

(Anno Domini, abbreviated AD or A.D. expressly complies with Isaiah 61:2 & Luke 4:19, i.e. *"To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."* (Isaiah 61:2))



<sup>1</sup> If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. <sup>3</sup> For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Col 3:1-4 (KJV)

In yesterday's conclusion to Chapter 2, I drove my points with what some may consider uncharitable zeal. Do I hate those who are ignorant of the both the Spirit and Truth of the Gospel? Of course not, otherwise why write and preach for the purpose of revealing the beauty of the Gospel; but I do hate the ignorance borne out of a complacent view of Holy Scripture. If we love the Lord, we will, in the very least, attempt to understand His Word better by diligent study and comparison of meanings. Yesterday, we discussed the polemic approach to preaching and teaching – a method used almost exclusively by the Reformers. They upheld Truth, and disparaged error. I reviewed a contemporary article on Polemic Theology from a book in my library after writing my devotion yesterday. The author wrote, "I am amazed, in a day when all of the emphasis is on ecumenism that we would even raise the question of Polemic Theology." He is being true to his colors for almost all theology today is a conglomerate of mixed views of every stripe. We dare not stand by a concrete opinion or interpretation of Scripture lest we offend the Methodist, the Anglicans, the Presbyterians, or the Lutherans. So we have become strong on tolerance, and miserably lacking on principle and truth. Lukewarm best describes the theology of our day. Nothing is certain – nothing is absolute – all is relative. We preach and teach to convict, not to win an argument!

Paul was a loving and Godly Apostle who was just as polemical as could be, yet he was loving in his approach and teaching. He would not compromise on God's Word because he BELIEVED IT! I have learned many great truths and understandings from the writings of the great masters of faith. I love to read their works because I know they write out of a love for God and His Word. They are not writing out of a desire for filthy lucre, or to write such sensational, extra-biblical books as to gain the acclaim of the ignorant masses. They are SERIOUS about Truth! Why would an advocate of the views

of Arminius write a book extolling the virtues of Calvin, or vice versa. Both men have written splendid works defending their views, and they both base their contrary views on Holy Writ. I can respect such men who so base their writings; however, Calvin and Arminius do not write Holy Scripture – they merely write of their interpretation thereof. If we would only adhere to the Author who wrote the Bible rather than those theologians (good men though they are), we might come far closer to truth than if we stake out theological positions and disregard all scripture that seems to contrast with those positions. We have, in the Articles of Religion of the Reformed Church of England, an excellent and Bible-based summary of the Doctrines of Faith and Grace. The Articles do not exceed the clear Canon of Scripture in meaning. They allow that God's Word does possess mysteries of which we may not (and surely are not) fully aware.

The first verse of chapter three is so pregnant with meaning is it difficult to confine our remarks on it to the context of a mere devotion. ***"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."*** Remember the day you came, as a forlorn sinner, to a lonely well at noon day to draw water of earthly nature? You may say, but wait, you must refer to a certain Samaritan woman who came at the noonday hour to draw water – not ME? No, I mean YOU, for we are all represented in that woman. We all must have come to the Well to meet Christ at some point, and have learned of Him. Do we yet seek worldly water from deep in the earth (at the bottom of a 50 ft well) or have we found, as the Samaritan Woman found, the very Fountain of Living Waters that will quench our thirst forever! How is it that we can be ***"risen with Christ?"***

If we are crucified with Christ, and buried with Christ, we will certainly arise in the resurrection to eternal life with Christ! We must be about following our Shepherd through that valley of the SHADOW OF DEATH (only a shadow and not the real thing). We are as near-sighted sheep that can only see the grass that is within a small circle of where we now stand, but the Good Shepherd knows where the green pastures and still waters are abundant, and He leads us continually on the Way. If we will keep our focus on the Shepherd – as Peter while he walked on the sea - we must look up to Him and not down to the earth and its withered provision. Christ is RISEN! ***"Believest thou this?"*** All that He ever told us, He has done. His Word has not failed in any point. If we believe that Christ is risen, we must know that He has risen to the Father and makes intercession for us there. There are two different attorneys who seek our souls – our Adversary, the Devil; and our Advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you ever consider what great event occurs before you come before the Judgment Seat of God? ***"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."*** (Rev 20:9-10) These are two very sobering verses.

Note that Satan's armies, which are gathered from the four corners of the earth and are so many as the "sands of the sea," compass the "Camp of the Saints." A Camp is a very small cantonment area for the Church Militant – yet her Captain and Master rules the Seas and Heavens. He sends forth fire from Heaven to destroy the miscreants of Satan – and Satan himself. The beleaguered Camp (Church) emerges victorious – not by the strength of its own might, but by the strength of the Savior whom it adores. What happened to that adversarial attorney who seeks to prosecute you for your forgiven sins? He is cast into the Lake of Fire. What next? This is the great comfort of the saints:

*“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev 20:11-15)*

What a comfort to know that our Adversary will not be present at the Judgment, but our Defense Attorney will be there to receive us and to claim us as His own – bought and paid for by His last drop of blood at Calvary’s dark brow.

*“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”* What are those eternal treasures of the snow that we should seek on high? They are the treasures of grace, mercy, love, truth, salvation, hope, and the Person of Jesus Christ who is the Author of all of these. How much of your wealth will you carry beyond the grave? What of your Wall Street investments, or your golden rings and jewelry, your fine Porsche, your Madison Avenue flat, the accumulated wealth of hoarded riches? None shall endure beyond the grave. You will be leaving all of these earthly possessions on the earth (which you are leaving). The treasures we have deposited on high shall be waiting our claim just beyond the Gates of Splendor. Remember the tear-streaked face of the little Asian or African child whom you offered a cold glass of water, and a meal. THAT will be waiting in Heaven’s bank. What of the elderly widow, helplessly waiting by her unserviceable car, for which you stopped and assisted by caring for her and seeing that she was in good stead before bidding farewell? THAT will be waiting in Heaven’s Bank. Even the abandoned and starving creatures deserted on a roadside that you stopped and showed mercy to – these will also await your claim. Your service to God, to fellow man, and to the creatures of God – these are all treasures on deposit in Heaven. Have you, friend, made a deposit today?

*“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”* In bygone days, we were dean “in trespasses and sin.” (Ephesians 2:1-5) but when we have gone into that Ark of our Salvation – Jesus Christ – we are dead IN Him to sin, and alive in Him to righteousness forevermore. We are hidden in that Great Rock of our Salvation. Being IN Christ means being a part of Him....having His Mind as our minds, His heart as our hearts, and His will as our will. The world cannot find us out though they seek our souls to destroy them. Neither can the world comprehend our Hiding Place in Christ. Christ and the Father are one. Christ grants us the privilege to be ONE in Him and, if one in Him, and He is in the Father, than we are One in Christ in the Father as well.

*“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory?”* If we are in Christ, we shall appear wherever our transport appears. He is the *“Way, the Truth, and the Life.”* No death can inhabit the Body of Christ – for all is life and Light! In Him is no darkness. He is our Life because we are in His heart.