

Death and Resurrection with Christ.

Notes of a Lecture.

Rom. 6: 1-7; Col. 3: 1-5; Eph. 2: 4-8; Gal. 2: 20.

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Explanatory Note.

As it has been desired that the following Notes of a lecture (taken at the time of its delivery by one of the hearers, and printed by him afterwards) should be re-issued, it should be remembered that it is seventeen years ago since it was spoken. No doubt many emendations and corrections might be made; but on the whole, in view of the many testimonies which have from time to time been received of its usefulness in blessing to souls, it has been thought better to reprint it without alteration. The reader will kindly bear this in mind, and pray that, in spite of its deficiencies, it may be still used for the Lord's glory. E. D.

You will see, beloved friends, that several of these passages that I have read speak of our having died with Christ; and we have simply to ask the question, first of all, When was it that we died with Christ? The third and fourth verses of the sixth of Romans are very distinct on this point. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." We might, perhaps, turn to the second of Colossians, before we proceed to refer to this more particularly. In the tenth and eleventh verses we read, "And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, *in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.*"

Now, as I have said, most of these passages speak of the same thing — of our having died with Christ; and in this lies the foundation of our standing *before God*. Because, you will see at once, it is not what we are actually, but what we are as before God. We are said to be baptized unto the death of Christ; and the apostle uses this in the sixth of Romans as an argument why we should not continue in sin.

Now, it is a marvellous thing, if we consider it, that we, as sitting here tonight (if believers in the Lord Jesus Christ), can be said to be before God as those who have died with Christ. Thus we see at once it is the light in which God regards us, His judicial estimate of us, as having died in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is brought out most distinctly in the sixth of Romans. We are said to have died with Christ; and the consequence is stated in the seventh verse, that "he that is dead is freed from sin." In the verse preceding this we are told, "Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Here

we get the secret of the whole thing. It is the old man that was crucified with the Lord Jesus Christ. My Adam nature or standing is therefore gone completely, because that I died, or was crucified, with Christ.

This is exceedingly simple; but is it not the simple that we want to apprehend in power? It is exceedingly easy for each one of us here tonight to say, "I have died with Christ;" but what a marvellous thing it is, if I can walk in the midst of this world, saying that I as a child of Adam have no standing at all before God that my old man has been crucified with Christ Nothing short of this we understand as being set before us in the passage we are looking at, and indeed in several of the passages we have read for what can the apostle mean when he says, I am (or have been) crucified with Christ"? Does it not mean simply this: that, looking back to the Lord Jesus Christ in death, and regarding himself as linked with Him in His death (by God's grace, of course), and seeing Him there as his substitute, meeting the judgment due to sin, and sins too, he is able to say truly, "That death was my death; and therefore it is true before God that I have been crucified with the Lord Jesus Christ"?

We do not forget that the facts of the case will often seem opposed to this statement of God's word; and so the question meets us, How do I *know* that I was crucified with Christ? May I not answer that by putting another question, How do I know that I am saved? In the first place (to say nothing now of the witness of the Spirit), it is because I believe the testimony of God's word. How then do I know I have been crucified with Christ? It is not an experience, it is not an attainment; and ought we not to be very distinct and clear upon this point? It is not experience. I don't *feel* that I have been crucified with Christ; neither have I attained to this. But God tells me it is so; and because He tells me so, I accept it, I believe it on the testimony of His word.

See then the practical influence of such a truth upon my walk, when it is held in power as it ought to be. What is it that troubles me most in my daily life.? Is it not the old nature? Is it not the flesh that is still in me? Yes, it is quite true that I have the flesh in me; but God has put it in the place of death. There it is for Him, and so I can look back to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and say, "Yes, I was crucified with Christ, and so I, as far as my old nature or Adam-standing is concerned, am gone altogether out of God's sight." What power it thus gives me! because, if God has put this flesh of mine into the place of death, where ought I to keep it? We get the answer to the question in the tenth and eleventh verses: "For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

Another aspect of the same thing may be found in Rom. 8: 12: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." And so the practical power is just in this — God has put me, that is, my old man, in the place of death. I was crucified with Christ, and therefore I have, through the Spirit, to keep it just where He puts it. Since I am justified from sin, sin has no claim upon me, nor the flesh either; and therefore in the power of the Spirit I yield not to the flesh — I recognize not its claims. God has delivered me from it, and has given me a standing outside of it altogether, because He regards me as having been put to death in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The object is — and here responsibility comes in — "that the body of sin might be destroyed" (that is, annulled, brought to nought), "that henceforth we should not serve sin." Here then is the practical responsibility. Am I dead? Then I must not yield to sin. And just in proportion as I do yield to sin, I practically deny my standing. The Spirit of God is always careful to connect responsibility with standing. If I sin, I deny in practice my standing. If the flesh is active, I deny in the same way the fact that I was crucified with Christ. I repeat it, see how practical this may become in our daily lives. Many of us, today it may be, have had things round about us to irritate us. It may be that the wheels of life have not run smoothly in our homes, or in our places of business. Have I been irritated? Then the flesh has come into activity, and in so far I deny that I am a dead man; I have yielded to the old man, and so denied my standing in Christ Jesus. Because my standing, as we shall see, is the measure of my responsibility. If God regards me as dead, I have also to regard myself as dead. I have to "reckon" myself dead. Of course, if I were actually dead, I need not "reckon" myself so; but because He regards me as dead, I have to reckon myself such. That is, my standing is the measure of my responsibility. God looks upon me, then, as having died to sin, being dead to it, and on that foundation we get the exhortation, "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We turn now to another aspect — that which we find in Col. 3. It is not simply death here, but resurrection; and the two things are linked together in baptism. That you see in Col. 2: 12. Then we get in chap. 3. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above;" that is, responsibility is brought in as connected with our resurrection with Christ as well as with our having died with Him.

First of all, however, we have the fact here stated. I need not dwell upon the "if" — an "if" of responsibility, as it is termed; but the fact is given us, that we are regarded as having been raised with Christ — not simply therefore dead, but raised with Christ; and so we get the double aspect of our standing. In that respect, and on that fact, is founded the exhortation to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." But then we get, in the second and third verses, a further exposition of this. The apostle says, "Set your affection (mind) on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." And thus the responsibility of being raised with Christ is to set my affection on things above. I am clean out of this scene altogether; I belong not to it, because I have died out of it in the death of Christ. Through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus I have been brought into a new place, a new scene, which is to characterize my life down here. My affections are to be set on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. The expression of the life down here is to be in accordance with the place given me, by God through the death and resurrection of Christ.

We shall all feel how wonderfully practical this is. Am I risen with Christ? If so, do I set my affections on things above, where Christ sitteth? The Spirit of God does not permit us to say, as a cloke for licentiousness, "I am risen with Christ;" quite the contrary. I remember once speaking on this point to a professed believer, one, indeed, who prided himself upon the fact of being a believer, but whose life was any thing but what it should be. His answer to me was, "I am a child of God;" and he was using this profession to cover his laxity and failure in responsibility. No, God's Spirit does not allow that As we saw in Rom. 8, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall

die." The life is to be the evidence, in one sense, of what I am; and if a person says, "I am risen with Christ," and yet has his affections set on things here, what then? I don't say there may not be inconsistencies in walk. We know there are; but what I say is this, On this foundation we have before us, I am not entitled to say I am risen with Christ, if all my life down here partakes of the character of the scene through which I am passing. No; if we have life in the risen Christ, that life will find an outward expression. It is Christ Himself who is my life; that is brought out here — "When Christ, who is our life." If He is my life, He must be expressed; and if He be not expressed, then I have reason to doubt that He is my life. Is it not so? This is a familiar truth; but do we not need to press it upon our souls — upon our hearts and consciences as before God? For what is the character of my life now? Ought I not to search myself in this matter? Ought I not to bring myself into the presence of such a Scripture as this, and say, "Well, I *do* profess to be thus risen with Christ. Am I, then, now seeking the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God?" A saint said to me the other day, speaking of herself and her husband (both believers of long standing), and accounting for the fact that they were seldom seen at the meetings, "We have our business to attend to, and must do it; that is the first thing we have to do." Well, "if ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." How do these two things correspond? We cannot claim a standing unless we accept the responsibility. That is the point brought before us — the measure of my responsibility exactly corresponds with my standing; and if I am in Christ, He expects me to walk as a risen one, so that even enemies may see in me some likeness to my blessed Lord.

Another saint recently said to me, "Well, but after all we are *down here*." Undoubtedly we *are* down here. But that is not the point. The thing is, being down here, ought we not to express the life of Christ? He is my life, I am in Him risen, and therefore if I do not set my affections on things above, I ought to search my own heart, and ascertain whether I can truly say that I *am* risen with Him. After all, it comes simply to this — What is the heart occupied with? If my heart is occupied with the, Risen One, I shall soon be lifted out of this present scene. If He fill my gaze, I shall be blind to the fairest sights on earth, and I shall be deaf to its sweetest sounds. It is entirely a question of affection. Does He fill my heart? Does He occupy me? Not simply am I occupied with Him. The two are connected. If I am occupied with Him, He will be occupied in manifesting Himself to me; and if that is the case, I shall do everything down here as *to Him*, and of necessity my affections will be set on things above, where He sits on the right hand of God.

I might go farther. If I understand the place into which I am brought, shall I not be exceedingly familiar with that place? Shall I not be more familiar with it than with things down here? And yet do not many of us pride ourselves upon the practical wisdom we possess in the things of earth? Another saint said to me that he had been thrown back upon himself by finding this — he had been in the habit of reading the newspaper every morning, and found, on reckoning up the time occupied in that way, that he had spent more time on his newspaper than on the word of God. God gave him grace to judge it, and put it away; but it shows us how easily we may fall into a practical denial of our being dead and risen with Christ; and thus it behoves us to remember the responsibility we have as being put into this position.

Shall we now turn to the next passage I read, Eph. 2: 6? "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." So that we are brought not simply through death into resurrection, but we are seated (not with, but) in Christ in heavenly places.

What then is my standing? It is there in Christ where He is. Nothing short of it. It is not simply that I am raised together with Christ down here *where I am*. No, I am carried farther; I am seated in Christ, *where He is* in the glory. That is my place. Oh, what marvellous grace, that God in mercy should have come down to us, to meet us when dead in trespasses and sins, and have quickened us with Christ, raised us up together, made us sit together in heavenly places in Him! Always before Him, in His presence!

I suppose there is no passage more familiar to us than this one. We speak so much of the wondrous place of blessing into which we are brought. We, above all others, then ought to understand the responsibility of it. Yes, if I *am* a heavenly one — for it comes to that — I have to *live* as a heavenly one in Christ where He is. What a marvellous place it is! I raise my eye of faith, and I see Him glorified at God's right hand; and if I want to understand the full character of my redemption, I can only get it by just looking at Him. He is the measure of it, and so it is quite true in the verse we sing sometimes —

"So near, so very near to God,

More near I cannot be;

For in the Person of His Son,

I am as near as He."

We are brought then right home to God; and the very presence of God is our home, and being our home, it should be there that our hearts should dwell. What would you think of any one, in a human way, whose heart was never in his own home, whose heart, when in business, did not turn back to the home where were his loved ones? A strange husband, or father, as the case might be! But what would you say of the believer whose heart seldom or never turned to the place where he is seated in Christ? I think it is Payson who mentions three classes of believers. They may not be found here, but yet they are sometimes found. He describes one class as busy with earthly things; so busy that their backs are turned to the Lord Jesus. Another class he speaks of whose faces are turned only now and then towards Christ. The third class are standing, as he describes it, with faces always upward in the full light of His presence. To which of these classes do we belong? If we understand the place we have got through death and resurrection, and being seated in Christ, surely our hearts will ever be with Christ, and our eyes will ever be gazing upon Him. There is nothing saints sing more readily than that verse —

"Oh, fix our earnest gaze

So wholly, Lord, on Thee,

That with Thy beauty occupied,

We elsewhere none may see!"

and yet in our daily walk how easily are our thoughts, our hearts, taken up and occupied with the many things going on around us!

Ah, beloved friends, if we had full perception of the place into which we have been brought, and if the heart dwelt in that place, if we are gazing upon Him and getting any glimpse of His beauty, surely we shall not wish to see any beauty elsewhere! May we understand the responsibility of our place and position.

But let me pass on to the responsibility in a more distinct form, as brought out in other passages. I have spoken simply of death, and resurrection, and being seated in Christ in heavenly places; but now what is my responsibility down here as to walk, *because* of the place and the standing I have in Him? To give the answer, first, in the most general form, let us turn to 1 John 2: 6. This is not connected with standing, but it brings out the thought I want to express. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." And so it is then that I am in Christ, where He is; and also the converse of that Christ is in me down here. "He that saith he abideth in Him" — that is communion — "ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." Thus the general responsibility, is to walk as Christ walked. How was that? Turn to John 3: 13: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is *in heaven*." So that even when He was here on the earth, Jesus was able to say, "in heaven;" or, putting it in other words, He walked as the Heavenly One upon the earth, as being in heaven while upon the earth. A model for us! We then have to walk, not as belonging to this scene, but to that place in which we are seated in Christ; so that it may be true in spirit of us as it was true of Christ — in heaven while upon the earth. And oh, what a different character it would give to our lives if this were the case! An expression of Christ, not simply in words, but in acts; yea, in all things, the life of Christ expressed in us and by us, in our walk and conversation.

We may get more distinct forms of this expression; for instance, Eph. 5: 2. This is based upon the fact of our being children of God; and we get a characteristic of walk, and a very important one, brought out. The apostle says, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, even as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." In this respect also I have to walk as Christ did — "in love, even as He hath loved us." Turn also to John 13: 14: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you;" also verse 17: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." But what I want to bring before you specially is in Eph. 5: 2. We are to imitate Christ, then, simply because of what we are, and the place we occupy. And then we have this example set before us here; and it is wonderful the terms in which we have it described. He "hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." The apostle John also brings this out in his first epistle. I will read it just in passing. 1 John 3: 16: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us." And what else? "And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." So that the love of Christ ought to be our model in this expression of it — love even to death. But in the verse I read out of Ephesians, we have the important truth, that while Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us, it was "an offering and a sacrifice *to God* for a sweet-smelling savour." The expression of our love, therefore, must not have the saints for its object, but it must be God Himself; and this love can only be expressed in obedience, not otherwise. It is exceedingly important to remember this. We

might be tempted — many are — to think that we must *exhibit* love under all circumstances. Not so; the expression of the love must be governed by the word of God; and so the glory of God is to be the first thing. "He gave Himself for us." Yes; but it is "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." I suppose there is no snare so great as that which pleads for charity towards all, in the sense that we must not exclude any from the Lord's table, which is quite true so far as it goes; but we must except those whom God's word excludes. The love must be expressed in obedience to God. It must have God for its object; and therefore, if I go outside of His word, I am making my fellow-believer the object, and not God. We thus get the true character of love; unless it has God for its object, it is not the love that Christ exhibited when He gave Himself for us. We have to imitate Christ; that is our responsibility.

There is one other aspect, which I cannot refer to tonight. We have it in 1 Peter 2: 20. It shows our responsibility towards persecutors and foes. We have to imitate Christ in this also.

But I now turn to the last passage we read, Gal. 2: 20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." There will scarcely be a difference of judgment as to the first words of this verse; for is it not true that every one of us can say — that is, if we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ — "*I have been crucified with Christ*"? But is it also true that we can say, "Nevertheless I live; yet not I"? Has it been true of me today? Has none of the flesh been expressed, none of the old life? Can we say of *our* lives today, *I have not lived*; but Christ has lived in me? The apostle says it. Can we say it? We have thus again the whole of the responsibility of my standing, it is Christ in me down here; and because He is in me, He is to be expressed in all that I am. Oh what marvellous saints we should be if this were the case! If I could see in you, fellow-believer, and you could see in me, nothing but Christ! And yet how often we say, "Oh, but there are peculiarities of character, temper, and disposition, to be accounted for!" But am I not dead? Where then can be the peculiarities? Are we buried as to the old self in the grave of Christ? Surely not, if these things are manifested. In God's sight we are, and that is the blessedness of it, — the old man is gone completely; but now we are speaking of responsibility, and I want to press it upon my own heart and yours. Is it true of me and you, that we don't live; but Christ lives in us? Is it true in our relationships with the saints, for instance? Have they seen anything but Christ in us when assembled together in the name of the Lord Jesus — gathered together in the power of His Spirit? Have we all exhibited Christ, and not ourselves? Has the word spoken, the hymns sung, the worship offered, all been an expression of Christ? In my home, through the past week, has it been so? Have the unconverted ones, as they looked at me, said, What a power is expressed in that life! In my place of business, have those round about me been constrained to say, What a marvellous life it is! I happened to say once to the principal, I think it was, of a house of business, when speaking of a young man in his employ, that he was a believer. What was his reply? "I didn't know it." How was that? Perhaps, you will say, the principal had not eyes to see. But I want to ask you this, Should there be a believer anywhere, and not be known? Should it be so? Was it so in the early days? Ah, but you say to me in reply to that, The days were so different. They were; but I want to ask you this, Was the expression of the life of Christ different? He has not changed, and why should the expression change? Do you mean to tell me that the world is more like Christ than it was then? No doubt the world has lessened the violence of its hostility and opposition in manifestation; but is not the world the same? Ought there not to be the same complete separation? Yes; we are in danger of sliding back, because we think we have a separate place, and are quite safe. Let it not be so with us. This

is the truth I want to bring out — I have nothing to do but to express Christ; and there was one who did it, I suppose, in a measure that no saint has ever attained to since. He said, "To me to live is Christ;" nothing else. Now, will that one word sum up the whole of my life? Is He the one object? Is it Christ in me? If not, then I am not recognizing my responsibility. What then ought I to do? To go in self-judgment into the presence of God, and confess it, and seek for more grace.

And then see also that in this marvellous place which He has given to us, He is able to say to us, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in you." The Spirit of God characterises all my existence before Him, so that the flesh is completely gone out of His sight, and only Christ remains, and we in Him.

But then we must still bear in mind the other side — Christ in me down here; and all my work is to express Christ in every possible way. We are to express Him, not only when we are having Christian fellowship, but everywhere, at all times, and all seasons. But is it not possible for the saints themselves to come between us and Christ? I put the question as a test. I would put it to myself as well as you. Am I happier in fellowship with saints than I am in the presence of Christ? Some of you would say at once, "Why, of course we are happier in the presence of Christ." But think before you answer. Are you? Do you find as much joy in solitary fellowship with Christ as you do in fellowship with the saints, it may be over the Word, or when privately together? Now it is not a question easy to answer. I have found out from my own experience, that an hour or two will soon slip away in happy fellowship with saints. Do we know anything about an hour or two "slipping away" in the presence of Christ? Do not put the question aside; for we must face it, and answer it. And be sure of this, we have no power of sustained communion, unless we can answer it, and say, "Happier in the presence of Christ than in the presence of the saints; happier with Him, dwelling with Him, in communion with Him, than even with the most Christ-like of God's people." Why? Because the most Christ-like of all His people will but approximate to the expression of what He is. Can you point me out a single saint of your acquaintance of whom you can say, "Exactly like Christ"? No! Well, then, if you are happier with the saints than with Him, it shows that you do not appreciate Christ as you ought. Hence I want you to answer that question, "Where are you the happier, with the saints, or with Christ?"

Conscious that I have not expounded the subject as I fain would do, yet if you but remember this one thing, that you have nothing to do but to live Christ, I shall feel that the Lord has not sent me in vain. Distinctive truth has its place, and thank God we have got it; and some of us who have had difficulty in getting hold of it may feel that more than others; but after all, the one thing is *living Christ*. I do not know how to express it more strongly. I go back to it once more. Are we in Christ *there*, and is He in us *here*? Suppose then we commenced tomorrow by saying, "Christ in me," or when we awake in the morning, let the first thought be, "Henceforth I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:" as we go to the duties that God may have for us in the day, let us say, "Henceforth I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;" and when we go back into the bosom of our families, with our children round about us, let us still be saying the same thing; and then the marvellous power of the Spirit of God will be free to work in us and by us, so that even the unconverted will confess that there is something about us that they cannot understand. We have not half the power we ought to have; and the reason of our weakness is, that the picture of Christ in our lives is so indistinct. What did He do? Express the Father perfectly. Our work is

to express Him, and only express Him! Keep that object before you — only Christ, because you are *in Him where He is!*