

The Present Place of Christ

Hebrews 12.

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Part Fourth. LATER MINISTRY.

There is a marked distinction between God's actings in old times and since the day of Pentecost. He had revealed Himself to man in man's circumstances till that day; since then He has been requiring man to come into His circumstances. The whole testimony of God now is to what Christ is in heaven; and we see the most amazing crowd of blessed things connected with Him there. People often talk of the heavenly calling as if it were but a piece of knowledge. It was not a piece of knowledge for Enoch to walk with God, for Moses to realize the power of God while leading the people through the Red Sea. God being with him, he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. We are not Christians at all, if we do not know the true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent; but if you do, where do we know Him but in heaven? Bethlehem, Sychar, Gethsemane, each had its record; but He is not there now, He Himself is in heaven. His human body has a locality as much as mine. If you do not know Him therefore where He is, are you Christians? He is a living Person, and has called me by name as distinctly as I have called on His name. This One, whose love was stronger than death, has surely a claim on my love in the place where He is.

God thinks it a reasonable thing for me to say, "The Son of God gave up His life for me, and I love the place where He is." Take such a word as "accepted in the Beloved." If God's eye passes from Him to a poor weak believer such as I am, whom He has forced in the school of adversity to be satisfied, does His love rest on me as a member of Christ's body, and is it not a reasonable thing that He should expect my love to be set on Him? What a love-token from Christ was the sending down of the Spirit, when He had gone up there into heaven to receive a kingdom! In Acts 7 there was Jesus in heaven, and Stephen on earth, and all that the people knew of Jesus was what the dying Stephen told them.

We regulate our conduct by our circumstances, and that is always wrong. Would you like to do what is right in any thing? Well, what would the Lord Jesus Christ feel about it? Directly you get the thought of a perfect Son of man in heaven, occupied with His people individually, as with Stephen, every thing becomes as clear as possible to you. Looking back to failures, you will generally find they were because you settled things according to circumstances. It is not a notion, but the fact of the Son of man in heaven in the highest glory there on the throne of the Father, and He not only having the heart to enter into every thing that His people are passing through, but to make this knowledge of it a thing for the individual alone. As with Stephen, he saw this Lord of glory in heaven, and he knew that Christ's eye was upon him. Christ's heart was with him, and was Christ's eye only upon Stephen? Is it not on me too individually? I have One up there who is able to look in the face of God, to bear testimony that, according to the mind of God, there has been purgation made of sin — a Mediator for me! He could not be a "daysman" before God if there were no one needing a daysman. If He is in the presence of God as Head of the new creation there must be a new creation.

The Lord is a reader of thoughts, as we have Him in chap. 4. But did He ever read your heart to you? He does that with His own people. They shrink from it often; feel it an awful thing to be in His

presence — He taking the place of the Physician, probing the heart. He does it, just as He did it with Peter; He did it for Paul, as we see in 2 Cor. 12. But by the discovery of what we are, He makes us only the more cling to Himself and cleave to Him. Can a person go through this scene without the guiding voice of the Lord Jesus Christ? I believe not. Paul got wrong whenever he had it not. You and I must not say, "We are only little people." Little people need guidance just as much as great people. There is a living Person in heaven today. Do not you know Him as such? He brings you to discover that what you are is in contrast with what He is, and that you cannot trust to anyone but Himself. Circumstances, myself, and the power of Satan — these are three distinct hindrances.

The faith of most Christians comes short of the holiest of all. There the whole question of sin is looked at as settled. It is nothing but unbelief in me that would degrade Christ from the place of being the accepted sacrifice. The Lord Jesus Christ set down in heaven is the only thing for the soul to "look away to." There are a quantity of circumstances around me to distract my heart, but they are only the means of driving my heart in on Christ.