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## THE RED STRING

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Angels are not human beings with feathered wings. They are messages from God. One of these messages was delivered to the Children of Israel by Moses (Deut. 6:4 to 9) as follows: "Hear Oh Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and on thy gates."

Moses knew whereof he spake. He well knew the difficulties experienced in remembering to "love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might," so he did the very practical thing—told them to have reminders of one kind or another which should serve to turn their thoughts to God. When we desire to recollect something it is a common thing to place in the mirror a card with that which we wish to remember written thereon, that we may see it the first thing upon arising. We know too how prone we are to become accustomed to that memorandum and fail to observe it if it is left there indefinitely. Moses knew this also, and he told the Children of Israel to do several things so that if one failed to produce the desired result another might do it. To this end he instructed them to write the foregoing commands on the doorposts of their houses, and on their gates, so that they might see them when they passed in or out. Then knowing that these reminders would be passed by mechanically after a while, he suggested other ways to remind them, and said, teach them diligently to thy children; talk of them in thine house; when thou walkest by the way; and when thou risest up, and when thou sittest down; wear them as frontlets before thine eyes—phylacteries, they were

called—and then having done all these things faithfully, he said as a grand finale, bind them about thine hand, by which no doubt he meant that the Children of Israel should use that age-old custom of tying a string around the finger, for people did that as a reminder in those days just as we do it today.

Who has not in childhood's days heard mother say: "When you come home after school be sure and bring home a pound of tea." Then after a short pause she would add, "Wait a moment. Give me your finger." Then she tied a red string about the finger, remarking as she packed us off to school, "Now you won't forget."

A curious thing then occurred. Every time you caught sight of the red string, instead of thinking about the string, its color, its material, texture, etc., you thought of a pound of tea. On the way to school when one of the boys caught sight of it and said, "What's the red string for?" you replied, "Oh, mother told me to bring home a pound of tea," whereupon he and all the other children who heard the reply, whenever they caught sight of the red string on your finger, would think, not of the string, but of a pound of tea. It was the same with the teacher. When she caught sight of the string, though maybe in the middle of some important teaching, she stopped abruptly and asked, "What is the string for?" And having received the stereotyped reply, she too immediately thought not of the string but of the pound of tea. Even today in this world of commercialism, if you were negotiating a loan of untold amount and were sitting about the board table of the greatest financial institution in the world, with all the directors present and vitally interested, and with the chairman speaking oracularly about the business in hand, if he should suddenly catch sight of the red string tied about your finger, he would pause in his speech and say, "What's the string for?" And when he had been informed that it was to remind you to take home a pound of tea, he and his conferees would smile and then each one of them, as and when he saw the red string from time to time, would not think at all about the string itself, but would instantly think about a pound of tea. As one ponders over this homely incident, it certainly seems an odd thing that one should look at one thing and think of another quite unlike it.

So Moses, fully aware of what has been set forth, commanded the Children of Israel to tie a string about the finger which should serve to act as a reminder to turn their thoughts to God, or, as the very words of Moses expressed it, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might."

It is to be noted that when we returned home with the pound of tea, mother took from the finger the red string as being of no further use, for its mission had been fulfilled, and likewise when we have turned our thoughts to God, the red string which we shall speak of directly will be taken from us as having fulfilled its purpose.

Each one of us today, when faced with a problem, be it sickness, sin, death, poverty or what not, has no need of a red string to be tied about our finger to remind us of God, for the problem itself is the red string, or the reminder. It has appeared for the sole purpose of turning thought to God. It is a reminder and nothing else. It is presented to consciousness solely because we have permitted ourselves to forget to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and might. We have turned from Spirit, Mind, God, wherein we "live and move and have our being" and entertained the belief that we live and move and have our being in matter, and so must reap the consequences of the false belief so long as we continue to entertain it.

The tendency is to dwell on the trouble whatever it may appear to be, and which is the red string, and examine it, forgetting the pound of tea altogether—forgetting to love the Lord thy God with all the heart and soul and might. If, however, instead of examining the problem, we regard this trouble of whatever nature it may be, as a red string, a simple reminder to turn to God, thus dwelling on the true, spiritual and real, it will not be long before the trouble will betake itself off and disappear just as the red string was taken off when its mission had been fulfilled.

Years ago the writer had a number of red strings about his finger in the form of troubles of one kind or another. He was dissipated to a degree, sick in body and soul, and given up by his physicians to die. He smoked, also to great excess. He spent a large time

watching his troubles, the red strings. So did his doctors, but with no beneficial results. Instead of growing better he grew worse. Finally he went to a true follower of the Christ, and obedient to the instructions given, he ceased dwelling on his troubles, began to take no thought for his body, and simply used those troubles or red strings as reminders to turn his thoughts to God.

As he did this he became better and better until finally he was wholly healed in every way, and since that time, thirty odd years ago, he has been in the main, healthy, happy, strong and prosperous.