

# Man's World Displaced by Christ

AND

## THE AGE TO COME.

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NOTES OF ADDRESSES

BY

JAMES BOYD.

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LONDON :

G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

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# NOT I, BUT CHRIST.

(GAL. II. 19-21.)

THERE is a tendency in every one of us to put ourselves under law. We are apt to think that the favour of God toward us depends on some qualities of goodness in ourselves, either natural or acquired. We are not ready to believe that it was for the helpless and ungodly Christ died, and that the way in which the love of God is commended toward us is in this, that when we were yet sinners Christ died for us. We naturally cling to the flesh and we are very reluctant to accept the fact that in it dwells no good thing. A little grace to help the flesh man will not object to, but to have it *all* grace is too much for the natural heart of man to submit to.

This desire to make something of the flesh by cultivation, after God had ended it in the cross of Christ, had constantly to be combated by the apostles from the very commencement of Christianity. Satan took advantage of the natural repugnance of the flesh to grace, and transforming himself into an angel of light, and his ministers into ministers of righteousness, he wrought fearful havoc amongst the saints. The way in which he appeared as an angel of light,

and the way in which his ministers appeared as ministers of righteousness, I have no doubt was in turning the saints to circumcision and the law of Moses. It was very deceiving, because no one would be likely to think that it could be of Satan to resort to an ordinance instituted by God and to keep His commandments. And neither would circumcision have been any harm in itself, nor could the keeping of the commandments of God have been a crime, but surely right and proper, had it not been that the object was to lead the saints away from Christ to a ritual that belonged to the flesh while it was under probation, and in which man could not find that which he could not do without, and which God had given him in Christ, namely, life and righteousness.

The law demonstrated the weakness and the wickedness of the flesh. The will of the flesh was hopelessly antagonistic to the will of God. It could not be tamed into subjection. Wrath, curse and condemnation were as unheeded by it as was the display of divine goodness. It could not be *mended*, but God in His infinite wisdom found a way by which it could be *ended*, without the destruction of the human race which was characterised by it, and whose nature it was. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. viii. 3.) It has been brought to an end in the cross of Christ by the judgment of

God. It is no longer under probation. God is no longer contending with it. He has set forth its judgment in the spotless One who came in its likeness to bear the judgment. And now in Him who bore the judgment of it every man under heaven is to find salvation or perish for ever.

Christianity is not like Judaism. Judaism was a religion belonging to the flesh. It was given to man as a child of Adam. It consisted in laws and ordinances, which he as a child of Adam was to walk in in subjection to God, and in which, if he fulfilled his obligations, he would live. The man that doeth these things, Moses said, would live in them. It set forth what a child of Adam ought to be. Christianity on the other hand is *what Christ IS*. It is a new order of things, and it is heavenly and spiritual and subsists in the power of God, because Christ is a Man of a new order, and He is heavenly and spiritual and lives by the power of God. These systems, Judaism and Christianity, cannot be mingled; the new wine will burst the old bottle, and the new piece of cloth will make the rent in the old garment worse. The old must be kept by itself and the new by itself.

Christianity can only be touched in the power of God, which is all vested in a risen Christ. The apostles could not go out with the gospel until they were endued with power from on high, and when they preached, their preaching

was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that the faith of saints might not stand in the wisdom of man but in the power of God; and those who believed received the Holy Spirit that they might be set up in relationship with God in His power. *Resurrection* is the great power of God. *The preaching* of that risen Christ is to be in the power of God, and the *faith* of saints stands in the power of God, and *those who believe* are set up in relationship with God in the same power. Everything in Christianity subsists in the power of God. The power of Christianity is not found on this side of death but on the resurrection side. The beginning of it was the birth of Christ into the world, and this was brought about by the power of God apart from the aid of man in any way. God says to Him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." So in regard of resurrection; He was crucified through weakness but liveth by the power of God.

The Galatians were going back to the elements of the world in their zeal after law. We naturally do this, for as I have said Christianity can only be maintained in the power of God. They had begun in the Spirit and therefore in the power of God. The law made great demands but gave no support. Everything was to be done in the power of the creature, but the flesh being incorrigibly bad, even when there was a

work of God in the soul, there was no power to put in practice whatever good desires might be implanted there. Therefore these Galatians who had been deceived and turned back to the flesh were reaping the consequences of their act in their unruly behaviour, for they were biting and devouring one another instead of by love serving one another. (Chap. v. 13, 15.)

In writing to these saints the apostle associates with himself all the brethren that were with him. In writing to the assemblies he generally associates one or two of the brethren with him. The exceptions are Romans and Ephesians, and I suppose the reason of this is that the gospel to the Gentiles was committed to himself, and in these two epistles taken together we have the full presentation of it. Romans is the gospel on the line of responsibility, that is to say, as meeting man's need, what is called "*milk*" in scripture; Ephesians is the other side of the gospel, unfolding the counsels of God and the place the church has in those counsels, and this is what he terms "*meat*." In writing these epistles no one is with him. But in this to the Galatians it is, "all the brethren that are with me." I suppose the reason of this is, because they were abandoning Christianity, and this being so, it is not only the business of an apostle, but it concerns every other saint.

I would trust almost any gathering of believers

to judge a matter of conduct, and, generally speaking, accept what they would do without raising questions; but if it were a matter of doctrine I should be inclined to make inquiries as to what the doctrine was. I should not accept the judgment of any number of men on a matter of doctrine, and if I were asked my reason for my interference, I should quote this epistle.

If men go back to law they give up Christianity, and I would not feel myself called upon to walk in company with such. I know who it is that leads in that direction; I know it is the great enemy of the souls of men, and I would not care to follow such a leader. He is very cunning and has deft ways of destroying souls. His lie may not be *all* a lie, but if it is received as the whole truth it is as ruinous as if there were no truth in it. We are told here that Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world. Men will tell me that it was to deliver me from the lake of fire. I do not doubt there is an element of truth in this, but Satan desires me to accept it as the whole truth. I say no, and, moreover, it is not what scripture says. You may be sure if a man is delivered from the present evil world he will not go to the lake of fire; but if you make the object in the death of Christ to be deliverance from the lake of fire you have missed the truth, and if you preach it

to others you deceive souls. How can you expect to be saved if you are not delivered from the world? This great world-system, of which the devil is the prince and god, is bound to be visited with the judgment of God, and by that judgment be brought to an end, and if you are not delivered from it what hope have you of salvation in that day of wrath? It was from this world Christ died to deliver you. You need to be delivered from this world-system that you may belong to another world-system, that is to say, the system which belongs to the world to come.

Satan sets himself to entrap souls, and by making salvation to consist in salvation from the lake of fire, he blinds people to the truth of the salvation of God, and his victims fall headlong into the pit he has dug for them, the present evil world. Let me say to every one here present, that if you are not delivered from this evil world you know little or nothing as yet of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.

Now the gospel is the means by which this is effected. It is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth. We sometimes hear of a *good* gospel and of a *poor* gospel, of a new-fashioned and an old-fashioned gospel, but there is nothing but one gospel, it is *the* gospel, and there is no other. Nothing but the preaching of Christ is gospel at all. All the apostles preached one gospel, because they all preached

one Person. Peter presented Him in a different character from Paul, but -whatever way He was presented He was presented as the One in whom everything lay for every man. Peter preached Him as the Christ, the Messiah, the One who had been the hope of Israel, and all the promises made to the fathers fulfilled in Him risen from the dead. Paul preached Him as the Son of God. The full glory of His Person is announced among the Gentiles. I need not add that Peter knew Him as the Son of God equally with Paul. He confessed Him as the Son of God when here on earth, but it was not given to him to preach Him in this character, but to Paul.

But this Man is to displace every other man. He is preached for this object. Men are attracted to Him by the preaching, that they may get His Spirit and be formed after Him. If men were *all they ought to be*, they would *do all they ought to do*, and there would have been no occasion for the gospel; but men commit sin because men are sinful in nature, and Christ is preached that men might by Him be renewed in nature, that is, that they might partake of the divine nature, and this is wrought by the Spirit who is received from Christ when one turns to Him by faith in the gospel.

It is no good being occupied with the bad fruit of a tree. The fruit is bad because the tree is bad. If the tree were good the fruit

would be good. Man is by nature a bad tree morally. Christ is the only good tree, and if we are to be suitable to God the old moral self must be cut down and Christ must live in us by the Spirit. This is great gain to us. How good it is to lose all that we have learned ourselves to be in the flesh, and to be so completely renewed that nothing but the precious characteristics of Christ can be seen in us, because He lives in us by the Spirit! All that by man was esteemed admirable and excellent in the flesh, Saul of Tarsus possessed, but for Christ he suffered the loss of all things, and counted it his whole salvation to have Christ magnified in that body of his in which he had magnified himself. He was as excellent a man as the old order ever produced, but in the light of the new order the old was seen to be rubbish. Christ was to him all his desire.

Those of the circumcision were the deadly enemies of this gospel. They had been taken up by God, a nation chosen from among the other nations, and placed in the exalted distinction of being the only nation in relationship with God, and they were in this relationship as men in the flesh. But they were unfaithful to the relationship in which they were placed. They rebelled against the authority of the Lord, broke the law, stoned and slew the prophets and murdered the Son of God, and all hope of

the recovery of man in the flesh being over, God raised Christ from the dead, and brought to light by the gospel a Man of a new order, in new relationship with God, and the new ground upon which He will have man in His presence. The flesh has been refused, and no one is now in relationship with God only in Christ.

The Jews resented this with all the bitterness, pride and malice of the flesh. It brought them down from their high position and put them upon a level with the nations. A Gentile was now as good as a Jew, for neither Jew nor Gentile was any good at all. The gospel made no distinction. Men were now to be blest in Christ, and all were to come in on the ground of grace. And in Christ there are no distinctions, Jew and Gentile disappear, for in Christ it is all *new creation*.

The opposition to this by Jews, and even Jews who professed Christianity, was hard to withstand, and Peter at Antioch for the moment wavers and is unfaithful to the truth. Barnabas, who was sent to the Gentiles in company with Paul, is also unfaithful to his mission and is carried away by the dissimulation of the others, and Paul alone is left to stand in the breach. In a powerful argument he convicts Peter of making Christ the minister of sin, and next unfolds the effect upon himself of both law and gospel.

The law had killed him. It was a ministration of death and he had found it to be this. "I," he says, "through the law am dead to the law, that I might live to God." He tells us in another place that he was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came sin revived and he died. It killed him in his conscience. It convicted him of sin. He had not done any overt act that would have proclaimed him to others a law-breaker, but the law had said, "Thou shalt not covet." It not only forbade the appropriation to oneself of that which belonged to another, but it equally forbade the *desire to have*, and before this he could not stand. He saw he was a dead man. The commandment which was ordained to life he found to be unto death.

But this was that he might live to God. He could not live to God in the life of flesh. Its nature was antagonistic to God's law and there was no mending of it. If he was to live to God it must be upon some other principle than law. The gospel set Christ before him. Life was in that risen Christ for all. In Christ there was the revelation of the love of God. This was attractive and life-giving. It made no demand upon the poor, helpless, sin-burdened soul. The righteousness that was needed was there in Christ for all. He was set forth in the gospel as the One in whom God had placed everything that a poor sinner could need. There was

nothing in the law but demand, curse, death and condemnation. Blessing, righteousness and life were come in Christ. To Him the apostles had resorted for justification, and in Him they had found it on the principle of faith, not on the principle of works of law. On this principle of faith they had received the Spirit in whose power they lived to God.

But there was more than this. God had condemned and set aside in the judgment of the cross all that man was in the flesh as a child of Adam. Our old man has been crucified with Him. This the apostle had not overlooked in the blessings that had been brought to him in Christ. In the power of the Spirit he had appropriated the death of Christ. He had made that death his own. The condemnation of sin in the flesh by the cross was not a meaningless thing to Paul. He realised that all that was done there was done for him, that he might have the Spirit, and be able to refuse all that he was in the flesh as God had refused it in the judgment of that cross. He had come to this in the spirit of his mind, so that he is able to say, "I am crucified with Christ."

But then it was also true that he lived. He went about this world, a man having to do with men, and displaying certain characteristics of life in his pathway of service for Christ, or in his tent-making, or whatever he may have had to do in his life of responsibility here below. He

was seen to be meek, and gentle, and lowly, and patient, and anxious for the blessing of men's souls; when reviled reviling not again, doing good to those that hated him and overcoming evil with good. Who was this that came out in the body of this man who was once so insolent and overbearing? *Christ*. He says, "Christ liveth in me." Where was that insolent, proud, persecuting legalist, Saul of Tarsus, that used to walk about and display himself in this man's body? Crucified with Christ. What a change! How marvellous!

This was how the gospel had affected him. The Jew by nature was gone, and with it the persecutor of the gospel. It was not the Jew turned into a Gentile, which, had it been possible, would have been no mending of the matter; but it was the new man, which is Christ everything and in all.

But it might have been said to Paul, All that may be true enough as to justification, nature and character, but do you not need the law as your rule of life and the guide of your footsteps through the world? No, he says, "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." This is the One who controlled and directed and supported the beloved apostle in his life down here. That glorious Person in the heavens, the Son of God, known to that poor, harmless, persecuted wan-

derer, in all His fathomless love, which was witnessed in giving Himself for him, was the great object by which he lived day by day. He needed nothing else. The Son of God was to Paul all that the sun in the heavens is to the earth. From Him he got his light and warmth and comfort, and besides Him he needed nothing else.

Oh, to be thus affected by the gospel of the grace of God! What a salvation it is! How blessed it would be if we were all so in the benefit of the gospel that we could say such things about ourselves! How beautiful, I often think, it would be if no man could find anything in this body of mine but Christ! That no one might ever find a single trace of the old self in any of us ought to be our earnest desire and pursuit. It is the mind of God for us, and it has been effected in the chief of sinners, and we have the same blessed God of all grace to do with, and He has not changed His mind all these centuries since this was written, and He never will change it. His present desire for you and me is that we might lose all that belongs to us in the flesh and have Christ for our gain. The Lord grant it to be so.



# THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM.

(GAL. III. 1-14.)

IN what we had before us last evening we saw that Christ gave Himself for us that He might deliver us out of this present evil world. This was the object of the death of Christ, and it was according to the will of God our Father. It was the will of God for us that we might be delivered from this evil age. He had His own way of accomplishing this; but this is what He had before Him in His thought of us. The present age was introduced at Sinai by the giving of a law that was addressed to man as a child of Adam. Israel after the flesh was taken up and placed in relationship with God and the law which was given to them as the principle of that relationship became a great test to them. It shewed what man after the flesh was. It demonstrated the rebellious disposition of the natural man, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Not only does it point out and forbid the act of sin, but it gives one to see that there is a law of sin in the members—something there that will do nothing but sin. The law set before men exactly what they ought to render to God,

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” It was a simple test to men as children of Adam, the balance in which he was weighed, the standard that made known to him the required stature and how far he came short. But as man was not up to what was required of him the law could do nothing but condemn him.

But Christ came into the world and went to the cross and bore the curse of that law for those under it, and gave Himself for our sins that we might be free from the age of law that is called here “*this present evil age.*” The age of law was the age in which man in the flesh was in relationship with God and under probation, responsible to fulfil his obligations or bear the consequences. This state of things went on up to the advent of Christ, and when He came a new and greater test was applied to man, for God was there in Christ presenting Himself as a Saviour God in grace. To this test man no more answered than to that of law, and in the cross God set forth the condemnation and removal of the flesh from before Him, so that the mere child of Adam, the natural man, or the man after the flesh, is no longer on trial or in relationship with God; for in Christ risen God has got another Man before Him and that Man the Man of His eternal counsel.

But this did not change the character of the age. The age of law still runs its course, but the law is not that to which God is drawing the attention of men. The age of law will go on until the second coming of Christ, when a new and glorious age shall be introduced under His beneficent reign. But a new *dispensation* has come to pass by the presence of the Holy Spirit upon earth sent from a glorified Christ with the glad tidings of God's grace to man in that Christ at God's right hand, and to Him God directs the attention not of the Jews only but of the whole world. Paul speaks of God's dispensation which is in faith (1 Tim. i. 4) and that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him; but this is testified of in an age in which man in the flesh has been tested by law, prophets, Christ's personal presence, and even by this gospel itself.

To be delivered from this age a man must be brought to an end as to his status in flesh, and to accomplish this Christ gave Himself for our sins. A man's sins cannot be put away without the man being put away. It is so even as to the law of this land, if a man commits a capital offence that offence cannot be removed without the man being removed. So Christ gave Himself for our sins. He took flesh and blood that He might be a sacrifice for our sins, and in Him we have been brought to an end.

When you come to the passage I read last

week you get that appropriated by Paul. I suppose we are all able to say that we know *our old man* has been crucified with Him. (Rom. vi. 6.) All that we were in Adam has entirely gone in the cross of Christ. The judgment of the cross was yours and mine. But here the apostle goes a little further than "our old man," and he says, "*I* am crucified with Christ." Where then is the man to whom the law had its application? Where the responsible man—the man after the flesh? Gone. And who was it that was there living in the mortal body of Paul? Christ by the Spirit, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

It is not the thought of God to forgive the sins and leave the nature that committed them. This was the way in which He went on governmentally with Israel in the past dispensation, there was a remembrance of sins made again every year. But this was because the sacrifices offered by that nation had no real value to put away sins. Christ came that the whole question of *sin* might be summed up and settled in His cross; He appeared to put away *sin* by His sacrifice, and the putting away of sin meant the end of all flesh before God, for sin was condemned in the flesh. God has nothing more to say to the flesh. He is not dealing with it, nor striving with it, nor seeking to mend its evil ways; He is done with it for ever and His object is to bring you and me to His mind about

it. It is our privilege to say, "I am crucified with Christ." The life of Jesus is the only thing God can take pleasure in as He looks down from heaven upon earth.

The Galatians were turning back to the law and flesh, and the apostle in his distress about them asks them who had bewitched them. Their turning back to the flesh was senseless. First, because before their very eyes, as it were, Jesus Christ had been portrayed crucified. God had dealt in judgment with the man they were going back to. The devil had indeed bewitched them, they had fallen into his snare. Secondly, it was not by works of law they had received the Spirit. It was not because they had been so righteous after the flesh, had so commended themselves to God by their works that He had signified His approval of them by bestowing upon them such a great gift. Indeed these poor Gentiles had received the Spirit before they ever came into contact with the law. They had received the Spirit through the report of faith. They had heard the glad tidings of the grace of God, the report of the glory of Christ had reached them and they had believed it, and God had taken account of their faith and had given to them the Spirit. Thirdly, they had begun in the Spirit. They had abandoned flesh in flying to Christ and had begun their history with God, not upon fleshly lines but upon spiritual. How then turn to the flesh to be perfected? It was

very stupid and unreasonable. As you begin with God you must go on with Him. The apostle tells the Colossians that as they had received Christ Jesus the Lord they were to walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, &c. (Col. ii. 6, 7.) Fourthly, they had suffered persecution for Christ, was it all to be in vain? The gospel is always in reproach. A man of the world might tell me it was popular. But what is popular is not the gospel. Though it brings to man the kindness and love of God and speaks to him of infinite blessedness it is the condemnation of all that he is. It hews all that he is as a man in the flesh to pieces. The letter of the law condemns his deeds, but the gospel gives him to feel that he is a helpless slave of sin and the devil and that nothing will do for him but the free grace of a Saviour God. Hence the gospel is disliked and persecuted, and these Galatians had experienced a little of the enmity of the human heart against Christ. And the apostle asks them if all this suffering had been in vain. Were they indeed evildoers for turning to Christ and counting only upon Him for salvation? Were their persecutors right and they wrong? By their turning to law they were confessing this. Fifthly, He who ministered the Spirit to them and wrought works of power in their midst did it not on the principle of works of law but on the principle of the report of faith. "Even as Abraham believed

God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." This was the principle upon which the Spirit was ministered to them.

But the enemies of the gospel had in their own estimation a very powerful argument in the fact that it was only on the line of Abraham that blessing could be possessed. These corrupters of the saints made it appear that only on the lines of flesh and law and circumcision was the blessing obtainable, for only on these lines could they be accounted as Abraham's seed. But the apostle shews that Abraham had himself the blessing on the principle of faith and that all who are of faith the same are the children of Abraham. He is the father of those who believe, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. We who believe in Christ Jesus are much more the children of Abraham than are the Jews after the flesh. On the line of flesh the mass of the nation is rejected. And as to all on the principle of works of law they are under the curse; for the law says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." If any one kept the law it would be all well with him, but every one under it is a lawbreaker, and the law must curse the transgressor, it cannot justify him. And the law is not of faith. It is not on the principle of faith. No faith is needed. It is works that are required. It does not say, "He that believeth these things shall live by them," but "He that

doeth," &c. No doubt all Israel believed the commandments, but they did not do them.

But if man has come under the curse how can the blessing reach him? In Christ, no other way. But Christ had first to be made a curse for the man under the curse, and this He was by being hanged upon a tree; and in Him risen blessing is established for man. But a Gentile has as good a right to a risen Christ as a Jew. He had no right to Christ as come after the flesh, but to a risen Christ neither Jew nor Gentile has any title except the title given of God, and to both God gives the same title. Hence the gospel goes out to all men alike and the soul who believes receives the Spirit that he may be in Christ in whom the blessings are and that he may possess them. The blessing of Abraham has come the length of the Gentiles in Christ Jesus and we receive the Spirit by faith. To go back to law is to go back to curse and condemnation and to deprive ourselves of every blessing of God, for outside Christ there is no blessing for man.



## SONSHIP AND THE SPIRIT.

(GAL. IV. 1-7.)

I WAS trying to bring before you the last time I had the privilege to address you how that God had brought the blessing of Abraham to us in Christ. There were certain promises made to the fathers by God which had their fulfilment in Christ come into this world in flesh, but the sending of Christ into the world did not quite bring these promises to the Gentiles. To the Syrophenician woman who appealed to Him on behalf of her daughter He said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs," and to the disciples who wished Him to grant her request and thus put an end to her crying after them He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But all this was rejected by the nation and lost to them when they put Him to death. But God came in and by His mighty power raised Christ from the dead, and in Him as thus risen established every blessing, and by the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit called the attention of all men to Him as the One in whom blessing was to be possessed. When the Jews rejected Christ and murdered Him the resources of God

were not brought to an end. Satan may have thought they were, and it may have appeared to the godly among that rebellious people as if all hope was for ever at an end, but God is not to be defeated by the mere creature; His mighty power was set in operation in raising Him from the dead and giving Him glory. *Now* He is as much for the Gentile as for the Jew, and the Holy Spirit has come down from heaven with the report of His glory. The believing Jew has been begotten again to a living hope by His resurrection. In the hearts of His despondent and hopeless disciples hope sprang to life when they saw Him risen. It is written, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." He said to them, in view of His death, "Now ye therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." The birth of God's Son into the world was the beginning of His intervention on man's behalf. The angel says to the shepherds, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke ii. 10, 11.) His death was also on man's behalf, for He gave Himself a ransom for all. And His resurrection was as truly on behalf of man as His birth and death.

It is in this way, as we saw, that the blessing has arrived at the nations, not, as in the Author-

ised Version, "come on the Gentiles," for that would imply that all the Gentiles were justified. But in Christ risen the blessing of Abraham has reached them, so that it may be available for them and that they may receive the Spirit and thus be in the enjoyment of the blessing.

Now it is this blessed Person in whom all blessing is established that is preached as glad tidings in the world. The apostle speaks of the gospel as "concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. i. 3); and in chapter i. of this epistle he says that it had pleased God to reveal His Son in him that he might preach Him among the nations. Every blessing that God had purposed or promised at any time is in this glorious Person; indeed He is Himself the blessing. "Thou hast made him blessings for ever." (Psa. xxi. marg.) The disposition of God toward all men comes to light in the place that He has given Christ in glory. He will fulfil all the will of God, and God is favourably disposed toward men. Satan, sin, death and sorrow are found here below, but Christ will bruise Satan's head, cleanse the world from sin, and be the destruction of death. The world is in rebellion and the thrones of the earth are stained with iniquity, and all creation groans and travails in pain together, but a day is appointed by God in which He will take up the government in the person of Christ. "He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath

ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." This is indeed glad tidings. He will not allow confusion, lawlessness and violence to dominate the world for ever. The Man at His right hand will very soon shew Himself to the world, and bring in righteousness, peace and world-wide blessing. He was raised up by God to bless man. People too much associate condemnation with Christ. This is a mistake. You should always associate blessing with Him in your thoughts of Him. He may, and will have to condemn, but this is His strange work and He is exalted for blessing. This is why His resurrection is glad tidings. You tell me of Christ and you tell me glad tidings, that is, if you tell me truly of Him. His name is Jehovah the Saviour, not Jehovah the Destroyer. If you tell people of the resurrection and glory and coming again of Christ what are you telling them? You are a publisher of glad tidings. How so? Because His resurrection and glory and coming again are all for blessing. But you say He will condemn. This must be, for blessing could not be established without it. The prisons, police and soldiery of this country have no terror for me. Their presence brings to every law-abiding man a sense of security. They are only a terror to the rebellious. And if men will not have Christ they must be condemned ; but they need not be condemned, no more than any one in this

land need know what the misery of a prison cell is; let all submit. Anarchy can do no one any good. There is no rest, peace or happiness in a badly governed kingdom. The leaders of this world are sometimes at their wits' end. They are unable to cope with the lawlessness that often breaks out. They are looking very earnestly for a man to arise who will bring in order and peace and safety for the earth. The devil will give them a man one of these days from whom they will have great expectations. But he will not be God's man—he will not be the Christ, but the antichrist. He will disappoint them, and the confusion will be greater than ever. But God has got a Man who will judge the world in righteousness, and no one will ever be disappointed in that Man. He will reign in righteousness, and rule in judgment, and be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. There will be peace, rest and righteousness for all who submit to Him.

It was this glorious Person that the apostle preached to all, and in Him the disposition of God toward all is learned. Through Him forgiveness of sins is preached. In Him the blessing of Abraham has arrived at the nations, and all who believe receive the Spirit and the blessing is theirs. He says to the Corinthians, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the

name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." It is in Him all the promises are established, and it is in Him they are brought close to men.

These promises were addressed to Abraham and confirmed to his seed, Christ; and it was impossible that the law which was given four hundred and thirty years afterwards could render this void. Why then was it given? It was added for the sake of transgression, a mighty witness of what God required of man, and a testimony of the utter impossibility of man obtaining righteousness by his works. Was it then against the promises of God? Certainly not; and the proof of this is that it could not quicken. Had a law been given that could have quickened or given life righteousness would have been by the law. To quicken means to cause man to live in his affections. The law of Moses could command a man to love God and his neighbour as himself, but it could not produce the love. Had it been able to do this righteousness would have resulted, for if a man loved God with all his heart he would keep the first table of the law, and if he loved his neighbour as himself he would keep the second table—"He that loveth has fulfilled the law." But the law could not do this, and all are concluded under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. God left Himself free to bring in another prin-

ciple by which man might live, and if he lived he lived in the life of Christ.

The people of God under law were viewed as infants or under age, but what God had in view for man was sonship. This could not be revealed while man was under probation and as in the flesh in relationship with God. During that dispensation he differed nothing from a bondman, whatever he might be in the purpose of God. But when the term of the probation of man, what is called here "the fulness of the time," came to an end, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Now the time for sonship has come, and a man is either a son or nothing. He cannot be in the old position of bondman under law as his tutor. That day is over. If God touches a man in grace it is for sonship. The Son of God has come, and that means sonship for men. Everything depends upon the Person of the Son. When redemption had been accomplished Jesus says to Mary, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Thus a new place and relationship for man comes to light. It is sons with the Son of God. Then He came into their midst and breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Power to enjoy the relationship is communicated to them. They

have now the relationship and also the affections that belong to the relationship; it is the Spirit of God's Son in their hearts, crying, "Abba, Father."

Everything is given to us in Christ, and we are brought into all upon the principle of faith and in the power of the Spirit. We have no blessing in the flesh nor on the principle of works of law. We have the Spirit given to us in chapter iii. as the One who makes good to us the blessing of Abraham. Here He is in our hearts as the Spirit of God's Son, "crying, Abba, Father." In the end of this chapter we are born after the Spirit. In chapter v. we are to walk in the Spirit as the power by which the flesh is kept in subjection and its lusts denied. Later on in the same chapter we are exhorted to walk by the Spirit if we live by Him. The sons of God do not walk by law, bondslaves may, but not sons. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. viii.) Then in chapter vi. we have the solemn warning that if we sow to the flesh we shall reap corruption; but if we sow to the Spirit we shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. The great object in the epistle was to get the saints to sow to the Spirit. Sowing to the flesh does not mean the giving way to immorality and irreligion. A man might be both moral and religious and sow to the flesh. It means that you cultivate it and expect good fruit from it. There is no good in

it and no good can come out of it, but they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, and they sow to the Spirit and reap life everlasting. The Lord grant that we all may prove ourselves truly Christ's.



# THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

(TITUS I. 1-3; II. 9-14; III. 1-7.)

My thought in reading these passages is not that I may give an exposition of them but to draw our attention for a little to the hope of the believer. The gospel brings before men the reign of Christ and the world to come. The world to come is the only world with which you can connect eternal life. The Lord tells His disciples that "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." (Mark x. 29, 30.) With this world the Lord connects compensation an hundredfold and persecutions; but with the world to come He connects eternal life. We may have eternal life while we are in this world, but in relationships and affections entirely outside the old earthly order, innocent or guilty; we have it in the knowledge of the Father and of Jesus Christ His sent One. This, I think, is one reason why the apostle speaks of God having

in due time manifested His word through the proclamation that was committed to him; because that word was the revelation of God in Christ, in which lay eternal life in its moral bearing, for that word was the word of life; but he does not pursue the thought, for to the Apostle John it was granted to develop that life in its moral force and characteristics. Paul speaks of himself as in hope of it, not as already in possession of it, for he views it in connection with the dispensation to which it belongs, the world to come.

With that world faith ever was and is connected. It always had that world in view. Abraham, the father of the faithful, rejoiced to see the day of Christ; and he saw it and was glad. (John viii. 56.) Men of God in the past dispensations saw afar off the things that will obtain, in that day and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and consequently relaxed their grasp of things on earth; and they died with that hope burning brightly in their souls. To-day the gospel turns the hearts and minds of men in that direction, and whoever has faith to-day that faith has in view the world to come. No one could be accepted as a believer who did not believe in the world to come. He might not be intelligent about it, and as to the term he might be completely ignorant of its meaning, but what made him a believer was the report of that which will never be verified until Christ

comes and establishes His authority upon earth. It is in the world to come every man believes who has the faith of God's elect.

It might be thought that the world to come is only teaching for believers, but this is not so; it is that to which testimony is borne in the proclamation to the whole world. I will quote a few scriptures bearing upon that which I am now bringing before you. In Acts ii. we get the first gospel preaching, and Psalm xvi. is quoted by Peter to shew that David, in writing that psalm, had before him the resurrection of Christ to sit on His throne, and he quotes from Psalm cx. to prove that Christ has His place at the right hand of God until His enemies are made His footstool. That is, He not only occupies this place of authority and power, but will sit there until every enemy is subdued to Him, and we know that this is to be done during His reign. (1 Cor. xv. 24-8.) Next he will have the whole house of Israel know assuredly that God has made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ. (Acts ii. 36.) He is neither Lord nor Christ to this world I need hardly say. In chapter iii. he tells them that the heavens must receive Him until the times of restoration of all things, *which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.* No prophet left out of his testimony the world to come. The fact is the burden of their message was, "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that

should follow." In chapter x. it is He that is ordained of God to judge living and dead. This brings the world to come clearly before us. And Paul in Acts xiii. tells the Jews that by means of a risen Christ God would give them the sure mercies of David.

My object in referring you to all these scriptures is to shew you the place the world to come has in the simplest gospel testimony. The effect of this upon those who believed was, that they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven." (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.) I need not quote more scripture. All that will be in display in that day is now established in Christ. His resurrection is the pledge of that day. He is the bright morning Star. The Star has risen and that is the guarantee of the day. Old Testament saints had not the morning Star; they had the prophetic word, but now the Star is in the ascendant. People sing, "*Waiting to see the morning Star arise.*" But I do not think that good enough. The Star has risen; Christ is it. It is not that He shall be it; *He is it.* He says, *I am* the bright morning Star. Thus the day is guaranteed.

When we are in the benefit of the gospel we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Our faith is in Christ glorified, in whom all blessing is established, and throughout the world's dark night we wait for the day. The day of glory

becomes our hope. Christ is our hope, for it is He who shall bring in that day. Then our hope is in heaven because He is there. But that day may be delayed, and hence endurance becomes necessary. The apostle's desire for the Colossians was, that they might continue in the *faith*, and not be moved away from the *hope* of the gospel, and that they might be strengthened with all might, according to the power of His glory, unto all endurance and longsuffering with joyfulness. But there is one great thing necessary, if any one is to endure and hold fast faith and hope, and that is, that the heart should be in the enjoyment of the love of God. Therefore you get all these four things in Romans v. : justified by *faith*, tribulation working *endurance*, and endurance *hope*, and hope making not ashamed, because the *love* of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. This is why the apostle desires that the Lord would direct the hearts of His own into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ. *Faith*, *hope* and *endurance* are the characteristics of those who are of the faith to-day, but what lies at the foundation of all endurance is the love of God in the heart.

But if we are to have part in the glory of the world to come, we must be saved from this world, hence in this very short epistle we have God our Saviour and Christ our Saviour three times over. The system of this world will be brought to an

end by the judgments of God, and if we are to be saved from its judgments we must be delivered from it. But this salvation is a *soul*-salvation, not a temporal deliverance. Slaves were to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. How were they to do this? By willing subjection to their masters, meekness of spirit, absence of all covetousness, and by faithfulness. They were to be taken account of, as set free from the evil fleshly influences which controlled those in a like position with themselves. They were once as other slaves and as their masters also, foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

From this the grace of God comes to deliver them. It has appeared in God's blessed Son. It has brought salvation to all men. It has come to men in a risen Christ. God would have all men to be saved, and the Mediator gave Himself a ransom for all. God would bring man under the influence of grace or kindness and love, as we get in chapter iii. We are told, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." By the grace of God Christ has died for us. By His grace we have received the Holy Spirit, who brings our hearts under the power of kindness and love. Now the master, who formerly could reach nothing in the slave but stubbornness, insolence and treachery, finds now nothing but kindness and

love. By this salvation the circumstances of the slave are not changed. He is not like Israel brought bodily out of slavery into liberty from an earthly yoke, but his salvation is much greater and more perfect and abiding. He is free from spiritual bondage. His soul is emancipated, and he is much more really free than his master if that master be not a Christian.

The grace that has brought salvation to all men teaches him to come out as delivered from those evil influences that work destruction to the human soul. It teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world: and also to look for the blessed hope. This, I have no doubt, is what he speaks of in chapter i., "in hope of eternal life." And also in chapter iii., "being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." But with that hope is bound up the appearing of the glory of the great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Of the world to come we are heirs. We are justified in view of it, and already the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts. By this we are assured that our hope will not leave us one day like the hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish and leave him confounded.

As regards this world some may have been great losers by following a rejected Christ, though even here there is great compensation

in being delivered from every destructive influence, and in being allowed to breathe in christian fellowship the atmosphere of heaven; but the fulfilment of the blessed hope (eternal life) and the appearing of the glory of the great God our Saviour Jesus Christ, will infinitely more than compensate us for all the loss we may have sustained here. And being justified by His grace, we have become heirs according to this hope.

Do not connect eternal life with your life in flesh, your life of responsibility. Whether you view it in a moral or in a dispensational way, it does not belong to this world. It belongs to the line of divine counsels, to a new order of man, to the full revelation of God, to the knowledge of the Father and Jesus Christ His sent One, to new relationships for man, and to the affections that belong to those new relationships. We have it while we are in the old order as to our natural lives down here, and in everything we do, as we pass through the world, we are greatly affected by it; but "*this life is in his Son,*" and we know it by abiding in the Father and the Son, not by abiding in our houses of clay and in the relationships and affections that belong to "dust and ashes." The Lord direct our hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

J. BOYD.

