

Summing Up All Things in Christ.

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Rob. 1: 8 to —Which he made to abound towards us in all wisdom and prudence, having made know unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth.

If one wishes extended views of the magnificent scenery surrounding Chester, he must leave the seashore and climb the outlying hills. He will then be rewarded by a panorama of surpassing beauty. So, would we get large views of the purpose of God, we must leave the low life of self and climb the eternal hills of truth where Paul stood when he wrote the Ephesian Christians. Our text presents one of these grand views. In the verse immediately preceding, the apostle has sounded the depths of the love of God, and spoken of our redemption through the blood of Christ. Instantly, the view changes and we behold the heights of that love in the summing up of all things in Christ.

The riches of divine love abound toward us. In God's revelation of his intention concerning the ultimate destiny of his creation. This was a mystery to prophets, psalmists, and earlier followers, but to us it is made known, "according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself." We have not forced this divine secret. It has all been revealed according to the riches of the free grace of God. We thus learn that, from the beginning, it was the divine thought to bring to a close these innumerable ages of sorrow and sin, "in the dispensation of the fullness of the times." There shall be shown the righteousness of heaven and earth as eternally secure for it is God's eternal purpose to sum up all things in Christ.

From this and some other isolated passages from the New Testament we might construct a scheme of universal salvation. And men of all ages have tried to lull conscience to sleep with such rosy dreams of the future.

For the true view, we must consider to whom Paul was writing. It was to those, who many times had listened, as with living voice, he had unfolded the manifold riches of God. Much of the full orbit of his teaching must be taken for granted. If anything is clear from the teaching of Paul, and from that of Jesus too, it is that those guilty of the supreme sin of persistent unbelief shall be driven, forever, from the loving presence of God. Just as no preacher compasses the whole range of truth in one sermon, so Paul made no attempt to present the full orb of truth in a single short letter. Paul was writing to those that had been delivered from the bondage of sin and death. That fact was never long foreign to their thinking. So when Paul wrote to them of "summing up" all things in Christ they would not mistake his meaning. To them it was clear that those who persisted in unbelief would persist in its punishment, and that the rest of the moral universe should be organized into a perfect unity for eternal ages of righteousness and joy.

Let us see if we can discover the path by which that achievement is to be attained. That path is no ethereal dream of a visionary reformer. Rather its stages are all graven in the bedrock of truth. As we move from height to height the ground we tread is firm. It is living truth.

Here is the first stage.—Our Own Christian Experience. We know that all this is of Christ and in Christ. Our experience may not be as deep as Paul's was. He may have climbed loftier summits than we have, but anyone who has reached any maturity in Christian experience is sure that this life is all of Christ. As we learn more of the riches of the love of God, we understand with ever-increasing clearness what Paul meant when he said, "I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." It is in the strength of Christ that we do God's will. Our faith in Christ has its roots in Christ's faith in the Father. Our love for Christ and for one another flows from the love existing between the Father and the Son. It is the peace of Christ which gives us our peace. It is the joy from which our joy flows. The parable of the vine and the branches is verified in our experience. What at first we accepted on the authority of Christ we now know of our own experience.

And secondly, what is true of ourselves is true of all Christians. They, too, are branches of the great vine. In their spirits we recognize the signs of their union with Christ. They may have lived in a different age and land from us. They may be of a different color and speak a different language from ours. But the moment our spirit touches theirs we recognize the kinship. The accents of the voice are familiar; their sorrows and their joys, their d-festies and their accomplished hopes, their reverses and their triumphs are similar to our own. The channels in which their life flows may be very different, but the streams issue from the same eternal fountain. A few years ago Dr. Henry Mable, Sec'y. of the American Baptist Missionary Union, visited the missions of that great society. At Rangoon, among those awaiting his arrival, was a convert of Adoniram Judson's ministry. Fifty years she had been a Christian. The only words they could speak in common were Jesus and Judson. But as Dr. Mable grasped her hand it needed only

the light of that face lighted for fifty years with the light from heaven to tell him that her life had its source whence his flowed. Whatever accidents may divide our lives we are one in Christ.

Thirdly, we are equally sure that there is nothing provisional nor transient about this arrangement. Without him we can do nothing here. Without him we can do nothing hereafter. Whatever heights we may attain in the hereafter will all be through and in Christ. For the whole church we can hope for nothing grander than perfect union with Christ. When organized into this perfect and immortal unity then shall the words of Christ be accomplished:—"The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one . . . I will that where I am they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

So far then as the Christian church is concerned it is clear that its consummation is, the summing up in Christ. But Paul leads us in a more adventurous flight. Not content with the summing up of all believers in Christ, Paul carries us on to the thought of the universe being summed up in Christ. We do not see the steps to this consummation so clearly, but solely because we are not so used to thinking of the relation of Christ to the universe. Yet there lies the solution of this problem too.

But what is Christ's relation to the universe? The prologue of John's Gospel is our key here. "All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made." Christ is the eternal word in whom the mind and heart of God are revealed just as our words reveal our minds and hearts. And that revelation has relation to the whole creation. But what is that relation? Did Christ make the universe as a machinist make a machine? When it was finished did he stand off to see how it would go? Did he put it out of his hands and have nothing more to do with it? No! This universe is an expression of the living God.

Let us borrow a passage from Col 1: 15, 16, 17, in answer to our question concerning Christ's relation to creation:

"Who is the image of the invincible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist."

This passage sums up Christ's relation to the Creation. We find from it,—

1. That Christ is the first-born and as such he was the eternal prophecy of creation. The first child born into the world was the prophecy of all that have followed. So was Christ, the uncreated, the prophecy of creation.
2. When God spoke and creation was its root and being was in Christ. It is the expression of his thought and its life is in him.
3. Creation is not the immediate act of the Father. The creative power travelled through Christ and all things were created by him.
4. This creation was not called into being for itself. All things were created for him as well as in him.
5. Apart from Christ the universe as such could not exist. Let Christ withdraw himself and the universe would fall back into the chaos whence he called it, for in him all things consist, *i. e.*, hold together.

The universe was created to reach its perfection in Christ. The eternal thought of God has been moving through all the ages, and through all its vicissitudes toward this end. Its final triumph is secure. We may not see all the steps, but that which was created through Christ shall in him find its perfection. In him the discords of the universe shall be resolved into eternal harmony. Its conflicts shall end in golden ages of untroubled peace. It will find God, and finding God will find eternal unity and blessedness. And this is to be not merely an immense federation of worlds. The loftiest of God's moral creatures and the most obscure alike are to share a common life, for all are to be one in Christ.

And this lofty doctrine has important lessons for us. Take first that for the individual. I know that I am a free moral agent. I know that I must bear the responsibility of that freedom. I know that when I am tempted to sin it lies with me to yield or to resist. Earth and hell confederate cannot force me to sin. But yet I am not entirely free. I am an omnibus in which all my ancestors ride. It is the harder for me to do right because some of my ancestors were passionately sinful or violent tempered. On the other hand it is the easier for me to do right because some of my ancestors were among the noblest of the sons of men. And the relation in which my ancestors stand to me is similar to that in which we shall stand to generations yet unborn.

Once more, out of this lofty doctrine grows that of the solidarity of the human race. Created in Christ Jesus we cannot isolate ourselves. We have relations to the whole community with which we have to do. We are saved one by one, but we shall never be saved alone. No

man among us can look upon misery, ignorance, evil, and crime and say it is no concern of his. It is for us to make the life around us as conducive to noble living as we possibly can. It is not for us to say the conditions are as good as those amid which I grew up, therefore they are good enough for my neighbors and their children. Your life is a failure if you are not contributing something to make the conditions of the rising generation better than those amid which you have lived. Only as you contribute to lift the work-a-day world nearer to God are you hastening the summing up of all things in Christ.

Again, this lofty teaching has direct relation to our worship. We are blessed as we read our Bible and commune with God in solitude, but it is where devout hearts in unison lift up their praises and thanksgiving to the giver of all good, that the richest blessing comes to the worshipper.

Finally, in that endless future we shall join with other orders of God's moral creatures in participation in whatever majesty of righteousness there may be in the whole universe. We shall contribute our part and every other moral order of God's creation shall contribute to this some of universal righteousness. The joy of other orders shall be increased by their recognition that we have been saved from sin and death and united with them in their blessed union with Christ. Our final glory shall not consist in the restoration of the solitary soul to solitary communion with God, but in the fellowship of all the blessed with all the blessedness of the universe as well as with the blessedness of God.

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The Savara Missionary.

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At the Conference recently held in Vizianagram, India, seven missionaries who have seen long service in this land met. Five of the number, Mr. and Mrs. Sanford, Mr. and Mrs. Churchill and Mrs. Boggs came to India on the same steamer 29 years ago. Another of the number was Mrs. Armstrong who came several years before that time and the seventh was Dr. Boggs who came the following year. These were the first missionaries of the Maritime Baptist Board. They had much to say of the way God had led them during the years of their missionary service. They praised God with deep joy in their hearts for his loving guidance.

At this same Conference other missionaries were made to realize that God had been leading them and preparing them for their work. If in the providence of God some seven of this company shall meet again some 30 years hence they will be able to praise God for no less wonderful care and love. While none but a prophet should presume to speak confidently of the future, yet if the past contains certain indications that in some measure justify it why may not one comfort himself and others with bright hopes for the coming years? Indeed if there is inspiration in it how can one honestly keep such things hidden in the recesses of his own mind.

My story which has inspired hope within me has several beginnings but the character and influences come together in the present and as surely as we can trace God's hand in what has already come to pass so sure may we be that he who hath begun this good work will carry it on to a glorious future.

About seven years ago J. A. Glendenning told his pastor at the Moncton church that he believed God wanted him to go as a missionary to India. The pastor looked at him and said, "You are the man we have been praying for these ten years to go as our missionary."

Thus encouraged the college course at Acadia was undertaken and completed in 1900. The autumn of 1900 found him at Newton Seminary. During both College and Seminary courses special attention was given to languages for in his mind was the idea, "I may need to do some translation work sometime."

When the opportunity came to take some special lectures in medicine it was gladly embraced with the thought "sometime this information may be helpful on the mission field for I know not where I may be."

An early application was made to the Board to be sent to India. He further stated his willingness to go at the end of his second year at Newton if the Board wished him to go. The financial condition of the Board was such however that no hope was given him of being sent at that time. Having a desire to see the old countries and to visit friends in Scotland he decided to take his third year in theology at the United Free Baptist Church College, Glasgow. His plans for the winter being arranged, he spent the intervening time with some of the small churches in New Brunswick.

While he was thus engaged the Convention of the Maritime Provinces met at Yarmouth. When the F. M. report was read at the Convention it was learned that three young men had applied to be sent to India. One was compelled by ill-health to remain in the homeland, one was under appointment and the other Mr. Glendenning was not going because of the lack of funds to send him.

In that Convention were some whose hearts had heard