Colossians - Commentaries by Henry Allan Ironside

Daily Sacrifice, September 25

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Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit"—Colossians 1:8.

WHEN the Holy Spirit is given His rightful place in the heart, He will lead us into the life of abundant blessing. The happiest people on earth are those who are subject to the will of God and are occupied with Christ and not with self. For these there will be countless opportunities to manifest the grace of God toward those whom they contact from day to day. And as they serve, they will find richer enjoyment than the worldling can ever find in his life of selfishness.

—T. P.

Daily Sacrifice, September 26

"God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" — Colossians 1:27.

PAUL speaks of a sacred secret, the mystery of Christ and the Church, which was revealed to him that he might make it known to others. It is the precious truth that every believer is a member through the Spirit's indwelling of that one Body, of which the risen, ascended Lord is the Head. And just as the same life that is the head of our mortal bodies is in every part of our physical being, so Christ is in each of His members, and He Himself is the basis of all their confidence, the hope of glory and assurance of everlasting felicity. He too is the strength of our souls, come to live out His own life in us as we walk in fellowship with Him.

—Maj. D. W. Whittle.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, October 31

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church: whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God" — Colossians 1:24, 25.

A DISPENSATION is a stewardship or economy in God's ways with men, in which He is dealing with them in a different way from that in which He has dealt with them before. Some people decry what is called "dispensational truth," yet all Bible students believe in it to some degree. No one seriously contends that God is dealing with men today in the same manner as He dealt with them under law from Moses to Christ. And it is clear from Scripture that when the Church age is ended and the kingdom age has dawned, man's responsibility will be different from what it is now. The word "dispensation" is found four times in the Authorized Version and five times in the Revision. It is a translation of the Greek word oikonomia, from which we get our word "economy," and is translated also "order," "administration," and "stewardship." It refers to the ordering if God's ways with men.

—Gilpin.

Daily Sacrifice, September 27

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" — Colossians 2:16, 17.

IN every dispensation many have been found who, misunderstanding God's reasons for giving to His people visible ordinances designed to picture different aspects of His redemptive grace and His purpose for His saints, have exalted these outward signs to such a place as to make salvation depend upon their observance, thus nullifying the truth of justification by faith alone. This is always true of ritualists, to whom sacramental observances mean more than the truths they illustrate. But the most punctilious attention to rites and ceremonies and the keeping of holy days can never produce the new birth or clear the soul from the guilt of sin. When our Lord was on earth, His chief conflicts were with those who hoped by dead works to purchase that which God offered to give freely to all who came to Him in faith.

—Thos. Spurgeon.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, November 1

“And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are riser, with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead” —Colossians 2:10-12.

THE believer is looked upon by God as so completely identified with Christ that His death is viewed as ours, and we are seen as buried in His grave and alive in His resurrection. But there is more than this. It is not only that our standing before God is perfect because of our identification with Christ; but as to our new state or condition we are so intimately linked up with Christ that we partake of His fullness and His life has been imparted to us, so that now as we live by faith, that new life is operative in us, enabling us to glorify God in all our ways. From our glorified Head in heaven grace flows down to every member of His Body on earth, sufficing for every emergency.

—Fawcett.

Daily Sacrifice, September 28

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him”—Colossians 3:16, 17.

THE Word and the Spirit. The same effects are here seen to result from a heart filled with the Word of God, as when one is said to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-20). It is a well-known axiom that “things equal to the same thing are equal to one another.” Clearly, then, to be controlled by the Word of Christ and to be filled with the Spirit are one and the same. Or, to put it another way, the Spirit-filled believer is the Word-controlled believer. We are filled with the Spirit only as we walk in obedience to the revealed will of God, set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, November 2

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” — Colossians 3:1-3.

IT is not as though Paul cast any doubt on our having been raised with Christ, and our identification with Him as He sits at God’s right hand. But it is as though he said, “Since these things are true, now set your mind on things above.” We belong to the scene where Christ our Head has gone. We have died to the old life and all that belonged to it. We are now associated with Christ in new creation. Our real life is that divinely imparted eternal life which we received in regeneration. Nothing on earth can satisfy its desires or meet its demands. We must look up to where our Saviour sits exalted. As we are occupied with Him the things of this lower realm will lose their power over our souls, and heavenly things become more real.

—Mary Bowley.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, November 3

“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all” —Colossians 3:9-11.

GOD is called the “God of truth” (Isa. 65:16). The Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of truth” (John 16:13). Christ said, “I am... the Truth” (John 14:6). No one can have fellowship with the Holy Trinity who does not walk in the truth (2 John 4; 3 John 4). God desires truth in the inward parts (Psa. 51:6). Falsehood of every kind is hateful to Him. There is nothing that so manifests the alienation of the natural man from God as his tendency to falsehood. Of the wicked we are told that they go astray from their very birth speaking lies (Psa. 58:3). Satan himself is the father of lies (John 8:44). It is he who injects the venom of untruthfulness into the heart of man (Acts 5:3). Only by the new birth can this lying spirit be overcome. It is as the regenerated man yields himself to God as one alive from the dead that he learns to delight in the truth objectively revealed and to walk in the truth subjectively.

Daily Sacrifice, September 29

“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh;... fearing God: ... Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven” — Colossians 3:22; 4:1.

WHERE the gospel is believed and the Christian program actually accepted, employers become considerate of those who work for them, and employees give conscientious and adequate service in return for wages received. The Bible, and particularly the New Testament, ever recognizes the relationship of what we call Capital and Labor, and never hints at the necessity of overthrowing this order, but rather regulates it according to the law of love and principles of righteousness. If men are rich, they are to hold their wealth as subject to God Himself and to use it for His glory and the relief of those in distress (1 Tim. 6:17-19). If men are dependent on their own toil for daily bread, they are to be honest and faithful in meeting their obligations (Col. 3:22-25).

—Georgians M. Taylor.

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds” — Colossians 4:2, 3.

PRAYER is talking with God. He invites us to come in all simplicity and to tell Him our needs (which He promises to supply) and to intercede on behalf of others. Paul, the very chiefest of all the apostles, felt the need of the prayers of others. Again and again he pleads with the believers in various places to speak to God concerning him and his ministry. How much do we pray for Christ’s servants? And, for ourselves, do we pray for God to endorse our programs, or do we ask that He will reveal His mind to us and give us grace to act accordingly?

—Helen McDowell.

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