

Christ In Us the Hope of Glory

“That 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.” Colossians 1:27

In handling these words I shall observe this method: (1) Speak to the coherence; (2) Explain the terms of the text; (3) Draw both parts of the text together into one doctrinal observation.

Chapter 1. The Coherence

The coherence lies thus: Colossae was a city in Phrygia in the lesser Asia where, by the ministry of Epaphras, a church was gathered and soon after troubled by certain seducers, pressing upon them the observation of Mosaic ceremonies and many human traditions. Epaphras goes to Rome to acquaint Paul with the present state of this church (verse 8), whereupon he, as the great apostle of the Gentiles, upon whom the care of all the churches lay, writes this epistle to the Colossians, taking notice of their conversion to the faith and giving thanks to God upon that account (verse 3). He prayed for them “that they might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing and be strengthened with all might unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness” (verses 9–11).

Then he takes occasion to set forth the excellence of Christ preached unto the Gentiles, laying open the benefits of our Redeemer (verses 12–14). And then he gives an admirable character of the divine person of the Redeemer, from verse 15 to verse 23, exhorting them thereupon to persevere (verse 23) by divers arguments drawn from the necessity of perseverance, from the multitude of those who had embraced the gospel,

from his own ministry, from the afflictions they suffered for the gospel (verse 24), and from that obligation that lay upon him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (verse 25), extolling the dignity of the gospel as a mystery hid from ages but now made manifest to the saints (verse 26). And in the beginning of this 27th verse he sets forth the riches of this mystery. He shows in the words of the text how all this is contained in Christ, of whom they were now possessed. They had Him in their very hearts, dwelling there, which is "Christ in you the hope of glory." So much for the coherence.

The Terms of the Text

I now come to open the terms of the text, to show you what is meant by "Christ" and what is meant by "the hope of glory." And there is more of mystery in the first part of the text, "Christ in us," than in the second part, "the hope of glory." Not but that there is great mystery in this too, as will appear by and by, but, I say, there is more of mystery in the first part because we have some natural notions of hope and glory that may help to lead us into the spiritual sense of the apostle here. But we can have no natural notion of Christ being in us; this is above all the apprehensions of reason and must be taken in by pure faith from the Word of God revealing it. Therefore I will dispatch the second part of the text first and show what we are to understand by "the hope of glory." We will look first at what is meant by "hope" and second what is meant by "glory."

All hope presupposes desire, though every desire does not amount to hope. It must be desire that is continued. Hope implies desire maintained and kept up in the soul. We may have a sudden liking, a pleasing, transient fancy to such or such a thing from the first glance of the eye upon it; this is not properly hope. The moralists tell us it is a durable, permanent, fixed, habitual desire when the mind is set upon such a thing, dwells upon it, must have it, is continually reaching out after it from an eager propensity towards it so that it cannot be satisfied