

Christ and His Reconciliation Colossians 1

by John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby's sermon explores the profound reconciliation achieved through Christ's sacrifice, emphasizing the necessity of faith and the transformative power of grace in the believer's life.

Scripture: Colossians 1:12

Topics: "Grace Of God", "Reconciliation"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the dual approach to the gospel of grace, highlighting how God meets human need through Christ's reconciliation. He explains that while our conscience must be awakened to recognize our need for salvation, it is through God's eternal counsel that we understand the fullness of His grace. The sermon elaborates on the transformative power of Christ's blood, which not only redeems but also reconciles us to God, making us fit for His inheritance. Darby stresses the importance of living in the light of this reconciliation, walking worthy of the Lord, and growing in the knowledge of God. Ultimately, he calls believers to embrace their identity in Christ and to express gratitude for the profound love and grace bestowed upon them.

Transcript

There are two ways in which we may approach the gospel of the grace of God: firstly, the conscience convicted, and seeing how God has met the condition of man, as in Romans 1-3; and, secondly, the counsels of God from which it all flows. We may trace Him up from the poor sinner in his need, or we may see the grace from Him flowing down.

In this chapter we have much of God's thoughts about Christ Himself, as in Hebrews 1, where He is presented to us as "heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds," etc., "upholding all things by the word of his power," "when he had by himself purged our sins." It begins with this wonderful counsel of God in grace coming to meet the need, notwithstanding all He was in Himself. In the chapter before us in Colossians we have the glory of this work in Christ; then its extent is shewn; and what is so precious is that when we begin at the other end (conscience and the sense of need) we reach the same point; but there is a fulness and a strength gathered in looking at the place and purpose of God from all eternity, beyond what we get from the need of the sinner being met. It is quite needful in whatever way it is brought to us, that the conscience should be reached, because God cannot reveal His glory to unawakened man. Understanding must come through the conscience, as in the case of the woman of Samaria. Her spiritual knowledge was gained through the exercise of her soul with Jesus. Where there is not a living work in the

conscience, there never can be a link between the soul and the living person of the Son of God. This always is the beginning. The word of God reaches the conscience, and sets it in the presence of the living God. He has made that one step essential to the sinner. This woman heard the Lord speaking to herself. That is the all-important thing, and there can be no truth in the soul till then. What is all the Bible worth to me if my soul is a stranger to God? If we bring in all the purposes of God, then they must bear upon the conscience this way. A sense of God's love to the soul, etc., will never be truly realised till it is apprehended as flowing downwards from His glory.

345 We will look into these verses which succeed the prayer relating to the saints' growth in grace, etc. (v. 12) (for it is well for sinners to see the state of the saints, if only to know that they are not saints), "Giving thanks unto the Father," etc. Here is the certain settled knowledge of being fit for the inheritance of the saints in light. Then we are fit for heavenly glory! This made us fit for that.

(1) The extent and nature of this fitness - made light in the Lord. "Ye were darkness, but now are ye light": and there is the full consciousness of it, for there is thanksgiving. The saints themselves have that knowledge and apprehension of being fit. See the condition of the saints - "Delivered from the power of Satan, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." The Christian, can say, I was darkness but am now in the place of Christ as to my standing before God.

(2) The means by which we have been brought into this condition: "Through his blood"; and not only redemption, but the sins forgiven. I was a slave, but am now a redeemed soul in the kingdom of the Son. It is accomplished between Him and the Father; a settled thing in bringing a poor lost sinner and setting him in the presence of God. Had I any part in it? No. He did it through His blood. When we simply believe, we always know it is by Christ's blood we are purged. You may not be sure you are a believer; I do not ask you if you know this: but do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? If the soul rests on Jesus, there is not a cloud; but if on yourself, you may well be uncertain, because you have got into the mud of your own hearts. But in Jesus there is nothing but blessedness: light, nothing but light; every step of His path perfect light. Faith is believing what Christ Himself is; therefore it immediately breaks out in this passage about the glorious object, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." There are distinct parts of Christ's glory here brought out. The Lord Jesus created all, and therefore He is the Head of all; not only as Adam having dominion, and everything brought to him to name, but "by him were all things created"; and He must be above everything and everybody: "dominions, principalities, powers," etc. Then there is another character of headship in verse 18: "Firstborn from the dead." None could go lower than death, but we see Him going down into it, and rising up from it, and He fills all things. Everything is created by Him and for Him; and, mark, He takes them as man. "What is man?" etc. (Psalm 8). Mark another thing also in this verse 18. He is Head of His body, the church; she is His helpmate, His bride.

346 The next thing is, we find His inheritance defiled - God dishonoured - the world ruined - and man guilty! The angels have not kept their first estate above, and man has not kept his state below - none have kept it. But He must be glorified in bringing it all back again, and the first thing was for God to be honoured, for He has been dishonoured; therefore He must make peace through the blood of His cross. In making atonement there were in the type two goats to be taken, one lot for the Lord, and one for the people. The goat on which the Lord's lot fell was to be offered for a sin-offering; but the goat on which the lot fell on behalf of the people had to be presented alive before the Lord, so as to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness; and that goat was to bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited; and he shall let go the goat into the wilderness. Has God been glorified then? Yes, fully glorified, God's requirements more than met. And who do I find has come in to repair the breach? It is the Son of His love. I find it all done.

And where could God ever have been glorified as in the work of His Son? He glorified God. "I have glorified thee on the earth." Could Adam have so glorified Him in Paradise? Such love for a sinner could only have been shewn in the redemption of man. The mercy-seat is sprinkled with blood. God's lot, not the people's lot, is a token of perfect peace being made with God through the blood of the cross: yes, everything reconciled in heaven and in earth: it does not say under the earth, that is not mentioned here. Thus we have the basis of everything ransomed to be with God and for God for ever and ever. It can never stand on creation title; though heaven and earth will stand in the presence of God, but it will be in redemption title alone. "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth."

"You hath he reconciled," etc. This is a thing to give thanks for now If I am to return in heart and mind to God, I must be reconciled. God saw the need, and from the fulness and perfectness of His own love He did it all. "We have known and believed," etc. Such is the condition of the Christian; and if you ask a proof of it, this is the answer - He laid down His life. "You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." Not only have we a wicked nature in us ("children of wrath"), but more than this, we have done wrong, thought wrong, spoken wrong; and then, besides that, our hearts are alienated, the sure consequence of sin. Did you ever see a servant or a child do wrong, and glad to meet his master or parent afterwards? Does not the sense of having done wrong keep them away from those against whom they have sinned? Yes. Alienation of heart there is, because we do not want God to come and say to us, as to Adam, "Where art thou?" There is first, lust, then the commission of sin, then the mind turned away and at enmity. Then, in this condition, God comes to bring it back. How can He do it? Ruined, unhappy, wretched as I am, if God is for me, I can come to Him. Grace can come and make me happy. God comes in grace to win me back when thus alienated, and tells me He has dealt about my sins. This will bring me back. Law convicts, but never wins back - never. It is as though we said to God, My conscience makes me dislike you - makes me unhappy with you: take away my sins; and I will come back. This certainly is in substance what the gospel of God says to us both about our sin and about His grace.

347 And will He half reconcile? No, He has completely done it: "In the body of his flesh through death." There were you under your sins. Christ came as a real true man about these sins that are distressing you and keeping you away from God. I see Him made sin, bearing to take the dreadful cup of God's wrath: all the sins laid upon Him like the scapegoat: Jesus Christ coming in a body, not with a message that it shall be done. No, the thing is done. God has visited sinners in love. I meet God by faith there where He had met me; and I see in the body of Christ's flesh through death, He has put sin entirely away. I have nothing to do with it. Who could do anything to add to such a work? Men may wag their heads at it in derision, but the work is done fully and completely. Christ is gone up; and He is gone to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in His sight. Was there any mistake, any uncertainty? No, the soul knows and feels that God has done it. If He has me in His sight, He must have me holy and unblamable and unreprouvable, and He has made me so: and when He finished the work, He sat down. "After he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Well then may it be said, "Giving thanks unto the Father who hath made us meet," etc. The work is done; and now God sends "to declare," as the apostle says, "his righteousness." Did you accomplish it? Did you do anything towards it? Nothing, but your sins. He has made peace. Our souls then can rest in this blessed peace. And it is not only that I have this peace: no, God has peace for me; and the nearer I get to God, the more I see the fulness and perfectness of this peace. It is God's peace, and I have peace in it. All there is according to His own perfectness. He rests in Christ's work for my sin. If He had nothing more to require, what can I require? All the ground of my connection with God is that His love has been manifested in putting away my sins; and I have peace in that. If you think you must satisfy God as a creditor, you do not know God. God is love, and

He is known through the cross. If I own God as my Saviour and Lord, it marks all my character. I have new objects and new motives. I may do the same things, harmless in themselves perhaps, but I have a different motive in doing them when I know God. It is not what a man does that marks his character, but why he does it. When I know God in Christ, I go and do right things because I love God. I may be outwardly correct and moral, but the spring and motive may be all wrong at once. A child may see if you say He has translated me from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. If I have peace with God, there is nothing between Him and me. The peace is made. It is a thing accomplished.

348 Now, are you reconciled to God? Grace, and glory, and love then are brought before your soul by the Holy Ghost; and you will be changed into the same image from glory to glory, etc. If I know I am to be like Him at the day of His appearing, I shall be purifying myself, "even as he is pure" now. May the Lord work in our hearts by His own Spirit, conforming us who believe into the image of Jesus, soon to be conformed to the Firstborn in glory.

349 Part 2

Besides the Person of the Lord coming out fully in this chapter as Head of His body the church, and Creator of all things, the main subject that is developed in the epistle is life, much more in its detail than in the Ephesians, where we have rather the glories of the church of God in contrast with the previous heathen, or even Jewish, state. Here, in Colossians, it is the life of Christ in us, and does not go as far in regard to privileges. The apostle gives us the saints risen with Christ, and then takes this life and shews what it is. But in doing so he puts the Christian fully in his place with God in that life. The Christian is taken as indeed risen, but yet on the earth, just simply having life yet not sitting in heavenly places. He puts the Christian in the power of resurrection, and the life of Christ in resurrection in the Christian. But heaven is looked at still as a matter of hope: you are looking up to it - "your life is hid with Christ in God"; but you are not seated there yet; whereas in Ephesians we are there in Christ. In Colossians he looks at what the power of that life is, and the Christian as risen put in this place before God; and then he shews the power of this life in the details of daily life.

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." The knowledge which we have in this new life is renewed after the image of God Himself. A life has come in which has overcome the world, and I get into the new place which Christ is in as man before God. Thus we have Christ's place, but still down here; then what the power and character of that life are practically, as passing through this world just as Christ did. He was properly a heavenly man passing through the world, overcoming everything, and having all His joy in His Father, and He puts us into that life, both as to its acceptance and as to its power. (You do not get here all the privileges that flow from it.) Consequently the only proper place of one looked at as risen with Christ is the place He has before God.

You have the Head largely brought out here, the object and source of it all. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In Ephesians we are the "fulness of him that filleth all in all," for we are looked at as His body. On the one side all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him, a real man, and on the other you are complete in Him and have everything in Him. The fulness of the Godhead has been revealed in Christ, and we are complete in Him before God. He sets us in connection with Him in virtue of Christ who is at God's right hand, and we are waiting for the hope which is laid up in heaven.

350 "If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." Speaking of the Christian in Christ, you never get any "if." I could not say, "If I was at C-," for here

I am. There is no "if" to your place in Christ, no condemnation. But there is another aspect in which we may look at the Christian; he is running a race towards glory. You have it especially in the Hebrews: the saints are viewed there as on earth, Christ the Son of God and man as in heaven; and so you do not get the truth there of their being united to Christ - the body to its Head. Whenever the Christian is looked at in his path through this world, then the "ifs" come in; only with them you get the blessed testimony to the faithfulness of God in carrying us through to heaven. With acceptance and the value of Christ's blood, there are no "ifs"; but when I am running the race, then I say I must get to heaven. When Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, there was no "if" then: so the one offering has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. I am "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation"; but why do I want to be kept? I find with this revelation that I have a need of being kept, so that I am constantly in need of being entirely dependent every instant upon this grace; but with it the positive revelation that the grace will not fail. Therefore dependence is maintained, and it is very blessed to be kept in dependence. A man has to learn his entire dependence, as the Lord says, "Without me ye can do nothing." This man does not say, but thinks he can do a great deal; and so we have to learn dependence, but at the same time the blessed truth of the unfailing faithfulness of God. "He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous"; He always has His eyes on them for blessing, though He may have to chasten them.

"Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Why do you say that? Because the devil would pluck them out if he could. Before we come into the effect and result of all in glory, it is the wisdom of God that I should be called to lean upon Him. So He puts one through this process where one's faith is constantly exercised; and then I have to learn too that He never fails me. I have to learn myself and to learn God. It is painful to learn oneself, but then there is the blessed truth of the unspeakable condescension of God in taking notice of our state and circumstances. Interested in us every moment, as I said before, "he withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous." Intercourse with God is maintained; it is the path we have to walk in as being redeemed. Supposing we were to give up Christ and have done with Him, then we should not have life or peace or anything. Some of the Hebrews seem to have been in danger of drawing back and are warned accordingly.

351 We will see where God has set the Christian. Seeing we are risen with Christ is more than seeing we are forgiven. Forgiveness is the perfect clearing away of every spot (the first thing we need). Guilt is all gone in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, where we had no part but our sins and the wickedness that crucified Him. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." If we were not perfected in conscience before God, Christ must have suffered often. What is to put sin away if it is not put away now? I may hate it and judge it more (that is the work of the Spirit in me), but I speak of the putting it away once for all. "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." He came the first time to bear sin; when He comes the second time, He will have nothing to do with sin, He comes to receive us to Himself. We stand between the first coming of Christ, in which He wrought redemption on the cross and gave Himself to put away sin, and the second coming of Christ, when in virtue of that work He comes to receive believers to Himself; and the Holy Ghost is come down meanwhile to give me the full sense of what He did the first time, and the bright and blessed hope of what He will do the second time. We have nothing between, except of course the operations of the Holy Ghost, for the work of the Spirit is going on, most blessed in its place, to lead us on to grow up unto Him in all things; but, as regards the work of Christ, He sits in the presence of God because all is done. There is no progress in the value of Christ's blood, nor in the righteousness of God which we are in Christ.

The first thing then is redemption - a work which delivers us from the place we were in, and brings us into the new place that Christ is in before God as man. God takes away the sins, and gives us all Christ besides. It belongs to us as being in Christ, though in this epistle it is more Christ in us.

352 As for the glories of Christ that are to come - all things created by Him and for Him, and He taking them all up as man - we read that He is going to reconcile the whole state and order of things in heaven and earth; but you "hath he reconciled." The Christian does not wait till then. I am perfectly reconciled to God. There I was a stranger and an enemy, away from Him; and here I am, my sins entirely gone, and my heart, by this wondrous revelation of love, brought back to delight in God. I am reconciled; and a great and blessed thing it is. If I am reconciled to a person with whom I have been at enmity, there is nothing any longer between us; if there is anything, then I am not reconciled. If you have an after-thought, a misgiving, "after all I do not know whether it is all right," then you are not reconciled; the heart is not free.

But we do by faith get perfect liberty with God through the precious blood of Christ, and the power and presence of the Spirit of God giving us the consciousness of it in our souls. "You hath he reconciled." He makes this difference between us and reconciling the things around us, which will not be till the new heavens and new earth. The state of things will be reconciled, which is not so now, for the world has rejected Christ, and will never see Him in that way again; but we, believers, are reconciled to God. It is God's estimate of Christ's blood that is the measure of my acceptance with Himself; it gives me peace. I have been reconciled to God in the consciousness of the perfect love that gave Christ; but beside that I am brought into perfect favour with God, the favour which rests upon Christ. It is not merely that the old things are swept away, and my sins washed out in the blood of Christ, but the perfect love of God is revealed in doing it. I come back to God in unbounded confidence and infinite love. This is the place of the Christian. Christ, being in us, teaches us, and conducts down into our souls this love of God; and the heart is thus reconciled in blessed peace and righteousness, resting in the consciousness of His perfect grace towards us.

If you look up to God and get into His holy presence, do you feel perfect liberty with Him? Poor unworthy creatures we certainly are in ourselves (and in the light I see more how worthless I am); but God spared not His own Son. There is no doubt or cloud as to that which He is for our souls, because it has been perfectly revealed to us in the word of God, as it has been proved in Christ Himself and the cross.

353 Redemption and forgiveness is the first thing; reconciliation is the second. Then mark another thing, beloved friends: "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness." The world is blinded; where God is not known, they are in pitch darkness. They may be very clever on everything else; but this has nothing whatever to do with God. Man's mental powers may be great; he may be full of science; but the moment his breath goes forth, all that is gone. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not" - that is, on Christ's coming into this world. Wherever the light does come in, wherever God is known, what is the effect? It reaches the conscience. If man's mind were capable of judging what God is, or of knowing what He ought to be, then he would be master of the subject. Do you put God in that place? When God comes in, it is to put me in my place, and Himself in His place, as with the woman of Samaria in John 4. All true intelligence of God comes in by the conscience. The heart, no doubt, is attracted by His grace; but all true knowledge of Him comes in by the conscience, though it may be developed afterwards. It is not only light but unspeakable love has been revealed, and He has delivered me fully and brought me into the very place in which Christ is before God. I am "translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love." It is the operation of grace which does come in, and makes us know what we are - true moral light in the soul; but the effect is to take me out of darkness, and put me "into the kingdom of the Son of his love."

There is another thing in which many feel more difficulty. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Here we are told of meetness. For what? For the inheritance of the saints in light - that is, in glory. But, as a Christian, I am not looking to get at it - He "hath made us meet." May I not say, See what a work God has done! Yea, I am to give thanks for it too. The thief was fit to be Christ's companion in paradise that day. Christ was there for him on the cross, and the value of the work of Christ was proved in taking that man straight that day to be His own companion above. Did God put him in unfit? Of course not. Fit for what? Fit to be with Christ in paradise. Exactly so am I, having "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," then reconciled to God, and delivered from the power of darkness, and made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. All that is done, that it may be known now by faith. By grace I do value the death of Christ; but God values it a great deal more. There is where my sin can be fully estimated: I hate it, and confess it; but after all a holy God sees it a great deal more deeply than I do, however sincere I may be. God knows all my sin, and He knows that Christ has put it away. I am left here for two things - to learn a great deal about myself, which is ever humbling; and to learn of God in Christ the unutterable patience and love and goodness of God.

354 "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." I have not merely, as in the law, what a man ought to be; I have now been taught of God, and know what God is, and that I am His child - brought to Him by redemption. He says that you are a partaker of His holiness; He is making you enjoy His love: now you must not do anything that would hinder your enjoying it, or that would grieve the Spirit. You are brought into the light, and everything that does not suit the light must go. It is not merely avoiding crimes and positive sins, but you are to be filled with the knowledge of His will. God has a thought, and a mind, and a path, for His children; and this is Christ's path, that we should walk in His steps. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself to walk even as he walked." Did you ever see Christ avenge Himself? Did you ever see selfishness working in Him? or trying to get rich, or seeking for pleasure or amusement? Then you go and walk like Him, as a person redeemed to God by the precious blood of Christ. It is a great mercy that God has a will about us and a path for us. "I am the way," says Christ. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." It is following His steps, walking in the spirit and mind in which He walked. "I have set the Lord always before me."

You will see how the apostle brings that out, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." Here am I called to-day and to-morrow to walk worthy of the Lord - nothing that I do, say, or think, which should not be worthy of Christ Himself. Here it is all growth: I have got the life. I say to a child, "You go and walk worthy of your family "; but if he has no sense of what his family is, it is no use telling him to walk worthy of it; but if he has the sense of the integrity and standing of his family, then he knows how to walk worthy of it. "In all things behaving ourselves as the ministers of God." You get the word "worthy" in three ways. In Thessalonians, "Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." In Ephesians it is the same thing practically: "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Here, in Colossians, it is, "Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." Did He ever do His own will in anything? No, He did His Father's. Are you content never to do your own will, but to take Christ's will as that which is to be the spring and motive of all you do? Then communion is not interrupted; and it is joy and blessing beyond all human thought. You say, "Am I never to do what I like?" Like! Do you like not to be always with Christ? This detects the workings of the flesh.

355 Then comes the activity, the growing acquaintance with God, "Increasing in [or rather, by] the knowledge of God." The full joy of heaven is the knowledge of God. If I am going after the world, will this be increasing by the knowledge of God? It tests what I like? Do you like to be away from God, and to do your own will sometimes? But He says, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." Do you delight to do it? Oh, what a thought it is, that in this dark world God has perfectly revealed Himself in Christ, nay more that He dwells in us! "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Christ, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." There is God by His Spirit.

Now mark how this works. "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power." I shall find plenty of difficulties in the way, and temptations of all kinds - possibly death, as has often been the case in some countries; but we are strengthened with all might. There is the strength. I have been brought into close relationship with God, and there I get this power. Unto what? "Unto all patience." This sounds a poor thing, but you will find it is just what tries you. "Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." And again, "The signs of an apostle were wrought in me in all patience." Are you always patient? Do you not want divine power for it? I may want a setting right in the church of God, or in the Lord's work, or in a thousand things; but I must have patience. I must wait on God.

356 Supposing my will is not at work, there comes meekness and gentleness. Even things that try, I can take gently and meekly and quietly with others, and then he adds, if that is the case, my life is in full display before God, and there is the enjoyment of God. I enter into all this blessedness, I am not merely "made meet," but "giving thanks," because I am in the positive and blessed enjoyment of all. When I am walking in patience of heart and long-suffering, my soul is with God. I get the blessed enjoyment of what He is, and I grow by the knowledge of Him; "To him that hath shall be given." If I am honest, I say, "I do not know what His will is"; perhaps there is something in myself that I have not yet detected. Here I have all these exercises; but it is in the sense of the divine favour resting on me with the consciousness of a child of God. The more a child is with his father, and delights in him, of course the better he will grow up, understanding what his father likes. It is so with us before God.

Later on we are told, we "have put off the old man with his deeds"; and then it is added, "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering" - the graces belonging to the Christian. You must have the consciousness of what you are as the elect of God, and then put them on in that blessed consciousness. It was thus Christ ever walked as man.

"Strengthened unto all patience." You will find there is nothing that tests the strength of your soul like waiting for God. We think we must do things that we think right; we must rather learn to wait. Take Saul, for example, in 1 Samuel 13. He ought to have waited, and said, I can do nothing. We have but a little while more to go through the wilderness, but it is with God.

And now, beloved, I only ask, but I earnestly ask, you, Are your souls free with God, reconciled to Him? Are you before God in virtue of the cross? or will you pretend to stand before Him as a Judge? "Enter not into judgment with thy servant," says the Psalmist, "for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." He who will be the Judge first died on the cross as the Saviour. When I appear before Him, I find the Person who Himself put away my sins, and in whom I am now resting.

357 The cross of Christ is where everything is morally perfected. There the whole question of good and evil was solved. The world despises the cross; and God meant it to be a despicable thing - a gibbet. "But

God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, that no flesh should glory in his presence." There, on the basest thing in the world, He has hung salvation. But the moment I am inside, I find everything in the cross - the uttermost sin of man in enmity against God, all the power of Satan, but the perfect man in Christ. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." But, on the other side, God is there in perfect righteousness against sin, and in perfect love for the sinner; and as you go on, you find that the new heavens and the new earth - all things in short - will be perfected by the cross. There I have perfect righteousness against sin, and perfect love towards the sinner; and I find peace and rest, not merely rest but God's rest. For He rests in His love, in the blessedness of those He has brought near in Christ, and He will bring them into His rest in glory.

The Lord give you fully to see the place where He has brought you, and, in the consciousness of your relationship with God, to set it forth, and walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Surely we have to give "thanks unto the Father," when we see the unutterable love that is in it all: He did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. Then follows the suited Christian walk. The Lord give you to see, beloved, with the eyes of faith what God was and wrought in Christ, so that you should be before God according to it, as reconciled to Him, and then seek to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing by the knowledge of God.

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