

# TRUTH FOR THE TIME.

(PART XII.)

BEING NOTES OF ADDRESSES AND  
READINGS AT QUEMERFORD,  
MAY, 1899

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REVISED.

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LONDON:  
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

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1899.



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# THE SPIRIT CHARACTERISTIC, AND AS WITNESS.

(1 JOHN IV. 7-15; v. 18-21.)

I THINK there is not any truth much more practically important than that of the setting aside of the first man, and I fear it is comparatively poorly understood. It does not mean simply the introduction of another Man, but what is even morally above that; the introduction of all that is of God. That is to my mind the great importance of it. I do not think that any one can understand Christianity or scripture unless they accept the truth of what has been effected for God. We continually and habitually look at things as under our own eyes, but we should view them not so much from our side but as they are under the eye of God. Nothing can be plainer to any reasonable person than that the introduction of another, a second Man, involves that the first man is set aside. He has disappeared to God's glory in the death of God's own Son, and God has brought in another Man. The first man's death was not

for God's *pleasure*, but faith apprehends that in the death of Christ he has been removed to the *glory* of God, in order that the second Man might fill the scene. The second Man is presented in a remarkable way at the present time as the Head of every man. It does not say that He is to be Head, but "the head of every man is Christ." Nothing could make more plain than does that passage that there is but one Man before God, and that is the second Man.

There is another point consequent on this, namely, that everything is to be taken up under that Man. I do not care what it is. Human life and relationships are all under Him. The true character of everything is expressed in Him. Even as to marriage, the pattern is Christ and the church. Everything for God is now expressed in that Man, and all is to be taken up in Him. I can conceive nothing of more importance than this for the right understanding of Christianity. When God again takes up the earth, all will be carried out according to the second Man, not according to the first man. Hence you can understand the great importance of the church coming out as the bride, the Lamb's wife. The nations walk in the light of that, and everything is brought into accord with the second Man. The second Man will give order

and character to everything here, and if we are in the light of the Lord, that is what is true now to us in Christianity. I do not believe the eye of God rests with satisfaction on anything down here, save that which is of the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit is come down representatively, in that sense, of the Man in heaven. He did not come till Jesus was glorified. What we have to judge of is how far things down here have their source in the Spirit of God. Take what you like down here, everything morally, even the way we carry out natural obligations, all is to have its source in the Spirit of God. In that way, as I understand Romans viii., the Spirit is everything. The Spirit is life in view of righteousness.

I read these passages only to make two or three remarks upon them. In chapter iv. you have the Spirit of God as characteristic. In chapter v. the Spirit is seen in another light, not as characteristic, but as Witness; witnessing to One who is absent. Chapter iv. connects itself with the testimony of saints; hence the Spirit is characteristic. On the other hand, when the question is of privilege, the Spirit is witness—He represents here the Son of God. We first need to learn the Spirit as characteristic, for when you learn the Holy Ghost in that light you see that He gives a divine character morally

to all here. That is the point in chapter iv. : it stands quite distinct in that way from chapter v.

No one preaches the gospel as knowing it doctrinally, but because he is in the secret and spring of the gospel, that is what comes out in chapter iv. I doubt if any one could preach the gospel effectively otherwise. We need to be in the source of it; that is where we get the good of it. We read in verse 9: "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time; if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given to us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Now we have the thought of testimony in that verse manifestly. But there is a very important statement before that. "If we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us." That statement is conditional. And then afterwards, "we have seen, and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the



world." The gospel comes out with power when the saints love one another. When they are abiding in unity, and the love of God is perfected in them, then they bear witness that "the Father sent the Son," &c.

I feel pretty confident that we are defective in that respect. I doubt if the spoken testimony is not thus much marred and hindered. I take it to be the reason of the little apparent result in connection with the gospel in the present day. The testimony of God was in the saints collectively. The church was to be the perfect expression down here of the love of God in Christ, the only begotten Son. God's love was perfect in the One the Father sent, and saints were to be here the expression of that love in Him. It is vain to say we love God if we do not love one another; but in loving one another God's love is perfected in us in the way of expression or witness down here; and this points on to what is to come out in the heavenly city. The city comes out having the glory of God, her light like unto a stone most precious. It is the expression and witness of the nature of God, not simply of His attributes, and that is what the church is left for down here. The Lord prays for this in John xvii.: "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 ;" that there might be a witness thus in the world that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. You get the statement "because he has given us of his Spirit," and thus the Spirit is characteristic. If saints are in the reality of God's love, they are a powerful witness of that love. I suppose that if we love one another as saints, it is because we are in the love of God. I can understand natural affection, that exists even in the brute creation. But the love of saints is divine affection, pure, fervent, holy love; if there be anything of that, the secret and spring of it must surely be God Himself, and we abide in God in the sense of His love. His love is enlarged upon very greatly in this chapter; hence it is that we love one another. The secret is that we are in the spring of love—we abide in the love of God. And then it is we "have seen, and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," for this is the expression of divine love. Divine love came into activity when the Father sent the Son, and that testimony is now on the part of those whose hearts are abiding in the spring of love, and that is God's nature. And we love one another—that is our witness—because our hearts are abiding in the spring of love. God has given to us of His Spirit, that there should be an expression of Himself in this world. We

are made partakers of the divine nature that God may be characteristically expressed in the saints down here. It is not a mere question of profession (that we avow or profess to know God), but that we are maintained in holy affections one toward another. There is an expression of love. His love is perfected in us. He has given to us of His Spirit. We speak of the Spirit, and rightly, as a divine Person; but I think I see the Spirit characteristically, the bringing in of what is morally of God. And now we are made to live in the Spirit, to partake in the character of God, that God, in what He is morally, may be expressed in the saints. We are together in holy love, and this is testimony, that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." It is important to bear in mind that our testimony here is more in what we *are* than in what we *say*. God intended to have a testimony of saints in unity. The unity of the saints will never be restored here, but I am sure that it will come out in the heavenly city by and by, and in that sense we have it now as heavenly light. But we need to go back to divine principles, and a first principle is fervent love one to another. If we are burning with this, the effect will be increased activity in the testimony which is the outcome of divine love. We participate in God's Spirit.

Now if you turn to chapter v., there we have the Spirit, not characteristic but witnessing. See verses 10 and 11, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." And verse 20, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God, and eternal life."

Now it is said there are three that bear witness. In this we are coming to privilege. The epistle closes with this: God has brought us to the furthest point to which He could bring us on earth. John is not here carrying us into heavenly places. The apostle Paul does that, but John brings us to the furthest point to which we can come on earth, as things are, and that is to eternal life. We are in Him that is true, and He is the true God, and eternal life; that I understand to be connected with the witness of the Spirit. The Spirit is the witness of the Son of God now at God's right hand. The Son of God is not here, but the Spirit is here to witness to Him. There are two other witnesses

spoken of, but the Spirit is evidently the witness of the Son of God. If the Son of God were here, we should not want a witness, but the Son not being here, we have the Spirit to witness of Him. What that brings us to is this—WE can be brought to the Son of God here, the Witness brings us to Him. The two other witnesses—the water and the blood, are necessary, for we are actually down here in responsible life; and the blood is witness that we are free from imputation that we may be perfect as to conscience. The water speaks of cleansing from pollution. You have the witness, and you know its virtue. It would be no gain to you if you did not know its virtue. The virtue of the blood is that by the one offering Christ has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. No question can be raised on that score; we are perfected as to conscience, and washed as to our bodies with pure water. You are washed that you may be before God clear in regard to all connected with responsibility, but the positive witness is the Spirit to the Son of God. That brings us to verse 20. He "hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true." Saints are now capable by the understanding given them. They are not actually quickened yet, but they are quickened in point of affections; they are capable of knowing Him that is true. "This is

the eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, thy sent one." Thus we are capable in point of divine affections. The secret of understanding lies in affection. There is no real knowledge of divine things apart from affection. The apostle Paul prayed for the Colossians, "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding." You will not get understanding of divine Persons or divine things apart from the presence of affection. Christ has made us capable in that respect, "He hath given us an understanding," &c. You will not know divine Persons simply through the study of scripture, but you have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things. He has given us too an understanding. How many of us have set out to get at the knowledge of God by the study of scripture! But true knowledge is from within, the understanding which Christ has given, and that is "that we may know him that is true."

Then there is another point, "We are in him that is true." You belong to that circle of which He is the centre. This brings in the blessed thought of association with Christ, we are in Him that is true, and know what He is—"the true God, and eternal life." God has brought us there

in His Son. It is the place of privilege, and I think the furthest point to which God could bring us down here. We are risen with Christ, and quickened together with Him. That is how Paul expresses it. John expresses the same thing, but in different terms from Paul. The great point is our being brought into association with Christ risen, and John brings us to this when he says, "He hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." I think everybody would be prepared to admit that if Christ is eternal life, there can be no eternal life where Christ is not. It is brought in at the present time by the Witness; there is One here representative of the Son of God, and it is in our place of association with the Son of God, in the power of the Holy Ghost, that we touch the reality of eternal life. The Spirit is here as witness of the Son of God in glory, and the witness is efficient; the witness is competent, and equivalent to the One He is witness of. We never could come up to the One witnessed of else. He has given us an understanding. I think it is a wonderful thing to see that the saints are competent in point of affection, though not yet quickened actually.

Just another word I would say. The testimony of God is seen in His own character, and I do

not think anything has the true character and ring of testimony but what is of God ; no mere human utterance. The true testimony of God down here is really after God Himself, the new man's testimony. The new man is created after God—in righteousness and holiness.

Saints are to abide in divine love, their hearts imbued with love, and they will then manifest what is characteristic of God. Thus you get the testimony—the Father sent the Son, the Saviour of the world.

On the other hand you get the Spirit, the witness, in connection with which the saints are in association with the Son of God in divine love in a scene where divine love can rest in eternal and perfect complacency.

There are many things which apply to us down here besides this, discipline and purging and such like, which are also expressions of divine love ; but there is a spot where divine love rests, and we are brought to that spot in connection with the witness to the One who is “the true God, and eternal life ;” and love rests there. It is not purging or discipline there, but love in perfect rest and complacency.





## THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

(2 COR. V. 5-12; 1 JOHN II. 27, 28; IV. 17, 19;

REV. XIX. 6-8.)

YOU will have gathered from the scriptures read that what is a little before me is the judgment seat of Christ. I think it is a great thing that we can be brought even while down here, I believe, in spirit to the judgment seat. And I question how far any of us can enter into the purpose of God until we are in our experience past the judgment seat.

I dare say most of us are aware that the former part of the second Epistle to the Corinthians is occupied specially with the ministry of the Apostle Paul, and the way in which he was given of God to bring out the wonderful and glorious ministry entrusted to him, so that the saints might be taught, and formed by it, and he carries on that ministry so as to bring the saints up to the point of the judgment seat. Now, we might be disposed somewhat to look on the judgment seat with fear, but the verses we read in John's epistle tell us we need not regard it with fear. I believe with regard to Christians that the object of the Lord in bringing us there is not

for condemnation, but to manifest us blameless, the great point being that it is for approval. Thus when we come at last to the bride, the New Jerusalem, she has passed the judgment seat and, when measured with the golden reed, all is approval. We read, "And his wife hath made herself ready, and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints." She is about to be presented, so that necessarily there is approval. That makes the judgment seat of the greatest possible value to us now, because we come under what I may call the discrimination of Christ. When I think of the ministry confided to Paul, I am in the sense of the grace of Christ, and when he brings us to the judgment seat he brings us to the discrimination of Christ; He must approve what His grace has effected, and in His light we see how far we have been formed according to the grace of Christ by the Spirit, and so by divine teaching. If there is one thing I desire for the saints to-day it is that the grace of Christ may more and more teach us, so that we might be formed in His grace. All sorts of questions try us, and distress us, but what a blessed thing if our souls should get more under the impress of Christ by divine teaching; then we see everything according to Christ. I have no doubt as to what has often been said that in that day all

our lives will pass in review before the judgment seat. I do not raise any question as to that; we shall see in His light everything that was contrary to Christ, and the grace that met it, but it will all be gone, and we shall see all that is according to God remain. The reason it will all be gone is this:—"For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." We are to be made the righteousness of God in Him, that is the blessedness of it, and the ground for that is laid in Christ having been "made sin." If any one of us had written that verse, in whom was working the leaven of the human mind in regard to the gospel or the things of God, we should never have written such a sentence as that. I take it that a great many of us, if we had written about the death of Christ as the sin-bearer, would have thought it wonderful to say, He was made sin, that we should go as poor forgiven sinners into heaven. But that is not how you are going to be in heaven, you are going to be there "*the righteousness of God in Him.*" There will not be a trace of the old sinful condition. I do not believe we realise sufficiently the extent and depth of those words, "made sin for us"—how completely sin is put away that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ. I do not forget that I am a

forgiven sinner. I do not forget what I was, nor the hole of the pit whence I was digged, but what I see is that I am to be there in righteousness. I should put a slight on the grace of God and the work of Christ if I allowed any thought to mar the wonderful way in which that grace of Christ has entirely obliterated in the cross all that was contrary to God. Do you suppose it will ever come up in His presence? No; we are made the righteousness of God in Him. What a wonderful thing to see what is the effect of the work of Christ! and nowhere do we so see it as in the light of the judgment seat. I do not think we have all taken in the thought that sin is put away from before God for ever. There are pious expressions from converted persons so far as God has taught them, and God forbid we should put a slight upon them, but we want to get into the depth and reality of the cross of Christ, and the work He has done. God forbid that we should limit it in anywise. As we sometimes sing—

“The work that Thine own Son hath wrought  
Has brought *us back in peace* and free,  
And now as sons before Thy face,  
With joyful steps the path we tread  
Which leads us on to that blest place  
Prepared for us by Christ our Head.”

Not in peace and free as forgiven sinners, but

“as sons.” The prodigal was not in the house at all as a prodigal but as a son. I want you to see that through the work of Christ on the cross God can say, “Your sins and iniquities I will remember no more for ever.” They will never come before Him. But what do you become? “The righteousness of God in him.” Is not that a wonderful thing when we think of it?

Now I believe that it is a great point to see that when we are converted we come into the sense of the opening out to our souls of the riches of the grace in Christ. And then through ministry we are brought to see everything that is set forth in Christ. He is in glory, and God has been pleased to set forth everything in Him. All that was offensive to God, He has so put away that it can never come up again before Him, and God has been completely and fully glorified. A Saviour in glory is the witness of this.

See the remarkable way in which the Lord speaks through Balaam. If we looked at Israel we could not conceive it, but he is forced to speak from God's height, not of what Israel had done, but of what God had wrought. What he spoke of could not be fully seen in that day, but in this day it can be seen what God has wrought. As we look at that blessed Man in the glory of God we see the work He has done has so completely put sin away that it is *obliterated* from

the mind of God, and He is there in the glory, setting forth to us all the good pleasure and delight of God. Is not it a blessed thing to come under that teaching?

There are many of us here who seek to help one another, to build up and edify one another in Christ, but you will agree with me, that unless it is growth *in Christ* it is worthless; growth in mere knowledge of scripture will not do. I do not undervalue growth in the knowledge of scripture, but what I long to see is growth in the knowledge of the Son of God, growth in the Lord Jesus Christ, growing up into Him. That is what God has got before Him, and nothing is of any value but that; because the whole question with us before God is *the end* to which He is conducting us. A beloved brother, who has often stood here, used to quote to us the text, "That ye may be *found* of Him in peace without spot and blameless." Because it is a great point how you will come out in the day of Christ. So the apostle, in writing to the Thessalonians, says, "I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved *blameless* unto [or rather at] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." God has to exercise much discipline toward us down here, and we need it, in order that divine teaching may be effective with us. We learn through it how completely He has dealt with man in the

cross, but we learn also what He has set before us in the Man that is glorified at His right hand. We get this divine teaching by the Spirit.

In the beginning of this fourth chapter of John's epistle I see what is very important for us in regard to the Spirit of God in a day like this. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God. . . . Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in flesh is of God." I believe that is a test which the youngest believer can use, and by it detect what is the truth and what is not. The Spirit of God confesses Jesus Christ come in flesh. A young Christian may hear others speak of the heavenly places, of eternal life in the Son of God, and of entering into the holiest and so forth, and he might say, I am not sure that I know much of these things; but I say to him, Have you seen what the Lord was when down here in lowly grace, and learnt of Him? He was here in meekness and gentleness, dealing with souls in grace—"Jesus Christ come in flesh"—do you know Him? Now where the Spirit of God is, there is the confession of Jesus Christ come in flesh; it is the test as to all assumption of superior light and knowledge: the youngest believer can say, when something is presented to him that lays claim to spirituality, though it may be put in a very specious way, That

sounds well, but when I look at the person who presents it to me, I do not see the character of Jesus Christ come in flesh—His meekness, lowliness, and grace—I do not see the impress of Christ in that person. The talk of the lips is nothing.

Divine teaching is very simple for our souls. Christ is the measure of everything for us, the anointing teaches us of Him, and thus by the Spirit we come under the impress of Christ. Paul and John both conduct us to the judgment seat, it has been called the examination day when it is seen how far divine teaching has formed us after Christ. Up to verse 5 of 2 Corinthians v. Paul had been speaking of the ministry of grace which brought the light of God's glory in Christ into the souls of the Corinthians. God had wrought in them through divine teaching in view of a resurrection body, and Paul brings them, so to speak, before the judgment-seat; but, like John, he brings them to it in confidence. "We are always confident," he says; he has no thought but of confidence in going to the Lord; so John, "that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." God has come out in love to remove everything that was offensive to Him. Christ was made sin for us, and in His grace He makes Christ everything to our souls.

Having brought them to the judgment-seat,



Paul can then go on with the ministry of reconciliation, so John brings us to the day of judgment, in the light of love perfected with us, "as he is so are we in this world;" and then in chapter v. carries us on to eternal life in the Son of God. God has to teach us lessons as to His grace, His righteousness, His love—of all that Christ is, and in view of the judgment-seat the soul is made conscious that everything which is not Christ will not do for God. Nothing but what is of Christ can go into heaven, but He is the measure as to everything down here in this world; we are to be like Christ in heaven, and the judgment-seat can approve nothing less down here. Then in chapter v. Paul carries us into another scene, but you do not really get there until in spirit you are past the judgment-seat; there you come under the eye of Christ, and He only can approve what is of Himself, and there you learn the judgment of all that is not of Himself.

In the passage which I read in chapter ii. the apostle says, "the anointing teacheth you of all things;" as an apostle there could be no question but that he had ministered to them in the power of the Spirit, yet as to the things he ministered, it was the anointing which taught them and not man, even though an apostle ministered the things; it thus became truth in them taught

by the Spirit and not by law, that is, by letter, and the effect of it was that they would abide in Christ. The apostle then says, "Abide in him," in order that he, as an apostle, might have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If we do not come under the teaching of the anointing, all head knowledge, even of apostolic ministry, is useless; it will not form us in Christ, nor shall we be abiding in Him. We may think that we have a great deal of light and truth, but it is what we are which is really light that can be seen, and it is by divine teaching that the soul is formed in view of the judgment-seat. I am afraid very few of us have in reality come there. It is in the light of the judgment-seat that we see the great truth which has been before us, how completely the old man has been removed to God's glory, then we are free to go on to the ministry of reconciliation.

I have tried sometimes to bring home to the young the incapacity of the flesh to be anything for God by reference to Paul in Romans vii. He there says, "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Tell any one he is not to have even a wrong desire, and you may as well tell him not to be a man. But where does such an experience bring me to? Why, that nothing will do for me but Christ.

In Him I find the Deliverer, and then it is that we take the place of little children, "children taught by grace." I would to God that we were all more children taught by grace; the fact that many of us are teachers and preachers should make us more desirous of this teaching. What marked the apostle was that he commended the ministry entrusted to him by his life. He could say, "We are made manifest to God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences." As if he should say, I minister Christ to you, and I trust that you see in me the Christ I minister. He adds, "For whether we be beside ourselves it is to God, or whether we be sober it is for your cause." Some perhaps thought that Paul lived up in the clouds, and did not know the sober realities of life down here. Well, if he was at times beside himself, it was to God, but he could come down in all soberness to where the Corinthians were. He was clear enough as to the judgment-seat himself, but he would lend a hand, so to speak, to the feebleness he saw in the Corinthians, and seek to bring their souls into the light of God, so that they might get clear in view of the judgment-seat, and so be enabled to enter into the Father's delight in Christ. So John brings the children, those taught by grace, to the same point, "Abide in him," and in reality this is in view of the judgment-seat

when all would be manifest, that we may "not be ashamed before him at his coming."

It is a good thing for us in connection with this teaching of grace to see the object of discipline. We may not always see why the Father chastens us, but it is in connection with the teaching of grace. An ache or a pain may for the moment seem to unfit us for anything, but God can use it to withdraw us from our purpose. Our schemes and the purposes of our hearts are broken in upon, and we are more ready to take the place of children taught by grace. What a blessed thought this patient teaching of grace is for our souls. Christ becomes everything to us, the measure of everything for us, and the treasure of our hearts. He gets a larger place there from time to time. We look at everything in the light of Christ. We see how God has cleared away the old man, and that He has one thought for us, that we should be presented perfect in Christ.

It is good sometimes to look at the saints in the light of the judgment-seat. As I stand here and look at you all, it is very blessed to think of one another in the light of Christ, children taught by grace. God has His own end and purpose in view, and divine teaching is to the end that we may be blameless at His coming—freed from things here because Christ's death is our freedom,

that we might live by Him. There is often this question among the saints, and that question, this trouble has to be met, and that trouble, but it is blessed to be able to rise above it all, and look at each other in the light of God's purpose, and to think of how surely He is teaching us by grace, and leading us to that point.

Father, Thy name our souls would bless,  
As children taught by grace,

Then I love to think of the next lines :

Lift up our hearts in righteousness,  
And joy before Thy face.

We can lift up our hearts in righteousness, for Christ is our righteousness there in the presence of God, but we could not have any other measure of righteousness down here.

When we look at one another in the light of Christ, one feels the saints are worth living for. Christ is worth living for, and the saints are worth living for. If we can only afford the least bit of help to the youngest and feeblest believer and help him on in the grace of Christ, it is indeed worth the while. May the Lord more and more enable us to be :

“CHILDREN TAUGHT BY GRACE.”

T. H. R.



# READING.

## CHILDREN AND SONS.

(LUKE XII. 22-32.)

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(JOHN III. 1-3; EPH. I. 3-6; II. 18.)

F. H. B. The name of Father in the gospels hardly goes so far as in John's epistle. There are three leading thoughts in it—care, love, and glory.

F. E. R. What difference do *you* make in the thought of Father in the gospels and in the epistle?

F. H. B. The name is opened out more fully in the epistle as to what is involved in it.

F. E. R. What is the moral idea connected with the name Father?

F. H. B. Care and love.

F. E. R. That is the application of it to children, but the thought is not large enough. I understand by it the revelation of God in the activities of His love.

F. H. B. Would that apply in each case?

F. E. R. I fancy pretty much so.

D. L. H. Is the Father more fully revealed in Luke xii. than in John iii. ?

F. E. R. Luke xii. is different from John as to the Father. John speaks much more of the Father, but not so much in relation to our place and need down here. We see in Luke xii. what the Father is towards us. We are to seek His kingdom, and all things necessary will be added unto us.

G. G. Is that care part of the sway of the kingdom ?

F. E. R. I think it is connected with the kingdom. We are in the kingdom, but there not simply as subjects but as children. The children of the queen are subjects in her kingdom, but they are her children. So we come to our Father, but we are none the less in the kingdom—subject in that way to the ordering of the kingdom.

F. H. B. There is not so much difference between the kingdom of the future and the kingdom now, except that it will be displayed.

F. E. R. All the moral features of the kingdom come out before it is displayed.

QUES. "Thy kingdom come"—when is that ?

F. E. R. Its display is future, but as a moral thing it is to rule in our hearts now. The kingdom is set up in our hearts. It is established in

heaven for God, and maintained in the hearts of His people here by the Holy Ghost.

D. L. H. In Luke the real reading is, "Seek ye *His* kingdom." The antecedent to this is "Father." In the prayer it is the Father's kingdom. All the principles of heaven which the name Father brings out, of grace and love, we are to obtain in the kingdom.

F. E. R. I think so. The point of that part of Luke is that the Lord is detaching the hearts of the disciples from earth, and leading them to heaven. He assures them of God's care on earth, but He is leading them to the Father's things—the heavenly things.

W. J. You say, we are children in the kingdom?

F. E. R. Yes, as in human things the children of the sovereign are subjects of the kingdom, but none the less children.

W. B. I do not know your thought as to the difference between John iii. and Luke as to the Father.

T. H. R. You must see the difference between the Lord's position here on earth before His rejection and after it. The name of God as Father was revealed in connection with the Son here on earth, but when rejected He took the path which led to a heavenly position. Then He could bring



out the full revelation of the Father in heavenly purpose. In Luke He is leading them to know the Father's name according to heavenly counsel and purpose. You can understand in the sermon on the mount that the Lord speaks of the Father as here upon earth, Himself the object of the Father's love, and putting His Jewish brethren in association with Himself in the Father's care. But the moment came when He was rejected, and then He says to His disciples, I send you forth as lambs among wolves, they would have to buy a sword, for things were all altered. They would find this earth a totally different place when Christ was no longer here. Then the great point was where He was leading them to, associating their hearts with the heavenly place where He was going.

REMARKED. The first aspect of the kingdom was passed away?

T. H. R. No; it will be good for the Jew by-and-by, but we have to take the place of Christ's rejection here. I do not think they had to take that at the beginning; but when He is rejected as in Matthew xi., then the position of the disciples was altered, as was the Lord's position here. It is a remarkable thing as to the sermon on the mount, that where we have the Father's name in Matthew, in Luke it is changed to God with regard to present things. (Compare Matt.

vi. 26 with Luke xii. 24.) But then the Christian is always entitled to remember that God is his Father. Jesus brought the grace connected with the Father's name unto His own from the first, but after His rejection He took another way. The world is left as it is; God's grace may interfere, but then, as a matter of fact, the earth is left as it is, though all is providentially governed in a way. We come into all the providential dealings of God, are fed and cared for, and can connect every mercy every day with the Father's care of us and love to us.

F. H. B. We have nothing but the Father's care.

T. H. R. But the question is, are we satisfied with what is necessary for us to carry us through? Do people accept this? The Lord is applying the wisdom of One greater than Solomon to the things down here, to the difficulties of the disciples in the place of His rejection, and shews how they would be kept, and the folly of seeking this world, and laying up in it. The rejection of Christ altered the position of the disciples in the world entirely. It put them in touch with heaven. In the sermon on the mount He says, speaking of prayer, "How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" My impression is that is what you may call the idea of the millennium.

But here it is giving the Holy Spirit out of heaven. It is heavenly giving now.

QUES. What did you mean by the wisdom of Solomon in connection with these things ?

T. H. R. His wisdom the queen came to hear, as to her own things, but he led her beyond to his things. So we see the Lord's wisdom with His disciples, He shews them His way through the world, but He is the way to the Father.

W. B. Why is it the Father sends the Son ?

F. E. R. I think the thought of the Father brings in the idea of the activities of God's love. That is the general idea connected with the Father.

REMARKED. Generally it is the Father sends and the Father gives.

F. E. R. Through John's gospel, J. N. D. used to say, when it is a question of God's nature it is "God"—"God is a Spirit;" but when it is the activities of His love, it is "Father"—"The Father seeketh such to worship him." So in chapter vi., "My Father giveth you the true bread," &c. I think the Father's name is in that way connected with the activities of divine love.

QUES. Are we regarded in John's gospel in the light of children ?

F. E. R. Believers are regarded as children

from the outset, but the Lord all through John's gospel is working in the direction of sonship, that is, to bring us to perfection and glory.

F. H. B. Will you say a word as to the difference between children and sons ?

F. E. R. Sons are connected with glory, children more with the care and discipline of love. In the one, love is at rest ; in the other, love is in vigilance and activity.

QUES. Love in rest you connect with sonship ?

F. E. R. Yes.

F. H. B. Would it be right to say as in the position of children we are as Christ was down here, but as sons as He is in resurrection and glory ?

F. E. R. I think so. The Son is revealed, and the Spirit of sonship given, that we may be brought into association with God's Son. We are to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect ; but the thought of perfectness there is in connection with conduct as children, as far as I know.

W. J. "The world knew him not"—is that rejection ?

F. E. R. That is not exactly the idea, but that in the very nature of things the world is morally incapable of knowing Him.

F. E. R. Perfectness is connected with us as

sons rather than as children. The passage in the beginning of Ephesians i. gives the true idea of sonship. The great point is, that all is before God according to the glory. It is evident the love of God would then find perfect rest. You could not then have activity in the sense of discipline and the like.

T. H. R. Love is at rest. It is the rest of love. Love in activity has done its work, and now love is in rest; the thought connected with sonship is glory.

F. E. R. I think that whatever you may be subjected to in the way of discipline and purging is in view of the day of judgment. This does not affect the fact that, as Christ is the object of the Father's love, so you are in this world. There was an interesting remark made this morning to the effect that you do not get into privilege until you are past the judgment-seat. I think that is connected with all that has been before us this afternoon. It is as to our conduct as children that we come before the judgment-seat. It is the termination of discipline, purging, fruit-bearing, &c., in connection with the saints. In what we have in John's epistle, Christ gives the character to everything. I could not get the idea of righteousness but as in Him. Thus the hope of seeing Him as He is has a purifying effect.

No one would look to have a less measure than Christ. You get the climax in the verse quoted, "As he is, so are we in this world." You come to the point where everything is excluded in your mind but Christ, but you are in the sense of the Father's love.

F. H. B. In connection with love we are made perfect, "as He is"; loved as He is loved.

QUES. What do you mean by being past the judgment seat now?

T. H. R. There is such a thing as coming to the judgment seat now in our souls, and when you have the sense how completely everything is dealt with in the cross, and that nothing but Christ is before God, then you have come to the judgment seat, and passed it, and you enter into privilege. Paul kept it up in his own soul, hence he says, "we are made manifest to God."

QUES. Is that your authority, 2 Corinthians v., that what is to take place has taken place?

T. H. R. Yes, in verse 16. So in 1 John iv., "As he is, so are we in this world." You cannot separate it from John's epistle.

W. J. Does the effect of discipline come out in the heavenly city?

F. E. R. Yes, there you get it perfectly. All comes out in the city. Everything answers to the measurement, and the administration in the city is righteousness. We get that distinction in

scripture, that whenever it is a question of what we are to God, the prominent idea is holiness; when of testimony to man, the prominent idea is righteousness. In Ephesians i. we are "holy and without blame before him in love." In Colossians we are to be presented "holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in his sight." On the other hand the new man is "created after God in righteousness." The new man is for the setting forth of God here. In the First Epistle of John you have not got holiness, but the two proofs of children are righteousness and love. The result of God's ways with us comes out at the judgment seat. You cannot connect the thought of judgment with sons. Sons implies association with Christ in a scene where the love of God rests. Everything there is according to His glory, and God rests there in perfect present complacency.

QUES. Can we reach that spot now?

F. E. R. Yes—in our souls.



# GOD'S WAYS WITH US.

(HEB. v. 11-VI. 1; 1 PET. II. 1-3.)

I DESIRE to say a few words, beloved brethren, as to growth. The apostle at the close of Hebrews v. spoke of the lack of growth, and indeed of retrogression. He says, "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." I think, too, that there is in the epistle an indication of what led to this. They did not get beyond the flesh. As in the case of the Corinthians, the retention of the flesh barred their progress. It is perfectly clear that God has His dealings with us all as men here on earth and in flesh; but His end in them is, that we may so discover what the flesh really is that we may not seek to retain it, but let it go; at the same time He shews us what He Himself is, so that we may learn to appreciate what is of Himself.

God's dealings with us here, of necessity, have reference a good deal to what we ourselves are;



His purpose for us springs from what He Himself is. But His purpose has its bearing upon His ways with us, and as we get the benefit of His ways we are enabled to enter into His purpose. It is with us much as it was with the children of Israel; God's purpose for them was the land of promise, but the wilderness was a kind of school through which they passed on their way to the land, the end of which was that they might be brought to rightly appreciate all that God was giving them in that good land.

In the Book of Deuteronomy Moses recounts all the lessons of the wilderness, and this he does immediately in view of their entering into the land. His anxiety was that they should not miss the benefit of those lessons, but that, as those who had been humbled and proved, and whose hearts had been known, they might enter the land distrustful of themselves; but, as those who had tasted of all the goodness of God, they might be able to enjoy with Him all that He was giving them. There was one, at least, who got the benefit of the school, that is Caleb, who boldly laid claim to the inheritance which God had given him, although all the strength of the giants was there. Strong for war, in the confidence which he had in God, he drove out the giants and entered upon his inheritance.

In our own case God has His own purpose in

view in all His dealings with us, and we get the benefit of these dealings as we are subject to His hand and are exercised. He brings us into exercise that we may learn to distinguish between good and evil. That which is of man is always evil, while that which has its spring in God is always good. It is a wonderful thing to be here in this world under the hand of God with this blessed end in view. He will bring us into the perfect enjoyment of all that is of Himself, and He will bring us into it as those who have come, through His infinite grace, to rightly appreciate all that is of Himself.

I speak the simple truth, which you will all acknowledge when I say that no one is naturally appreciative of that which is of God. A man may be religious and be able to appreciate all that is religiously of man, but he does not appreciate that which is of God. Now God reveals Himself to us, and teaches us and disciplines us, to bring about an appreciation of what is of Himself.

Peter speaks, in the close of the first chapter of his first epistle of the revelation of God to us, the word of God. Our first apprehension of Him is in grace; we taste that the Lord is gracious. The Lord has brought into this world the perfect presentation of the grace of God, and in the well-known instance at the close of Luke

vii. we see one greatly affected by it. The grace was refused by man because it came bearing the impress of all that God is. Man can appreciate goodness of a human sort, such as benevolence, but he has no appreciation of divine grace. At Nazareth they sought to destroy the anointed Messenger of the grace of God, for man will not have God. But that poor, broken-hearted woman could appreciate Him. Though He was in the Pharisee's house, the last place she would naturally have entered, she lost sight of the Pharisee, being so absorbed with the One who had brought to her the infinite grace of God, and she bowed at His feet, kissing and anointing them. What was so enigmatical to the Pharisee, who knew not the grace of God, was explained by the Lord; she had been forgiven much and she loved much. She was deeply affected by the grace that had come to her, and she was greatly attached to Him who brought it.

This is our first apprehension of what God is; we taste that the Lord is gracious. There may be a long history before us, we have much to learn, there may be many trials and difficulties to encounter, but we begin with a sense of God's grace to us, and we are sustained, while under the hand of God in discipline, by the grace which has flowed to us.

Then if we have tasted that the Lord is

gracious we are to desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby. This passage follows upon what he has said previously, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." The blessed God has been pleased to reveal Himself in our souls, and we are brought under the moral power of all that He is. Now by "the sincere milk of the word" I understand that the apostle speaks of the positive nourishment ministered to the soul in the communication to it of that which God is. It is said in Colossians i. that we increase, or grow, by the knowledge of God. All our growth depends upon this supply of nourishment, for without it there can be none.

Then what must ever accompany this nourishment is exercise. The apostle speaks in Hebrews of "them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Some think that exercise is merely passing through gloom and sorrow, but I do not think that that is the scriptural view of it. Spiritual exercise corresponds to physical exercise for the body. Physical exercise is for the development of the muscles and various parts of the body. Now while God nourishes us He brings us into exercise about moral things, so that we learn to

distinguish between that which is good and that which is evil; between that which springs from Him, and that which is of man after the flesh. The result is that we come to have a great shrinking from all that is of man, while we have a deepening delight in all that is of God.

As regards the truth of God I have an impression that we get what we are divinely prepared for, and nothing more. In the case of the apostle Paul he ministered to the saints what they were equal to. So in writing to the Corinthians he said, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." So again to the Hebrews, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing." We may suppose the case is different now, seeing that we have a complete statement of divine things in scripture; we may think that there they are and we may enter upon any portion of them at our will. But growth is still as necessary to the apprehension of divine things as it ever was, and it is according to our measure of growth that we are led into the apprehension of that portion of truth for which we have been divinely prepared. We must know God in order to enter into His thoughts and apprehend His purpose.

There is a scene of cloudless joy and infinite

delight where divine love rests in complacency. There all is of God and nothing of man in the flesh can intrude. The power of Satan can never be known there, nor any of the results of sin. God, the blessed God, who loves us, will put us in perfect rest in that place.

How could He do this without making us to rightly appreciate all that is of Himself? If I were able I would like to say more of the education of the soul. But I can speak as one who in some little measure has learned the sweetness of being under the hand of God with this end in view. I can see how He leads into exercise, and nourishes by the communication of all that He is, to the end that we become appreciative of all that springs from Himself, and so He conducts us into that circle of cloudless joy and delight, where we rest in the enjoyment of all that He has purposed for us.

J. R.



## THE ARK OF LIFE—THE ARK OF DEATH—THE ARK OF GLORY.

(HEB. VIII. 1, 2; IX. 1-5.)

I DESIRE to say a word as to where we are led on to in connection with what has been brought before us, what God has in view in the sanctuary. We have often been reminded that when God gave the description of the tabernacle He began from Himself; He began from the ark and worked outward. We get in the ark brought before us here the thought of what we find in the holiest, how that what God prized was there. Three things of infinite preciousness were inside that ark: the golden pot that had manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant. They were not placed there in that order, for the rod was put in after the others; but I believe we find them presented to us in the early chapters of Hebrews in the order they are given in verse 4. First the blessed Person who came down, the One who is figured for us in the golden pot that had manna—the Apostle; and next as High Priest we see Him the antitype of Aaron's rod that budded. Then in chapter viii. we have God's covenant ever towards His people,

and it is remarkable that there was nothing found in the ark, when it was put in place in the temple, save the tables of stone (see 1 Kings viii. 9), shewing that although God's people might have lost the sense of His grace in coming down to them, as shewn in the manna, and His grace in causing their murmurings to cease from before Him (Num. xvii. 10) in answer to the laying up of the rod; in spite of all, He remains faithful to Himself. Now I want to shew how *we* reach this; it is not by the exercise of our will. Just take the simple figure which scripture gives us—the ark. There are three arks really. We all know the blessedness of the ark of Genesis vii., that ark that was of Himself entirely, and where, in grace, all were shut in and sheltered; that is the first point, our hearts are at rest as to that. Now what marks this first ark is it was very large, there was plenty of room though only eight found shelter in it; it passed through the waters of death, rising above them. That was the ark of life. Now we come to another ark; it was not to Noah who built the ark of life and offered the burnt offering that the arranging of the golden ark was committed, but to Moses, who had his place in the other ark—the ark of death.

In Exodus ii. 3, we read, "When she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of



bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein, and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink;" that was the acceptance of death. What I would bring before all our hearts is this—have we not in this second ark God's way up to the third? It was to the man who found his place in the second ark, that the wondrous treasure covered with the cloud of glory was committed.

Now, whilst we all are by grace in the ark of life, this ark of death has to be accepted by each one individually, and it was formed out of that which grew out of death—the bulrushes by the river; precious thought that *His death* has ever been before the eye of God for us before we learned it for ourselves.

Then this was a tiny ark, only room in it for a child, and we must each find it in that way. Surely it is only as such that we can get the blessing, "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom." True as to conversion, but is it not also true as to the apprehension of divine things by the soul? We cannot enter of ourselves, but the Lord would lead us on to that which is in the ark of glory.

This is where His priestly grace would help us; to realise all these things that are hidden in the ark of glory, which alone was seen by the

eye of the entering priest. Through God's mercy and grace we have been shut in by Him, into the ark of life; may we also have grace to accept the narrow ark of death, result of His death for us before we had an existence. May the Lord grant that each of us may be willing to take the place of a child that we may be led into the glories contained in that blessed One who is Himself in His own Person the centre of all the glory of God.

J. R. B.



# THE HOLIEST.

(HEB. IX. 1-6.)

I SHOULD like to say a word or two in regard to the ark of the covenant. It is a great point for Christians to see what they come into the presence of in the holiest of all. I strongly suspect that the thoughts of many are very indefinite in this respect. Though we speak of boldness to enter the holiest, and sing about it pretty frequently, I doubt if many of us could give much account of what is there. I am sure I cannot say much, for I know very little about it.

I only desire to say a word or two in regard to what we get in this passage. We do not come into the holy place. If we did, we should come into view of the table of shew bread and the candlestick, &c. They have no place now that the first tabernacle is done away. They represented certain things connected with Israel, and do not belong to us. In entering the holiest it is a great point to remember that we do not come into the first order of things at all.

It has been said (very ignorantly, I think) that Adam entered the holiest in coming into the

holy presence of God. Adam came certainly into the presence of God, but that does not convey to me the idea of the holiest. One point is very plain, if you come into the holiest you do not come into the first order of things at all. What was divinely connected with the first order of things is hidden there. You come into presence of another order of things. When I speak of the first order I refer to the two tables of the covenant—they were there, but hidden; there was also the golden pot that had manna, that was hidden; there was Aaron's rod, too, that budded, that was not seen. These all belong to the first order of things. They are typical of principles hidden, so to speak, in Christ, and which are the means by which God is pleased to accomplish the purposes of His grace. They are connected with man in his position of profession and responsibility.

Sin came into the world. The way in which *God* met it was by declaring His law. I think many do not see the importance and bearing of what God did in that way. Sin wrought in the world with all its terrible fruits of dishonour to and alienation from God, and death was in its train. But on the tables of stone God declared His mind as to what man should be, in spite of all that is here and all that sin has done. It was not exactly a new revelation, not an unfolding of

God's particular mind as to that moment, but the setting forth of the great principles of what was proper in man down here. It put things in their right place morally. God saw fit to enunciate what was right for man in regard to God and to his neighbour. God did not write that at the beginning. It was long after sin had come into the world. Sin, the world, and the devil had power over man. God said, as it were, I will write on tables of stone what man should be in the presence of God and his neighbour. I think in that way God vindicated His glory in regard of the evil here. In the Old Testament you frequently find God vindicated in some way. You get a striking instance of this in what took place on Mount Carmel when Elijah erected an altar of twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of Israel. God was glorified in it in regard to the twelve tribes of Israel. And the writing of the law was of this character. God saw fit to vindicate Himself thus in view of the terrible contrariety and self-will of man. He declared man's duty to God and to his neighbour.

But God had further thoughts: He intended to carry out His purposes of grace in sinful, weak man, and the means by which He would effect this were declared in priesthood on the one hand, and the manna on the other. A ministry of grace to man down here, and intercession on man's behalf

with God above. These were the two great principles on which God was able to carry out His way. These principles held good in the past ; they hold good for us now, and will hold good in the future in regard to Israel. When God takes up His dealings with Israel in the future it will be on the one hand in connection with priestly intercession, and, on the other, with a ministration of grace here, so that they will be enabled to hold fast their profession until Christ appears for them. As regards ourselves, Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us, and we have the manna, "daily grace for daily need," as has often been said, so that we too are enabled to hold fast our profession.

In the holiest all these things are hidden ; they are out of view. The fact is, that God has been perfectly glorified in all this in Christ. It was not a vain thing for God to make known His mind on two tables of stone ; He was going to be perfectly vindicated in regard to the expression of His will ; and He *has been* vindicated. That is one of the wonderful things in the ark of the covenant. God has been glorified in Christ. It is said, "Thy law is within my heart." He suffered that He might vindicate God, not only in regard to His ways with Israel, but in regard to man. And now, because of that, we find in Christ the power of intercession

—the antitype of Aaron's rod that budded, as well as of the manna. They are hidden in the ark in the holiest of all. We are conscious that all is there. Every one of us knows it in our own experience. You have no right to be there if you do not know these things in experience; they are the principles and means of God's ways with us in grace down here. If you do not understand them, you have no business in the holiest. We are, in thought, in accord with all that is in the ark of the covenant, because we have the gain of it experimentally. In Christ God has been glorified, and Christ is the Intercessor, and the manna. But what do you see when you enter the holiest? The mercy-seat. The mercy-seat was the lid of the ark. That is the first thing in connection with the holiest. It was founded on the ark. Glory is there; nothing there but glory. God's glory at rest in all before Him. Rest is there; love is there. All is rest in the One in whom God has been completely glorified in regard of all His ways down here. From beginning to end, Christ was in view. We come into the holiest, not ignorant of God's ways, but in the knowledge of His ways, and that those ways have been declared in Christ. We have rest there in the presence of the One with whom we are associated in priestly service. Infinite, supreme love is

there, and we are privileged to be there in association with that Man in whom God has been glorified, the Firstborn among many brethren. Our thoughts are perfectly in accord with all that is within the ark. It is not seen, but what *is* seen is the glorified Man, in whom God's glory rests in infinite and eternal satisfaction.

“Glory supreme is there,  
Glory that shines through all ;  
More precious still that love to share,  
As those that love did call.”

We share in the love—that is where we come in. We are brought into the presence of love with Him in whom God has been glorified in respect of His ways down here. That is the *new* order of things. We are conscious of the old order, and of what has enabled God to go on with the old order ; but in the holiest we are brought into that which is of the new order. We are come to the church of the firstborn ones, whose names are written in heaven. We are brought to a scene where there is nothing to disturb, and all is according to God's glory.

God could not display His glory except where everything is according to that glory. You can see at once that it would be ruin and an end to everything not according to it. In the holiest everything is according to glory, and



there is love in perfect rest. The love of God in Christ is what we come into presence of.

It is manifestly important to be in accord with what is contained in the ark. We have acquaintance with it experimentally, and know the way that God has taken to glorify Himself, and to accomplish His purposes in the midst of a scene of sin and rebellion and self-will.

F. E. R.



# THE FATHER'S GOOD PLEASURE AND OUR TREASURE.

(LUKE XII. 32-44.)

BEFORE looking at this passage, I would like to revert to what I was speaking upon yesterday. When we see how every question of responsibility has been met for us, and that we are brought by the apostle to the judgment seat as the place of manifestation, and consequently the close of responsibility, then we further see the attitude of the apostle himself in view of the judgment seat, he was manifested to God, and he trusted in the consciences of the Corinthians also. Then he says, "For the love of Christ constraineth us." My impression of the word "constraineth" here is that it is not a force put upon us to do something, but that it is what I may call the embrace of love. I prefer to read it, "The love of Christ has got hold of me." As brought into the light of the judgment seat, where we see all question of responsibility close, we are free for the embrace of love. The apostle does not say here "to live *for* him," but "*to* him who died for them and rose again." No doubt

the apostle is speaking for himself in saying, "The love of Christ constraineth us." The love of Christ has got hold of me. While there are questions with regard to ourselves unsolved, we could not be happily free. It is a wonderful thing when we do get free in the embrace of love. Hence he thus judged: "If one died for all, then were all dead." It is not merely that responsibility has all been met, but death has become the proof of the love of God. When everything was in death, God came in and quickened. What for? To live not to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again.

There are two things that come out in this chapter (Luke xii.) which are most important. The first is that Christ becomes the treasure of our hearts. Therefore, the first thing here is watching for Him, not serving Him. Watching only proves the love. As we know Him and are held in the embrace of love, so shall we watch for Him. It is a beautiful thought that the Lord so places Himself before us and counts on our affections that we would wait for Him as the treasure of our hearts. Two beautiful thoughts come out here which I just put before you: "The Father's good pleasure" and "your treasure." Those two sentences speak volumes. The first thing is, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The early

part of the chapter shews how the Lord in His wisdom instructs the disciples as to the pathway down here so that He might set their hearts free from care. He was leading their hearts to heaven. A great point in this part of Luke is that the Lord is leading the hearts of the disciples to take the direction in which He was going. Paul, in Philippians iii., speaks of "pressing towards the mark;" He was following where the Lord had gone. The Lord would set our hearts free as to things down here, so that we may know the good pleasure of the Father about us. It is His good pleasure to give us the kingdom. My impression is that it is the heavenly part of the kingdom. In verse 31 it should be read "*his* kingdom." Nothing can be set up actually upon earth, for I am not speaking of the kingdom of heaven in mystery, but in its final display, until Christ's power is established in heaven. But the Son is sitting on the Father's throne, all things having been given into His hands, hence the kingdom has now to us the character of the kingdom of the Son of His love. That is the kingdom we are to seek, where we come under the power and control of love as it is known in heaven. The disciples were but a little flock, but the Lord was leading them out of the existing order of things into the thoughts of the Father for them. It was His

good pleasure to give them the kingdom. I wonder how far our hearts are in the sense of the Father's good pleasure. It is not merely that grace is reigning, and that we are children taught by grace, but we are to seek the Father's kingdom, it bears the character of the kingdom of the Son of His love. Do you remember the word in Nehemiah, "The joy of the Lord is your strength"? The returned remnant from Babylon were a little flock, and everything looked as weak in that day as it possibly could look. The old men had wept when they thought of the former glory of God's house. And in Nehemiah's day the people wept at the sense of the failure and breakdown that had come in, but what comforted them was the joy which the Lord had in bringing back a little remnant from Babylon to build His temple and city. Faith recognised the temple as the house of God, though it was poor indeed as compared with Solomon's building. Jerusalem was still, to faith, the city of the great King. They said, as it were, we are broken enough, but if God has His joy in bringing us back here to Jerusalem, the city of the great King, to His house and temple, it may well be our strength. Take Caleb, and Joshua too. What was the thought in their hearts? "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land." It is a wonderful thing, that we can

think of the Lord's delight in His people. What is the strength of our hearts to-day but the thought that the Lord has a delight in His people? It is the Father's good pleasure that we should seek the things which are His. We see here how the Lord assures the hearts of His disciples that they are cared for down here, that they might be free to seek the heavenly things.

But that is not all; not only does the Lord lay open to us certain thoughts of divine love and grace which are connected with the kingdom, that our hearts might be impressed with them, but He makes known to us that we have a treasure in heaven. Therefore we can give up on earth. "Sell that ye have, and give alms," &c. Let me ask, What do we know about denying ourselves down here for the sake of the treasure we have found in Christ?

" 'Tis the treasure we've found in His love,  
Which has made us now pilgrims below."

I do not know anything else that will make us pilgrims but this treasure. Anything else would be legalism; we might give up this or that in an ascetic way, but we need to be in the embrace of love, conscious of the Father's good pleasure, and that we have a treasure in heaven. Then we shall be ready to give up things here. Are we dropping things here

because we have found a treasure in the love of Christ?

“Himself our treasure in a brighter sphere.”

We have a treasure in heaven. I trust it will affect the hearts of each one of us. Are things dropping off from us? Do you find your heart turning more to heaven, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to all that is there? That is the prelude to service, service comes after this. When we know the love of Christ, then we serve Him. We see it in Peter, the word that put him right was, “Lovest thou me?” then the Lord said to him, “Feed my sheep.” We find sometimes that there is a stone before the wheel, like the ten days they wanted Rebekah to stay. (Gen. xxiv. 55.) If we have been hindered, it is a wonderful thing that we can open our hearts to the Lord and say, Lord, Thou knowest that we love Thee. Then He says, “Feed my sheep.” We can make what is dear to Christ our interest down here.

If Christ is the treasure of our hearts, and there are many here who will say He is, the effect of that will be, that we shall be in expectation of Him. It is not occupation with prophecy, or events, or even talking or singing about His coming; it is easy to do that; but there will be the quiet watching for Him. It

is watching for Him that tests our hearts; suppose it is one night or two nights, you will watch for Him—as the hymn says,

“ For a day, or a week, or a month, or a year.”

Then there is the blessed promise of the Lord to the watchers, that He will come forth and serve them. We are to have girded loins, the affections of our hearts are all to be regulated by the Lord in heaven. Our “lights burning.” God had set up His candlestick in Israel. The saints now are the light for Christ down here. It is not as if each took a lamp in his hand, but the saints themselves in their love to Christ and to one another are light down here. As Aaron lighted the lamps in the tabernacle, so Christ would act on our hearts to be a testimony for Him down here, and that is more in what we *are* than in what we *say*. People will see that love to the Lord and watching for Him is in our hearts. It is a great thing for everybody to see we are governed by the love of the Lord. The church has got the Spirit of God, and we are here this morning, not merely that the Spirit may direct us what to say, but it would be a very poor thing if the very feeblest word was not connected by the Spirit of God with the love of Christ in all our hearts, so that it might be life and light and power to us to-



day—not merely that the one who speaks is to be in the power of the Spirit, but that every one here should be in the light of divine teaching, so that a very simple word should have light and life and unction in our hearts.

Then when the time of watching is over, the Lord speaks of girding Himself and being the Minister of all the joys of the Father's house. If there were ten thousand joys in heaven, and the Lord were not the Minister of them, they would not be joys to us. I think it is that kind of ministry we get in the assembly. It is the Lord's joy to open out to us what the joys are that belong to what is within. There is the love of the Father and the Father's things, the place of sons into which Christ has brought us, and the affections that belong to that blessed scene of rest. I believe it is the delight of the Lord to minister these things to us in the assembly, as it will be to minister to us all the joys of the Father's love in heaven.

Then the Lord looks round and says, "Who then is that faithful and prudent servant, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?" If we are watchers, then we have to turn round and feed the Lord's household here below, and we think of how we can best serve the saints while He is absent. If we love Christ we love

the saints. If He is the treasure of our hearts, depend upon it, the saints will have a place in our hearts too. The effect of having a treasure in heaven is that it sets us free from what is here, we see the saints in the light of God, in the affections of Christ, and we do not think of one another in all our want of love toward each other. The desire of my heart is that every one of us may be so lifted above all the petty things here into the love of Christ, that we might enter into what the Lord's interests are down here. If a man has a house he must attend to it, and if he has a business he must look after it, and it is very good discipline for us, for forming the vessel. We learn the care and thought of God for us in daily things, and if so, how much more does He care for the soul, and there is a third thing He cares for and that is our hearts. May the Lord become much more to our hearts than the things here. He presents Himself to us as our treasure in heaven.

T. H. R.



## THE SECRET OF POWER IN A DAY OF WEAKNESS.

(ACTS VII. 54-60; DAN. I. 8-15; VI. 10.)

I WISH only to say a word by way of illustrating, and a little enlarging on, what the Lord has brought before our souls this morning.

I think we get a man in the New Testament that in reality covers both these figures presented to us in the old ; and I think we shall see, moreover, that what comes out in these two figures, fits in, in a certain way, with what our brother has been saying to us as to things here and the Person there. I grant you there is not exactly a distinct Person before Daniel. What was before him was God's revealed mind in connection with Jerusalem ; and it was this that made him open his window toward Jerusalem. God had expressed His thoughts to Solomon as to the temple he had erected there. He had said, " Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually " (1 Kings ix. 3), and it was this, no doubt, that caused Daniel to open his window in that direction. He could say—Though *we* are in captivity, I know where God's eye and heart

are, and that is Jerusalem. If, for our wickedness, He has, for a time, had to turn His hand against us, He has not forgotten His promises to His people. His eye and His heart still turn toward that centre. Our failure has not changed His heart, although, practically, all is an utter wreck as far as we are concerned. We are under the Gentile power, and Jerusalem a desolate ruin. Daniel's faith rose above everything on man's side, and found its rest in God.

Talk about difficulties! There were difficulties enough for the faithful in those days. But whatever our difficulties, there are two things our hearts can do. We can do what Daniel did. We can shut the door and open the window. He shut the door against the king's dainties here: he opened the window towards God's centre there.

But what is God's centre now? Ah, it is not a heap of ruins, there is no desolation there, for it is the blessed Person at God's right hand who has won our hearts. *God's centre is our treasure*, and it is there above. It is to that spot that the Holy Ghost directs our hearts and eyes now, as He directed Stephen's, years before.

There was plenty in Daniel's surroundings to put him severely to the test. Worldly wisdom would say, Why quarrel with your providences: why not fall in with the king's wishes and make

the best of it? You have a fine chance now! You can fare quite as well in Babylon as in Jerusalem! But Daniel knew how to say, "No;" and that is what we have to learn. What, then, is the power to enable us to say, "No?" I believe it is the love of Him that said "No" to the wishes of the enemy when he would have held us in the grip of sin's cruel bondage; that said "No" to man's last effort to get rid of Christ by keeping Him in the grave. Remember how they rolled the stone against the door of the sepulchre. That was their "No" to God's dear Son. The expression of God's love was there in the Lord Jesus Christ, but the world put its veto on it; they said at the cross, and emphasized it at the grave, "We will not have you."

*We* once belonged to that world, and it is well for us that we had to do with a God who would not take our stubborn "No" as our final answer. That "No" was not according to His wishes for us; and He who rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre removed the opposition from our hearts also. He was determined to have His gracious way with us. Such a God is ours!

In Acts vi. and vii. the heads of the nation are seen gathered together as if determined, once for all, to close up the testimony of these few poor, weak disciples. They had got rid of God's Son,

but they could not get rid of the fact that the very One they had rejected was still an irresistible source of power to His people here. Mighty was the power arrayed against Stephen, but still mightier the power that was for him in his utter weakness. So that amidst all the opposition he had a bright face—as bright as Daniel's if not brighter. He knew how to say "No" to all the devil's efforts. He opened his window to a brighter scene than ever opened to Daniel. He opened his eyes on the Man in the glory of God, and found that that One was able to sustain him in the most terrible of circumstances.

Well, brethren, that is our privilege. I may not be able to express it to you, but I have tasted a little of it myself, thank God, and I would like the youngest here to taste it also. It is our privilege to turn our hearts there still. We talk about our *difficulties*, but where do we turn when our difficulties arise? Alas! we are so liable to turn east, west, north and south—indeed, anywhere but the right direction. We turn to this brother and that for countenance and sympathy, and take shelter under what *they* think and say. Stephen did not turn to his brethren; Daniel did not turn to his brethren; they both turned to God's centre, and thereby got God's help. That is just what

we need to do. Too often have our faces been sad and downcast because we have *not* turned there. You cannot have a bright face unless your *heart is bright*, and if your heart is bright, it is because you turn to where all the delight and interest that God has in you is expressed in the Man of His right hand. He is seeking by the Spirit to turn our hearts there to-day. He would shew us that there is something there well worth our attention.

There was, to outward appearance, a very great blank for Daniel in turning his face to that ruined, forsaken city. But the Spirit does not turn *us* to a heap of desolate ruins! We turn to One who is God's object of supreme delight, and find that there is nothing but love in His heart for us there. Yea, even at our coldest moments there is nothing in His heart but love to us. Oh, how tender the way He adopts to break us down and set us right! Do you say, *How* does He do it? He just sets us down to learn this lesson, that there is nothing in His heart, even at our very worst, but love for us.

The Lord, in the power of His grace, would teach us, in this world that has cast Him out, how to say "No" to its best and brightest offers. In the sense of the love which has taken Him there to live for us, He would, by His Holy

Spirit, turn our hearts there also to enjoy Himself personally, and in the power of His own blessed name to do something for Him here.

I believe we do not get a more successful servant than Stephen. You say, he had a very short innings. True. Only a short time of testimony was his, but I do not believe we have in scripture a brighter or more successful servant than this very man.

Note the character and power of his service. Occupied with Christ there, Christ was morally reproduced in him here, and like his Lord he was enabled to pray for his murderers. Now notice the next step. The Lord answered that prayer in the conversion of the most unlikely man in Jerusalem. A man who went out of the city full of hatred to God's people, and came back full of love to them. A man who, when he left the city, was determined to spare no pains to get rid of them, yet returned to it fully prepared to lay down his life in their service. But more. Do we not get all the blessed ministry of Paul in answer to Stephen's prayer?

What a response on the part of the Lord to His dying servant. Is it not wonderful? Then just trace the spring of all this. Notice how *all came from Him*. It was in beholding the face of Christ in glory that Stephen was morally conformed to that glory. (2 Cor. iii.) But how



was it that Stephen looked there? Was it not as directed by the Holy Ghost? "*He being full of the Holy Ghost.*" Again, how came the Holy Ghost here as the power of this faithful witness? Was it not Christ who sent Him? *All goes to Him because all springs from Him,* and all the fruit of His love.

You may say, We have no great Stephens now to stand as he stood; no great Pauls, to teach as he taught. But this we have: we have all the love of Christ, and all that a Stephen or a Paul could be sprang from that.

The Lord says to Stephen, in effect, I will honour you by answering your prayer directly from heaven. I will not allow any human instrument to come between your prayer and My answer. I will answer it by speaking directly from heaven to the soul of Saul. I will turn that man round and make him a willing, devoted servant to Me. Hence it is we hear Saul of Tarsus saying immediately he was arrested, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

If you and I knew better how to shut the door to things here, in other words, to say "No" to our own natural tastes, and "Yes" to His wishes—"No" to self, and "Yes" to Christ, there would be nothing we could not do for Him, because nothing is too great for God to do

for us, even in a broken day of weakness like this.

It was after a good deal of hesitation that I stood up to speak to you, but I trust the Lord will give you to *feel* what I have said, and that He will make it good in each one of us.

GEO. C.



# DIVINE TEACHING AND THE SERVICE OF GOD.

(HEB. VIII. 1-13.)

I THINK there is an interesting and important connection between that which Christ effects, or carries out, now from heaven, from the right hand of God, and that which was effected in His work down here. You will find this presented in a great many ways in scripture. For instance, in Luke xxiv., "It behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached IN HIS NAME." Remission had been secured by His death, but was to be ministered *in His name*, and that marks the present time. It behoved Christ not only to die, but to rise. The same thing holds good in regard to peace. Christ made peace by the blood of His cross, and now He preaches it. Further, in regard to the communication of the Spirit. It is the One in whom sin was condemned in the flesh who ministers the Spirit; He who takes away the sin of the world is the One who baptises with the Holy Spirit.

Now it is the same in principle as to the new covenant: it was established in the death of Christ. The death of Christ was, so to speak, the declaration of God's disposition towards us. And now Christ is livingly the Mediator of the new covenant. We are said to have come to the Mediator of the new covenant; and He is also the Minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. It is well the connection should exist in our minds between that which Christ secured by His work and that which He now ministers in power from the right hand of God. And one can see the suitability of it. He is the living minister of that which He secured by His work. I suppose it is true that there is no consequence of His death but what He ministers now in living power; that is how we know Christ at the right hand of God. We know Him as the Mediator of the new covenant, and that undoubtedly introduces us to the line of priestly work. It is curious that often the Old Testament types fail you; when you have the truth of the New Testament you see that types do not come up to the Antitype, they are not the image; when you get into the realities you get beyond the type. Now in regard to priestly work the first great service of Christ was building the house of God; but in the type of the tabernacle this was the work of Moses. (Heb. iii.) He was

faithful in God's house as a servant. It appears to me that in setting up the tabernacle Moses was doing, in a sense, priestly work; Aaron was not consecrated until the tabernacle was set up. But there was a kind of priestly work carried out by Moses previous to the installation of Aaron as high priest. I gather that from the Antitype. According to Psalm lxxviii., when Christ went up on high, "He led captivity captive, and received gifts for men." This is really in character and principle priestly work. I fancy we see here the real beginning of priestly work in connection with the Lord Jesus. He goes up on high, and, having received from the Father the promise of the Spirit, "He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." (Acts ii.) And the apostle in connection with this quotes from Psalm cx., where Christ is spoken of as a "Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Thus the beginning of priestly work was in the formation of the house of God, the communication of the Holy Ghost to the saints gathered down here.

There is another character of priestly work, when the house has been formed, which has to do with sympathy with our infirmities; and in that connection is priestly intercession, and the activities of Christ in regard to the saints down here. He succours the tempted, and that is

made effectual down here in the power of the Holy Ghost. Until the Holy Ghost was come you could hardly conceive of that being carried out. It gives us an idea of the activity of Christ's love in regard to His saints.

There is a great deal of priestly service that we have not been accustomed to connect with priesthood. I fancy all the little service we can render to one another in the way of sympathy and succour is the fruit of the activities of Christ as high priest above; Christ sets all in motion. When saints are under trial and pressure of various kinds they get a great deal of sympathy on the part of one and another, but all is set in movement by Christ at the right hand of God.

There is also the element of intercession, illustrated in the case of Peter. The Lord, in view of his fall, says, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and that is where the power of the Spirit comes in. Christ intercedes for us in heaven, but there is activity on the part of the Spirit down here that calls to mind the word of the Lord. So Peter, instead of being driven to despair, is brought to repentance; grace works in him, repentance is the result, and he is restored.

Now in chapter viii. we have a further idea in

connection with the priesthood of Christ. He is "minister of the holy places, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." That thought I should connect with Psalm cxviii. The Jews are to be blessed in the future, and will say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." That refers, I judge, to Christ coming out in the power of the Melchisedec priesthood. The Lord said to the Jews in the past, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate; for I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say—"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." That is not quite the thought of Jehovah coming to reign. That comes out in the fourth book of Psalms. When you come to the fifth book, it is "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." That is Christ coming in on man's side, and fulfilling the desire of His people down here on earth. They say, "We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord." Christ comes, and is welcomed in the very place from which He had been rejected. He comes in, in priestly grace, to His people as Melchisedec, and in that character will be welcomed by Israel. He will indeed establish Jehovah's throne. He will be the Jehovah that reigneth, but at the same time He comes in as the priest after the order of Melchisedec, wel-

comed in the name of the Lord. But until then their house is left to them desolate.

Now, WE get Christ as the Minister of the holy places; He is welcomed there and we welcome Him. He is the Leader in all that is connected with the service of God.

The point in this chapter is not the service of man; there is that, but that is not the character of the service that is spoken of here; it is the service of God; and in this Christ is the Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.

What I wanted to touch on particularly for a moment is a subject familiar to many, and that is the connection between the Minister of the sanctuary and the Mediator of the covenant. The suitability of the Minister is dependent on His being the Mediator. The Mediator is the One in whom the disposition of God towards us is declared. He is thus suitable to lead us in the praises of God. These two things are bound to go together. You see here how the type is defective. Aaron was not the mediator of the covenant. He was the minister of the sanctuary and might not be always in accord with the Mediator of the covenant. But in the Antitype Christ is the Minister of the sanctuary. "By how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant." We need, as I understand it, to know



the Mediator of the covenant before we get any true worship of God. You get the new covenant in the Lord's Supper. In the supper the Lord is distinctly presented as the Mediator of the new covenant. It is stated, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." You must touch the Mediator of the covenant before you can appreciate the Minister of the sanctuary. And I think I can understand the working of that morally. I do not believe that any one not established in the knowledge of God's disposition towards us is competent or ready for the service of the sanctuary. But the wonderful thing is that the One who in death has been pleased to declare the disposition of God towards us is the One who leads us in the service of the living God. The new covenant is a great lesson to learn, it is where divine teaching comes in. The teaching of the new covenant is not what man can do for you; the ministry of the new covenant makes us acquainted with the disposition of God towards us as set forth in the death of Christ. That is, we apprehend the death of Christ in its teaching; which in a sense is distinct from the thought of its efficacy. Many have learned the death of Christ in its efficacy, who have not learned the divine teaching in it, founded on the death of the testator. For Christ is looked at in that light, and in the death

of the testator we have the declaration of the disposition of God towards us. That is a wonderful thing, and in it Christ is the teacher. We have to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear His word ; He is the teacher by the Spirit. We have to learn the meaning of Christ's death from Himself. His death is the great lesson-book to us. We have to learn the meaning of His death in the ways of divine love. What it means is that love never ceases to act on behalf of God's people, and the end which the love of God towards us has in view is to have us with Himself in His own habitation. I do not think people weigh that enough ; they think they go to heaven as a matter of course, but as I understand it they go to heaven to satisfy the love of God. God will have His people in His own habitation. By-and-by He will have Israel in the mountain of His inheritance. I think we learn two great lessons in the death of Christ, one is His great mercy towards us, " He is rich in mercy," and the other that which is the spring of His mercy, His great love wherewith He loved us. It would be a great lesson for every one here to learn. If our hearts were instructed in the great love expressed in Christ towards us, in His going down on the cross into all that great distance, we should understand that it must be that God will have us with Himself in the nearness of heaven.

Our place in heaven is the answer to the place of distance which Christ took in His love toward us on the cross. He went into the distance that we might be brought to God's habitation, and in going to heaven we shall receive a warm welcome there. We are not to be carried to heaven by angels, but by the One who gave Himself for us. And you may be sure we shall be welcomed, seeing that we go there as the fruit of the great love wherewith He loved us.

That is the effect of the teaching of the new covenant. It may take a somewhat different form with Israel. We have the spirit of it; they are more in the terms of it. They will be acquainted with the mercy of God, will have the law written on the heart, and thus be made acquainted with the goodness of God. But the instruction it conveys to us is the disposition of God toward us; and His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us. Now the One who has declared to us the love of God, is the One who leads us in the service of God; and we have to learn in connection with the ministry of the sanctuary, that it is impossible there should be any complacency of God in us as men; we have to accept that by the death of Christ the flesh is wholly and entirely excluded. There is complacency in man on the part of God, but the man in whom is the

complacency of God, is the Man that *is* now before God.

In our own experience Adam has to be set aside and Christ to have his place. It has been said sometimes Ishmael had to be cast out of the house, when Isaac had his place in the house, and so it is in regard of the Christian; that is the qualification for the service of God. I do not think we could apprehend the service of God if we did not understand the completeness of God's complacency in those who serve Him. He could not be served otherwise. We could not serve Him according to His pleasure if He were not completely complacent in those who serve Him. The way it works in regard to us is this: when we are instructed in the love of God, then we are prepared for the displacement of self; when Christ gets His own place in us, then we enter into the holy places, and come under the eye of God for God's complete complacency. We are before God in His complacency in Christ, and the eye of God rests on that which He Himself has formed in us, and there is that which is according to Himself on the part of those who approach Him.\* There all is of God. Christ is the Minister of the sanctuary, and we enter like

\* Like the prodigal in the best robe, the Father's eye could rest with complacency on him. Reconciliation has come in and Christ is the Head.

Aaron's sons, as sons of God, we go in in the company of Christ ; but the complacency is really in the true Aaron, in the Son of God. Christ has been pleased to take the position of man in relation to God, and He has the place of the Minister of the sanctuary. There could be no meaning in this if others were not there. And the ministry is equivalent to the grace of "the new covenant," which is established upon "better promises." He is the Minister of the holy places by as much as He is the Mediator of the better covenant ; and that is a great lesson to learn.

God will be sanctified in those who approach Him, but the idea I want to convey is that there is complete complacency in those who approach. We stand in connection with the true Minister of the sanctuary, having learned effectually in the death of Christ, through His ministry, what God's mind and disposition is in regard to His people down here.

It is often a long time before that lesson is learned, before *we* are prepared for complete displacement. But we have to be displaced. In the eye of God we were displaced in the death of Christ, but it is often long before we learn it and come to practical displacement in regard to ourselves. How could we understand complete displacement in regard to God without displacement in our own eyes in regard to man ?

It is a blessed thought that, after all, God can look upon His people apart from all that is unsuitable to Himself. It is in the power of God to look upon His people and to see only that which He has formed in them, apart from all that is not according to Himself. But then when it is a question of the service of God, you want the other side too. The worshippers should be conscious of the complacency of God in those who approach Him. I desired to shew the connection of the two things. I think we have to learn the lesson of the death of Christ, and then, having learned that, we are prepared to accept our own displacement, and learn that God's complacency is in His work. If God can look on those who approach Him with entire complacency, we see it is on account of His own blessed work in us. He has quickened us together with Christ, but I do not think the complacency can go beyond the limit of His work in us.

F. E. R.

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## “HE LEADETH ME.”

(JOHN IX. 35 ; XI. 20-28, 30-36, 39-43 ; LUKE XXIV. 50.)

I VENTURE, beloved friends, to say a few words, but feel much cast on the Lord for them, knowing very well the peculiar character of our being together in this way, and knowing how many dear servants of the Lord there are here.

I think we must all feel, after the years we have known Christ (and some of us have known Him for many a long day), it often forces itself on one, how very little progress we seem to make, and an intense longing desire springs up in the heart for a more real, personal acquaintance with the Lord. When we get a taste of it, and are drawn into His presence, we feel we must get out more of things here to be thus near Him. But this seems to me just where many of us have stuck fast—and then much becomes a mere matter of talk with us, though we must feel and know that there is a sphere, a region, a circle of things—another world, where the Lord can only be known thus, where He is free to reveal Himself to our souls, and to fill us with Himself, and His glory, before we can venture out into service or venture out into

this hostile world as overcomers—into a world where there are dangerous snares and everything which the devil can spread out before us, to catch our eyes and hearts, everything to attract and lure us away in the most specious manner. And then what splendid hands we are for making excuses when we want to go in a certain direction.

We have all been struck with the blessedness of knowing Christ as a Saviour, it does one's heart good to think of that blessed One, the tender way in which He takes us aside "out of the crowd," as poor sinners, binds up our wounds, and pours in oil and wine. Ah! beloved brethren, our hearts know Him in that way, all our deep necessities met, our guilty consciences cleansed, all the distance between our hearts and God removed, all met perfectly, so that not a particle is left behind that can raise a question. He reveals Himself thus so perfectly, and sets our hearts in complete rest—no dread remains; but after all this, most precious as it is and necessary, yet it is only the first step to lead us on to deeper acquaintance with Himself. Do not our hearts long for it, a real, downright acquaintance with Him, beyond the question of our having found a Saviour and having all our need met perfectly? I know there can be no progress till this is



known, but there is a danger of stopping there (many do) and holding back.

Now, what struck me in John ix. was the way the Lord had His eye on that man all through. He had to get him out of a good many things; He had to clear him of his family, his relatives, often no small hindrance; of course, it was specially painful work to get clear, but he had to get out, and they helped him out, he being so true. Then he had to get clear outside of national things, and then out of ecclesiastical things — all real difficulties and hindrances. Thus we see a lonely one to look upon, one whose family would not have him, his religious friends would not have him, his political friends would not have him—not one seemed to care for him. But "Jesus found him," he was where he could be found by Jesus "cast out"! That was just where the blessed Lord was—outside! Then takes place that wonderful moment for Christ to make Himself known in a new way. His words were like a flash to his soul; the Lord presents Himself in a new character, a new position, before the eyes of this man's soul—"the Son of God"—with this result—the man drops as a worshipper at His feet. The Lord grant we may move on a little towards that!

Now look at Mary. We see she "stuck" a

little too. She was "stuck" with sorrow, overwhelmed with grief; death had come into that happy circle. All these things we dread terribly, and try to escape them if we possibly can. Mary would have liked to escape this sickness and death—no wonder; who would not? But it came in, and it *will* come in—guided by the skill of the hand of One who loved her (no doubt of that), "Now Jesus loved." But it desolated the house; so she "sat" down under it. No doubt the light was almost gone. Quite right to love, and to sorrow too; but little did she know that the Lord had to wait a little outside. And Mary had to rise and go outside, and it was worth her while to get outside, for it was there she learned the Lord in a new way, in a way she had never known Him before. She learned Him as One who was infinitely superior to the most desolating thing that could come to her house. She knew Him as the One who could weep with her on the way to the grave, and the next moment shew Himself superior to all the power of death—"the Son of God." It is no wonder to me that she sinks at His feet in chapter xii., outside at Bethany, worshipping. Oh, to be in our souls in the power of this blessed acquaintance: with Christ in this *outside* place, superior to grief and death!

Now see in Luke xxiv. The Lord is going away rejected, outside. He leads that little company that His heart loved out as far as Bethany. How one wishes to know more of that place—Bethany. It is a blessed thing to get if only an occasional visit there, for if you get a taste of the best thing, the second best will not do. If one had everything else, it would fall far short of this. It is a great thing when the Lord gathers us here, if we get a taste of the *best*: as our brother said in prayer, that we may carry away a flavour or taste of that place. The Lord leads His own out to this place. He is going to heaven, and He leads them *out*; and we, to get out, must get clear of things here. I do not speak of getting out of sin, but out of the various things we get a glimpse of in these chapters. He leads them out to Bethany. Bethany is a lovely place to reach—a great deal of worship going on there—outside the great city of Jerusalem. See this little company! He is going away; He lifts up His hands and blesses them; that is where we get real blessing beneath His priestly hands. He blessed them, and was carried up into heaven where He is before our hearts to-night. Oh, thus to see Him! Jesus, the One who went beneath the load of our many sins. We see that blessed One, Jesus, crowned with honour and glory. And as they gazed, they worshipped.

May the gracious Lord lead our hearts in such a way that we may forget ourselves, forget one another, and look up where He is; and may He let His glorious Person so shine out before us, that it may be with us as it was with them; they went back home to their pathways through this world, and were "continually praising and blessing God." May the Lord help us. May He make these occasions the means to draw out our hearts closer to Himself.

J. C. P.



## OUR COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST.

(COL. II. 8-14.)

I WOULD just like to say a few words on the precious theme that has been occupying us with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ and what is presented in Him.

In this passage we get, on the one hand, what is presented to us of God Himself, and on the other what is in man for God in the Lord Jesus Christ, and both for us. It says, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." There we get, as far as I understand it, all that can be presented of God in the man, in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the idea of fulness. If we want to know God, it is there we have to learn Him. God is pleased to draw near to us in Christ's blessed person, and as we look there we see all that God is, and all that is in His heart for man presented to us in the Lord Himself. What a blessed revelation it is to our souls to find that God has been pleased to draw near to us in One who is perfectly adequate for the setting forth of all that is in Himself, in all that He is, and that in a Man, in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I think we have all learned something of how God has come out in Christ to meet us in our dire need as poor miserable sinners, and how He

has relieved us of all the misery and wretchedness and all the burden lying upon us. The Lord Jesus Christ has brought us liberty and salvation on the part of the blessed God in coming down into the very place where we were, and in dealing with the whole question of sin, death and Satan's power to the glory of God. And as result of this we are brought to God Himself. It was so in type with Israel. They were sheltered by the blood in Egypt, which was the testimony of accomplished righteousness, and the judgment which destroyed the firstborn of Egypt had nothing whatever to say to them. There was complete deliverance likewise from the power of the enemy, and they learned that God was a Saviour God. Just as God had been pleased to speak to Moses in the burning bush, so He had wrought. He said He had seen the affliction of His people, and was come down to deliver them. Yet this deliverance was but a means to an end, even that God might have His delight and happiness in having them near Himself. As He says, "I have borne you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself."

Now God is presented to us in Christ. In Him all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and thus God is fully revealed to us in perfect righteousness and in the fulness of His love. The Lord Jesus could conciliate every attribute of

God, and in result make known to us the heart of God that we might know and love Him.

Now we have another step of the utmost importance to our souls. "We are filled full in Him." We are presented before God in all the perfection of that blessed One. While then on the one hand God has come out in all His perfection that we might know Him, on the other hand we are filled full in Him in whom God has been pleased to make Himself known to us. He has brought God down to us, and now He carries us, as it were, back to God, and becomes our complete sufficiency.

Then the Colossians are warned against a snare they were exposed to—the endeavour to make man's natural powers to contribute to them in a religious way. To counteract this the Spirit of God shews what we have got in Christ. We are filled full in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. The moment we get hold of that in our souls the effect is, we want to know more of that blessed One. The more we know of Christ the more we know that we are filled full in Him. We are at the fountain-head of all good and blessing in that respect for man. But then everything that is of ourselves must go, and hence we have "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the

flesh by the circumcision of Christ." Circumcision refers to His death. That is the true cutting off of the flesh. We have to be cut off. We have to go, and not a bit of self is to be left. Why should we wish to keep a bit of that? We are filled full in Christ. Whatever we may have to be proud of, mental powers or religious advantages, all has to go that Christ alone may remain for our souls; nothing but Christ.

But there is yet another step. We are buried with Him in baptism. If circumcision signifies the death of Christ; baptism as applied to us is burial. "Buried with him in baptism" means we go completely out of sight, never to be brought up again, never to be resuscitated. There is this difference between death and burial; while still above ground there is still some note taken of a man, some occupation with him. But in burial the man is completely gone, never to be brought up again in any way.

Then there is something further. "In whom also ye are risen with him by faith of the operation of God who raised him from the dead." Now we find we are brought out of death and are in association with the One who has broken its power, and who belongs to another world. It is a great thing to apprehend in power in our souls that through divine grace we belong to another world, and are privileged to



live even while here in another sphere as connected with an out-of-the-world condition of things. The Lord Jesus is actually in that world, and we are privileged to enter into it in spirit.

One more point. "And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath he quickened together with him." Here we get the power to enter into the things that belong to another world, and thus we are able to enjoy the things that are unseen and eternal. In result we come out in this world in the grace of Christ, our hearts filled with what belongs to Him in the scene where He is gone, to represent Him here in the power of the Holy Ghost. This is found in the next chapter, where, having put off the old man, and having put on the new, we are exhorted to "put on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering," &c. The picture is perfectly beautiful; God made known to us in Christ, and we filled full in Him in order that, as independent of human resources, we may come out in this world for God in all the grace of Christ, to represent Him in the very place from which He has been rejected, and to fulfil His pleasure during the time of His absence.

# READING.

## CHRIST AS HEAD TO THE CHURCH.

(EPH. I. 19-23 ; COL. II. 15-19 ; EPH. IV. 15, 16.)

W. W. Did you use the expression, "service of the Head"—if so, what do you mean by it?

F. E. R. I suppose the idea is found in Colossians ii. 19: "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

F. H. B. Are there not two things, the ministering to the body, and the uniting together?

F. E. R. The body is ministered to by the joints and bands, the Head being looked at as the source of supply.

T. H. R. So, as to impulse, the movements are the movements of life; the ordinary, and not the extraordinary movements.

F. H. B. In both Colossians and Ephesians we get, "From whom the whole body," &c., both speak in that way of ministration from the Head to the body.

QUES. To what purpose was Colossians ii. 19

brought in? Was it corrective; the Head being let go, all was disjointed?

F. E. R. There was grave danger then from those not holding the Head. Now if you look at the professing church you get what comes of failing in this. Bethesda is an illustration of not holding the Head—there is looseness.

F. H. B. How does losing sight of the Head lead to open ground?

F. E. R. If you hold the Head, you must hold the truth of the one body, which stands in relation to the Head; and in fact the truth of the body was taught in scripture before the truth of the Head.

QUES. Did not Mr. Darby receive the truth of the Head first?

F. E. R. Yes; but in scripture the truth of the body was taught first.

QUES. Have not most of us got the truth of the body before we got the truth of the Head?

D. L. H. We want to see how scripture presents the matter.

F. E. R. We see in Romans, and still more in Corinthians, that one Spirit makes one body. "For by one Spirit have we all been baptised into one body." That shews that the truth of the body is the first taught. If you do not accept the truth of the one body, I do not see how you can well apprehend the Head.

QUES. Yesterday we were speaking of Christ as Head, and Christ as Lord. What is the distinction?

F. E. R. Christ is Lord to the individual, and in connection with individual responsibility. Then He is High Priest in service to us individually, not collectively. But if you follow the idea to the Minister of the Sanctuary, you come near to the Head.

QUES. But then He is Priest there?

F. E. R. Yes; but there you are near the Head.

T. H. R. You must see that Aaron was head to his sons.

QUES. What is implied in "not holding the Head"?

F. E. R. It comes out manifestly in the present day in Bethesda. They are an example of the form and order without divine teaching, without the Spirit, in a way. Their meetings are simply believers' meetings.

QUES. Can we have the truth of the body rightly without the Head?

F. E. R. The truth of the body connects itself with the presence of the Spirit; you must accept the truth of the body. Then there is another thing to be learnt, that Christ is Head to the body.

D. L. H. So the better we know the Head, the better we know the body.

QUES. Was not the thing put forward to the Corinthians? but when the apostle spoke of one Spirit and one body, it was not as a mere fact.

F. E. R. It was not presented as a mere fact, but as corrective, because they were rallying round leaders. In the same way you get the clergy now as official leaders. The apostle brings in the truth of one body, one Spirit, as corrective.

F. H. B. Properly speaking, I suppose all movement in the body originates with the Head?

F. E. R. I think so. The husband, as head, gives impulse properly to the wife, not the wife to the husband.

QUES. With regard to priesthood, as the Great Priest over the house of God, is Christ known in any individual service He renders us?

F. E. R. I do not think so. Great Priest is a very large and deep thought. The house of God represents the universe.

QUES. Does it speak of the service of Christ to the individual in chapter iv.?

F. E. R. Yes, I think so.

T. H. R. It has always interested me to see that the tabernacle was anointed first, for the tabernacle is a figure of the universe. And the

priest was anointed after as the one who sustains it and ministers in it.

F. E. R. There is nothing more interesting than the anointing. The tabernacle which was anointed was a pattern of all things, and "He who built all things is God."

REMARKED. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness for entering the holiest . . . and a great priest over the house of God," &c.

F. E. R. Christ is a great Priest over the house of God, but the application of headship at the present moment cannot go beyond Christianity. We have to accept Him in that way as the great Priest over the house of God. The church is the first circle. In Psalm xxii. we see how the influence of Christ widens out from the church, first to the great congregation, and then to the ends of the earth. In Colossians i. we have first the Head, then reconciliation, then the body. The body is the first thing brought into reconciliation.

QUES. Is not the Head a great thing to us, so that whatever is set up by-and-by we can be in touch with it now.

F. E. R. Yes.

QUES. You distinguish between the great high Priest of chapter iv. and the great Priest in chapter x. ?

F. E. R. Yes; the idea of High Priest is

taken from Aaron. You do not get the term High Priest in Psalm cx. There Christ is said to be Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Great Priest is, I suppose, in contrast to Aaron.

T. H. R. Everything is great in the Hebrews—the Majesty on high, the word really means the *greatness*, in contrast with the littleness of Judaism.

D. L. H. Then a great deal of the service of the High Priest is seen in connection with the weakness and wilderness experience of the people to lead them to the other side.

F. E. R. Yes.

QUES. Is not the difference between the Priest and the Head set forth in some way in Ephesians.

F. E. R. Yes. Christ ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. This is in a sense priestly, though hardly connected with the thought of Head of the body.

T. H. R. As the exalted Man?

F. E. R. Yes; and passes on from that to the thought of the Head.

QUES. Is there not more the thought of drawing from the Head?

F. E. R. The impulse of life is from the Head. When the body is brought in in relation to the Head, it is always looked at as a distinct

entity. In Corinthians you do not get this idea, it is said, "You are Christ's body;" He is the spirit and living principle of that body. But when, as in Ephesians and Colossians, you have the Head and the body, the Head is looked at as distinct from the body, though related to it, and this may lead on to the truth of the bride.

REMARKED. In Ephesians i. He is not the Head *of* the body, but He is Head *to* the church, which is His body.

F. E. R. A man is not only husband *of* his wife, but husband *to* his wife; so Christ is Head *of* the body, and Head *to* the body, but the Head is an entity distinct from the body.

F. H. B. In Ephesians iv. we have the organisation, the whole body.

D. L. H. There we have the whole body, rounded off, as it were.

QUES. Does the thought of union come in as connected with the body?

F. E. R. The thought of union is not in connection with the Head and the body. It is not in that sense the word is generally used. Union is of two entities, just as man and woman are two. We see it in Isaac and Rebekah. They became one by union, and Christ and the church are one by union. At the same time there is the truth that the church is His body, and He is the spirit of the body. I can conceive of my body



as in a sense distinct from myself. It is my body, and I am the spirit of my body. So the church is to Christ as His body.

REMARKED. We see what you are through your body.

F. E. R. Yes.

QUES. Are both these thoughts applicable at the present time ?

F. E. R. I should say both are applicable to the present.

QUES. We are His body now ?

F. E. R. Yes.

QUES. You would say that the thought in Ephesians i. is future ?

F. E. R. Christ as the Head of all principality and power is future, but He has this in title and place as Man now. You could scarcely, however, speak of Christ as being IN FACT the Head of all now. You do not see all things put under Him yet.

H. T. Did you say the body is not united to the Head ?

F. E. R. I do not think I said so. I said union is of two entities.

REMARKED. In Ephesians i. you get the Head in two positions : Head over all things, and Head to the church.

F. E. R. Exactly so, you get the same in Colossians. He is the Head of all principality

and power, and then He is Head to the church which is His body, and that brings in two entities. Christ is Head of the church, as the husband is head of the wife. They are two. It is the same idea as that Adam was head to Eve. Eve was of his body, and at the same time his wife; they were two, but now one in the eye of God, yet none the less Adam was head to her. Her sin was that she acted from her own impulse instead of that of Adam.

QUES. Is not that what the church has done?

F. E. R. I think so.

QUES. Do not we get another analogy besides husband and wife, I mean, the human body?

F. E. R. I do not think the analogy of the human body ever goes beyond the saints down here. My head is part of my body, just as my ears and my eyes are parts of my body.

D. L. H. It is every part in Ephesians, "From whom the whole body," &c. That idea includes every part of the body. All Christians are embraced in that sense.

QUES. Is not the other figure very conclusive, "The husband is head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church"?

F. E. R. Yes, it is to me. In both epistles, Ephesians and Colossians, He is Head over all things, Head of all principality and power to the

church, but the church has a place which other things have not; that is, it is His body.

F. H. B. Adam was really head over all things before he was head to his wife.

F. E. R. Yes, he was united to her afterwards, and became her head.

H. D'A. C. Is not Christ Head to His body in a far more intimate way than husband to wife?

F. E. R. The apostle says in 2 Corinthians v., "If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we know that we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." In a way he distinguishes himself from his body, but he is the spirit of his body. A man is not head of his body.

QUES. Do not you think there is a good deal of confusion through a human application of the word "Head" in 1 Corinthians xii.?

F. E. R. The mistake is in bringing Christ as Head into that chapter. I quite admit that in the revival of the truth it pleased God to give Mr. Darby an idea of the Head first, but the truth of the body was made known before the truth of the Head was known. It was known first on the day of Pentecost, but not until Paul was called out was the Head known.

QUES. Was not this truth given him in a way at his conversion?

F. E. R. Yes, but it came out a long time after in testimony. In Romans, "we being many are one body in Christ." So in Corinthians, "By one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, and have been made to drink into one spirit." I have thought that this latter clause had reference to Christ rather than the Holy Ghost. One spirit characterised them.

C. B. Why had they not the Head at Pentecost—and yet there was the body?

F. E. R. They had not the truth of Christ as the Son of God. You do not get that testimony until it was brought out by Paul, and therefore you could not have the truth of the Head. The testimony of Peter was to an exalted Christ. They had known Him after the flesh, and now He was the exalted One at the right hand of God. But the coming of the Holy Ghost constituted one body, and if the saints were not in the intelligence of it, they were in the instinct of it. The movements came from the Head.

QUES. How were they maintained in it then?

F. E. R. By the Holy Ghost and by gifts, but they had not understood the relation of Christ as Head. He must be known as Son of God. You could not understand our relation to Christ as Head unless you saw the truth of son-

ship, so that He is the Firstborn among many brethren.

D. L. H. With regard to that, what would you say about Peter's confession of the Lord in Matthew xvi. ?

F. E. R. I think it was a revelation given to Peter personally, but not for testimony. The grace of the Father gave it to him.

F. H. B. It was not effective until long after.

F. E. R. It was given to him personally by the Father, and it made him a sample stone. The confession really formed the spiritual material for Christ's assembly.

QUES. Revealing His Son in me in Galatians i. What is that ?

F. E. R. That was for testimony, "that I might preach him."

QUES. What is the force of "holding fast the head ?"

F. E. R. It works in this way, that you hold to the truth of the one body. You will not suffer disintegration.

QUES. Was it not corrective ; they were letting go the idea that all was in Christ, and from Him ?

F. E. R. Yes, He must be the source of supply.

QUES. Is not the case of Eve an illustration of not holding the Head ?

F. E. R. She acted on her own wisdom.

QUES. And is not that the danger with every one of us ?

F. E. R. If you hold the Head you get intelligence by the expansion of affection, and God does not intend us to get intelligence in any other way. He would enlighten the eyes of our hearts.

REMARKED. We get the "Son of his love" in Colossians i.

F. E. R. Yes, and you find out that Christ is everything.

QUES. Is that holding the Head ?

F. E. R. Not holding the Head is characteristic of the seducers. We drop in that way into individuality. People try by their own effort and power to acquire wisdom.

F. E. R. Intelligence hangs on the expansion of affection, being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding.

F. E. R. If you are after wisdom, you want to grow bigger. Are you big enough to hold it ?

D. L. H. When you get bigger you really get smaller. "Be ye also enlarged."

F. E. R. Yes, enlarged in affection, and then you are greater in intelligence. Many men are clever enough, but do not hold a great place in the affections of others.

QUES. You would say the holding the Head is shewn in keeping the unity of the Spirit ?

F. E. R. It is a great thing to recognise the unity of the body, so as not to get narrowed up in mind. You think then aright of the church.

REMARKED. Was it not God's intention originally that the joints and bands should do more for the edification of the church than even gifts, every part of it to contribute to the well-being of the whole?

F. E. R. In early days joints and bands had much more place than they have now. Nourishment was thus ministered.

QUES. Do not we lose much from the broken state of things?

F. E. R. Yes, but the joints and bands are to hold things together.

QUES. But for this you must have affection?

F. E. R. What you want is to keep the whole thing together, and things would be kept together if everybody were seeking it. But even earnest men work in such a way as to break up. Peculiar ideas all tend to break up things.

REMARKED. Joints and bands are a great thing where there is no gift.

D. L. H. "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another," &c. Is not that the effect of the activity of the joints and bands? Is not that the movements of life more than gift?

F. E. R. There is evidently something besides

ministry. It is a curious thing that the gifts are not said to come from the Head but from the exalted Man. I think the working of the Head goes on by the joints and bands, and keeps things together. If you get ministry without that you may form a clique by it. The Corinthians wanted the joints and bands.

T. H. R. You may get a meeting regulated outwardly by ministry, but the movements of life are the great thing after all; like a family growing up together in affection, nothing official.

REMARKED. There is more need of family affection than of gifts.

T. H. R. The impulse of life comes from the Head and not from ministry.

F. E. R. Yes, and that is an important point in this connection.

T. H. R. Ministry gives form and shape to things.

F. E. R. Exactly.

QUES. In Colossians: "Increaseth with the increase of God." What is that?

F. E. R. In what is of God. In Colossians we have everything divine in contrast to philosophy and all that sort of thing. It is all Christ. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."



QUES. What is the course of an evangelist—  
Outside and beyond ?

F. E. R. An evangelist stands in relation to  
the body.

QUES. Could a man call himself an evangelist ?

F. E. R. Scripture might call him so, but it  
would be assumption for him to do so.

QUES. In Ephesians iv. 3 we get an exhorta-  
tion to diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit,  
is that—diligence in the things spoken of in  
the first two verses ?

F. E. R. I do not know that is *using*  
diligence. I think it is the purpose which is  
before the soul. What I judge is that unless it  
were so there would not be the diligence to keep  
the unity. Lowliness and meekness are suitable  
for those in the presence of God. It is a  
recognised truth that the Spirit has a dwelling  
place here, but the truth is that God is dwelling  
here by the Spirit. I am not sure people  
sufficiently recognise that. It is not simply a  
doctrine that the Spirit is here ; but a reality  
that God is dwelling. We are builded together  
for a habitation of God by the Spirit.

QUES. Is not 1 Timothy on this line ?

F. E. R. Yes, we have there the house of  
God. Hence the effect of belonging to God's  
house is to come out in the detail of daily life.  
The place of men and women and deportment,

demeanour, and dress are taken account of. It is a question in my mind whether we have not taken up the doctrine of the presence of the Spirit without recognising the moral effect of the dwelling of God.

QUES. Does not the presence of God always subdue ?

F. E. R. Yes ; hence we have "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace."

T. H. R. Really a man is known by his household, and God's character in the world ought to be known by His household.

F. E. R. The heathen would judge of God by His household. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth.



# PROGRESS IN APPREHENSION OF CHRIST.

(JOHN X. 1-30.)\*

MY object in selecting this chapter is to bring before you the various lights in which Christ is presented in it, and to shew that there is the idea of progress in us by the apprehension of those lights. This is marked through the chapter in the way in which the Lord speaks of Himself; and the apprehension of each step has a distinct effect upon us.

He presents Himself first as the Shepherd, having title to lead out the sheep; then as the Door, connected with which is the idea of entrance; then as the Good Shepherd, giving confidence to the sheep; and lastly, as the One Shepherd, which brings in the thought of unity. The chapter begins with exit and ends with eternal life: these are the extreme points, and each step from the start to the finish is the result in the soul of a certain presentation of Christ, and of its apprehension. Each presentation has reference to the saints down here, and the last

\* Lecture at Chippenham.

one manifestly brings in the thought of the Gentile, "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." Finally, Christ says that He gives His sheep eternal life. He, so to say, puts the sheep into the hand of the Father, and no one is able to pluck them out of His hand. "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand;" and His testimony closes with the remarkable statement, "I and my Father are one." (Vers. 28, 29.)

He is *the Shepherd* of the sheep, and in connection with Him as such there is a going out, that is, the sheep had to *apprehend* the *direction* in which He was leading. Though He speaks of leading out of the fold here, I do not think that this is looked at in this chapter simply as a consequence of His being rejected. In chapters viii.-ix. He is seen as rejected; but in chapter x. He is seen as having come into the fold and shewing His sheep the direction in which He is leading. Christ did not come into the world to connect Himself with the world system as it was; there was no hope of recovery on the part of the world, though the Lord's presence was a test, but He was in truth the beginning of a new world. He is the beginning, the true bread from heaven, and our path is to go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. The

suffering *without the gate* in Hebrews xiii. 12-14 is looked at as morally suitable. It was that He might *sanctify* the people with His own blood. Outside the gate was not *His* position, but He identified Himself with *man's* moral position of distance that He might sanctify the people with His own blood; and the injunction connected with that is, "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." We have to separate ourselves from ecclesiastical order after the flesh. In Christianity around us things are set up on a certain established order, and we have to go outside that order unto Him bearing His reproach. As Shepherd, Christ came into the fold in order to lead out of it. No one can make spiritual advance till he has accepted the fact that Christ has gone without the camp, and closed for ever that order of things. It is a great thing when one can say, "I am crucified with Christ." I accept the reproach of the cross. The reproach is, that you are not good enough for earthly religion, and it is a great moment when God gives a saint grace to accept that, and to go outside the camp to Christ, bearing His reproach. We are called to follow Christ, and it is a solemn thing to realise that Christ has left the whole religious order of things in the world, and our path is to go outside unto Him. That is the first step. Christ is first seen as the *Shepherd* of the sheep.

The position He next takes is that of the *Door*. Now in the thought of the door there is an entering in. (Ver. 9.) I understand Christ as the Door, in view of the giving of the Spirit; where there is a lack of apprehension of the presence of the Spirit, and of the house of God, it indicates that there is little sense of Christ as the Door. You must enter by the appointed way, by the door—the appointed way is by baptism, and you are baptised to Jesus Christ. The idea in connection with baptism is that you leave other associations to find a place in the house of God, the region of the Spirit.

In the Acts those converted by the apostles' preaching accepted Christ as the Door, and they came into the house of God. (Look at 1 Peter iii. 20, 22.) I understand the house of God to be a kind of moral correspondence to that which has taken place in heaven. Christ has gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him. There has been a celebration in heaven consequent on Christ's being received there as man. It was "peace in heaven and glory in the highest." The acclamation on Christ's entering Jerusalem pointed on to that moment, and the celebration in heaven is recorded here in Peter. Now how do we know that He is gone into heaven? By report. We could not know it

otherwise, nor did the disciples, though they saw Him ascend ; but that He is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him, is known by report. The Holy Ghost has come down to report this, and it is known in the house of God. There is thus a correspondence to heaven in the house of God. The festivity on earth is seen in the great supper of Luke xiv. The answer of a good conscience in 1 Peter is through the accepting of the testimony of the resurrection ; but the Holy Ghost has brought down the report of what has taken place in heaven, and in the supper we have the good of this.

Verse 10. Life more abundantly or very abundantly is, I imagine, life in the Spirit. We enter into the power of the Spirit through the Door, and are saved, and go in and out and find pasture—salvation, liberty and food. All this is found in the power of the Spirit ; but until we have taken the first step we cannot go further. Till we leave systematic religion, we do not understand what it is to be saved and to have liberty and to find pasture.

Christendom soon lost all sense of the presence of the Spirit because it refused the first condition, that is, the *reproach* of Christ. It is held now that He is in honour here. In losing the sense of the Spirit's presence they have lost

the true idea of the house of God. The Spirit has brought in the light of what has taken place in heaven, the celebration of righteousness. And hence *grace is commensurate with glory!* The greater the sense you have of the glory of the Lord, the more conscious you are of being a subject of grace. The second point is the Door, and by Christ, as that, you enter into all that is connected with the presence of the Holy Ghost.

Now the third point is the *Good Shepherd*, and the *Good Shepherd* gives His *life* for the sheep. Divine *love* expressed itself in Christ in death, and this love has had effect in the sheep. "The love of Christ constraineth us . . . that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again." These verses illustrate the effect of what we get here in John x. 11-14. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And again, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine, as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep." We have in this the strongest expression of love; but where is love going to find satisfaction? In those who have accepted the testimony of that love; in these the love of Christ has had effect. The position of the world has been greatly changed by the



testimony of the love of God. Christ's *death* was the testimony of divine love, and the testimony of it has made two classes of men in the world, one of which is particularly obnoxious to God, that is, the class that rejects Christ. On the other hand, there is a class composed of those who have accepted the testimony of the love of God, and in them love has found its satisfaction. Christ knows His sheep and is known of His sheep, there is the reciprocity of affection. He loved them, and they love Him, and they live unto Him who died for them and rose again. As the Good Shepherd, Christ has given His life for the sheep, and it is His *death* that affects the soul, and the soul answers to it; and this is what is set forth in the Lord's supper, for His death has expressed His love. Our response to the love of Christ is when we have apprehended Him as the Good Shepherd, and the knowledge that subsists is that of reciprocal affection. The apprehension of the love of Christ, as expressed in His death, has a very profound effect on the soul. Many of us are but poorly prepared to part with country, friends, and religion for the love of Christ, and yet He will not be content with less than the *supreme* place in the affections of His people. The character of love into which we are brought is wonderful. It is

not exactly as the Shepherd, nor as the Door, but as the *Good* Shepherd, that He has given His life for the sheep; the soul has come by divine teaching into the apprehension of the love which was expressed in His death. Jesus says in verse 15, "I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd."

Now this brings in another point, namely, that of *unity*, and the secret of this lies in the apprehension of the *one Shepherd*. We are exhorted to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; but in order to do this we need to leave human order. The Lord attached great importance to unity, and was going to send another Comforter to bring it about. You cannot get the unity of the Spirit unless by leaving human order. In recognising Christ as *one Shepherd*, and His sheep as *one flock* you come into the unity of the Spirit, and the obligation to keep the unity of the Spirit is recognised. The idea that the one flock was to be hidden in a great mass of profession was never in the mind of God. The Lord's prayer is, "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." The unity of the saints was the testimony to the world that the Father sent the Son. The one flock, one Shepherd, in John, answers to the thought of the one Head, one body, in Paul. Every one should be prepared to accept the obligation to unity, which brings us to the true idea of the assembly. How we keep the unity of the Spirit is by practically discountenancing everything that is a denial of that unity.

We come to a further point in verses 27-30. Christ is going to lead His sheep, not to heaven, but to the land of promise. He says, "I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish." Eternal life is found in the land of promise, that is, in conscious association with Christ Himself. He is it, and you are risen and quickened with Him. And you will never perish, that is never apostatise, for you are in the hand both of the Father and of the Son, and this is emphasized by the statement, "I and my Father are *one*." Christ leads His sheep into eternal life, that is, into the consciousness that they are in Him outside the wilderness and all that is connected with the individual path, and are secure in the hand of the Father, and in His own hand. "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we might know him that is true; and we are *in* him

that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and eternal life." He brings us into the circle of which He is the centre, in the land of promise.

There is in the various presentations which Christ makes of Himself in this chapter, a progress, and we have to apprehend Christ in increasing light. He presents Himself in many lights to us and we apprehend Him as He is pleased to present Himself; and as each is entered into by the soul, it is prepared for the next, for there is advance in each step. And it is a curious fact that in this chapter the Lord was really speaking to His enemies, but shewing the course which divine grace was taking in the world.

The Lord give us to increase in our knowledge and apprehension of Himself in all these various presentations which He has been pleased to bring before us.



## READING.\*

(1 COR. XII.)

C. G. We should like to read something on the assembly.

F. E. R. Then we had better look at 1 Corinthians xii.-xiv. These chapters do not bring before us the idea of the saints as risen and quickened with Christ, as in Colossians and Ephesians, but the practical working of the assembly on the principle of unity. We have what may be called the first principles of the assembly. Chapter xi. virtually gives the Head, for it is the Lord who is prominent there, and He is the Head. Chapter xii. gives the body, for it brings in the truth of the Spirit, and one Spirit makes one body.

W. B. Is Christ the Head as the One to whom the body is subject?

F. E. R. Yes.

A. H. Does Head and Lord convey the same thought?

F. E. R. No, but we distinguish the person who is Head by the title of Lord. As Lord, Christ holds Himself in a sense distant. He did

\* Studley, June 5.

so to the Corinthians because of their state. The moment you recognise Christ as Head, you understand that you take your character from the Head. The secret of the confusion in the world is from lack of a Head.

REMARKED. Antichrist will be given that place by Satan.

F. E. R. He comes on the scene after Christ, the true Head, has been refused. Christ is Head of every man, but now this is true only to faith. In a system like popery they try to impose a head, but it is not the true thing. In Adam, God began with a head: he was the first man and the head. We have in the assembly the introduction of the Head before the body. The way in which God puts things right is by the introduction of a head. (Eph. i. 22.) The idea of a head is one from whom character is taken. When things are in order according to God, every man, instead of asserting his own will, will take character from Christ. "As is the heavenly [One], such also are the heavenly ones." If every man took character from Christ, things would be right in the world. My body takes character from my head, for the intelligence is there. All the confusion in the world, the separation into nations, and confusion of tongues arose from the fact that man had lost a head; everything was marred, and man went

his own way. In coming together in the assembly we own Christ as Head.

REMARKED. If Christ were realised as Head, everything would go right in the assembly.

F. E. R. Yes; but I should like to see that every one took character from Christ; then we should have wonderful meetings.

Chapter xi. virtually presents Christ; chapter xii. the Spirit, by which Jew and Gentile have been baptised into one body. The spirit into which we have all been made to drink is, I judge, Christ, from whom we take character.

QUES. "The Christ" (ver. 12)—what is that?

F. E. R. The church as the anointed vessel. That is the true place of the church here.

W. B. In what way is the Lord brought before us in the supper?

F. E. R. In His death, the supper gives Him His proper place of pre-eminence; He claims pre-eminence, but in love. He has taken the place of "firstborn" that we might accord Him this place of pre-eminence. He is Head of all principality and power. We own and recognise Him as Head of every man and of all principality and power. The church is His body and He is Head to it.

QUES. In chapter xi. when the bread and wine are before us, what do they convey?

F. E. R. You find yourself in the presence of the Lord's-death, the greatest expression of His love. In the bread and wine He sets forth the conditions on which we can have part with Him.

J. C. And that holds good the whole week through.

F. E. R. Yes.

W. B. Some think the breaking of bread to be the stirring up of your pure mind by way of remembrance.

F. E. R. But you have not known His sufferings in order to remember or recall them in the way in which the apostles would, you have to take the institution up spiritually rather than literally.

REMARKED. The Lord said, "Do this in remembrance of me."

F. E. R. I think He referred in that to what He had been here when with the disciples, and they were to recall Himself. To us, the bread and wine, as setting forth His death, give us the expression of His love, and Christ has given in them, too, the conditions under which we can be with Him.

QUES. The bread and wine recall His death?

F. E. R. They recall Himself. You have to go behind the bread and wine, for the supper calls Himself into presence; and that is more even than laying down the terms on which



He can be with us. Many get the good of His presence though not much in the intelligence of it. The Jew had no more title to Christ in death than the Gentile, whatever he might have had in His life. Thus Jew and Gentile are on common ground in the presence of the death of Christ.

W. B. I think of Him in all He died to put away, all that I was after the flesh, in order that He might have us with Himself in all the love He expressed there.

F. E. R. That is the force of His body given, the removal side; the cup is the cup of blessing. It does not speak of the *bread* of blessing, because that refers to removal. The supper is introductory to the sanctuary, to the priestly service of God, according to the appointed order.

T. P. As to the supper being at the beginning of the meeting, it would not do to force things?

F. E. R. No. You must recognise when saints are ready for it spiritually; but you will not find much good will be done by putting off the breaking of bread.

J. C. But you would not make rules?

F. H. B. No. Chapter xiii. comes in to regulate all. Love regulates everything. In John xx. when the Lord came into the company of His disciples, He brought before them the record

of His death. He shewed them His hands, and His side. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." His hands and His side identified Him as the One who had died.

B. B. Chapter xiii. comes in for us to have consideration for those who may not be up to the truth of things.

F. E. R. Yes; the Corinthians were not much up to the truth.

A. H. You would deprecate an unwritten church service ?

F. E. R. Yes, but we ought to try and help saints to that which is true, namely, priestly worship. In regard to this, Hebrews and Colossians go together, that is, in Colossians you apprehend God's work in us, namely, that He has quickened us together with Christ; and in Hebrews we have boldness to enter into the holiest. You must connect the holiest with the land of promise. The greater and more perfect tabernacle is in the land.

REMARKED. The tabernacle was set up at Shiloh.

F. E. R. The greater and more perfect tabernacle is connected with Mount Zion, but it is all of course a moral idea, and is realised in our apprehending the place which Christ has taken up before God on our behalf. If you understand what being quickened together with Christ and

raised up is, you enter into association with Christ in the holiest.

QUES. Is Christ's presence the holiest, for it is not a place?

F. E. R. Yes; but the point in Colossians is the apprehension of what God has wrought—what is true in us; quickening is what God has effected in us. As quickened together with Christ, we are in the land, in association there with Him.

QUES. Why is it "in Christ"?

F. E. R. Because we are not actually in heavenly places yet. We are there in Christ.

J. C. I am there before God in Christ, and as Christ is.

F. E. R. You are there before God as *you* are, according to what God has made you. Everything in the holiest is according to God's glory. You are there according to that glory—holy, without blame before Him in love. In the holiest there is a power of exclusion of everything in us which is not according to God's work in us. We are true worshippers because we are there according to what God has wrought in us. At the coming of the Lord we shall be actually quickened and raised up, but that is effected in us now in anticipation. There is the work of God, and you are in the holiest in virtue of that work.

A. H. Not only *in* Christ, but *of* Christ, as Eve was *of* Adam.

F. E. R. Yes.

J. C. Then it is really all that is of God in me that enters.

F. E. R. Yes. These things are said by many to be mystical, but they are only mystical to those who do not understand them.

QUES. What is quickening ?

F. E. R. It is making alive out of death.

QUES. When is that true ?

F. E. R. When the love of God is so effective in the soul that you are conscious of being associated with Christ in that love.

QUES. Is it progressive ?

F. E. R. Quickening is really the sum total of God's work in us.

QUES. Does not the quickening process go on if the person is clear of the world ?

F. E. R. Well, it enlarges. The secret of deliverance lies in the divine nature. (2 Pet. i. 4.)

REMARKED. Quickening is more than intelligence ?

F. E. R. In scripture spiritual intelligence is connected with love. (See Eph. i. and Col. ii.)

QUES. As to the holiest—Is the idea of it that we realise heavenly association with Christ where love has found its rest and satisfaction ?

F. E. R. Yes. The love we have learned in

its activities down here in discipline, and in other ways, is there at rest. It is the same love which we experienced here that we find there at rest. There is a place where everything is according to God, and *there* is found perfect love in complacency and at rest. We read in John xvii. 26, "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them."

REMARKED. In Corinthians we do not find much of this.

F. E. R. No, they were not up to it, the tendency with them was to party making.

REMARKED. You said that Corinthians was a contrast to Hebrews and Colossians. How?

F. E. R. In Hebrews and Colossians we get the idea of the assembly in its true character according to God. In Corinth they were party making, going after leaders. In the assembly there is no such thing as leadership or pre-eminence. In your natural body there is no pre-eminence, your finger is as good as your eye. No member in the human body seeks prominence, though on the other hand it might be paralysed, and die out of use. You have to be particular in the assembly as to conduct, no person should express judgment on what is done there—it is a very unhappy position for any brother to place himself in, for he makes himself judge.

J. C. If on the one hand a person is not to make himself prominent, many, on the other hand, do not take any part at all.

F. E. R. Chapter xiii. would correct that. Love is an active principle which would bring to the front many who do not now take part. It is a lack of love, rather than a question of modesty.

QUES. Is there not a fear of criticism?

F. E. R. Well, love would lead a man to forget himself; to correct all these things our hearts must get into the scene and region of love; one cannot correct them for another.

P. Do you not think prayer about it would effect it?

F. E. R. Yes, for that would bring out the love.

B. B. If love were manifested would it not bring it out in others?

F. E. R. Yes, love is the life of the assembly, and Christ claims to be pre-eminent in love. The supper puts that before us.

REMARKED. If we were formed in love there would not be such long pauses.

QUES. Do you not think that the real defect in all of us is that we are not affected by the love of God, not that we do not know about it?

F. E. R. Do you think that if love were in activity there would be these horrible divisions

coming in ? Doctrine will not correct these things, but divine love would ; but for its acting, people must keep themselves in the region of the Spirit, not in the influence of the world.

A. H. If a person is quickened with Christ he must be of Christ, nothing of the flesh could be quickened.

REMARKED. It is new creation.

F. E. R. That stands in rather a different connection.



## THE CAUSE OF DEFECTION IN THE CHURCH.\*

(EXO. XXXII. 1-6; 1 COR. X. 1-12.)

WE get in the passage in Exodus the point of departure in the case of Israel. There had been the lusting after evil things; but this was the great defection, on account of which they were carried away into Babylon. Although Israel entered the land of promise they did so only provisionally; they never entered it according to the pleasure of God. From the making of the golden calf God intended that they should be carried away captive into Babylon. The same defection is seen in the history of the church. That is my meaning in connecting these two scriptures.

What Israel did actually after the flesh, the church has done in a spiritual sense. Israel began first by lusting after evil things, and this was followed by idolatry. There were in Israel what answered to sacraments; they did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink—it is what the Lord's

\* Devizes, June 9.



supper is to us—but there was unjudged flesh amongst them. Now I want you to see that the same character of departure has taken place in the church of God.

On the occasion referred to Moses was absent. Moses was apostle in connection with Israel, Aaron was priest. Moses represented to the people the light and authority of God. In divine things rule and authority are connected with light. We see this even in nature. God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. God constituted light to rule, and so it is to-day—light rules. I do not doubt that in putting things in this way in Genesis i. the Spirit of God had Christ in view. He is the great Light set in heaven, and it is very important to see that God intended light to rule.

Now light is connected with the apostle. In regard to Israel, Moses was apostle and brought the light, and the light was to rule. Authority was connected with light. In this passage in Exodus we learn that Moses was absent, he was up in the mount with God. During his absence the people separated priesthood from true authority, and connected a false authority with the priest, and by doing so they practically degraded the priesthood. They separated the light and authority, which were vested in Moses,

and connected them in their mind in a false way with Aaron, the priest. He was to be their leader, and to accommodate things to their taste.

This act resulted in the bringing in of idolatry. They said to Aaron, "Up, make us gods," and Aaron said, "Break off the golden ear-rings which are in the ears of your wives." (Vers. 2-6.)

We have in this an epitome of the history of the professing church. Christ is absent; He, the apostle, is lost sight of in the present day in Christendom because He has delayed to return, and the leaders have separated priesthood from true authority. They have degraded the priesthood by connecting authority with it; idolatry has been sanctioned, and the people under the influence of idolatry have become completely worldly. "The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play."

It is remarkable that at the beginning of the history of the church God should have warned saints by this defection of Israel. We see the defection to-day, both in Romanism and in Protestantism. And it will be in the case of Christendom as with Israel, that because of this defection destruction will come upon it. It is of all importance to apprehend the course defection has taken in Christianity. It is easily seen that during the absence of the Apostle—Christ, heavenly light and authority have been disre-

garded. A spurious priesthood has been introduced, the priest has sanctioned idolatry, and thus priesthood has become degraded.

We have been given to see this defection, and it is a great favour to have had our eyes opened to it. Now God's corrective I believe to be in the apprehension that what man separated, God has brought together. Apostle and Priest go together in the One Person, and that makes Christianity, in its true power, perfection. As we accept the authority we get the gain of priesthood, and that is the point I want to bring before you.

I may turn to Romans iv. 23, v. 11 to illustrate this. All this passage is connected with the Lord Jesus Christ; He is the Apostle, the One in whom is brought in the light of God. The Priest does not bring in the light, the Apostle does. If you turn to Romans viii. 33-39, you find the priest. We get thus the distinction between the Apostle and the Priest. There is distinction in function, but the two are combined now in one Person, so that the Priest is as good as the Apostle, which was hardly the case in Moses and Aaron. At the outset Aaron went wrong, but of Moses God said that he was faithful in all His house. It was an imperfect system. Now the system is perfect, for the two offices are combined in one Person—the Priest

is equal to the Apostle. The Apostle brings the light of God which is to rule; the Priest carries us in to God. Therefore the function of the Priest is more limited than that of the Apostle. Light, when it comes in, is world-wide testimony. God could not limit His light, it shines for all. You could not conceive God limiting the value of the sun. "There is nothing hid from the heat thereof." And God could no more limit the light of the gospel than that of the sun. Priesthood is more limited in its application, for its exercise is connected with those drawing nigh to God; the Priest brings us in. Many to whom the light has come are never exercised about going in to God, and so they never get fully the good of the priesthood.

Now the light is to rule, and I understand the light to be the glory of God. We read in 2 Corinthians iv. 6, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

I understand the glory of God to indicate the completeness of moral perfection, in display. Circumstances have come to pass which have brought the moral perfections of God into display, and they are all proportionate and harmonious. Righteousness, love, holiness, mercy, faithfulness, truth—all that goes to make up the

moral perfection of God—all are harmonious. That is the simple idea to my mind of the glory of God, and it is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. It is what Stephen saw, and where Stephen left off Paul begins. The glad tidings of the glory of God have come into this world; it is a wonderful light, and that light is to rule. God intends us to be ruled by the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Every attribute of God has come into display—righteousness and faithfulness, all is set forth in His face, and in that light I am to walk. I am as much affected in my soul by the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ as I am naturally by the light of the sun in the heavens. Under the influence and rule of the light I walk down here in the will of God in the midst of imperfection. I see all moral imperfection in man. If I come across a man good in one point he has imperfection in another. I see every moral perfection in the face of Jesus Christ, and I walk in that light down here for God's will. Light is in the Apostle, we are affected by it, and it is in the light of that glory that the Christian is enabled to walk in the knowledge of God's will.

At the close of Romans xi. we read, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Then in chapter xii. the apostle beseeches the saints

through the mercies of God. Mercy is part of God's perfection and glory. "That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." You have got the light of the glory of God: that is, "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever." The apostle has assured us in the epistle of God's righteousness and faithfulness, and in the light of that we prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. The more you are affected by the light the more you are down here in this world, not for man's will, but for God's will. It is a great thing to be here in the light of God's glory, for we shall come out in it by-and-by in the heavenly city.

Till things are morally according to God's glory, He cannot display His glory. God does not *display* His glory now. If He were to display it there would be an end of man. But He gives us the light of it in Christ that we may not be ruled by our own perverse wills, but by God's will. And it works out down to the most minute and meanest things in our daily lives. The light of God's glory is to illuminate us com-

pletely; we are to be affected by that light in the details of our daily life. I would seek to carry out everything down here—any little bit of ministry, my business, my responsibilities in my family, &c.—according to my knowledge of the righteousness, faithfulness, love, and mercy of God. It is a great thing to walk down here in the light. The light is the authority to the Christian, all the details of his conduct are affected by it.

I turn to one more passage. Titus ii. 10–14. Grace is the predominant element in the light of God. We are taught by it, and are awaiting “that blessed hope, and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” This passage concludes my point in that connection; that rule is connected with light, and light is by the Apostle, and as we are walking in it, we are here for God’s will. The moral effect is that we live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. It is thus a great thing to apprehend the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God has made known to us the completeness of moral perfection, and we can regard it because we stand in a grace which imputes nothing. The great point is rule,

and the rule is the rule of light. The rule of light comes into the corners and dark places of our hearts and affects us in every detail of life. We seek to answer to the character of God. We are exhorted, "Be ye imitators of God as dear children."

Now we have seen that light is connected with the Apostle, but we have also to apprehend that the Apostle is Priest. Not only is there *light*, but there is *life*. The thought of life is connected with the Priest, light with the Apostle. Through the Apostle light comes to us where *we* are; the Priest takes us in to where *God* is. If you turn to Romans viii. 28-34 you get the Priest, "Who also maketh intercession for us." As in chapter v. you get in principle Christ as Apostle, so here you get Him as Priest. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" that is as Priest.

The first knowledge we have of God's love comes to us as light, not in connection with the Priest, but by the Spirit. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us. The love comes out in testimony as light, and the Spirit diffuses it in our hearts, and the effect of that is that we live. The first real breath of life is our response to the love of God. The response to it is in affection. The moment you can say that you love God you



know you are the called according to God's purpose. And the love of God will never fail us down here; it is light to us, and God will keep us in that light. But now the Priest comes into view, and Christ stands in another light. He is going to lead you into the sanctuary, but in order to do that He must have you attached to Himself, for till He has got you attached to Himself you are not in a position to enter the holiest. In the wilderness Christians have the Spirit, and are in the light of the love of God, but it is a poor thing to have the light of such great love and not to respond to it. You are bound to respond, and when you respond that proves there is life in you, and the moment has come in your history when you find that you are the called according to purpose. Some object to the truth of election, but, do what you may, you cannot get away from the fact of the sovereign mercy of God.

Now the love of God is so known in your heart that He has got your affections, and you are ready for Christ as Minister of the sanctuary—that is, you are prepared to go in with Him to the heart of God. You go from the cross, where the love was expressed, to its source in the heart of God. The way in which the Priest attaches our hearts to Himself is by making intercession for us, and by succouring us in our difficulties and

trials along the road. We learn His tenderness, His sympathy, His unfailing interest in each one of us personally. He appears in the presence of God for us, helping us in the exercises through which we pass down here, and is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. But there is an end in view in this; namely, to attach our hearts to Himself so firmly that He can lead us in with Himself to where He is at home—to where the love of God is at rest.

The twelve apostles were three and a half years in the Lord's company, but it had not much effect in enlightening their intelligence. It is said after Christ rose, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures," but He had first rebuked them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." It has been said that the disciples did not really understand a single thing the Lord said to them while He was down here with them. But His presence had the effect of deeply attaching their hearts to Himself. Though Peter did deny Him, he could say to Him afterwards, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." After His resurrection the Lord came into the midst of the disciples and shewed them His hands and His side. Do you not think

their hearts were attached to Him? They were prepared then to be led in.

I am sure that our qualification for being led into that divine scene is our attachment to Christ Himself. Many Christians have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts who are not sufficiently attached to Christ to care earnestly to be with Him where He is.

The next question that is raised is, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Read Romans viii. 35-39; 1 John v. 21.) The apostle passes in review a number of things, and says, "I am persuaded that neither death nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." You are in that circle. "In him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life." You are in the scene of divine complacency, and the service of the priest is to bring us into that scene. He so attaches us to Himself that He can lead us in to where God's love rests. The high priest in Israel bore the names of the twelve tribes on his heart and on his shoulders. So with Christ. He intercedes for us individually and supports us in our trials and exercises because He loves us; and He thus so attaches us to Himself that we must go in with Him to where He would lead us—to where He

is at home. He never leaves that scene of divine complacency in which He is when He serves us down here, but He serves and succours us here in this scene so that we cannot consent to be separated from Him, and thus He leads us into association with Himself in that scene of rest and joy. He is the Firstborn among many brethren. That is, He is Firstborn in our estimation. I used to think of Him as Firstborn in a very cold way, that is officially. I see now that it is *we* that accord to Him the place of Firstborn; He is Firstborn in our affection. We give Him that place of pre-eminence because He has so effectually attached us to Himself.

You see thus how the idea of Priest is connected with life, and that is connected with the love of God.

It is very important for our souls to be in the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, so that in every detail of daily life we intelligently do the will of God. If I were asked why I do not steal or lie, I should answer, because I am in the light of the glory of God. But there is another thing, and that is, We go in to God. We learn His purpose. I was born again before I knew it, but now I know myself as called according to purpose. I get not only the Priest now, but the Priest and the Apostle united in one Person, and perfection has come in.

In saving us to the uttermost, and in ever living to make intercession for us, He, as Priest, is assuring us of the attachment He bears towards us, to the end that He may lead us into the place where He Himself is, where love has found its satisfaction and is at rest. All this is eternal. All that which is connected with our responsibility, as being in the light here, will come to an end. That which is connected with God's purpose, our association with Christ in that scene of holy love, is eternal, and it is there that you touch eternal life. All connected with our responsible life here will come to an end. All connected with the purpose of God and life beyond death is eternal.

In Christendom men have become idolatrous ; and they have degraded the priesthood by separating the Priest from the Apostle. God has opened our eyes to see that in the Antitype we get the Apostle and Priest in one Person, so that there can be no more divergence. We can walk now in the light of the Apostle—in the light of the glory of God—and can go in with the Priest into that scene where the love of God rests in divine complacency. And we can look forward to the time when we shall be completely according to God's glory, having entered in with Him for ever.

