

The following is a modernized adaptation of parts of Chapter 11 in *The Glory of Christ* by John Owen, first published in 1684, to conform to our vocabulary and forms of grammatical structure.

### **From the Preface to *The Glory of Christ***

The following treatise may be regarded as a series of discourses on John 17:24. The subject is the Glory of Christ, as the representative of God to the church in (A) the mystery of his Person, (B) his office as Mediator, (C) his exaltation on high, (D) in his relation to the church during every age of its history, (D) and in the final consummation of his work, when all things are to be gathered into a blessed unity, as the result of his mediation.

The design of the ensuing discourse is to declare some part of that glory of our Lord Jesus Christ that is revealed in the Scripture and that is to be the principal object of our faith, love, delight, and admiration.

### **Chapter 11**

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). He created for Himself two distinct, rational families—the human family, and a family of angelic beings—that were to depend on Him by conforming to the law He provided suited to their nature and His purposes and, by doing so, give glory to Him. He created these two distinct families with two distinct habitations suitable to their respective natures and purposes—heaven above, and the earth beneath.

The earth He ordained and established for the habitation of human beings, and He created it so that in every way it was suited for the constitution of their human nature, their preservation, and their created purpose in giving glory to God.

Heaven He ordained and established for the habitation of the angels, and He created it so that in every way it was suited for the constitution of their nature, their preservation, and the end or purpose for their creation, giving glory to God.

God then gave human beings power and dominion over all things on earth and was to use them only for the glory of God. By the use to which human beings put the things on earth, God would receive glory from them also, even those things that were inanimate.

Likewise, the angels were given dominion over the celestial and ethereal bodies that God has fitted for their place of habitation, that through the contemplation and use of them God might receive glory and praise from them, too.

However, this beautiful order in itself, this union between the two families of God, was disturbed, broken, dissolved by the entrance of sin. By virtue of sin, part of the family above (the angelic beings) and the whole family below (human beings) rejected their dependence on God, and ceasing to find Him as the center and purpose of their being—or, using biblical terminology, as their "head"—they fell into a change in their condition and enmity entered into their human relationships. Because God, as the center (tethering power) of their union and order as human beings, was lost, nothing but enmity and confusion remained among them.

In order to show to our original answers that their own goodness was now lost, God cursed the earth and all that was in it as a perpetual reminder of the original goodness of what humans had lost when the good earth had been put by God in subjection to the human family. But He did not similarly curse the heavens, which God had put in subjection to the family of angelic beings; those

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of them who turned away from God as their center of being were removed from their habitation, so there was no need to curse the habitation of those who remained for their sake. This was not the case for the human family, because *all* of it, unlike the angelic family, was *wholly* separated from God.

The angels that sinned were utterly rejected by God forever, as an example of His severity; the whole race of the human family, however, He would not utterly cast off, but He determined to recover and save some of them, by means of grace, which He did through an act of great condescension, the Second Person of the one eternal essence, God, who is Spirit, laying aside the manifestations and privileges of divine glory and joining to Himself a human nature like our own, yet, without the effects thereon of sin, because that nature was created by God without human intervention (the Virgin Birth).

However, He was not going to restore them in such a way as to again have two distinct families in different and distinct habitations (Ephesians 3:15), but He would gather them both into one under a new head who would (A) forever preserve the angelic beings who had not sinned from sinning and (B) deliver members of the human family from sin committed.

This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote these words, "To gather together in one all things which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." And he expresses the same idea in Colossians 1:20, "To reconcile all things unto himself in him, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

In other words, all things fell into disorder and confusion by sin; they were separated from God and consequently put at variance among themselves. God would not restore them into their first order, *in an immediate dependence on His divine perfections*. And He would no longer keep them in two distinct families. Instead, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, He would *gather them up into one common head*, on whom they should have their immediate dependence, and be reconciled again among themselves.

This new head, wherein God has gathered up all things in heaven and earth into one, one body, one family, on whom is all their dependence, in whom they all now consist, is Jesus Christ the Son of God incarnate. (See 1 Corinthians 11: 3; Ephesian 1:22, 23.) This glory was reserved for Christ; no other being could be made suitable, sufficient, and worthy of being constituted this new unifying and reconciling head. (See Colossians 1:17-19.)

To accomplish all the ends and purposes of this new Head of God's recollected family, all power in heaven and earth, all fullness of grace and glory, has been committed unto Jesus Christ. There is no communication from God, no act of rule toward this family, no supply of virtue, power, grace, or goodness unto angels or men, but comes directly from this new Head into which they are gathered. In Him they all consist, on Him they depend, unto Him are they subject. It is only in their relation to Him, as their head, that peace, union, and agreement among themselves consist. This is the recapitulation of all things that the Apostle Paul intended to express.

*Nothing ought more to affect the delight and joy of the hearts of them that contemplate the glory of Christ than this—the recapitulation of all things in Him. One view by faith of Him in the place of God, as the Supreme Head of the whole creation, moving, acting, guiding, and disposing of all things in heaven and on earth will bring a person spiritual refreshment.*