

Administration and Reconciliation

by H.J. Vine

Administration and reconciliation are two essential aspects of God's plan, working together to bring glory to God and to secure His ultimate glory.

Scripture: Colossians 1:19

Topics: "Divine Administration", "Christian Reconciliation"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the significance of administration and reconciliation in the divine plans of God, emphasizing their distinct activities and results. Administration, highlighted in Ephesians 1, focuses on the outward blessings and order established in Christ for future universal administration. On the other hand, reconciliation, emphasized in Colossians 1, brings inward blessedness and joy, securing favor and satisfaction for the heart of God through Christ's work on the Cross.

Transcript

Administration and reconciliation differ in their activities and are distinct in the results they attain, but their importance is great and evident if we judge by the large place that the Holy Spirit gives to them in the inspired writings. Both are necessary for the fulfilment of eternally blessed counsels of God and to secure His ultimate glory. The one is outward and the other inward, generally speaking, and they are secured in the work and in the Person of Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the matters of nations and of families these two things are necessary, for no measure of governmental or social order could be maintained in a sinful world like this without them. But in regard to God's wonderful counsels of glory and love, all will be established in Divine perfection to the praise of His glory on the one hand and to the eternal satisfaction of His holy nature on the other, and that in spite of man's sinfulness and enmity with which He must deal.

Administration is prominent in Ephesians 1 and the reconciliation in Colossians 1. We read of the good pleasure of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "which He purposed in Himself for the administration of the fullness of times; to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in Him, in whom we have also obtained an inheritance, being marked out beforehand according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:9-11, N.Tr.). Also, in Christ "all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to itself, having made peace by the blood of His Cross--by Him, whether the things on earth or the things in the heavens. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now has it

reconciled in the body of His flesh through death" (Col. 1:19-22, N.Tr.).

While Ephesians 1 tells us of the centring up of all things in Christ for the future universal administration, we are told in chapter 3:2 and 8, of the present administration of grace in view of the blessing of sinners who believe on our Lord Jesus Christ even now; as Paul says: "The administration of the grace of God which has been given to me towards you, . . . to me, less than the least of all saints, has this grace been given, to announce among the nations the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches of the Christ" (N.Tr.). And, as we have seen, both the future and the present aspects of reconciliation are given in Colossians 1. It is a glad day for our souls when we stand upon the first mountain peak of the Roman epistle, and experience the elevating truth of chapter 5:11, as we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom "we have NOW received the reconciliation" (N.Tr.) And if, even here, upon this height of justifying and redeeming grace, we rejoice on the principle of faith in the invigorating and healthful benefits of sound doctrine, what shall it be when glorified with our Lord Jesus Christ amidst scenes of Divine majesty, we behold the royal radiance of thrones, lordships, principalities and powers, all reconciled by Him on the ground of the peace He made by the blood of the Cross?

"Then, Lord, through endless days

Where all Thy glories shine,

In holy, happy strains we'll praise

The grace that made us Thine."

If administration be chiefly for outward blessing to the praise of God's grace and glory, if reconciliation be more for inward blessedness for the pleasure and satisfaction of the heart of God; if the first has order, government and glory mainly in view, if the second brings into favour, rest and rejoicing--then the activities and the results reached by each may clearly be distinguished. The ministrations in grace now and in glory soon, resulting from the economy or administration established by God in the Man Christ Jesus--who tasted death for everything and who is now exalted above all--not only bring salvation to sinners, but sets those who believe in corporate, collective and vital blessings now, preparing them, too, for the glorious day when as Christ's co-heirs they participate with Him in that whereby the benefits of God FLOW OUT from Himself through Christ and the assembly to all in heaven and on earth. On the other hand, the activities of the love of God in and by Christ now and in the future--as the result of the pleasure of the Godhead fullness to dwell in Him, and of the peace made by His blood shed at Calvary--secure the reconciliation for persons now and positions of dignity soon; so that, subsisting in a state of favour, joy and satisfaction--all being rightly adjusted to the fullness residing in the Son of the Father's love--the Head of the assembly in resurrection and ascension--deepest and richest blessing is known INSIDE before and with Himself. Both the one and the other are to the pleasure of our God, and if the first yields praise to His grace and to His glory, the second brings rejoicing, and satisfaction to His heart.

It is important for us to see that even the preaching of the gospel has this latter in view. It is the outcome of the deep desires of His heart of love; and if, when we believed the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation, we learned that though we were enemies, we "were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:10), it is nevertheless a great stride forward when we discover that, though we get the blessing, God Himself finds joy and satisfaction in our being reconciled. The pleasure of the returning one would only be deepened when he beheld the satisfaction and joy of his Father as described in Luke 15. The feasting, the music, the merry-making and the dancing, all tell eloquently the good pleasure of our God.

He desired the reconciliation--and wrought in righteousness for it--when we did not; we needed reconciling--who were at enmity against Him--when He did not for there was no enmity with God in regard to us. There could not be. Man needed reconciling, not God, blessed be His holy Name! He desired the reconciliation truly and He secured it through the death of His Son, and by means of the gospel He brings sinners to receive it, even as Paul writes, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning to them their offences, and putting in us the word of that reconciliation. We are ambassadors, therefore, for Christ, God as it were beseeching by us: we entreat for Christ, BE RECONCILED TO GOD. Him who knew not sin He has made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him" (2 Cor. 5:19-21, N.Tr.) The "WORD" of that reconciliation is therefore proclaimed consistently with the character of a holy God, who is also a God of perfect love.

There is also the "MINISTRY" of that reconciliation as well as the "Word" of it, for those who have in faith received the proclamation need the unfolding to them of that which is enfolded in the Word they have believed. The new things in Christ are opened out to us, therefore, by this ministry; so we read, "If any one be in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things have passed away, behold all things have become new, and all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and given to us the ministry of that reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:17-18). If on our side, therefore, we are to be maintained in the rejoicings, the satisfaction, and the deep, holy blessedness of reconciliation to God even now, before the glorious day of reconciled positions of real dignity in heaven and on earth, we need to read the benefits of this ministry, and not to grow slack as to it, lest we become lean in our souls and our gladness Godward be lost, and our songs of praise be silent. All believers are made meet for the portion of the saints in light, but all are not in the present enjoyment of Divine love and favour as God desires them to be.

All of us should be awake as to this matter, and even those servants who rejoice in the results seen from the proclaiming of the word of reconciliation--though they cannot presume to be the appointed "ambassadors"--are often found greatly lacking in their inward joy in God Himself, through neglecting the benefits of the ministry of the truth for their own souls. Service shuts out soul prosperity when pursued at the cost of attention to sound teaching. One mourned of old, "They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept."

Furthermore, the enrichment of our souls Godward would deepen in us His own desires for the reconciling of sinners to Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ, giving us greater longings for the spread of the Word. And then, too, we should seek that not one of His own, as far as we are concerned, should walk in estrangement and alienation from the rich benefits of reconciliation which belong to all. As we see how God has wrought, we shall not be daunted by the difficulties in this regard.

Who could be more irreconcilable than a religious Jew and a loose Gentile? Yet Christ is their peace (where there is true faith in Him) and both are made one, to fully "reconcile both in one body to God by the Cross, having by it slain the enmity" (Eph. 2:16). What a triumph of love Divine! What glory for Divine grace! Both in reconciliation now, they have access together by one Spirit to the Father. This is what pleases Him, and it is what the Divine nature (which is ours) ever desires for every brother in Christ. As it is enjoyed truly by ourselves, we shall desire this increasingly for others.

How earnestly God's ministers at the beginning besought the brethren not to "receive the grace of God in vain," for He had heard them in the well-accepted time, in the day of salvation. And how diligent they were themselves to give "no manner of offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed" (2 Cor. 6:1-3). Would not a little more of their "beseeching" and their carefulness for the good of others become us

today?

Ah, beloved brethren, the universal administration soon to be seen in unfading glory flowing out through Christ and the assembly will know no failure, and the reconciliation to the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in the Son of the Father's love will abide in eternal perfection and blessedness. May we then be powerfully affected practically by these things even now, and may both administration and reconciliation, which are according to God's good pleasure, give character to us increasingly before the day of heavenly glory dawns!

"Soon Christ will come for all His own,

And place them with Him on His throne,

His reign and joy to share."

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