

THE
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I. THE NEW CHRISTOLOGY.

THE completion of Dr. Gerhart's *Institutes*¹ prepares the way for a full consideration of the theory which the distinguished author sets forth and maintains. The volumes give us a new work on systematic theology. They emanate from the Reformed (German) Church. They are able and entertaining. The spirit of their author is calm and reverent; his mind is broad and grasping; his method is positive and constructive rather than polemical and controversial; his style is plain and vigorous. The work possesses great value, but that value is chiefly negative, because these volumes are a concrete demonstration of the utter inability of modern progressives to fulfil their promises of a new theology and to make good their criticisms upon the old. Others of this school have written incisively upon topics in theology, and have had the polemical advantage of having that particular topic separated to itself, so that it could not be reinforced from the general system of truth to which it belonged; but Dr. Gerhart, bolder, braver, fairer, and truer than all his school, undertakes the construction of a system. His mind sees, and his heart feels, that, if the new principle be

¹ *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. By Emanuel V. Gerhart, D. D., LL. D., Professor of Systematic and Practical Theology in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church at Lancaster, Pa. Complete in two octavo volumes, 1744 pages; per volume, \$3.00. New York, London, and Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company. 1894.

V. PAUL'S SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL.

“BUT of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Thus wrote Paul to the Corinthians, and in that terse language, and comprehensive sweep of thought, he compresses a whole system of theology. To analyze and elucidate, as far as may be, in Scripture language, the meaning of these words, will be the object of this paper.

“Of him are ye in Christ Jesus.” God is the origin and source of this new life in the soul. This is true as to the very scheme of love on which the salvation of the soul is founded: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John iii. 16.) “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John iv. 10.) “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans v. 8.) The very fact that there is a method by which those who are dead in sin may be brought to life is due to God's own adorable grace. There was no eye to pity, and no arm to save, when God took on him to furnish a plan for the salvation of the lost. There was no desert in man, but of God's free will and adorable mercy he made this covenant with his own co-equal Son, to furnish a ransom for the sins of the lost.

God, too, is the source of life to the individual believer: “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” (Rom. ix. 16.) It was not that we first chose him, but that he chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world. It was due alone to the special grace, to the distinctive love and mercy of God, that any one of us was called from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. “I have loved thee,” he says, “with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” (Jer. xxxi. 3.)

And then, too, it was God who inwrought this new life in the soul by the Holy Spirit: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Eph. ii. 1.) "Quickened together with Christ," when he breathed the very life of Christ into our souls. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John iii. 8.) "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 12, 13.)

This same apostle says: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John iii. 9.) And again, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." (1 John iv. 7.) And again, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." (1 John v. 1.) And again, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John v. 20.) From these precious words we are obliged to believe that God himself is the author of this spiritual life which we feel throbbing within us. As in the beginning God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and he became a living soul, so, in each case of genuine conversion, God does breathe into such a soul a new life, a spiritual life, a life which is just as immortal as the life of God himself. And what is taught us in the word is confirmed by our own personal experience. Explain it as we may, or rather as we may try to do, there is a consciousness in the heart of every true child of God that whatever of good is found in him is due to the sovereign and adorable grace of God. If he is a Christian, it is because God took him as he was, and made him what he is; took away the old, hard, insensible heart of stone, and gave him a heart of flesh; washed away his sins in the blood of Christ, and made him a new creature, or a new creation in Christ Jesus, so that old things passed away, and all things became new.

Then, again, this life which we receive from God is "in Christ Jesus." "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus." To prove this, we have only to call to mind some of those familiar texts in which Christ is held up as the source of light and life to the believer. "I am the light of the world." "I am the bread of life." "I will give you that water, which if a man drink he shall never thirst." "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "Abide in me, for without me ye can do nothing." Or, as John says, "This life is in his Son." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.) This mysterious and subtle something which we call "life" no one can understand. It eludes our search, no matter how, or where, we seek to find the hidden source. Men dig down into the rocks and find "fossils," which, they say, were once the abode of life. They have followed it down from one form to another, lower and lower still, and away down in what seems to be a mere mass of spawn, or "protoplasm," there is what is called life. And all the way up from this lowest germ to its highest form of animal, or reptile, or insect, there is still what is called life. From the microscopic animalcule in a drop of water to the great whale in the Northern seas there is this same principle of life. It bursts in the little flower that blooms under the eternal snows of the Alps, and grows as a giant in the immense trees of the Yosemite. It has been known to hide itself in a grain of wheat, wrapped in the folds of a mummy for thousands of years, and when that grain of wheat was planted, the life there would show itself and burst out into "first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear." It is found in the insect coral that gradually lifts the reef to the surface of the ocean, and in the monsters of the deep that make their beds in the grottoes of these coral reefs. It is in man a principle, an element of his being, that causes the heart to beat, the lungs to breathe, the blood to pulsate, the stomach to digest, the hands to work, the whole nervous system to be sensitive to every impulse. It is that strange, mysterious, subtle something, which no microscope can see, which no lancet can dissect,

which no anatomist can locate in this human body, itself so fearfully and wonderfully made. We all know it is here somewhere, hidden away—the secret spring that keeps all these wheels in motion. But where it is, and what it is, no scientific man can tell. While here in the body, there is life and motion and activity; but when withdrawn, or crushed out, as it may be at any moment, we are dead. There is a sudden collapse of the system, a sudden paralysis of the powers, and we are dead, and crumble back to dust from which we sprang. And now, as there is a life in the body, so there is a life in the soul; a spiritual, immortal life, which God breathed into the soul. “And this life is in his Son.” Says Paul, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Phil. i. 21.) “For 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. ii. 19, 20.) And again, “To whom God would make known 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, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” (Col. i. 27, 28.) “Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Here is the point. This life is in Christ. It is Christ in you, a spiritual life, a divine life within this human life, that vitalizes these mortal bodies.

And what is more, that life is an immortal life. There is no power in this universe that can crush out that life. The cold of winter and the heat of summer cannot reach it. The most malignant of diseases cannot touch it. Satan himself cannot take it away, as he could not take away the life of Job after God said to him, “Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life” (Job ii. 6), *i. e.*, “You may afflict him with all sorts of calamities, but you shall not touch his life.” So God says to Satan now, “Here is the body of my saints, and you may send sickness and disasters and all sorts of troubles and calamities to rack these frail bodies. Here is their soul, and you may tempt them away from the right path, and allure them by false lights, and fascinate them with the

glitter and glare of what seems bright and dazzling. But there is a life there, a secret life, a hidden life, a spiritual life, an immortal life, which you dare not, and shall not, touch. It is Christ in the soul, and you can no more tempt him now than you could when you tried all your subtle arts in the wilderness, where he was led to be tempted of the devil."

"Of him are ye in Christ Jesus." There is the ground of Christian stability and perseverance. The life of Christ in the soul makes him one with Christ, and a union thus formed by the grace of God can never be broken. The true branch can never be cut from the true vine. The living member can never be cut off from the living head. The real sheep can never be so thoroughly lost that the Good Shepherd will not find it and bring it back into the fold. If it were an artificial limb, it might be taken off; but it is a living part of a living body, and the same blood circulates in all parts of the body. If it were a fungous growth, like the mistletoe, it might suck the sap from the branch on which it grows, and thus destroy the life of the tree, and thus its own life also. But it is a branch of the true vine, drawing its own life from the life of the vine, and growing and bearing fruit to the glory of God's grace. If it were a galvanized dead body, when the galvanic current ceased the apparent life would cease also. But it is a living body, and a living soul, a living body because it is animated by a living soul. And Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the life of that living soul. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 9, 10, 11.)

And now, having glanced at these points, let us look at the logical results of this mystical union. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us *wisdom*." On this point let us study the wholesome words of Dr. Archibald Alexander: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, from whom and through whom emanate all the rays of divine truth which ever enter the mind of man. "This is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." Christ is that great Prophet that should come into the world, like unto Moses, whom the Jews expected, but whom they would not receive when he actually made his appearance. He is the great Teacher, by whose instruction all the children of God are brought into the path of life. "All thy children shall be taught of God."

There is no interference in the prophetic office of Christ and the teaching of the Holy Spirit, but a perfect concurrence. Christ furnishes the lesson and the Holy Spirit renders it effectual. "He shall not speak of himself, but he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." "Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing unto us by his word and Spirit the will of God for our salvation." "In him dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Man is endowed with reason, but by sin his mind has become blind, and reason itself is perverted. He not only needs external light, but to have the organ of vision rectified, without which the light "will shine in darkness, and the darkness comprehend it not." Christ becomes wisdom to the believer, by making him wise to know the way of salvation. He first teaches the sinner something of the depth and malignity of his disease. He wounds that he may heal. When by law the knowledge of sin is acquired, then he guides the convicted sinner to the cross, and opens his eyes to behold the Lamb of God.

He is not only the wisdom of God, as he instructs the ignorant, and opens the eyes of the blind; but, as the God-man Mediator, is the most wonderful exhibition of the wisdom of God ever made to the universe. The whole plan of redemption is resplendent with wisdom. The contrivance of a way by which God can be just, while he justifies the ungodly, is so replete with wisdom, that the angels contemplate it with profound astonishment. The gospel, which is the revelation of this plan, is, therefore, called the "wisdom of God." In this there is a depth which human reason cannot fathom. The Apostle Paul, therefore, says, "But

we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory." We may, therefore, in the contemplation of this subject, exclaim with the apostle: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Christ is then "of God made unto us wisdom" in a twofold respect: 1, As he is the brightest display of the infinite wisdom of God; and 2, By teaching his people all that is necessary to make them wise unto salvation. He teaches them what they are to believe, and what they ought to do.

Again, "He of God is made unto us *righteousness*." This does not mean that the moral character of Christ is infused into believers. This false notion sometimes causes confusion in the mind of those who are anxious to know the truth. Justification is an act, not a work of God. It is an act of his grace, in which he counts over to us, or sets down to our account, the righteousness of Christ. It is clearly brought out in these words, "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." (2 Cor. v. 21.) Here it is plainly intimated, that just as Christ was looked upon as a sinner, despised, rejected, condemned, and crucified as a sinner, so we are looked upon as righteous, justified as righteous, "only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." In other words, there is legally and really a transfer of the sin from the sinner to the sinless; and then there is legally and really a transfer of this righteousness from the Righteous to the sinner. And hence, in the eye of the law we stand justified and complete in Christ. "He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "He is the Lord our righteousness."

It was in this sense that Paul wrote: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.) "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." (Rom. v. 11.) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk

not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 1, 2, 3, 4.)

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. viii. 29-34.) Here, then, we have a statement of the doctrine in the words of the Bible, that Christ of God is made unto us, not only wisdom, but righteousness.

Again, "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and *sanctification*." "Sanctification," says the *Shorter Catechism*, "is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness." Granting that this is correct, we notice the sharp contrast presented between sanctification and justification. The one is an "act of God's grace," and the other is the "work of God's grace." The one is a judicial act that is done in a moment, and forever; the other is a work which commences with regeneration, continues all through life, and is only completed in "the glory which is to be revealed hereafter." It is that mysterious process by which, through grace, we are "changed into the likeness of Christ," are made "partakers of the divine nature," are cleansed, purified, sanctified, until at death the souls of believers are made "perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory."

Now, the agent for this specific work is the Holy Spirit, hence the question arises, How is Christ made to us sanctification? There are two senses in which this is true. It was due to the work of Christ, predicted and then performed, that the Holy Spirit came. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John xiv. 16, 17.) "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (John xv. 26.) With these words of promise agree the words of Paul: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.) Peter also says, "Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter i. 22, 23.)

But there is another sense in which Christ is made unto us sanctification. Paul said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. vi. 14.) There is no power on earth that has such a sanctifying influence on the believing soul as the cross of Christ. There is no pathos like the pathos of the cross. There is no scene that so tends to soften and subdue, and make tender the heart of a Christian as that sad and solemn scene which tells us of a Saviour's sufferings, testifying to a Saviour's undying, unquenchable love. The judgments of the Lord may startle us. The terrors of the Lord may frighten us. The justice and the vengeance of the Lord may drive us to Christ as a refuge. But the cross of Christ alone can draw us to Christ, as he said: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

And under the shadow of that cross, "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

Lastly, "he of God is made unto us," not only "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification," but "*redemption.*" In one sense, this may be regarded as a summing up of all the rest; but more than that is wrapped up in that word "*redemption.*" "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. iii. 13.) "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter i. 18, 19.) "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to-wit, the redemption of our body." (Rom. viii. 23.) It is in such texts as these, comparing Scripture with Scripture, that we are to find out the full meaning of that word "*redemption.*" It is more than justification, and more than sanctification, while it includes both.

In the old days of savage warfare the captives were sometimes redeemed with a heavy ransom. When the money was paid, the captive was set free. But he may have contracted, during his confinement, some dreadful disease, and this required many years and many remedies for his complete restoration. Even when released, he might be a long distance from home, and might have to pass through many a scene of danger, of hardship, and of trial, to reach his distant home. So it is with Christ's ransomed or redeemed saints. The ransom has been paid in full with his own precious blood. It is a full satisfaction to the law and to the justice of God. It is a ransom for the body, and a ransom for the soul. But the ransomed ones are still diseased with a dreadful malady. There is a remnant of corruption. There is a law in the members that wars against the Spirit. And then, too, they are far away from home. There is a long, dreary, dangerous pilgrimage before them. It is through much tribulation that they are to enter the kingdom. When John saw some of them in

heaven, the angel told him, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. vii. 14.) But they had come out of the tribulation, and had washed their robes and made them white. And, blessed be God, so shall it be with all his ransomed ones. The ransom is all paid, and "he that hath begun a good work in us shall continue it until the day of Jesus Christ," and "we shall be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." The soul must be tried, and "purified so as by fire." The dross must be burnt up, and the gold be refined. The long journey must be travelled, amid dust and weariness. The body must die, for it "is not quickened, except it die." It must be buried, as Christ himself was buried. But it shall rise again, as "he rose again, and became the firstfruits of them that slept." "Sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption." "Sown in dishonor, it shall be raised in glory." "Sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power." "Sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body." "So when this corruption shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 54-57.)

Thus have I tried, in Bible language, to bring out the meaning of this comprehensive sentence: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." And the natural and logical result of it is, "That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." It is well for us, now and then, to take up some such pregnant passage as a summary of the whole gospel, and get as clear a conception as we can of God's plan of "salvation by grace." It is well for us to dig down to the very foundation of our hope, and thus "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear." (1 Peter iii. 15.)

Such a subject, such a summary of sound doctrine, may tend to humble the pride of man, but "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted"; and, certainly, it does tend to exalt, and to magnify, and to glorify, "the grace of God which bringeth salvation." "Salvation by grace" is the key-note to the whole gospel, and this is the song that shall be sung at that time of which we read in Isaiah: "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there; and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

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