

"CHRIST IN YOU"

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:26-27.

A mystery in the scriptural sense does not mean something actually incomprehensible, but something concealed or unknown until it pleases God to reveal it; something beyond the human mind to discover for itself, and which can only be attained by divine aid. Unlike the heathen mysteries, which were confined to a narrow circle, the Christian mystery is freely communicated to all.

God chose his own time for making known the mystery of the gospel. Like all the divine procedures, the development was gradual, increasing in clearness and completeness as the fullness of time approached; that time embraced the advent of Jesus Christ, His ascension and enthronement in heaven, and the descent of the Holy Spirit. The revelation of the mystery was an act of the divine will — "To whom God would make known." There was nothing impelling him to unfold this mystery but His own pleasure. It was his sovereign will to disclose the wondrous grace and glory of the gospel to the humble and devout, rather than to the proud and self-sufficient. But, this gospel is still a mystery to the unconverted.

The gospel is full of glory — a glory unique, resplendent, unsurpassable; and this glory is dowered with riches, abundant, inexhaustible, and divine. The riches of the glory appear in the manifestation of the nature and attributes of God, and also in the moral wealth that has descended upon man.

I. The Essence of the Gospel.

What is the gospel? It has been said that, "The Gospel is this disclosure, demonstration, and donation of the free and unmerited love and mercy of God, disclosed at Bethlehem, demonstrated at Calvary, donated at Pentecost — the supreme fact of history and the deepest wonder of experience." Through His incarnation, Jesus revealed God to man. Through His atonement, Jesus reconciled man to God. Through His gift of the Spirit, He made possible a new life from above for those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death. At Bethlehem, God was with us. At Calvary, God was for us. At Pentecost, God was in us.

Jesus Christ is the infinite, the holy, the almighty God, accessible, sympathetic, and compassionate. It is truly wonderful that the infinite God should take upon Himself the nature of man. God and man in one person is the wonder of heaven, and earth, and hell. He is the author of our beings, the healer of our diseases, the comforter of our sorrows, the guide of our lives, giving fortitude in all the trials of life, certifying in countless experiences that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." To know Him, to understand His will, and to do that will, is the unifying interest of life.

When we think of our Lord we remember that glorious work which he undertook and finished on our behalf. He took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. His was a life of grief and humiliation. Up to the cross He carried all our load, and on the cross He bore, that we might never bear, His Father's righteous wrath. What has Christ not done for us? He has cast our sins into the depths of the sea. He has taken the cup which we ought to have drunk forever, and He has drained it dry and left

not a dreg behind. He has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; and now He has brought in everlasting righteousness and gone up to His Father's throne within the veil, bearing His divine oblation, and making everything right and safe for us, that by and by we may follow Him, and be with Him where He is. I cannot think of what He is, and what He has done, and what He is doing, and what He will yet do without saying, "He is all my salvation and my desire."

It must be Christ Himself rather than anything which Christ gives. How different Christ is from all the friends and helpers that we have. They bring us good things, but Jesus gives us Himself. He does not merely give us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, but He Himself is made of God all these things to us. Hence we can never do without Him. We shall never outgrow Christ, but we shall grow to need Him more and more. We shall find that He is growingly dear and increasingly necessary.

II. The Experience Of The Gospel.

Here is a grand advance. Christ in heaven, Christ free to poor sinners is precious, but Christ in the heart is the most precious of all. Christ in you means Christ embraced by faith as our righteousness and strength. When a sinner's heart is opened by the Holy Spirit, when the beauty and excellence of the Saviour is shown to Him, the heart inwardly embraces and cleaves to Christ. Every new discovery of Christ to the soul renews this act of inward cleaving to the Lord Jesus. Every reproach, every temptation, every fall into sin, every bereavement, makes the soul more really, firmly, and fully embrace the Lord Jesus. Therefore, by continual faith, Christ, may be said to dwell in the heart. Ephesians 3:17.

"Christ in you," how can it be explained? As in the grafting of trees, we are the little grafts and He is the strong and living stem. We are laid to Him, bound to Him, sealed to Him, and when there is nothing between the new shoot and the old tree, at last the sap flows into the graft, and the graft and the tree are one. Thus Christ enters us and becomes our life.

Does Christ come and dwell in us today? If Christ does not abide in us now, it does not matter very much to us whether He wrought miracles in Jerusalem or muzzled the angry waves of Galilee. But if He does dwell within us today, and manifests Himself in us as the interpretation of life, and He guides, cleanses, restores, inspires, etc., we have something even more real, more immediate, than the narratives of the writers of the gospels. "Christ in you" means:

1. Christ accepted by faith.

It is a wonderful thing that Christ should enter people, but it is still more wonderful that He should enter by so narrow an opening as our little faith.

2. Christ possessed.

You see nothing is so much a man's own as that which is within him.

3. Christ experienced.

There may be a valuable medicine that works like magic to expel a man's pains and cure his diseases, but it is of no efficacy till it is within him! When it commences to purify his blood, and to strengthen his frame, he is in a fair way to

know it without depending upon the witness of others. Get Christ in you, curing your sins, Christ in you filling your soul with love to virtue and holiness, bathing your heart in comfort and firing it with heavenly aspirations.

4. Christ reigning.

Christ swaying his sceptre from the center of your being, over every power and faculty, desire and resolve, bringing every thought into captivity to himself, is glory begun and the sure pledge of heaven.

5. Christ transfiguring.

When Christ enters us, He elevates us to a nobler state; even as Paul said, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

(1) Christ's mind is formed in the believer.

He thinks as Christ does. I do not mean that the believer has the same all-seeing mind, the same infallible judgment concerning everything as Christ has, but up to his light he sees things as Christ does.

a. He sees sin as Christ does.

Christ sees sin to be evil, bitter, abominable, and dangerous. He sees the inseparable connection between sin and suffering. So does the believer.

b. He sees the gospel as Christ does.

Christ sees amazing glory in the gospel. The way of salvation which He Himself has wrought out appears a most complete salvation to Him, most free, most glorifying to God, and most beneficial to man.

c. He sees the world as Christ does.

Christ looked on this world as vanity compared with the smile of His Father. Its riches, its honors, and its pleasures did not appear to be worth a sigh. He saw it passing away.

d. He sees time as Christ did.

"I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."

e. He sees eternity as Christ did.

Christ looked at everything in the light of eternity. Everything is valuable from His standpoint only as it bears on eternity.

(2) Christ's affections are formed in the believer.

"I will put my spirit within you."

- a. The same love to God.
- b. The same aversion to God's frown.
- c. The same love to saints.
- d. The same compassion for sinners.
- e. The same tenderness to the awakened.

(3) Christ's life is lived in the believer.

Though the believer may wax cold and have many falls, still the main current of his life is Christ living within.

- a. Bearing reproaches.
"When He was reviled, He reviled not again."
I Peter 2:23.
- b. In doing good.
"He went about doing good."
- c. In being victorious.

III. The End Of The Gospel.

It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." The true hope is distinguished from the false hope by three marks:

- 1. It comes down from heaven.
We cannot create it. No fellow creature can persuade us into it.
- 2. It longs and look for heaven.
- 3. It carries the soul on toward heaven.

This hope of glory arises from the indwelling of the Saviour. He is in us as the source of life and the principle of action. Take Him away and there is no hope. Our hope is founded in Christ, communicated by Christ, and maintained by Christ. He has purchased glory for us, has actually taken possession of glory for us, and has pledged Himself to bring all believers to glory. Glory is one of the greatest words in our language. It is one of God's magnificent titles. It is the object of the true believer's hope, and whatever else he relinquishes, he will not part with this. He lives and dies in hope -- the hope of being where the servant is like his lord, and sharing the throne with Jesus in His triumphant glory. To have Christ in us is the life of grace; to be with Christ is the hope of glory; and the two go together. We shall have glorified bodies, glorious companions, a glorious reward, and a glorious rest. The Christ who now lives within us will never be separated from us. Christ in you means you in glory, as surely as God lives. There is no question about that. Go your ways therefore and rejoice in Christ Jesus, letting Him speak through your mouth, weep through your eyes, smile through your face, work with your hands, walk with your feet, and love with your heart. Let Him seek sinners through you and comfort saints through you until the daybreak and the shadows flee away.