has done the work of an antichrist, and misrepresented Christ.

There is a little letter the apostle John wrote at the back of your Bible; just before Revelation. He says, “Many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”⁵ Oh yes, they say He’s come, and you can see churches everywhere with steeples and crosses on top. They all say, “We’re Christian. We believe in Jesus!” But John puts his finger on the root of the problem when he says that there is an antichrist. They do not see that Jesus is come in our flesh, for the only kind of human flesh there is in the world is our flesh.

Antichrist says that Jesus came in some different kind of flesh, pale-faced, hollow-eyed, sunken cheeks, a halo around His head like you see in old stained glass windows, hardly ever smiled, thin, emaciated, intoning His words like a preacher at a funeral—effeminate, an ugly “root out of dry ground.” This is “Christ” to many people. He appears as plastic as “Abraham Lincoln” at Disneyland. Many teenagers wonder, “How could Christ be my best friend?” And because they think that mother and dad, maybe even the preacher and the Sabbath school teacher, have kept saying, “Don’t do this, don’t do that, you’re bad,” the teenager feels that Jesus talks that way. “He must be my worst enemy. I could have a good time if it wasn’t for Him.”

² Matthew 11:28-30, NKJV

³ John 16:7; 14:16-18.

⁴ Isaiah 53:2.

⁵ 2 John 7.

This antichrist—this horrible antichrist—is masquerading as Christ. The Greek prefix *anti* can mean three things: “instead of,” “in place of,” or “against” He has advanced himself instead of Christ, he’s against Christ, and he misrepresents Christ, while professing to be for Christ. No wonder lots of people are deceived.

The Father and Jesus are one, for the Bible says that there is one God. So when the Father is your Friend, be sure that Jesus is your Friend. You have a “secret” with Him! No one else can get in on it. That’s exciting, isn’t it? And even though He knows all that you do and say in secret, He still loves you because He forgives. He is teaching you to obey Him as though you were the only person in the world. He is the One True Friend you will always have.

How does God want you to think of Himself? As some infinitely large and complicated divine Organization designated by a third person pronoun “the . . .”?

The Bible reveals Him, but the larger part of it is the “Old Testament” wherein the revelation is not as clear as in the New—at least ancient Israel did not understand “God” very clearly, or they would not have crucified “the Lord of glory,” the very Son of God, when He came.

Over and over again we find the Messiah in the New Testament presenting God to us as “our Father who is in heaven.” Simplest designation possible for humans to grasp! Our first syllable is “*Baba*” or “*Abba, Father,*” and the apostle tells us that the Holy Spirit impresses upon us (sinners as

we are!) the conviction that we have been “adopted” by this “heavenly Father” (Rom. 8:15)! The Messiah is the Son of God, and He is intimately close to us as the One who “sticketh closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24), and He delights over and over in calling us His “brethren,” as His Father delights in calling us His adopted children. It’s family! As we think of God as our “Father in heaven,” His Son wants us to think of Him as “Brother.”

Rare and deeply fortunate you are if you had an earthly elder brother who loved you tenderly (this unworthy writer had such). He made it easier for me to think of Jesus in an intimate way, and I owe an enormous debt to him; but many people have been deprived of that “gift.”

More rare and even more deeply fortunate you are if you had an earthly father who interpreted for you the faithful loving-kindness of the heavenly Father. But if you were bereft of that earthly blessing, or thought you were, and you need “Elijah” to “turn [your] heart” in reconciliation to him (Mal. 4:5, 6), then look again at Romans 8 above.

It’s a positive, rock-bottom-truth stated in a double negative: “You did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the [Holy] Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out ‘*Abba, Father.*’ The [Holy] Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (vss. 15, 16).

The double negative means you have received the conviction of the Holy Spirit that you have been “adopted,” not only into some celestial third person Establishment, but into an intimately close divine

family wherein you are a loved child—a sibling, yes, of Christ’s.

Can you make clear to me what is this “in Christ” idea? I always thought that only obedient believers are “in Christ.” How can it be said that Christ actually “saved” the whole world.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve are tempted to partake of the forbidden fruit. At that time, the fate of the entire human race trembles in the balance, “in Adam.” If he yields to the temptation, the human race comes under his condemnation and is lost. Adam *is* the human race! Whatever happens to him happens to all of us.

In the Garden of Gethsemane and on His cross, Christ wrestles with a fearful temptation. Satan reminds Him that His own nation has rejected Him, one of His own disciples has betrayed Him, another has denied Him with cursing, and all have forsaken Him. Why give His eternal life for such ungrateful people? Again, the fate of humanity trembles in the balance. *He* is now the human race. As with Adam, whatever happens to Him happens to the entire human race, to all of us. We read:

“It was here that the destiny of *a lost world* trembled in the balance. Should He refuse to drink the cup, the result would be eternal ruin to *the human race*. . . . I have thought of that cup trembling in the hands of Christ; as I have realized that He might have refused to drink, and left the *world* to perish.”⁶

⁶ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 102, 103)

“The awful moment had come—that moment which was to decide the destiny of *the world*. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance.”⁷

If Christ had accepted that temptation and refused the cross, what would have been the result? Only one possible answer: the “world” would have been “lost,” “*humanity*” would have “perished.”

But Christ rejects the temptation. What then has been the result of His sacrifice? Only one possible answer: the reverse. The “world” and “the human race” have been “saved” from ruin.

If He renounces the cross, “humanity” as a corporate whole is “lost.” If He makes the sacrifice, it follows that “humanity” as a corporate whole is “saved.” *In that sense*, as He hangs on His cross, “humanity” or “the human race” is “in Him.” He becomes “the last Adam,” the new Head of “the human race,” and all are now “in Him” by redemption as surely as they were by nature and by physical birth “in Adam.” “With His own blood He has signed the emancipation papers of the race.”⁸ “He hung on the cross, the sin-bearer of the race.”⁹

This must mean that all that Christ accomplished in His person has been won for the corporate humanity for whom He died. *In this sense* it must include justification, sanctification, and glorification—all of which He realized in His person as our “Elder Brother,” and second Adam.

But this does not mean that any individual is saved *eternally* against his personal choice or will. Our

⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 690.

⁸ *Ministry of Healing*, p. 90.

⁹ *Review and Herald*, June 12, 1900.

“redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24) has set us free to choose which way we want to go. We can resist and reject all that Christ has achieved for us and has given to us. But nonetheless, He *did* it and He *gave* it.

It follows that everything that Christ accomplished by His sacrifice is ours already in reality “in Christ,” and will become ours by practical experience *when it is grasped by our personal faith*.

As the second Adam, Christ is the “firstborn among many brethren.” To use a crude illustration, an inventor builds a prototype of the machine which he will manufacture in quantity. The 1996 Cadillac was once a prototype which looked exactly like the many cars that will roll off the assembly line. Christ is the Prototype of a glorified humanity. All that happened to Him has become the inheritance of humanity, even as the infant child of a millionaire is already a millionaire, but will realize it only when he comes of age *unless he separates willfully from the family*.

Was Christ “perfected”? Hebrews 2:10 says yes. Was He “sanctified”? Verse 11 says yes. Was He “glorified”? Yes.¹⁰ Therefore, in a corporate sense we too who believe are “perfected,” “sanctified,” and “glorified” *in Him* and will realize it if we choose not to separate from Him.

This is the intent of Hebrews 10:10: “By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” And verse 14: “For by one offering He has perfected [past tense]

¹⁰ A multitude of texts say yes (John 7:39; 11:4; 12:16, 23; 13:31, etc.)

forever those who are being sanctified.” And 13:12: “Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.” What He did, He did at the cross (also past tense). The blood was shed *there* “*once* for all,” for all people. The root meaning of the word “sanctify” in the Greek is to set aside for a holy purpose, an objective act of God “in Christ.” But the word “sanctification” has acquired for us the meaning of character transformation, which is a subjective experience. But only as we behold and appreciate the Prototype can we become like Him in experience.

As the new Adam, the new Head of the human race, Christ has reversed all that the first Adam did. Whereas we suffer “condemnation” “in Adam,” now we enjoy the opposite “in Christ”—“justification.” Shocking as it may seem to our ears, the Bible describes Christ as “the Saviour *of the world*,” “the Saviour of *all men*” (John 4:42; 1 Tim. 4:10). When this truth is understood and appreciated, a message can lighten the earth with glory, and a people are prepared for translation.

How is this accomplished? “The love (*agape*) of Christ constrains us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves [meaning, they cannot, if they believe!], but for Him who died for them and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:14, 15). This means an earth-shaking, cataclysmic spiritual reformation in the church—of a dimension that many unbelieving “saints” think is impossible.

Since this “in Christ” reality spells the end of Laodicean lukewarmness, it must be the message the world church at present is starving to understand.

When you are perplexed and tempted to discouragement, think about what the Son of God accomplished for you by His great sacrifice. Then remember that He wants you to “comprehend” it—to let your mind grasp the reality of what He accomplished. Paul got on his knees and prayed for us that “the whole family in heaven and earth” might be united, “rooted and grounded in love [*agape*], . . . able to comprehend with all saints” those grand dimensions of His personal love “which passeth knowledge” (Eph. 3:18, 19).

What does it mean? We don’t want to remain like little children in immature thinking, slow comprehension, for that disappoints our Lord. Children are wonderful little creatures, but no parent in his right mind wants his child to remain a child forever. I once knew a family whose 23 year old son had the mind of a 3 year old. Pathetic. Christ is disappointed when we do not “grow up unto the measure of the stature of [His] fullness”; and His disappointment becomes serious.

Yes, He loves us, but if, generation after generation we remain content to be childish and immature, His disappointment becomes intense. Even if the church becomes so numerous that there are billions of childish, weak members who do not grow up to appreciate what His sacrifice means, His disappointment is not lessened.

What it means is that Christ is lonely, even when surrounded by untold myriads of loyal angels in heaven. They are His faithful servants, waiting to do everything He asks them to do. But don’t forget that the Son of God became the Son of man; He emptied Himself of the glories of His divinity to become one of us, to share our humanity, to become one of us, our Elder Brother, forever. It was “we,” the human race, who rejected and crucified Him, and then we exiled Him to leave earth and return where He came from—heaven. But He is lonely there; He wants to be with those who are the purchase of His sacrifice.

No, those of His believers who have died during these 6000 years are not alive with Him in heaven—they are “asleep in Jesus.” He longs to awaken them in the first resurrection of the sleeping saints and to come to earth the second time to welcome the “alive” members of His church. It’s time for us to begin to think about what He wants, to understand the longings of His heart, to give Him His reward!

Is it possible that we can know what Christ is thinking about now? Does He have a great purpose just now? It is true He is no longer a helpless Baby in Bethlehem nor hanging “forsaken” on a cross, yet He is still a human being as well as divine. His name is still “Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us.” He will remain forever our Elder Brother, forever has sympathy with us, “made like unto His brethren, . . . a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, . . . able to succor

them that are tempted, . . . touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:15).

Does He have hopes and yearnings? There are statements in the Bible that indicate that yes, He does have yearnings and desires. He told us that He “will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom” (Mt. 26:29). Is He fasting, at least partially?

We know that He is a disappointed Bridegroom-to-be longing for His wedding Day to come (Rev. 19:7-9). We know He does not want to delay His second coming, for He loves His people who appreciate His sacrifice in their behalf and wants them to be with Him (Jn. 14:3). We know He sympathizes with the sufferings of His people (Isa. 63:8, 9).

Surely it is reasonable to understand that He longs to bring all this suffering to an end. He is waiting for the heavenly angel to tell Him, “Thrust in thy sickle and reap, for the time is come for Thee to reap” (Rev. 14:14). The entire Bible is full of the idea that He loves us; and if you love someone, you must want to be with that one.

We talk about how much WE long for His second coming; are we to conceive of Him as icy cold, unimpassioned, unconcerned about a delay, not caring if He comes soon or maybe for a millennium? The important truth is not ourselves, that is, how much WE long for His second coming, but how much HE longs to come the second time! If we are correct that He Himself longs to come, then it follows logically that what hinders His coming is not that the Father stands in the way to hinder it,

but only that “the harvest of the earth is [not] ripe” so He can come (Rev 14:15, last part). Or to state it in another divinely inspired metaphor, “the fruit is [not] brought forth,” because when it is “brought forth, immediately He putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come” (Mt. 4:28, 29). James says that He is “quietly awaiting His precious harvest” (1:7, Phillips). As a farmer eagerly watching his precious crop day by day, longing for the harvest, so Jesus yearns for His people to get ready for His coming. Let’s think about Him!

Will it be fun to meet Jesus face to face? Have you ever thought about that?

There is no reason under heaven why you should be the least bit scared to meet Him and to look in His eyes. He has never wanted you to be afraid of Him!

He is your Friend—already is. You don’t have to do anything to win Him over to become your Friend. That idea is part of the darkness that good preachers used to preach before that wonderful “latter rain” began to come with better Good News for us. When He gave Himself for you on His cross, He did that to prove to you that He is already your Best Friend forever.

There’s already a silent, underground bond that has tied you to Him ever since you first began to respond to His love for you. That means when you finally do see Him and you can meet Him, you will look into His eyes and He will look into your eyes, and the two of you will instantly recognize each other (of course He will have known you all along). There will be a glint shining in His eyes as He looks

into your eyes that will tell you that He knows all about you (and still loves you) and you will feel like you have known Him all your life.

You will instantly feel like He is the other half of that “broken stone” that is you. You will tell everybody, “I have never really known until this moment what pure happiness is!” Translation will be a thrill. He will put His arm around you and sweep you up with Him into heaven. And you will at last feel perfectly at home with Him because from this day on you will live with Him here.

A glimpse of the cross is better than all the labored arguments employed to prove that Jesus is divine. Once discern the nature of the love (*agape*) revealed there, and the Victim stands out clearly as none other than the Son of God. Only “God is love [*agape*]” 1 John 4:8. Human love alone could never stage or invent the demonstration we see there. The quality of love revealed is self-emptying, infinitely beyond our calculating, self-centered human love which easily fails test. Every one’s heart convicts him that such *agape* must come from God alone, and that the hostility which murdered the Victim there was in essence our own “enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7). Jesus’ *agape* carries its own built-in witness to prove its credentials are divine. That love was unearthly. No philosopher, poet, playwright, in thousands of years had dreamed of such a love.

This love sends the appeal of the cross home to human hearts in the awareness that the One who died thereon is every person’s truest and closest relative, the unfailing Friend of Elder Brother who

has always loved us when we were most inclined to hate ourselves, the Companion who has remained with us in our shadows and believed in us when we doubted and disowned ourselves.

Every person has at times been faintly conscious of this brightest of all hopes—that Someone trusted him and believed in him while knowing the fullness of all his guilty secrets. Sweeter than the words “I love you” is the assurance, “I believe in you; I trust you all the way; I risk everything on your future.”