

Bruce – In Christ - exploring union with Christ

Speaker Introduction & Context

- Bruce Ritchie presenting on “In Christ” theology
- Author of books on James Clerk Maxwell, Columba, and Moffat
- Transition from “creative Episcopalian to moralistic Presbyterian”
- Core premise: Living Christian life means allowing risen Christ to live through us via active surrender

Four Theological Concepts of “In Christ”

- **In Christ and Knowledge of God**
 - Spurgeon’s distinction: apprehension vs comprehension
 - Apprehension: partial, incomplete, tentative knowledge
 - Comprehension: total, encompassing understanding
 - Mary’s faith apprehended God’s promise without fully comprehending it
 - Only Jesus truly knows the Father; we know God through Christ
- **In Christ and Christian Repentance**
 - Spurgeon’s definition: discovery of sin’s evil + mourning + resolution to forsake + deep mind change
 - **Repentance is response to grace (evangelical) rather than pre-condition for grace (legal repentance)**
 - T.F. Torrance’s approach: repentance as intellectual change within epistemology context
 - Must involve profound heart, will, and mind transformation - not just intellectual shift
 - Grace as response, not license for moral compromise
- **In Christ and Sanctification**
 - Sanctification complete in Christ, not self-accomplished
 - Church/Christian: Christ-centered, not self-centered
 - Discipleship = disciplined habit of thinking/acting in Christ
 - Life of ongoing dying and rising with Christ
 - Baptism: once-and-for-all union with Christ
 - Eucharist: daily dying to self, rising in Christ
 - Living between “fallen time and new time” until Christ returns
- **In Christ and Nature/Grace Relationship**
 - Grace transforms nature through cross and resurrection
 - Humanity redeemed, not replaced
 - Natural gifts must be crucified in Christ and reborn
 - Examples: public speaking, intellect, teaching, leadership, music

- Process: surrender ego → take to cross → allow redemption
- Even spirituality requires cross surrender

Key Principles & Applications

- All natural gifts need cross transformation, not just blessing
- Difference between natural conscience and Spirit's work
- Hudson Taylor: "Unsatisfied life lies in unsundered life"
- Church needs pastors who've had "swagger gospelled out of them"
- Personal example: Minister Jim's guitar - set aside for years, then redeemed for ministry