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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton,
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"As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Colossians 2:6.

It is a very solemn, sad declaration in the 1st chapter of John concerning Christ, We read, "He was in the world and the world was made by Him, yet the world knew Him not. He came unto His own but His own received Him not"; and Paul, writing to the Hebrews says "We are partakers of Christ, if ye hold fast the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end. " Well, if we are not partakers of Christ, we are undone to all eternity. The wonder, the mystery is, that the infinite God has made Himself to be partaken of, to be received, to be approachable, possessable. It is an amazing mystery that the infinite God has in wisdom and goodness so made it possible for sinners and creatures of a day to know Him; to be partakers of the divine nature; to receive Him, for Him to receive them.

The all-important point is - have we received Him? and therefore, in the first place, as enabled, we would speak of this blessed person who is received by faith. He is the eternal Son of the eternal God.

*Eternal ages saw Him shine,
He shines eternal ages hence.*

(Gadsby's 969)

In Colossians 1 we read "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." but in this chapter - "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." The fullness here is the fullness of the Godhead as it is in the incarnate Son of God, all the fullness of Deity, omniscience, immutability, omnipresence is in HIM. But the fullness in the 1st chapter is all that mediatorial fullness of life and grace and merit and riches and power that His people will need and yet the two together make a wonderful Person, Emmanuel, because that fullness of the Godhead in Him invests Him in His humanity with that omnipotence and immutability and eternity and omnipresence and every divine perfection which, while that fullness cannot be communicated to creatures, yet the fullness in the first chapter is a communicative fullness. The deity of Christ gives that fullness of grace and life and light and power, all the effects by which His people receive from Him as being brought into union with Him, those blessings which are eternal, irreversible. Those favours which are divine and indeed the whole kingdom of grace with all the graces of the Spirit that can never be removed; those graces that can never decay.

O what a person is that in the text therefore 'As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.' He reveals Himself to faith and faith is a grace of the Spirit which makes the heart in which it is, receptive. It is a great thing, my friends, to have the eyes, the ears, the hands and the feet of faith, for all this will be in a reception of Christ.

*Blessed are the eyes that see Him;
Blest the ears that hear His voice.*

(Gadsby's 1055)

But we are given in the gospel by John a real description of what it is to receive Christ. "He came unto His own, but His own received Him not but to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name." So that their believing and receiving are the same thing and so is coming.

Well, as helped, let us look at the power of the Holy Spirit in this reception of Christ; and this is to be said at the outset, that every reception of Him and believing in Him results from the covenant of grace. Effectual calling results from predestination; and this receiving of Christ is one of the sweetest evidences of effectual calling, and in receiving Christ it will be in two ways. Now this perhaps may give some clue to anxious souls as to whether they have really received Christ.

He will be received as revealed by the Holy Spirit in what we are. If the Holy Spirit has convinced us of sin and given us to really experience that we are poor and miserable and wretched and naked and ruined and lost in ourselves and then reveals the Lord Jesus, we shall receive Him in just what we are in all our deep, deep needs and this condition and this teaching will make Christ suitable, attractive to us. Therefore, at the same time, we shall receive Him, not only as helpless, self-destroyed sinners, but receive Him in what He is as revealed in the gospel of the grace of God. Those two things together make a very gracious, living experience. You may be able to trace that in the days of your spiritual youth; some of you may be in the days of your spiritual youth now, but you will feel distinctly the two things as long as you live. I have believed and have declared that the apostle Paul was never throughout the whole of his life anything better in himself than a wretched man; but he never lost sight of the blessed object of faith, that door of hope. "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The two things will ever go together in experience in every prayer you pray.

'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.' "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to Me" ; and this coming to Him is the work of the Spirit, is a receiving of Him. "And this is the will of God that sent me, that whosoever seeth the Son" - seeth the Son by the eyes of faith, sees in Him what He is and the fullness that He possesses "and believeth in Him, shall have everlasting life." O this blessed contact of a sinner receiving Christ.

*Nothing but sin I Thee can give,
Nothing but love shall I receive.*

(Gadsby's 144)

Therefore, it is the result of union with Christ. We shall never receive Him unless He first received us; and He received His people as a gift from His divine Father in the covenant of grace. He received them with a fore view of their fall, their ruin. That did not alter, could not alter, immutable love. But He received that gift from the Father, that gift of everlasting love; and the Son loved His people with the same love as did the Father in election; and the Holy Ghost loves the Lord's people with the same love as the Father and the Son; and all are united in this mighty work of grace in effectual calling. A poor sinner by the power of God is made willing, willing to come out from among the ungodly, separated by the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, with that separation which unites unto Christ and His people. A teaching which discovers the true nature of sin, its malignancy. Its universal power in the soul and in the body; and the revelation of the glory, the beauty, the righteousness, of God's dear Son; and this knowledge of self and of Christ are two mighty incentives in the soul to a reception of Him.

'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord.' You will receive Him in all the doctrines of Christ. Not merely assent to them, not in the mere letter of the Bible, but there will be a reception, in such a way that the Holy Spirit will unite you unto Christ, join you unto Him in believing, in every part of the gospel which embraces the whole of His Person and His work; and if the Holy Ghost helps you it may be that you will find an inward, mysterious, going out unto Him which is the sweetest evidence of receiving Christ Jesus the Lord. Take for instance the matchless condescension of His coming; and the love of God in the unspeakable gift of His dear Son. Have you received Him in those declarations of eternal love and wisdom? This "God so loved the world that He gave His only

begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him" - that whosoever receiveth Him – "should not perish but have everlasting life."

Have you ever, from your heart, thanked God for His unspeakable Gift, for His person that was given, because of the fullness of Deity, the fullness of all divine perfections in Him? Which gave to you a fullness of the supplies that were in Him, all their permanency, eternity and efficacy? 'As ye have therefore received.'

We read of Him too as the Father "Who spared not His own Son." O, my friends, may the Lord forbid that we should become gospel-deafened and gospel-hardened by repetitions! "He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" It was God's own eternal Son. No benefits could derive to us from Him unless He became incarnate, took upon Him the nature of Abraham. No benefits could have reached us had He taken the nature of angels. Have you received Him? Do you receive Him and admire and humbly adore His matchless condescension to veil His glory and to stoop to wretchedness and dust that guilty worms might rise? Have you ever received that with respect to yourself?

'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.' Have you received Him in those offices that He condescended to assume? Received Him as needing Him in those offices? Prophet to teach; Priest to offer a sacrifice - and that sacrifice Himself; King - King to reign in Zion, reign in a poor sinner's heart, in His kingdom of grace. Have you received it under a sense of its suitability and the all-sufficiency that is in Him to abound over all the abounding evils in our hearts? Have you received Him? Well, the alternative to receiving Him is to reject Him, disallow Him. Peter speaks of this, that there are some who disallow Him, reject Him. In the parable there were those who sent a message after Him saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Do you disallow Him? Do you reject Him? Could anybody here say, I don't want Him? I don't need Him? There is nothing that I need Him to do, I am independent of Him. I don't believe there would be a person here could say that, but according to the Scriptures there are multitudes that do. They do so by their actions, by their desecration of the Lord's day.

'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord.' Have you ever received Him in His Word? How do we read the Scriptures? "They are they" said Christ, "that testify of Me." O this eternal infinite ME! Yet He speaks invitations – Come! O His mercy to poor sinners! "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, I will give you rest." "Look unto Me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God" - there is the authority, there is the ground upon which you may look, "I am God, and there is none else."

So there will be a receiving of Him by faith throughout all the journey of life. You receive Him too in His characters. O how suitable! And you will be compelled to, as for instance, a Refuge. How many times have some of you in difficulties, in distresses, in the midst of calamities, weaknesses and pains been compelled to confess, "Other refuge have I none." Have you ever received Him as a refuge? "God is our refuge and strength." Well, none receive Him as such but those who are weak, those who are exposed and pursued. The two things, as we said at the beginning, must go together. What we are in ourselves, in all our unspeakable and complete ruin, where we are in this world, in a city of destruction, together with who He is in His glorious Person and all the divine perfections in Him; and it pleased the Father there should be a fullness of supplies for His people in every time of need and where He is now exalted in Heaven. "Led captivity captive, received gifts for men." I say have you received Him in these particulars? For it takes in body and soul, time, circumstances, death and eternity; and when you are brought to feel what a speck you are, what a nit you are, a less than nothing as you are before Him who fills heaven and earth.

I wish I could speak of Him as I ought, but I do believe, although my sins are great, I believe I receive Him in these two particulars, in what I am as the worst sinner that ever lived. I don't say that rashly, I say it because I know myself better than I know anybody else; and I believe I have received Him in what He is, in His glorious righteousness.

'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.' O this is the difficult, this is the practical part! Well, in one way taking the whole it is this, as really we have already said. To walk in Him as you have received Him is to continue to walk in Him as a poor sinner in yourself, and in Him as an all-sufficient Saviour. But you see how the two things must go together, because in a reception of Christ, there must be a knowledge of Him and there must be a divine approval of Him in your heart. Love to Him, a need of Him. Now just these simple utterances - and I am thinking of you that are seeking Him, who are exercised in your soul, put those simple questions to yourself and see how you can honestly answer them. Do you really need Him? Do you feel that if you never possessed Him, if you were ever to be destitute of Him and His salvation, you have no other hope? And then add to this, do you desire Him? Not only need Him to save you from hell, but do you desire Him, His Spirit, His grace? Do you desire Him to come into your heart and to reign there, to dwell in you the hope of glory? Are you willing for Him to choose your inheritance, to reign over you in your circumstances for it says here: 'As ye have received Christ Jesus,' that is God's anointed One, Jesus - "His name shall be called Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins." Willing for Him to reign in us; His divine sovereignty, His holy will to direct all our ways? Have you received Him thus?

There were some that appeared to receive Him, but when He pressed things close home and said, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, ye have no life in you"; as much as to say, Unless you have union with Him, unless you partake of Him in His body and eat of Him, that is receive the virtue, the benefit of Him in His person and His work, "Except ye drink the blood" His precious sin-atonement blood in your conscience, you are dead. Except you have union with Him who is eternal life, ye are dead. They said; "This is a hard saying, and from that time, many went back and walked no more with Him."

Well, it is a mercy if this reception of Christ, although you may not believe that you have faith, if this inward, secret cleaving to Christ in the midst of all your changing scenes, your sorrows, and losses and crosses and calamities have not driven you away from Him as it drives away thousands, but have been sanctified to drive you closer home to shelter beneath His wings. O that is a sweet evidence of receiving Christ Jesus as your Refuge, your almighty Friend, your Counsellor, He who alone can do wonders, those wonders that you need. 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.'

John, in his Epistle, was glad to see that his children walked in the truth, and upon this point the Epistle of James will help us. There were those who looked into the perfect law of liberty and continued looking; they were not forgetful hearers. They received the things, they saw they were so suitable, the remedy so infallible a cure for the diseases they had; they saw such beauty in the righteousness of Christ, such power in His precious blood, such an all-sufficiency in His salvation, that they continued looking, "this man shall be blessed in His deed." They were doers of the word and not hearers only. That is where this comes in; if you have received Christ Jesus the Lord you will walk in Him as you have received Him. You will walk in Him in the gospel, walk in His tender fear. You will walk in Him at the throne of grace when in prayer. What a walking there is in a received Christ. Walk in His atonement as you plead it. Walk in His righteousness as you pray that the righteousness may cover your nakedness. Walk in His infinite wisdom, for He is made of God wisdom to the ignorant and you will walk in Him as this wisdom when you seek wisdom to direct your way in every difficulty. You will walk in Him in the Word of God; follow Him in His footsteps.

It is very precious to read the Word of God and to feel some vital contact with Him, so that His Word, and He in the Word, becomes your guide, your counsellor, your companion, your friend. Do you ever walk in Him in the Word of God? There is a walking in Him too in the house of God, and this brings us really, 'As ye have received Him' - and if any of you have received Him in the few feeble references we have made, O may He help you so to walk in Him! To walk in the ordinances of His house. "For they that honour Me, I will honour", and when you come to consider why the Lord Jesus instituted those two ordinances, O how it will make you willing to follow a despised Redeemer. Despised and rejected of men He was, but received and loved by poor sinners.

He instituted the ordinance of Baptism. It is a yoke. "Take my yoke upon you"; it is a yoke. There is a measure of reproach in it. The flesh really dislikes it. The flesh thinks it some indignity to be taken down into the water, but how the grave of the Lord Jesus is set before us there; and one who has received Him in His sufferings, loved Him as He has been seen by faith in Gethsemane's garden, has heard in his heart His groans on account of their sins, heard Him cry because deserted of His dear divine Father and left in the blackness of hell, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He has instituted this ordinance for His disciples to follow Him. Do you love Me? "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The Lord has chosen water to set forth His sufferings and His death. The waves and billows of divine wrath that rolled over His holy soul. Follow Him, in whose mouth was no guile; and when a poor sinner sees that forerunner and all His sufferings for his sin, he will say -

*Thus make me willing, glorious Lamb,
To suffer all things for Thy name.*

(Gadsby's 771)

I remember, many years ago, taking an ordinance at a Chapel many miles away, and they quite innocently cut the bread in fingers: I said to the deacon 'Why do you cut the bread in fingers?' He was a good gracious man and he said, 'Well, it is more convenient for breaking.' I said 'Did they make any convenience upon the cross of Christ, When His sacred body was broken, was there any convenience shown to Him?' He never cut the bread in fingers after that.

'So walk ye in Him.' Then the Lord's Supper, gathers His people around that table, "This is my body, my body, broken for you." "My body.... for you." My sacred humanity, a substitute for your sinful humanity. "Do this in remembrance of Me." Well, may the Lord help us to walk in that word: 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.'

Amen.