

## Christ's Triumph Over the Demonic Powers (3)

In the last two issue of the *News*, we have been considering this inspired statement by the apostle Paul: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:14-15).

This is not the only Scripture to speak of Christ's blessed victory over Satan at the cross. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews writes, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might *destroy* him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (2:14-15).

Likewise, the apostle John declares, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might *destroy* the works of the devil" (I John 3:8).

Before the cross and with a view to its accomplishment, our Lord Jesus proclaimed, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be *cast out*" (John 12:31).

Not long after the fall, God Almighty promised, "I will put enmity between thee [i.e., Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed [i.e., Christ]; it [i.e., He] shall *bruise thy head*, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

All this helps us answer two crucial questions. First, for whom were Satan and his host defeated, disarmed and made a public spectacle at the cross? Not for all men head for head. The devil and his demons rule over many, even most, people. He is not disarmed regarding his abuse of the law against them or rule over them through sin. He is even called "the god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4; John 12:31).

The truth is that Jesus Christ's sacrifice is particular, for the elect alone. He made atonement for His chosen people's iniquities, making satisfaction to God's law for us. In this way, He disarmed Satan of these weapons so that he cannot condemn us. Thus Isaiah exults in our Lord's victory: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (53:11-12).

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Second, in what way were the devil and his demons defeated, disarmed and made a public spectacle at the cross? Christ's atonement justifies His elect before Jehovah, dealing with our sin and God's law, so that Satan is disarmed regarding us in these crucial areas. With respect to our sanctification, we add that our flesh is dethroned and not dominant, and Jesus is Lord over us.

However, it is also true that Satan and his demons tempt us and even seduce us into sin, for our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8).

We must keep praying the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer: "*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*"; that is, since we are so weak in ourselves that we cannot stand a moment; and besides this, since our mortal enemies, the devil, the world, and our own flesh cease not to assault us, do Thou therefore preserve and strengthen us by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may not be overcome in this spiritual warfare, but constantly and strenuously may resist our foes, till at last we obtain a complete victory" (*Heidelberg Catechism*, A. 127).

But Satan does not rule over us and he is a defeated foe. At the judgment day, he will be made a public spectacle, even before the wicked, and he shall be cast into the lake of fire as he deserves (Rev. 20:10)!

All of this is good news for the Christian! First, in Christ we are "more than conquerors" over the demonic powers (Rom. 8:37-39). We triumph over the guilt of sin and have victory over the law as a condemning power!

Second, we are also "hyper-conquerors," another translation of the famous phrase in Romans 8:37, over the (ungodly) world. We are victors over the world which stands in the service of Satan and sin, the world as it works through humanism and false religion to make righteousness appear wicked, sin look good, truth seem foolishness and the lie to be veracity itself.

Rejoice in this testimony of sacred Scripture: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (I John 5:4-5).

*Rev. Stewart*

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For further study on this subject, listen to "The Devil and His Demons," online ([cprc.co.uk/belgic-confession-class/](http://cprc.co.uk/belgic-confession-class/)) or order the box set of 10 CDs from the CPRC Bookstore for just £10 (including P&P in the UK). We now have 93 titles of box sets of CDs and/or DVDs for sale ([cprc.co.uk/bookstore/](http://cprc.co.uk/bookstore/)).

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## The Idea of the Organic in Scripture (4)

How does God reveal Himself in the salvation of His church? What does it mean that He works His great work of salvation *organically*? That is the question we now face.

I have written about the idea of God's organic working in a world of sin, beginning with the sin of Adam. Adam's sin brought the guilt and the pollution of sin upon the whole human race. Death was the punishment for sin, and all the grief and sorrow we witness in the world today is God's punishment upon a sinful human race. The awful wickedness of the idol worship of the heathen, the cruelty of Islam and the debauchery of Western civilization are all due to the evil development of Adam's one sin of disobeying God.

But it is not and never was God's ultimate purpose to abandon a sinful world to its own depravity. We are now talking about the counsel of God: His eternal purpose in all His works. What is the highest and final purpose of the living God in His eternal counsel?

God is sovereign in all things—or He is not God! He does all His good pleasure, and does not purposelessly or arbitrarily exercise His sovereignty. He is not fickle in the exercise of His sovereign rule. Nor does He abdicate His throne or share His sovereignty with foolish and depraved man. He is God! There is none else!

Scripture tells us that the eternal purpose of God's eternal counsel is His own great glory, the glory of His infinite majesty, His holiness, His perfections, His blessedness, His supreme joy in Himself and all His virtues as the Triune God. The Bible tells us that He has chosen to reveal all His glory in the highest possible way. What is this highest possible way? Again, according to Scripture, the highest possible way for God to reveal Himself is through Jesus Christ, His eternal Son, the perfect and full manifestation of God.

The opening words of Hebrews declare this astounding truth: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (1:1-3).

Colossians 1:14-19 and Proverbs 8:22-36 teach the same ideas as Hebrews 1. In this chapter, we have enough scriptural truth to occupy all our time throughout our entire life. This passage is so profound and wonderful that I have never dared to preach on it lest I do it injustice by making our God and His Christ less glorious than they are.

A few obvious truths found in these three passages are important for us now.

God's eternal counsel to reveal His glory makes it clear that He determined to reveal Himself through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the purpose of the counsel, the goal of the God who has determined to reveal Himself in the highest and best way. Everything in His counsel is subservient to this purpose. Everything must serve this goal. All God determined to do, which is all He does, serves the revelation of His glory in Jesus.

Christ is, therefore, before Adam in the counsel of God—if I may speak of one thing

as "before" another, given that God's counsel is eternal, that is, timeless, not made in the framework of time's succession of moments.

That this is true is evident from Paradise itself. The whole of the original garden pictured the tabernacle and temple, where sacrifices were made: the Garden of Eden = the outer court; Paradise itself = the holy place; the holy of holies = the tree of life.

The carnivorous animals were created with jaws and digestive systems fit to eat meat, when there was no death. The immune system was created in man, when there was no disease. Most important of all, Christ Himself was created in Adam and Eve, as was the entire human race, which was born from Adam and of which Christ is a part.

In other words, in His creation God had another organism as the goal of His eternal purpose. Not the organism of the creation with all its sub-organisms, and not the organism of the human race with Adam at its head, is God's eternal purpose, but Christ who was destined to be head over all in this new organism through which God would reveal His great glory.

Christ is God's only begotten Son, who was made like us in all things except sin. He had no sin because the Triune God was His Father and He was born of the virgin Mary by the miracle of conception without a man. The Holy Ghost came upon Mary and "the power of the Highest" overshadowed her (Luke 1:35). He was, and is, the Son of Man. He is also the Son of God, "Light of Light, true God of true God," to use the words of the *Nicene Creed*.

Does this all mean that the first Paradise and the first Adam mean nothing? No, they were "the shadow of things to come" and thus serve the purpose of achieving the goal of God's counsel in Christ, "the last Adam" (I Cor. 15:45).

Was the original creation with Adam at its head spoiled by Adam's transgression such that God had to reformulate His counsel because Adam made it impossible for Him to realize His purpose in the original Paradise? No, the first Adam was "the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. 5:14).

One more significant point. The Scriptures teach that Christ is the one true organic head of all things and people in this universe. But Christ is also the organic head of heaven and all the heavenly creation and its inhabitants, including the angels. This is clearly taught in Colossians 1:20: "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him [i.e., Christ] to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

This is a startling verse. Paul is concerned that the readers of this passage (or the listeners in Colosse who heard their minister read Paul's letter) might mistakenly assume that he meant merely everything here on earth. So he repeats himself: "I mean 'all things,' and that includes everything in this earth all right but also all things in heaven." This statement by Paul quite naturally raises questions for Christ died for SIN!—and there is no sin in heaven.

But we shall discuss this problem a bit later. Indeed, we will discuss the whole idea further in future issues.

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