

有关信徒地位的原则

迈尔斯·斯坦福 (MILES J. STANFORD)

第九章 各样的罪与光明 (IX. Sins and Light)

“我们若在光明中行 [真实的活在光明中]，如同神 [自己] 在光明中，就彼此 [有真实的、不受拦阻的] 相交，他儿子耶稣的血也洗净 [除掉] 我们一切的罪 [过犯与罪愆]” (约翰一书 1:7)。

我们被摆放在其中，并且在它的里面生活与行走的这个光明，到底是指什么呢？“神就是光，在他毫无黑暗。这是我们从主所听见、又报给你们的信息” (约翰一书 1:5)。既然我们的父神就是光，我们的主耶稣必定也是光。“那吩咐光从黑暗里照出来的神，已经照在我们心里，叫我们得知神荣耀的光显在耶稣基督的面上” (哥林多后书 4:6)。

当他还在地上的时候，主耶稣说过，“我是世界的光” (约翰福音 8:12)。不过，那个光的明亮度几乎整个的被他人的人性所遮盖而不是那么明显了。只是在一个很短暂的瞬间，当他在变相山上的时候，他允许自己里面的真光被照射出来。“就在他们面前变了形像，脸面明亮如日头，衣裳洁白如光” (马太福音 17:2)。彼得在后来的书信中写到，他跟其他几位使徒那时候“乃是亲眼见过他的威荣” (彼得后书 1:16)。在现今的时刻，我们的主耶稣乃是在天上的荣耀里，“坐在高天至大者的右边” (希伯来书 1:3)。正是在他的光明当中，我们得以居住、并行事为人，因为“从前你们是暗昧的，但如今在主里面是光明的，行事为人就当像光明的子女” (以弗所书 5:8)。

每一个基督徒从地位上来说，都是已经在光明里面了，但是，只有当他们学会了如何去居住和生活在那个光明里，他们就只能够继续在罪与自我的黑暗当中苦苦挣扎。“从前你们是暗昧的，但如今在主里面是光明的……光明所结的果子 [其效果、产物] 就是 [包括着] 一切良善、公义、诚实” (以弗所书 5:8, 9)。我们的地位，乃是用基督的宝血买赎回来的，而且是在有父神同在的光明当中的。

状态 (Condition)

一位在基督里的健康的婴孩，可以有很好的一个开端，无论他是否知道一些关于他在光明当中的地位。作为属灵的婴孩，他也是作为小孩子被他的父神所对待的。他常常觉得主耶稣是离他那样的近，并且是时刻都在紧握着他的手往前走的。他也总是被主的喜乐所充满，并且也是全心全意地去爱主。尽管，他看起来也是常常仰望着主耶稣的，而在实质上，他却依然是以自我为中心的，这是因为，他对于自己在基督里的地位，还是相当的无知的。他所知道的主要内容，就是那些基督已经替他所成就的、正在给他作的、以及将要替他作的事情；他自己也就顺其自然地，企图寻找机会去为主而活、为主去作工。在总体上说，这位婴儿基督徒，乃是被他的情感所鼓舞和推动的，并因此是受其生命的状态，而不是受其新生命的地位，而影响和牵制的。

过了一些时段之后，到了他的属灵的青春期，主耶稣就开始把这一切都倒转过来了。于是，生命的重心就开始出现转移，从居住在主所作成的工作上，转移到以主为乐，并开始要为着主的身份、主的属性与主的所在之处，而欢喜快乐；从之前的感到幸福并且蠢蠢欲动，转向要更加地像基督；从之前的想要为着基督而活、为他而作工，转向让主在我们里面居住、并让他通过我们来作工；从之前的以自己的身份来定义自己，转向以我们在他里面的身份来定义自己，并且会认真地关注他在我们里面的真实身份；而且，从状态开始转向地位——“不再是我，乃是基督”。

于是，所必须发生的情况是，这个从以状态为中心向着以地位为中心的生活之转变，在实际上，乃是一个极其痛苦的过程。“凡管教 [培训孩童] 的事，当时不觉得快乐，反觉得愁苦；后来却为那经练过的人结出平安的果子，就是义”（希伯来书 12:11）。“因为主所爱的，他必管教”（希伯来书 12:6）。

虽然说，这位信徒有良好的开端，然而就是在他为着主而怀有的快乐、并积极的行动当中，“自我”就开始偷偷地溜回到这幅图画里面来了。那个内住的罪的原则（罪的律）又一次开始行使它独断性的权势，随之而来的是，外面的世界又变得那样的充满诱惑与吸引力。平安与爱心，渐渐就变得脆弱和枯竭，不断流逝而去。那本来是安静的灵修时间，静静地走向衰亡。研读神的话语也开始变得是枯燥乏味的苦差事了。良心也变得污秽起来；即使犯了罪也不再去积极认罪，而是给自己找各种的借口。两只眼睛也开始从主的身上挪移开来，紧接着而来的，就是靠着自我而展开的挣扎不断地登台献艺，而且会愈演愈烈——理由很简单，就是这位信徒已经把优先权都给了状态（condition），而不再去留意地位（position）方面的真理了。

这样一来，这位蹒跚而行的基督徒就开始深刻地意识到自我的存在，而对于那位圣子耶稣，却开始变得印象模糊起来。因着对于自己那失败的状态极度地难过，他就挣扎着想要提高自己，同时又会切切地祈求上帝，好赐给他解脱与“得胜”。而这正是撒旦一直都在等待着的大好机会。他狡猾地引领这位信徒去把当今的这种悲惨境遇，跟信主之前那些流逝了的开心、无忧无虑的日子去进行比较，并因此而来晃动一切可以倚靠的根基，要引诱他不再去尊崇神的话语并主耶稣。撒旦无情地把这位摇摆的基督徒放到一个自我防卫的地步，包括其生活和言行的每一个层面。而且，他还在信徒身上施加往下压的力量，让信徒的心里充满了那种咬牙切齿的懊恼和愧疚，而且往往是伴随着极大的自我定罪。

当这位信徒给了仇敌许可，让他在自己的生命当中来肆意传播那种令人窒息的自我责备的烟雾时，基督的义的那个光亮就变得模糊不清了。撒旦的目的，就是要来诱惑这位信徒，返回到那种自我定罪的光景里面，为的是让该信徒去否定那些从神而来的益处，也就是因着自己已经跟基督一同复活而有的益处，以及，否定他已经在天上与基督联合的这个事实。

的确，那些没有被建立在罗马书 8:1 经文之“不被定罪”的根基上的基督徒，就不会在属灵的成长上有什么明显的进步。他们刚刚才起步，走了才一小段，就深陷泥沼，动弹不得；他们的果子在还没有成熟之前就掉落在地。然而，当这位信徒能够安息在以下这条真理上时，从仇敌而来的那个破坏性的力量就能够被抗拒与废除了，该真理就是，“因为赐生命圣灵的律，在基督耶稣里释放了我，使我脱离罪和死的律了”（罗马书 8:2）。

虽然，圣灵作为让人知罪者，会把人们的心灵摆放到为着诸多的罪而痛悔的地步，他却是从来都不会去贬低和逼迫人的。尽管撒旦的控告是要叫人意识到自己的状况，而圣灵的定罪却是要引领人意识到基督的价值。当圣灵在人的心里和良心之中为着各样的罪而让人忏悔、承认自己的罪时，他就会带领这位信徒去审判（分辨）自己，并且能够去悔改。然后，他就让人抬头仰望神，好为着自己所犯下的罪去获得弥补与医治——就是靠着基督的宝血而打通了一条道路，是通向我们在上帝同在的光明当中之地位的，在这个地位上，我们能够拥有平安与生命。“弟兄们，我们既因耶稣的血得以坦然进入至圣所”（希伯来书 10:19）。

仇敌是如何挑逗一位失败的基督徒的呢？他就是把一个无法达到的完美之标准，高高的举在这位非常不完美的信徒的头上，让该信徒靠着自己的努力去挣扎、奋斗。仇敌不断地煽动着，要这位信徒在转瞬之间就企图去彻底地改变自己失败的状态。然而，那位满有耐心的圣灵，在另一方面，却是允许人花上一段适宜的时间，好持续地来发育成长的，通常，圣灵会用恩典的言语来提醒信徒，让他可以随时来到基督的宝血那里，也就是倚靠基督所已经成就的工作，好在我们成长的过程当中，支取从神而来的力量，帮助我们从各样的不义当中获得洁净。他会温柔地引领这位蹒跚而行的信徒脱离自我中心与黑暗，来就近光明，并且学会以基督为中心。为了达成这个果效，真理的灵就会把那关乎地位的真理教导出来：“所以，你们若

[既然] 真与基督一同复活，就当求在上面的事；那里有基督坐在神的右边”（歌罗西书 3:1）。“因为你们已经死了，你们的生命与基督一同藏在神里面”（歌罗西书 3:3）。

地位 (Position)

那位苏醒过来的基督徒，若不是安息在他的地位之上，就会因着自己的状态而变得沮丧起来。结果就是，他也会时不时的有认罪的行为，却是对于自己的已经从一切的不义当中被洁净，毫无确据或是认识得很少。他并没有在享受与父神并圣子的团契相交，而且发现自己常常让圣灵担忧，常常被圣灵提醒自己乃是犯罪了。并且他也是处在罪与自我的辖制之下，同时也受到魔鬼的指控和定罪。他真的是痛苦不堪，随着自己的各样的罪的增加，就如同越来越多的乌云累积一般，简直是暗无天日，使得自己那自由的地位、以及跟复活的主之间的团契，所发出的光芒都被遮蔽不见了。

但是，历史表明，撒旦总是会自己踩自己的脚。他最臭名昭著的所谓的那些胜利，都是包含着打败他自己的种子的。那因着信徒的失败而产生出来的种子，就是要被圣灵用来预备这位信徒，让他看见和居住在自己的那个蒙福的地位的，并且这个地位乃是在光明里面的。他的信心，需要聚焦在以下这个事实上，那就是，上帝已经在他的荣耀同在中赐下一个位子；而且比这还要进一步的，上帝已经把他安置在那个地位上了！“我涂抹了你的过犯，像厚云消散；我涂抹了你的罪恶，如薄云灭没。你当归向我，因我救赎了你”（以赛亚书 44:22）。

一位诚实的、然而却是以自我为中心的信徒，就会被他自己有罪的状态所产生的黑暗来逼迫和拦阻。即便如此，就算在他不断走向低迷的恶性循环中，圣灵乃是会不断地把真理呈现给他，为的是要用他在光明中那个义的地位来提醒他、环绕他。“你们必晓得真理，真理必叫你们得以自由”（约翰福音 8:32）。真相是，他不仅是从罪的刑罚当中脱离了，是自由人，而且，也是可以脱离罪的权势，也就是促使他去犯罪的那个力量。信徒之所以会受到捆绑，就是因为他还不明白，尽管自己还会犯罪跌倒，他依然可以安息在关于这些罪的真理之中。（也就是说，这些罪，并没有取消他作为蒙恩之人所拥有的作为神儿女的权柄。他若是明白这个道理，他就自由了。——译者注。）

那么，那个关乎我们的罪的具体的真理是什么呢？根据我们的状态而言，我们乃是完全不能够被接受的，也就是不能来到父神面前去享受跟他的团契相交。但是，在上帝那里，我们的地位才是最终算数的，而且必须是首先要跟着我们而呈现出来的。“又感谢父，[他已经] 叫我们能 [适合的] 与众圣徒在光明中同得基业。他 [已经] 救了我们脱离黑暗的权势，[他已经] 把我们迁到他爱子的国里；我们在爱子里 [借着他的宝血] 得蒙救赎，罪过得以赦免”（歌罗西书 1:12-14）。“他儿子耶稣的血也洗净我们一切的罪”（约翰一书 1:7）。

每一位信徒，无论他目前的状态是怎样的，就是已经处在父神丰满的同在当中了；我们是在基督里，一同站在那位高天至大者的右手边。我们基督徒生命的根源，乃是在于天上的光明中，在复活的基督里。我们就是要在哪里居住；惟有那个完美的地位，才会真正地影响到我们每天之生活境况的改变与更新。“既然藉着他在十字架上所流的血成就了和平，便藉着他叫万有，无论是地上的、天上的都与自己和好了。你们从前与神隔绝，因着恶行，心里与他为敌。但如今他藉着基督的肉身受死，叫你们与自己和好，都成了圣洁，没有瑕疵，无可责备，把你们引到自己面前”（歌罗西书 1:20-22）。

我们不必被自己的感觉和状态所影响，而是要被上帝写给我们的话语所引领。在属灵的成长当中，信心的眼睛将会逐渐地从我们自己的观念，转移到神的启示上，也就是从状态转移到地位上。借助于我们理性的信心，建基于圣经的事实之上，我们需要大胆地从有罪的黑暗里，转变到能够在神圣洁的光明中来享受安息。“你的言语一解开就发出亮光，使愚人通达”（诗篇 119:130）。“你们从前远离神的人，如今却在基督耶稣里，靠着他的血，已经得亲近了 [亦即，得以与神和好，能够来到他的面前]。因他使我们和睦（原文作因他是我们的和睦），将两下合而为一，拆毁了中间隔断的墙”（以弗所书 2:13, 14）。“神使

那无罪（无罪：原文作不知罪）的，替我们成为罪，好叫我们在他里面成为神的义”（哥林多后书 5:21）。一旦我们重生，就是出生在基督里了，基督就成了我们的义，这样一来，我们的天父就能够接纳我们，进入到他完满的同在当中，而且是按着我们的本相接纳我们的。我们能够进入这个光明当中的权利，乃是来自于我们永恒的地位，而跟我们现今生命的具体状态无关。

我们的基督徒生活，乃是从我们生命的根源所生发出来的结果。如果我们试图要倚靠我们自己的资源，来做一名合格的基督徒，就会导致以自我为中心、自以为义、以及身处黑暗之中。但是，当我们的基督徒生活乃是倚靠我们生命的真正根源，在上帝同在的光明里面，就会达成以基督为中心、以基督为义、并且“耶和華必作你永远的光”（以赛亚书 60:20）。

按照我们自己的估计来看一下，到底是我们的各样的罪，还是基督为这些罪所洒下的宝血，显得更加的重大呢？我们对于自己的诸多的罪之看法，是从神的角度，还是从我们自己的角度来看的呢？我们在这件事上，是否让上帝来做上帝呢？是的，我们乃是要跟随上帝的思想来思考才对。他已经满有恩慈地、合乎正义地把我们摆放在他的儿子里面，这位爱子，乃是世界与天堂的真光。我们的各样的罪，难道能够拦阻在我们的父神与他那位得了荣耀的儿子之间吗——这位圣子就是我们的生命？这是绝对不可能的！基督被挂着木头上的时候，已经担当了我们一切的罪、所有的罪。他乃是我们复活的中保，就是那义者耶稣基督。借着祂代赎的宝血，他就让我们跟父神之间的关系有了永恒的保障，并且是成为了一个毫无破绽的整合体。

虽然，我们各样的罪，是绝对不会影响我们在光明中的地位，或是去改变上帝对我们的爱的心意，它们却是能够而且确实会影响到我们对父神的想法与态度。它们从来都不会遮盖了上帝对我们的中保的视线，却是能够而且确实会消除我们对于基督之中保职能的看见。并且，它们乃是会立刻阻碍到我们跟父神并他儿子之间的团契与交通。那些阴暗的罪愆之云雾，以及犯罪所产生的懊恼，就会沉积在我们的心灵与良知当中，除非我们学会了如何去审判我们自己，并且甘心情愿地在上帝面前承认我们各样的罪。“我们若是先分辨 [原文作‘审判’] 自己，就不至于受审”（哥林多前书 11:31）。

THE PRINCIPLE OF POSITION BY MILES J. STANFORD

CHAPTER 9 SINS AND LIGHT

“But if we (really) are living and walking in the Light as He (Himself) is in the Light, we have (true, unbroken) fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses (removes) us from all sin and guilt” (1 John 1:7).

What is this light in which we have been placed, in which we are to live and walk? “And this is the message...which we have heard from Him and now are reporting to you: God is Light and there is no darkness in Him at all---no, not in any way” (1 John 1:5). Since our Father is Light, our Lord Jesus is Light also. “For God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

While here on earth, the Lord Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world” (John 8:12). Nevertheless, the extent of that light was kept almost totally obscured by His humanity. For a brief moment, while on the Mount of Transfiguration, He allowed the true light within to be manifested. “And (He) was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light” (Matthew 17:2). Peter wrote later that he and the others “were eyewitnesses of His majesty” (2 Peter 1:16). At present, our Lord Jesus is in glory, “on the right

hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3). It is in His light that we are to abide and walk, for “now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).

Every Christian is positionally in the light, but until he learns to abide and walk in that light he can only struggle on in the darkness of sin and self. “For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord... For the fruit---the effect, the product---of the Light...(consists) in every form of kindly goodness, uprightness of heart and trueness of life” (Ephesians 5:8, 9). Our Blood-bought position is in the light of our Father’s presence.

Condition

The healthy babe in Christ begins well, whether or not he knows anything at all concerning his position in the light. Being a child spiritually, he is handled as such by the Father. He feels that the Lord Jesus is very close to him and is leading him by the hand. He is filled with the joy of the Lord, and loves Him with all his heart. Although he is looking to the Lord Jesus, he is still self-centered because of ignorance regarding his position in Him. He is taken up mainly with what Christ has done, is doing and will do for him; he is, in turn, seeking to live and work for the Lord. For the most part, he is emotionally motivated and therefore affected by his condition rather than his position.

Later, during his spiritual adolescence, the Lord begins His reversal of all this. The emphasis in the life is to be shifted from dwelling on what He has done to rejoicing in who, what and where He is; from being happy and active, to being like Him; from living and working from Him, to His living in and working through us; from what we are in ourselves, to what we are in Him and what He is in us; from condition to position---“not I, but Christ.” Of necessity, the transitional process from a condition-centered to a position-centered (child-training) for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Hebrews 12:11). “For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth” (Hebrews 12:6).

In spite of the believer’s good beginning, and in the midst of his joy and activity for the Lord, self begins to creep back into the picture. The indwelling principle of sin once more asserts its tyrannical power, and the world regains its attraction. Peace and love tend to weaken and drain away. The “quiet time” quickly dies. Study of the Word becomes burdensome work. The conscience is defiled; sins are no longer confessed, but excused. The eyes are off the Lord, the struggle with self is on---simply because condition has been given precedence over position.

Now the faltering believer becomes keenly aware of self, and only vaguely aware of the Son. Desperately upset about his failing condition, he struggles to improve himself, all the while begging God to give him relief and “victory.” This is the vantage point Satan has been waiting for. He slyly leads the believer to compare the present condition with the happy, carefree days gone by, and to question every realm of belief, thus shaking all reliance upon the Word and the Lord. He ruthlessly puts the wavering Christian on the defensive in every aspect of his life and walk. He applies downward pressure, and fills the heart with the gnawing remorse of self-condemnation.

When the believer allows the Enemy to spread the choking smog of self-accusation over his life, the light of Christ’s righteousness is dimmed. The goal of Satan is to lure the believer back onto the ground of condemnation, in order to negate the benefits of his resurrection with Christ and his union with Him in the heavenlies.

Those who are not established upon the “no condemnation” ground of Romans 8:1 make very little spiritual progress. They go just so far and then bog down; their fruit falls before it ripens. But the destroying power of the Enemy is rendered null and void when the believer rests in the truth that “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2).

Although the Holy Spirit, as Convictor, puts the heart in an agony of conviction of sins, He never points downward. While Satan’s accusations results in self-consciousness, Holy Spirit conviction leads to Christ-consciousness. When He convicts the heart and conscience concerning sins, He leads the believer to the self-judgment of confession. He then points upward to the remedy for sins committed---the Blood that has opened the way to the peace and life of our position in the light of God’s presence. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the Blood of Jesus” (Hebrews 10:19).

The Enemy spurs the failing one to self-effort by holding the impossible standard of perfection over the very imperfect believer's head. He agitates continually for immediate and complete rectification of the failing condition. But the patient Holy Spirit, on the other hand, allows time for development, graciously reminding of the ever-available and finished work of the Blood for our cleansing from all unrighteousness throughout the process of growth. He gently leads the faltering believer from self-centeredness and darkness to Christ-centeredness and light. To bring this about, the Spirit of truth presents positional truth: "If (since) you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1). "For you died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3).

Position

The awakened Christian who is not resting in his position becomes discouraged by his condition. Therefore, confession of his sins is sporadic and he has little or no assurance of being cleansed from all unrighteousness. He is out of fellowship with the Father and the Son, and finds himself convicted by the Holy Spirit whom he is grieving. He is also under the domination of sin and self, as well as the condemnation of the Devil. He is utterly wretched, with his sins accumulated as a cloud obscuring the light of his position of freedom and fellowship in his risen Lord. But it is the history of Satan always to overstep himself. His most apparent victories all contain the seed of his own defeat. The very need generated by the believer's failure is the Spirit's preparation for his seeing and abiding in his blessed position of light. His faith is to be focused upon the fact that God has already given him a position in His presence; what is more, He has already established him in that position! "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgression, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee" (Isaiah 44:22).

The honest but still self-centered believer is oppressed and hindered by the darkness of his sinful condition. Nevertheless, in the midst of his downward trend, the Holy Spirit is presenting the truth so as to overwhelm him by the light of his righteous position. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Not only is he free from the penalty of sin, but also from its power to bring forth sins. The believer is bound until, in spite of his sins, he rests in the truth concerning those sins.

What, then, is the specific truth concerning our sins? In our condition, we are totally unacceptable for the Father's presence and fellowship. But position is what counts with God, and it must come first with us! "Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet (suitable) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:12, 14). "The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Every believer, regardless of his present condition, is in the very presence of the Father; we are in Christ, at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The source of our Christian life is in the light above, in Christ risen. It is there we are to abide; it is that completed standing which alone will affect the growth of our daily state. "And having made peace through the Blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight" (Colossians 1:20-22).

We are not to be influenced by our feelings and our condition, but rather by His written Word. In spiritual growth, the eye of faith is slowly transferred from our own point of view to His, from condition to position. By means of intelligent faith in the scriptural facts, we are to turn boldly from sinful darkness to rest in His holy light. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light" (Psalms 119:130). "But now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made nigh (reconciled to His presence) by the Blood of Christ. For He is our peace" (Ephesians 2:13, 14). "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Being born into Christ, who is our righteousness, our Father is able to accept us fully into His presence, just as we are. Our right to the light is our eternal position, in spite of our present condition.

Our walk is the result of the source of our life. If we attempt to walk as Christians in dependence upon our own resources, there is self-centeredness, self-righteousness, and darkness. But when we walk in dependence upon the Source of our life in the light of God's presence, there is Christ-centeredness, His righteousness, and "the Lord shall be thine everlasting light" (Isaiah 60:20).

In our estimation, which is looming larger, our sins, or His Blood shed for those sins? Are we viewing our sins from His side, or ours? Are we letting God be God in this matter? It is for us to think God's thoughts after Him. He has graciously and justly placed us in His Son, the very Light of earth and heaven. Can our sins come between our Father and His glorified Son who is our life? He has borne them all in His own body on the tree. He is our risen Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous. By means of His atoning Blood, He maintains eternally our relationship with the Father in unbroken integrity.

Though our sins can in no way affect our position in the light, or alter His thoughts of love toward us, they can and do affect our thoughts and attitude toward our Father. They can never cloud His view of our Advocate, but they can and do obliterate our vision of His advocacy. They immediately hinder our communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son. The dark cloud of guilt and conviction of sin settles down upon our heart and conscience, unless we learn to judge ourselves and willingly confess our sins before God. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Corinthians 11:31).

