

Text: Rom. v. 10. 11.

11820

A very wonderful thing to be reconciled to God, for those who were sometime alienated and enemies by wicked works to have that great thing wrought in us, to "renew the will and turn the feet to Zion's hill". It is a great matter. Any here who have been the subject of that great work should acknowledge the Lord's goodness in that. Newton once said: "I am not what I once was, though I am not what I hope to be".

But here the Apostle speaks of those who were once enemies being reconciled to God by the death of His Son, and that death was accomplished by the Lord Jesus while we were yet sinners, indeed while we had no strength and power. We had a being, and He died for His people because they were His people from eternity. He died to make atonement for the sins of the whole elect, died that they might be reconciled to God by the expiation of their sin. Nothing less would do. Christ died for us, that is to say, He died in His people's place, died for them as they were united to Him in the covenant and He was responsible for them. Oh the secret of this union! As was said this morning, We all had union to Adam, he is our federal head. But not all who are in Adam are in Christ as a federal Head, "the second Man, the Lord from heaven". And we were in Him in eternity. Then we have an interest in all that He did and all that He suffered. But what He did when He made complete atonement and put away the sins of His people by His one sacrifice will, must, have an effect, a consequence, in those for whom He thus lived and died.

And so the Apostle says here, "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life". He rose again, we are told in the previous chapter, having died unto sin once, for His people's justification. And Paul in the Corinthians speaks at large of the reality and necessity of Christ's resurrection, not only because He was God the Son incarnate, but because He is the Head of the church, and when He rose again and entered heaven, He did so as the Firstfruits of the harvest which should follow. If you follow this teaching in the Scripture, it will make you see the importance of this vital union to the Lord Jesus, and the blessedness of it, because if we are united to Christ, then heaven is our home, then the time will come when we shall be delivered, not only out of all our troubles, but from all our sins, and shall be as was read just now (Col. i), "unreprovable and unrebukeable before God in glory".

But this complete atonement seems to stand out before me. He sufficiently in His soul and body to entirely cancel the sins of His unworthy people. We cannot comprehend this mystery; it is vast. And if and as we feel our own black, and heavy, and innumerable sins individually, and try to compute the extent and weight of the whole, we shall be bewildered; but He was sufficient. "He bore all incarnate God could bear, With strength enough, and none to spare." And He died unto sin once, and He rose again triumphant over sin, death, and hell, and His people rose with Him. They can never be disunited; but experimental union is a thing that is set before us in this context. An experimental union is from the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. He it is who unites a sinner to Jesus Christ with a vital union of faith. Oh what a

great thing it is, not now to be an enemy, but to be so far reconciled as to be made willing to be saved by divine grace, willing to be made clean from sin, and willing that the Lord Jesus Christ should reign over us. Christ said, when He was upon earth, to His professed followers who were not real followers: "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life". They followed Him so far, but they went back and walked no more with Him when they perceived that His teaching was beyond their carnal reason and was spiritual. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." They could not tolerate anything that was beyond the comprehension of their puny reason, and so they went back. But there were some - Peter and others, who when the Lord said, "Will ye also go away?", said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God".

Now that is union, a union of necessity, a union of faith, and a union of love. Where living faith is, there will always be love, faith that worketh by love and that distinguishes living faith from a dead one. A natural faith has no love in it. A mere, bare, logical credence of the doctrines of the Gospel may have no love in it to Him who is the essence of the Gospel, the Lord Jesus Christ. And this love takes the place of that enmity which once ruled, and submission takes the place of rebellion, and a desire to have Christ to rule over us takes the place of that resentment to His sovereign sway. To be thus reconciled is no little matter, only the people thus reconciled want the enjoyment in their hearts of the fruits of Christ's death in pardon and peace with God, and this is what is in the text.

"Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life; and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." There comes a time in the life of the child of God when he personally receives in his heart the reconciliation, the atonement, receives the virtue of Christ's death, that sweet peace with God, that clearing of his conscience. In the 2nd chapter of the Ephesians, where Paul speaks largely of the Holy Spirit's work in quickening dead souls into life, he goes on to speak of that peace which Christ obtained through the blood of His cross, and which He preaches: "And came and preached peace to you which were far off, and to them that were nigh". Now that preaching of the peace that was made by Christ's reconciling and atoning death is brought into the heart by Christ's Spirit. A day comes when there is an experience of receiving Christ and all the benefits of His death into the heart, a testimony from Him. Sometimes it comes through the Scriptures, a blessed unmistakable and vital testimony from the Lord Jesus in an individual heart. Oh how singular, how sacred, how solemn this is, and how it does unite that sinner to the Lord Jesus in love, in trust, and in surrender, for He comes to claim His property: "I have redeemed thee; thou art Mine". If you get these few words spoken on your heart, sinner convicted, what would it do for you? It would put more gladness in your heart than if you possessed millions of gold. To know that Christ is ours, that He died for our sins in love, to redeem us from hell, to be told with His own mouth that we are a part of the travail of His precious soul, to be His by that painful and costly purchase, this is what humbles, this is what reconciles, this is what gives humble liberty, and confidence, and

trust. Why, you will feel glad at heart when you get that. You won't then envy a miser with his millions. However poor your lot and troubled your pathway, if you get that reconciliation, that atonement, that Atoner and His dying love, you will get a measure of satisfaction. Christ in you, the hope of glory, with all His benefits, the fruits of His bitter death, which are sweet to a poor unworthy sinner, and make the Lord Jesus very precious.

Then you will want Him to reign, and you will surrender yourself to His disposal. But you will not be without trouble, not be without need. Indeed, you will be needier than ever. There will be more anxiety in your heart to be saved from all sin. When He rose again and ascended on high, and lives after the power of an endless life, with all power in heaven and in earth in His gracious hands as Mediator, will He not save a person for whom He has died, if He has paid the costly price will He not exercise His kingly power now in blessing that soul? It will help you sometimes to consider this, that the Lord Jesus ended His sufferings when He said, "It is finished". All His humiliation then ended, and when He rose again He rose again in triumph, He rose again by the glory of the Father, He rose again and was declared to be the Son of God with power in His resurrection, He rose again according to the Spirit of holiness - all of which shows that His death was perfectly sufficient and accomplished its purpose. Now He reigns above, and Paul here says, arguing from the greater, the work of Christ in His death, to the necessity of the soul, he says: "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life". It is not for me to say that the Spirit's work is less important or inferior to Christ's work. It is different, but it is inseparably connected with Christ's work and the consequence of it.

And the Lord Jesus has the Holy Spirit to pour out upon His people, and for this purpose, that they might find that Spirit springing up within them unto eternal life, in spiritual exercises, in prayer, and in love, and in worship, and in holy obedience. Prayer is one of the chief things in the life of a child of God. There is only one way of prayer, through the mediation of Christ, and oftentimes a sinner upon earth has to pray to the Lord for salvation. Not only salvation from hell - that is the chief thing, but salvation from sin, present sin, indwelling sin, unbelief, and saved from the world and its charms and bewitchments, and saved from infidelity, that dreadful power that is in us, and saved from gloomy black despair. Oh how many times a person who is reconciled to God through Jesus Christ finds a necessity upon him to come to the Lord Jesus in prayer for help, support, and salvation in his present difficulties and trials!

And this life through which we are said to be saved is His resurrection life. It is His representative life in heaven for His people. My friends, how do you get access to God in prayer? Only through Christ's presence there, His presentation before the Father of His atonement, and His people's prayers mingled with the merit of His blood. That is how people get access, and find blessings come down. We need saving to the uttermost, and if that is inscribed in the 7th chapter to the Hebrews, you may depend upon it, we shall come into experiences when we shall want all that is contained ~~the~~ in that

declaration: "He is able to save them unto the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them".

Now if the Spirit unites in your mind the blessedness of Christ's atoning death with His prevailing intercession, see how certain salvation is for those who are brought to call upon His name. "It shall come to pass", it is declared, "that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved". It may sound perhaps too general on the surface of it, but the Apostle goes on to show that none can call upon that name unless they know that name, and that the Lord uses, generally speaking, the ministry to make Christ known to sinners convicted of their sin, whereby they come to believe in Him and to call upon Him for themselves. Do you have transactions with God at the throne of grace? It may seem almost impertinent to ask of a few Strict Baptists, but I will ask the question, and I ask myself, "Do we have transactions? Do we sometimes by the Spirit's help get near the throne of grace, near to Him who sits upon that throne, the blessed Mediator, and does He incline His ear to us when we pour out our anxieties and roll our burdens upon Him, and pray Him to help and save us from ourselves, from our deceitful hearts, from Satan's temptations, from our rebellion, from the world, and from all evil? That is the way the Lord's people have to live. There is nothing in the Scripture to make us think we shall have an easy path through this wilderness world, but there is much in the Scripture to encourage us to hope and believe that through Him who died and rose again, we shall endure and overcome and live at last.

Paul, as you noticed in the words read just now (I Col.), said that we should be presented unreprouvable and unrebukeable before God, if we are not moved from the hope of the Gospel. Does that mean that we must keep ourselves? I know Jude says, "But ye, brethren, seeing ye know these things before, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God"; but that only means that it is the way the Lord uses to bring His people through, and to convey to them persevering grace in the exercise of believing prayer. You will prove it true. Only while we pray, we really live, and only as we are enabled to pray, can we overcome and avoid being moved from the hope of the Gospel. It is a great hope. Paul in this chapter speaks about rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, and that even in the midst of tribulation, which worketh experience, and patience, and hope. To have that great hope in our hearts, and to look up to Him who is the anchor ground of that hope, the blessed Redeemer who has died and expiated our sins in our interest, will draw out patience in tribulation; but we shall find the need of cleaving to the throne of grace.

And what a privilege it is! Why my friends, when you are enabled to pray, to call upon the Lord's name in times of difficulty and trouble and He answers prayer, and helps, and delivers, and sustains, and indicates in your heart that He has an interest in you and (oh) not forsaken you, that you are His property still, is not that a strength to keep you on your way? "Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Paul said: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and 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". That was the secret of Paul's perseverance. And what is at the back of all this? Union - as the Lord Jesus Christ said: "Because I live, ye shall live also". He has declared that in His Word, and I

believe He declares it in substance to His anxious people when they feel so much death within, and so much death without, and such a solemn death before them, and He gives them to see how they shall be saved from those deaths by the death and resurrection of Christ; for it is said that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death". But Christ died, rose again, and abolished death, so that His people have no reason to dread death, though they often do. Yet He has given a blessed word concerning such who may be tormented and bondaged by fear of death - He has said that He has destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and is able to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. "Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

And this reconciliation is a submission to the will of God. It is a very important point in spiritual experience. Peace with God through Jesus Christ, known and felt in the heart, will bring one as Paul said to the Colossians, to seek to know the will of God, "that ye may be perfect and entire in all the will of God". And what is the will of God? It is to do His people good. His will cannot be other than good and perfect, and it becomes truly acceptable to those who are reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. Now that will come into your praying. We may want many things. We may fume and fret because of crooked things, galling things, that we may think we ought not to carry or meet with. But when we are brought down to submission to the will of God, then there is quietness of mind, and you can pray in submission to the will of God. And what has Christ said? "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, I will do it".

If we half believed that declaration, we should more earnestly, and constantly, and more extensively pray. Instead of trying to make our own way easier, and to carry our own burdens, and find our own paths, we should turn the battle to the gate. And what a relief it is when you can turn aside to the Lord Jesus on the throne of grace, look up to Him and see Him who is the great Burden-bearer, and who once was the great and gracious Sin-bearer, and who has said, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you". "Roll thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you."

"Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved through His life. There is no enemy, no devil, no sin, no possible power can overcome the feeblest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, for whom Christ died. No, Christ's power is on his side, Christ's merit, and knowledge, and love, and immutability, and all the blessed promises of the Gospel are on His side. Feeble as he is, and unworthy as he feels, he is invulnerable while he has Christ for his refuge. So that the fruits of Christ's death are everlasting fruits, and include safety on earth, victory over every enemy, deliverance from sin, its power, guilt, and pollution, and the very being of it, and an entrance into heaven.

"Being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life; and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ is God, God the Son, and He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also; I and My Father are one". But there is sometimes distinctly felt in a sinner's heart an apprehension of the three blessed Persons in the Trinity, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and though that Triune God is a mystery, we cannot understand the subsistence of three Persons in one Godhead; yet the simplest believer sometimes will feel a great satisfaction and gracious joy in considering who God is. You see, the love of God is manifested towards unworthy sinners because the Father sent and gave His Only-begotten Son, and the love of the Son is manifested in His coming to make atonement for His people's sins by that suffering sacrifice, and the love of the blessed Spirit is manifested in His infallible and patient instruction, and conviction, and heavenly comfortings. Have you not felt sometimes a little joy in your heart in God, that God is what He is? And if you read carefully, and prayerfully, and reverently the 17th of John, you see how blessedly this union in the Trinity is knitted with the union of the people of God with Christ: "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one". Oh what a union that is, to have such a God for our God, to have the love of God for our comfort and shed abroad at times in our hearts, that immeasurable love which can be tasted, but whose measurements are beyond all computation!

John said, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us". Known it by a little taste of it, believed it by the declaration of its infinitude in the Word of God. Paul desired that the Ephesians should "know and comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge". And that God is what He is - immense, eternal, omniscient, all-wise, and immutably the same, and

that He is the God of poor sinners, that we have, if we have this God, One with whom nothing is impossible. No difficulties that we have are any difficulties with Him. He controls the universe, and this God will be the Object of our worship, and of our trust, and of our delight. Oh do you sometimes pray that that God may be your God? There can hardly be a greater thing said to us than that the Lord should say that we are His people, and that we shall be permitted and constrained to say that the Lord is our God, and it is declared that this shall be so, that when the Holy Spirit is poured out as the Spirit of grace and supplications to people in trouble, going through fiery trials, they shall call upon Him, and He will say, It is My people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God. Oh what rejoicing sometimes you may feel in your heart as you look about you and see everything chaotic, everything perplexing, to look up unto the heavens and believe that God is your God and Father in the Lord Jesus, that Jesus Christ is your Redeemer, your almighty Friend, with universal power, love in His heart that can never be quenched, and that you are His because you were given to Him in eternity, and His because He died to purchase you, and His because the Spirit has conquered you and changed that "will not" into a willingness to be saved by His sovereign grace. This is reconciliation.

"Not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Received it - it comes into the heart, Christ brings it. Peace He brings into a sinner's heart, sweet heavenly peace. And this joy goes out into eternity. There is a joy of prospect. If you have a prospect of heaven because the Lord has given you an assurance that He will take you there, and because He is there He will come again and receive you to Himself, seeing He has redeemed you, if He assures you that you shall through Him overcome every enemy and live at last, and you have that blessed prospect set before you with a measure of clearness, a sweet hope that one day you will lift up your face before the Lord unashamed among His redeemed company, the prospect will be full of joy in your heart. That is joying in God in the prospect of reaching heaven, of overcoming all difficulties, every enemy, and getting within the gates, final admittance into heaven and leaving behind everything that is worthless. You will leave nothing behind that is worth anything. No, leave behind a body of sin, and death, and mortality, and the world in chaos. Oh what a great prospect this is! And we should have no such prospect but for Christ being in heaven. And He has said that it is His will that His people shall be where He is, and that they shall behold His glory and be like Him. Is there any joy in that? Do you not feel sometimes, with that prospect, fired? You will by the Lord's grace and help, pursue the narrow way until you reach heaven. Patience of hope, patience in tribulation: "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope". I hope the Lord will save us from being moved through unbelief and temptation from the hope of the Gospel. If we must give up that hope, what have we left? We have only despair, for the world provides us with no hope. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." We have hope in Christ in this world, and

hope He will be with us according to His gracious pledge, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"; and according to many promises we have hope in this life, but that is not the end. We have hope beyond the grave in the Lord Jesus to surmount every difficulty, outride every storm, and find acceptance.

What a tremendous ~~it~~/~~is~~ day it will be when the saints of God are gathered in, when the number of the elect is completed, and all things here below are dissolved! Then to be found among the redeemed, to be owned by the Lord as His, will be a wonderful thing. The alternative is to be cast away for ever. Is there an enemy to Christ here, one who still lives without God and without hope in the world, who has never yet confessed his sins nor pleaded for pardon through Jesus Christ? Very solemn to live and die like that! Living and dying like that, then the prospect is eternal perdition. That is what we all must look for out of Christ; but if we are in Christ in covenant union and in experimental union, and through Him reconciled to God from our follies and our faults, and forgiven our sins, then we shall reach heaven. No trouble can keep us out of heaven; no death can. While Christ lives, His people cannot finally be overcome, but they shall overcome at the last.

My strength is gone; I must leave it where it is. It is a wonderful chapter. There is food enough in this chapter for a lifelong meditation. The truth it contains is deep and rich, and if we can only just get a drop, a touch of it in our hearts vitally by the Spirit, then we shall have some joy in the prospect of heaven, and we shall have an infallible source of help in every time of trouble here below.

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