

# “IN CHRIST”

REVELATION

AND . . .

APPROACH.

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... BY ...

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# “ IN CHRIST.”

**W**ERE it not that the things of God are so different from the things of man one would hesitate to attempt to say anything on the words “ In Christ ” as placed at the head of this paper. However often they have been the subject of meditation one is encouraged, on account of the wealth of blessing which they involve, to look at them for a moment in their varied connections; first, in relation to God, then the Lord Jesus Himself, and then leading on to the distinction of their bearing on the race of mankind as contrasted with the saints that form His Body and His Bride. The words “ In Christ ” will be found to express the two great lines of truth which extend over the whole field of Inspiration, giving character to all the dealings of God with the race, whether we take His activities in time or His counsels in eternity. The first of these lines of truth is known as the Revelation of God *in Christ* to man and the other as man’s approach to God in richest blessing *in Christ*. It presumes on the one hand the full declaration of God in His nature and character in the place of man’s need; and on the other, man blest and set down before God in answer to the revelation, and in perfect suitability to Him.

Running the eye over a few passages as given below, we see at once that one class presents our Lord both as Revealer and Revelation of God, while the other class goes on to show how the revelation has become effective in man’s soul, not only meeting his need as a sinner, but transferring

him by a work of the Holy Ghost to a new relationship and state before God as connected with a new Head even Christ in glory. The phrase is sometimes expanded to "In Christ Jesus," which may emphasize to our hearts the grace as well as the glory of Him who is the Centre of all God's thoughts; but in no wise affects the great fundamental verities embodied in the expression itself.

Presentation of God to man, in Christ.

"Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24).

"The act of favour of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23).

"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 39).

"How that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Cor. v. 19).

"According to the purpose of the ages which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 11).

Presentation of man to God, in Christ.

"There is then now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1).

"To those sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. i. 2).

"If any one be in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Cor. v. 17).

"I know a man in Christ" (2 Cor. xii. 2).

"Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph. i. 3).

"In whom we have also obtained an inheritance" (Eph. i. 11).

These Scriptures show clearly the way the phrase is used and bring out the fulness of God's blessing for man in the presence of the full blaze of His glory. The phrase is used in other connections which are of a minor character compared to the above;

but we ask the reader to linger with us a little over these two thoughts, which are of such vast import to our God, and to His blessed Son, and to ourselves as blest in Him for evermore. Here, Christ is everything to God and everything to His own: verities which hang upon and demonstrate the mystery of His Person; for on the side of Revelation He must be God and on the side of His Approach, blessed be His Holy Name, He must be Man.

How sad it is that many of those whom the words " In Christ " greatly concern, view them as a mere theological phrase which a certain select few have the ability to explain; or it may be, seek its meaning in the definitions of a dictionary. In such cases, the enemy gets the victory, and instead of enjoying the precious truth of God, souls drop into a worldly christianity, marked by spiritual poverty, want of discernment, and inability to appreciate the precious things of our God. " Give me understanding that I may know Thy testimonies," are the words of a fixed heart, and where this is asked in sincerity there is nothing more pleasing to God. If we can earnestly pray, " Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law," our souls will soon be satiated with the joy of heavenly things.

A moment's consideration shows that the distance between God and man, as created, is infinite. On account of the Eternity and Majesty of His being, there must ever exist an infinite gap between the Deity and the very highest ranks of creation. On account of the special place of man in the creation, God came down and

walked with him; holding intercourse; providing for him an helpmeet; and putting him in a place of authority over certain parts of the creation. In the fall a new situation came about, which raised tremendous moral issues, and put man in a position from which it was impossible for him ever to recover. The created relationship was broken, and death being the penalty, there was no possible hope that the original position could ever be regained. God immediately, however, spoke of another Man and, although He bore with the race for long, in the working out of His ways, He ever had Christ before Him as the One who would settle everything perfectly for His glory.

But note the position: a third party having come upon the scene, man is seduced, and ruined, and God, to all appearance, defeated in the most important part of His handiwork. Man needed God and could not do without Him; and as the being in whom the counsels of eternity centred God had need of him. God only can, and must, work for the relief of His fallen creature; but in doing so, He takes occasion at the same time to carry out His own purposes of love. This combines the meeting of His own need with that of the creature's, and shows how that the sinner is not merely brought back to the place from which he fell; but to a new place before God in Christ Jesus. Like a mortgage on a property, the enemy had acquired certain rights over what belonged to God; His intervention in Christ is the answer to it all. Thus we can see that what

appeared defeat, but created the position for the working out of eternal purpose; thereby securing the glory of God in the race, for time and eternity.

Now it might be thought that the stoop of God the Son into Manhood would be sufficient to remove the distance and put man right. This was impossible. Death lay upon man, and until that was accomplished there was an encumbrance upon the inheritance. In the Person of Christ, God and Man are found together; but until the Cross that blessed Person must stand alone. The intervening centuries between Adam and Christ, which served to bring out the character of God in loving-kindness and mercy in the trial of man, in the fallen state, came to an end in the advent of the Son. The distance there is bridged and all that had been promised comes near to man in Him. In His resources, God comes forth to relieve His creature, and fulfil His own deep desires; for not only did the helplessness of man call for a deliverer; but the counsels of eternity necessitated a fulfiller; and as no created being could be found equal to dealing with the sin question; neither could any but God carry out the counsels of His own heart.

From many Scriptures we gather the feeling of impenetrable mystery, which, in the mind of man, surrounded the being of God. This was felt most by those who came within the range of His activities, for "He maketh darkness His secret place; and His pavilion dark waters, and thick clouds of the

sky" (Psa. xviii. 11). And again, "Clouds and darkness are round about Him," and Isaiah addresses Him with the words, "Surely Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour" (Isa. xlv.). This was felt all through the ages as men sought, more and more, the knowledge of God. Even Moses, at the giving of the law, had to say: "I exceedingly fear and quake," and at the second giving of the law, when he said, "Shew me Thy glory," received in answer, "No man can see My face and live." Job sought, in agony, for a Daysman or Mediator, and the cry of saints of later days is:—"O that Thou would rend the heavens and come down."

We who live in the full light of divine revelation, can see that through all the ages before the incarnation, the saints must ever have yearned for further light and blessing from God; but what we fail to grasp is that, in these very ages, the heart of God yearned over His creature; and longed for the time when He would over-step the distance and come near to him in the love of His heart. It was necessary that the ages of man's testing should go on; to bring out the grace and loving-kindness of God, combined with His faithfulness and righteousness; but we lose much if we miss the way He took to show that Christ was before His eye all that time. Who that is taught of the Spirit, can fail to see, in every age, whether Patriarchal, or under Prophets, Priests and Kings, Christ shining forth, in promise, one way or another? He went on in



patience, taking up men like Abraham, Moses, David and Nebuchadnezzar, to show in them things which could only be perfectly accomplished in Christ; and we hear again and again of His coming, both by promise and prophecy; as well as by type and shadow. What is of moment in all this, and which has so little place in man's theology, is that God has come near to us in Christ, in infinite love, and it is that alone which could meet the situation in every particular. By the Incarnation, all that the creature needs is brought to his door in One who is able to meet every requirement of God. If it were seen, in a proper way, that the ages between Adam and Christ were preparatory to this, it would wonderfully affect the outlook; changing our thoughts of God, and showing the impossibility of putting those who believe under law. It is here that the tremendous failure is seen; in that, the whole external system of Christianity has been Judaised. The enemy, it has been well said, will allow anything but what is the mind of God for the moment; hence the condition of things, which puts man at a distance from God; instead of the enjoyment of being in Christ, for the pleasure of God. Could anything be more miserable than a man taking the place of Christ's Vicegerent on earth, and being shut up in a walled castle from whence he issues his orders? All the ritual of the day, with its imposing buildings, beautiful vestments, genuflexions, etc., is but the denial that God has come near to us in blessing, to set us in the joy of sonship before Himself.

The story is told of a father and son who had gone out walking; at a certain part of the road the lad overturned a stone and immediately there was unearthed a world of life, each little creature terror-stricken and using all its power to get away. Why, said the youth, are they so afraid: what can I do to make them at ease? It is beyond your power, said the father; and then, as the thought flashed before him, said: if you could become one of them, sharing their humble abode, and getting beneath them you might get their confidence, but not otherwise. This is exactly what has been done. The blaze of God's glory at Sinai did but terrify; so that Moses had to say, I exceedingly fear and quake, but in Jesus, our God has come near us in all the tenderness and love of His heart.

Here our illustration fails, for after making that wondrous stoop He is rejected and crucified. This, however, was foreseen; in proof of which, we know, He left the scene above to die, that God's sentence might be carried out, and His glory made good. In His resource He uses man's worst act to work out for him eternal salvation; so that that which is man's worst meets with, and is the expression of God's richest and best.

But see how precisely all works out in relation to plan and purpose. Christ having taken flesh and blood glorified God in it; then by death and resurrection accomplished redemption for men, that all that He brought from heaven might be available for the race,

in perfect consistency with the holy character of God. Having gone to the furthest place of distance, He comes forth in resurrection to take up a new place, as Man, according to eternal counsel; entering thereby the place marked out for man long before time began. In this way it can be said, that not only has God come out in the revelation of His heart, but Man has gone in, in answer to what has been revealed. This is the order of Man that is for heaven. Personally, there was nothing on His side to have hindered Him from going there from the mount of transfiguration; but He was acting for God in relation to the order of His creation: Flesh and blood is for earth and comes to an end by death; Christ in resurrection is the beginning of a new creation, and takes His place in heaven as the Head of a new race.

Although the present session of our Lord at God's right hand is provisional (Psa. cx. 1), yet, His going there put a certain touch of completeness to all these things, which we need to be taught of God to apprehend; and if we add to it the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost we can see heaven and earth brought together, in a way which anticipates the future right on to eternity. A Man in heaven is a new thing in the divine procedure; it must vouch a new creation, since in his original creation man was made for the earth. In this blessed Person at God's right hand we have the key to the unlocking of all the treasures of the holy Book of God. Like the sun in **the**

heavens He rays Himself forth, in the moral region; opening out the Scriptures in all they contain of glory and beauty, making the Old Testament radiant with the light of a coming Christ; unfolding the divine plan from where time began; and going forward, past Kingdom days, to the golden days of a coming eternity of bliss.

Thus we can see that all the blessing which was in Christ for man could only become available after redemption was wrought, and He had gone on high. The great things we speak of as the Kingdom, Salvation, Eternal Life and Sonship were there as well as everything else, but on our side certain obstructions existed which death alone could remove. We do not get the words, "Redemption which is in Christ Jesus," nor "He is the propitiation for our sins," till the Spirit has come down from the glorified Saviour so that we are privileged to visualise, on the principle of faith, all these blessings in the heart of God in a past eternity; then trace them on the pages of Holy Writ; and finally note how, in the grandeur of God's procedure, they have been transferred to a MAN, that they might be available to the whole race in Him. Not only have we the inspired record of what God is in the Scriptures; but all that He is in nature, character and being, comes before us in activity, in the Son, that we might not only be delivered from our sins, but be brought to know and love Him, in the liberty of a new nature, relationship and being, for His eternal joy.

Surely this is the triumph of good over evil; the perfection of love in regard to hate; the grand and magnificent exhibition of the glory of God in the creation. In the dawn of His ways creation was His testimony. “The heavens declare the glory of God”; later came the law as the measure of His requirements from the creature; but now it is Himself as made known in the Son. Not only has the blessing of Abraham reached the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, but *both Jew and Gentile* partake of His promise in Christ by the Gospel: God’s testimony, which is the witness of Himself, can now be called the testimony of Christ since all that God is shines forth in Him. “For all the promises of God in Him are yea and in Him Amen.” In earlier ages He spoke of Him prophetically, saying, “I have found a ransom,” and again “I have laid help upon one that is mighty, but we can say *now* that God has made Him to us, “Wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption.” The aged Simeon tasted these things in some way when he held up the Holy Babe and spoke of God’s salvation, and to-day the Holy Ghost, through Paul, still directs our eyes there for the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory (2 Tim. ii. 10).

The reader will observe that all the above has the whole race in view. To limit the bearing of God’s approach to man in His Son would be to deny the “whosoever” of the Gospel and impugn the character of God. This is the glory of the Evangelist as he

goes forth to sinners, this he delights to proclaim far and wide, and this it is which is the joy of guilty sinners when awakened to their sinful state before God. Christ is made blessings; not only is He the Blessor, but He is made Blessings for evermore (see Psa. xxi. 6, margin) and all that is on God's account towards mankind. A God who is at a distance from His creature and content to remain there, would not be a God of love, and a God in that position, and unable to bridge the distance, would be impotent. This is not our God. Supreme in love, mighty in power; we adore His holy Name, that nothing could hinder Him from reaching us, however low we had fallen.

But the one who is the Apostle is also the High Priest: as the former He came out and as the latter He went in; and in this way we pass from the thought of Revelation, to that of Approach, and can see the identification of the two thoughts in the same Person. We are not so ready, however, to lay hold of the truth, that one Man has entered into the joy of all the blessing of God. If the Son came out, the Man Christ Jesus is gone in to enjoy the blessing of Sonship: the One, who is the eternal Life which was with the Father, has asked life and got length of days for ever and ever; and with regard to salvation, the One who triumphed gloriously and laid the enemy low, is the same One who was heard in an acceptable time and in a day of salvation. "The King shall joy in Thy strength,

Jehovah, and in Thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice" (Psa. xxi. 1-3 and Psa. xvi. 11).

Here another point must be remarked, which arises out of these things and is necessarily linked up with them, viz., that the One in whom all the blessing centres is the Administrator of all to men. Like Joseph, who was brought from the prison to be chief ruler in Egypt, our Lord has come back from the dead to be the supreme Administrator of all the bounty of God. All that range of blessing which we read in Himself, He lives to administer, because He died to secure. The blessings are spiritual, heavenly and eternal (Eph. i. 3). Spiritual in contrast with basket and store. Unlike the Israelites who got houses, wells and gardens which they had not produced; ours are intangible and exist outside the range of nature and of the sphere of divine providence on the earth. This accounts for the way that many, who have little in this world, may be rich in the possession of the things of God. They are heavenly because belonging to the life of heaven, and form no part of the life of the earthly man; and they are eternal as existing in the heart of God from all eternity and forming no part of the time scene. How slow we are, and how much we lose on account of our reluctance, to leave what is seen and temporal. The feast of grace, which brings in new creation, may still be refused for five yoke of oxen or a piece of land.

A Man in heaven is the proof that others are going there, and we know that nothing of fallen flesh shall ever be there; so that, we have now to see the way that the believer is lifted out of the fallen condition of man in Adam, and set down in life and nature before God for His pleasure in Christ; in the nature, relationship and state of that Man in such a way that heaven with Christ is his place for evermore.

Here we meet with very great difficulty, on account of the way the Gospel has been lowered to a mere question of man's relief and access to heaven when he dies. We look in vain for any attempt on the part of current evangelicalism to distinguish between forgiveness of sins and deliverance from the sin state. Paul's Gospel is ignored with the consequence, that instead of being led out of the world's system into the joy of a new creation, those converted are left in a state of bondage struggling under the law.

Assuming then, that the Gospel has been received and forgiveness tasted, the person has began a new life with God, and in proportion to his desire to grow, there is increasing joy in the things of the Lord. At this point in his history the question is sure to be raised of indwelling sin, which is much deeper than that of sins committed; so deep indeed, that he learns, with agony, that sin forms part of the moral texture of his being. How is it to be got rid of? I can understand, says one in this condition, forgiveness through God's mercy, but how is it possible for me to be taken out of



myself—out of my natural state as a child of Adam? This is just what God's Gospel does, and the soul at this stage is on the way to the point where death can be accepted, as the way out from the ruin in Adam to a new creation in Christ. If the exercise be faced the person takes on a new character which is marked by stability and satisfaction; if not, these things are absent and instead there is a restlessness which nothing can satisfy. This accounts for much in the ways of many excellent Christians who are earnest workers, but seem to have no rest or peace save in their activities. Paul's Gospel, which gives complete deliverance, being unknown, they lack the joy of new creation, and the supreme happiness of being at home in a new relationship in communion with the Father and the Son.

The truth of deliverance was much used in ministry a generation or two ago, though confessedly not so much of late; but the fact that the enemy has changed his tactics, flooding the world with new psychology and such things, calls for more earnest concentration on the part of those who would be faithful to the Lord. In spite of all these clever innovations, the simple Christian with the Word and Spirit of God may be led into the joy of true deliverance, if his desire is to be obedient to the Lord and to learn the pleasure of His will. It is connected with a view of man in a threefold way—first, as he came from the hand of God, next as having fallen, and then as brought back to God in Christ.

It is easy to see that when he was created there could be no question with man of either sin or righteousness. We must, therefore, distinguish between man as a sinner having broken away from God, and what he was when first created. At the fall a new element came into his being, and while it is impossible to separate him from this, it is necessary that we should distinguish. Man was now a fallen being and the moral poison had so become part of himself that he was not only incapable of doing the will of God, but he was capable of doing all manner of evil in defiance of Him. So complete was his ruin that Scripture tells us that it is impossible for him to be subject to God. All this is inherited, and there is no possibility of getting clear of it apart from a definite work of God in the soul. It is no question of refinement or even religion on the one hand, or of being proud, boasters, inventors of evil, on the other, for man in Adam can be both. Nor can it be gained by the acquirement of knowledge merely. This is always a pleasing exercise, but much more so when it is attended with relief from that which is trying and entrance into the good. To see the way out is one thing, but to walk that way is another, and being a moral exercise the road must be walked.

Note the conclusion reached in this exercise as stated in Romans vii. "We know that the law is spiritual, but I am fleshly *sold under sin*." He is identified, in his consciousness, with the state brought in by the fall; the case is hopeless and he is

doomed to despair. But the Spirit of God is at work, as always in such cases, and proceeding a little further, he learns to distinguish between himself, as a creature, and sin that dwells in him: that is to say, there is ability to discern between the *ego* or personality, and the sinful flesh that came in by the fall. This is a great step in the history of the soul, and it prepares for the next, which gives complete liberation by his identifying himself with what is of God, as having been wrought in his soul by the Spirit. "For I delight in the law of God after the inner man." In this way is made the experimental journey of the soul from Adam to Christ, wherein lies the whole secret of deliverance from sin, the flesh and the law; and it is completed objectively in the apprehension of Christ Risen, who had by death removed from under the eye of God the whole sin-state. "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." There is the apprehension of the second Man in the soul. He is now able to distinguish between himself and two controlling principles. "So then, I myself with the mind serve God's law; but with the flesh sin's law." The wide difference between these two things is seen in chapter viii., verses 5-8, where the antagonism is shown between the Spirit and the flesh; and the assured result is given in the same chapter, verse 2, where the whole practical course of life is in view. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death."

A simple illustration may help us here. If the reader has ever stood on the banks of a tidal river he may have witnessed the strange phenomenon of the water being arrested in its downward flow and made to go backwards in the courses from which it came. In its ordinary course the water flows down, but at a certain time, through the operation of the law that governs the tides, the river is seen to turn and flow back towards its source. The law or governing principle of man's life is sin, which really works death; but the law of the life which is in Christ Jesus is really delight in, and obedience to the will of God. Here in the Apostle we see the law of the lower having to give place to the law of the higher life; and, just as the incoming tide challenges and overcomes the force of the river's flow, so the power of the life which is in Christ Jesus meets, by the Spirit, the grovelling tendencies of the flesh and produces a life well-pleasing to God. "That the righteous requirement of the law should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to Spirit." He is made conscious, not only of a new origin, but that Christ is to be reproduced in him; since he stands now in the same relation to Him as before he stood in to Adam, and all this in such a way that he might be able to say, "For me to live *is Christ.*"

But now note the full meaning of this transfer. The Lord Jesus Christ having ended in death the history of man's responsibility, and taken His place on high as the

Man of God's purpose, the believer is linked up with Him there in the world of God's pleasure; where sonship is enjoyed and responsibility cannot come; and where that life which is marked by the knowledge of the Father and the Son, finds its fullest activities and its deepest joys. Nor is this all, for Christ being the heavenly One, to be in Him, generically, is of necessity to be heavenly also, which shows that the Gospel of God not only goes back to the fall to lift us out of what came in there, but reaches beyond it to the original created condition which was earthly, to lift us from that, into the heavenly order in Christ. "The first man out of the earth made of dust; the second man, out of heaven. Such as he made of dust, such also those made of dust; and such as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones" (1 Cor. xv. 47, 48)\*

At this point the soul comes into the apprehension of the new Man, where every distinction of the flesh is gone, and Christ is everything, and in all. This merges the thought of the unit in the aggregate, by the manifestation of a new company, every one which is accepted in Christ and provides, as another has said, the moral material for both the House of God and the Body of Christ. Surely we can see here a sphere in which God can dwell with infinite delight. The God who was pleased to grace both the Tabernacle and the Temple with the symbol of His presence, has secured for Himself in His Son a living House which is in accord with Himself, because of His own construc-

\*See also pamphlet entitled "BLUE," by the same author pages 22-28

tion. "For we are His workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus." All is seen in the divine nature, and consequently it is the exact opposite to a material house, which has been made so much of in Christendom.

With the House of God we reach the accomplishment of His great desire, as it is said of Zion, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell for I have desired it." It is where God is known, and His voice is heard by the Holy Ghost; where the blessing of eternal life is enjoyed, and He is surrounded by adoring hearts. Inside that House is made known to our hearts the truth of "the mystery" which is the complement and culminating point of Paul's Gospel; which may be viewed as standing out prominently in the counsels of eternity, and rightly has been called the Master-piece of God. In Ephesians the House is seen in relation to God composed of His sons, and the Body in relation to Christ, and all in view of the universe both for time and eternity. The mystery can scarcely be defined as Christ, far less the Assembly, but is correctly spoken of as Christ and the Assembly: it involves a work of grace in our souls, outside the flesh and blood condition, by which we live in relation to God. As another has put it, "Where the truth of union lies is in the fact of a moral being in the saints which has been derived from Christ; that is, that having been quickened together with Christ, we have received a being which puts us in association with Christ." In this way Christ is continued

here in His members, the sensibilities, tastes and feelings belonging to the Head coming out as described in Colossians iii., but in Ephesians all is seen in relation to the universe and the coming day, the Assembly being the lesson-book of angels even now.

It should be clear that all the above belongs to the resurrection world where no sin can come. The Christian is brought there by the Holy Ghost, whose work it is to form him after Christ, and the marvel of all is that this can be accomplished while still in a body belonging to the earth and the first creation. This is what constitutes the peculiar character of the moment; demonstrating the power and wisdom of God, and calling for the greatest care, lest we miss that which displays the grandeur of His counsels and the beauty of His work. The body having not yet come into the gain of redemption; the flesh and blood condition goes on with all its relationships and responsibilities wherein the Christian seeks, through grace, to walk in obedience to the will of God. This gives a new and duplex condition which is altogether unique. He is in the sphere of God's ways, where providential government is at work daily, in his outer life in the world; but in the inner it is the sphere of divine purpose where all is heavenly, spiritual and eternal. The intelligent Christian stands in that way on the confines of two worlds: in the heavenly, where all is of God, Christ is everything, and the Holy Ghost rules; in the other there is confusion, sin and death, but all controlled

for His own purpose by Him who rules creation.

The Christian is now in exact correspondence with the position of the Lord Jesus Christ when on earth; a heavenly Man carrying out the things of time in obedience to the will of God. (With the difference, of course, that the state of sin in the flesh from which he has been delivered remains, and so readily becomes active if not kept in the place of death; a thing altogether unthinkable in the blessed Lord). While all that constitutes life for him is in the heavenly domain, he walks on earth a stranger. It is entrance into the heavenly which makes earth a desert, as it has been well put:—

" 'Tis the treasure we've found in His love,  
That has made us now pilgrims below."

and the two systems are so entirely different that the principles governing the one would be altogether unworkable in the other. No more could we think of the prodigal masquerading in the best robe before those of the far country than making the things of the new creation common in this world. It has been said that, "In both *Philippians* and *Colossians* the heavenly life is spoken of as a present thing; but there is entire separation, even down here, between the pilgrimage and this heavenly life itself, although the latter has a powerful influence on the character of our pilgrim life."

But this two-fold relation of the Christian demands our closest attention supplying as it does the qualification for the position



which results from a Man being in heaven and the Holy Ghost upon the earth. Since the pilgrim life is in a scene of sin, it follows that intelligent advance in the line of God's will, puts one further and further from all that is accredited here, whether it be religious or political, and brings in one of the most important features in the whole range of divine dealings, namely: the disciplinary ways of God with His own. In the botanic world, when the process of grafting has been accomplished, the husbandman uses all his skill for the cultivation of the new thing, taking care that the old will not be allowed to grow. In the ups and downs of life here, we know well what this means in sorrow, pain and travail, which often brings us down in deep distress before our good and gracious God for mercy. His love would have us in the knowledge of the possibilities of the flesh for evil, keeping it in the place of death by the activities of the Spirit: bringing what is of the inner man and the faith sphere to bear upon all that is seen and temporal. "For we who live are always delivered unto death on account of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh." This explains the enigma of suffering, by showing that heaven's worthies are often earth's despised, and bringing out that the men which were entrusted with heaven's richest for the need of men were often made the lowest, even to become as the offscouring of the world and the refuse of all (1 Cor. iv. 13 and 2 Cor. iv. 11).

Happy, thrice happy are they who have learned the secret of what lies behind the riddle of suffering. How many of the heirs of glory are at a loss to know how it is that they are loved with a love that is eternal and yet permitted to suffer. Well it is for the one who can say, in the midst of tears, "God can do nothing for me but that which is the very best": the consciousness of this deep down in the soul in moments of trial imparts a sober dignity to the person which nothing can equal. Let no one think that we under-estimate this precious part of the dealings of our loving God, or go away with the thought that it can be met by an easy-going sentimentalism that views it as a sort of necessity; saying, it will be all right when we get home; or, on the other hand, meets it with a dogged stoicism which is callous in the extreme. Oh no: they that own His hand most and taste His sympathy in the sorrow are the same that feel the weight of it most keenly of all.

But we should view these things in relation to the double character of our life while upon the earth. There is a marked difference between bearing sorrow and suffering with a sympathising Priest in heaven, and a bright future ahead; knowing that we are going to where these things can never come (that is, the motive for calm resignation in the trial is connected with the future) and being in the life of Christ, now, in a condition to which no discipline can apply. In the one I am in deep distress, but cheered by the thought that it is not to last,

but by some mysterious law it is necessary on account of future exaltation; so that strength is sought, and the sympathy of the great Priest to meet the trial; but in the other, while all the above is recognized, and the poignancy of the trial is felt, the divine end is seized in the Lord's own company, and the soul finds its rest in His affections, in a life and relationship beyond the reach of sin. The difference of the support is, that all that is relegated to the future in the first case, is available to the soul in the second. We may have hymns, poems and happy phrases, all good and helpful in their way, bringing the light of the future to bear on the trial of the moment; things indeed, which it is far from our thoughts to condemn; but how infinitely blessed it is to see, that the person in the trial is united to a glorified Christ at God's right hand, and has the privilege of entering, even now, into the whole range of heavenly life and blessing where nothing that is of the first order can come. Rightly understood, the grace of the Priest is to succour, sustain and lift us above every pressure, by carrying us over to the Heavenly Sanctuary, the Holiest of all, where sin or want can never come.

"You are not in liberty, but as you are in the life of Christ. Many have a sense of the love of God, and how He is towards them, who are not in liberty, that is, not living in the life of Christ. It is then you know Him in a new way, and you find your joys in that which ministers to His life. You are now peculiarly attached to Him; you were first drawn to Him by His work for you; now you know Him as your life, and you are so bound to Him in love that you can say, 'Who

"shall separate us from the love of Christ?' Now, "the fact of living His life of itself reduces this "world to a wilderness: there is nothing in it for "the life of Christ. If you live His life, if He "lives in you, you must live outside this scene; "and as you do, you receive from Him the manna, "that is, grace from Himself to live here as He "lived here. (J.B.S. Letters. Experimental. pp. 2).

Now a summary of what has been before us is, that our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God over all, is first seen on the divine side revealing God in His counsels of grace and blessing for men. If the thought of the great Being who created all causes us to tremble in our nothingness, surely the love of His heart made known in His Son, begets our confidence. The reign of sin was permitted in the ages between Eden and Calvary that a display of His character might be given in the creation; but in the doing of this there came out in one way or another, all down the ages, a prophetic delineation of Christ. At the end of these ages the Son appeared here to combine in His Person the perfect answer to all God's Old Testament ways and at the same time, make known His eternal purposes.

But all this necessitates an answer, for God will have man for Himself. Where then, is the Man that can stand before the holiness and majesty of God? He alone who made the revelation could do this, and we adore as we behold Him, a Man, having entered in supreme holiness into all the blessing of God. This opens the way for the detail of the scheme of eternal counsel, which necessitates that the soul of man

should become the scene of the work of God that he might be fitted to stand before God in the holiness suited to His presence. It is thus we reach the great thoughts of eternal life and sonship which lead to the truth of the new Man, the House of God and the Body of Christ, all of which presume a new creation; but entered now, while still in a body belonging to the first creation.

Connected with the words “*In Christ,*” there are certain expressions in the writings of John such as, “*Ye in Me and I in you.*” “*In the Father and in the Son,*” etc., but, however precious and fraught with blessing they stand in a different connection and may be left for the moment. It is impossible, however, to close without looking a moment at the words, “*Christ in you,*” as given by the apostle Paul, which seem to be a kind of complement to the words “*In Christ.*” Both phrases have often been used as showing man in Christ for *blessing*, and Christ in man before men for *testimony*.

Without going over all the passages in which the words occur, we would note a beautiful graduation of thought in Romans, Colossians and Ephesians. “*If Christ be in you the body is dead on account of sin, but the Spirit is life on account of righteousness*” (Rom. viii. 10). The believer is here looked at as in the Kingdom of God and Christ in him by the Spirit, so that its principles may be maintained and if the flesh makes its appeal there is no answer on the part of the vessel, it is dead to every appeal of sin. In Colossians we are in the sphere of risen life,

being past the desert. "Christ in you" has regard to "the mystery," taking in the whole scope of His interests in the Assembly at any given time on the earth, which leads on to chapter iii. 11, where "Christ is everything *and in all.*" In Ephesians the thought is greatly expanded, so that we may view ourselves as part of the company which takes its place with Christ at the centre of all things. "That the Christ may dwell, through faith in your hearts, being rooted and founded in love, in order that ye may be able fully to apprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of the Christ which surpasseth knowledge; that ye may be filled even to all the fulness of God."

It might perhaps be expected that something should have been said on the seven-fold mention of the words, "In Christ Jesus," which occur in 2 Timothy, but these call for separate treatment. All that is attempted here is to show the main leading thoughts of Revelation and Approach, with a glance at the fulness connected with them. It may be said, however, that no intelligent Christian would deny that all these seven things were as true in Christ at Pentecost as when the epistle was written, but the breakdown of the outer frame-work of Christianity called for the emphasising of the stability of all that is of God in our Lord Jesus Christ. Herein lies the grand victory of our God, who brings us out of all our ruin into a new creation, based upon the work of our Lord

Jesus Christ at the cross, the value of which is eternal.

Reader, may I affectionately urge upon you the importance of all this. We are soon to be with Himself in bodies of glory. Do not postpone these blessings which are your very birth-right till then: they are yours *now*, if you have been brought to own the Lord Jesus as your Saviour. May both writer and reader join in holy earnestness in seeking to enter into the new creation, rejoicing in the grace that has made us heavenly in calling, heavenly in spiritual constitution, heavenly in hope, and, thank God, heavenly with Christ in *destination*.

J. McB.

AND HIS COUNTENANCE AS THE SUN SHINES  
IN ITS POWER.

(Revelation i. 16, N.T.).

○ JESUS LORD, Thy glory fills my soul,  
With deep and inexpressible delight,  
As under Thy permissive gracious sway  
I sit before Thee in Thy heavenly light.

To rest in the seclusion of that place,  
Most blessed scene made luminous by Thee,  
Home of my soul, the fruit of boundless grace,  
That brought Thee here to die for such as me.

Made meet to share the joys of that blest place,  
Resting in all Thou richly dost bestow,  
Full joy—a home with Thee through Thine own grace,  
My heart with deep delight doth overflow.

But, Lord, I need Thy touch of heavenly grace,  
Which holds my soul quiescent to receive  
What Thou dost teach of love's divinest ways,  
Thoughts far beyond my heart could ere conceive.

With ecstasy I still would meditate  
 With reverent and deep enquiring gaze,  
 And further by the Spirit penetrate  
 Into the mysteries of Thy wondrous grace.

O Jesus Lord, God's well-beloved Son,  
 Thy depths unfathomed, pass all creature ken.  
 How happy they who learn what Thou hast done!  
 Who live to worship and to spread Thy fame.

Thyself the Centre in Godhead's converse  
 Of thoughts and plans, which long ere time began,  
 Marked out by Him a blissful universe,  
 Fruit of Thy death, in Thee the risen Man.

Purpose eternal, read in Thee alone,  
 Unfolding Godhead's rich and deep design.  
 Father and Son and Holy Ghost made known,  
 In moral fulness by Thyself in time.

And though come down to Manhood's low estate,  
 Equal to fill God's blessed heart art Thou.  
 Creator, God, in man the creature's place,  
 Stupendous stoop—a Man for ever now.

And, Lord, Thou know'st my heart for joy doth leap  
 In view of Home with Thee—O matchless grace!  
 Body of glory, perfect and complete,  
 In Thine own likeness for Thy Father's praise.

With holy expectation I await  
 That call which brings me home to Thee above.  
 Then with Thine own in risen heavenly state,  
 To see Thy face and serve in holy love.

Then precious Saviour, Thou shalt far outshine  
 All creature thought of glory, power and fame,  
 Heaven and earth, the whole creation join  
 To hymn Thy praises and adore Thy Name.