

WORDS OF ESTABLISHMENT

“IN THE PRESENT TRUTH”

OF CHRISTIANITY. 2 PETER i. 12.

SANCTIFICATION IN THE TRUTH.

JOHN XVII. 14 TO END.

IT is not beloved friends that I can at all attempt, indeed I do not feel myself able, to give you a full exposition of what is contained in these verses, but I desire to indicate a few thoughts that are there, so that our souls by divine grace may lay hold of and profit by them.

I think it is an immense thing for us to see what Christianity is, because we are so apt to connect Christianity with the course of things in this world. It has often been said there are two great subjects in the Bible. The one is the government of this world, that is, God made it and it has a course; it has had dispensations ordained of God, and finally it will be brought into blessing under Christ. All that forms one subject, and I need hardly say to those here that Israel was the centre of the government of

God in this world. But the other subject of which scripture speaks is the truth connected with the Father and the Son, and that is brought out in this chapter—relationships of divine love which existed before ever there was a world. And not only is there the revelation of truth connected with the Father and the Son, but also of purposes and counsels of God in Christ for His glory before the world was. All this lies entirely outside the course of this world, though eventually the light of it will be a blessing to this world; and even now, Christians though not of the world ought to be a light and blessing in it; but the effort of Satan has been to conform Christianity to Judaism and to connect it with the world, to make it a means of elevating the world as it now is; and therefore we often find that persons have a sense that they need conversion, that they need to be born again, that they need forgiveness of sins, and if that is known--what then? They think they may fall in with the ordinary ways of this world. They would avoid its wickedness, but their thought is to get on in the world, to live in the world as being at home here because Christianity is in their eyes an amelioration of things here. Let me say, the truth of Christianity lies outside the world altogether. I want to establish this to-night, the Lord helping me, that Christianity is not of the world because

Christ is not of the world. I would say this because there are those who are young here, and to them the world holds out special attractions. We are born into the world, and there are certain prospects in it ; people set certain things before them as necessary, perhaps to get on in business. It is not that they want to be worldly, but they want to get on, to make the world a home, where Christ had none ; hence Christianity is to them, while securing the future, something that comes in for the present to help them ; and the thought is that their lives down here are to be spent in the current of things around. Now, let me say, Christianity comes in to take us out of the world altogether, and that by revealing other objects.

I will refer to one passage which will illustrate what I say as to these objects. It is 1 John v. 1. There you find that "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Now it is not that it there describes *how* a person is born again. It merely states the fact that every one that believes Jesus is the Christ is born of God. The subject raised in the end of chapter iv. is as to loving your brother, and then the question might arise, who is a brother? The answer is, that *whosoever* believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, no matter whether he be Jew or Gentile. In those early days there were con-

verted Jews who looked upon all who were Jews as their brethren, and a Jew naturally would love a Jew, but the apostle insists on loving brethren, loving what was born of God. "Every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." We may take that home to our own hearts, do we love what is *of God*? I ask the youngest believer here to-night, where are your affections? A Jew's affections would naturally be with his countrymen, but there is another thought here ; no matter whether Jew or Gentile—whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born, not of Abraham or of any pedigree in this world but, of God, and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him. There you get the first great object, God has brought in another Man, because the moment you use the words "the Christ" it is the anointed Man ; of course He is the Son of God, but the first great question in believing that Jesus is the Christ is, that that is the Man God has approved and anointed. I may look at all other men, whether Jew or Gentile, but all flesh is as grass ; but the moment my eye is fixed by divine teaching on the One whom God has anointed, no matter what my connections according to the flesh, whether French, English, German or Italian, there is another Man before my soul, and those believing in Him are my

brethren, for whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and consequently love flows out to all that is *of God*.

I would again ask, where are your affections? Is Christ the object of your heart, and all that are His? All that believe in Him form the *circle in which our affections now flow*. We love what is *of God*. It is a wonderful moment when the soul wakes up to the truth that it has a new home for its affections; and that is the first object I have to bring before you, because it will carry your soul into a right channel.

The apostle goes on to another point. I have already spoken of that which is of God, but all around us there is another system, and that system is the world, therefore the apostle says, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith." So far as I understand it "our faith" there does not mean exactly a person's individual faith, it is rather the faith of Christians as contrasted with the faith of Jews. The faith of the Jews if they had received Him would have been that He was the Christ; but the full faith of Christians is that He is the Son of God. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith." Hence the apostle adds, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" It is not only that a Person has come *into* the world, the Lord Jesus

Christ, and in that Person there is the manifestation of the love of God down here, and that you believe in Him as God's anointed Man, but He has gone out of the world and is declared Son of God in resurrection. He was sealed and anointed as having come into this world, but He has gone out by resurrection, and thus declared Son of God with power. This leads to the point I now want to bring you to. If He the Son came into the world, He came from somewhere, and where did He come from? We have it in John x. "Say ye of him, whom *the Father* hath sanctified, and sent into the world." He came from the Father, as also it is said in the sixteenth chapter, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world ; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." But now, though He came into this world from a different scene altogether, He has gone out by death, having been rejected here, and is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

I trust every one here may be able to grasp it, that the Lord Jesus Christ as Son of God is not of the world at all. He was not of the world when He came into it, and He has gone out, and if now we see Him in the glory of His own Person as Son of God it lifts the heart out of the

scene here. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" This gives superiority to the world as not being of it.

I have referred to the foregoing to impress upon you the first question, Are our affections really with Christ, and with those who believe on Christ? and secondly, to lead you to consider who that blessed Christ is in the glory of His Person; because I am persuaded that if we only look at the Lord as One sent into the world to meet our condition and need, it will never make us superior to it. We must see what a glorious Person He is, and that He is in glory, in order to be drawn to Himself out of the world. The glories of Christ are yet to fill the world. Many may have noticed that there is very little in scripture about the rapture of the saints, but there is a great deal about the coming of Christ. Have you ever thought what it will be for God when He has filled the universe with the glory of Christ? The rapture is revealed for the comfort of sorrowing saints, but the coming of the Lord will establish glory in this scene. Let me say another thing here. Supposing you were on a death-bed, and you find heart and flesh fail, if you had nothing before you but that which concerned yourself I do not think you would be very bright. You would doubtless have peace and

the assurance that every question between you and God was settled, but that alone would not make you bright. For this simple reason, the thought before you would be connected with yourself; but if your heart was full of the in-coming of the glory of Christ you would have something entirely outside of yourself, so that in the moment of your weakness your heart would be occupied with a scene entirely outside your weakness. I will give you from scripture an incident to shew what I mean. You will remember when they took "the child Jesus" into the temple Simeon took Him up in his arms and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." That is where people generally stop: they say, good old Simeon could go in peace because he had seen the salvation of the Lord. I do not want to disturb that thought, but let me say, there is more than that. What Simeon says is this, "mine eyes have seen thy salvation" [he does not say, *my* salvation], "which thou hast prepared before the face of *all people*; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." What he saw was, I may say, the in-coming of the glory of Christ that was to light all nations and peoples, and establish glory in the earth. That was the salvation he saw coming in, and

now he, a man of the old order, retires. That is the secret of Simeon's utterance. When I see the glory of Christ it eclipses the man after the old order and I am ready to retire. Christ's glory is a wonderful thing to be occupied with. Let me ask you, has the glory of Christ ever shone into your hearts? Have you ever thought that this scene is going to be filled with that glory, and how? Why, through the church, which is the fulness of Christ; the saints are those through whom the whole earth will be filled with glory, because the church is the fulness of Christ. If that is received into the heart it will bring wonderful thoughts before our souls. Perhaps some may say, I cannot lay hold of that; but are you prepared to receive it? that is, Where are your affections? Have your hearts been drawn out to Christ?

What I want to shew you is the sanctifying power of the truth mentioned in the verses I read, and that is a point which is very necessary for us in these days, perhaps as necessary for us in this room as for any people, for it introduces the question of unity; and I am bold to say there is no true unity apart from sanctification in the truth. To believe certain doctrines and to be upon what people call right ground is not the real power of unity. We cannot make light of unity, because if all the universe is to be filled

with Christ's glory there must be, and finally will be, unity in its display. If there is to be unity now, there must be sanctification in the truth as here brought out; that would keep us from divisions and truly united. It is not the mere belief of doctrines that will sanctify, but the response in the affections to the word of truth; and the word of truth is connected with the Father and the Son in this chapter. Indeed it could not be otherwise. In the Old Testament when God gave the law it was connected with the revelation of Jehovah's name and of His will for the people; but it was not *the* truth. Then again, take the prophets and all that they said of the coming glory of the Messiah, I need hardly say all was true, but it was not *the* truth, because the truth is more. It remained for the blessed Lord to come as the sent One of the Father in order that all the truth might come out. There was that which lay outside of Old Testament communications, the counsels and purposes of the Father from all eternity. All this had to come out in order that we might have the truth. What the Lord is speaking of in this chapter is the word of truth connected with the Father—*"Thy word," "Thy truth."* The Son is speaking to the Father of that which was outside the course of this world, though spoken in it.

The Lord had finished His course here. In

the thirteenth chapter He said, "his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father," and therefore He speaks to His disciples in these chapters (xiii.-xvi.) upon this subject. He wanted to lead their hearts to a fuller acquaintance with Himself as gone out, so that He might lead them in affection to Himself as sanctified in heavenly glory, that they might know Him there and represent Him here.

I would ask the youngest Christian here, would you like to be here for Christ's pleasure? If you have been saved and redeemed by His precious blood would you not like to be here for His pleasure? Ask yourselves the question. You would not like to be absent from that scene of glory when He comes to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe. No, you say, I would like to be in that. Well, you will be for His pleasure then because you will be in His likeness, but would you not like to be for His pleasure down here now?

There is one verse I would refer to (Phil. ii. 12), a verse that is often taken very wrongly. You see in the apostle Paul a man who was for Christ's pleasure here. He had one desire (Phil. i. 20), that Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. In the second chapter of the same epistle he says, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed

work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Now what is it to work out your own salvation? In one word I believe it is to be here really for Christ's pleasure. That is, it is really bringing into effect the salvation that we have. People sometimes think it means to do the best they can and that somehow or other they will be saved in the end. No, you *are* saved; Christ is your salvation, and as Peter says, you have been sanctified to the obedience of Christ, and He was obedient to death, even the death of the cross—there was God's judgment of the old man, and in being obedient we accept that and seek to bring into effect the truth connected with Christ in our walk and ways. Hence he says "that ye may be blameless and harmless," &c. The apostle had traced all the blessedness of Christ's down-stooping here, and wished the Philippians to be like Him, for he says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." In obeying and working out our own salvation the mind that was in Christ and all that is of Christ would come out in our walk and ways, that we might be here for Christ's pleasure.

The Lord as going away speaks to the Father of the eleven first of all, and the great point was, that they had known Him down here as receiving communications from and walking in intimacy

with the Father ; He had given them the Father's word, of which He was the expression. It is quite true He met the need of man, that He healed the sick and cast out demons, but there was another thing, He was the revelation of the Father's love down here, and He dwelt in it, and gave to His disciples the blessed communications that the Father gave to Him. Hence, in the verse I began with He says, " I have given them thy word," &c. That is the Father's word ; and then He says, " Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth." Mark you, it is all "*thy*." It is the Father's truth what the Son knew in the intimacy of His divine relationship with the Father, and yet as having become Man. The Lord could say, " I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world ; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." The moment you get that, you get not merely One who could say, I know every sorrow and misery that is here—blessed be God ! He did—and in entering the scene of sorrow and misery that was in this world His pathway in the midst of it was wonderful, but One who ever walked in divine communion with the Father. He entered indeed into all the sorrow and misery here in the most blessed way, He bare our griefs and carried our sorrows. Ah, but He came from another scene, and when we know the truth connected with the Father

and the Son, we know the truth of a scene of love and rest to which the Son always belonged ; even when He was down here He Himself belonged to another scene. He had been sanctified and sent into the world by the Father. He was about to sanctify Himself in going out of it, as He says "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth." It is this truth connected with the Son and the Father which has a sanctifying effect on our souls, that is, it separates us from the present scene. We get the truth connected with Persons who are in another scene. We know the Son there, and thus the Father. First the Lord says, "Sanctify them through *thy truth*: thy word is truth." He had brought the Father's word into the world, the revelation of the Father. Then He says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." He is going to set Himself apart in heavenly glory that we might know a Person there. The One the eleven knew down here is the One they were to recognise in the dignity of His own Person and to believe on in heavenly glory, "that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

Nothing but the blessed Spirit of God can enable us to lay hold of it. Still I feel in bringing it before you, that the Spirit can give to every one of us the sense of it. What a sanctifying effect it would have on us if we had the sense of

knowing divine Persons in another sphere altogether. The theme of John xvii. is that the Lord Jesus having been sanctified and sent into the world, was the revelation of the Father's grace and truth, and in going out He would have us know the Father's word, and Himself in that scene where He is, and thus to have the sanctifying power of it in our own souls.

I pass on to verses 20 and 21. In verse 20 the Lord Jesus says, "Neither pray I for these alone," because He had been praying specially for the eleven, "but for them also which shall believe on me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." These verses are dependent upon the sanctifying power of the truth in the former verses. We have revealed in verse 21 (to use the word of another) the "mutuality" of divine relationships and affections—"as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." To my mind it is very blessed that the sanctifying power of the truth will conduct our souls to such a unity. Think of it ! What a mutuality of divine affection and relationship is unfolded in those words. Such is the desire of the Son expressed to the Father, "that they also may be one in us." Supposing every Christian in London could meet together as one to-morrow,

and that all were agreed upon every point of doctrine, that would not be *this* unity. "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Until the soul has in some measure entered into something of what the mutuality of divine relationship and affection between the Father and Son is, you could not know what it is to "be one in us." Here you get the desire of the Lord coming out. He has brought these divine affections of the Father to us *as He knew them*. You will find that in Psalm xxii., where He is heard from the horns of the unicorn. He says, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." He did this when in resurrection power. He sent the message by Mary Magdalene, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend," &c. He made known the Father's name. But how? As He knew it as a Man when raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and now when He says, "that they also may be one in us," He prays that all the saints should enter into the sense of this wonderful relationship and affection that subsisted in the divine bosom, and which He knew as a Man. He had always known them, but He was speaking as a Man here, and as about as such to enter into divine glory. When He says, "that they also may be one in us," the saints are brought into the very centre of divine affections ;

and now "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." How that shews that the world is outside ! You see here the contrast between a scene of holy love, of divine affections into which the saints are brought, and the world outside. Mark the way in which it is put. That the world may believe that the Father sent the Son ; not that they may believe in His glory as Messiah, but that they may believe He came from that scene of holy love, the Father's bosom, though He never left it. He was the expression here of all the divine affections and love of that bosom. "The Father loveth the Son." But, you may say, did not He come to do us good ? Yes, He did ; but, thank God, there is a scene of holy love, and the Son came out to make it known. He came to make God known in the revelation of the Father and the Son, and now He has re-entered that home of divine affections. Believing on Him through the word of those to whom was revealed this mutuality of divine relationship and affection, we learn that God is love and also the unity connected with it. By-and-by when all is gathered up in one in glory, then the world will know it ; it will be outside it, but it will see this scene of holy love and divine affections connected with the Father and Son ; and then, too, the saints when in glory will be able to enjoy it, because they will be in the

likeness of Christ as well as with Him. This is what the Lord wanted the disciples to enter upon, and also those who should believe on Him through their word.

There is one word I would dwell upon a little, and that is the word "all." "That they *all* may be one," &c. The blessed Lord Jesus would not have one left out. Perhaps some young believer here may say, you are talking about that which the elder ones may enter into. Well, the Lord says "all." He wants your soul to be acquainted with these divine affections. He wants all to be sanctified in the power of the truth. The truth here is connected with the revelation of the name of the Father by the Son; and that is love, grace. The love of God could not be known under the name of Jehovah. He could not be known as love until He sent His Son. Love could come out then. And what is it for? Love has come out and reached us through divine grace in order that our souls may be brought into that scene of holy love. The word of the Father is to separate your souls to that scene, and you know a Person in that scene, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." What He wants is our hearts. If all saints were in that unity what a witness there would be here. The world would see that our affections were elsewhere, held by the power of a truth to which

they are strangers, and drawn to a Person who is in heaven.

I will not say more upon it, for I do not think I could put it any better to you ; but the blessed Spirit of God can impress each heart with it. For myself, I can say that I want to be more at home in that scene of love.



THE PURPOSE OF GOD FOR THE GLORY OF CHRIST.

COLOSSIANS I. 12-29 ; JOHN XIV. 20. .

WHAT I desire to bring before you to-night, beloved friends, is the great purpose of God for the glory of Christ. It is not merely that He has purposed glory *for us*, which is quite true, but God's purpose is to establish Christ's glory, or, I may say, His glory by Christ in the universe. The whole universe is to be filled with the glory of Christ. It is an immense thing if we get this great thought of God before our souls, it will lift our hearts out of their own narrowness. Selfishness characterises us naturally, and therefore it is a great thing for our hearts to get awakened to the sense of the glory of Christ. I will refer to one passage for a moment in illustration of what I say. Turn to Zechariah iv. ; but we will look at chapter iii. first in order to shew the contrast between that and chapter iv. ; they are closely linked together. Chapter iii. contains a well-known subject : there you see Joshua, the high priest, standing before the Lord and the Lord taking up his cause

against the adversary. Joshua had nothing to say for himself, but his filthy garments are taken away, his iniquity caused to pass from him, and change of garments given to him. That subject is very well known. There is one thing, however, which is important in that chapter—that when Joshua stood before the Lord he was the representative of Jerusalem; it was not merely a question of himself. Jerusalem was the city of God, and it is the place where He is going to establish His glory in the earth; and there is not a saint of God in this room but he is one through whom God's glory will shine in the heavens. Christ will come to be glorified in His saints and wondered at in all them that believe.

Joshua, then, stands as the representative of Jerusalem before the Lord, and in verses 2 and 3 the Lord takes up his cause, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem," etc. It does not say, the Lord that hath chosen Joshua, but Jerusalem, the city of the great King. Pass on to verse 8, "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at." God had taken up the cause of Jerusalem in Joshua, and now, cleansed and clothed, he and his fellows that sit before him are men of wonder or *sign*. Jerusalem cleansed and clothed with garments of righteous-

ness is yet to be the vessel of Jehovah's glory. The same thought is in the passage I quoted from Thessalonians, "He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." Let me put it home to every one here! How far do you and I enter into the thought of God, that cleansed and saved, and having known the power of that precious blood that cleanseth from all sin, we are, as those in Christ, to be to the glory and praise of God. Christ should be manifested in us now, and we are to be in the likeness of Christ for ever to the praise of God's glory. That is God's thought for us.

I pass on to the 4th chapter of Zechariah. "And the angel that talked with me came to me again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep." We are often like that, we need to be awakened to what is in the purpose and thought of God. And then he shewed Zechariah a vision of the two olive trees and the candlestick; it was God's purpose that Israel should be the light in this world, and it will be so sustained by these two anointed ones, the Priesthood and Royalty of Christ. I refer to it in passing in order that our hearts may get the sense of how little we are alive to that which will be for God's glory. In Israel here below, after Zechariah had seen all filthiness taken away

from them, and garments of righteousness, as in Isaiah lxi. 10, "he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness," provided for them, he had to be awakened to what was before the mind of God—as a man wakened out of sleep. How little are we alive to the fact that God has saved us for His own glory!

I read that passage in Colossians because it brings before us the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory of His Person as the Son of the Father's love. He is thus the image of the invisible God. It was always in the mind of God not only to bring man into blessing according to the purpose of His heart, but it was also in His heart that His glory should be known, and the Lord Jesus was the One who was to come forth and make God known, and there can be no greater blessing than that God Himself is known. If you remember, I sought to bring before you last week the truth connected with the Father and the Son as that which sanctifies and brings the soul into the knowledge of the most intimate relationships and affections; I do not think we can come out for God until we have gone in. It is when we have gone in and got the sense of what is there that we are able to come out. It was so with Moses. He had to go up to the mountain to see the pattern before he could

come down and build the tabernacle according to the mind of God. The thought of God establishing His glory in His people came out for the first time in connection with the building of the tabernacle, for He says, "I will sanctify the tabernacle with my glory." It was the place where His glory dwelt. Moses has to go up in order to see the pattern, and then he comes out to make the tabernacle so that the whole should be a representation of God manifesting Himself in Christ.

I will take another incident illustrating how we are formed inside in order to come out. (John xii.) The Lord Jesus comes back to Jerusalem, and there, we read, they made him a supper and the disciples were with him. I do not go into the details, all I ask you to note is, that the disciples are in the house where Jesus is appreciated, where they could also have the sense (though I do not say how far they entered into it) of what a glorious Person He was. Lazarus was the witness of the glory of the Son of God ; and then you get the deep appreciation of Himself in Mary, and the disciples were inside the house, filled as it was with the odour of the ointment. Then afterwards the Lord rides into Jerusalem ; they have come out now, and they accompany Him as He presents Himself to Zion as their King. They were in the house first

where they got the sense of the appreciation of the Person of the Lord and His glory. It is a wonderful thing for the heart to get a sense of the glory of the Lord's Person. So far as I see, I speak for myself and very likely I am speaking for others, we have been very defective as to the glory of the Person of the Lord. It is not that we do not know that the Lord *is* the Son of God; but I believe we little know Him *AS* the Son of God.

I refer to a scripture in illustration of what I mean. (Matt. xiv.) I see the Lord there in all the grace and beneficence of His heart meeting the need of the multitude; there never was such a heart. In a desert place His heart goes out, and He satisfies the poor of Israel with bread. It is a wonderful thing to see Him thus, but the latter part of the chapter shews me the glory of His Person, and that is as I see Him walking on the sea. It is blessed to see Him lift up His eyes to heaven and take five loaves and bless them and give them to the multitude. But in the compassion and power there manifested He was dealing with men, meeting *their* need, and Israel had known that before; God had fed them with manna in the wilderness; John vi. refers to the same moment as Matt. xiv., and there evidently the Jews connected the feeding of the multitude with the

manna. Elisha had been able by the power of God to feed a multitude. But when I see the Lord walking on the sea I see a Person who is outside the estate of man altogether. He is in nowise bringing the power of God to meet man's need, but walking on the sea. Who is that? The sea is not the place for man to walk on, the roaring billows as they rage afford no footing for man, to walk there is not part of man's estate, and yet a man is walking there. Who is that? The Son of God. What a glorious Person He is! It is not merely He is a gracious Person with power to meet our need, but He is a glorious Person, Jesus, the Son of God. They come and own Him as such directly. In the first storm, you remember, He was in the boat with the disciples, and when He calmed the storm they said, "What manner of man is this?" But when He walked on the water they came and worshipped Him, and said, "Truly thou art the Son of God."

Now in Colossians we get that He who is the image of God is the "Son of his love," because it could only be the Son of His love that could represent Him, and this is a great point in Colossians. It has often been noticed that where you get God in Ephesians you get Christ in Colossians, because Christ is the image of God, and the display of God's glory is in Christ.

Now you get the same truth, that we must

first be inside before we can come out, in the verses I began with, "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." We are made meet to be in a scene of unclouded light. We are brought inside through being translated from the authority of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Satan's dominion is exercised in darkness; no doubt that then the apostle referred to the darkness of heathenism; but there is another darkness now, the blinding and deluding power of Satan which we meet in Christendom. Still here is the great fact that Christians have been set free from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

The kingdom of God has that form, it is its moral character for us while the Lord Jesus sits at the right hand of God until His enemies be made His footstool. Everything is given into the hands of the Son by the Father, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands." In John xiii. you have the same truth. "When Jesus knew that his hour was come knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands." Everything has been given into His hands and He is sitting on the Father's throne, not yet making good His power by coming out to put down evil and fill everything, but

glorifying the Father in the present administration of the counsels of love ; He will come out because everything has been put into His hands to fill the universe with glory, and that glory will be displayed in the saints, those who are now in the kingdom of the Son of His love. The church is the fulness of Christ, it knows the love of Christ, and the church is the means by which He will fill all things with glory.

You see of what immense moment it is that we should know what the church is as the vessel in which Christ is to be displayed for ever. Hence I would like all, even the youngest here, to get the sense of being in the kingdom of the Son of His love, made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. I believe we have been very defective as to this (I speak for myself). I used to turn every bit of scripture into something to meet my own condition. No matter how blessedly servants of God may unfold His mind in Scripture, we listen to it and turn it round according to the state of soul we are in, and therefore we often miss the force of it. Now it is not that God does not meet us where we are. He does. But I can see a great difference now between being taken away from myself into the purpose of God, and recurring constantly to my responsible state in the flesh.

I would pause for one moment to ask every

one, in God's presence—Is there any unsettled question in your soul that prevents you entering into God's purpose for you? If we are not clear about the past how can we step out into what is before us. We must ever be looking back with the feeling that there is an unsettled question behind us. We may see what God has purposed for us and like to lay hold of it, but if there is an unsettled question behind, of necessity we must go back to it. We cannot then give thanks to the Father who has "made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

You may say, I see the purpose of God and the value of the blood of Christ for my sins; I know that in the best robe I have a title to be at home in that bright and blessed scene, but I am not quite clear about my state in the past, I revert to it. Is that so? Do you not see the grace of our Lord Jesus, that on the cross He left no question unsettled, neither concerning your responsibility nor God's purpose of love, and if you get hold of the glory of the Person who was there you see how surely the ground was laid for securing the purpose of God. When you read of Him in John's gospel going to the cross, the glory of His Person shines out. Those sent to take Him went backward and fell to the ground, and we read, "Jesus, therefore,

knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth." That the Father's name might be glorified as well as on account of our responsibility He had come to that hour. He knew all that should come upon Him and He *went forth*. Could there be one question unsettled if he knew everything that was to come upon Him? He knew all, and therefore when we come to the close we read, "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished said, It is finished." Before He left the garden He knew everything that would come upon Him. Peter did not, he began to smite with his sword, but Jesus said, "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" And then at the end He, whose Spirit had written every prophecy, could cast His eyes over the whole range of prophetic utterances concerning those sufferings needed to usher in the purpose of God, and there was one not fulfilled, He knew it full well. Look at the glory of the Person of the One who went into death for you. He surveyed the whole range of prophetic utterances connected with the cross, and there was one circumstance that His own Spirit had written in the prophets about His sufferings, and to fulfil that He said, "I thirst." He then said, "It is finished." "It is accomplished," it is the same word. Has He left one

unsettled question? Look at the glory of the Person—the Son of God who went into death. Not that John occupies you with the sufferings of the victim ; he shews you the glorious Person that went through death and left behind for ever that estate of man where sin and death have power. Look at what your Saviour could say, “It is finished.” Paul could say, “I have finished my course,” after having been led along in triumph by another. But who could say, “It is accomplished?” He could put His own seal upon His work ; everything finished for God’s glory, the bringing out of the Father’s counsels of grace, and the love of God ; everything connected with the purpose of God as well as the sinner’s need finished. Oh ! how blessedly can one turn round to that redemption, “In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” What does that mean? Forgiveness has two aspects. The one is that God’s mind is perfectly clear about my sins ; “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” The second is, *I* have the sense that they are all removed ; “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions *from us*.”

Very well, there is deliverance from the past. But not only so, Christ is risen, He has gone through death and He is risen and there is a new beginning in Him who is the first born from the

dead. This leads on to the truth of reconciliation, which brings into the estate revealed in Christ risen, though not yet in actuality. "And you, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and un-reproveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith." It is not continuing in the faith which makes us holy and unblamable, but continuing in the faith makes the soul sensible of what Christ is in the presence of God. He is there to present you. Where has Christ entered? Into the unbounded light of God's presence. "Thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance." Now He can present us, having reconciled us through death.

Can you conceive the blessedness of the fact that the Lord Jesus has entered into the presence of God? He sits at the right hand of God, but what has He entered into as a Man after all here had been accomplished? What does He find in that scene? "In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." He has entered as a Man; He has reconciled us through death to present us. If that be so, is not that the inheritance of the saints in light?

Perhaps some young believer will say, I know that is where I will be by-and-by ; but do you not see you are made meet for it now? The Lord Jesus is there in life and righteousness who died for us. There is no unsettled question with Him *you* may be unsettled, I know what that is and I know also what God has given me to find, that while Satan could shake me as the leaf of an aspen tree, that what Christ has done cannot be shaken. It is finished. I have found Him to be the Rock of Ages, and His finished work beneath my feet firm as a rock. A wonderful salvation has been wrought by Christ, but more, He is there in the presence of God. Are you not then fit for the inheritance of the saints in light, what other fitness have you but the Lord Jesus Christ? Holy, is He not holy? Unblamable, can anything be laid to His charge? It is not merely that you have a title to a place before Him, but Christ is there to present you. There all the love of the Father rests upon His beloved Son, and how worthy His beloved Son is of all the love that can be poured upon Him.

I think I referred last time to the text where the Lord says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, *that I might take it again.*" Why is that said? Because I believe it was in the Father's heart that Christ should go through

death in order to take life in another sphere, where He might bring many sons in with Him. He always belonged to that sphere, but He laid down His life as a Man, to take it again that He might bring us into it; and the Father loved Him for doing it. What does that tell us? The Father's love would have us there; but in order to give thanks to the Father, you must get the sense that He has made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and delivered us from the power that held us in darkness as to God, as to Christ; no longer judging of God by the wanderings of man's heart, thinking as many do that God will be to me what I am to Him; but knowing the love of God, and the delight of the Father's heart in the Son of His love. Oh! how the light shines in Christ for one's soul. Let the bright shining of what Christ is as the Image of God come into your heart as light, and then see where we are brought—into the kingdom of the Son of His love. What does that mean? When the soul is brought there I do not think whether *I* am a worthy object, but I see the Son is a worthy Object of the Father's love, and I am in the kingdom of the Son of His love, where the Father has given everything into His hands.

I refer to another text which brings this out (Matt. xi.), "All things are delivered unto me of

my Father ; and no man knoweth the Son," etc. That verse is a great comfort. The Father knew Him. He knew into whose hands He was putting everything. People might understand in some little measure what a gracious Person He was, and though the Father's revelation told Peter who He was, yet only the Father knew Him. He knew that the Son would secure His purpose. Christ will never fail, and the whole counsel of God will be established in Him for ever, and established for glory to God in us. The Father knows Him. That verse has been often used in a wrong way ; it is used sometimes to prevent souls from realising who that Son is as the Son of the Father's love ; not indeed penetrating into the mystery of His Person, but knowing Him as the Son of the Father's love. It is His kingdom we are brought into.

There is not one single thought with the men of this world as to the establishing of the glory of Christ. Could you read it in the newspapers? To establish the glory of man is the great object. But what do you and I belong to? We belong to the kingdom of the Son of His love, and that kingdom is coming out in power, but you are in it, reconciled to be presented without blame before appearing with Him in glory. It is not the kingdom of the Son of His right hand, though that is true if

we speak of authority and power and putting down evil ; that is not the side of it, here it is the kingdom of the Son of His love, and therefore it goes on, "Who is the image of the invisible God," &c., and the church is that in which this image is to be displayed, and already the new man is renewed for full knowledge after the image of Him who created him.

Now I just put the two things together for a moment, the going in and coming out. I read that verse in John xiv. because it shews us what was the present mind of Christ as to His own. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." If you remember in the former part of the chapter the Lord had said in answer to the unbelieving remark of one of the disciples, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" "Believe me for the very works sake." That is, when down here the Father was in Him, and all the words He spake and the works He did were the setting forth of the Father in grace, as He says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Now the Lord was going away and He was to send to them the Comforter, and the Comforter was to bring all things to their remembrance. (Ver. 26.) The great point was that these disciples were (to use the expression of another) to be the continuation of

Christ down here. Christ had revealed the Father, and they were to set forth Christ down here. Therefore He says, "Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." He does not say, "the Father in me" now, because it would not be so any longer down here, but He says, I will be in you. I refer to it because Christ in you is the great subject of Colossians. The Lord said when the Spirit came the disciples should know first that they *were in Christ*; the other side is *Christ in us*. I believe you must go in before you can come out, and I must know what it is to be in Christ before Christ can come out in me.

I would like for a few moments longer to revert to Colossians i. to shew you how, as saints, you belong to another sphere and scene. The Lord Jesus Christ is presented as the image of the invisible God, but mind you, He is the Son of His love. Adam was made in the image of God, but He was not the Son of His love; God made Him and stamped Him with His image, and therefore I can understand how Satan likes to degrade man, but Adam was not the Son of God's love. In Colossians iii., where it speaks of "putting on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," we get the same word "image" as in Genesis. Adam got the know-

ledge of good and evil, but he was never renewed to full knowledge; he took of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he did get knowledge, knowing good and knowing evil, but not able rightly to discern between the two. But the new man is renewed for full knowledge after the image of Him that created him; that is, the image of God is Christ. But what I desire to impress upon you is, that the One who is the image is the Son of God's love, and the more you see the glory of His Person the more you will enter into what is set forth in the image.

I have sought to introduce your hearts to Him, and now bear in mind that all down the chapter He is the Son of God's love; "He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." The point I want to fix your attention upon is, "He is the beginning." It is not the Lord taking up something to better it, but He Himself becomes the beginning of something new. If you speak of what we are here as a race of men, Adam is the beginning; you say, but we are a redeemed race, I admit it; but here we get *a beginning*. We have been redeemed from all that we were as of the race of Adam, reconciled to God through death, and Christ is our life now. All that we were as of Adam is

gone in death, and Christ is out of death, a new beginning, and He is our life. As Christians we derive entirely from that blessed Christ. How that fits us to set Him forth. How often we have been disappointed because we have been looking within for springs in ourselves; the springs are in Christ.

I will give you an illustration in the woman of Samaria who came to the well where Jesus was. In her we see every spring of evil and ruin, and in the One who sat by her were all the springs of life. Could she have them? She could. The Lord Jesus has come in order that I might have Himself instead of myself, that I might find all my springs in Him. There I get the new beginning.

One more point, verse 24, "To whom 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." The hope of glory, what is that? The great thought is that glory is going to be established in Christ. He is the Image of God, the Son of His love, and Christ was in the Colossians, they derived from Him, hence, "When Christ who is our life shall appear" (be manifested), we shall be manifested with Him in glory. That is, we are going to form part of that wonderful glory of Christ when He shall come to be glorified in His saints

and to be admired in all them that believe. But if I have taken you to the future for a moment, I want our souls to have the present sense of it, because the church as His body is that in which the graces and traits of Christ should come out *now*; they will come out fully in the heavenly Jerusalem; but the traits of the new man should come out in the saints now as deriving from Him. The Church is the fulness of Christ, it speaks here of fulfilling the word of God, completing it; the church as the body of Christ is that which gives fulness to every other subject of which the word speaks. It is like the keystone to an arch.

I would impress upon the soul of the youngest believer here that you are a little item in that glory of Christ, and His glory would not be complete without every member of His body. He has saved you, He becomes the source of everything to you, He is the beginning. Do not look to another beginning, draw everything from Christ, let Him be the all in all to your souls; He is everything to you, and His glory would not be complete if those derived from Him were not in the glory.

Go inside and let the bright shining of what Christ is shine upon your soul; it will transform you, and you will then be able to come out and express Christ amid the contrarieties here.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIANS,
AND
"PART WITH ME."

LUKE XXII. 7-27 ; JOHN XIII. 1-17.

I THINK it must be evident to every attentive reader that these two scriptures are very closely connected, both as to occasion and time, though one, I think you will find, gives more the character of christian fellowship in its outward form, while in John xiii. we get that which is vital and essential to it; and it is upon these two points I propose to touch to-night. You will see in both how the love of the Lord comes out and the desires of His heart for us. It is not that He is a mere benefactor as He says in this very chapter: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors." He was not that, but He says, "I am among you as he that serveth." Is it not a wonderful thing? He come down to serve us in the most blessed way that He may attract us to. and win our hearts for Himself.

I propose in looking at these scriptures to take Luke first and then John, and I trust I may be able to bring a few points before you as the Lord may enable me, apart from any exhaustive exposition of the two passages, and that He may use them to all our hearts so that our affections may be more deeply drawn out to Himself, for I am sure He wants our affections, and, I may say, He wants our company. In connection with this last remark I would notice that in this gospel of Luke it is the Lord Himself who proposes the subject of the passover to His disciples ; you do not find this in the gospels by Matthew and Mark, but in verse 8 of this chapter you read, "Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat." Matthew and Mark begin with what follows in the next verse. In Luke the motion to prepare the passover proceeded from the blessed Lord Himself. That is an important point for our attention.

The passover was an eventful moment to a pious Jew. It would recall to his memory all the great goodness of God who had redeemed the Jewish nation and made them His people, for there was no other nation that enjoyed such a wonderful privilege, and therefore to a pious Jew preparing the passover and eating it must have been, as it came round every year, a solemn

and a signal moment ; the Lord now proposes it to the disciples, for the moment had come when it was about to be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

Another point is important ; He tells them in giving directions to enquire, "Where is the guestchamber, where *I* shall eat the passover with my disciples?" It is not where *we* shall eat ; but a moment had now come when He would sit down with His disciples and enter in a peculiar way into what was before Him, for I need hardly tell you that the passover foreshadowed His own death. He would eat it with His disciples, for the terrible betrayal of Judas was casting its shadow at that moment upon His heart. He drew closer to His own when He was given up by this world, for Judas was the instrument of this world's rejection of Jesus. The institution of the Lord's supper is closely connected with that betrayal. Paul puts it in the same way, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus *the same night in which he was betrayed* took bread." It was when man gave Him up to the chief priests and elders, Herod and Pilate, Judas being the instrument, that, the One who came into the world and brought all the beneficence of heaven and the grace of God down here, was refused and

rejected ; it was at that moment His blessed heart drew closer to His own and sought to draw them closer to Himself. You will notice that the first part of the chapter opens with the covenant of Judas to betray Him, then we have His direction to prepare the passover, and a little lower down we read, "And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, *With desire* I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." We see the desire of His heart.

Never was such a moment as that. Just before (John xi., xii.) all his glories had been witnessed to His soul, now His suffering is present to Him. He had raised Lazarus from the dead, when as the Son He had acted in the communion of the glory of the Father, for it was the glory of the Father to raise the dead. "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them ; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will," and it was the glory of the Son to do what the Father did. So also in John xii. 28, "Father, glorify thy name," and the answer, "I have both glorified it," that was in raising Lazarus from the dead, "and will glorify it again," that was in raising the blessed Lord Himself from the dead, for He was raised by the glory of the Father. Thus in raising Lazarus the glory of the Son was manifested. He came into this

world as a servant, never manifesting His own glory. He, the Son, had emptied Himself, made Himself of no reputation. "I seek not mine own glory," He said, and God at that moment bore witness to the glory of His Son. Then another glory passed in review before Him, and that was His entry into Jerusalem, when the people took branches of palm trees and went forth to meet Him, crying, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord," and then the further glory of the Son of Man when the Greeks who came up to worship at the feast desired to see Him: "Sir, we would see Jesus."

All these glories pass before His soul, but then comes out the great truth that He must die: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

Now, *that* death was before His soul. I not only speak of what it was in atonement, though the more the grace of Christ and all the blessed purposes of God's heart for the saints in Him open out to our souls, the deeper the sense becomes of that precious blood which has laid the foundation for every purpose of divine love. That precious blood not only separates you from all your past history, but is your title for association with Christ in the holiest. But when the world and Israel gave Him up, do you not think

the Lord felt it? He was rejected, betrayed, lover and friend far from Him, and death as the break-up of all associations with His own on earth was present to His soul.

Well, in the midst of these sorrows He sought the company of His own and drew them closer to Himself, giving them the memorials of Himself in death, while looking forward to the kingdom of God about to come in through that death. We have the same love expressed in John xiii., "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." But then He drew them together that He might open up to them the deepest thoughts of His heart. In Luke we have Jesus eating with them at that feast which pointed to His own death, and He says, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." Then, having eaten the passover, He instituted what is called "The Lord's Supper," to be a memorial of Himself, thus linking their hearts together in the fellowship of His death. You do not get the Lord's supper in John, but "part with Christ" is before us there. His death is applied to His own by His pouring water into a bason and washing their feet. Here we have His taking bread and giving thanks as a sign of His body given, and the cup speaking of His blood—both for a memorial of

Himself. They were to bear in mind it was the time of His rejection here, but the fellowship of Christians is that they come together to the memorial of the death of the Lord. It is the first great element of our gathering together as Christians. The Lord has been given up by the world, He is not here, but He is the One who has loved us and given Himself for us, and thank God, we can say, the One that we love. Can we not say it, as having the sense of His great love? Nothing could be more touching than the Lord Himself taking the bread and the cup and giving thanks, and though about to die binding the hearts of the disciples to Himself by the memorials of that death. How little we are touched by it, and how little we have the sense as we come together that our Lord died in this world, but that at the moment when there was no place for Him here He sought a place in the memory of His own as having died here, and that is the very ground of our fellowship; we are drawn to a Person that the world would not have. The disciples knew afterwards, though scarcely realising it at that time, the hatred, murder and cruelty which crucified their Lord; their hearts were all the more drawn together in the attachment of His love and in the sense of His great grace in having died for them.

In the end of John xiii. the Lord in speaking

to them of His going away says, "As I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." Though they should follow Him afterward yet He was about to leave them, and they were to "love one another." Supposing, for instance, a father were taken away from the midst of a family. How all the members of that family would cling together; so the disciples were to cling together as having lost the One who was the centre of their affections here, and we must cling together because the One we love was put to death here. Do we miss the Lord out of this scene? Have we the sense that this is a heartless world, it does not care for the One we love? does that knit our hearts together in the fellowship of His death. As we see that His heart turned from the ruthless world around to sit for a few moments in the company of His own, saying, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," may we be touched with the love of Christ as we see how He valued their love. The hand of him that betrayed Him was with Him on the table, and He deeply felt the treachery; then He asks them to remember Him.

Let us look at the next point. "There was also a strife among them which of them should be accounted the greatest." What would you

think of a family who had just lost the head, and instead of saying we must all be drawn closer together and love one another all the more, if one of them said, I am going to be the master here now? There is not one of us but would deprecate such a man. But the Lord corrects them according to His own love, "I am among you as he that serveth;" and that leads me to John xiii.

The service of His love is beautifully opened out to us here. In Luke it was rather the memorial of His love and the fellowship of saints in that memorial; yet He had to meet the strife that was working in their hearts in the very spot of fellowship. Does He rebuke them? Well, it was a rebuke of love; as He said, "I am among you as he that serveth." Then in John xiii. we find the character of the service of love is that He may fit us to have part with Himself. In the after part of the chapter, where He commits the same service of love to His disciples, He says, "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." Instead of any thought of pre-eminence He has left us this blessed service of love.

I do not think it is a mere question of faults that we get in this chapter. Not that we ought not to seek the removal of a stain, a soil from any one, but service of love goes further. We

should follow the Lord's footsteps in seeking to draw one another's hearts closer to Himself, having the sense that this world has rejected Him and given Him up, for you get the betrayal of Judas mentioned in the opening of this chapter. First we have the love of the Lord, "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Secondly, it was in the heart of man—Satan had put it there—to give Christ up, to betray Him. Then Jesus rises from supper, laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself; He took the place of a servant, and the effect of His down-stooping service was to draw the hearts of the disciples close to Himself. I would press that point because I am convinced that the primary object of this feet-washing is not for faults. It is not the *hands* but the *feet*. The question is one of *walk*, and He wants us to walk close to Himself. Therefore the service of love here is to draw us to Himself that we should not get in contact with the world. I know we are going through the world and we contract soils, and we have the Lord's advocacy; but there is more in this chapter, and I will tell you why. Because the disciples before eating the passover with the Lord were ceremonially clean, or they could not have eaten it. Therefore it was not a question of actual defilement here, but of drawing their

hearts to Himself now that He was about to depart out of the world. They were not to be left in Jewish circumstances. Eating the pass-over was a witness of their privileges as Jews, and the Lord had eaten it with them, that is, He had shewn fellowship, so to speak, with them in their Jewish associations, and in this He had shewn the deepest affection for them ; but here the great point is that His death was to sever them from every Jewish association, and draw them into His own company as the One who was going out of this world to the Father. That is the basis of this chapter. "Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world to the Father." His death as figured in the passover would lay the ground for setting up the fortunes of Israel again ; but the Father had given all His own counsels for eternal glory into the hands of the Son, and therefore, though in several passages His death is referred to, yet in this part of John's gospel the Lord is seen as looking through death to the other side. "Jesus knew that his hour was come to depart out of this world to the Father." He knew also "that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God." As the Son all the Father's counsels were in His hands, and having become Man He was the Servant of the Father's glory.

In one sense I believe it is the contrast to Adam. Adam as created by God, in that sense came from God, but He was not the Son ; dominion down here was given to him, all put into his hands to hold in fealty to God, and all was forfeited. The casting of Jesus out by the world was the outcome of the fall. But the Father had given all things into the hands of the Lord Jesus as the Son, and He as having become flesh came from God and became the Servant of the Father's glory : and having taken everything up that He might accomplish the eternal counsels of the Father, He went to God as having glorified Him. But the first thought of His heart as the Servant of this glory is to associate the disciples with Himself. He is not now before us as eating the passover with them, nor is He instituting the Lord's supper, which is the outward side of our fellowship, but here is a closer and more intimate association. In the one case he shewed the affection which desired to eat with them, and gave them a memorial of Himself here ; but in this case He draws them away from earth and their most hallowed earthly associations to Himself. I wish I could impress every one here with the sense of the desire of the Lord to draw every one of our hearts to Himself. The stooping down to wash the disciples' feet assures us of this. He would have

us know that there is not a single charge against us, for He has died, but through that death He has gone out of this world to the Father, and He would so apply that death to us that no earthly association should prevent our having part with Him; and what would you find there? Not only all that would meet your need, but you will find all that centres in Himself. I see a wonderful opening of divine glory in what there is in Himself; glories that far eclipse and surpass anything that would just meet our need, though divine glory shone out in that. But when we are drawn into His company it is to have part with Him, and it is only there that we can understand what it is.

Well, now, the washing of water I do not doubt for one moment would take away every soil, and the Lord loves to do it, yet I feel in this action of the Lord girding Himself and stooping down there is *a divine principle* expressed as to the *positive* service of love which our hearts need to get hold of. Taking away from my conscience a soil that prevents my heart being happy, though needful, is only negative, and for it the advocacy and the grace of the Lord come in to lead us to the judgment of the evil, then, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But I am persuaded that there is

positive truth in this feet-washing, producing the sense in the soul that the Lord, in girding Himself and stooping down to wash our feet, desired that our footsteps might be directed into His own company that we might have part with Him.

I would press this positive portion upon you. You may know the work of the Lord for your eternal salvation ; you may know there is provision with the Lord if you fail or fall ; but there is a portion to be found in His own company—a retreat and a refuge—when we realise that He was refused on earth. We have to go through this world, but do we go through it as those who do not belong to it, because our Lord is not here and we have part with Him in another sphere. I remember a beloved servant of the Lord, who has since gone to be with the Lord, said to me when I was young, “Get through the world as fast as ever you can.” It was dear Mr. Darby. I daresay many a one welcomes the Lord’s day morning, when you get into the company of the saints and taste the sweetness of the love of Christ and nearness to Himself. It is the retreat Christ has provided for you—the retreat of the company of His own where His presence is realised. Not even the activity of service, though that is a blessed thing if only to impress any heart with the love of Christ, but not the

joy of a soul converted or a saint helped is like the retreat of the Lord's company. Little as one knows it, I think I see the blessedness of it. We have nothing to do in this retreat but to sit down and enjoy what the Lord is, what there is in Himself. That would colour our service, we could tell others what we had found there. We see in Paul's service the effect of beholding the Lord's glory.

I would say to the youngest here, if you want in any measure to serve the Lord, your first preparation is to *know Himself*, not only His work, but the Person who did it. How can we commend part with Him to others if we have not first tasted it? A person might explain the gospel; but no one could commend the gospel as from God without first having tasted that it came from God; and so to be able to affect another with that which is to be found in the Lord we must have tasted it ourselves.

Now this "part with me" is the desire of the Lord for every saint. I want you to be impressed with the fact that He stoops down to your feet. There is a passage in the Old Testament that shews how the Lord wanted His people to walk with Him and hearken to His voice. You read in Psalm lxxxi., "Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! He should have fed them

also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." How the Lord wanted them to walk in His ways that He might satisfy them.

Now, the Lord stoops down to our feet that we may have part with Him. He cares for our company, for in going out of the world He would not leave it without expressing thus the depth of His love, and then leaving that love in the midst of His own, so that their hearts should burn with the same love one towards another.

It touches one's heart to see the Lord stooping down to wash our feet so that our steps might be directed entirely to Himself, that we might have part with Him. It is the application of His death to our walk, and I think I see the effect of it in this chapter, for we read directly after of a disciple leaning upon Jesus' bosom. We do not read of that before. I believe it was the effect of the feet-washing upon John. You must judge whether my thought is right, but that is my impression. I do not think Peter entered into the Lord's desire for him as He washed his feet. It was not that he did not love the Lord, but self-confidence as to his own love prevented him from apprehending *the true character* of the Lord's love. John, on the contrary, responded to the love of the Lord; he is content to designate himself as the disciple whom *Jesus*

loved. With Peter, the thought of *his* love was too prominent ; he said, " Lord I will lay down my life for thy sake." Hence he did not respond to the service of love, but said, " Thou shalt never wash my feet." So in Matthew xvi. he savoured not the " things that be of God, but those that be of men." He was looking at the Lord's sufferings from man's side. The moment we look at things from God's side all is changed. With John the thought was *Jesus' love* ; with Peter *his love* to Christ, which would consider His sufferings in a human way. That will not do. " We love him, because he first loved us."

Many a converted person would say, If I walk piously through this world what more do you want? I want you to know the blessed Lord, to be in His company as drawn by the service of His love to Himself. But you say, I want to have Christ with me in my things. You cannot have that. You will have the Father's care, but the Lord has gone out of this world, and you must go to His side. He has gone through death, and like the children of Israel when they looked toward the wilderness they saw the glory of the Lord in the cloud, you must go the way Christ has gone.

I close with one more remark. In this chapter we have a contrast. The betrayal of Judas and the effect it had upon the heart of

the Lord. He was troubled in spirit. Then the outcome of the heart of man in Judas who went out, and it was night. He who had witnessed the service of love closed the door on the face of Jesus and went out.

But at that moment, when God was most deeply dishonoured in man, God was glorified in Man. "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him." There are two men in scripture that are called the "son of perdition." One is Judas, and the other the man of sin or Antichrist (2 Thess. ii.), and I think the Spirit of God would not name them both the "son of perdition" unless there was a likeness between them. Judas had witnessed all the goodness of Christ and the affections of His heart poured out to His own, and yet he could give Christ up, and shut the door in His face as He went out to betray Him. Now the man of sin is the outcome of the profession of Christianity which will finally give up Christ. What is called Christendom has had the gospel and all the benefits of Christianity for nearly two thousand years, and yet it will, like Judas, give Christ up. I would warn the youngest against going back, it is fatal. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." That is what Christendom is doing. It is a dark picture of dishonour. On the other hand I shew you the very bright

picture of the glory of Christ. If you look *that way* there is a Man in glory ; God has glorified Christ ; we believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead and gave Him glory. Look up there and you see the glory of Christ, God has glorified Him in Himself. If we are drawn into this nearness to Christ we shall enjoy His blessed love and be witnesses down here of the glories of Christ up there.



THE HEART IN TOUCH WITH THE ONE WHO IS COMING.

MATT. XVII. 24-27 ; XXV. 6-13 ; REV. XXII. 16, 17 ; 20, 21.

PERHAPS you may wonder, beloved friends, at my linking these scriptures together, but I want to bring before you what, I believe is, the great question for to-day, and that is—affection for the Lord. I trust I shall be able to shew you the connection.

I read that passage in Matthew xvii. because I believe it is an illustration of what I brought before you last Friday ; I was speaking of the Lord drawing us into His company. In the beginning of the chapter the Lord takes three of His disciples and shews them on the mount of transfiguration His coming glory. Chapters xvi. and xvii. bring out the character of things which would supervene when the earthly system had failed. Judaism had been the great centre of God's interests upon this earth and it had failed. Then two things are brought out very distinctly to take its place. One was the church in

chapter xvi., and the other was the kingdom ; and though the kingdom is not set up in power, and will not be till the Lord comes, and though the church as built by Christ is really for heaven, yet both were to supersede Judaism upon the earth. The kingdom will come in power and subdue everything ; but as to its present form Peter had the keys of the kingdom of heaven committed to him, and those brought into the secret of it were witnesses of the Lord's majesty, though the King was rejected by the leaders of Israel. But prior to this, and consequent on His rejection, the true glory of the Person of the Lord had also been revealed to Peter. When He was here it was veiled. No one looking at the Lord in flesh would have known He was the Son of God. They saw Him as Son of Man, they believed on Him as the Christ, but what was revealed to Peter was the deeper glory of the Son of God ; and it was upon that effectual revelation of the glory of His Person that He was about to build His assembly. "Upon this rock I will build my church."

All that had ever been committed to man had failed, but here now is a Person who had become Man, but in the truth and secret of His own Person He is the Son of the living God, and He is going to build, with material formed

by the revelation of the Father as to the truth of His own Person, something against which no power of Satan can prevail.

I am touching on a point or two to lead up to my subject. The difficulty with all our hearts is to get the sense that everything of man has failed, and that God cannot form anything of man as he is. I am not speaking of salvation; no one who knows the precious blood of Christ as that by which they have received the forgiveness of sins could think there is anything in them that could contribute to their salvation. But I do not think we are quite so clear that Christ cannot make anything of the first man, and that what He now builds must entirely come from Himself. And there is the great hindrance with us, that we do think in some way God can make something of us as we are, children of men. No; beloved friends, everything must come from Christ. There must be a new beginning. You find in the end of chapter xvi. when the Lord speaks of His sufferings and death and that the chief priests and elders would give Him up, Peter has a most beautiful sentiment. But we need to take it home, that the most beautiful and elevated sentiment of the heart of man is worthless in the things of God. Peter was of a most ardent affectionate temperament. The Lord speaks of the cross and Peter gives

utterance to a most beautiful sentiment (I quote from the new translation), "God be favourable unto thee, Lord; this shall in no wise be unto thee!" Was not that kindly feeling? But was it not the shrinking of man from what is so terrible to man! Must everything of man go in death? Must Christ even die? *He must.*

Let me give you a figure which will explain what I mean. You will remember with regard to Abraham that when Isaac, the promised seed, a figure of Christ, came in, Ishmael had to go out. If you read the Epistle to the Galatians you see Ishmael must go out; you cannot have the man according to the flesh; he goes out in order for Christ to have His place. But there is another thing: Isaac had to go. You say, I thought *Ishmael* had to go? Yes; but Isaac according to the flesh had to go. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest . . . and offer him," etc. (Gen. xxii. 2.) What is the meaning of that? Christ according to the flesh had to die and close all relationships with the flesh. There is no relationship now between Christ and the flesh.

I take another passage, Romans vii., where the apostle uses a figure and says, The woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives, but if he die she is loosed from the law

of her husband. The moment death comes in relationships are broken. All relationship between Christ and this world was broken in His death. Abraham had to give up Isaac according to the flesh ; true, to receive him in resurrection, but he had to give him up. There is no link at all between Christ and man in nature. It is important for us to see this if our souls desire to reach Christ, and where affection would draw us is to Christ. Affection cannot be satisfied with merely knowing the work that is done ; it desires to reach the Person that effected it. Well, He must be reached in resurrection because He has died. It was a kind sentiment in Peter ; but what does the Lord say ? “ You savour of the things of *men*, not of the things of God. It is well to follow this line, because it shews us where the hindrance often lies. We would like to bring Christ to our line of things. That cannot be. It is broken, and if we try to form it we do so to our loss.

There is another passage which I would like to refer to in connection with this subject, and that is Christ as the Stone disallowed of men. (1 Pet. ii. 4-7.) If I know Him as *God's* foundation and chief corner stone I know Him as disallowed *of men* ; but then I learn all the preciousness that is in Him ; all the preciousness that God sees in Him. Do you think if

we are on the side of man we can ever learn the preciousness that God sees in Christ? That a structure is being built up which shall speak of the unsearchable riches of Christ? If you have come to the living Stone you come away from man, but you get the preciousness that is in Christ. God brings the soul to know it in order that it may be part of that structure which is characterised by all the preciousness of the Living Stone. You see it in the new Jerusalem. There is not one bit that does not bring out the beauties and glories of Christ. God knows them all, and He would have us know them. Are we on the side of man, thinking that God can allow some glory or sentiment of man? or have we gone to God's side, realising that the first man is set aside in order to get the preciousness and beauty of the second Man? The effect of seeing the preciousness of Christ is that the soul is drawn in affection to Him.

In Matthew xvii. it is not the structure in which all the beauty of Christ is to come out, but the kingdom. The Lord takes Peter, James and John up a mountain with Him. Consider it for a moment! He takes them up into a high mountain *apart*, away from all the influences of man, and there they see Christ's glory. He was transfigured before them, but it

was the glory of the heavenly that shone upon Him. It was the glory of the Son of Man which they saw, but there was more, the glory of the Son of God was declared. Immediately Peter would put Christ on a level with Moses and Elias, the voice from heaven says, "This is *my beloved Son*." Though He did receive glory as a man, as He did everything, having come into the place of manhood, yet the true glory of His Person was declared by the Father's voice. In Matthew you get what is not mentioned in the other gospels: "His face did shine as the sun," so much is the glory of His Person made prominent. To His disciples He spoke of "*the Son of Man coming* in His kingdom." It is the Person our eyes are fixed upon here. In Mark it is "the kingdom of God coming with power." In Luke it is simply "the kingdom of God."

In order to see this glory of the Lord they are taken apart from the scene of man's activity that their hearts might be impressed with the glory which is yet to break in upon this world. We see again how Peter is hindered in his apprehension of the Lord's glory. "Master," he says, "it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." He tries to attach and connect

the Lord's glory with the passing state of Judaism.

If we examine the history of our own souls, how often should we find that we have tried to connect the Lord with the human side of things. We have not been clear of man in our souls so that we might behold the Lord's glory and our hearts be drawn out to Himself, with the desire in each of our souls: "I should like that glory to come in!" as those who love His appearing. We are privileged now to behold the Lord's glory, "We all beholding the Lord's glory with unveiled face." Paul received the vision and revelation of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, and as an apostle he made it known so that we might behold it also. Thus we see that by the revelation of the truth of His own Person, Christ is forming a structure in which all the preciousness of the Living Stone will be brought out. It is exceeding grace that we should be of it. Further, we see Him on the holy mount, and the three disciples conducted apart from this world were witnesses of the Lord's glory. Moses and Elijah had been witnesses for the Lord, but they had been connected with the earthly system and they retire as the Father's voice proclaims His glory. The Father will not allow anything to touch it, and then the blessed Lord comes and touches

them, and nothing can be more blessed than His touch. Then they look up and see "Jesus only." That is a great point for our souls. Does the Lord fill the vision of our souls? Is that what we want, Christ singled out from every one else; all the glory of God shining in Him, the yea and amen of all the counsels of God, and He to fill the vision of our souls? Affection draws us to Him.

I pass on to the last point in chapter xvii., and there you find again the leaven of man in the heart of Peter. Does not your Master contribute to Judaism? That is the force of what he is asked. This was the tribute money, the half shekel which went to the temple service. Peter is not clear of the leaven. He has had the revelation of chapter xvi. and seen the glory, and yet how easily he is caught. How a little thing may shew at any time that we are not clear of the old system. Peter says, Yes, His Master would contribute to the structure of Judaism. He had not learned that the Lord was the beginning of a new structure, and that He was the Lord of glory morally outside this scene. The Lord anticipated Peter when he came into the house, "Of whom do the kings of the earth take tribute? of their own children or of strangers?" Peter had not the sense he was a child of the kingdom—that

kingdom he was privileged to see in the holy mount. He was contributing to the old system that was actually about to crucify the Lord. That came out in chapter xvi. There the Lord says the *scribes* and *Pharisees* and elders would kill Him. In this chapter it says *men* shall crucify Him. In another chapter it says the Gentiles. So whether Jews or Gentiles or men, *all* would give up the Lord and everything would be established in resurrection. Peter had not the sense of it.

Now look at the beautiful way in which the Lord replies. (Ver. 27.) "Notwithstanding, lest *we* should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up." Look how He says "we" to Peter! How He links Himself and Peter together! "Lest *we* offend them." He shews He was Lord of everything, and everything was tributary to Him. He could command the fish of the sea. "And when thou hast opened his mouth thou shalt find a stater (two didrachmas or half-shekels): that take, and give unto them *for me and thee*." It is for these two words that I read this passage—that we might understand association with the Lord.

Peter's heart was going off to Jewish things. He did not get to Christ's side, nor could he fully until after the cross which ended him, and

he had received the Spirit that linked Him with Christ. But we do know the cross now, and we have the Spirit of God.

But here the Lord is drawing Peter to Himself, and nothing could be more touching than that the Lord could say at that moment, "me and thee." Beloved brethren, does it touch our hearts, "Me and thee"? Think of it! I was speaking last week of how the Lord draws the soul into His company, and here, I may say, these two little words put things into their right place. "Me and thee." Oh! what a rebuke it is to our hearts as we see the Lord, who He is, all His glory, and yet He has come down here and in the most touching way would say to our hearts—to the youngest—"Me and thee." I believe if we could only enter into it we should know what attraction there is to draw us out of this scene to Christ who has been rejected here.

I take you to one more passage in 2 Corinthians iv. 10. "The dying of the Lord Jesus."

It is, if I may alter the translation, the *putting to death* of the Lord Jesus. Why do I put it in that way? Because what the Spirit of God there fixes our minds upon is not exactly the blessed Lord giving Himself up to death for our sins, but that He was put to death. The world would not have Him. The putting to death of

the Lord was a great fact, though He became obedient to death that the counsels of God might be accomplished, but He died, and broke all connection with the world in dying. If you would know Christ you must join Him on the other side, where He is in resurrection, and it is there His glories will shine to you. He came in humiliation in order to say "Me and thee," and that we might know His grace in dying for our sins in order that He might bring us to a place where we can look at all His glories, and be descriptive of Him as brought into association with Himself.

Now if I turn to the point of the Bridegroom I will tell you what I understand by it. The virgins represent the saints during the Lord's absence, those who now form the church. Their calling was to look for the Bridegroom; they went out to meet the Bridegroom. What to my mind is involved in the Bridegroom's return is, that it will be the moment when the Lord will have His rightful place here. The marriage day is not only the day of the gladness of a man's heart, but the day when he enters upon a home for himself. He has lived in his father's house perhaps, but on the marriage day a man gets a home and enters on his full estate.

A day is coming when the Lord is going to

enter on all that belongs to Him, and it will be the day of the joy and gladness of His heart. If I have been on the mount with the Lord in spirit and seen the glory that is going to break on this world, surely I would like that glory to appear.

That was, I think, the great point that the saints woke up to at the moment the cry was made, "Behold, the bridegroom!" The church had not been alive to the truth of the coming of the Lord—that had been lost—but they had forgotten also that this world was Christ's inheritance, that the present system was going to be displaced and another formed. The church had gone to sleep, and Christianity was regarded as a supplement to Judaism; a better kind of law wherewith to build up and cleanse and make the world a bearable place, and that by it eventually the earth would be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and so on. The idea that there was a Bridegroom, and that connected with Him a new system of glory would be introduced was lost. Not merely the coming of the Lord was forgotten but what was involved in it also.

We know that some sixty years ago it pleased God to revive the truth that there was a Bridegroom, One who was coming to take the inheritance and rule; and that glory was going

to break on this scene through the in-coming of Christ.

It seems to me that this parable of the virgins supposes an interval, a moment of tarrying after the cry had gone out. I do not say how long an interval, but there is evidently a moment between the cry and the Bridegroom coming, and in that moment the wise virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. There might have been only an interval of minutes after the cry that awakened the saints up to the great fact of the glory of Christ, which is connected, to my mind, with the idea of the Bridegroom. During that interval the wise virgins arose and returned to their original calling; they went out to meet the Bridegroom.

We sing, "This world is a wilderness wide." Is it really so? Do we love the Lord and hence look for His appearing? If our hearts tell the truth, how little has all that blessed love of the Lord that says "Me and thee" affected our hearts. Would to God it affected our hearts more, and that to-night He would arouse every one to the sense of our association with Him. "Behold the Bridegroom!" announces the truth that there is such a Person.

Concurrently with this cry another thing came out, and that was the truth connected with the Spirit. In this parable there is the question

of having oil. In another parable (Matt. xxii.) you have the question of the wedding garment. That I think more came up at the Reformation. The question of justification by faith became prominent then ; the possession of a robe of righteousness that would alone entitle you to be at the marriage feast. That was not the question with these virgins, it was with the guests at the wedding supper. The servants had gone out and gathered a great multitude, good and bad ; and then came the question of fitness, that which became prominent at the Reformation.

But when the cry of "the Bridegroom " went forth the great question that came up was the possession of the oil. Those who remember it, can recall the recovery of the truth that God vouchsafed sixty years ago, that the church had the Spirit. In the Church of England they pray for the Spirit as though He had not come, but what characterised the wise virgins was they had the Spirit. It was an immense recovery ; not whether I had a title to glory through having the wedding garment, but of having the Spirit that would acquaint me with the Bridegroom. How could I be ready to meet Him as part of His company without the Spirit. Could I enter into His company as one of the wise virgins, suited to be His companion without ?

That depended upon the oil. The Spirit alone can open up to you the things of God and acquaint your soul with the blessedness of Christ, so that in company with Him I enter into the joys of the Bridegroom. When the Spirit of God conducts you into the things of God and of Christ it is not your personal fitness that is in question—you have that—but you are in liberty and free to think of His glories. In order to delight in His glory being established, and to see what a glorious Person He is and that God finds His delight in Him, and ours is there too, we must have the Spirit. Title will not do that. For that you need the Spirit.

I think it depends upon how far we know the Spirit's power that we respond to the truth of the Bridegroom. His glory puts out every thought but itself. If we knew the presence of Christ in our hearts through the power of the Spirit it would put out all but Himself. When the glory of Christ comes into the world it will put out everything but His glory, and so it should now in our hearts. We have the Spirit to conduct our souls into Christ's things, then we are ready for the Bridegroom, ready to go in with Him.

One word more. It seems to me the words which I read in Revelation xxii. give us the last utterance of Christ to His church. "Behold the

Bridegroom " supposes an interval however short during which we may trim our lamps and respond to the thoughts and mind of Christ as those who are His companions. But in the last chapter of Revelation we have the last utterances of Christ to the church. It supposes no delay. He is coming quickly. You see in the previous chapters various characteristics of the Lord in connection with the putting down of evil. You see Him as the Son of Man in the glory of the "Ancient of Days," as "the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as the Angel-priest," &c., and then at last He says, "I, Jesus." That is His own personal name, a name we well know.

Like He said to the disciples when they saw that wonderful form walking on the water and were afraid, "It is I; be not afraid." So the Lord says, "I, Jesus." It is not merely that He opens the seals, or His intercession brings forth messengers of judgment to clear the earth, but He is the One who brings in the "sure mercies of David;" He is also "the bright and morning star," the heavenly hope of the church. Judgment after judgment rolls over the earth to clear it of what is of man—of that which Satan has set up—in order to make way for the coming in of the glorified Man. The Lord at the close of the history of judgment says, I am the Morning Star of every hope of your heart,

the hope of the bride. That is the last word He has to say to the church. Not merely have we "the bridegroom," but now we have "the Spirit and the bride"; the truth of the Spirit was concurrent with the cry of "the bridegroom," and now the last word, "I am the bright and morning star," draws out the affections. And "the Spirit and the bride say, Come." There is the heart of the bride. Affections are drawn out. We are not now looking at an angel-priest or a conqueror, but at Jesus. The youngest saint knows that name. The Lord says, "I, Jesus." He wants to reach your heart. He is the Morning Star of every hope that His name awakens in the soul, and affection is drawn out to Himself.

It is not here a question of righteousness or of readiness to be companions of the Bridegroom, but of affection. Can our hearts say, Come?

Thus you get the last word of Christ to the church, and surely if I read the present moment aright, if I think of the ministry that the Lord is giving to-day in a very special way, I cannot but feel it is a ministry from the Lord to call out the affections of the heart to Christ. The Spirit is here to form Christ in the saints. But what I feel at the present moment is that the ministry is to revive the affection of our souls to Christ Himself, that we may have the sense of

who is coming, the One who loved us and gave Himself for us. The ministry, I believe, is to awaken first love, as on the day that we first heard that name sounded in our hearts by the Holy Spirit—the name of Jesus. All the troubles of your soul, every burden of your conscience fled away before that one word, “Jesus.” The Spirit reverts to it, “I, Jesus.” Ah! beloved friends, do our hearts go back to that day when that word fell like music on our ears, or have we turned round to man? Have we got down into the world occupied with a thousand things so that that Name has no power in our souls to-night to draw out that response, Come? May God lead our hearts back to it; that one word, “I, Jesus.”

“I have sent mine angel to testify these things,” but *I* am the One who is coming to bring in all for the earth and heaven. I am the bright and morning star, and “the Spirit and the bride say, Come.”

Then the last lingering word to the church is, “Surely I come quickly. Amen.” The Lord now says “*quickly*,” and the response is, “even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

The Lord lead our hearts, beloved friends, to that precious Saviour! Oh! may His words, “me and thee,” draw every one of us into His own company! And then the first mention of

the name of Jesus that ever calmed a troubled heart—may the power of it be upon every soul to-night, so that the effect may be for every one to say, “Come, Lord Jesus!”

