LIVING IN THE HOPE OF Glory

A New Translation of a Spiritual Classic

ADOLPHE MONOD

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When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age un-
derstood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written

“No eye has seen,
   no ear has heard,
no mind has conceived
   what God has prepared for those who love
him”—

but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:1-10

In summing up with you, my dear friends, as before your very eyes, the results in which I have been strengthened by the experiences of life and of the gospel ministry and by the study of the Word of God, I said last Sunday: All by the Holy Spirit. Let us say today: All in Jesus Christ.

GOD IN CHRIST

We are sometimes led to think of Jesus as having only opened the door to heaven for us and then having, in some sense, abandoned us to get there on our own; but that is a very narrow view of what the Lord has done and of what he is for us. Saint Paul surely had something higher in mind when he wrote, “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” For him, the whole of God is summed up in Jesus Christ, and the whole of Jesus Christ is summed up in his cross.

Elsewhere Paul says, “Christ Jesus … has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30). Here we see that Jesus Christ
was not given to us simply to blot out our sins through his once shed blood, but he was given to us again, having been reconciled with God by that precious blood, in order to guide us, to sanctify us, to fill us with wisdom, and to accomplish all in all. Again Paul says, “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (Col. 2:9). It is in the flesh, in a visible form that God dwells in Christ, but all of him dwells there, with all of his glory and all of his eternal perfections.

And still elsewhere, another very profound passage by the same author says, “All things are yours, … and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God” (1 Cor. 3:21,23). Here we see God, through a wonderful, marvelous hierarchy, at the head of the entire order of eternal truth, sending and directing his Son. We see his Son in turn calling us and adopting us to himself, so that in the name of this Son we might have dominion over all things and so that we might possess the entire universe through being members of him to whom the entire universe is submitted. “All things are yours,” first level; “and you are of Christ,” second level; “and Christ is of God,” first, or rather, third level, the supreme level to which everything else is attached and upon which everything else depends.

ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST

We are now quite far from the thinking of those who regard Jesus Christ as having simply accomplished an act, the principal act of salvation! Jesus Christ is the God of man, as Pascal said so well in a few pages where he develops in a deeply Christian way Jesus Christ’s place between God and us. He is the God of man. He is God who has given himself
to us, and he has given himself completely. When we possess Jesus Christ by a true faith, we possess nothing less than God himself, and in him eternal life. “He who has the Son has life; … God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:12,11).

**OUR NEEDS MET IN CHRIST**

In addition, whatever the need to be satisfied in our souls and in our entire existence, earthly and eternal, we find it in Jesus Christ.

Is our need first of all the blotting out of our sins? He has blotted them out by his blood. There is only one thing in the world that blots out sins. It is not our acts of contrition, not our repentance, not our alms or our good works. It is not even our prayers. It is the blood of Jesus Christ: “the blood of Jesus Christ … cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7 NKJV). All sin that the blood of Jesus Christ has covered is forever annihilated before God. God no longer sees it, and I could use even stronger language without straying from Scripture. “God himself seeks them,” says a prophet, “and no longer finds them” (see Jer. 50:20). He has put our “sins behind his back” (Isa. 38:17) so as not to look upon them any more. He will “hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19), and in beholding us in Christ, he beholds us without sin, just like Christ himself, who was made “to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21).

Is it a matter of being consoled in our troubles? We go to Jesus Christ, who has suffered as we have, more than we have, infinitely more than we could suffer, infinitely more than we could conceive of suffering. All of our pain and sor-
row is nothing but a tiny brook removed from the river of his infinite pain. In the same way, it is from his cross that all consolation and all mercy flow. It is to the Man of sorrows that we go to seek consolation and peace, knowing that he is well acquainted with weariness and that by approaching him we will not only find the easing of our pains, but we will even see real blessing in them. Thus our bitterest afflictions will be found, in the end, to be his most remarkable mercies.

Is it a matter of light and of wisdom, of strength and of resisting sin? Is it a matter of this world or of the other? All is in Christ. Having Christ we have all things, but deprived of him we have absolutely nothing. That is why the apostle Saint Paul says in that marvelous passage that I just quoted, “All things are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.” All things are yours if you are of Christ, who is of God. It is not the relationship of God to Christ that will be contested by anyone. It is not the relationship of Christ to us that can be questioned if we are true Christians. So then, what is the result? That all things are ours.

Am I poor? All of the fortunes of this world are mine because they belong to Christ, who belongs to God. He would certainly know how to give to me, with him and in addition to him, all the fortunes of the world if they would be useful to me. If, in place of riches, he gives me poverty, it is because this is better for me and the result of God’s choice. The entire world with all its glory and power belongs to me because they belong to my Father, who will give them to me tomorrow and who could give them to me today if that were good, because he dispenses them according to his pleasure.

Am I sick? Health is mine, strength is mine, well-being is mine, a perfect enjoyment of all the good things of life is mine, because all that is Christ’s, who is God’s and who dispenses them according to his pleasure. And to whom would
he dispense them if not to me, his child? If then he refuses them to me today, for a fleeting moment that passes like a ship of the mist, he has his reasons. It is because there are in these pains and this bitterness hidden blessings that are worth more to me than that health which is so precious or that well-being which is so sweet. He will never deprive me of any good except to give me some other, better one. That is my consolation; it is all in his love.

Is it a question of wisdom and light? Well then, even if I were ignorant all my life, if I never had the opportunity to cultivate my worldly abilities, I am still wise in Christ. Knowing Christ, I am wiser and more enlightened about the things of God than the man of this world who has spent a lifetime growing pale over his books, for I know that uncreated, eternal light that he doesn’t know. This is the light in which God himself rejoices and by which I am unfailingly led through all the dark places of life.

I defy you to find anything of which I could not say, “That belongs to my Father; therefore it is mine. If he refuses it to me today, he will give it to me tomorrow. I entrust myself to his love. All is mine if I am Christ’s.”

Our Gratitude for Christ Crucified

Also note that Saint Paul says in the chapter that we read at the outset, “I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Oh, my friends, let us not be so ungrateful as to forget that it is beneath the cross and through the cross that Jesus Christ purchased us and earned that enormous bliss that I am trying to describe and that I fail even to glimpse or imagine. It is by his shed blood, it is by his unimaginable sufferings that he has
accomplished everything for us. His love is the source of our full deliverance and redemption—such is the Savior. Thus we have begun, and it is thus that we must end. We come to his cross, we sit down beneath his cross, we desire only that nothing in this world will uproot us from that place. We desire to live there, and we desire to die there.

Dear friends, soon the scenes of this world will have passed away. We have anguish in the world, but be of good courage, Jesus Christ has overcome the world. The strong man has been bound by one stronger than he. And now here we are in the presence of Christ, who has redeemed us with his blood and who waits for us in order to fill us with glory and bliss.

Do you not desire his glory? Do you not desire his love? Know him such as he is. Embrace him completely by a sincere faith, so that you might experience those admirable words of the apostle on which we have just meditated. That is how you might be happy in life and happier still in death. That is how this life, which is so sad for the man of the world, might be for you an existence whose light and peace will be ever increasing until the day of Christ. To him be given the praise, honor and glory, and, above all, the homage of our hearts along with a love corresponding, if possible, to his own!