

# GOD IN CHRIST



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# GOD IN CHRIST

*“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”—Matthew 3:17*

**W**E are to speak of God’s being in Christ. To understand this, we may consider first what God is out of Christ, and second what God is in Christ.

## **1. What God Is Out of Christ**

What is God out of Christ to the sinner? He is an offended, threatening, dishonoured, and distant God.

### **a. God out of Christ is to a sinner an angry God.**

“God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day” (Psa 7:11), or it may be read “God is the *righteous Judge*. God is angry with the wicked every day.” Because He is a righteous judge, therefore He cannot but be displeased, offended, and angry with them. Oh, the wrath and anger of God is a terrible matter. Who knows the power of His wrath! When it begins to burn, it burns to the lowest hell.

### **b. God out of Christ is a threatening God.**

His anger manifests itself in threatenings and curses: “If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he hath ordained his arrows” for taking vengeance (Psa 7:12-13).

His threatenings are not bare words. As God in Christ gives being<sup>1</sup> to His words of grace, so God out of Christ gives being to His words of wrath—saying, as it is, “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance

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<sup>1</sup> **gives being** – makes substantive; manifests.

to mine enemies, and a reward to them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood” (Deu 32:39-42). God out of Christ is a God Whose mouth is full of curses and threatenings, and Whose hand is full of terrible vengeance for executing the threatening. “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal 3:10).

### **c. God out of Christ is a dishonoured God.**

This is the reason why He is an angry God and a threatening God: because He is a dishonoured God, for “Sin is transgression of God’s law” (1Jo 3:4). His authority is contemned,<sup>2</sup> His wisdom slighted, His power vilipended,<sup>3</sup> His holiness baffled, His justice enraged, and all His glorious attributes abused and affronted.

### **d. God out of Christ is a distant God.**

Sin has set God and man at variance and at a distance from one another. Therefore, men are said to be afar off (Act 2:39; Eph 2:13, 17)—not in respect of any local distance, for God is everywhere, but in point of moral distance. We are far from the image of God, far from the favour of God, far from the knowledge of God, far from the love of God, far from the life of God—being alienated therefrom through the ignorance that is in us (Eph 4:18). And [men are far] from any relation to God—except that of a vindictive judge, an avenger of sin, a consuming fire, ready to break out every moment in everlasting flames. Between Him and the Christless sinner there is nothing but the weak, tender thread of life, which the least spark of that fire of God’s wrath can burn and break. And then he falls into the depth of endless and irremediless<sup>4</sup> torment.

Thus you have a short account of what God *out* of Christ is.

## **2. What God Is in Christ**

We may consider what God is *in* Christ.

### **a. God in Christ is a reconciled God.**

His anger is appeased and quenched by the blood of His eternal Son, offering up Himself a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God. Upon which account He proclaims here, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well

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<sup>2</sup> **contemned** – treated or thought of with contempt.

<sup>3</sup> **vilipended** – disparaged; belittled.

<sup>4</sup> **irremediless** – without remedy; irreparable.

pleased” (Mat 3:17), and sends ministers to proclaim the word of reconciliation. “That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (2Co 5:19).

### **b. God in Christ is a promising God.**

As a God out of Christ is a threatening God, so a God in Christ is a promising God. The covenant of promise is sealed and confirmed by the death and blood of Christ, which covenant is therefore called the “new testament”<sup>5</sup> in His blood (1Co 11:25). And the condition of all the promises being so well fulfilled, the price of them being so well paid, they come to us in the dispensation<sup>6</sup> of the gospel freely and absolutely, to be received without money and without price (Isa 55:1)—because the money and price is already paid down to the full in the liquid gold of the blood of the God-man.<sup>7</sup> The promises being freely received, we may wait with assured hope till they be fully accomplished, because, “All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God” (2Co 1:20).

### **c. God in Christ is a glorified God.**

As God out of Christ to a sinner is a God abused and dishonoured, God in Christ is a God glorified and honoured—Christ having fulfilled, yea, magnified the Law (Isa 42:21). He hath brought in everlasting righteousness, made restitution of all the honour to God and His perfections that sin took away: “Then I restored that which I took not away” (Psa 69:4). And Christ testifies this: “I have glorified thee on earth,” even on earth, where God was dishonoured. How? “I have finished the work thou gavest me to do” (Joh 17:4). God in Christ is a God not only Whose mercy is magnified, but also Whose truth is vindicated, Whose holiness is celebrated, Whose justice is satisfied, Whose wisdom, power, and other attributes are made more conspicuous in *redemption-work*, than ever they were in making heaven and earth. He is a God in Whom we may look for salvation through Christ to the honour, the highest honour and glory, of all His excellencies.

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<sup>5</sup> **testament** – covenant; a commitment between two parties.

<sup>6</sup> **dispensation** – provision in time.

<sup>7</sup> **God-man** – Jesus Christ, Who fully maintained His deity when He became fully a man. See *Free Grace Broadcaster* #172, “The Uniqueness of the God-Man,” and #219, “The Person of Christ,” available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

#### **d. God in Christ is a nearly related God.**

God in Christ is a nearly approaching God, a nearly related God. In Christ, He comes near graciously, saying, “I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory” (Isa 46:13). And He comes near relatively,<sup>8</sup> saying, “I...will be *your* God, and ye shall be *my* people” (Lev 26:12). And this is upon account of Christ’s approaching to God in our room, as our Surety: “Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD?” (Jer 30:21). Hence the near relation is promised: “And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God” (v. 22). And this near approach and relation of God to us in Christ is an everlasting nearness, and hence we have Him saying, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb 13:5). And [we have] the Church saying, “This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death” (Psa 48:14).

### **3. How We May See God in Christ**

#### **a. God’s attributes and fullness**

In Christ, we see all of God’s attributes and fullness. There is nothing that the Father has except His personality, but the Son, as Mediator,<sup>9</sup> has “all things”: “All things that the Father hath are mine” (Joh 16:15). All things that God has belong to the Mediator, the God-man. Here then is an ocean where you and I may dive forever and never reach to the bottom.

In Him we may see the wisdom of God: “In whom are hid all the treasures of *wisdom* and knowledge” (Col 2:3). Poor foolish sinner, who hast no wisdom, knowledge, or understanding, here is a treasure for you: Christ the wisdom of God (1Co 1:30).

In Him we may see all the *power* of God: “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks foolishness; But unto them that are called...Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1Co 1:23-24). Poor weakling who can do nothing, here is a bargain for you to lay hold upon—it is He “which worketh in you both to will and to do,” and to make His “people willing in the day” of His power (Phi 2:13; Psa 110:3). You are not called to come to Christ but by the power of Christ, which is the power of God. You are to receive Him Who can give you power to receive Him—and as an ab-

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<sup>8</sup> **relatively** – in relationship.

<sup>9</sup> **Mediator** – a go-between; one who intervenes between two hostile parties for the purpose of restoring them to a relationship of harmony and unity. See *FGB* #183, “Christ the Mediator,” available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

solite weakling to take hold of His strength, and look to His power, to Whom is given all power in heaven and in earth.

In Him we may see all the *holiness* of God. He is said to be made of God to us sanctification (1Co 1:30); and surely here is an immense fountain of sanctity: the infinite holiness of God. O poor, vile, polluted sinner, who hast lost the image of God by the fall of the first Adam and the deficiency of his holiness. Here is a better head and husband for you, in Whom is all the fullness of divine holiness that ye may be complete in Him.

In Him we may see all the *justice* of God and all the righteousness of God. We may see justice satisfied in Him, by His mediatorial righteousness, for the Lord is well-pleased for His righteousness' sake. Yea, He that is the righteousness of God is made unto us righteousness (1Co 1:30). And, O wonderful word, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2Co 5:21).

O guilty, guilty sinner, here is a joyful sound in your ears: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Mat 11:15). You may, in Christ, be more righteous in God's sight than ever you were guilty in His sight; yea, you may be the very righteousness of God in Him. You may not only be justified, but find God to be just in justifying you—because the justice of God is in Christ, and it is satisfied in Him, magnified in Him, glorified in Him. In Him we may see all the mercy of God. All the infinite love, pity, and compassion of God is in Him, in His heart. What is Christ, but the love of God wrapped up in the garments of flesh and blood? "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation<sup>10</sup> for our sins" (1Jo 4:9-10). And "keep yourselves in the love of God." How? "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life" (Jude 21).

O poor, miserable, sinner, would you wish to find mercy in the moment of death, and mercy at the great Day?<sup>11</sup> Know there is no mercy to be expected from God *out* of Christ, and unless you look to His mercy as *in* Christ. For He will never show mercy to the prejudice of His justice, and it is only in Christ that mercy and truth meet together and embrace each other (Psa 85:10). In Him we may see all the faithfulness and truth of God: "My mercy and my faith-

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<sup>10</sup> **propitiation** – sin offering that turns away wrath; appeasement.

<sup>11</sup> **great Day** – Judgment Day at the end of time when Christ shall judge righteously the living and the dead (1Pe 4:5).



fulness shall be with him” (Psa 89:24). I have observed (as I formerly noticed upon another discourse), between thirty and forty places of Scripture where mercy and truth, mercy and faithfulness, are joined together, and here you see they are joined together in Christ. In Him the mercy and love of God vents<sup>12</sup> to the honour of divine truth pledged—even in all the threatenings of the Law as well as divine truth pledged in all the promises of the gospel—because in Him all the threatenings and curses of the Law have spent their force (Gal 3:13). “For all the promises of God are in him yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God”. He is the way and the truth: Truth itself, the God of truth, the Truth of God.

O perfidious,<sup>13</sup> faithless, unfaithful, and treacherous sinner, who hath many times lied to the God of truth, would you have your falsehood all done away, and swallowed up in the truth and veracity of God, and your salvation secured—notwithstanding of your falsehood, fickleness, and instability? Here is a pillar on which you may stand firm and fixed amidst all changes, whether in your outward lot or inward frame. “For all flesh is grass...But the word of the LORD endureth forever” (1Pe 1:24-25). The truth of God stands unalterably the same. Again, in Him we may see all the authority of God: “My name is in him” (Exo 23:21).

O! Poor lost sinner, when Christ in His gospel comes to seek and save that which was lost (Luk 19:10), say not, “By what authority doest thou these things” (Mat 21:23). He is the Sent and Sealed of God, and He hath all the authority that God can give Him. And if you ask by what authority we—poor sinful mortal worms like yourselves—do offer Him and all His riches to you? Indeed, we could have no authority if He had not said, “Go...preach the gospel to every creature,” “and lo I am with you to the end of the world” (Mar 16:15; Mat 28:20).

In a word, in Him we may see all the fullness of God. “It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell” (Col 1:19). In Him dwells all the fullness of the God-head bodily: not only all the attributes of God, but all the fullness of all the divine attributes. Not only the wisdom of God, but all the fullness of divine wisdom. Not only the power of God, but all the fullness of divine power. Not only the holiness of God, but all the fullness of divine holiness. Not only the justice and righteousness of God, but all the fullness of divine righteousness. Not only the mercy of God, but all the fullness of divine mercy. Not only

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<sup>12</sup> **vents** – pours forth.

<sup>13</sup> **perfidious** – treacherous; deceitful.

the truth and faithfulness of God, but all the fullness of divine faithfulness. Not only the authority of God, but all the fullness of divine authority. Not only is God in Him, but all the fullness of the God-head. O poor, empty sinner, here is unsearchable riches, a bottomless well of everlasting salvation and consolation for you.

### **b. God's saving offices**

In Christ we see God in all His saving offices. The Father hath anointed Him to the office of Prophet, Priest, and King. O Sirs, what employment will you put in His hand? It is He, as a Prophet, Who says, "They shall be all taught of God" (Joh 6:45). Look to Him for the promised teaching. It is He, as a Priest, Who says upon the ground of the sacrifice He hath offered, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake" (Isa 43:25). Look to Him for remission in His blood. It is He, as a king, Who says, "I will subdue your iniquities; 'sin shall not have dominion over you'" (Rom 6:14). O ignorant sinner, will you find in your heart to refuse such a Prophet as Christ is? "Who teacheth like him?" (Job 26:32). O guilty sinner, will you refuse such a High-Priest as this? Such a sacrifice as this is? O enslaved sinner, will you refuse the help of such a King and Conqueror as this? If there be none of these offices to be dispensed with,<sup>14</sup> then take hold of Him in them all.

### **c. God's relations to sinners**

In Christ we may see God as He is clothed with all relations that can contribute to the happiness of a sinner. What friend or relation do you want,<sup>15</sup> O sinner! Want you a father to pity you? Behold, here you have an everlasting Father; for that is His name (Isa 9:6), and in Him the fatherless find mercy. Want you a mother to be tender to you? Behold, here motherless children may have their losses made up. When father and mother forsake you, here is One to take you up (Psa 27:10). He is One that can be a thousand times better to you than father and mother, and manifests more love than the tenderest mother that ever was. "Can a woman forget her sucking child...yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isa 49:15). Want you a husband? Oh! What would you think to be married with the Heir of all things? Why, if the ear of faith be opened, you may hear Him saying, "Thy Maker is thine husband" (Isa 54:5). And again, "I will betroth thee unto me forever" (Hos 2:19).

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<sup>14</sup> **dispensed with** – unused; disregarded.

<sup>15</sup> **want** – lack.

If you say, Oh! How will it be consistent with the justice of God for Him to marry such a black<sup>16</sup> bride? Why, He says, “I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness” (same verse). If you say, how will it be consistent with the wisdom, mercy, truth, and faithfulness of God, to betroth the like of me? He says, “I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD” (Hos 2:19-20). Thou shalt know God in Christ, Who can betroth thee to Himself and yet be infinitely just, wise, merciful, and faithful in doing so; because mercy and truth have met together in Christ, the glorious Bridegroom. They strike up a match together, and embrace each other, that there might be nothing to hinder the match between Christ and you.

Want you a proper match then, O sinner, or a help meet, poor bankrupt [one, who is] in such arrears to the Law and justice of God? Is not He that hath unsearchable riches a fit match for you? Poor, dying creature who will be food for worms in a little while, here is a living head for you, that can make you live forever. O mortal worm, here is an immortal Husband for you. Poor, changeable creature, here is an unchangeable match for you: Christ, “The same yesterday, today, and for ever” (Heb 13:8). Want you a lover? Are you an outcast, who reckons yourself despised by all the world, insomuch that none cares for you nor loves you? Behold an infinitely loving and lovely Jesus tendering His love to you, saying, “I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely” (Hos 14:4). And He is seeking your conjugal<sup>17</sup> love, saying, “My son, give me thine heart” (Pro 23:26).

Want you a leader through the dark and difficult steps of your way; a guide, director, and counselor in whatsoever affair you have upon your hand wherein you need to be directed? O Sirs, here is the wonderful Counselor Who says, “I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not...in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight” (Isa 42:16). Want you a shepherd to feed you? Or a captain to fight your battles for you? Want you a physician when in sickness to heal you? Want you a refiner and purifier when you are in the furnace, to purge away your dross? Behold, a God in Christ hath all the happy relations you can desire.

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<sup>16</sup> **black** – that which is destitute of light; darkened by sin.

<sup>17</sup> **conjugal** – relating to the marriage; marital.

#### **d. God's graces**

In Christ we see God in all His graces. This is a great part of the glory of the only Begotten of the Father, that He is full of grace and truth; "And of his fullness have we all received, and grace for grace" (Joh 1:14, 16). "Grace is poured into his lips" (Psa 40:2) and, I hope, He is pouring grace from His lips by His Word among some of you this day. The Spirit of the Lord is upon Him for He hath anointed Him; He is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, anointed with the Spirit of all grace.

Want you grace to believe? Behold it is in Him, as He is the author of faith. Want you grace to repent? Behold it is in Him, as a Prince and Saviour, exalted to give repentance. Do you want grace to pray? It is He that hath the Spirit of prayer to give (Zec 12:10). Do you want grace to communicate aright, grace to mortify sin, grace to bear the cross, grace to resist temptation, grace to do and suffer? It is He that hath all grace to give, and Who says, "My grace shall be sufficient for thee" (2Co 12:9). Hence, His people are called to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

#### **e. God's blessings**

In Christ we may see God in all His blessings that He hath to give. He is the Lord-Dispenser of temporal blessings, for "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof" (1Co 10:26); the Lord-Dispenser of spiritual blessings, for heaven is His and the fullness thereof; the Lord-Dispenser of eternal blessings, for eternal life is in Him, He is "the true God, and eternal life" (1Jo 5:20). It was promised of Him that men should be blessed in Him; and accordingly He is sent to bless us: "God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Act 3:26).

I might here enumerate many particular blessings. The blessing of *illumination* is in Him, for, He is the "light to lighten the Gentiles" (Luk 2:32). The blessing of *conversion* is in Him, for He says, "I, if I be lifted up...will draw all men unto me" (Joh 12:32). The blessing of *justification* is in Him, for we are "justified freely by his grace" (Rom 3:24). The blessing of *reconciliation* with God is in Him, for it is He that makes peace by the blood of His cross. The blessing of *sanctification* is in Him, for He is "made of God unto us...sanctification" (1Co 1:30). The blessing of *acceptation* with God is in Him, for we are "accepted in the beloved" (Eph 1:6). The blessing of *access* to God is in Him, for by Him "we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Eph 3:12). The blessing of *consolation* is in Him, for He is "the consolation of Israel" (Luk 2:25). The blessing of a *happy death* is in Him, for

“Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord” (Rev 14:13). The blessing of a *happy resurrection* is in Him, for He is “the resurrection and the life” (Joh 11:25). The blessing of a *happy sentence* at the Great Day is in Him and at His disposal, for all judgment is committed unto Him. It is He that will say to the wicked, “Depart from me, ye cursed”; and to the righteous, “Come, ye blessed of my Father” (Mat 25:34, 41). The blessing of eternal *glorification* is in Him, for as He is the glory of the higher house, so He says, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory” and “so shall we ever be with the Lord” (Joh 17:24; 1Th 4:17). Can you tell me any spiritual blessing that is not in Him? No, we are blessed “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places” only in Christ (Eph 1:3).

And now, after all, what think you of Him? Have you no heart to join hand with such a well-furnished Saviour, in whom “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col 2:9)? If you have no heart to such a good bargain, this is very sad; but, because it is a day of glad tidings, I will tell you, among all other things, that all hearts are in His hand, and it is His prerogative to open the locked heart. It is easy with Him to create a clean heart, to melt the hard heart, to fix the wandering heart, to cleanse the filthy heart, to elevate the drooping heart, to conquer the stubborn heart, to quicken the dead heart, to draw the backward heart—as we formerly observed in another discourse. And if anything draw your heart to Him, it will be the revelation of His grace and fullness—and of God’s being in Him, and in Him a well-pleased God.

#### **4. A Further View of God in Christ**

Further, in the light of this truth, particularly that God is in Christ, we may see,

##### **a. How little of God is in the present generation.**

If God be in Christ, and only in Christ, then a generation that is without Christ is without God. A Christless generation is a Godless generation; God is not to be found where Christ is not to be found. If Christ be not in a family, God is not there. If Christ be not in the heart, God is not there. If Christ be not in a sermon, God is not there. Where Christ is owned, God is owned; where Christ is dishonoured, God is dishonoured. Where Christ is away, God is away—for God is in Christ.

And, Oh! Is it not too evident that God is away from our nobility, when Christ is disowned, dishonoured, and disregarded among them? That God is away from the commonalty and generality of people when Christ is so little

known and loved? God is not to be found among Arians;<sup>18</sup> why? They rob Christ of His supreme deity and eternal Godhead. God is not to be found among Arminians;<sup>19</sup> why? They spoil Christ of the freedom and power of His grace. You need not seek God among Papists; why? Because Christ is dethroned there, and the merit of works set up in His room.<sup>20</sup> You need not seek God among legalists and erroneous preachers; why? If Christ be not in their preaching, God is not there—though they make mention of Christ’s name, yet while they preach not the true Christ, they preach not the true God.

It is as evident as the sun-beams that God is far away from the present generation because, when Christ is not there, God is not there. God is not among the ignorant and erroneous because Christ, as a Prophet, is not there. God is not among the self-righteous because Christ, as a Priest, is not there. God is not among the wicked and profane because Christ, as a King, is not there. God is not among these that are drowned in sensuality and worldly-mindedness because Christ and His Spirit are not there. God is not among these that deny there is any divine impulse leading a man to such and such a duty, and leading him on therein—because it is contrary to Christ, Who, as the Way and Leader by His Holy Spirit, promised to lead the blind in a way they know not, and to make darkness light before them, and to be a voice behind them saying, “This is the way, walk you in it” (Isa 30:21). This Spirit is promised to be with His servants and people in all generations: “Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world” and “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Mat 28:20; Heb 13:5).

## **b. False dealers with God**

In the light of this truth, we may see who are false and presumptuous dealers with God, even these that adventure to deal with a God out of Christ. Who deals with God out of Christ? Even these that live in unbelief and impenitency, for it is a way of faith and repentance that all who deal with God in Christ do walk. These that hope all is well with them, and will be well, though yet they have never fled to Christ for refuge nor know what it is to live upon Him by faith. These that hope to atone<sup>21</sup> God by their repenting and reforming, by

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<sup>18</sup> **Arians** – those who believe that Jesus Christ is a created being, thus inferior to God and not eternal.

<sup>19</sup> **Arminians** – followers of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), who taught that God’s predestination of individuals was based on His foreknowledge of their accepting or rejecting Christ by their own free will.

<sup>20</sup> **room** – place.

<sup>21</sup> **atone** – to reconcile or restore to friendly relations; to appease.

their future pains and prayers, and never receive the atonement. These that hope in God's mercy, and yet were never afraid of His justice, nor concerned how to have an infinite satisfaction given to infinite justice, by betaking themselves under the covert<sup>22</sup> of the blood of the God-man. These, and many such there are, who are presumptuous dealers with God out of Christ—to whom He will be a consuming fire if they remain there.

### **c. Honest dealers with God**

Hence we may see who are the fair and honest dealers with God, even these that so take up God in Christ, and all things in Christ, that they dare not approach to God but in Christ. They dare not pray to God but in Christ. They dare not hope in God's mercy but through Christ. They dare not hope in the promise but as it is dipped in the blood of Christ. They dare expect nothing but in Christ.

But in and through Him and His blood, they come boldly and hope confidently. We have "boldness to enter in to the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb 10:19). If they joy in God, it is through Jesus Christ. If they deal with God for pardon, it is through the blood of Christ. If they deal with God for justification, it is through Christ as the Lord their righteousness. If they deal with God for sanctification, it is through Christ as their strength. If they deal with God for grace, it is through Christ as the storehouse of all grace.

### **d. Marks of discovering God in Christ**

Hence we may see what are the marks by which you may know if ever you have got a discovery of God in Christ.

1) What sight have you got of God out of Christ? They that have seen Him in the gospel-glass, have seen Him first in the glass of the Law. The faith of the Law ordinarily goes before the faith of the gospel. Have you got apprehension of Him as an angry God because of your sin—a threatening God, a dishonoured God, a distant God—and so apprehend yourself to be without God and without Christ in the world? Have you got an afflicting sense hereof?

2) What apprehension have you got of God for relieving you from this misery? If you viewed God in Christ, then you have seen Him a reconciled God, a promising God, a glorified God, and a nearly approaching God, coming towards you, flying on wings of grace and mercy, and so with healing under His wings (Mal 4:2), and with balm perfumed by Christ's righteousness.

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<sup>22</sup> **covert** – covering; hiding place.

3) What of God have you seen in Christ? Have you seen the greatest glory of God, and all the glory of God, in Him? Have you seen all the persons of the Godhead glorified, reconciled, satisfied, and well pleased in Him? Have you seen all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling and residing in Him—have you seen more of the glory of God in Him than ever you saw in the sun, moon, and stars? Have you seen the method of salvation through Him to be worthy of God, as contributing to the illustration of all the divine attributes, in so much that God, in redeeming Jacob, doth glorify Himself in Israel?

4) What of Christ have you seen God in? Have you seen the glory of God in His face (2Co 4:6): in His person, in His human nature, in His being—God manifested in the flesh? Have you seen God and His glory in the undertaking of Christ: in the incarnation of Christ; in His doing, dying, rising, ascending, and exaltation to the right hand of God? Have you seen God and His glory in the intercession of Christ, in His offices, in His names, in His fullness, in His righteousness, in His gospel and promises?

5) What way do you deal with God for blessings? Blessings are only in Him, because it is said, “Men shall be blessed in him” (Psa 72:17)? What way do you deal with God for promised privileges? Is it not only in Him, in Whom the promises are Yea and Amen? What way do you deal with Him for pardon? Is it only in Christ, Whose blood cleanseth from all sin? What way do you deal with Him for purification? Is it only in Christ, Who is made of God to us sanctification, and has promised the Spirit to take of the things of Christ and shew them unto us?

What way do you deal with God in prayer? Is it only in the name of Christ? What way do you deal with Him in praise? Is it only in Christ you offer praise as well as prayers? What way do you deal with God in believing? Is it by Him you believe in God? What way deal you with God in rejoicing? Do you joy in God through Jesus Christ, by Whom we have received the atonement?

What way deal you with God in approaching to Him in any duty? Know you what it is to have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by this new and living way that He hath consecrated through the veil of His flesh? What way do you deal with God in the tenor of your conversation? Is it such as becometh the gospel of Christ? Is it your desire and endeavour to spread the savour of His name that the Father may be glorified in the Son?

6) What hope and expectation have you in God with respect to future things? What hope have you in God with reference to days of trouble, trial, and calamity? Is it only in Christ the Refuge? What hope have you in God with ref-



erence to death? Is it only through Christ's taking away the sting of death? What hope in view of judgment? Is it in Christ, the Lord your righteousness? What hope of a happy eternity? Is it only in Christ? "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:23). Do you take up Christ Himself to be the true God and eternal life, and that everlasting glory lies in the everlasting vision of the glory of God in Christ, and fruition of this God?

#### **e. God is well-pleased in Christ**

Since God is in Christ, and in Him well pleased, then hence we may see and try whether He be well pleased with you in Him.

1) If He be well pleased with you in Him, then you have sometime seen and found God to be a displeased God—displeased with you, as it is said, "O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again" (Psa 60:1). They that have the faith of God's being well pleased, have felt His displeasure; and have been put in fear of His wrath because of sin.

2) You have seen there was no pleasing of God, nor pacifying of Him by any sacrifice or service of yours. "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Mic 6:6-7). "Sacrifices and offering thou didst not desire...Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Psa 40:6-8). Nothing could satisfy you but what satisfies God; you could find no rest but in Him in Whom God rests.

3) You will be well pleased with Christ—well pleased with the way of salvation through Him and His righteousness, even as God is well pleased for His righteousness sake—because as it magnifies the Law and makes it honourable, so grace reigns through that righteousness to eternal life. You will be well pleased to be in Him, saying, "This is my rest, here will I stay, for I like it well." Well pleased to be like Him, saying, "Oh, to be conformed to His image!" Well pleased to be for Him and upon His side—for His cause, truth, and interest—though all the world should be against Him. Well pleased to be with Him; to be with Him on earth and have fellowship and communion with Him; to be with Him in heaven and reckon it your chief happiness to be forever with the Lord. And if you be well pleased with Christ, you will be ill pleased with yourself, with your own righteousness, your best duties and performances.

4) You will be well pleased with God in Him. If God be well pleased with you in Christ, then you will be well pleased with God in Christ, that is, you will be reconciled to God in Him. The good pleasure and love of God in Christ will, according to the measure of your faith of it, kill your displeasure and enmity against God, for “Faith...worketh by love” (Gal 5:6), even as unbelief worketh by enmity. “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (Col 1:21). “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself, of twain, one new man, so making peace. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph 2:15-16). Not only the enmity between Jews and Gentiles, but between God and man.

You will be well pleased with God’s choice of Him. You will be ready to say as the queen of Sheba concerning Solomon in 2 Chronicles 9:8: [I am] well-pleased with God’s perfections as they are in Christ; well pleased with God’s accepting of Christ and His works, and advancing Him to the throne; well pleased with God’s anointing Him and putting all our stock in His hand.

#### **f. God is fierce out of Christ.**

Hence we may see what God is to the unbelieving Christless soul; as God in Christ is a well-pleased God, so God out of Christ is all things that are terrible and dreadful. He is infinite wrath and anger, fire and brimstone, and vengeance. God is the very hell of hell: “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (Isa 33:14). He is a God preparing flames of indignation to burn and destroy the soul that remains in that Christless state. “For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it” (Isa 30:33). See the description of hell in Revelation 20:14; it is called “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev 21:8).

#### **g. Preaching Christ**

Since God is in Christ, and in Him [is] a well pleased God, then hence we may see that Christ is the great theme that gospel ministers should preach upon. It is true, works and duties ought to be preached in their place; but one great difference between the gospel and the legal way of preaching is not that the one preacheth duties and the other not; but the legal way makes duties the

foundation of gospel privileges—whereas the gospel-way makes gospel privileges the foundation of duty, or Christ and His graces the foundation of all holy obedience. The one is for the order of the Covenant of Works:<sup>23</sup> Do, and then live; the other for the order of the new covenant: Live, and then do. You must have spiritual life in Christ before you can do any duty.

When we do not preach Christ, we do not preach the true God, nor true obedience unto Him. God out of Christ is not a well pleased God, but a revenging God. Therefore, obedience to God out of Christ is but rebellion. Faith in God out of Christ is but infidelity. Love to God out of Christ is but enmity, even as the mercy of God out of Christ is but fury. “He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father,” says Christ (Joh 5:23). We are to “confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,” says the apostle (Phi 2:11).

To neglect Christ, therefore, is to neglect the Father. And what makes gospel ministers harp most upon this strain? Because if we could once get people into Christ, they could not miss holiness. Why? Because they could not miss God Himself; they would in Him find the favour of God, the grace of God, the image of God—which is all in Christ and nowhere else. People may preach the Law, and yet miss the Law and all true obedience to it. But one cannot preach Christ and miss the Law; because, as God is in Christ, so the Law of God is in Him, Who is the end of the Law for righteousness (Rom 10:4); and in Whom, as our Ark, the Law is kept. The Law as a covenant is in Him, as the Lord our righteousness, for justification. The Law as a rule is in Him, as the Lord our strength, for sanctification. Therefore, if we could get people into Christ, then we would get them both justified and sanctified.<sup>24</sup>

If, therefore, any think, Why do you not preach up works and duties more? I will not say, if you be offended at the preaching of Christ, I fear you are ignorant of works and duties both. Yea, and ignorant of God to Whom you pretend homage and obedience. For, as God is in Christ, so He is in none of your works and duties that you perform while you are out of Christ. And you must be where God is—that is, in Christ—before ever you can perform a duty that God will have

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<sup>23</sup> **Covenant of Works** – agreement God established with Adam in the Garden of Eden before his fall into sin. It established man’s obligation to obey God, with the penalty of death for disobedience (Gen 2:16-17); cf. *The Covenants of Works and of Grace* by Walter Chantry, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>24</sup> **we could get them both justified and sanctified** – The author is not saying that a man can justify another, but that preaching is God’s chosen means (or instrument) which He uses to accomplish His purposes, often including justification and sanctification. Justification and sanctification are the work of God.

any regard unto. “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (Joh 15:4-5). “He hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Eph 1:6). Woe to these whom Christ is a stumbling-block, but blessed are all they that shall not be offended in Him.

#### **h. Where God is to be found**

Hence we may see where God and all things we need are now to be found: “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand” (Joh 3:35). Where God goes, all things go with Him. God is gone into Christ; therefore all things follow Him. And since God is in Christ, and all things with Him, then where should we go but where God goes? Where should the fish go, but where the water goes? God, the fountain of living waters, is gone into Christ, and let us then follow Him there. Where He loves to dwell, let us love to dwell; where He stays, let us stay; where He rests, let us rest. Let us take pleasure in Him in Whom God is well-pleased. “To whom shall we go?” says Peter, “Thou hast the words of eternal life” (Joh 6:68). O Sirs, to whom should we go, but to Him in Whom God is well-pleased. To whom should we go, but to Him that hath the eternal God in Him, eternal life in Him, eternal blessings in Him, and all things that concern eternal happiness in Him.

My friends, though you had never heard a word of the gospel before, there is more in this truth than a whole world is worth; namely, that God is in Christ, and in Him well pleased: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mat 17:5). He, and all things in Him, is offered in this gospel unto you. O Sirs, if your heart were open to receive Him, happy would you be to eternity. I know not what the joyful sound of the gospel is, if it be not the news of God’s being in Christ, and in Him well pleased. Blessed are the people that know it and embrace it, and cursed are the people that despise and undervalue it—and all the people of God must say, Amen.

How shall they escape who “neglect so great salvation?” (Heb 2:3). Happiness and misery in life, in death, and forever is now before you, O hearer of this gospel. If God be in Christ, and in Him well pleased, and if this be the gospel of Christ, then God is in it dealing with you—man, woman; with you and each of you of whatever station or denomination: high or low, rich or poor, young or old.

As it is said, when God appeared to Elijah at Horeb in 1 Kings 19:11-13, there was a strong wind; then there was an earthquake, but God was not there—but

after that there was a still small voice, and God was there. So we may say at this day, there are strong winds of temptation whereby many are made to turn with the wind, but God is not there. There are great earthquakes of confusion and commotion, but God is not there. And there are fires of division, wrath, and contention, but God is not there. O! Where is God then? Why, there is a still small voice of the gospel sounding in your ears; and if the name of Christ be recorded herein, God is there: “My name is in him” (Exo 23:21).

May He give proofs of His powerful presence by drawing out your heart to Him—of Whom the Father here proclaims, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am *well pleased*” (Mat 3:17).

