

Reconciliation

N. Anderson.

Luke 2: 14, "Good pleasure in men," is the present fruit of "Glory to God in the highest."

A further consequence awaits the world to come, when Christ, having been manifested, shall establish righteousness in the earth.

"The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever" (Isaiah 32: 17).

"Glory to God" must be secured primarily.

"In the highest," envisages the establishment of His will, and of His claims to universal sovereignty.

Today we are looking back to the Cross. There, the Son of God, by His sacrificial work, secured the glory of God; we are now looking forward to the day of manifestation with all that blessedly shall attend it in the world to come. yet, here and now, a substantive reality is "good pleasure in men."

Reconciliation has been effected. Where God was grieved and disturbed — by the advent of sin — He is now complacent. The portent of this was signaled in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Apart from the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, the most stupendous occurrence in the history of time and of the timeless eternity had taken place. God had come into His creation — He had become Man!

The heavenly hosts were set agog! The far reaching effects of this marvellous and gracious condescension were anticipated and celebrated by them in praise. The first, Righteousness — for God was to be glorified. Second, Peace — for earth was to be freed from the thralldom and misery of the curse. The third, Joy — for God was to find His pleasure where once all had opposed Him. Of all this, so the heavenly host intimated, the Birth of Christ was the Pledge. But the Cross of Christ was the Basis!

Do we not read in Romans 5: 10, "Reconciled to God through the death of His Son"? Romans 5 and Colossians 1 coalesce in these two things; the character of the subjects of reconciliation, and its imperishable Basis. Romans 5: 10 — "enemies;" Colossians 1: 21 — "Alienated and enemies." Colossians goes deeper than Romans. The latter (up to this point) lays emphasis on practice, the former, additionally, predicates an alienated mind. So Romans deals largely with the matter of guilt, Colossians with the state. Both guilt and state have been fully accounted for "Through the death of His Son" (Romans 5), and "in the body of His flesh through death" (Colossians 1).

Earlier in this 1st chapter of Colossians we are taught that, "by Him to reconcile all things to itself, having made peace by the blood of His cross — by Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens."

So then, all things are to be brought into the good of reconciliation. Such is the value of the shed blood of, "the Son of His love" — shed upon the Cross — that there is to be such a cleansing from defilement that God will find His pleasure universally.

In the meantime persons are affected, "yet now has it reconciled."

We may now pause, and seek to answer the question, What are the features of Reconciliation?

Where enmity and hatred existed, now intimacy and affection subsist.

Where distance and estrangement were, nearness and complacency are.

Those reconciled are now at rest before God and He is at rest in having them thus.

The source of reconciliation:

"All things are of the God Who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5: 18).

The sphere of it: "If any one be in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5: 17).

We are reconciled as being in Christ, where there is nothing to disturb; where there is only that which gratifies the heart of God.

To summarise:

The Pledge of it — the Birth of our Lord. Luke 2: 14.

The Subjects of it — guilty enemies. Romans 5: 10.

The Basis of it. Col. 1: 21, 22.

The Source of it. 2 Cor. 5: 18.

The Sphere of it. 2 Cor. 5: 17.

The Repository of the truth of it. 2 Cor. 5: 18.

The Testimony of it — "Be reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5: 20.

The present Gain of it. Romans 5: 11.

The Effects of it: —

Where enmity and hatred were, intimacy and affection are.

Where distance and alienation were, nearness and complacency are.

The reconciled are now at rest before God, and He, the Reconciler, is at rest in having them thus.