

Believing and Receiving

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Christ, the Word, who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, in whom all things were created, —as the life and the light of the world, —“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1.10-13

Worldly Ignorance —“He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.” John 1.10. “The world through wisdom did not know God.” 1 Corinthians 1.21. The wisdom of this world does not reveal Christ, but conceals Him. No man can ever learn of Christ by worldly wisdom. It is Mr. Worldly Wiseman that turns Christian out of the right way. “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” 1 Corinthians 3.19

The Depths of Ignorance —“The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.” says the Lord. Isaiah 1.3. Therefore the wisdom of this world does not rise to the level of the intelligence of brutes. Yes, it sinks men below the level of brutes, when it is given full chance to develop; because when men “became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.” Romans 1.21-23. It is impossible that men should rise above the object that they worship, and the description, which follows the scripture just, quoted shows that the worshippers of beasts and creeping things did actually fall below them. But all that was simply the full development of worldly wisdom.

True Wisdom —The Bible does not discredit wisdom or science. It is only “science falsely so called,” and the boasted wisdom of the world, which is not wisdom at all, but only foolishness, that is spoken against. “For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright.” Proverbs 2.6, 7. “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.” Job 28.28. “If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know.” John 7.17. It is by faith that we understand. Hebrews 11.3

The Cross and Knowledge —Wisdom comes from God alone. To know Him embraces everything that is worth knowing or having. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, or let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me." Jeremiah 9.23, 24. But by the Spirit of the Lord Paul said, "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Galatians 6.14. Since we can glory only in the knowledge of God, and only in the cross, it follows that it is only in the cross that we can learn to know God. The world knew not Christ, because they wanted glory without the cross. Whoever shuns or rejects the cross, refuses to know God. Whenever in anyone's Christian experience a cross presents itself, and he refuses to accept it, he thereby says, "I know as much of the Lord as I wish to," and then he begins to lose even that which he has.

"His Own" —"He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him." John 1.11. In the Greek there is a clearly marked distinction between the two expressions, "His own," the first being neuter, and the second masculine. The "His own" to which He came is distinguished from the "His own" who did not receive Him. The English does not show this difference, except by a more full rendering, as is given in the Revised Version: "He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not." He came to His own inheritance, but His own people rejected Him. Jesus set this forth most clearly in the parable of the vineyard which was let out to husbandmen, who killed the heir when he came. See Matthew 21.33-44

The Inheritance —"The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein." Psalm 24.1. The earth was given to man in the beginning, for a possession. But it was given to a perfect man, not to a fallen man. Man lost it when he fell. But Christ has purchased it. Ephesians 1.14. We see Jesus, because of death, "crowned with glory and honor" (Hebrews 2.9), just as man was when the dominion was given him. It is His by right, although those to whom it has been entrusted for a little while cast Him out when He came to it.

Rejected of Men —"He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him." Isaiah 53.3. Mark this, He not only was despised, but "He is despised and rejected by men." It is a thing still going on. Multitudes of those who delight to be called by His name are rejecting Him. How? —In rejecting His cross. They are willing that He should suffer, but they are not willing to suffer with Him; and in rejecting the cross, they are rejecting Him.

The World Unchanged —The world is not converted, and never will be. There is an everlasting difference between Christ and the world. "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." James 4.4. "For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." 1 John 2.16, 17. Therefore the world ever rejects Christ. The world is as much opposed to Christ today as it was eighteen hundred years ago. His people are chosen "out of the world." John 15.19; Galatians 1.4

Believing and Receiving —"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name. John 1.12. Whoever believes, receives. Whoever receives Him thereby becomes a son of God. Therefore every one who is not a child of God is rejecting Christ.

What Is Infidelity? —Many people think that it consists in a railing against God and Christ and the Bible. But there are thousands of infidels who have never said a word against Christ, and who would be shocked at the suggestion that they do not believe the Bible. The word "infidelity" is the Anglicized form of the Latin *infidelitas*, through the French *infidetite*, meaning *unfaithfulness*. Infidelity is simply lack of faith. Now whoever has faith has Christ, for the text says that those who believe Christ receive Him. Ephesians 3.17. Therefore that man in whose heart Christ does not dwell as "the hope of glory" (Colossians 1.27); is an infidel even though he be a professed Christian. "Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified." 2 Corinthians 13.5. Instead of reviling those who do not profess to be anything except infidels, it becomes professed Christians to keep the exhortation of the Spirit, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith."

Waiting to be Received —Jesus, "the faithful and true witness," says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3.20. How shall we open the door? —Simply believe Him. If we believe Him, we receive Him. How often He has knocked, and we have sent word that we were "not at home." Let us no longer be false to our most faithful Friend. Let this day be our day to receive. "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." Hebrews 4.6

From Servant to Son —When we receive the Lord Jesus, then He dwells in us. His presence transforms us. Remember that we receive Him by believing Him. We feed upon Him by taking the Word. By the "exceedingly great and precious promises," we become "partakers of the Divine nature." 2 Peter

1.4. Thus it is that receiving Christ makes us sons. "And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." Romans 8.17. In the parable of the vineyard (Matthew 21.33-44), the servants slew the heir, in order that they might seize on the inheritance, and thereby they lost it and their own lives as well. If they had only known the day of their visitation, and had received the heir, they might have received the adoption of sons. "Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Galatians 4.7. How little those who reject Christ, in order to win the world, know what they are losing! In rejecting Him that they may win all, they lose all.

Born of God —Those who in simple faith receive the Lord thereby become sons of God. Not only are they called sons, but they are actually sons, since they are made "partakers of the Divine nature." "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1.13. "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides for ever." 1 Peter 1.23. This receiving of the Word makes God our Father as actually as is the father by whom we were begotten according to the flesh. Just as our earthly parents transmitted to us their nature, so in the new birth God transmits to us His nature, and this is "renewed day by day" while we believe it. We are heirs of God Himself, and therefore all that is His. With what joy, then, the true believer may sing: —

"Blessed assurance—Jesus is mine!
Oh, out what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God;
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood."