

Christ in You, the Hope of Glory

By Paris Reidhead*

Our Text this morning is found in Colossians, Chapter 1, verse 27. I call to your attention, however, the Scripture which was read from John, the 15th Chapter, to which I expect we will be returning. I suggest that you seek to recall the import of those words as I read begin with the 25th verse and through the 29th in order that we might have the setting for the text which is the last clause of the 27th verse.

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; ²⁶Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: ²⁷To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: ²⁸whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: ²⁹Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

The word "mystery" would seem to imply something hidden, something mysterious. Perhaps it is true that we can take the connotation of the word and apply it to that which has preceded the occasion of writing, and say that the Greek use of this word implies that "hitherto it has been hidden," "before the point of disclosure it had been unknown." Not mysterious, but covered. Now, at the time the word is used here it means that something hitherto not understood, not seen, and not known has been uncovered, has been revealed. It is mystery only in the sense in which others didn't know about it, not in the sense that it is mysterious or difficult to comprehend. It had been covered but it has now been uncovered. The mystery is that the Gentiles are to be on identically the same level and basis as the Jews. We understand, of course, that Peter had difficulty with this.

We recognize that when God gave to him the vision of the sheet let down from heaven, filled with all manner of beasts, beasts which Israel held to be unclean and unfit for food, and he was commanded to slay and eat, he probably had the same reaction that you would have had. (Acts 10:10-13) Had they said to you as they have said to some of our missionaries on the Mission Field, to the young expectant mother, Now be sure to eat lots of nice large fat rats because this is going to be the means of insuring a healthy baby. You can recognize the aversion and the repulsion that the mother would feel when she was told by the well-meaning woman that this was the only way to insure a healthy child. And so, when God said to Peter, Rise up. There is the dragon; there is the little beast that crawls, the little lizard; eat it. And there is the monkey; eat it. And there is the crow; eat it. You can imagine that there was considerable revulsion in his heart, for there were not only dietary laws, but there were natural reticence and prohibition of his own mind, just as you would have prejudice, and so would I, regarding many things that we just would not think to eat.

So Peter was faced with a problem. The problem was how he could recover from all of the prejudices that had been ingrained by centuries of tradition and teaching by all of the cultural influence in which he had been reared. But we find that God wanted him to understand that in the mind of God, man who breathed the breath of human life and had human fears, and human hopes, and human needs, are the objects of God's love and grace and never to be viewed as intrinsically unclean. That all men are unclean with the same uncleanness of sin. All are under the same sentence of death. And God, however, has made all mankind of one blood and of one nature, with one crime, their sin, and one cure, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son. And thus, the mystery was that the Gentiles were to have identically the same relationship to God through Jesus Christ as that which the Jews had, and that His church was to be thus made up of those of Jew and Gentile alike, who were redeemed and cleansed, and purged and purified and made partakers of Divine Life.

Now this had been hidden. This had been covered. Oh, we find in Isaiah the 43rd Chapter that He says, "I will do a new thing. I will bring springs into the wilderness, and rivers into the desert, and the owls and the dragons shall drink thereof, and out of these that have been called unclean I will show forth a people that will show forth My Praise." (Isa. 43:19-21) So there had been an illusion or a prophetic utterance, saying also that the Gentiles would seek whom the Jews had spurned. But now He is saying that the mystery had been hidden. This thing had been covered and it has been disclosed, that the church is going to

have no middle wall of partition, but of the twain those who had been two distinct groups, He is going to make this new thing, His Body, of the redeemed.

We could stop there and say that this is the primary meaning, but I think that as important as it is the principle that is given in this last clause ought to engage us this communion morning. The mystery hidden among the Gentiles which is, "Christ in you the hope of glory." We can be ever so correct as to our understanding of the history of Israel and the nature of the Gentiles. We can be ever so correct as to our understanding of our eschatology, the future things and what is going to happen. But that which is going to engage us above all other concerns is that this new thing, His Church, is to be made up of those who have partaken of Christ, have been placed by the Father into Christ, and by the Father Christ into them. The mystery hidden from ages and generations which is, "Christ in you the hope of glory."

Now the only religion of which I have any knowledge where the founder is absolutely central to the continuance of the faith is Christianity. We recognize that one can be a Mohammedan without any reference to Mohammed. They can be a Buddhist without any loyalty to Buddha. But one cannot be a Christian without a personal, vital, experiential relationship to Jesus Christ. It is not just the fact that we hold Christ to be God, come in the flesh. The doctrine concerning Christ is essential to Christianity, but Christianity is not found in its doctrine and in its teaching. A man is not a Christian in the Biblical sense because he holds certain historical truths concerning the Person of Jesus Christ. He is not a Christian in the Biblical sense, because he has subscribed to certain doctrines about Christ. Nor is he a Christian because he has submitted to certain rituals that have been prescribed by the people of Christ; namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper. One is not a Christian because he has been taken into the church, having agreed to doctrine and to history. There is more to it than history, more than doctrine, and more than ritual. There must be a personal relationship with the founder of our faith. For this reason in II Corinthians 13:5, Paul wrote to this Church that had had so much difficulty and said, "Examine yourself whether you be in the faith. Prove your own self. Know you not your own self how that Christ be in you." Ah, there it is.

He only is Christian into whom Christ has come. It is the presence of Christ, not the truth about Christ that makes one a Christian. It is the person of Christ, not the profession of Him that makes one a Christian. It is Christ who is our life, and "he that hath the Son hath life." (I John 5:12)

Now we understand that the Lord Jesus Christ was God come in the flesh, and He was known as Jesus, the Son of Man, and the anointed of God, Jesus the Christ. This Man, Christ Jesus, who lived even as He was born of human parents. He lived in the family of men, and identified Himself with all of the changes and needs and problems that man experienced. In fact, He went beyond that and submitted to temptation and test that it could be said, "In all points He was tempted like unto His brethren, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15) And God allowed the Lord Jesus Christ as God, the Eternal Son, to die and to be raised from the dead, and His resurrection body is today at the right hand of the Father. But six feet of human flesh could not hold and confine the Son of the Living God, for we must remember our faith. And we are Trinitarians. We believe in the triunity of the Godhead, that wherever God is manifest as Son, there the Father is and there the Spirit is. Now Christ is in us, the hope of glory. Obviously, not in His physical body which is there as the first fruit of the resurrection. But He is in us, made real to us, by God in His omnipresence, the Holy Spirit.

Now this does not mean that the Holy Spirit has ceased to be Holy Spirit. It does not mean that at all, but it does mean that in the mystery of the triunity of the Godhead, where the Lord Jesus Christ is He is by virtue of the presence of God in His omnipresence, made real by the Holy Ghost. You say, I don't understand this, and I quite sympathize with you. I cannot comprehend how God can exist in three persons and how He can be in you and in me at the same time and in all believers everywhere. I can't comprehend how. But I do know that. And I know that the only one who has right to think himself Christian is the one into whom Christ has come. For it is Christ who is our life.

Now since it is by the person of the Holy Spirit that the presence of Christ is made real, the attesting to our being in Christ and Christ in us is the work of the Holy Spirit. Some months ago, I heard in Albany a message by H. J. Sutton, the Editor of our Sunday school notes in the Alliance Witness, a message on the theme, The Witness of the Holy Spirit. I've asked him to come at some future time to minister to us for that message, such a proclamation of truth, such a declaration of Word in life and fervor

and blessing I have never heard before. It was my own conviction stated most completely and perfectly, and so I submit to you that the time will come when he shall be here under God and bring to us that ministry.

But, meanwhile let us refresh our hearts by remembering what the Word says regarding the witness of the Spirit. When one has savingly repented and received Christ, the Spirit of God then witnesses to us that we have been born of God. Familiar Scriptures to many of you, Romans 8:15, 16 and 17. "God has not given us the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba Father." (Rom. 8:15) And again, in Galatians 4:4-6, "in the fullness of time, 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. And since we are sons, He has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts whereby we cry Abba, Father." And in I John the 3rd Chapter, the 24th verse, "Hereby we know that we are in Him, and He in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." And in I John 5:10, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness within himself." It is the witness of the Spirit. It is God, the Holy Ghost, telling our spirits that our repentance was complete and right, that our faith was saving, and that His Blood has been applied, and that we are accepted in the beloved, and Christ is in us. This is the work of God. This is that interior ministry of the Holy Ghost. This is that work which alone is the privilege of the Spirit of God. No one has the right to tell anyone that Christ is them, the hope of glory, but God. This is where tragedy results when we usurp the privilege of the Spirit of God, the right of the Spirit of God, and do that which is His sole privilege and prerogative. We can do lots of things, but we cannot tell anyone that they are born of God, because you see, "it is Christ in them the hope of glory." And, if Christ is not in them, they have no hope of glory, none whatsoever. They may have doctrine. They may have history. They may have church ordinance and ritual. But, if they do not have Christ in them, there is absolutely no hope of glory, no grounds for expectancy of forgiveness and pardon. It all centers in the Person of Christ. It is quite possible for a person to walk through the days of their years and to come to the very threshold of eternity, and then to say, Wait, I have doctrine, I have history, I have practice, but I haven't Christ. And it is "Christ in us who is the hope of glory." And so we must recognize that only the Spirit of God has the right to tell anyone when Christ is in them.

And when Christ is them, this elegant One, whose voice fills the universe, who causes the stars to sing together, and whose voice is heard over and above creation is abundantly able to tell us that our sins are pardoned, that we are accepted, and that we are received. We are His. We do not need to add some feeble mutterings; some lisping of man's fading breath to the voice of eternal God. When one comes into that relationship with Christ, they know. They know. They know. They know, because He tells them. And so, it is "Christ in us the hope of glory." "Christ in you, the hope of glory." No hope apart from His presence in you. It is not Christ the hope of glory. We say so often, Christ, the hope of the world. No. No. It is not. It is not. Christ is not the hope of the world. It is, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." It is the relationship to the person, not the fact of the person. If it was Christ living, Christ dying, Christ raised from the dead, then the Universalist would be correct, and would say, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall ALL (underlined 5 times with red pencil) be made alive." (I Cor. 15:22) And then there would be the grounds for universalism. But there are none, because it isn't that Christ died, and was buried, and raised again that becomes the hope of the world. It is that Christ who lived and died, and was buried and raised from the dead has been so met on the basis of repentance and faith that He who fills the universe now indwells the heart. And it is Christ in you that causes Christ to become the hope of glory. And this is why relationship to the Lord Jesus is the very center of Christianity, the very heart and circumference of our faith. Not the relationship to Biblical history, or theology, or to church, but to a Person, and it's all in this Person. It's all in Christ.

This is why Dr. Simpson¹ sang so eloquently and frequently, "Christ in us the hope of glory." Christ in you. And again, All in all, all in all. Over and over again in his own inimitable way, his eloquent way, testifying to the fact that he had discovered that the whole of Christianity is in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. The vital, living, warm relationship with Him. But notice, it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

What does this mean? I remember years ago going to the commentators, and getting them lined up around me to find out what they meant by "the hope of glory." And you know I discovered that there had been 200, 300 years ago, a warm conflict

¹ Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance

going on. One man said, The hope of glory means, the hope of one day being glorified with Christ. And another, reading this, said, Oh, he is wrong. He is wrong. That isn't what it means at all. All it means is the hope of one day being where Christ is glorified. And another said, Ah, it isn't even that. It is just the hope that one day we will see Christ in His glory.

Well, I figured that if they had sufficient reasons to contend for their position, there must be grounds, so let's take them all, and say that this is what it means, The hope that we will be where we can see Christ glorified, for if you have ever been brought face to face with the grief that comes when you hear Him maligned, and His name taken in blasphemy, and you hear men use His name as a curse word, then you will understand what a joy it will be to be somewhere where He is the Son, and furnishes the light, and He is the theme and furnishes the song. And everyone present is there for one purpose, and that is the glory of Jesus Christ. And so the only hope of seeing Him glorified is that He is in you.

And then, of course, the other is that in beholding His glory we might share His glory, share in the benefits of it, share in tile accomplishments of it, that we might not only be there as a spectator, but to be one who has benefited by that which He has accomplished and by that which He has achieved. And so, if you would like to be there to share His presence and share that joy, share that peace and blessing, then it is Christ in you, the only way by which you will have any part in glory is that He be in you.

And then, of course, the other is that we be glorified with Him. And this of course strains our imagination and stretches our faith to think that in that day we are going to be shown to be heirs and joint heirs with Christ: That already in the Father's identifying love we have not only been crucified with Christ, but we have been buried with Him, and quickened with Him, and raised with Him, and seated with Him in the heavenlies, and one day that which is accomplished in the Father's purpose shall be wrought out in our lives. We that have known His indwelling presence through our pilgrimage will be there as heirs of all that the Father has given to the Son. As the bride shares all the honors given to the bridegroom, so His church that has walked with Him, persecuted, despised, hated, abhorred, is one day going to be given a robe of glory and the privilege of sharing in His glory, and will be there as His ransomed bride. And so, the hope of glory.

Name it as you will. Enlarge it as you can. It still is this: All hope for the future rests on the presence of Christ. Everything is in Christ, and everything is from Christ. But I will not stop by saying it is Christ in us, only the hope of glory for the future. It is also for the present. We are not as those who walk toward some gate that is going to be the opening into bliss, but if He is in us then bliss has already begun, and heaven has begun already in our hearts. And the thing that is going to make heaven glorious isn't the fact that we are there, but that He is there. And since it is Christ in us, then Heaven can begin now, right now. And there can be joy and peace, exquisite and delightful. There can be the sense of His presence that makes everything else meaningless.

Has He ever become so sweet to you? Sweeter than the honeycomb? Sweeter than the sweetest thing that has ever touched your lips? that you could look into His face and say, Lord Jesus, nothing else has meaning. Nothing else has value. Nothing else holds any interest to my heart. There is no position anyone could offer that I am interested in. There is no possession that I am interested in. There is no privilege that I want. The only thing in the universe that has any meaning to my heart now is the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you drunk of Him and found Him living water? Have you eaten of Him and found Him living bread. Have you tasted of Him and found honey in the rock? Has the Lord Jesus become sweeter than all to you? He is, you know. You are made for Him. Oh, when He fills your heart then the world certainly loses its appeal. You can walk, be in it and not of it. You can have it and not hold it, nor have it hold you, because you have tasted of something infinitely beyond everything the world has to offer. Has the Lord Jesus become precious to you? Has He? Oh, when I see the mad scramble for this, or that, or the other, when I see this fanatic, fierce race for some little tawdry crown that is made of gilded paper, that withers with the first wash of rain, some little tawdry honor or recognition, some little possession, some little thing that is inconsequential in the light of eternity, and often by those who profess the Name of Christ, my heart cries out, Why? How can it be that anyone in the living world is going to have any interest in anything but the Lord Jesus. Why nothing else has meaning. Nothing else has value. Nothing else has import, but Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is your health, for when Christ is in you, then the One who has all power in heaven and earth is in you, and healing does not come from above or without. Healing comes from the presence of the Healer, Jehovah Rapha, the Lord Jesus Christ. So it is Christ in you, your health, and health is from within, from the presence of the Son of God.

It is Christ in you, your wisdom. For wisdom doesn't then come from some revelation of letters printed in the sky, but the presence of a Person who is Himself made unto us wisdom.

He is our righteousness. For it isn't something that we strive to do, but the presence of Christ in us grants to us now the one who is Lawgiver becoming in us the Law keeper.

He becomes our joy. He becomes our peace. The fruit of the Spirit is nothing more than the fruit of the presence of Christ. And so Christ does become all in all. Is He there? Has He come? Do you know? Is He is you? Nothing else has meaning. Nothing else has significance. Nothing else has value. Only Christ. "Christ in you the hope of glory."

Don't you see? We preach Christ, not doctrine. Christ, not theology. Christ, not history. Christ. Oh, there is history. There is doctrine. There is theology. There is ritual. But that is like the envelope to the letter. That is like the clothes to the beloved. That is like the can to the food. It is not part it, yes, but not part of it. Oh, dear heart. How important has Christ been to you this past week? How much time have you spent just telling Him you love Him? How much time have you spent just worshipping Him and adoring Him? How much time have you spent with Him? How much does He fill the horizon of your heart? Has He been your wisdom and your strength, and your peace and your health? Has He? Oh, listen, listen. Our faith is all in Christ. Christ is my wonderful story; Christ to my heart has come. Just Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ. God who became flesh and dwelt among us, so we could see Him, and handle Him, and know Him, and that by His coming He wouldn't have to be separated from us, but He could come and make His abode with us, and dwell in us, and walk in us. Let us pray.

We are going to go in just a few moments into the Communion Service, and you are going to take a little morsel of bread and put it to your lips, and a little cup of grape juice and put it to your lips. And you are going to take bread, and the fruit of the vine into your body. And what are you saying? All you are really saying is this: that you understand that it is the presence of Christ in you that makes you a Christian. You are acting out your faith. You are saying that by virtue of His shed Blood, and His poured out life, His broken body, the Son of God made it possible to come into you and you into Him, and that your whole faith is not in the wine, not in the little morsel of flour; it is in Christ, spoken of by the emblems. Now if you have the emblems and you do not have Him, then you are doubly impoverished, because you have the symbol without the reality. The person that is ignorant of the symbol does not know what he misses, but the person that has the symbol, but does not have the reality is doubly impoverished, for he has the need, the knowledge of the provision and possibility of meeting the need. How real has Christ been to you this past week? Has He been more real than your activity? More real than your work? More real than your family? More real than your possessions? What does Christ mean to you today? Has He been your wisdom? Has He been your strength? Your health? Your power?

Do you know I suggest we do? Can we just come all alone, forgetting everybody that is near us and beside us, right into the 3rd heaven, through the rent veil, passed the angels that stand with covered faces, and see there the Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father, exalted, and realize that this One who has all power in Heaven and earth, not only fills heaven and governs the universe, but He also by His death and resurrection, made it possible that He could come into our hearts and make our hearts His home.

I wonder if you would not like to sing under your breath, silently, without even moving your lips, into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in today. Come in to stay. [Tape stops] Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Fill me now. Fill me now. Oh Jesus, come and fill me now. Fill me with Thy Holy Spirit. Come, oh come, and fill me now. You see, it is Christ in you. It is this relationship with Him. It is the hope of glory, for the future, for the present.

Our Father, a thoughtful company of men and women wait before Thee now at the conclusion of this meditation, exhortation. We have been dealing with the central revelation of Thy grace, this mystery that was hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been made manifest unto the saints, that the Lord Jesus Christ wanted to come into Jew and Gentile alike and

make them His temple and then build them together into a habitation for Thyself through the Spirit. And grant, Lord, that we shall understand that the grounds of our fellowship are not our tradition or our ministry, nor our doctrine, nor our history, but that which makes us a company of people, known as a church, worshipping together, is that Christ is in each of us, and anyone in whom He is not is not part of the church, regardless of what their membership may be, or what their activity may be. We would see again this morning, Father, that the whole of our faith and the fellowship of our faith is the fact of the indwelling presence of Christ. Make this truth wonderfully real. And let someone right now, that has come weary in body, realize that the healer is not above but within. And someone that has been discouraged, that the comforter is not above, but within. And someone that has been perplexed and tempted, that the deliverer is not above, but within. Oh, above, but within. Grant it Lord, that we shall realize that it is Christ in us, the answer to every need, that just now we might invite Him whose presence is there, and the knowledge of whose presence assures us that we are His, become to us all that He intended to be. For He is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. So to that end, seal this truth, "Christ in us, the hope of glory." Amen.

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