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*"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD."* COL. 3. 1.

**"COATS OF SKIN"**

**Gen. 3. 21**

*An Address (revised) at*

*Forest Gate*

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by

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**“COATS OF SKIN” - Gen. 3. 21**

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward,  
Forest Gate, 26<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1923.

In Gen. 3. 21 we read “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin, and He clothed them”. I think we all feel, beloved friends, at the outset, this simple statement shows God's wonderful CARE. Have you noticed how in the early chapters of Genesis God is so definitely brought before us as giving food AND clothing. God made ALL arrangements for Adam's food. Before he sinned, yes, and after he sinned, God did not say to Adam, Thou shalt have no meat. “In the sweat of thy face” this is true, but “Thou shalt eat bread”. Oh such tenderness! And then the gift of clothing. One loves to think of the tender care of God, MAKING THE VERY CLOTHES, – the clothes for Adam and his wife. God is NOT afar off. He Who tells the number of the stars, Who holds and upholds all things by the word of His power, is SO tender, SO merciful. How grateful we ought to be for our food and clothing! But if Genesis impresses that God appointed, Matthew gives us the same view, yet a different aspect. Be not anxious saying, what shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed. All these “necessary” things shall be ADDED unto you. Beloved friends, you and I have not a right to any food till we have first of all SOUGHT the kingdom of God. Of course, we CAN dress ourselves up, and we CAN eat our food and enjoy it and so forth, but that is nothing – in the way of true profit. I want my food ADDED, do not you? I do not want my opinions to rule, but His will. I want my clothing added. I am sure the Lord will dress me properly if I have the garments added. “All these things shall be added”. How often we put these things FIRST, and make them matters of our arrangement. God does not want us to be swayed by the world's customs and fashions. He wants us to have these things ADDED. And there is a wonderful ARRANGEMENT in all God's work as to Adam and Eve. I think we notice the KIND of clothes He gave. He made coats of SKIN. Ah, you rightly say, Typical teaching. I grant that. But there is a

further thought. Here we have durable clothing. A coat of skin implies durable clothing. Why? I do not say it was the cheapest clothing. It was durable, because God has always set Himself against theories of flimsiness, to keep on “changing”. The very desire to keep on changing is ruinous spiritually. God set Israel against it in the wilderness. The people's clothing remained the same throughout the forty years. God hates the wish of changing, from a standpoint of natural self-indulgence, and God marked out this at the very first. I would repeat it earnestly, He gave durable clothing. Moreover, THEY had sought aprons. God gave COATS. God indicated that clothing was not to be as little as possible. Savagery has gone back to “as little as possible”, and so do many in the twentieth century; but God emphasized a contrast with the aprons. In material AND SIZE God protested against present-day ideas and our humbled hearts are drawn to God's protest. That is not a small matter; though I rejoice we can go a step further, and see Christ in the type. Indeed, because we see Christ here, therefore we understand the preciousness of these things as to daily pilgrim life for Him, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

At the outset, therefore, we behold the sinner's need, then the Saviour's work, and afterwards the saint's position. Here is a little touch of Gospel teaching in the third of Genesis, and the Gospel is again and again brought before us in the passage. O that it might speak to some hearts even tonight! First, the sinner's need. You can take this in two ways. He needed covering. The sinner is a stripped man. He needs a covering. Contrast man with the animals. For the animals God did not make coats. Animals are not viewed as sinners, but a sinner needs a covering. We dare not go before God without a covering. Our own skin will not do. Our own work will not do. Our own righteousness will not do. The sinner is a stripped man. If only we could feel this – the stripped sinner.

Secondly, one loves to notice the thought that something quite new was needed. Adam and Eve had been sewing fig leaves together. God gave something quite distinct. God does not patch up. God does not simply ADD a little to our work. You remember how the unjust steward said, Take thy bill and write fifty. Now underlying that we find the thought of “You do your part”, and THAT is the Gospel of many today. It is not God's Gospel. When Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood

before the angel, there was not the statement “Wash his garments and patch them up”, but “Take away the filthy garments,... I will clothe thee with change of raiment”. So no one seweth a piece of uncarded cloth upon an old garment, else the rent is made worse. Throw that old garment away. God has no room for a fraction of your righteousness. Oh how we need to emphasize this in days of pride, in days of man's glorification. “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin” plus leaves? No. God did not attach skins to the leaves. God did not put a few leaves on top of the skins. He shewed NO appreciation of man's efforts. I want us to realise this. God will not accept or give any appreciation of human efforts. The whole of the best of a sinner's self-righteousness is dashed to the ground as worthless, – cast away, worthless, absolutely worthless. The best of the fig leaves rejected. The sinner's need is covering. The sinner's need is something quite new.

Thirdly, this passage brings before us the Saviour's work. “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin”. I somewhat regret our English rendering “Coats of skinS”. There is no plural. The material is before us. It is a collective material, I grant; but to make it plural is to add to the word of the Holy Spirit. “Coats of skin” is a sufficiently plain statement. There may have been one skin. Certainly the Antitype is one. In Leviticus we are told that the priest who offered any man's burnt offering had the skin for himself. Now in Gen. 3 we have a time when no animal flesh was eaten. That was connected by God with the days after the flood, consequently the offerings before the flood suggest burnt offerings; hence the skin of the burnt offering belonged to the offerer. God Himself arranged the sacrifice, and God took the skin, but not FOR Himself, He made it a coat for Adam and Eve. THAT is the teaching. So we have brought before us the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as a Burnt Offering, and THAT means not only atonement but perfect acceptability. I love to think of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as more than merely productive of “pardon”, more than merely productive of deliverance from Egypt! The work of the Lord Jesus has been an infinite JOY to the Father, and our salvation is an infinite joy. Salvation is NOT ONLY A PATCHING UP. Salvation is not only that which puts us where Adam was before he sinned. Salvation reveals a complete work that is the Father's delight, and the saved one's delight is

linked, and his glorification is before us. It is marvellous to see that where sin abounded grace OVERFLOWED, but it is a reality. So here we have brought before us the Lord Jesus as the Perfect Burnt Offering. You will observe with regard to this skin, it was perfect upon the offering first, but of no avail for Adam and Eve, – no avail except VIA death. You could not take the skin off till there was death. So the Lord Jesus Christ was perfect in His life, but of no AVAIL to me except by death. There must be death, (cf. John 12. 24). So we have brought before us the life and death of the Lord Jesus in that simple expression, – a perfect life, – the Saviour’s work as a complete work in life, but available by death. I need hardly say that this stress on the coats of skin would suggest that the work of the Lord Jesus is to give a COMPLETE robe as distinct from an apron, a righteousness that completely meets the need, and COVERS the sinner. That is so important! Our soul’s nakedness no longer appears at all. We are no longer ashamed to go into God’s presence. The ambassadors with garments cut were ashamed, but our robe is a complete robe. We have no shame in the merits of the Lord Jesus. That is what redemption has brought about. The work of the Lord Jesus Christ takes away our sin and our shame, and we go into THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD.

I am thus going on to the fourth point, – our position. Indeed, we cannot get away from quickly reaching this. As soon as we remember the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ we think not only of what they are, but what they mean to the One Who possesses them. You cannot get away from such a glorious aspect; nor do you wish so to do! These merits are not simply bare merits to be in a museum, they are merits made available for US, given to us, the undeserving. It is delightful to realise this. I dare say you have sometimes noticed the expression “The righteousness of God” in the later Scriptures. “The righteousness of Christ” is an unusual expression. “The righteousness of God” is rightly employed. This passage helps to explain it. “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin, and He clothed them”. Christ wrought out a righteousness as a matter of obedience: VIA death His full work in life and death was accepted. The Father having accepted it presented it to us as a robe. Hence the obedience of Christ is presented to the Father, and thereby it becomes the righteousness of God presented to us. Thus there is the harmony of the works of our Triune

God. Coats of (a) skin! The work of the Lord Jesus is enough to cover all who are brought to feel their need, and Adam and Eve were types of such. They suggest fellowship (two), and those of all nations, for at that time they were alone. They bring before us man and women. The work of the Lord Jesus is sufficient.

What about the saint's position as a result of salvation? Adam and Eve were clothed. That was the result. That was the fruit. And the believer now through the merits of the Saviour is a CLOTHED man. In the days of the Lord Jesus they came and saw the one who had the demon sitting and clothed and in his right mind. What a contrast! He had been among the tombs cutting himself with stones, but now he is sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And those who are saved by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ are clothed with the righteousness of God. In other words the believer is one who goes before God without any thought of his own merits, and without any fear because of the merits of Christ, (Ps.71.16). On the one hand there is not the particle of suggestion of one's own righteousness. It is true that we can do service to please God after we are saved, but that service is not meritorious. Our meritoriousness because of Him, is the background which must be FIRST, before we can do service. Here we see the position of the believer, – clothed. God not only made coats of skin, but He made coats, and He clothed. He carried the whole work THROUGH. I need hardly say the Antitype excels the type in various ways. First of all, the sacrifice was not raised from the dead. CHRIST has been raised from the dead. Secondly, Adam and Eve had a coat given to them. WE are made the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5. 21). We are UNITED to Him. Thirdly, Adam could not make the coat for his wife. Christ HAS made the coat for His bride, the one robe. Further, the next verse goes on to say that God drove out Adam. One may possess the type, and YET not possess the Antitype. If one possesses the Antitype, "Blessed are they that are CALLED INTO the marriage supper of the Lamb". The fine linen – the righteous requirements. They have a righteousness, and they are called in, NOT driven out. A man with a type may be driven out, but the one with the Antitype will be welcomed in. That is the glory of it. The Antitype excels. Further, though this clothing was durable, Adam and Eve last of all died, but "MY righteousness shall be for ever" is the Divine statement. The moth will not eat THAT up. We

have a robe which will never fade. The Antitype excels. Oh beloved friends, let us declare this glorious Gospel. It is God's Gospel from Genesis onwards. Without the pouring out of blood, without the sacrifice, NO ROBE. "Oh", say higher critics, so-called; "the adoption of the theory of sacrifice was from the heathen, a concession to the people". We tell them we believe the SCRIPTURES, and that we find that God appointed sacrifice BEFORE there were any heathen, that God commended Abel in connection with presenting a sacrifice; yes, before that, God HIMSELF gave the sacrifice. Thus at the outset there is only ONE thing that came in before sacrifice was mentioned, and which was a sad necessary preparation for it – sin. There was no sacrifice before the sin. So on Sinai, there is no mention of sacrifice when the ten commandments sound forth, but as soon as Israel said, We have failed, we cannot do anything, God went on to say, "An ALTAR of earth shalt thou make unto Me". When God dealt with Adam in the covenant before he died, there was no sacrifice; but "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die". He died, – then sacrifice at once. What could show more plainly than that, that sacrifice was not simply a representation of the work of God's LOVE, but a SUBSTITUTIONARY work. Thus with a sinner who is under a sentence of death, and the death of Another in his place, and that is the glorious Gospel of the grace of God. It humbles us, but it exalts us. It humbles us to think we deserve to die, and exalts us to think we are made members of Christ. One loves to see the Divine plan. Language falters, but I think we can have some view of this Divine plan. Have you ever thought, beloved friends, if Christ had not NEEDED to have died, He COULD not have died. It would not have been right for the Righteous One to die unless He was justly condemned. That is important! That is the first point. If Christ had not needed to die, He could not have died justly, – justly could not have died. Secondly, if I had not needed to die Christ could not have died. That is the second point. Come now to the third point. If Christ had not died, His life could not have become mine. Now come to the fourth point. If I had not needed to die, Christ's life could not have become mine, and the next thought in your mind will be, Oh I love all the attributes of God, yes, including the wrath of God. Do you wonder the psalmist praised God for His JUDGMENTS? The wrath of God is delightful to a believer, when he sees in that very righteous wrath a stepping stone to the glory, and to the glory of God in

redemption. If there had not been absolute wrath, there could not be absolute salvation. If any modification had been possible, Christ could not have died, and salvation would have been much lower. Surely where sin abounded grace overflowed, and in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, the poor guilty sinner is lifted up to a height to which he could not have been lifted up otherwise, to which he could not have been brought unless via wrath. The very wrath makes the background, yes, more than the background. The very wrath makes the occasion for the display of infinite grace, whereby the poor, guilty, ruined rebel is made a member of the Son of God's love, and lifted up to heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and clothed with all His merits, and made acceptable with all His perfection. The water of judgment exalted the ark, and all within. The mind falters, words fail; but the heart realises, in the power of the Holy Spirit, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift".

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