

The God of All Comfort

Part 11 of 11

by — Hannah Whitall Smith (1832–1911)

Key Points:

GOD IS ENOUGH

My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from Him (Psalm 62:5).

The last and greatest lesson that we will consider is the fact that God, and God alone, is enough. This is the crowning lesson of life: *God is enough!*

If God is indeed the "God of all comfort," as we have seen; if He is really and truly our Father; if, in short, all the many aspects we have been studying of His character and His ways are actually true, then we must come to the positive conviction that He is, in Himself alone, enough for us, and that we may safely rest in Him absolutely.

We have wanted a great many things besides God. We have wanted fervent feelings about Him, or realizations of His presence with us, or an interior revelation of His love; or else we have demanded satisfactory schemes of doctrine, or successful Christian work, or something of one sort or another, besides Himself.

The psalmist said in those old days,

My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my ex-

pectation is from Him.¹

Yet now there are many who would say, "My soul, wait thou upon my good disposition and feelings, or upon my righteous works, or upon my fervent prayers, or upon my earnest striving, for my expectation is from these." To wait upon God only seems to them to be one of the most unsecure things they can

do. They reach out on every side for something to depend on, and, not until everything else fails will they put their trust in God alone.

George Macdonald (1824-1905) says,

We look upon God as our last and feeblest resource. We only go to Him when we have nowhere else to go. And then we learn that the storms of life have driven us, not upon the rocks, but into the desired haven.

No soul can be really at rest until it has given up all dependence on everything else and has been forced

1. Psalm 62:5.

(continued on page 8067)

"The God of All Comfort" (part 11 of 11)8065 Our Mailbox......8071



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Bible Student's Notebook[™]

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal ISSN: 1936-9360 Volume 39, No. 956 – February 6, 2023

Scripture education in a weekly format!

- This *free* electronic publication is dedicated to:
- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11); the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians
- 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the *mystery, which was kept secret in ages past"* (Romans 16:25); the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephe-
- sians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with: total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);

union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Romans 6; Ephesians 2:6); adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of ordinary men intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. - André Sneidar

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to depend on the Lord alone. As long as our expectation is from other things, nothing but disappointment awaits us. Feelings may change, and will change with our changing circumstances; labors may come to naught; prayers may seem to lose their fervency; everything that we have believed in or depended upon may seem to be swept away, and only God is left, just God, the bare God, if I may be allowed the expression; simply and only God.

We say sometimes, "If I could only find a promise to fit my case, I could then be at rest." But promises may be misunderstood or misapplied, and, at the moment when we are leaning all of our weight upon them, they may seem utterly to fail us. But the Promiser, Who is behind His promises, and is infinitely more than His promises, can never fail.

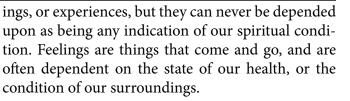
The little child does not need to have any promises from its mother to make it content; it has its mother herself, and she is enough. Its mother is better than a thousand promises. In our highest ideal of love, promises do not enter. The person of the lover is better than all of their promises. And should every promise be wiped out of the Bible, we would still have God left, and God would be enough.

Again, I repeat it, only God is enough, He Himself, just as He is, without the addition of anything on our part, whether it be disposition or feelings, or experiences, or good works, or any other thing either outward or inward.

God only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense: I shall not be moved.²

I do not mean by this that we are not to have feel-

2. Psalm 62:6.



Faith holds us independent of all else, resting in only the grand, magnificent fact of God, that He is God, and that He is our Savior. It finds God, the fact of God, sufficient, whether we feel ourselves to be in a desert or in a fertile valley. Faith can say with Israel's prophet,

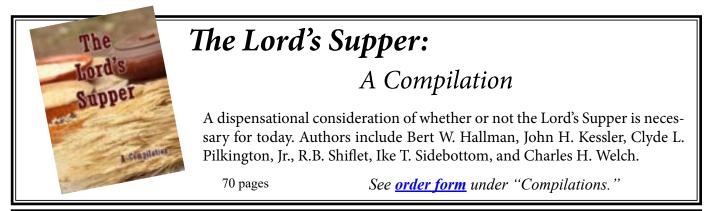
Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.³

We are made for this, and we can never find rest in anything short of it. All of God's dealings with us, therefore, are shaped to this end; and He is often obliged to deprive us of all joy in everything else in order that He may lead us to find our joy only and altogether in Himself.

It is all very well, perhaps, to rejoice in His promises, or in the experiences we may have realized; but to rejoice in the Promiser Himself – Himself alone – without promises, or experiences, this is the crowning place of faith; and this is the only place where we can know the peace which passes all understanding, and which nothing can disturb.

Yet sometimes we cannot think that the Lord can be anything to us, unless we find in ourselves something

3. Habakkuk 3:17-18.



"Second causes" are powerless to act, except by God's arranging. - Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911)

ᡬᢧ to assure us of His love and His care. If, for instance, we feel a glow of love toward Him, then we can say heartily that He is enough; but when this glow fails, as sooner or later it is almost sure to do, then we no longer feel that we have found our all in Him. The truth is that what satisfies us is not the Lord, but our own feelings about the Lord. Yet we are not conscious of this; and consequently, when our feelings fail, we think it is the Lord Who has failed, and we are plunged into darkness.

The only really vital thing in our relationship with God is, not what are our feelings toward Him, but what are His feelings toward us. Our sufficiency cannot possibly be of ourselves, but of God.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.⁴

This, then, is what I mean by God being enough. It is that we find in Him, in the fact of His existence, and of His character, all that we can possibly want for everything. God is, must be our answer to every question and every cry. If there is any lack in the One Who has undertaken to save us, nothing supplementary we can do will avail to make it up; and if there is no lack in Him, then He, of Himself and in Himself, is enough.

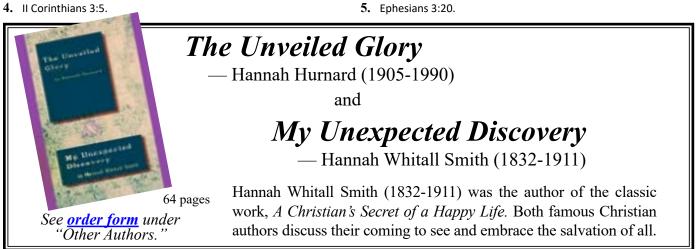
This is the secret of freedom from all of the discomfort and unrest of life. Discomfort and unrest arise from our strenuous but useless efforts to generate some satisfactory basis of confidence within ourselves; such, for instance, as what we consider to be

the proper feelings, or the right amount of fervor or earnestness, or at least, if nothing else, a sufficient degree of interest in spiritual matters. Yet because none of these things are ever satisfactory (and, I may tell you, never will be!), it is impossible for our life to be anything but uncomfortable.

However, if we see that all of our salvation, from beginning to end, depends on the Lord alone; and if we learn that He is able and willing to do for us "exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think,"⁵ then peace and comfort cannot fail to reign supreme. Everything depends upon whether the Lord, in and of Himself, is enough for our salvation, or whether other things must be added on our part to make Him sufficient.

Some years ago, I was passing through a great deal of questioning and perplexity, and I felt that no one had ever had such peculiar difficulties as mine before. There happened to be staying near me just then for a few weeks a lady who was considered to be deeply spiritual, and to whom I had been advised to consult for spiritual help. I summoned up my courage, therefore, one afternoon and went to see her, pouring out my troubles; I expected of course that she would take a deep interest in me, and would be at great pains to do all she could to help me.

She listened patiently enough, and did not interrupt me; but when I had finished my story, and had paused, expecting sympathy and consideration, she simply said, "Yes, all you say may be very true, but then, in spite of it all, there is God." I waited a few minutes for something more, but nothing came, and



Be not afraid of saying too much in the praises of God; all of the danger is of saying too little. – Matthew Henry (1662-1714).

she had the air of having said all that was necessary.

"But," I continued, "surely you did not understand how very serious and perplexing my difficulties are."

"Oh, yes, I did," replied my friend, "but then, as I tell you, there is God."

I could not induce her to make any other answer. It seemed to me most disappointing and unsatisfactory. I felt that my peculiar and really harrowing experiences could not be met by anything so simple as merely the statement, "Yes, but there is God." I knew God was there, of course, but I felt I needed something more than just God; and I came to the conclusion that she, for all her great reputation as being a spiritual teacher, was at any rate not able to grapple with a peculiar case such as mine.

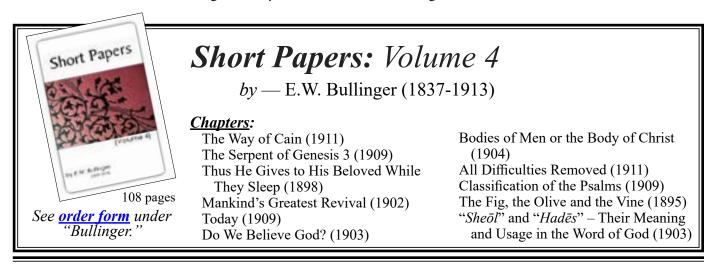
However, my need was so great that I did not give up with my first trial, but went to her again and again, always with the hope that she would sometime begin to understand the importance of my difficulties and would give me adequate help. It was of no avail. I was never able to draw forth any other answer. Always to everything would come the simple reply, with an air of entirely dismissing the subject, "Yes, I know; but there is God."

At last, by her continual repetition I became convinced that she really and truly believed that the mere fact of the existence of God, as the Creator and Redeemer of mankind, and of me as a member of the race, was an all-sufficient answer to every possible need of His creatures. At last, because she said it so often and seemed so sure, I began dimly to wonder whether after all God might not be enough, even for my need, overwhelming as I felt it to be. From wondering I came gradually to seeing that, being my Creator and Redeemer, He must be enough; and at last, a conviction burst upon me that He really was enough, and my eyes were opened to the fact of the absolute and utter all-sufficiency of God. He was enough and my soul was at rest.

The all-sufficiency of God is enough for the child of God. We all know the utter rest of the little child in the mother's presence and the mother's love. That its mother is there is enough to make all fears and all troubles disappear. It does not need the mother to make any promises; she herself, just as she is, without promises and without explanations, is all that the child needs. My own experience as a child taught me this, beyond any possibility of question.

Now, when any troubled soul fails to see that God is enough, I feel like saying, not with scorn, but with infinite pity, "Ah, dear friend, you do not know God! Did you know Him, you could not help seeing that He is the remedy for every need of your soul, and that He is an all-sufficient remedy. God is enough, even though no promise may seem to fit your case, nor any inward assurance give you confidence. The Promiser is more than His promises; and His existence is a surer ground of confidence than the most fervent inward feelings."

Someone may say, "All of this is no doubt true, and I could easily believe it if I could only be sure it applied to me. But I am so good-for-nothing, and so full of sin, that I do not feel as if I had any claim to such riches of grace."



Blessed is he who sees God in history and in nature, as well as in revelation. - William S. Plumer (1802-1880)

All the more, if you are good-for-nothing, and full of sin, have you a claim on the all-sufficiency of God. Your very good-for-nothingness and sinfulness are your loudest claims. Paul, the apostle, declares that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;⁶ not to save the righteous, not to save the fervent, not to save the earnest workers, but simply and only to save sinners, among whom he was chief.

As long as our attention is turned upon ourselves and our own experiences, just so long is it turned away from the Lord. This is plain common sense. As I have said elsewhere, we can see only the thing we look at, and while we are looking at ourselves, we simply cannot "behold God."

Heretofore, it may be, our eyes have been so fixed upon ourselves that all of our interior questioning has been simply and only as regarded our own condition. Is my love for God warm enough? Am I earnest enough? Are my feelings toward Him what they ought to be? Have I enough zeal? Have I enough faith? Do I feel my need as I ought? We have been miserable because we have never been able to answer these questions satisfactorily. Although we do not know it, it has been a mercy that we never could answer them satisfactorily; for, if we had, the self in us would have been exalted, and we should have been filled with self-congratulation and pride.

Paul, the apostle, declares,

All things are yours, whether ... the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.⁷

It would be impossible for any statement to be more all-embracing. And "*all things are yours*" because you belong to Christ – not because you are so good and so worthy, but simply and only because you belong to Christ. Let our needs and difficulties be as great as they may, yet "*all things*" are part of our inheritance in Him.

Neglect, indifference, forgetfulness, ignorance are all impossible to God. He knows everything, He cares

6. | Timothy 1:15.

7. I Corinthians 3:21-23.

about everything, He manages everything, and He loves us. What more could we ask?

God's saints through the ages came to know this, and realized that God was enough for them.

Job said out of the depths of sorrows and trials, which few can equal, *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.*"⁸

David could say in the moment of his keenest anguish, "yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," yet "I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."⁹

Paul could say triumphantly in the midst of many and grievous trials,

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.¹⁰

After such a declaration as this, where every contingency is provided for, how can any of us dare to question or doubt God's love? We do not need to beg Him to love us, He simply cannot help it.

Therefore, oh doubting and sorrowful hearts, in the face of all we have learned concerning "*the God of all comfort*," realize with Job, and David, and Paul, that nothing else is needed to quiet all of your fears, but just this: that *God is*. His simple existence is all the warrant your need requires for its certain relieving. Nothing can separate you from His love, absolutely nothing.

God is enough! ESN

For a short biographical sketch of Hannah Whitall Smith, see: – Editor's Desk, *Bible Student's Notebook #921*.

TOPICS: Major: Comfort; Faith; God *Minor*: Sovereignty

8. Job 13:15.

10. Romans 8:38-39.

9. Psalm 23:4.



I just wanted to thank you for the Daily Email Goodies! I read them every morning. – MI

This is yet another wonderful BSN [933] ... so encouraging. It clears up a lot of questions about how to consider the dates and timelines we have always considered to be sound teaching. Thank you for your love of truth above all else. - IN

My wife and I have been watching *The Greatest Truth I Know* videos and they have been helpful in resting in what our Father has for us. - PA

I don't usually comment on books I read unless they are extremely bad or extremely good and A.E. Knoch's The Problem of Evil¹ was the latter. I was hesitant to get the book because it is such a difficult subject and I thought there wasn't anyone that could do it justice. A.E. Knoch did a masterful job in laying out the problem and its origin and taking it all the way to the Consummation. ... [It] opened my eyes to many things I was not aware of, or that I saw from a different light. My yellow highlighter ran out of ink as I found myself rereading passages over and over until they were worked into my spirit. When I finished, I immediately

1. We consider this one of the best books in print. It can be found on the order form under "A.E. Knoch."

turned to page one and started reading again just to make sure I did not miss anything. Thank you also for your Study Shelf bookstore as I have been able to read some books that are hard to find and locate authors you don't find in many modern bookstores. - KS

The books I treasure the most are those that exhort me to think on a higher plane, e.g. I Choose, Being OK with Not Being OK, and now the one I've started reading, We Call Him Father.² These are the ones that challenge me and elevate me out of the habitual pattern of worldly thinking to think about our loving Father and His so much larger perspective on life and things to come. - South Africa

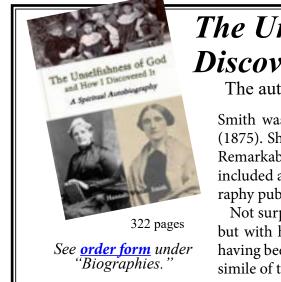
I'm up first, usually before five. My job is to turn on all the heat, plug in the coffee, and get the Daily Email Goodie ready for my husband. – ID

By far the best stuff you are putting online is related to the universal reconciliation of all men to God (Colossians 1:20; Romans 5:12-21; 11:32; Ephesians 1:9-10; etc.), especially from the older writers who are so articulate.

This so much needs to be heard, especially by so-called "Evangelicals" who have corrupted the Gospel by injecting a "Good News" with the poisonous and horrific doctrine of endless hell torments for the vaster part of humanity.

"Turn or burn forever." This is the "Good News"? That is their message? Good News? No person in his right

- 2. All three books can be found on the order form under "Clyde Pilkington."



The Unselfishness of God and How I **Discovered** It

The autobiography of Hannah Whitall Smith (1832–1911)

Smith was the author of the famed A Christian's Secret of a Happy Life (1875). She was influential in the "higher life" and "holiness" movements. Remarkably, she would come to see and embrace the salvation of all. She included a description of this journey and understanding in this autobiography published in 1903.

Not surprisingly, her autobiography would subsequently be republished, but with her accounts of coming to the conviction of the salvation of all having been removed. This publication is the complete and unabridged facsimile of the original edition.

mind would want to draw near to someone pointing a blowtorch at him. – *VT*

The BSN publication gets better and better. - PA

Once again Hannah Whitall Smith³ hit a Homerun! [<u>BSN 947</u>] One of the best articles on depression I've ever read! It's almost like our spirits operate on the same frequency – imagine that! :) "*There is ... one Spirit*" (Ephesians 4:4). – **SD**

Thanks for making that book [*The Salvation of All*]⁴ – it's great! ... I've watched a bunch of your YouTube videos ... – WA

Your daily posts are a real boost for me every morning. I'm very thankful for your faithfulness. – *OH*

Excellent issue [<u>BSN 939</u>]. I loved André's article *Concerning God's Sovereignty*! Outstanding truth.

Also, Clyde's continuing series on *Things I Misunderstood*⁵ is wonderful. I so wish that, 16 years ago when I came into the knowledge of truth, I had access to such great information. Took me years to understand what Clyde is summarizing now. – TN I just finished reading <u>Being Ok</u>, with not being Ok⁶ today. It was so needful, as my wife and I are badly scarred from religion ... and your book was a welcome relief to see that it is ok to be content in not being ok, and that we will all reach our perfection at the resurrection. After I talked to my wife and told her about the book, now she wants to read it. – *KS*

Once again stellar work [<u>BSN 945</u>]. I so appreciate your consistent effort, coming from a pure heart, to simply call upon the Lord to understand the truth. Of course, it is a shifting landscape as we mature; only carnality would assume full knowledge before its time. Thank you for being faithful to this end; genuine humility is its own badge today, and without the benefit of divine immediate fulfillment of understanding today we must keep a keen awareness of our limited and progressive maturing process. It's supposed to be, and is, a process today, and you guys have remained faithful to mature in the Word, and not just in years.

The clarifying article on death in this issue of the BSN is wonderful encouragement. I cannot say enough about how important it is to grasp the new resurrection hope made known through Paul's completing revelation. At the heart of the mystery is the revelation of the new and glorious resurrection hope that belongs to us ... now in assurance, and then in reality when we appear with Him. It is the answer to life's endless quagmire. – IN

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Goodies – 365 Thoughts on Scriptural
TruthsTruthsby - Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

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^{3.} We have received much positive feedback from this series, *The God of All Comfort*. It is being prepared as an upcoming book by the same title. This special abridged edition will be a great tool to give to others as a way of introducing comfort and hope. Watch the *BSN* for an announcement of its availability.

^{4. &}lt;u>The Salvation of ALL: Creation's Final Destination (A Biblical Look</u> <u>at Universal Reconciliation)</u>, on the <u>order form</u> under "Pilkington."

^{5.} This series is being prepared as an upcoming book by the same title. Watch the *BSN* for an announcement of its availability.