

No.
196.

*"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE
RIGHT HAND OF GOD."* COL. 3. 1.

COLOSSIANS I.

An Address (revised) at

FOREST GATE, E. 7.

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by

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By Mr. P. W. Heward,

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We notice here that the apostle speaks in verse 21 of those who were enemies in their mind by wicked works, or as it might be rendered "IN wicked works", and who were reconciled. When God saves a soul He not only deals with sin as a legal fact, but He reconciles. Now what is reconciliation? It is the EFFECT of atonement. It is the EXPERIENCE of atonement. It is the FRUIT of atonement. It is the JOY of atonement. Atonement is Godward. Reconciliation is manward. Atonement deals with wrath. Reconciliation deals with our wrong condition. But if we are reconciled as to our mind, we are no longer enemies in mind, and that is the important point brought out in Scripture. The mind of the flesh is enmity toward God. It is not SUBJECT to the law of God. Reconciliation involves glad subjection to the law of God, or rather union with it; the law is written on the heart. Hence the horrible cry of bondage of the present day even among professing children of God is an attempt of the devil to draw away believers from the true attitude which is marked out, namely, conformity to the will of God, and identification with the will of God, with the will of God written on the heart. Believers are not called to freedom from bondage, but to the freedom of bondage; not called to be free from subjection, but to find their freedom in subjection; not called to put aside acknowledgement of God's law, but to realise that law made part of themselves. This is the striking change. There are two paths which may be called paths of freedom. One is to escape from the sphere of control, which is a humanly devised freedom, filled with bondage - since "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8. 34). The other is to delight in the sphere of control, and THAT is ^{the} ~~the~~ Divinely appointed freedom. Let us be clear, by grace, upon this point, because the Devil is subtly contriving to hinder believers' progress on these lines. You notice, beloved friends, that those who are reconciled are viewed as having been

reconciled in the past, IF they continue in the present. In other words, their continuance is not the steppingstone to reconciliation, but their reconciliation is a steppingstone to continuance. The continuance is not the way of obtaining reconciliation, but the fruit of having obtained it. Hence they are to continue in the faith, having been grounded, or founded, i.e. fixed. This word implies a Foundation, which is none other than Christ; and the word "settled" has an allusion to a city. It is blessedly true that God's people are made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and unlike the priests of old, they, accepted in the merits of the One True High Priest, are made to sit together in heavenly places. Thus their position is parallel with that of the cherubim on the mercy seat which were of one piece with the mercy seat. They are not busy here and there with respect to the accomplishment of righteousness. Having been founded and settled, fixed, made to sit, their activities are now in a different sphere altogether. They are not UNDER law, though they are IN a law to Christ. "Under law" implies the possibility of being rejected, and the working out of a still unworked righteousness. That is an impossible theory. Believers on the basis of a complete righteousness cannot come under the sphere described where we read of the unsaved under law, because law can say nothing against the believer. The law is in him, and he is thus in law. The word "under" is quite impossible in this connection, for "under" implies the possibility of rejection and judgment, and THAT is no longer possible. The continuance, therefore, is the proof of reconciliation, and if there is no continuance, there is a doubt as to whether they were EVER reconciled. One of the deadliest errors of the present day is to assume that profession of Christ is possession of Christ. Myriads have been lulled to sleep because profession is taken at its face value. If every child of God were EXPECTED to maintain a standard of holiness, and were thus dealt with in love's definiteness and love's separatedness, there would be

encouragement, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit. If a standard of holiness is not maintained there should be a far deeper test for those who claim to be in Christ Jesus, and if this testing were more felt, our lives would adorn His doctrine, and hypocrites would not be caused to heap to themselves wrath against the day of wrath. It is a solemn thing that this true position has been forgotten, and now it has been regarded almost as unkind to emphasize the only true kindness, which earnestly urges godly devotion and obedience as a proof of being in Christ Jesus. Worldliness should be hated with holy hatred, and Christlikeness loved with holy love. The line of demarcation is real, and the Spirit of God has never blotted it out.
