

## The Real Presence

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BEFORE the Lord Jesus Christ went away from the world, He said to His disciples, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18).

As He was about to ascend to heaven from the Mount of Olives, He said again to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; . . . and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

The presence of Christ with His people is thus an assured fact. Nor is it only with them in an outward and separate sense, but with them in the inward and essential sense of oneness with them. He is *with* them by being *in* them. And so it is written, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Cor. 6:16).

But His name is Immanuel, which is "God with us." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." Therefore the presence of Christ with His people is the presence of God also. It is the presence of both the Father and the Son, for they "are one." And so He has said, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

An abode is a dwelling-place. We will come unto him, and make him our dwelling-place. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, *with him also* that is of a contrite and humble spirit" (Isa. 57:15). "My presence shall go with thee" (Ex. 33:14). And as God is real, and Christ is real, so their presence is real. Their presence with the believer in Jesus is a real presence. This is the true real presence.

How, then, is this real presence manifested? Here is the answer to that question: "Strengthened with might *by His Spirit* in the inner man; *that Christ may dwell in your hearts*, . . . that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:16, 17, 19). "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col. ii. 9. Thus it is by his Spirit that Christ dwells with His people. It is by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer that the real presence of Christ is manifested to those and in those that are his. For "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9).

This is more fully stated in the Saviour's last talk with His disciples (John 14:16-23), before His death. He says, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." As He will not leave His children comfortless, He gives them the Comforter. He gives them the Comforter, because He will come to them. Consequently, it is by "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost," that Christ dwells with His people, and that His real presence is manifested to them and in them. So He says: "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; *whom the world can not receive*, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye

know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. . . . At that day *ye shall know* that I am in My Father, and ye in Me and *I in you.*” In the day that the child of God receives the Holy Spirit, he knows that Christ dwells in him; he knows the real presence of Christ with him and in him.

This Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, which brings the presence of Christ, the world can not receive, “because it *seeth* Him not, neither knoweth Him.” And the world *sees* Him not because it does not *believe*. Instead of *believing*, that it may *see*, the world wants to *see*, that it may *believe*. And so, because the world sees not the Spirit of God, and therefore cannot receive Him and cannot know Him. But to those who do believe, and therefore do receive Him, Jesus says, “Ye know Him for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” The promise of the Spirit is received “through faith,” and then we know Him. So that it is literally true that by *faith* we *know* God and the things of God.

Such is the true doctrine of the real presence of Christ with those who are His, and of his manifestation to them and in them. In one word this is the Gospel. Without it there is no Gospel of Christ. The Lord’s own definition of the Gospel is that it is Christ in believers, the hope of glory. And here it is: “Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which ye have heard. . . . Whereof I Paul am made a minister . . . to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints; to whom God would make know what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles *which is Christ in you*, the hope of glory whom we preach” (Col. 1:23-28). Christ in men, the hope of glory; God manifest in the flesh; this, and this alone, is the Gospel of Christ. And therefore Paul tells us that “it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen” (Gal. 1:15, 16). Not revealed *to* him only, but revealed *in* him, and revealed *to* him by being revealed *in* him. He was to preach Christ in men, the hope of glory; but he could not possibly do this unless he knew Christ in himself, the hope of glory. It was not enough to preach about this—he must preach this in very fact. It was not the thing to do to preach *about* Him, but to preach *Him*.

Thus “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body” (2 Cor. 4:6, 7, 10). “But I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:19, 20).

Such is the Scripture doctrine, the true doctrine, of the real presence of Christ with His people and in His people. It is the presence of Christ Himself in the believer by the creative power and overshadowing of the Spirit of God. This is the mystery of God.