

REPORTS OF THE SUBSTANCE OF ADDRESSES GIVEN AT WELLINGTON

by

MR. H. ST. JOHN.

June and July 1937.

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F O R E W O R D

These papers have been prepared from shorthand notes taken down by Mrs. K. J. Kelly of Lower Hutt, and it was the intention of her late husband, Mr. Keith Kelly, to have a limited number of copies duplicated for circulation, but before his task could be completed our brother departed to be with Christ. At the request of Mrs. Kelly, we were pleased to undertake the responsibility of completing our brother's unfinished work.

These papers have NOT BEEN REVISED by Mr. St. John and are not intended for general circulation. ON NO ACCOUNT must they be placed in the hands of any publisher.

The address on the first chapter of Colossians was not taken down and it is regretted that the papers on this Epistle are incomplete.

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An Address on the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

REFERENCES: Matthew 1:1, 4:17, 7:28-29, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1, 28: 16-20.

Now, if the winds of God should waft you to the city of London, you are almost certain to want to see Westminster Abbey, and if you ever get as far as that, I would pray you to notice on the south-western side of Whitehall, a stone's throw from the palace, a most admirable statue of the unfortunate King Charles I.

Now, the making of that statue was as follows. The king himself commissioned it, and he called Van Dyke, the famous painter of his age, and told him to prepare three sketches showing His Majesty from three different angles, in various relations which he held; as a king, a soldier, and a family man. When the three sketches were prepared with admirable skill, Van Dyke's work was done, and he handed the sketches to the sculptor, who carved the figure of the king seated on horseback, and yet with rare wisdom managed to combine with the equestrian figure some of the outstanding features of each of the three sketches.

Now in like manner, when God made a permanent statue of the glory of His Son, He called a Levite, a tax-collector, and a doctor, and said, "I want you to prepare three sketches of My Son, and to you the Levite, I will give the task of showing Him as the great Servant-Prophet. Then to the tax-collector there is allotted the task of describing his Saviour as the Sovereign-Builder who erects imperishable and indestructible structures. Then to the physician Luke, there is given the privilege of revealing his Saviour as the Physician-Priest, and when the sketches are finished, they hand them over to a fisherman, John by name, and the fisherman makes his perfect and permanent view of Christ, in an even higher character than the three earlier ones. For if Christ is Servant-Prophet, if He is Sovereign-Builder, and if He is Physician-Priest, or in other words, if in Mark He is Son of God, in Matthew the Son of Abraham, and in Luke the Son of Man, finally in John He is first presented apart from any Sonship, He is absolute and eternal God, apart from all relationships. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And God Himself must ever be greater than any relationship such as "Son of Abraham" or "Son of David" or "Son of Man."

Now, we have looked at the service of royalty as Mark depicts it, and tonight we are to see the royalty of service as it is in Matthew's gospel. We shall take the same method of approach as on previous nights, that is, first the author, then the structure, and finally the basic lesson that we have to learn. So we begin with the author, and we can dismiss him in few words.

Origen, the early church father, tells us, "I have inquired diligently concerning the four gospels, which are the only ones recognised in the universal church, and I find that the first was written by one Matthew, called Levi, a man who was once a publican, and afterwards an Apostle." It seems a very good thing that he who once had been a man despised and dishonoured should be chosen to tell of Jesus who saves His people from their sins, and that the man who kept the accounts of Caesar's kingdom, should be the one to write the annals of the Kingdom of the heavens.

But leaving that, we come to the structure, and if I may imagine this gospel in the similitude of a palace, I would say that first you have an introduction, that is, the entrance hall, covering the first four chapters down to 4:16. Then hand in hand with the King, you come through five reception chambers each marked off as by a door, closing each section with that formula "When Jesus had finished" Then from chapters 26 to 28 we have the throne room, where the King is seen first dying, then rising again. But to change the illustration - here is the King's highway, and you enter it by a wicket-gate - chapters 1 to 4. Along the highway, there are five golden milestones, marking at regular intervals the procession of the travellers' feet, and then finally you reach the palace itself again in chapters 26 to 28.

Now we shall look at these divisions. Firstly, at the first and seventh, and then on the five sections in between, and I do not think it will be such a laborious strain upon your thinking as perhaps some of you are fearing.

We come to the first section, and you find that there are seven paragraphs in it. The meaning of these three and a half chapters down to 4:16 is this, they give you the credentials of the Lord Jesus. Now you know when an ambassador from a foreign shore comes to the court of St. James, he may neither see the king nor function as an ambassador, until he has presented the credentials which authenticate him as an ambassador from that particular country. And when the Prince of Heaven came to these shores as an envoy of that country from the Father, He first presented His seven credentials, and you must examine them carefully, for the whole of the New Testament rests upon these seven paragraphs, and if in any one of these seven paragraphs there is a flaw, the whole of the New Testament goes by the board.

Now, the first is the King's pedigree, that is, has He really come from royal stock, is He the Son of David, the Son of Abraham? Well, let us decide by chapter

1:1-16. We have found that the King's ancestry is traced in exact contrast with the genealogy in Luke. You remember, Luke begins with Jesus and travels back to Adam, and ends, "Adam, which was the Son of God," thus connecting the genealogy with Christ's baptism, because this is the starting point of true manhood with Christ as the head of a new race in view. But in Matthew, the genealogy is traced forward, and instead of beginning with Adam or God, it begins with Abraham. You will notice in this list of names, forty two of them, (3 times 14 because David's signature is fourteen, D-V-D. D is the letter for 4, V is the sixth letter, and D again the fourth, so David's signature is always fourteen) the genealogy is arranged in three sets of fourteen, and you will notice that on it there are seven shadows, that is, there are seven points in the genealogy where you have an apparently needless stain.

First, as everybody knows, there are five women. There is Tamar the adulteress, Rahab the harlot, Ruth the Moabitess, excluded from the congregation for ten generations by law, there is Bath-Sheba, and there is Mary of Nazareth, against whose character, men in her own village were flinging reckless charges. Then there are two more unusual details also in the genealogy, first, there is Judas and his brethren, and last, there is Jechonias and his brethren. Why are the brethren brought in? Because the only time they acted as a group of brethren, Judas and his brethren sold their brother for twenty pieces of silver, and of Jechonias and his brethren I have not time to speak, but you must read the 22nd chapter of Jeremiah, and you will find that they were a ruthless set of scoundrels, and yet their names are woven into this genealogy. So the soul stands fast and says, "There is my Saviour, Son of Abraham, the man of faith, Son of David, of royal stock, able to save seven people whose lives are stained and spotted, yes, and able to save us, whose records are even darker.

The second credential given is in chapter 1: 17-25, where you find the Prince with the two names born into the world. The first name is Jesus, He is the true Joshua, and the second name is Immanuel, that name which was given in Isaiah 7 at the time when the Hebrew monarchy was about to fall in ruin, and the promise there given was that a virgin should conceive and should bear a son, and his name should be called Immanuel. In the power of that promise the Kingdom was saved in 700 B.C., and Immanuel is saving the world today in the year 1937.

The third credential, chapter 2: 1-12, deals with the welcome that the King will have when He comes. The Old Testament says, "When He comes, His own people will reject Him and the Gentiles will welcome Him." "Well," says Matthew, "That is the welcome He gets from His own people, but the Magi come from the far East, and the Gentiles come to the brightness of His rising." The third credential is authenticated.

The fourth is a little more complex, but I think I can make it simple. Isaiah has told us that when the Messiah comes, He will be God's true Servant, and He will take up in His own Person the history of the nation to which He belongs. Now, what was the history of Israel's travels? First, they went down to Egypt; secondly, they were brought up out of Egypt by the Exodus. Thirdly, they wandered for forty years in the wilderness. They went to a mountain called Sinai and received the law. They crossed the river Jordan into the land. "Now", says Matthew, "In the fourth credential, Messiah, as the representative of His race, must go down into Egypt" - so down to Egypt He goes. Then, He must be called out of Egypt. Chap. 2:15. "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." Next, the third thing is that He must go into the wilderness, not for forty years but for forty days, and shew how man lives "not by bread alone." Then, He must go to a finer mountain than Sinai as a greater law-giver than Moses, and give a higher law than the Mediator ever gave. Then, He must go to the river Jordan, but not crossing it from the wilderness into the land, but travelling in the opposite direction going through the land across Jordan into the wilderness. That is, He displayed in Himself the history of His people. If He had not done that, He would not have fulfilled His fourth credential.

The fifth, sixth and seventh credentials can be given in a sentence. Where does He stand in regard to three worlds - earth - heaven - hell? Chapter 3 shows how He stands in regard to earth. The herald comes and shows Him as God's Woodman with His axe in His hand - as God's reaper with His fan in His hand distinguishing between chaff and wheat, and the herald says, "This is He!" Earth confesses Him.

The heaven opens, the Father looks down and says, "This is He!" In the desert, Hell comes to meet Him, and when the devil is put to flight again we hail Him, "Behold the Man."

There are His seven credentials, and you will notice that in this section, chapter 1 to 4:16, we have seven Old Testament testimonies. Isaiah - "The virgin conceives" Micah - "Out of thee, Bethlehem-Ephrathah shall come forth ..." Hosea - "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." The fourth from Jeremiah - "Rachel weeps for her children" The fifth - "He shall be called a Nazarene" Sixthly, Isaiah says, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness..." and lastly, in chapter 4:14 "light springs up to people who sat in darkness."

Now, is not that a magnificent entrance hall, every credential brought out and laid upon the table? The most scrutinising eyes turned upon these precious parchments, authorised by the sevenfold signature of God, will be satisfied and

will exclaim, "The Prince with the two names is Jesus as to His manhood, and Immanuel, God with us, as to His Godhead."

Now take the end of the book, chapters 26 to 28, where the Lord Jesus Christ is first a victim, dying as the great Trespass Offering; then He is the victor, and rises triumphant from the tomb. Finally from the mountain, the last of the seven mountains in Matthew, He proclaims Himself as the Master of two worlds. "All authority is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."

Now let us come to the body of the book. The first section, that is, chapter 4:17 down to the end of chapter 7, is the great Sermon on the Mount, and you will notice that the point of that section is to show that the Lord Jesus is a greater law-giver than Moses. You have heard again and again that it was said to them of old time, "A greater than Moses shall arise," and you will notice the passage of thought in the sermon. First, in Matthew 5, you begin with nine blessings, and every one of these nine blessings denies and gives the lie to every standard of human happiness.

"Blessed are the rich," says the world; "Blessed are the poor," says Christ. Blessed are the happy - Blessed are the mourners. Blessed are the full - Blessed are the hungry. Blessed are the strong - Blessed are the meek. Blessed are the victorious and triumphant - Blessed are the persecuted. You can take which you like, but you can't have both. If Christ's standard is right, then the world's is as false as hell; and if the world's standard is true, then our Blessed Lord (forgive the word) was mistaken. You cannot have it both ways.

In chapter 5, the Lord shows that there are five rotten pillars on which men build their lighthouses, and the first is anger, the second, adultery, the third, falsehood, the fourth, hatred, and the fifth, slander. "Well," says the Lord Jesus Christ, "In My Kingdom, there are five pillars, and they are in each case the exact antithesis to the rotten pillars of men."

Now let us look at chapter 5:21. "Thou shalt not kill," that is anger, and against that the Lord Jesus erects His pillar, that is life. Instead of wanting to kill your brother, you are in every direction to promote his well-being. Verse 27. "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and the second pillar in the kingdom is purity. Verse 33. There, instead of telling lies, falsehood, you have the third, that is truth. Verse 38. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Instead of that, a justice that is mixed with kindness. Verse 43. Instead of hatred, love. These are the pillars on which the kingdom rests.

Chapter 6: 1-18. What sort of righteousness would the king require? See v.i. R.V. (read "righteousness" not "alms"). The trunk of character is righteousness, then the three branches spread out. To men, almsgiving, towards God, prayer, and towards yourself, fasting. These three make a perfect character - open-handed love to others, reverent prayer to the Father, and strict self-control over all your appetites and passions.

Chapter 6:19-34 gives the care-free life, which that sort of piety produces. "Then," says the Lord, "there are some great dangers. First, avarice, the fear that haunts the rich, and poisons the springs of their love; then there is anxiety, and that shadows the poor - now I call you to a care-free life." We all know the illustrations that He gives, and I daresay we remember how abominably they have been misrepresented. "Why," you say, "the Lord Jesus says we are to live like the birds and take no thought for the morrow." Take no thought for work and go out dressed like the lily! That is the kind of heresy I have heard attributed to the blessed Lord, but if people would only take the trouble to think about His words, and especially His illustrations (reading as in R.V. "be not anxious" instead of "no thought"), we would find that He is saying, "There is a little bird, and the bird cannot sow, it cannot reap, and it cannot under any circumstances build a barn - and if God takes care of the little sparrow that cannot do any of these things, why," said the Lord Jesus, "is it not an easy thing for me to look after my children who can sow, and can reap, for six months, and can build barns, and can look ahead for a whole year?" That is the true life. Look into the future, and make provision for all that is in front, and if you have these powers and gifts, how much easier is it for you to regulate your life, and take the view that the farmer takes, who sows in spring, reaps in autumn, and garners his wheat for the winter? "If you can do that," says Christ, "how much easier to keep you without anxiety?" "And then," says the Lord Jesus, "there is the little lily, and the lily has the loveliest coat, better than Solomon's. Yet the lily cannot toil, that is man's work, (or used to be), and it cannot spin, that is woman's work (or used to be). The lily cannot toil nor spin, yet it is beautifully dressed, but you men can toil, and you women can spin. Well, is it not an easy thing for the Father to give you sufficient clothing for the winter, and cool clothes for the summer, if He clothes the little blade of grass so beautifully."

That is what the Lord Jesus meant. "Take no thought...." Why, a farmer who took no thought would have no profit, so that is what the Lord meant when He said to take no anxious thought of the morrow, since you can sow and reap and spin, and being able to do these things, He will see your faith, and care for your food and clothing.

The second of these five sections is from chapter 8:1 to 10:42. This is

a military section, it opens with a leper to whom the Lord gives a command. In Mark we read that he disobeys it, but Matthew stresses it because the King commands, and that is enough. Then you have the centurion, and a whole series of commands which the King issues, and they are practically all obeyed at once, so the meaning of that section (chapters 8, 9 and 10) is to show that the Lord is a greater Commander than Joshua. Joshua met giants and slew them, but here and there he was defeated. "Here", said Matthew, "is the Captain of your salvation, and He never suffers defeat, and He never loses a man. He meets death, demons, blindness, and the whole category of ills that assail man. He slays the giants, destroys and scatters doubts, disease and perplexities." Thus Matthew ends his second section with "It came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding...." "A greater than Joshua" is the keynote of that second section.

Now the third one goes from chapter 11:1 to 13:53, and here the point is to show that the Lord Jesus is a greater Sage than Solomon. The Lord says in the middle of the section, "A greater than Solomon is here." Now, notice how delightfully Matthew develops it - refer to chapter 11:19. In Chapter 11:25 the Lord quotes from Psalm 8, where it says that God deals with babes and sucklings. Now what is the difference between babes and sucklings? A babe is a delightful little person who knows enough to understand that he cannot walk alone. This is the stage of life when the child is learning to walk, and it clings to its mother's fingers. The mark of the babe is that it cannot take two successive steps alone, and the mark of the suckling is that it knows where the milk is, and is determined to get it.

"Now", says Christ, "The wisdom of My Kingdom deals not with College professors, but with babes who fear to walk through this world alone, and with sucklings who intend to get the sincere milk of the Word, and will not be satisfied till they get it." As you go through life you will find that all the wisdom of this section is disclosed to babes alone; that is, the child of twelve who knows the Lord Jesus, may know more of heaven's wisdom than the most learned man in New Zealand.

In chapter 13 we have the eight great parables, the six parables of the kingdom, you remember, then one at the beginning and one at the end which are not stated to be "of the Kingdom." First, sitting by the seashore, the Lord gives four of His parables, the sower, the tares, the mustard seed, and the leaven. And then, inside the house, in secret, far away from the crowd, that is, to the inner circle, he gives the second four, the treasure, the pearl, the drag-net, and the scribe that is instructed into the kingdom of the heavens. Two sets of three to which the kingdom of heaven is likened. Then we have the sower, like the evangelist who scatters the seed in the world, and the scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old. The sower for the world, the scribe for the saints. That is the mystery, that is the secret, that is the wisdom which shows that Christ told the truth when he said, "A greater than Solomon is here."

Well now, the fourth section goes from the end of chapter 13 to 18, and here the point is to show that Christ is a better builder than Solomon. Solomon built a temple, and his own house, he was a mighty builder. "Yes," says Christ, "But I can build. On this rock I will build My church, and while the fingers of time have taken Solomon's building to pieces, and the fires of Nebuchadnezzar have burned his labour, My building will stand. The very fires of hell cannot touch the building that I erect."

We find in this gospel, the Lord Jesus builds four things. In chapter 7, the house upon the rock; chapter 16, the church; chapter 21, the tower; chapter 26, the temple. A house, a place of rest; the church, a place of devotion and worship; the tower, a place of refuge; and a temple, again the place of worship. He also tells us in the 23rd chapter that the scribes built something. He builds a church, they build tombs, and that is the reason why all the earthquakes are in Matthew's gospel. There is not a single earthquake in Mark, Luke or John, but there are three in Matthew. What does an earthquake do? It tests buildings. So you have three in Matthew - the earthquake came, but the house did not fall, it was built on a rock; and the church was not divided, she was impregnable; the tower did not tremble, and the temple did not fall. But when Christ died there was an earthquake, and what did it do? Why, it opened all the tombs, and scattered all the things that the scribes had been building. In the whole of that section, chapters 14 to 18, the Son of God is collecting the material and building a holy temple. He takes up Simon Peter, a stone, and another, a Syro-Phoenecian woman. He is collecting stones, and after His resurrection He begins to build His church.

In the last of these sections, chapters 19 to 25, the Lord Jesus is seen as holding the scales of eternal judgment. He is the Arbiter of men's destiny and that section all revolves around one expression, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner." Throughout the section you find that the things that men cherish, God despises, and the things that men are building, God looks down on; but there was a stone, men despised it, God put it at the head, and again and again in this section you get expressions like this - "The last shall be first, and the first last." That is, in simple words, if the Lord Jesus is a greater Lawgiver than Moses, a more successful Captain of Salvation than Joshua, a mightier Builder and a greater Sage than Solomon, and if

He is the Arbiter of all men's destinies, summoning the world before Him and dividing them into sheep and goats, what is the supreme message that the gospel as a whole would leave on the mind of a thoughtful reader? Some years ago, on two long voyages, I passed the mouths of two famous rivers, the Amazon and the Nile. Now the impression that I got crossing these two rivers was this - when I came to the Amazon, there is the mouth, nearly two hundred miles across, and as you sail into it and the shores gradually begin to appear, you get a sense of majesty and dignity, an idea of the splendour of a mighty river. Afterwards, we came to the Nile, and though it is magnificent up-stream, we saw nothing but a muddy, dirty channel, and had we come close to the shores we should have found a thousand other muddy little channels. What is wrong with the river Nile? It has a delta, a "D" shaped mouth, and a series of little intersections running across. It has no magnificence of outlet like the Amazon - merely muddy dirty channels.

Now, is your life an "Amazon" life, yielded to Christ as the Sovereign-Builder? You remember Abner's words - he said in time past to David the king, "That thou mayst reign over all that thine heart desireth." What did he mean? The Son of David has come to this meeting and has shown you his splendour, that there are things He can do that none other can do. He can take your life and redeem it completely, He can take you from anxiety and the dominion of sin. He can do anything for you, but He asks one thing, "All authority is given unto me in Heaven and in earth." He can do nothing for you until you have given Him the authority. "Take My yoke upon you," says Christ. What will that mean? A simple story -

I met a lady in America some time ago, who belonged to an institution known as "The King's Daughters" - christian women, mostly in what is called comfortable circumstances. Well, this lady told me how she, with twenty others, went to tour the land of Palestine, and when they landed at Joppa, they met the guide, a tall young Arab, who was introduced to them by the agent of the Tourist Company. Well, this young guide, very sure of himself and very competent, lined these ladies up and said, "Ladies, we are to be companions for a few months, and there are three simple rules I want to give you to guide our travelling, and the first is that you must give me all your luggage." The American ladies looked at their mountains of luggage and of these they were pleased to be relieved but made no other movement: the guide said, "Excuse me, ladies, I said ALL your luggage," and pointed to some little bags they were holding (I think you call them vanity bags). "Oh," they said, "we cannot spare these." "I want them all," he said, "I am responsible for big things and little things." "So," said my friend, "we learned the first lesson of travelling with the Lord Jesus." "He makes Himself responsible for all the luggage of life, the heavy things and the light things."

"Then," said the guide, "the second rule is that you must never go in front of me, you must always follow me." And the ladies said, "Yes, of course, we should never think of doing anything else." About an hour after that, having come to the railway station where the lines divided, they rushed into another train. It was a beautifully clean train, and they all hurried in and secured corner seats, and every lady as she seated herself smiled, and there they sat and sat... At last the guide came to the door of the carriage and said "Ladies, did you forget the second rule of travelling?" "This train does not go anywhere, it is on a siding. There is your train yonder packed with natives, and it leaves in a few minutes!" "And", said the lady, "we learned the second rule of travelling with Christ is that it is a risky and tiresome thing to go in front of Him. Always follow Him and never try to lead."

The third thing the guide said was, "Ladies, you must look to me for everything." When they found themselves in Damascus, it was arranged that they should have an escort into the desert. Then they began to wonder, "Where shall we sleep tonight?" and "What are we going to eat in the wilderness?" and "Where are we going to get water from?" The guide said not a word, and about five o'clock in the evening they came to the shadow of a great rock, and as the cavalcade rode round behind the rock, they saw a cool green patch of grass beside a sparkling well. On the grass was a snowy cloth on which was laid an appetising meal, while half a dozen white tents were pitched nearby, and fifty yards away was an armed guard with muskets. And the guide said, "Ladies, have you forgotten what I told you, that you must look to me for everything?" And my lady friend said "Thus we learned the third lesson of travelling with Christ is 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.'"

THE LEVITE AND HIS LORD.

(Notes of an address by Mr. H. St. John)

References:- Mark Chap. 1. 1 - 3
10. 1.
14. 51 - 52
16. 5 - 14 - 16 - 17 to end of
chapter.

I think, as a man gets on, that he begins to find increasingly that the true citadel of the Christian faith lies in the four Gospels. That is, a man may be delighted with the types of Moses, but I think when we get Home, we shall have the substance and shall not need the shadows. A man may be enormously interested in the epistles of Paul dealing with Church organisation, but I think we all agree that if Christ comes tonight, there will be no more need of the Corinthian Epistle as far as Church order is concerned. We read the Revelation and we praise God that it clears up the shadows of this world's darkness and throws a bright beam of light across the prophetic sky, but when the Millenium is over I expect we shall not turn back to the Revelation very much when we get to Heaven. But there is one part of the Holy Scriptures that must ever have the seat of prominence, and that is the four Gospels - the pathway of the Lord Jesus Christ - and I believe that every holy footfall and every spoken word, and every gracious deed is treasured by the historians in the Courts of Light. In any case it is a unique and marvellous thing to trace His footsteps across the sand of time like a track of silver across a desert of ink, to study that Holy Person, God manifest in the flesh, Who started in a manger and ended on a throne (for thus the Gospels trace His story), and I make bold to say that if a man will diligently keep company with Christ as He is seen in these four Holy books, he will find inevitably a very real change come across himself. That is, you can easily tell, if there is rudeness, or duplicity, or uncleanness, or shrewd judgments, censorious criticism or fierce envy in a man's life, it is impossible for you to think that he has been dealing much in the Gospels of late. For when a man walks with Christ across the fields of Galilee or Judea, there will come a holy shadow over his character, and you will recognise him from afar as one of God's children, a man graced and softened by contact with the Saviour. So, during these four addresses, I propose to discuss with you certain elementary thoughts as to the testimony of these evangelists. Each night we shall glance at the author and try to ascertain his main literary characteristic; that is, his way of writing his book which marks him out from his companions, and then we shall try and get a very simple structure, and finally turn into our hearts the chief lesson that the Spirit would leave upon us as the fruit of our study.

Now, I come to the earliest, briefest and the most distinctive of what are called the "Synoptists;" that is, the words "syn" (with) and "Optist" (sight) meaning that the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke can be read together - printed in parallel columns. But you cannot do that with John, because, until the Cross he only touches the other Gospels - his material is practically distinctive. So we call the first three the "companion" gospels, or, if you like the longer word, the "Synoptists" - that which you can see together in parallel columns in your mind.

The man who wrote the first Gospel was a certain person who rejoiced in two names. First he had his Jewish name which was John, meaning "The Grace of God," but, apparently, in order to distinguish him from his celebrated name-sake John the Apostle, we usually get his second name, Marcus, which means "a hammer." It is a name which has been worn by men of power. For instance, Judas Maccabeus is simply "Judas the Hammer," and Charles Martell, the famous Emperor, is "Charles the Hammer." Then there is the gentlemen whose body is in Westminster Abbey, the first Edward, I think, who has after his name the following motto which I quote with some fear "Scotorum Malleus," (The Hammer of the Scots). The Scots hammered the English constantly in those days, and this king was the first to have ever hammered the Scots. So you see in John Mark the Grace of God and the Hammer of God - we have that union of true grace and tremendous power that dwells in our Lord Jesus Christ as John Mark depicts Him.

A person might say, how do you know he wrote the Gospel? They were not published with names written at the head as we have them today, but in the Fifth Century some very right-minded scribe just put at the head of each one in Greek, "According to Mark," "According to Matthew" etc. Well, we know that Mark wrote the second Gospel by the testimony of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, a town mentioned in the Epistle to the Colossians. This good man tells us that Mark wrote the Gospel which bears his name in the city of Rome, and he wrote it as an interpreter of Peter, which means to me that the Gospel of Mark practically represents notes of Peter's preaching. And he says that Peter saw these and approved them, and Mark has set down nothing that he ought not to have written. "Well," someone might say, "I don't agree with what the Bishop of Hierapolis has said." Then, I can only say this, that if you surrender Peter's place in the Gospel of Mark, you must also surrender Mark's fellowship, because it rests on the same foundations. Any serious student of Mark knows how Peter's shadow falls across the page of Mark. But that is enough as to the author.

The second thing we have to follow up is the literary style of the book, and here it is marked off very decidedly from the other gospels. He is a great artist, and he does his work in every paragraph of his book by first making a sort of frame. He has seven kinds of frames, and when he has got them nearly set round, he commences to paint his figures, putting Christ right in the centre of the picture. First he makes his frame, then he puts in his canvas Jairus' daughter, or the young man and his ship, or whoever it may be, and then suddenly - in a flash - Christ is in the centre. First he has scenes by the seaside, then scenes in the synagogues, in cornfields, in deserts, on mountains, in the temple, and one other of which I shall think in a moment.

Now, you will find something like twentyfive scenes taking place in connection with the sea in Mark. At the sea the Lord Jesus chose His disciples from the number that drew their fish; walking on the sea they saw His power; tossed in a storm they know Him as Master of the universe, and everywhere in the first nine chapters of Mark we have what you might call "sea sketches" not "land sketches." At once you say, "What does that mean? What does the sea represent in simple language?" Well, the sea in the New Testament is a scene where the service of the believer lies. We are the fishermen of God, and it is our business to cast our lines and our nets into the sea; like the fishermen who go out to sea and draw the fish from the realm of life and bring them into the realm of death, so the gospel fisherman reverses the process and brings his fish out of the region of death into life. So the gospel of service practically confines itself in the first half of the book to showing you what you can do beside the sea. As the hundred and fourth Psalm puts it, "So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts," and we have got to do with those fish and creeping things, the region of our service being the sea. So, as it says in the book of Chronicles, "The servants of Solomon were men who had knowledge of the sea;" and if you have not got knowledge of the sea, you will never be a good servant.

The second of Mark's backgrounds is where he takes us into synagogues; and here there are three acts. In the first synagogue the Lord enters, He finds an unclean devil there (the synagogue is a place of organised religion; it is full of unclean devils) and He casts it out. In the next synagogue there is a man with his right hand withered. That must be put right, for how can a man serve with a withered hand? The third synagogue was full of people who did not believe in Jesus; and what is the use of going out to serve if you do not believe in Christ? If you belong to organised religion you must have your demons cast out, your right hand in power, and your unbelief changed to belief.

The third of Mark's backgrounds is when the Lord Jesus goes into a house. He goes into no less than ten houses in Mark. In every house He finds something which offends Him, and in each case He removes it and brings the house into its right place of Divine authority and human rest. For that is what a house means. When you go home at night, the head of the house, as you shut your front door you can say, "Well, thank God, here is one place at least on earth where I am master." And the moment the man gets in, the trials are forgotten; the door is shut, and the home is a picture of perfect rest. Now, the Lord Jesus comes into all these houses. He may find, as in the first chapter, a feverish woman crying out for water. The Lord cannot stay there with the fever, so out goes the fever. He comes into another house and He finds a lot of musicians there fiddling; they have been paid to make as much noise as they can, because a little girl is dead. The Lord Jesus, coming in at the head of His chosen three, puts them all out and says, "You cannot stay here. Death is here, and I am going to deal with it." Thus, in every one of the ten houses, you find that the offensive thing is put right and the house becomes the garden of the Lord. In passing, I wonder what the Lord would find if He came to your house or my house to-night. Would He find anything to deal with? I do not suggest that He would, but He might.

The fourth of Mark's backgrounds is the cornfield. It is a lovely picture. There is the Saviour breast high in the waving corn, and there are the disciples plucking the heads and rubbing them in their hands. The Pharisees and the other unlovely group are there and you say, "What will the Lord Jesus Christ talk about?" Then He tells them about the mystery and sweetness of the showbread sprinkled with frankincense and given to God's priests after having been given to God Himself. There amidst the waving corn He tells them of Himself as the true Shewbread before the eye of God, and the food for His saints.

Then the Lord Jesus goes into the desert; (He does so three times) the desert in Mark, as everywhere else, being a place of human bankruptcy. There is nothing but Christ, and in one desert you find He feeds five thousand people, and in the next four thousand people. Then He goes out into a desert place very early in the morning, and there praying to His Father, He makes the desert blossom as a rose. His presence spreads a table in the wilderness, and makes the place rejoice.

Then He goes up into the mountains; not many, as in Matthew (where you have seven peaks); but here He goes up three, and one of these is the Mount of Transfiguration, where He is transfigured so that His raiment becomes white as no fuller on earth can whiten - the character of the servant. Then He goes up the hill to pray, then up the Mount of Olives - three mountains.

The last of Mark's backgrounds is where he shows his Lord in the temple. He gives three temple scenes, where the other Gospels only give two. In Mark we read that the Lord walked into the temple in the evening - that is Mark's contribution alone, the others do not give it. He walked into the temple, and having looked round about at all things, went away again. That is Mark's favourite expression - "Looked round about on all things." He uses it five times. That is, in the Servant Gospel you have to remember that the Servant never acts in a hurry; He always looks and weighs things up before He moves. And the futility of our service may be because we do not give that look about. The second visit to the temple is when He comes and cleanses it, and the third when He comes and speaks to the people in the temple. The temple was the meeting place between God and man, but men defiled it, and it became a house of merchandise. The Lord Jesus says to them, "Ye have made it a den of thieves."

Now, I do ask you to admire these seven frames; by the sea, in the corn-fields, in the synagogues, in the mountains, in the deserts, in the houses, and in the temple; in every case our Lord is the centre and everything else is grouped around Him, like the lesser figures in a sketch.

Well, it is high time to look a little at Mark's structure. How does he build up his gospel? In the first place it falls into two sections, as cleanly cut as a split apple - the first nine chapters and the last seven - 1 to 9, 10 to 16. Chapters 1 to 9 tell of ministry in Galilee, chapters 10 to 16 deal with ministry in the south, Judaea. The first section shows the Lord Jesus training the twelve and teaching them how to serve. In chapter 16 He serves absolutely alone. In chapters 1 to 9 there are a great number of cases of demon possession, in chapters 10 to 16, not one. In the first half again and again the Saviour charges His disciples to silence, to say nothing of what they have seen; in chapters 10 to 16 never once. In the first nine chapters the Lord Jesus is serving in relation to man, in chapters 10 to 16 He is seen serving in relation to God. The text of the Gospel is in Chapter 10: 45. "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to the minister..." - chapter 1 to 9 ("to minister") "and to give His life a ransom for many" - chapter 16. Let us try to see how he works these great divisions out, for in chapters 1 to 9 there are four divisions and in chapters 10 to 16 there are three.

Now, chapters 1 to 3 are the first section. They are all seaside scenes, dealing with the great secrets of service. First, there is the introduction - you find the Lord baptized, tempted and tried (Chap. 1: 1-16). Then chapter 2: 13 "But Jesus withdrew Himself with His disciples to the sea...." These are the introductions to the three sections of these chapters 1 to 3. Chapter 1: 16 down to the end of the section 2: 12 deals with great hindrances to service. What are they? They are four; namely, 1: 23 an unclean spirit opposes Christ; chapter 1: 30 a feverish woman, shall I say, disturbs Him; chapter 1: 40 a leper (speaking of the uncleanness of sin) comes before Him, and in chapter 2: 1-12 a helpless, palsied man. First the demon, then the fever, then the leprosy, then the palsy. Four great successes of Satan - things that hinder service. "You must get rid of these things if you are going to serve Him," says Mark.

Then in the second section we find religious opposition. For instance, chapter 2: 16, "How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" Chapter 2: 18 "Why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but Thy disciples fast not?" Chapter 2: 24 "Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?" The religious, ritualistic-minded man is a block in religious service, continually taken up with little things - what wine you should have and what bread you should have. I could tell you twenty or thirty foolish things which fill good men's minds to the exclusion of good, large, broad things of the Church; men with little private grievances (and you can be certain that if you meet with them for ten minutes out will come their little flock of theories, showing that they are little-minded people. If they had been born into the Church of Rome they would have been great people.) "Well," says Mark, "you have to get rid of these things." As the late Lord Salisbury used to say, "Gentlemen, for the love of God, get large maps!" Do not take up precious time by foolish little things which I won't illustrate. First, there is the hindrance to service, and then the trivial mind is rebuked for its trivialities. In chapter 3 down to the end we have the true secrets of service. The first is in chapter 3: 9 where you find the Lord Jesus has a little ship whose exclusive service is to wait upon Him. What is it for? "Because of the multitude lest they should throng Him..." The Lord is not going to have a life hommed in by perpetual crowds. He said "I will have a little ship twenty or thirty yards away from the shore; I can preach and they can hear what I say, but I am not going to have a life thronged by crowds." That is the first thing a servant has to see to - that he has a little ship close at hand, that his spirit always has a place of retreat. Then in the 13th verse He has a mountain and He often goes up there. The little ship is always there, and the mountain where He goes for larger fellowship with God. That is the reason, in verse 14 of the chapter 3, why they should be with Him; for that is essential to the training of a servant. Now you see these seaside scenes.

The second division is Chapters 4 to 5 - the happy hunting ground of the evangelist. The structure of these two is as follows: There is the service of sowing, then in Chapter 5 you have three cases - one the helpless case of a man whom no-one can heal, the second a trembling woman who has been sick twelve years, helpless; and the third the child dead. The first is the devil's temple, the

second disease, and the third death. The devil is put to flight, disease is healed, and death is overthrown. The beginning of this section has three marks of power and in between you get that exquisite little engraving where the storm on the sea shows the power by which you can do your work, make it effective, and deal with death, disease and demons. What is the secret? Why, He is lying there in His ship and He is fast asleep while every wave and billow has broken and they are afraid they are going to the bottom of the sea. But He did not say, "Let us go to the bottom," He said, "Let us pass over to the other side," and when He says the "other side" He means that they must have no thought that they will perish. With the Lord Jesus it is not a question of perishing. He said, "Let us pass over" and they are rebuked. You find that the character of the servant is that you can rest in quiet peace with your head upon the pillow; God will sustain you.

In the last verse of chapter five you see the little daughter again raised up and He says, "Give her something to eat." That expression is the text for the sermon in chapters 6, 7 and 8 down to verse 26. What do I mean? Why, that these two chapters deal with one question only, "Give them something to eat." In that section you will find some forty references to feeding - feeding the five thousand, feeding the four thousand, feeding so many. There is Herod's lordly banquet, heavy with lust; there are Christ's banquets where He feeds thousands. When a servant has found his rest, he must see to his food and he must feed not on children's crumbs only, but on bread; the seven loaves if you like, or five, but always Christ. Very well, then, the next thing to see to us, Are you well fed as servants, and do you take your meals regularly? Have you the scriptures constantly in your hearts and on your lips, and can you give the children something to eat?

Chapter 8 verse 27 to the end of chapter 9 deals with a final series of hindrances existing amongst the disciples not outside but inside, as in chapter one. What are they? Well, dear friends, they are a most serious and rebuking list. I will only give the names. The first one is verse 32 of Chap. 8. Peter wants the Lord to avoid the Cross. The shrinking from the Cross is the first of the hindrances. Chap. 8:38. Being ashamed of Christ is the second. Chap. 9:17. The dumb spirit is the third. Chap. 9:34. The love of prominence among the brethren. They held their peace when He asked them what they disputed about, for they had been quarrelling about which of them should be the greatest. Chap. 9:38. The sectarian spirit, when one cast out demons in Thy name we forbade him because he followed not with us. The sectarian spirit spoils more service today than perhaps we can ever appreciate. Then the last solemn hindrance we have to deal with is self-indulgence, verse 43, "If thy hand offend thee...." Verse 45 "If thy foot offend thee...." Verse 47 "If thy eye offend thee...." "cut them off, pluck them out," says Christ. Anything rather than let any member of the body which we use be an instrument of self indulgence instead of for Christ's service. "Get rid of it," says Christ, "at any cost, or you will never serve me aright." There the division ends, i.e., the first nine chapters.

Chapters 10 to 16 can be taken very rapidly. There are just three main divisions. From Chap.10:1 to Chap.11:10, you will notice the Lord Jesus faces great economic and social questions. First marriage, then divorce, then little children, then the use and abuse of wealth; these are the great family matters and economic questions. He takes them up one by one and He has settled them and shown the only path to the rich young ruler. He brings us to the cross roads and He says, "There is a colt and the colt is standing at the cross roads. Which way will it go? Bring it to Me." The Lord has need of it, and the colt is brought to Him. There are two problems before it; first; it has never been broken in - no-one has ever mounted it - and second, it does not know the way up to the City of God. What is it going to do? It stands before the Lord Jesus and says in effect, "Lord, if you are going to ride me and make me Thy servant, You must furnish the strength necessary to sustain the weight." "Well," says the Lord, "I will do that." And the second thing the colt says is, "Lord, if I am going to carry You up to the City of God, You must show me the way." "Yes," says the Lord, "I will do that. I will give you strength for the service and I will show you the way you must go." "Very well," says the colt, "I have nothing else to ask. I will go to the Everlasting City straight away with Christ."

From Chap.11:11 to almost the end of Chap.15 we have the account of the Crucifixion down to the burial of the Saviour and this, as I said previously in passing, shows Christ as the true Sin Offering. There are two simple things I want to speak of, perhaps three. First, I want you to look at verse 43, chap. 15, which is the account of Christ's burial. Joseph of Arimathaea, and honourable councillor....craved the body of Jesus. Verse 45 "and when he knew it of the Centurion, he gave the body to Joseph." Now, what is the difference between the word in verse 43 rendered in the revised "body" and the word in verse 45 also rendered "body". The difference is this. Joseph went to ask for "Soma". What does that mean, compared to the other word? The word "Soma" means the body as a living, beautiful, glorious thing. A word that, in early Greek, a lover used about the body of his beloved. It is the highest, noblest word, and Joseph went and said to Pilate "I want the body of Jesus." "But," says Pilate, "I will not give you 'Soma', I will give you 'Ptoma'." And what does that mean? - a corpse, which comes from the root "pet" - a fallen thing, a corrupted thing. Now, which was right? If Joseph is right, our faith is justified. If Pilate is right, our faith is vain. Was that a secret shrine of Deity for three and thirty years or

was it a fallen thing, corrupt? Ten thousand times, No! "Thine Holy One shall not see corruption." That is, it is not true that it is a corpse, but it is gloriously true that it is the body of Jesus. The whole turns upon that one word. If Pilate is right "we are of all men most miserable." We have lost our Saviour, or, as Matthew Arnold puts it, "Now he has gone far hence. He lies in some far distant grave. With silent eyes serene stars look down." But, thank God, they do not; the grave is empty.

The second thing I want to say is in Chap. 16, verse 14 to the end, where you have the five signs that the Lord speaks of:- casting out demons, speaking with tongues, handling of serpents, drinking of poison, and healing of the sick. Now, dear friends, what do you suppose our Lord meant? Did He really mean that these signs were to be verified in the material world, or was He thinking of something far deeper? Well, first, we shall imagine that the Saviour was thinking of a literal power to do these things. In the country I come from there are no serpents left at all, and on the Continent of Europe where a great number of people call themselves Christians, there are no serpents, and if it is merely telling us that we can handle serpents, I rather fancy that it has not got very much worth for any of us and, again, no person is very likely to force you to drink poison. They did in the third century for fourteen years, and in some cases the sign might have been given, but do you really believe that the Lord Jesus is leaving as His most precious legacy to His Church, things which cannot affect one Christian in a million down the centuries? If you like to believe that I will leave you to your faith, but shall I tell you how I read these signs which have the most tremendous urgency for all of us. The first one, "In My name they shall cast out demons;" I do not suppose anyone in this room ever met a demon, but there is not one of us but has the power of having demons in our hearts: desire, pride, strife, passion; and please notice that the Lord Jesus does not say that these signs followed any healing gifts, - notice, "these signs shall follow them that believe," the gospel. What is the first thing that the convert does by the grace of God? he casts out demons from his heart when he believes the Gospel. That is what the Lord Jesus says, these things shall follow in the people that believe. The first thing is that the demons are cast out, and the second thing is that they speak with new tongues. I shall never cease being ashamed to confess that before I was converted, I was exceedingly foul-mouthed; it is a great shame to me. What was the first thing the Lord Jesus did for me? Why, He gave me a new tongue and I began to speak about heavenly things instead of about earthly or devilish things, and I would a great deal rather have a clean tongue than to be able to speak in any language. The third one was "They shall take up serpents," and you remember what Luke says about that in his book of Acts. He shows the man on the beach with a bundle of faggots in his arms (at least he thinks they are all faggots) and as he is going to throw them on the fire, one of the pieces of wood (which is really a hibernating serpent) suddenly wakes up and strikes Paul's wrist. It is a great story. There is Paul with the serpent hanging on to his wrist and the Barbarians looking on and saying, "That serpent has bitten him; he is going to swell up in a moment," but nothing happens. What does Paul do with the serpent? - with one quick turn of the wrist he throws the serpent into the fire. He does not stroke it or keep it in his breast for warmth. It is an exemplification of Paul's doctrine as to how we are to deal with sin; not pet it, indulge it, or compromise with it - one turn of the wrist, "Sin shall not have dominion over you" - shake it into the fire. John shows that on a large scale - the serpent is thrown into the fire. Paul does it in his own experience, and you had better do the same.

The fourth is, not to drink deadly things. I have got five children, and their mother and I have often dreaded the day when they will go to universities or offices or some places filled with blasphemy. Each morning we commend them to God, that they may go down and come back unsoiled by breathing the foul atmosphere of this world. "And if they drink any deadly thing..." For the deadly poison of unbelief is in the schools of the present day, but by prayer they shall not be hurt.

And the last is, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. God bless you if you can do that, but I think the Saviour means a bigger thing than temporary healing. I believe we are sent into this world by grace to lay our hands on spiritually blinded people and teach them. And, at any rate, Mark with a sudden start of wonder says, "There is a glorious Saviour. I have seen Him going up, He is at the right hand of God. At one moment, by some glorious miracle, He is sitting with the Father, and the next He is working on earth." Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, and as Mark paints Him for us.

THE PHYSICIAN AND THE PRIEST.

(An Address on the Gospel according to St. Luke.)

References:- Luke 1: 1-4, 24: 45-49.

(Now you must insert about five or six weeks between verse 49 and verse 50. Luke writes his resurrection story as if Christ rose and ascended on the same day. In his other account in the Acts we find that there were forty days between the two.)

There was once an eminent French critic, M. Renan, who made a very acute remark about the gospels. He said, "If you take the earliest gospel, that is, that of Mark, you will find that he is like an engraver, giving delicate thumb-nail sketches and portraits of the Saviour." Then he said, "Matthew is like an architect, arranging massive buildings." (As you know there is in Matthew a collection of five great masses of structure - they are the backbone of Matthew) "But," he says, "Luke is neither an engraver nor an architect, but he has given us the most beautiful book in the world, for he is an artist, and he mixes his colours with infinite skill."

Now, that witness is perfectly true. We have already seen in the earliest gospel how the Lord Jesus served, and last night in Matthew we saw how he commanded, but tonight we have come to find that Christ is a great Physician-Priest, that is, He is the Physician of souls and as the Priest He can have compassion on ignorant and unlettered people like ourselves. Now, it is a striking thing that, whereas in Matthew the evangelist insists on our Lord's descent from David, in the gospel of Luke, the writer is equally distinct in telling us that Mary was of the kindred of the daughters of Aaron; that is, she was a near relation of Elizabeth, the mother of John Baptist, and she came from Aaronic stock. In this gospel the Lord Jesus Christ is looked at as a priest, but mark you, not of an official order like that of Melchisedec, and still less of an hereditary caste like Aaron, but in this gospel He is addressed after the order of the Good Samaritan, and through the pages, so he passes.

Now we shall take up the same lines as those we have had on previous nights, and we will begin with the author, then the structure, and last, the outstanding message of the book.

In the first place, there is a man named Lucius or Lucas, and I do not know if you housewives get it in this country, but in the Old Country the housewives use something for cleaning clothes called Lux, which, as you know, means "light", and Lucius is a man of light. You can easily understand how fitting it is that the man of light should begin his gospel by proclaiming Christ in the first chapter as "the dayspring from on high" who has dawned upon a dark world. (verse 78).

We know three things about this writer, the first is that he is a gentile, and you may say, "How do you know that?" You may know it too if you like, for if you will turn up at your leisure the fourth chapter of Colossians (verses 11 and 14) you will find that Paul gives a list of his fellow-labourers, and he closes the paragraph by saying - "These are of the circumcision", that is, they are Jews "and they only have been a comfort to me concerning the kingdom of God." Then he goes on to give another list, and these are Gentile fellow-labourers, and you will find the name Luke in the second list and not in the first. So we know that Luke was the only Gentile author of the New Testament.

Then the second thing we know about Luke was that he was Paul's great companion, and as he was a doctor, (as we shall see in a moment) we can understand why it was that immediately after Paul had had a serious illness Luke joined him the first time at Troas and went to Philippi with him. There he left him for Paul's health had improved. Then the second time Luke joined him according to the Acts was just after Paul had had another very severe and exhausting illness and he comes hasting over land and sea to find his magnificent friend, to give him the best treatment that the science of his day could furnish. The next time he joins him was when Paul was going on his long voyage to Rome, when he went through shipwreck with him, on the way. Then we find him in prison with him, and at long last Paul takes up his pen and writes that infinitely pathetic sentence "Only Luke is with me" Please understand that that does not mean only a geographical and physical nearness. As you understand the writings of Paul you will find that throughout Luke's writings there is the closest mental sympathy with the distinctive doctrines of the apostle Paul - what he calls "My gospel." That is, you can see that Paul gives the doctrine and Luke gives the illustration. Paul tells the story of Christ and Luke says "There it is".

I challenge you that you will find very distinctive truth in Paul's Epistles illustrated somewhere in Luke's writings. You read the doctrine of Romans and you turn to Luke (seven) and you say "Well, there is the whole thing, but I would never have known it if Paul had not mentioned it in the Roman letter."

The third thing you know about Luke is that Paul calls him "The dear doctor," or "The beloved physician" and we find that every page of his two books depicts his calling. I defy a doctor to write a book - that is, a whole-hearted

thorough doctor - without his calling peeping out in every few paragraphs. You will find for instance, that Luke has that exceedingly intimate birth story about our Lord Jesus probably gathered from Mary's own lips during those two years when Luke was in Palestine, partly in Caesarea, and partly elsewhere. Mary would tell him many things that she would not tell the others in the apostolic group. Then we find that Luke only quotes that proverb, "Physician, heal thyself," knowing that even doctors are not wholly immune from criticism of their fellows. We find, for instance, that Mark, when he describes the story of the consumptive woman racked for twelve years with pain, lays the blame at the door of the physicians, when he says that they could not agree as to the diagnosis, "She had suffered a great many things of many physicians," the next thing they did for her was to strip her of her fortune and the next, to inflict upon her a great deal of needless pain. - so says Mark; but Luke, with professional caution, dismisses all these things, leaves them out, and throws the blame back on the patient. He says, "She could not be healed by any" - there was no response. The patient did not meet the doctors, and you can understand the pleasure with which Luke writes that sentence, that there was after all something to be said for the doctors. Then you will notice how Luke reports our Lord's saying about the camel going through the eye of the needle. Matthew and Mark use the ordinary word for needle, but Luke calls it a surgeon's needle, the needle he was most accustomed to use in his surgeon's work. Then, when Matthew and Mark describe the man borne of four as being a man with a tendency to paralysis, Luke's trained eye does not say that, he says, "The man had had a stroke." Quite right for fishermen to be cautious, quite right for a doctor to say the thing he knows. Then three times over Luke speaks of certain things as being on "the right side." The angel was on the right side of the altar. Matthew and Mark tell of the man with a withered hand, but Luke says "the right hand" as you would expect a doctor to say. And then, when somebody cuts the ear of Malchus from his head, Matthew and Mark tell you of it, but Luke points out professionally that it was the right ear, as again you would expect.

Then you come to such a case as Luke 13: 11-16 where he describes the case of a woman with curvature of the spine. First of all, he notes twice over that it was a chronic case, that she had suffered eighteen years from it, and then with the greatest care he describes in two phrases how the ligatures and the muscles of the back had hardened, "and she was bowed down and could in no wise lift up herself." Then, when he describes the cure, he tells us in a technical term how the vertebrae shot back into their correct position and the ligatures were loosened and remained loose - and in a flash she was made straight and glorified God.

Now I could spend a long evening showing you how the details of the craftsmanship of the doctor stand out on page after page of Luke's gospel, but we must come to the structure, for after all, that is the main thing about a Bible book. How does Luke build up the body of his book? First, in chapter 1, verses 1-4 he gives a preface written in the most accurate and classical Greek. Unlike the rest of his book, the first four verses are in the professional and classical style of a practised writer, then the first two chapters come down to ("north country" dialect, as we should say) - practically Aramaic speech translated back into Greek. In chapters 1 and 2 we have seven narratives concerning the births of our Lord and John the Baptist. You will notice that the birth stories (quite peculiar to Luke) deal with the birth of John the Baptist, as being too late according to nature, and then with the birth story of the Lord Jesus as being too early, according to nature.

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| (1) | Chapter 1. vs. | 5 to 24. |
| (2) | | 25 to 38. |
| (3) | | 39 to 56. |
| (4) | | 57 to 80. |
| (5) | Chapter 2. vs. | 1 to 20. |
| (6) | | 21 to 40. |
| (7) | | 41 to 52. |

You will find that each of these seven narratives is rounded off at the end, and you can place them side by side, each one entirely separate from its predecessor, and yet when they are all welded together you have one continuous story. The only point I want to touch in these chapters is their remarkable witness to the development of our blessed Saviour, and for this you look first at Luke 2 v.40, that is, at the end of the sixth narrative. You will remember that every mother knows that a little child is body, soul and spirit and for the first few weeks and months the body is the most important, and then the mind, and then the spirit last. Verse 40 reads "And the child grew and waxed strong (delete the words "in spirit" please because they are not in the revised not in the text) "Grew and waxed strong" - that is the body - "filled with wisdom" that is the mind, "and the grace of God was upon Him" that is the Spirit". Then in v. 42 you come to when He was twelve years old, this means with the Jews the age of responsibility, and in v. 52 notice the change of order, not the body now when He is 12 years old, but "Jesus increased in wisdom," the mind, "and in statute" that is the body, and finally in favour with God, and then with man. You notice how exquisitely accurate the descriptions of Holy Scripture always are.

Then the second section takes chapter 3 v. 1 down to 4.13, where you have the preparation for the ministry. The main points where this differs from the others is first, take for instance, chapter 3, v. 4 where you have the well-known quotation from Isaiah 40 beginning "The voice of one crying in the wilderness," In John you only have two lines quoted, John says "I am the voice of one

crying in the wilderness, make His paths straight." Matthew and Mark quote three lines "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight," but when you come to Luke, the gospel for the Gentile, and the wider view of the work of Christ, he quotes 5 lines more from Isaiah, making 8 in all, and you notice v. 6, the last line of the quotation, "and all flesh shall see it" says Isaiah, but Luke closes it "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." He is taking the Greek version as against the Hebrew in this case, because it was perfectly true that whereas in Matthew Christ saves His people from their sins, (that is, all Israel), in Luke He saves the world. He comes to save sinners, and so it is the salvation of God for all flesh and not for one nation. You will find also that while John, Matthew and Mark preach to Jews here Luke preaches to pagans, first to the Hebrews, then to the common people, that is, there is a word for every man, Jew and Gentile. Then you will have noticed that in the temptation in the wilderness Matthew has the "bread" temptation, then the "temple" temptation, and as a climax the temptation in connection with the kingdoms of the world, because Matthew is the Gospel of the King. But in Luke the order is altered, first the "bread", then the "kingdoms," and lastly the pinnacle of the temple, because Luke is the Gospel of the Priest, and so the climax of temptation for a priest will be connected with the sanctuary, not with kingdoms.

The third great section begins with Chapter 4:14 and then goes on to Chapter 9:50. This section very largely follows Matthew and Mark, so we will not deal with it, merely noticing the story of the widow of Nain, the sermon on the plain and the woman in Simon's house. These are glorious patches which Luke adds to his brethren's discourse.

Chapter 9:51. "Well," you say, "I suppose that the time has come for Christ to go to Heaven." Will He go? "That is," says Luke, "there is no conceivable reason why He should not. He has just been transfigured, and the Father is perfectly content with the work of His Son. He will go to Heaven." "When the time was come that He should be received up" what does He do? He goes down. "He steadfastly set His face" - not to go to Heaven - He could have gone, and had He gone in Luke 9:51 He would have gone alone, and not a single one of us would have followed Him, we should all have been left behind. Had He gone then there would have been a lonely Heaven as far as sinners were concerned, for all eternity, but instead of going up He goes down to death. This great section 9:51 down to 19:26, that is 10 chapters, is almost wholly, at least about 82% of the material, is entirely fresh, that is, not found in Matthew, Mark or John. These ten chapters to 19:26 are called "travel documents" and they are very peculiar in their structure. Three times Luke lets the Lord Jesus start on the last journey to Jerusalem, and three times he brings Him up within two miles of the city, and then he goes back and starts in the north of Palestine and describes the same journey with entirely different details, and the second time he brings the Lord within two miles of Jerusalem. The third time he starts the Lord on the border land between Samaria and Galilee, and again the Lord journeys up to the city and this time He gets right up to Jerusalem. The reasons for these three-fold journeys are these, the first one shows the path of faith, the second one the path of love and the third account of the same journey the path of hope. Now, we will merely glance at the structure. V. 51 chapter 9, again please? v. 52. He is in Samaria - v. 53 His face is as though He would go to Jerusalem, so the Lord has started from the northern province to go down to the city of God, and you go right through to the end of chapter 9 and at the end of chapter 10 you find that Christ is only two miles from Jerusalem, in the house of Martha and Mary at Bethany. Throughout chapters 11 and 12 down to 13 v. 21, Christ is moving in the suburbs of Jerusalem, that is perfectly plain from indication after indication, and the key word of that section is the faith and compassion of the Lord Jesus, and so you have the good Samaritan and similar passages in that section.

In chapter 13 v. 22, you find that the Lord is again in the North, starting for the second time. Now in this section the great point is Love, so you have for instance those glorious passages in chapter 14, the man with dropsy, the great supper, and then in chapters 15 to 16 where you have one picture with five parables, the lost sheep, the lost piece of silver, the lost son, the lost steward, and the lost rich man. Starting from the losing of the sheep right away to the tremendous and ultimate picture of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and the rich man in Hades, weeping out his soul. That section ends in chapter 17 verse 10 and in verse 11 of that chapter we have the start of the third section.

v. 11 "And it came to pass as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee."

The word means diagonally passing along the front border line that ran from the north of Samaria and the south of Galilee. There the Lord starts again in Samaritan territory, and again for the third time He begins the great journey to the cross. Everything in this section deals with hope, that is, the Lord's coming, the prophetic future, and the parable to the disciples of the Kingdom of God. The Lord fits into focus and places in the exact order the events that are coming, and in chapter 19:28 for the last time you get the phrase "And when He had thus spoken he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem" when he immediately enters the city and joins the accounts of the other three evangelists, Matthew, Mark and John.

Now, I pray you read these sections, and the account of these three great journeys, study them with your favourite gospel parables, and get the three great key notes, faith, hope, love, taken perhaps by Luke from his master-writer, Paul.

From chapter 19: v.29, to the end we have the story of the Passion, and as you know in Luke the Lord Jesus is viewed as the great peace offering, not the trespass offering of Matthew, nor the sin offering of Mark, nor the burnt offering of John, but the great peace offering. You can easily see that by standing in front of that ever-blessed Cross and looking as three leaves flutter down from the tree of life. You remember that in Matthew and Mark there is one saying upon the Cross, only the word of the victim "My God, my God, why didst thou forsake me?" That is the only word from the cross in those two gospels, but when you come to Luke there are three leaves, that flutter down from the tree of life and the first one is "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" pleading the only conceivable extenuating circumstance - ignorance. The second word from the cross is like a key, and it opens the gates of Paradise to every fallen sinner who looks to Christ, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." And then the third and most moving of all. He, who according to Matthew and Mark had just cried in the agony of His soul as the darkness was rolled away "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani" "Why didst thou forsake me," immediately looks up to the one who He had just said had forsaken Him, and He says, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." There is nothing finer in the whole of the life of faith, in all the history of the saints, than to find that glorious person, when He has just cried and the echo has not died away (for the cry is at the end of the three hours darkness, remember) "Why didst thou forsake me, yet my trust is unbroken and to the one who has just forsaken Him he says, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Then one thing more, we all remember the exquisite closing scene - the last temple picture - and you will never understand it unless you take the first paragraph in the gospel after the preface and compare the two. Chapter 1. v.21. The first picture is the temple of God at Jerusalem, with the priest going in to offer incense, and the people waiting outside for him to come out and bless them. As the priest goes in he is struck dumb for his unbelief and while he waits inside the people far away outside are waiting, waiting, waiting for him to emerge. At last, says the first paragraph in the Gospel of Luke, Zacharias comes out, but instead of lifting up his hands in blessing, as he should have done, he beckons or helplessly waves his hands to show that he has got no blessing at all. He is a dumb priest. Do you get the picture? An empty temple, a dumb priest, a people far off, and every man going away unblessed. That is the beginning of Luke's gospel - the first temple scene - but the last four verses of his gospel say "And He led them out as far as to Bethany" and He lifted up his hands and blessed them, so the priest is not dumb, and He can lift his hands. He does not wave them helplessly but lifts them in the true fashion. And while He was speaking to them He was parted from them, and as He blessed them He was carried up into Heaven, and they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing and praising God. So instead of an empty temple you have a filled one, instead of a dumb priest you have one who can speak, and instead of an unblessed people you have a company who are near to Christ, under the shadow of His blessing, a company who are moving about the house of God in the full liberty and gladness of a blessed and happy people.

I do not know you here, there may be amongst us some person tonight who has never as yet known the Saviour, well, remember, Luke's motto is "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Now, if you are a poor, lost sinner in this meeting tonight, the Priest of Luke's gospel is kneeling by you, and He has the bandages, and the oil, and the wine and all the power you need. He is prepared at this moment to save you and heal you where you sit.

Again there may be in this hospital tonight those who have trusted the Saviour, but are doubly conscious that the diseases of wrong-doing are upon them. Do you want their ugly names? Care, anxiety, envy, restlessness, all the black and ugly brood whom I need not diagnose. Can the Lord Jesus heal His people? Has the good physician lost His skill? Can He still pour in oil and wine?

There was a great saint not long ago whose hymns we have all sung, Frances Ridley Havergal, and her sister tells us in her "Life Memoirs" that she was the victim of a terrifically violent temper. Even in the days when she was edifying the whole Church, she had from time to time various explosions of her besetting sin, and Miss Havergal tells us that one day after a particularly violent explosion of temper and an unbridled tongue, in this case towards a house-maid, she went into God's presence as she had gone fifty times before with tears and asked the Lord if He was really able to give her healing. The Lord said to her in prayer "What was that Scripture you read this morning?" "Why, Lord, it was the 14th of Exodus." "And what did you read there?" "Why, I read that the Egyptians whom ye have seen today ye shall see no more for ever. Is that for me?" "Yes", said the Lord, "That is for you, are you prepared to take it," and she said "Lord, I believe that from this day forward that particular company of the Egyptians shall be carried away forever," and on her own testimony and her sister's and her mother's, never again was she defeated by that particular "Egyptian" of the flesh in her life. I believe profoundly that the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Healer, is able to come to you at the point of your greatest weakness, and give you final and definite and life-long liberation on that particular point, as He did in the days of His flesh to many men and women. And if you are prepared to take His word in the living exercise of faith, and to walk in simple trust with Him, I believe He is willing and He is ready as the Good Physician of old used to do, the One "Who healeth all thy diseases."

THE FISHERMAN AND HIS GOD.

(An Address on the Gospel according to St. John.)

References:- John 1: 1, 14, 18. 20: 30-31. 21: 20.

("became" flesh, not "was made" flesh. The Incarnation was His own act, not something He made. I render the word "dwelt" "Pitched his tent" because that is the verb from which the noun "tabernacle" is formed, and in John 2 Christ is the true temple, the temple of His body, and in John 1: 14 He is the antitype of Moses' tabernacle, and you lose that touch in our ordinary Canterbury version.)

Now, if a man were to take the pains to divide the four gospels each one into one hundred parts, in order to find out how much each Evangelist gives in material which is not found in the other three, I wonder what would be the results. Well, they would be as follows.

If Mark were divided into one hundred sections you would find only seven per cent, of his material is peculiar to himself, or in other words, if you lost every copy of Mark's gospel in the world, you would still have ninety-three per cent. of his material in Matthew, Luke and John. We are not going to lose Mark, thank God, but if we did we should only lose seven per cent. of his material. When you come to Matthew, you would find forty-two per cent. of his gospel is not found anywhere else, so if you lose Matthew you would only have fifty-eight per cent. found in other books. When you come to Luke, you would find fifty-nine per cent. is peculiar to his gospel, but when you come to John no less than ninety-three per cent. out of the whole of John's gospel is unique. In other words, lose your John and only seven per cent. could be recovered from other gospels.

Here is another way of looking at these things. The chief treasure of the church lies in the personal words of our Lord Jesus Christ; that is, the ministry in the days of His flesh. Now if you come to Mark's gospel, one-quarter consists of Christ's words, three-quarters the frame work and narrative, and so on. Then in Matthew's gospel, seventy-five per cent. or three-quarters consists of Christ's words, one-quarter being framework. You go back to Luke, and there one-third is the speech of Christ, two-thirds the Spirit's framework; but when you come to John, five-sixths of the gospel consists of Christ's verbal speech, and only one-sixth, about sixteen or seventeen per cent. consists of the framework and narrative. Now I do not think it is waste of time just to point out simple mathematical facts like that, lest you should imagine, as so many careless people have done, that the gospel writers merely sat down and copied one another. Nothing could be further from the truth than that.

Now we come to the subject of our talk this evening, and to begin with, I would remind you of the fancy of the early church, which I think is quite justified, namely, that the four faces of the cherubim correspond to the four gospels, or in other words, that the ox face of the cherubim refers to Mark, the gospel of sacrifice; that the lion face of the cherubim refers to Matthew, the royal gospel; and that Luke gives the face of a man. True enough, but now notice, oxen, men and lions all keep their feet on mother earth, while the fourth face of the cherubim is the eagle, and the eagle soars to remotest heights; hence you will easily see that when we come to John's gospel we no longer have our feet on earth, we have ascended to heaven itself. Here is a man who comes fresh from the reading of the synoptists, and he turns his page and enters John, and the first impression perhaps that strikes him is that John omits the great critical events in Christ's life -- there is no birth story, no account of His Baptism, His temptations or His transfiguration, no account of the last supper, no agony in the garden, and no ascension to the sky; and yet in every case there is one verse in the gospel which shows that the writer perfectly knew and completely understood the meaning of those seven great events, not one of which did he describe in contrast to Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Then you look again, and you are enormously interested to find firstly that there are no parables in John at all. The word occurs in our English version in chapter 10, but it should be a word meaning "a wise saying." Then again, we are struck in seeing that in the gospel of John there are no charges to silence. You remember how often Christ says to His disciples, "Do not say anything about that" and forbids them to mention certain matters - never in John. Then you remember in the synoptists the story is punctuated by announcements of His passion. You see the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man going to Jerusalem, and so on, to die, - never once in John's gospel. Then you find in the synoptists there is a great deal about lepers - they are never once mentioned in John, and even more surprising still, in the synoptists, especially Mark, we find a great many cases of demon possession - you never find a single one in John. What you do find is one of the most tragic and shameful facts, namely that the word "demon" does occur seven times in the gospel, but it is always levelled at the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This is an awful fact. "Thou art a Samaritan, Thou hast a demon" - and every one of the seven times when the word "demon" occurs in John it is, so to speak, reserved and thrown at the face of the blessed Son of God Himself. "Well," you say, "Those are matters that a man must ponder." And you will find

as we go through John's gospel that we have entered an atmosphere that is entirely different from anything found in earlier books.

Now, just a word as to the author. We know that John is a son of Zebedee. Then we find in chapter 1:14 that the writer claims to be an eye witness, that is, he saw the glory of the Lord Jesus on earth. "We beheld His Glory" and the word "beheld" is that from which we get our English word "theatre" and it always means a physical literal sight, a sight that is followed by thoughtful investigation and contemplation as to the meaning of the thing that is seen. "We contemplated His glory." Then in the 19th chapter, where the soldier thrusts his lance into the Saviour's side we read that the writer was an eye witness, "and he bare record, and his record is true, and we know that he saith 'true' that is, the disciple who wrote these things. Now, the actual way by which we reach John's authorship is just this. - in the first official list of books in the Samaritan canon there is a note to the effect that John, with some of the apostles and many elders, was at Ephesus, and the aged apostle was urged to write his memoirs. He told the brethren that they must fast for three days, and at the end God's mind would be known. On the morning, I think, of the third day, Andrew addressed the meeting, and he told them that the Lord had said that John was to write his memoirs of the Saviour, and that the rest of them were to see and vindicate the book. That is why you read in that last chapter when the writer speaks of having written his book, that vindicating phrase "and we know that his testimony is true." Then Clement of Alexandria tells us that John having seen that the outward facts of our Lord's life had been sufficiently related, has composed what Clement called, "A spiritual gospel" that is, an interpretation of the life of Christ, rather than a simple historical record of its main events. Therefore you can understand that when Dante, in his great poem, closes with the procession of the saints, and when they had all gone by from Adam onwards, the last of the saints is described thus.

"And last of all, one saintly old man, sleeping as he walked."

That is, Dante means that John was so absorbed in Christ, that while his soul was very much alive, he walked as if he were a man asleep.

Now we come to the structure of the book, and we open it at what is called "the golden preface" and the first verse deserves to be quoted again - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Now notice, in the first verse of Mark we read this: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." The first verse of Matthew - "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." And then in the beginning of Luke and all through the book we find that Christ is the "Son of Man." Now notice, "Son of God," "Son of David, son of Abraham" - and "Son of Man" are all titles in which others can share. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." Abraham and David had millions of sons. Sons of men there have been by countless millions, there are eighty million of them alive today - sons of men. That is the universal titles in Matthew, Mark and Luke are shared by others, but there is one name that can never be shared by anybody, and that is the name in the first verse of John. The "Word" was God, not the Son of God, not the son of anybody. It is a lonely challenge. In eternal and unique Godhead there stands the Lord Jesus Christ in this gospel. Great are His offices in the other three, but no one would deny that it is more to be God than to be Son of Abraham, blessed as that may be. So we have the golden preface, verses 1 to 18 of the first chapter, and the point of the preface is this - the writer takes every great keyword in the gospel - "Father" "love" "light" "world" "believe" and he introduces every one of these words that occur many times in the book (you will find every one of them in the opening preface) and then the lines of the preface are flung throughout the gospel, so, if you perfectly understand the preface, you will understand the whole book.

The first section covers chapters 1 to 7, and one figure is made use of in all these seven chapters - namely, water - the reason being that the key-word of chapters 1 to 7 is the word "life" as opposed to "death." In the first chapter we have the waters of Jordan, that is, we must begin at the river of death, and every man must go through those waters. Then in chapter 2, we have the six great stone vessels full of water, and as the writer has said in the preface that Christ is greater than Moses, the question is raised at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. Is he really greater than Moses? Well, what was Moses' first miracle? To turn water into blood. Now any man can do that, any dictator can turn water into blood, he can shed the blood of millions of his subjects. The turning of water into blood is the most common and tragic thing in the world. I want a Saviour who can turn water into wine, no dictator ever did that. No sovereign ever did it. But, says the second of John, here you have the mighty one, Jesus. Here is the symbol of gladness - wine. It has run out. You must come to Jesus, and he, the true bridegroom of the heart, can turn the water of your weariness into the wine of his own eternal gladness; or in other words, Christ can make you ten times as happy in His love as the world could ever make you happy without it. Got hold of that, please!

In the third chapter, the water comes in a new way. We are said to be born in three ways - born from above, born of water, born of the Spirit. Now what does "born of water" mean! Plainly, at least, the first idea without embarking into the full interpretation is this: That the thought of water cannot mean less than that a man comes into the presence of God, and as he later con-

fesses in Christian baptism, he goes down into the waters of death, and confesses himself as not fit to be seen, and buries himself, so to speak, out of sight. That is what is meant when a man sentences himself to death and goes into the waters of baptism. The next thing is, he emerges born of the spirit, blood and water. Sentence of death and entry of the Spirit - Power of life.

Then in chapter 4, beside the well, we learn that the water is to be a fountain, not a well. Men may make wells but God makes fountains - fountains springing up to everlasting life. (By the way, let me mention in passing, that every time the woman used the word "well," she used the word that means something that men have dug, and then the Lord Jesus used the word, though it is translated the same way in our version in every case, John and his Master use the same word that means "a fountain leaping from hidden springs." She never thought of anything more than a cistern. Christ was thinking of living waters leaping up into the gladness of a man's life.)

Now, in chapters 5, 6 and 7, the life that the Lord Jesus gives is introduced with three great blessings: first, chapter 5, the sabbath, that is, rest; chapter 6, the manna, symbol of Christ; chapter 7, the feast of Tabernacles, the everlasting joy of being with our Saviour. You will notice that in each case water is introduced - in chapter 5 the pool of Bethesda, which shows the inadequacy of the work of Moses, for if a man wants to get blessing from that pool, Moses says, "At least you must have some strength, and co-operate with me, at the very least you must get up and walk to the pool more quickly than anybody else in the crowd." The question might be asked "If I can walk so quickly, why should I need healing at all?" But what is Moses compared to Christ? Christ says, "I don't heal you like that. That pool is entirely inadequate. I have got something better than that for you. I have got the gift of power and life. Leave your pool and come after me."

Chapter 6; Here you have the water again, and this time the Lord Jesus is walking on its tempestuous surface. That is, Christ is Master of the circumstances of life. He is paramount on the most dark and tempestuous day that ever fell across your life's history.

Chapter 7: 37; "In that last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now that is the first section of the book, life in Christ is the imagery of a flowing river, or of a bubbling pool, or of a filled wine-jar, always the symbol of water, the sign of life triumphant.

Then in verses 7 to 9 of the preface, we have the second keyword that is the "light", so throughout this section (chapters 8:12) you get expressions like these: "I am the light of the world." "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world," and again and again, and three times in the last paragraph of Chapter 12, Christ says He is the Light.

Well, what is the function of the light? First it shone on the life of an adulteress, and how her soul shrinks and withers as she stands with that fierce light beating upon her, but she stays. Then it shines on the Pharisees, and every man goes out, from the oldest down to the youngest - the oldest, the man who had the most reputation to lose and the most sins to remember. Then the light in chapter 9 finds a man born blind. This is the only case of congenital disease, that which has been from birth, that our Lord has ever handled, but through these darkened eyeballs there beams the light of God manifest in flesh and the man falls at the Saviour's feet to worship. From blindness and beggary to worship.

Well, now, the third great section is from chapters 13 to 17, and this is neither light nor life; but now you have the great word "love," and no less than thirty times in that section is love brought out and poured, so to speak, at the feet of a dark sinful world. In that upper room the Lord Jesus Christ begins by taking water in a basin and washing His disciples' feet. Now please understand that in Scripture, feet washing is not primarily a matter of defilement, it is primarily a matter of refreshing. Defilement is a secondary meaning.

For the first time in Scripture where feet washing is mentioned, Genesis 18, we read "rest yourselves...wash your feet...comfort ye your hearts" and this was said to travellers who had come from a place where there is no defilement. So feet washing in Scripture is primarily to set the heart in perfect rest before the Saviour, to listen to His words. In that wonderful upper room, everything is strained, and there is no freedom until Judas has gone out (and John adds the significant comment "as he went out, it was night.") But there was no night in the upper room, the moment the betrayer has gone, the Saviour's soul opens up, and He gives a long stream (chapters 13-17) of incomparable ministry ending in chapter 17 with a threefold claim of His great love. "I have loved you" - "The Father has loved you" - "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Light for those in darkness, life for those in death, love for those in a world of hatred and strife.

Then we come to the fourth and last section, chapters 18 - 20. I leave the appended chapter (21) for a moment. Chapters 18 to 20 are where we have the

great stories of Calvary and the resurrection, and you will notice here that there is a big cleavage between the synoptic stories, and the story as John tells it. For instance, take Gethsemane in Matthew and Mark, and "the place" in Luke, and set these against the garden in John. John, five times in his last chapters speaks of the garden and the gardener. You will see the reason in a moment. There are no gardens in the other gospels, but places of anguish. The distinction between Gethsemane in the synoptists and the garden in John is that in Matthew, Christ falls upon His face; in Mark, He falls to the ground; in Luke, He kneels down upon the ground, and the enemies all stand upright; but in John, the Lord Jesus stands upright, and the enemies fall to the ground. That shews you the deep distinction between John's account of Calvary and his fellow writers". In the synoptists, Calvary is a scaffold, where a man dies under the hand of God, where men can blindfold Him and spit upon Him, where He is seen in weakness, and cries, "Why didst Thou forsake Me?" But in John's gospel there is no scaffold. The cross is a throne. Every single detail of that day is arranged by the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is Master of the situation. There is no darkness on the cross, no pain, no forsaking of God, - in John there are none of the details that would stress the blessed Saviour's weariness in those hours of agony. As a matter of fact He is triumphant. Then in John only, when His last Scripture has been fulfilled, His final word is this, "It is finished." In Luke, He commends Himself again to His Father, but He does not do that in John. Who shall commend God to God? In dying, He sets His seal upon His own work and simply says, "It is perfectly finished, it is all done."

Now we come to the resurrection story, and here you will notice that John in his twentieth chapter delivers a picture of the new creation, based in its details upon the first three chapters of Genesis.

"To begin with" says John, "In Genesis there was a garden, - Very well, - I will have a garden; in fact, I will have three. I will have a garden outside the city, the Mount of Olives, where the Lord goes with His disciples." In the place where Jesus was crucified there was a garden, and the place where He was buried there was a garden, for Mary supposed Him to be the gardener. "Now," says John, "In Genesis there was a man and a woman, and so I will have a man and a woman, but not Adam and Eve. Oh no, it shall be Christ and Mary Magdalene! In the first garden there were tears and there were thorns, there was death, but in my garden," says John, "the tears are all wiped away, and the thorns have all been worn by the Saviour, on the other side of death, the curse is lifted, and there is no serpent in my garden." In the first garden it says 'The Lord God breathed upon them the breath of lives.' Very well, the Lord Jesus Christ goes up to the upper room and He walks through the door without opening it, and He stands and shews them His hands and His side, and then He breathes on them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." In other words, if the Lord God can breathe on the first Adam the breath of lives in Eden, shall not the last Adam breathe upon His new-born church the breath of lives, and give them the Spirit's gift. Who shall say Him nay?

Then, John, with enormous delight, sketches for us a new creation, blessing resting upon not "hands and feet" as in Luke, but "His hands and His side," the riven side of the Saviour, that is, hands speak of work, feet suggest the path of the Saviour, but the riven side tells of an open highway right up to the heart of God. That is not original, by the way. I was sitting once in Somaliland in the Post Office. And you must not imagine a magnificent building like that in Wellington. It was a small tin shack, with a floor about twelve inches in dust, and a little wooden box with a lot of dusty dirty letters in it, (because you know, when a native comes in, he just tips the box into the dust on the counter, and takes out the letter that is for him, and the next native comes, and takes them up and puts them into the box and so it is repeated, until you can imagine the state of the letters.) Well, I managed to get the use of one of these Post Offices for a Bible-reading and we had seven or eight fine Zulus - I won't say anything of their clothing, but one man was wearing a leopard skin, and he had been named "Twopence-ha'penny." He did not know what it meant so it did not matter, and during the meeting I looked across while we were reading John 14, and I said, without a smile, "Dear brother Twopence-ha'penny, have you any thought as to why the Scripture tells us that the soldier plunged the lance into the Saviour's side, and thence came there out blood and water?" And that untutored savage, who had only known his Saviour for a short time, and emerged from the most degraded heathendom, gave an answer that could never have been bettered by any Theological College in the kingdom. He said, "My white brother, I suppose it was that all the world might see that by the death of the Saviour a highway has been opened right up to the heart of God." "Well," I said, "I think that is exactly right." The riven side of the Saviour - a highway for every man to walk right up to the heart of God.

Well, now, we come to the appendix chapter 21, no doubt added by the Holy Ghost to the inspired page at the end of chapter 20. And you say, "Why do you suggest chapter 21 is added?" For this reason. Chapter 20 finishes the main message of the book, but John by the Spirit wants to give us a little sketch of this dispensation, that is, the period between Pentecost and the rapture.

"Now," he says, "You have got two things to do." And the first paragraph in John 21 deals with fishing, because we are God's fishermen. That is,

the church's services in relation to the world, she is to fish in this world's troubled waters. And the Lord Jesus has certain lessons in regard to fishing. He says in the first case, "It is no use going fishing without Me. If you do you will toil all night and catch nothing," and in the second case the Saviour says, "You must never go fishing without My direction, Cast your nets on the right side of the ship, because I am the only person who knows where the fish are, and unless you fish with Me it is useless work." And then when you have done your night's fishing, you are to breakfast with Him, for unless you draw your food from Him you will never get anywhere as a fisherman of God. The moment the breakfast is over, the scene changes, and the fishermen suddenly turn into shepherds. Fishermen have sometimes to do that. But shepherds have to do with the fold, and the Lord says, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" Peter answers and says, "Lord thou knowest I am attached to Thee." - "Feed My sheep." He said again the second time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" and Simon answers, "Lord, thou knowest I am attached to Thee." (using the lower human word as against Christ's word for love, which means the highest possible type of love). Then Jesus says to him, "Simon, son of Jonas, are you attached to Me?" (coming down to Peter's word) and Peter was grieved that He said the third time, "Are you attached to Me?" and he said a great thing this time, as our version says, "Lord, Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I am attached to Thee." But he was careful enough, that untutored fisherman, to change the word "knowest." The first word "know" means that He knew humanity in virtue of what He was. He knew everything. But the second "know" is a word which means "to know by experience, having walked with a person." "Lord, you know everything." "Yes," says Christ, "I know by experience that you are attached to me. Very well, feed My lambs."

Now, you say, the two things the church is to do are these: First, she is to go fishing, in the world, and then she is to shepherd the flock, and you must never mix the two services. There may be fifty shepherds here tonight, I trust there are: and there may be two hundred good fishermen; and friends, let us remember that the word for the fisherman is guidance and good food. Get near to Christ. The word for the shepherd is love. Love the chief Shepherd and love the flock.

How does the book finish. "Well," says John, "I will shew you something, there is Christ, and He is walking on, on, on, into eternity, and by His side there walks one man. He is going to die, and at his heels there walks another man, who by His will is going to tarry till He comes. And there are two highways by which all men shall leave this world. Either by the lower road of death as Peter did, or by the upper road of tarrying till Christ comes, and with all my heart I hope that I shall be with the number that has to do with John's part. I am ready to die, by the mercy of God, and it would be a great experience, and for some things I would not miss it for a lot. To go into the valley of the shadow of death and have Christ with me, and to learn by experience the way in which countless millions have walked, to go through the valley of the shadow of death in company with Christ - that is good. But there is one thing better - and that is not to go at all, but to hear the shout - and for my own part I fully hope that shout may sound tonight - I long to see Him. We know Him, thank God, as the old German monk put it centuries ago:-

"Yet now I know Thee as the living Bread,
The living Lord, who died, who walked with me,
constant at my side.
Thou, Lord, has loved me and henceforth I am Thine.
My Lord sets out across the eternal sea and leaves the
shores of gloom,
I pass within the glory even now, where weights and shades
are not, for joy that passeth words.
Oh Lord, art Thou,
A bliss that passeth thought.
Heaven's praise for me, the angels joy begin,
No promise but is given, eternal given, because the
work is done."

SECOND ADDRESS ON COLOSSIANS.

References: Colossians Chapter 1 - 15
to " 2 - 3.

There was once a great riddle asked to this effect "Out of the devourer came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness," and then the answer to the riddle was this "What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?" That is, the question and the answer locked inside each other, like the hand inside a glove. Now the famous riddle of Samson is very well illustrated by the epistles that come to us from Paul's pen, epistles which were occasioned by certain conditions when the enemy was devouring the flock of God, and out of the strong there comes forth the sweetness of Paul's answers. For instance, in Colosse, the church had become exceedingly legal-minded, rigid, hard and Mosaic; in the case of Corinth, the church had become careless as to moral sanctions, in fact gross sin was there; and we almost have to thank these people because if they had not fallen into these ditches, we should never have seen Paul pulling them out, with such tremendous challenges and fervour; in this way God makes the wrath of man to praise Him.

Before we begin to open this section in the Colossian letter that we have read, I want to say a very brief word about the twin streams of black evil that were flowing into the Church at Colosse. I say twin streams, because there was a series of Jewish heresies that were defiling the church, and then there was a broad black river of Gentile corruption that was poisoning the springs of the church's life; and as these evils are rampant around us just now in the form of Christian Science and other systems, I may as well very briefly sketch what is popularly called "the Colossian heresy."

There are two great problems that interest thoughtful people always, and the first is How did the world get here? And secondly - How did evil spring up in its borders. Now first century thinkers and heretics within the church answered these questions with one broad law. They said "The fact that evil is here in the world proves that everything material, all that we can handle see or touch, must be in its nature evil, and the only real thing is the unseen and the spiritual. Now from that basic belief in the evil of matter, the following conclusions were drawn. If matter were evil, then plainly God, a good and perfect God, could never have created the world as it is, and in order to get over the difficulty, they developed a series of sub-Gods, lesser deities, beings with diluted divinity. They made a long procession of these, the first pair, (they were always in pairs) thrones and dominions, and the second, principalities and powers and so on down a long list, and at the bottom of the ladder, of these secondary deities there stood the Lord Jesus and the Holy Ghost. Paul refers to these false gods three times, twice in the second chapter, and once in the first, and he says, "You Colossians place Christ at the bottom of the ladder, but He is at the top. He is head over all principalities and powers; He made them, and not they Him. "And," he says, "postulate as many unseen Lords as you like in the unseen world, call them what you like, but at long last remember that it was Jesus who made them, and not they who made Jesus."

Then the second heresy that flowed in was this. If matter was evil, then the body of the Lord Jesus Christ could not really have been truly human; they said that Christ was only a phantom, that He was a good man, and at His baptism He received a body that looked like a human body, but He was not really anything more than a man. That is the great heresy that John fights in his Gospel. He says, "You tell me that my Saviour was only a phantom and not the Word made flesh, I tell you He was truly flesh. I tell you He was a real man. I tell you He was wearied with His journey, and sat down beside a well. I tell you it was real flesh," says John, "I saw it when the soldier thrust his lance into the heart of the Lord Jesus, and rived His side open. I saw that there came out blood and water. He that saw it bear record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he said true, that ye might believe." "A real Christ," says John, "I saw Him. There came out blood and water from His side, who can doubt after that."

Then the third thing that they taught was this. If the body is morally evil, let us give full range to our desires and our lusts, and they plunged into the darkest forms of lust and evil. Now these are the things that Paul had to face; a creation that was essentially evil, a Christ who was a phantom and men whose lives were loose. So you can see in this magnificent paragraph, Chapter 1 - 15, down to Chapter 2 - 3, that the apostle develops the undiluted glory of His Saviour, as he does it nowhere else in all his writings. This is the highest peak of the lonely majesty of Christ that you will find anywhere in the apostolic writings.

Now we glanced on Sunday afternoon, at verses 15 to 17, and we noted that this phrase gave us the eternal and inherent nature of the Lord Jesus. He is the image of the invisible God, expressing in a visible form everything that the eternal blessed God could ever be. Then He is the Creator at whose foot lies the whole of creation. He made it, He guides it, and He is its goal. And then, when he has spoken of this glorious Person, holding everything together by His own inherent Godhead, in verses 18 to 20, he gives the first little paragraph, where he shows us that if Christ was something for all eternity, He became something in time. And what is it that He became? He Himself is the Head of the body, the Church; that

is, there is a time relation, and a living and abiding link between the Lord Jesus, and the catholic church, the whole church, as it lives today on earth, and as it covers the ages of time.

Now look at the setting; the Christ with whom you are linked is the Christ who is the image of God, from whose hands sprung creation by a word. Do you understand, that to you as an individual Christian and from the church as a whole, there run up joints and bands, and lines and links that bind you with the ever blessed Christ of God. The link can never be broken. God forged it, and as long as time lasts and eternity travels on, if you are a Christian redeemed by the Blood of Christ, you are linked with my Saviour, and nothing can ever divorce what God has married, as Paul puts it. You are married to Another, the Man that rose from the dead.

Well, now if He is all that, what has He done. Well, I read that the Father's pleasure is that He is to have in Heaven the first place, and in verses 19 and 20, Paul shows how that comes to pass. First God the Father's pleasure is that in Him there should dwell all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, "That in Him should all fulness dwell," That means, that when Christ was here, every quality of God was in Him. In the next phrase, the Spirit looks right on, and He says, "The day is coming when we are going to live in a reconciled world, that is the Father will never rest until He has brought Heaven and earth to the feet of His Son, and He is going to reconcile both worlds. Here nothing is said of those who are unsaved, and nothing is said of the lost. We know from other Scriptures that there will be through all eternity one black spot in the universe of God, but of that nothing is said here. This is the widest thought, that "having made peace through the Blood of His Cross" he had reconciled all things, and all worlds must bow in homage.

Now verse 21 brings me by a sudden leap to quite local things; for in verse 21 he says "You" - that is, "You Colossians" or "you people here in Tory Street." He leaves the catholic universal church. "Forget that for a moment," he says, "and come down to your own personal relations to Christ. You hath He reconciled who were enemies alienated by wicked works, in the body of His flesh." And what is He going to do? He is never going to rest until he has got you holy (positive), spotless (negative), and without any charge or challenge being laid at your door. He is never going to rest until he has got you absolutely flawless in His presence." We look down at our spotted robes, and how conscious we are of our littleness and failure and pettiness. What an enormous comfort it is that He is going to present us holy, spotless and unreprouvable in His sight, if you continue in the faith, grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel. That is the outstanding condition of the gospel. Going on in Christian faith is absolutely vital, and according to this passage, to the fulfilment of the wishes of the Saviour. "Now," says Paul, "would you not like to stand flawless before God? Would you not like to see every stain and every blemish gone from your garments? Every spot? Why! Of course you would, more than anything else. "Very well," says Paul, "listen; that shall be true if you continue in the faith grounded and settled; for Christ wants you, to present you flawless on that one condition." Then Paul turns from that which is local in the church and he gives the rest of the passage to an examination of his own service, again from two standpoints. As he says in verse 24 to 29 "Look at my service to the whole church;" and then in Chapter 2:1-3, "Look at my service for you local Christians." It is these things that I want to speak to you about.

Now you notice that at the end of verse 23 and the beginning of verse 25 he uses this expression, "Whereof I am made a minister." What does he mean? In verse 23 he says, "I am a minister of the gospel," and in verse 25, "I am a minister of the church." That is, Paul never forgot that there were two ministries committed to him. He was a mighty gospeller, a great man in his love for souls; but he never forgot that he was a good churchman too, and he says, "I have got two functions to see to. As a gospeller I go out into the world, and as a churchman I serve the saints. The same Christ who has called me for one, is He who has settled me for the other." And he looks at this service from two standpoints. First he says, "I am a graduate in the school of suffering," and you will see the mighty claim he makes in verse 24, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church." You notice the contrast between Paul's frail flesh and the everlasting Body of Christ that never perishes and never corrupts and never fades away. (1 Peter 1:4) Now what does he mean when he says "he fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ?"

Remember that you must never misquote and say "That which is behind of the SUFFERINGS of Christ." That would be heresy. "The sufferings of Christ" is a phrase that is used for the atoning sacrifice of the Saviour and nothing can be added to it. The sufferings of Christ are the sufficient and eternal answer to the holiness of God for the human need. But there is that which is linked to the afflictions of Christ; and in what sense? When our Lord Jesus Christ died He did not break His links with earth. He left a generation of men and women in which He was incarnated, or, in other words, Christ's life was extended. In His saints Christ lives again. As Paul says in Galatians 2 and 20, "Crucified with Christ.. Christ lives in me." Christ's life was extended: it did not cease as far as earth was concerned when He went back to Heaven. Now there are afflictions that have to be borne in the Gospel, and they will not diminish. Christ did not escape them. Saints in the second and third centuries suffered the afflictions of Christ, "Now," says Paul, "I am going to take up the whole service of the Saviour," and do you

know, I am very much afraid sometimes that we Christians by reason of our infidelities perhaps, and our shortcomings know far too little of suffering for the Lord Jesus Christ, and of bearing afflictions for His sake. Yet those of us who have tasted a little of them, who have known the loneliness and the loss and the reproach, know that it is greater riches than all the treasure of Egypt. That law of suffering is only brought to us through the experience of the years.

There came to our country, England, a few years ago a very remarkable Hindoo, a Christian Native Teacher, who had an uncommon insight into the character and love of God, and he told us many things when he was in England, concerning his experiences. One was that he came one day to a certain girls' college in India, and just as you gracious ladies wanted to do something for my wife, so they wanted to do something for the Sadhu Singh. So they knitted him a very nice pair of slippers and presented them to him at the close of his meeting, and he took them and held them in his hands and very warmly thanked the girls. "Now that I have thanked you," he said, "I want to tell you something. For twenty years I have walked around the Himalayan Mountains to Tibet and have always walked barefoot. Many a time on the rough ways to Tibet I have left behind my bleeding feet tracks of blood upon the path. I count that privilege, walking barefoot over rough places for Christ, one of my life's greatest gains." And he said to the children, "I am sure you would not wish to rob me of my joy of suffering for Christ," and the children understood perfectly. So he of the bleeding feet went his way, and at last, we understand, laid down his life in a lonely place, dying for His Saviour.

But you and I are called to live for Him in this world, and in the costly loyalties that service to Christ brings, we may fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for His Body's sake, which is the Church. You say you would serve your Saviour. Thank God for your hunger in this; thank God for your deep desire, and I am enormously cheered as I look about and see, in this audience, for instance, scores of young men who are seeking to serve Christ in the ministry of the Word. May I break away from Colossians for a moment and say something to you. There is a verse in the Old Testament which says that "the preacher... was King in Jerusalem." Please understand that the true king of men is always a preacher, not the man who wears the crown. The true king over men is always the preacher - "The preacher was king" says Solomon, and the Kingdom of the preacher is never measured by acreage or broad lands, but his kingdom is the kingdom of the mind. He has the privilege of moulding the intellects of men and women, and I would not exchange for all that this world can give, the high privilege of being king in Jerusalem.

Preachers are always kings, but lest I should have you leaping to your feet in haste to deliver yourselves speedily of some new thought on Romans, may I say this to my young friends who have honoured me with their confidence, do not be in too much of a hurry to take up this tremendous task of preaching. Bear witness about you in the open street, remembering that preaching demands long months and years of patient spiritual toil that a preacher who starts too young (though I cannot help but think of Charles Haddon Spurgeon whom nobody could keep down at the age of sixteen, and who was ministering to thousands when he was seventeen - five thousand at a time - but in any case he was an exception) very largely makes his reputation in the first two or three years of his public ministry, and if, as is the case very often in early life, you are crude in speech, bare in knowledge, and without much experience, people will accord you a certain reputation in your early youth that will very often follow you. I am not speaking of the sufferings of your audience. I am only reminding you of this that you may make your reputation in your earliest days when you begin to preach, and all through your life there will cling to you certain things. So do not be in a hurry. Your Lord Jesus began to preach when He was nearly thirty, Paul began when he was nearly forty, John the Baptist began when he was about twenty-nine and a half, so don't be in a hurry to make a reputation over which you and your friends may blush in later years.

We must hasten back to our subject. Paul says "I am by the grace of God a graduate in the school of suffering." Then the second thing he insists on is that he is a steward of a mighty mystery. What is that? Verse 27 "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Now the proposition in the Greek is richer than it is in the English. In English you can either say, "Christ in you" or "Christ among you," and these are two different ideas. But the proposition Paul uses can be better translated than either "in you" or "among you". Shall we say "within you" because the word means both; that is, Christ among the saints in the local church and Christ living in the heart of the believer. "So," says Paul, "that is the second thing I have to say to you. Listen - the thing I have to tell the people is that the Lord Jesus Christ is living in the hearts of His saints, and if you really believe that and if it becomes woven into the warp and woof of the fabric and tapestry of your life, if we realised that Christ is in us the hope of glory, that the fact that He is resident here means that I am going to be with Him there, it would be impossible for us to do many of the things that we do. He has come down to live in me here on earth. "It is unthinkable," says Paul, "that anything less than glory with Him shall crown my everlasting future. Why, that is a magnificent thing, to be steward of a trust like that, to tell the people that Christ is in them, the hope of glory. Why, life can offer nothing better than to stand in front of men and women and tell them that the living Christ is ready to live in their hearts."

"Now", he says, "there is a third thing I have to tell you. I have told

you that I have suffered with you and for you, and I have proclaimed this great mystery among you, and now I want you to know (in the first verse of chapter 2) that I have had a tremendous conflict about you and for those at Laodicea, and for other brethren that I have never seen." Brethren, I know nothing that rebukes me more than when I find a man stretched out in agony on behalf of Christians whom he has never seen. I find it hard enough to keep up with the hundreds of assemblies with which I have links, and have seen. But here is a man who stretches himself out in agony (that is the word) over people that he has never heard of. This man makes me ashamed. He rebukes me, "Paul, what is it you want? what is your agony about?" "Why," he says, "I want these Christians to be knit together in love; I want them to enjoy the riches of the full assurance of understanding; not a blind uncertain hope in Christ but a definite absolute trust on a divine conviction that this link has been forged between you and Him, that is going to last as long as God lasts, and that there is to be manifested in you in this world the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ, the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, even Christ."

Near my home in England there is a very stately, beautiful castle belonging to a certain Lord Leigh. The chief distinction of Leigh Castle is its famous picture gallery. On one occasion Sir George Chayter, a very famous critic of pictures was walking down the gallery with his host, who did his best to point out the pictures in the gallery, when suddenly Sir George stopped and looked at a little frame hidden well up against the ceiling. "My lord," he said, "I should like to look at that." "Well," said Lord Leigh carelessly, "I don't think you will find anything of value. I had it hung up there out of the way." "I should like to look at it," said Sir George. The host sent for a ladder, and the picture was brought down. The two men sat and looked at it. It was rather a daub showing a dish of apples and peaches, etc. very crudely done. Sir George took a pen-knife out of his pocket, saying "You are quite right - it is a very poor daub. Have I permission to lift a corner of it?" "Certainly," said the host, "you may have it." "I would not ask for that," said the critic, "but may I lift up a corner?" He lifted up a corner, carefully pulled off a few flakes, and said to his host, "I think you have here the gem of your collection. May I treat it and do what I can with it?" "Oh, yes, certainly," said Lord Leigh. Sir George took it to his room and with infinite pains and care cut off all the surfaces of paint, and there stood out, as perfect as it had been painted, three hundred years before, the picture of King Charles I. The critic's eye had noticed that right in the centre of a plum there was a human eye, and he had seen that there was something underneath the rough surface, and the story was this.

In the days of the Stuarts, the Leigh family had taken sides with the King, and when the Ironsides were at their gate, there was their most treasured possession, the King's picture, which would have been instantly confiscated, or destroyed. So the head of the house seized it, and roughly sketched over the King's portrait, the daub of fruit to hide the King's image. When he dies his secret dies with him and for three hundred years there was the rough painting, but underneath there was the King's signature. Underneath was the King's face all the time.

"Now", says Paul to his Colossian friends, "Listen. I know the roughness, I know the daub that your life has been. I know you are harried by doubts and fears and the rest of it. I know the temptation that comes to you to break away from the Gospel, I know it. But will you let me tell you the secret, which is Christ in you the hope of glory." And if you become conscious of the secret you will find that the crust will fall away, the daub will disappear, and fine and delicate and clear, there shall stand out the features of the King. Christ revealed in His saints. "And", says Paul, "there is one thing more to tell you, in the third verse of chapter two. In this Christ there are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Now you know the word "treasure" is used in two senses in the New Testament; sometimes it is used for the casket that holds something precious, and sometimes it is the precious thing itself. For instance, the wise men "opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh." The treasure there was the casket and the valuable was the gold. Then again the Lord Jesus uses the word treasure to express a thing of value itself, and here it is that Christ is exactly the treasure. He is the treasure in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge.

Now just stop for a moment here. We are in the midst of this world's wisdom and the rush and haste of modern life, where men find marvellous discoveries and all the mystery of the powers of nature. But we have to turn away from that and look at Christ. Who is He? He is the Master of the kingdoms of the universe, because He is the image of the invisible God. He is the Lord of the kingdoms of creation, because He made them. He is the Master of the kingdom of the Church, for He is the head of the Body. He is the Lord of the realms of the unseen for He is the Firstborn from the dead. He is the Master of all realms; He has drawn all to His feet. He has made peace by the blood of His Cross. He is the Master of Service; He came not to do His own will. And then in a perfect ecstasy of wonder Paul looks up and says, "What more can I say of Christ than this. He is the blessed Redeemed. He is both centre and circumference of all things. Take Him into your life. Get full, really full of Christ, and you will see what life can be in fellowship with Him." Do you wonder that as a man sits down and writes words like that, and His spirit points to that Christ in Glory, all the weariness and griefs and fears and anxieties of life, fall like an old cloak from his shoulders, and the heart begins to sing as he writes, "This is my Beloved, this is my Friend." He is coming soon, let us live for Him.

THIRD ADDRESS ON COLOSSIANS.

References:

Colossians 2. v. 4 - 7

Now, during preceding evenings we have looked at the first two sections of the Colossian letter. We have seen in chapter 1, verses 1 to 14, that the Church's life is a life of upward growth, for she begins her course as one that consists of men and women redeemed from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. Then in chapter 1:15, down to the second chapter and the third verse, after the Church's life, we have the Church's Lord and the apostle paints, as nowhere else in Scripture, the undying splendour of the majesty of his Master. That is, he shows that the Lord Jesus Christ has picked up every ray of light and every fragment of truth that is found in any system of faith that has ever broken on this world, whether it be Hebrew or Gentile, whether it be Oriental or Occidental, whether it be from the primitive days of man's history, or whether it be the last discovery in philosophy. There is nothing of truth that is not found in Christ. It is the Father's pleasure that in Him should all fulness dwell.

Now, tonight we come to the third great section which extends from chapter 2, verse 4, down to the 4th verse of chapter 3. The subject of this section is quite simple - the Church's union with her Lord. This union is first symbolised in circumcision, then in baptism and lastly in being quickened with Christ; but we must look at it with some measure of orderliness. We shall confine ourselves this evening to the two short paragraphs read, chapter 2, verses 4 to 7, in which we find out why the Epistle was written, and then verses 8 to 15, where we have the three shades of union with Christ, and their consequences. "Now," you say, "Why was the Epistle written?" Verse 4 - "And this I say lest any man beguile you with enticing words." What did you say? Not merely the third verse of chapter 2 "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" but the whole bright picture that he makes of Christ. "Now," he says, "I tell you about my Lord that no-one may lead you away with enticing words." Then in verse 5, using incomparable language, he says, "Though as to the frail flesh of my body I am lying bound in a Roman dungeon, yet in spirit as witness I am present with you, joying and beholding your formation and the military order of your faith in Christ." This is, as the hymn puts it, like a mighty army marched the Church at Colosse. This, I think, is the only time in the New Testament where you get the phrase that shows the Church in military formation, marching against the hosts of darkness.

Then he says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him, rooted" once for all in your faith in Christ, and every day being "built up in Him, established in the faith", just as you were taught in the olden days. That is, Paul has very little use for "new-light-theory" men who have always some fresh theory, born yesterday and agreed to by tomorrow. Remember this, that you must never accept as new light from God anything that cancels truth that you have known hitherto. You may add to your stock of knowledge limitlessly, but you must never allow the thing that you know to be disturbed by the thing that you do not know, and no new ray of light that may come to you should be received for a moment if it cancels any other thing that you have been taught from the Holy Scriptures. "So," says Paul, "I wrote this epistle to you Colossians that I might keep you from being taken away, led astray by some false teacher. Then in the 3th verse he shows three directions from which these heresies may move towards them. First, he says, "philosophy," secondly, "tradition" and thirdly "the rudiments of the world." What does he mean by these three phrases? Now, the word philosophy, originally a very noble word, merely meaning "the love of wisdom", (coined by a certain Pythagoras who taught that God was so distant and unknowable, and yet that men should seek Him out as far as they might because they loved wisdom) had been cheapened and brought down. It had come to mean a mere play of human opinion and every philosopher who felt inclined mounted the rostrum in ancient Greece and when he had expounded his verse, someone else would come behind and push him off the platform and immediately fill the place he had taken. The Jews used to take the rostrum and preach their doctrine also, but this was especially the philosophy of the Greeks

Now the second phrase "tradition;" "after the tradition of men," is borrowed from the 7th of Mark where our Lord Jesus exposes the inadequacy of human traditions. Again you must notice that tradition is an honourable work in itself. When you read in Thessalonians "keep the traditions" what does that mean? Why, that means truth handed to the first generation of Christians by apostolic men and then enshrined in Holy Scripture. But the moment tradition passes from generation to generation, and goes from hand to hand, like the manna, it breeds worms and goes corrupt; and every tradition that is passed on through the centuries crystallizes living truth and makes it merely a matter of useless formula, fine phrases from which you can take no living vital truth. Then, I say, tradition, whether it be connected with feast days or traditions respecting the new moon or whether it be traditions connected with dress, observances and the rest of it, in its effect on men is always a thing that crystallizes and hardens living truth, and Paul was desperately afraid of it.

Then the third thing was the question of "rudiments", mere religion "after the rudiments of the world" and the word has as its force and meaning the letters of the alphabet. That is, Paul imagines a deeply taught scholar, a man who is accustomed to read Homer in the original perhaps, into whose study you go one day and there he is sitting on the floor playing with a set of baby's letters, little

letters, A.B.C. "Now," says Paul, "what is ritualism, and days of fasting, and eating certain foods and not eating fish on Friday? Why, it is like a fully grown man who has gone back to kindergarten days, and is playing with the letters of the alphabet," says Paul, with biting scorn. Priests dressed in Aaron's cast-off garments, priests dressed in man's millinery and so on, is merely sitting back on the floor when you should be out doing a man's task and doing a man's work in the church, which is the only antidote for this.

Verse 9. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Now, you must carefully separate that statement from the one in Chapter 1 verse 19, where you read that it was the pleasure of "the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." The history of our blessed Saviour, as far as our vacillating lips may attempt to frame it, may, I think, be told in the following fashion: from all eternity the invisible fulness of deity dwelt in Christ, and for three and thirty years that fulness came to earth and was made visible to the eyes of men, and today that has become true which never was true in the past ages, that bodily in His own true Manhood, in session on the throne of God tonight there dwells all the fulness of God in a body. That is a unique and magnificent thing, a body of glory. For three and thirty years that glory dwelt in a body of humiliation. For three and thirty years that body dwelt in Galilee and Judea and went to Golgotha, but the mystery of the glory is this, that tonight in Heaven there is a Man in Whom all the fulness of deity has been poured, One Who is both casket and treasure. Notice the tremendous phrase that begins the next verse "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him." "That is," says Paul, "I don't want your philosophy, I don't want your traditions, or your systems, I want Christ, and He is enough for me. I do not ask anything else in life than to have living links with that Man in Heaven, and to draw from Him the strength which I need. Well now, let us understand quite simply that the way to union with the Lord Jesus always lies within the gate of Heaven, and hence in the following verse, verse 11, we have "In whom also ye are circumcised.....in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." Now, let us try to understand that. There seems to be in question that certain teachers at Colosse were urging the rite of circumcision upon Christians. "Now," says Paul, "circumcision after the Jewish order is merely a fragmentary thing, but Christianity deals with something vaster, something more radical. Christianity means that you have been stripped of yourself (for that is the force of that strong reinforced word translated "putting off") you have stripped off from yourself the body of the flesh; that is, you are no longer here as a man in the flesh, you are a man in the Spirit." That is how he puts it in Romans 8. But the point is this; now that we have put off the sins of the flesh (thank God we have), by His grace sin shall not and does not have dominion over us who believe. Then he thinks of something far more radical than that, he says "Not the flesh in its sins, but the flesh itself." That is to say, that tremendous and subtle power, the power of self in a man. For remember this, that many a man has conquered (and thanks be to God for it) the sins of the flesh in his life and is able to stand in white robes before his fellows so far as that is concerned; and yet deep down in the core of his life, a man like that will discover as he searches himself, that the flesh will raise itself in ten thousand disguises and array itself in garments of stainless white.

We believe that we are guided by zeal for God and very often it is a display of our own private dislikes and prejudices. We believe it is some truth that holds us and many a time it is our sectarian and proud spirit. We believe we are governed by some text of Scripture in some action we take and it may be that Scripture has been twisted to make it the instrument of some prejudice that held us for forty years, and for forty years we have never had the open-heartedness or the spiritual humility to re-examine the thing that, may be, separates us in practical love and fellowship from men who should have our love and our communion. Self is the most subtle thing that this world and this life of ours knows. As the late Dr. Pierson used to say "The getting rid of self is like peeling an onion. You take one layer off the onion and there is another beneath it, and with your sharp knife you cut and cut. Layer after layer gives way and it falls into the basin beneath, and when at long last you come to a tiny hard core, you marvel that you took so much time to get to the bottom of things. You might have done it more quickly perhaps, but this lesson of self and its dominion over our minds and our religious minds most of all, is a thing that is enough to perplex and baffle us. "But," says Paul, in a sense, "what is your religion but this, the putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of the Saviour?"

Sometime ago I had a rare thing, fortunately, for me, a sleepless night. So I got up and fumbled round the room to find a book, and of all things I came across a "History of Mohammedanism." I thought it looked dead enough to send me to sleep so I started it and before long I did not want to go to sleep for this is one of the things I read:- "There was in India many years ago one of the Mohammedan conquerors of the Gujarat, Mahmud. And the first tenet in the Mohammedan faith is a crusade against idol or image worship. This man came to the City of Somnath and on entering the Buddhist temple dedicated to Siva he immediately ordered the destruction of every idol that the place contained. The high priest of the temple, supported by all his fellows came and prostrated themselves in front of the conqueror and besought him to spare one image, an enormous diety made of wood, with its breast shining with gems of priceless worth. They besought him that he would spare their image:

"Handsome price of gold they offered, pearls of price and jewels rare,
Choicest of their idols offered, this their dearest would be spare,
And amongst his friends they counselled that he should his hand withhold,
And that single idol suffer, and accept the proffered gold."

The man leaned upon his axe for a moment and thought. Then he said "I would rather be known as an image breaker than be called an idol seller," and with this, he lifted his great axe and flung it straight at the wooden breast of the image. As the axe struck the image there was a sound of rending wood, and then from the very heart of the image there rained down a great cataract of priceless rubies, diamonds, and all the hidden treasure that had been stored in the image as a last hiding place by those covetous priests. Thus he got ten times more out of his decision and action than he would have had he listened to those men and spared this thing. My brother and sister, you may stand in front of some idol and in your heart and mind there may be hidden practices, antipathies, jealousies, ten thousand evil things. We want to hold them with both hands, we are anxious to spare them, we are not ready for anything else. We are quite prepared to play around with a little religion, we are quite prepared to have a little circumcision, if you please. "No," says Paul, "This is something not made with hands, this is the putting off of the flesh." It is, the way of thinking, the faculty and way of looking at life, and it makes for us no love for pettiness, smallness, jealousy, sin, hidden idolatry. He stands before us and he says, "Listen, there is the man that you were;" ('the old man' as he calls it), "there is the man you used to be. Put that man off, and be dressed in the robes of Christ," and then "For your union with Christ first is the demand to put off the body of the flesh."

Then the second thing in verse 12, is the burial that takes place in baptism. There is no question that the writer is thinking of the ancient and original mode of baptism, that is, by a person confessing his faith in Christ and going down beneath the waters. The very force of the language, as in Romans 6, shows that he has the outward symbol in mind, but I need hardly say that he thinks of something far deeper even than the symbol. Paul is thinking of this; that, in the mind of God, Christ died historically about the year 29 A.D. and, as He breathed out His life in historical fact, in Divine intention, as they carried Christ to Joseph's tomb, all unseen they carried another body, the Body of Christ on earth. Not the shrine in which He lived in Nazareth, but they carried the whole Body of His redeemed, and they were all buried with Him, buried with Him in Joseph's tomb. In other words, representatively when He died, we died. When He was laid in the grave, we were laid in our graves. And how does this stand in regard to our ambitions and our desires? Have we accepted this? That baptism means that I take the ground that I am not fit to be seen before the eye of God. The dead must be buried out of sight as Abraham put it. "Yes," says God, "that is baptism, if you will take that position, buried with Him, dying and saying farewell to this world, going down on the nearer side of the baptismal tank to rise on the further shore." We have all to be quickened with Him, raised from that mystic death, and set out to walk in this world in newness and power of life, and in imagery I see these candidates coming to the steps, I see them start out on this new journey of life and I notice that every man carries in his hand a torn piece of parchment. And I say, "Baptismal candidate, what is it that you have there?" and he opens it and says, "This parchment? Why it is the handwriting of ordinances that was against me." "But," I say, "it has got a hole in it, there is a nail hole in the parchment." And he says, "Don't you know what it is? Christ carried that law of Moses, not viewed as the inspiration and expression of the will of God, but viewed as a tablet, and it has been broken. He took the law of God and on His solitary Cross of Calvary He drove the nail through the law." That is, as in the ancient Hebrew days, when a man had a great debt and by some means managed to pay it, as a sign of his gladness the debtor used to take the parchment of his indebtedness and nail it to the door-post that all the neighbours might see that he was once more a free man. "And," says Paul, "Christ has taken the bill of man's indebtedness, sin, death, judgment, everything, and nailed it to the Cross of Calvary." You know the old hymn:

"He gave me back the bond,
It was a heavy debt,
And as He gave He smiled and said,
'Thou wilt not me forget.'

He gave me back the bond,
The seal was torn away,
And as He gave to me He said,
'Think thou on me alway'.

It is a bond no more,
Yet it shall ever tell,
That all I owed was fully paid,
By my Immanuel.

This bond I still will keep,
Although it cancelled be,
It tells me of the love of One,
Who suffered there for me."

"Nailing the handwriting of ordinances against us to His Cross" says Paul. Thus,

your third act of union with Christ is this; having come out of your grave, and looking across the baptismal tank to the further shore, you see the Cross of your Saviour, and there nailed to that Cross is the bond of your indebtedness, with all your sin upon it. And, thank God, no hand can ever take that bond down from the Cross, but He gives it to me as a relic, to be carried as an abiding witness of the work of the Saviour.

Then we come finally to verse 15, and the commentators say that this is the most obscure verse in the New Testament, and I do not propose to give you those avenues of exposition that a competent man will offer you. I am only going to do the conceited thing and tell you what I think the text means. We will go for a walk down this road of exploration together. This is what the text means to me - Having stripped off Himself principalities and powers He made a show of them, openly triumphing in it. The word translated "spoiled" is only found twice in the New Testament; the first time in verse 11, putting off as a discarded robe; and the next time is in chapter 3, verse 9, you have put off a strong tyrant, taken it off, laid it aside, done with it for ever. Here is the Lord of Glory marching from the gates of death, and around these gates He finds waiting for Him hosts of malignant evil spirits. You say "Are the principalities and powers here evil spirits?" I think so. In the two previous times in this epistle where principalities and powers are spoken of, they are connected with a parallel passage in Ephesians 6 "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers...in high places." What is the picture? There stands the Son. We read in Ephesians that God has lifted His Son "far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named." And here the great apostle describes that tremendous struggle in the dark, when every power of Hell was pitted against the blessed Son of God. For if He once reaches in manhood that throne that is waiting for Him, never again as long as the devil lives and exists can he hinder the passage to the throne, of the countless millions of the redeemed; and, to use a figure, like the poisoned Nessus shirt of Hercules, which the old god stripped off himself and posted away to his glory, so the Lord Jesus Christ stripped Himself from those evil and hostile powers that were set to bar His way, that would cling to Him like leaches. He tore them from Him, made a show of them openly in flinging them like discarded rags to the ground; then went up, triumphing over them, to the welcome that awaited Him.

Why does Paul use such tremendous language to describe Christ's conflicts? He is thinking in terms of the Greek language of the time. How Christ has met the whole force of Roman and Greek gods, how the ancient philosophies and wisdoms, everyone of them, would be found turned to discord and put to shame by the risen Saviour. That is, can I say it, when you have touched the Christ gone up to glory, you have left behind you all the rocks of human wisdom and all the false gods. As Mrs. Browning puts it:

It was the hour when One in Sion hung for love's sake on a cross
And His brow grew chill with dying, and His soul grew faint with loss;
When His priestly blood dropped downward, and His kingly eyes looked
throneward -

Then, Pan was dead.

By the love, He stood alone in His sole Godhead rose complete,
And the false gods fell down moaning, each from off his golden seat,
All the false gods with a cry rendered up their
deity -

Pan, Pan was dead.

Do you see the point? That is, the sufficiency of your Saviour is such, and your union with Him so complete, that if He really is up there in Heaven far above all principalities and powers (friendly or hostile makes no difference), if He really is up there tonight, what does it mean to you, and other men and women going into the world and living lives of toil, trial, temptation and heart-ache? Why, I say, my friends, if we once get hold of this triple-union, circumcised in Him, by grace I have done with the body of the flesh, buried with Him I have said farewell to this world, this man, this power, these sins, and quickened and risen with Him I am here in this world to walk across the wilderness of time, across the plains of this world, on and on in faith, with Christ my glorious Saviour; master of sin, having the heart purged and cleansed by the action of Christ's most blessed Word; living here in this world a life of triumph, a life of victory; looking on the vaunted intellectual treasures of the world, knowing that these are only as we have said, children's lotteries lying on the floor. We have Christ in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and you are made complete in Him, Who is the head of all principality and power.

FOURTH ADDRESS ON COLOSSIANS.

References: Colossians 2: 16 to end.

Now, the section which we have read plainly falls into four brief paragraphs, each with its private message, the first and the third - negative, the second and the fourth positive. The first section, verses 16 to 23 deals with the putting off and getting rid of ritualism and rationalistic men. Chapter 3 verses 1 to 4, shows you where Christ is, and that there is the home of the heart. Chapter 3, verses 5 down to 9 negatively tells you what to get rid of, verses 10 to 17 tell us what to put on, and in what garments or robes the soul is to stand in its walk through this world. Now, I hope, very briefly, to open to you these four paragraphs. You will notice first, chapter 2:16 to the end deals with two outward tendencies that are found in every one of us. First the tendency to outward ritualism; (and we shall see in a moment that this teaches us much more than many may think) and secondly to high mystical claims of spiritual experiences which were not really justified in utter pagans like these.

Paul shows us in chapter 2:14 that the Lord Jesus Christ had taken the law and like a debtor's fragment of parchment He had nailed it to His cross, "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us." "Now," he says, "here you Colossians are judging one another and picking holes in each other over questions of meat and of drink and of the keeping of holy days." Now, he does not say that it is wrong for a man to keep Easter or Christmas, he merely says we are not to judge one another in these matters. He does not say that it is wrong for a man to set a taboo saying "You must not eat that, or you must not drink this," but he says, "You are absolutely forbidden to judge your brother in that matter." For under the law there were many taboos that dealt with food, and men were told what they should and should not do. In regard to drink there were two cases, in which a Nazarite, during his vow season, and the priest, in the execution of his duties, were forbidden to drink wine, and these people were trying to fasten down as a Divine law that every Christian was to abstain from the drinking of wine. They were trying to hold people down to a universal law for Christians, that they were not to do this, nor to drink that.

Now, I need hardly say that the path of prudence and of wisdom, I judge, in these temperate climes, is that we should leave wine severely alone, but do let us remember that we are absolutely forbidden to interfere with the liberty of our brethren in matters of this kind. Our Lord Jesus has told us as clearly as words can speak that nothing that goes into the mouth can defile a man, but the moment you exalt into a personal habit anything that you put into your mouth, the moment you make that a test of spiritual attainment or piety, the moment you criticise or call down your brother because he feels he has liberty in that direction you are at a definite issue with this Scripture. Please understand that ritualism in these matters is by no means dead in the circles in which we move. I think I can humbly say that I have used none of these things, that I am not in the habit of indulging in any of the different directions in which I see some giving themselves liberty, but do remember that we are forbidden to judge one another on that point. Wise and godly counsel from elders to youngers is always in order, but to judge one another is always forbidden, and is a mark of the flesh.

Then the second tendency, apart from ritualism, is, according to verse 18, that by a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, men should seek to intrude into or deal in regions that are merely suburban, or matters of scaffolding. Now we know how subtly throughout Christendom there has been the introduction of the angels and the saints and the many mediators who have practically displaced Christ. By a supposed humility men have said "I am not fit to go to Christ, so I will erect a barricade of angels and saints, and they shall act for me between my soul and Christ." Now, he does not say that we are forbidden to judge one another in that matter, that is a very different thing from our little bits of ritualism. Here he says that these things beguile us, or spoil us in our spiritual growth, and we have no authority to follow nor to condone in any sense the setting up of a mediator between the soul and the Son of God. That is not a matter of judgment, it is a matter of divine and eternal truth. But in any case the trend of the whole passage is this: we died with Christ, and I think we know that the tendency with us as we grow older is to become very busy with external things. We are enormously interested as to who can come into our meeting and who can be kept out, we are gravely exercised as to whether you should have an organ or whether you should not. I have known Christians nearly shattered in their Church relationships over the question as to whether you should take the Lord's Supper to a bed-fast invalid or not.

Those men live in the suburbs, they just play about in the scaffolding of Church life. "And," says Paul with tremendous dignity, "remember, the Christian has died with Christ to all that kind of thing, that the function of the Church is a big thing." As the late Lord Salisbury used to say to his Cabinet "My Lords, for the sake of God, let us buy big maps." Look at things largely, don't dwarf your minds and spend your life playing with external things, and pieces of scaffolding. Do we understand that the task and business of the Church

is that she is the army of Jehovah, fighting the massed forces of Satan, sin and death? That the whole of her business in life is to hold the power of Satan in leash? That all these petty little things that divide and separate the hearts of saints is merely giving ammunition to the hosts of evil, and weakening the strength and spiritual power of saints? "So," says Paul, "these things have a show of wisdom in will worship, and people will regard you as a devoted person if you are very careful about these matters." But," he says, "I have got a better thing for you than that." He shows first the negative side, then he takes up a different line of things.

In his great paragraph Chapter 3, verses 1 to 4, he leaves all these little questions of eating and drinking and keeping or not keeping laws, and with tremendous force he says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above....set your affections on things above." You notice the verbs? First "seek" and then "set". Make a journey of the soul and find Christ in Glory, and when you have found Him, he says, then anchor your mind on heavenly and eternal things, and note, "For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." Where is my life? On earth? No, saving as to the duties and responsibilities of the day. My true life is lived there in Heaven, where Christ is. The life at the moment is hidden, but it won't be hidden long, he says. It is hidden today, but when Christ who is our Life shall appear then the life shall be manifested and seen before the universe. Here he is not thinking of the rapture, he is thinking of the day of manifestation, when Christ stands with His perfected Saints by His side, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Yes, but how does this hidden life manifest itself? I remember, years ago when in Brazil, from the little wooden hut where I stayed we had to cross a single plank bridge to get to the main road. Now, on this side of the stream there was very seldom sunshine. The ground was barren, hard and absolutely bare. But on the brink of the further shore of the stream there was perpetual sunshine, bright flowers and bushes. The difference between the two sides was noticeable. One morning as I was going out, and just putting my foot on the plank to cross I noticed on the left hand side of the streamlet a magnificent plant in full vigour and beauty. I turned back to see how it was that, in this barren and sunless stretch, with circumstances so unfriendly that nothing could really thrive, such a lovely thing had grown there, and I was delighted to notice that the plant had come from the other side of the river, where the sunshine was. It had sent a tendril that had gripped along the grooves in the plank, and then waving it about in the air had found a piece of ground into which it could dig and bury its head, and then a few inches away it lifted its crest and brought forth exquisite flowers in the midst of bareness. This tendril ran from the root, with tropical luxuriance, for about nine or ten feet. As it ran to the other side, and lifted its head you could see that it drew its nourishment from the other side, its life was strengthened and sustained by the sunshine which had come from the further side of the river. And with deep precision I may say that there exactly is the Christian pathway, life in the midst of an unfriendly world, where sin and the blackness of our surroundings might well condemn us to sterility. Yet here and there you will see a man filled with the Spirit, you will see a woman bringing forth fruit to God, and you wonder, when on these unfriendly shores you meet such people as these, how they sustain their lives. This is the hidden life. You died, that is you cut the links with the hosts of sin in the past, and your life is hid with Christ. It is up there, He is your life, and because you draw from these hidden springs, bud, blossom and flower are produced.

"Now," says Paul, "let us get back to earth. We have sat with Christ in glory, and it may seem a very distant and remote region, but," he says in verses 5 to 9, "now we will come down to earth and find what this expression 'you died' involves." Now, Paul is an amazingly reasonable man and he does not draw the sins all on the same level, as being of the same gravity. You will notice the care and order of his language. "Now," he says, "if your life is really linked with Christ, in verses 5 to 7 there is the first thing that you have to attend to, and that is, with a sharp knife (it is a reference to the sharp knife of Joshua that was used on the banks of Jordan) you are to put to death the forms of sin in which the men of the world delighted in, in the first century. There is the dark list; uncleanness, and every kind of moral impurity. Now you notice how you have to deal with these things, you have got to kill them outright. That word "mortify" is a word that means to stab right into the heart and kill; have done with the thing. And let every young man here know in his heart that there is no possibility of power or of usefulness in the service of God until these five things have been put to death, they are evil, they are unclean, and, as Paul says, they are the things you used to walk in before you took your Saviour. They must be mortified, placed in the past tense, stabbed to the heart.

Then in verses 8 and 9 he uses quite different language, quite as distinct, and yet softer. He comes to things which are more common amongst Christian people, and things to which everyone of us knows there is a native proneness in our hearts. Here he uses another figure, not the knife, but the laying aside of an old coat. He says, "Put off these things." Three of them are moods that sometimes govern us, and govern Christian people. Remember the first is anger, that is, the deep-seated, frozen sleep of bitterness. Then wrath, the explosion

into outward and visible action. Thirdly malice, the slowly growing, slumbering fires of animosity, dislike and hatred. "Now," he says, "put these things off." They are not in the same category as verse 5, but they are things that maim and hinder spiritual living. "Then," he says, "there are two more, blasphemy" (and that word does not mean as in the English language, "speaking against God" but in the Greek language "speaking against man in the image of God," i.e., any criticism and any evil speaking) and finally, absolutely, exact and unqualified, no filthy speech."

"Now," he says, "the putting off of these things is the effect of having died with Christ." Beloved friends, we need all of us to search our own hearts, and many a time before one puts one's head on one's pillow it is well to enquire if we have been guilty of these things which are so often mentioned in the Pauline letters. I would seek to discover whether I have fallen into these things on this particular day, and if I have I would drag them to the light, and show them the brightness of the One who is my Life. We are, many of us, perhaps, far too careless about judging private sin, and far too quick to forgive ourselves and far too slow to be lenient with others. "You have put off these things," says Paul, "but you need not stand unclothed." Now he describes the robe of the soul. I suppose all of us read in the newspaper concerning a very solemn part in the Coronation ceremony. You read how his gracious Majesty was disrobed of almost everything that he came into the Abbey dressed in. There he stood with very little on him, and peer after peer and high officer of state, one after another, marched up and robed his Majesty. Every garment that they put upon him had a fresh and an ancient symbolism, going back sometimes twelve or thirteen hundred years to the coronation of the Saxon kings.

"Now," says Paul, "I send the officers of Heaven to robe you. You have laid aside malice, wrath, uncleanness. You have dealt firmly with sin in all its manifestation in your lives. What shall happen next? "Well," he says, "Now I am going to clothe you. You have put off, now put on." And notice what it is, verse 10. "You have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge." That double use of the word "new" is very interesting. The first time it is "the new man," and means new as opposed to old, that is, there was the old man, the man you used to be, now there is the new man that has arisen in the sense of time. Then he uses the word "new" in the next line, and here it is not "new" in time but "new" in quality. Perhaps I may illustrate it. Here is a lady, she says to her friend, "I was down in Willis Street today, and I saw an entirely new hat, and I shall never be happy till I get it." That is a very common remark, isn't it? Knowing not what she means, being a mere man, I look on and listen and I say, "I wonder what she means. Does she mean she wants a new hat because the one she is wearing at present is worn out? Does she mean she wants a new hat, new entirely? Or does the dear lady mean that she wants a new hat the like of which was never seen before by any woman since Eve?" Now, you may easily understand how different these two hats would be. One would be a hat exactly like the last one but it is new in time, and the other would be a hat never seen before. Now, Paul uses both words. "Put on the new man" that is "new" in time as opposed to the old man that you used to be. Then "Be renewed", he says, that is, a new kind of man in quality, so different that all its positives are negatives of the old man, and all its negatives are positives of the old man. In other words, this new man here is looked at from an entirely different standpoint from the old standpoint; and as you go through the New Testament, sometimes when you get such phrases as "the new man," it merely means a man new in time, and at other times it means a man of a new order.

"Well," says Paul, "let us look at this now in detail." And in verse 11 he shows that this Christ of ours has broken down all the walls and barriers that divide men. First, racial, Greek and Jew. It is the only time in the New Testament where you get the Greek first and then the Jew. (You often get the Jew and the Greek). That is, it is inclusive of all men, racially. Then circumcision and uncircumcision, that is, it is inclusive of all men religiously. But you will notice that there is no conjunction in the next two barriers; it does not say Barbarian and Scythian, it says, Barbarian, Scythian. The reason is this: the Barbarian was a man of the West, he came from the Roman lands and the Scythian was a typical barbarian of the East, he came from the east of Dacia. Barbarians from Rome, Scythians from Asia and the far East. But Christ has bound every man. There is no conjunction needed. Whatever our position in life, we are to be one. The glorious person of Christ is all, He fills the landscape; there is no room for any divergence or barrier or dividing wall between God's people. And here we have again in verse 12 the garment of the soul described. "Put on therefore as the elect of God holy and beloved, first, the heart of compassion." Brethren, I wonder if that is not one of the things that we need perhaps more than anything else to do? We speak perhaps harshly or carelessly to our brother and we never know what that man is going through. Behind that quiet courteous face, and that wall of expression that hides feeling, as so many of us know but do not generally show, we have no knowledge of what our brother may be going through. Therefore, as children of God let us be pitiful with one another.

One of our British judges recently published his memoirs, and he tells of a particular case where there was a very rough, bullying barrister who hindered and bewildered and confused every witness. And at last there was brought into the witness box a middle-aged, grey, faded, tired looking woman. Now the whole of this case turned about one question, on what day was a certain document

signed, it was a will and the petition was that it was a forged signature after the death of the Testator, and the great point that this barrister wanted to make with this witness was to shake her evidence. He thundered at her and shouted questions and all the time she stood quietly there and gave simple answers and at last he thundered at this quiet woman and said, "Now, Madam," how can you be positively certain that the will was dated on this day?" She was a little embarrassed for a moment, and turned to the judge, and seeing he had a kind face she said, "My Lord, I know it was the 21st of August because that was the day when my baby died." A silence fell on the court, and no man would have changed places with the hectoring, bullying barrister who had all the time been driving a knife deep into that woman's heart, bringing up memories of which he knew nothing, of her dead baby. Are we careful in the way that we speak to one another? Are we sufficiently cautious in the judgment we pass on one another, or utter concerning one another? Do we know all the facts, and are we sure that it is for us to sit on the judgment seat, and it may be, tear a brother's reputation to pieces, or dig up some matter from the forgotten past that should have been buried years ago?

So Paul begins, "Listen," he says, "as you stand there waiting to be robed in the garments of Christ, the raiment of the soul which befits the man who has dealt with these evil things, first put on the heart of compassion, then kindness, humility of mind, meekness, long suffering, forgiveness, and if you have got a quarrel with anyone, forgive them at once." "But", you say, "I thought he was going to tell us about speaking with tongues, casting our demons, and doing mighty works with the sick. Is that all?" I don't read that our Lord Jesus spoke with tongues, but I do read that he was meek and lowly in heart, and I can assure you that it is a mere twopence ha'penny trifle to go round speaking in strange tongues. It is baby work. But I tell you what is difficult, and that is to be clothed in the kind of suit of clothes that is described here. That is a job for you, my man, and when you have fooled about with manifestations, and you have got your heart puffed up with every kind of thing (I know what I am talking about, I have had between 70 and 80 letters in the last ten days, I know what is in them and nobody else does and nobody else will, but - I know what I am talking about) my brother and my sister, you have got the hardest task in the world ahead of you, to be dressed in the raiment of God, and to go about with humility, and have a compassionate heart. Do you think the Lord Jesus Christ is enormously interested that your views of the seventy weeks should be regarded with the utmost care? Don't you think He is more interested that you should be compassionate? Which do you think is the most valuable? These studies show that I do not in any way despise accurate thinking and the correct usage of Holy Scripture. Don't misunderstand me there. "These are the things you ought to have done, and here are the things you must not leave undone, and" said Paul, "let us put the girdle on, for a man's raiment never keeps its place till he puts on his girdle." Verse 14. "And above and around all these things put love, which is the girdle of perfectness." If your heart is a chamber where love lives, and the other garments are in perfect order, you will be a well dressed man, my friend.

"Now," says Paul in closing, "there are four pieces of counsel I want to give you." The first is in verse 15, "That the peace of Christ must be umpire in your hearts." What he means is this: A boy goes to the football field, and he watches the two teams and he sees there is a question about a foul. He does not look at the players, he looks at the umpire, and what the umpire says settles it at once. "Now," says Paul, "on the field of life there is an umpire, and his name is 'The Peace of Christ,' and whenever you have a decision to make and a problem to settle ask the Umpire and say, 'Lord Jesus, will this action receive the seal of Thy peace in me, or will it, so to speak, spoil the peace in my heart?'" "Why," you say, "surely I can go to that place?" (some place of amusement that the world offers). "Well," you say, "will the peace of Christ be in evidence there? Should I have an untroubled heart if the most spiritual person that I knew was standing at the door as I came out? Would my conscience be pricked? The Umpire has given his decision. "Let the peace of Christ be Umpire in all judgments in your heart," says Paul. Now the second thing, is "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" and that means give yourself to the ministry of God's Word, as the next clause shows "in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another." The business of the servant of Christ who handles His word is first to teach the people what it means, and then to apply it to their ways and consciences. And remember, wherever you go, he says, leave the impression that, you are an intensely happy man that is, the love of Christ has made you sing, and so you take a psalm (that is the experience you have had of the Saviour (Psalm - I touch) and the hymns, directing homage and worship to God, and the spiritual songs, any song to Him that you want to sing. It is the outward experience which deals with what lies behind you, and the hymn rises up to God, and the spiritual song is what you brighten the way with as you go home. The last and final word is this "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." That is, put the signature of Christ above your deeds, your words, your conversation, and the reading in which you indulge. What will that make your life? Radiant, strong, clean; a life that consciously draws its supplies from Christ in Heaven, because your life is Christ.

I remember years ago in England I was staying near a large house at which the heir of the house, a young fellow called Arthur Scott, was celebrating his majority. His father gave a great party and dance and everything else for his

son's coming-of-age. Amongst the members of the family there was a very wealthy old uncle, and this young man counted definitely on a fairly handsome gift from him. Well, his uncle drove up to the house and said he would not stop to the ball, but he would just like to give the lad two envelopes. "One," he said "you may open now and the other you must open when you go to bed tonight." When the evening was in progress the young man opened the first envelope and was very gratified to find a handsome cheque with which he could do a lot of things, and his fingers were tingling to open the second envelope, but he was a sufficiently honourable man to leave it as instructed. So he put it in his pocket and forgot about it, and was just getting into bed when suddenly the remembrance flashed across his mind of the second envelope. He got up out of bed and putting on the light searched in his clothes and eventually produced the envelope. He broke the seal and to his surprise there was nothing in it but a little slip of paper with these words upon it "To me to live is" and then a line. Young Arthur, whom I came to know very well later stood there looking at this piece of paper. He knew little of Scripture, but I have no doubt the Spirit of God brought to his remembrance that there was one place in Scripture which says "To me to live is Christ." "Now," he thought, "I wonder why my uncle did not finish the verse" and in a flash he saw it was a challenge, that every man can take 5/6ths of this verse, but only to a remnant is the whole text available. "To me to live" you say, sitting here tonight, "is--what?" Is it to get on in business, to have the biggest business in Wellington, in my particular line?" "To me to live," says a young man, "is to get Mary Jane to say she will be my wife." "To me to live is to be chosen for a particular football match, where my picture will be in the papers." It is going on all around us "To me to live is--?" Very well, is that the only answer you can give, is there nothing better?

Yes, there is that little Jew sitting in prison, "in bodily presence weak and in speech contemptible" scarred and maimed, having gone through thirty years of suffering for his Saviour, and there, with the weight of the iron on his wrists he writes the words, painfully and slowly, "To me to live is Christ." Shall it be so? Remember, here is no dividing line, merely that text, a great gulf between the saved and the unsaved. It is for every man to first settle the question, is it to be Heaven or Hell? And when you have settled that question, my friend, the second one steps on the threshold and you cannot push it away. It is not, "Is it Heaven or Hell?" any longer. No, but "Is it to be Heaven or Earth?" Are you going to live for time and give your poverty to Christ at the end? Or will you say with simplicity and with trust, "Lord Jesus I died with Thee, I seek the things that are above, I set my heart on these things." If you do, you will find that all your life is nourished from Heavenly springs; Christ your life will be closer to you than breathing, and nearer than hands or feet.

Well, beloved, there remains nothing more for me to do than this: to thank you for the many confidences shown me and the many kindnesses received.

My object in taking these studies was to give my young friends a desire for the majesty and beauty of Scripture, that they might see that the whole beauty of study is this, to be able to competently and carefully take Holy Scripture and interpret it to the people. Remember, that down through Church history we always find that the opening of the Word of God is for ministry that brings peace, rest and the most lasting gain to the soul. So, my brother, I beseech you, in the name of my Master, in days when Holy Scripture is scoffed at and denied, when it is reduced to the level of human thinking, see to it that for you Holy Scripture stands as an oracle on which you rest, the Bread that your soul needs, the Water that you drink, and the Light that guides you across the dark plains of a weary world. Amen.

"Let the Redeemed of the Lord say so."

References:

Psalm 107, vs. 1 - 3, 4 - 9, 9 - 16
17 - 22, 23 - 32, 33 and 34.
35 - 38, 39 - 40, 41 - 43.

Now, the inspired hand of God shines out in two directions when a man deals with the book of Psalms. First there is the writing of the Book itself, and this we owe to a number of authors, then almost as important there is the work of the Compilor, that is, the inspired servant who arranged the Psalms in their different settings, and with the most amazing skill placed them in such an order that each one telescopes into the other in the most perfect and admirable way. Now, for the sake of the youngest present, just for a moment I want to remind you that the Book of Psalms has been divided or separated into five smaller volumes, and to stir up your minds, will you please turn to Psalm 41. You will find at the end of the first book, that is Psalm 41: 13, that there is an inscription which was not part of the original Psalm, but is placed by the Holy Ghost at the end of that section 41: 13, and it reads like this - "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel....Amen and Amen." Now the reason why that dear man exploded in that doxology was this - that the whole of that first book (answering to the Book of Genesis) dealt with Christ as the last Adam, and that is why you get most of the Messianic Psalms in the first book. Turn to Psalm 72, verse 18. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel....Amen and Amen." Now, that book deals with the redemptive work of Christ and answers to Exodus, so you get very few distinctly Kingdom or Messianic Psalms, and these Psalms largely deal with the need for the Cross and God's supply. Now turn to Psalm 89, the last verse, the close of the third book, verse 52, and if you read through you find that this is the Leviticus of the three books. Hence you find the inner sanctuary and springling all through the book, at least in the first part of it. "Blessed be the Lord God for evermore... Amen and Amen." Then we turn to Psalm 106, the end of the fourth book, that answers to the book of Numbers, so you have a great deal about death and the wilderness journey, beginning with that famous 90th Psalm which we sing in paraphrase "Oh God our help in ages past" and ending with Psalm 106 v.48 "Blessed be the Lord God....Amen and Amen."

Now we will leave that, and I want to speak to you tonight about the first Psalm in the fifth book, that is, Psalm 107. May I say to begin with, that in the Psalms we often find the subject, the goal to which the writer is moving, placed in the first two or three verses. You will find that a key to the Book of Psalms which will help you enormously. That is, verses 1 to 3 often give you the key and then in the third or fourth verse as the case may be, the writer will move forward till he reaches the point when he began.

Now the point of the Psalm before us plainly is this: "Give thanks unto the Lord, let the redeemed of the Lord say so." The Psalmist is rebuking dumb believers, he is saying "There is no such thing as a dumb spirit to be allowed among the people of God," that we must say so, if Christ has really redeemed us, and say it with such power that men will bow and believe it, and the sum of all I have to say tonight is to bring that one great phrase before you "Let the Redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." But we must try to be orderly, so we shall just glance at the body of the Psalm, where you will find first of all, as we were noticing in the reading, there are four panels, making one fair picture of redemption.

The first panel depicts a caravan lost in the desert, the second a group of prisoners sitting with clanking chains in a dark dungeon, then a sick man in the shadow of death, suffering upon his bed, unable to do anything, and then the fourth panel, a terrible storm at sea, with even experienced sailors staggering to and fro like drunken men, unable to keep a footing on the slippery decks. A lost caravan, prisoners in the dark, a sick man breathing out his life, and a man threatened by the danger of a sinking ship.

These are God's four great parables of man's need, but the youngest of you will have noticed something more than this. Before we come to ourselves, we have to see that here is a prophetic picture of four great periods of Israel's history. The Psalmist describes it, "Why," he says, "we set out and we wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way. We found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty our souls fainted within us" and every Hebrew reading these words would say at once, "Yes, that is it. We remember Moses and Aaron in the days of the desert, how for forty years we wandered there, and again and again God came in when we cried to Him." "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble." "When we cried He sent the Manna from Heaven, first the smitten rock of Exodus and when that dried up there was the second speaking to the rock. In short those forty years told of our waywardness, our murmurings, the blackness of our own hearts, and the amazing and undeserved kindness of God for forty long years. 'Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness.' As we think of those forty years in the wilderness, our souls leap up with praise."

Then the second panel shows the Babylonian captivity, where for seventy years Israel sat in the dungeon with fetters on her wrists, under the rule of Belshazzar and his successors, sitting there in black darkness. You must understand that a prison in the East is no pleasant place. I have been in them. Dug

underground, with hardly a ray of light, saving perhaps for one short hour of an afternoon, and then blackness again, with fetters on hands and wrists. I have seen prisoners crouching there and can understand the forcefulness of this picture of those terrible seventy years when the nation was lying fettered for seventy years. "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion," and at the end of seventy years the gates of brass were flung back, as Isaiah tells us, and out they trooped back to Immanuel's land, singing songs of deliverance as they went.

The third of these pictures takes you to a very serious time, and that is the time when our Lord Jesus dawned like light upon the darkness of Israel. They were sick, stricken to death, they said "We see no signs, there is no longer any prophet of God in the land." The terrible diseases of Herodism, Phariseism and Sadduceism were eating into the very hearts and vitals of the nation, and a few months before the Lord Jesus Christ was born into the world, a cry began to take shape. A little remnant of people, described in the first chapters of Luke, began to cry to the Lord in their trouble, and what did He do in that day? Just look at your Psalm and you will find in verse 20, "He sent His Word and healed them." How did He heal them? By the coming of the Word. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God." The Word that was with God came down and became flesh, and pitched His tent among us, "And," says the Psalmist, shading his eyes and looking down the centuries to the Cross, "why, we are as fools because of our transgressions, mocking God, dissolute, not wanting our daily food and the worship of God, but when we cried unto Him He sent His Word. Christ came and He healed us."

Then, we find in verse 23 a sketch of the present state of Israel in the stormy sea of the nations. They have gone down to the sea in ships and during the centuries they have seen the wonders of God in the deep. In these times the storm of anti-Semitism has arisen as perhaps never before, and the Jew is practically hounded from a scene of so-called civilized countries and is finding himself scarcely able to keep his footing in the storm that threatens to break. I do not say that the storm has broken, but the deck is getting slippery and the day is coming that is spoken of in Scripture as The Great Tribulation, the day spoken of in Jeremiah 30 where the Spirit says "a day of reproach and a day of fear." "Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins as a woman in travail, and all faces turned into paleness?" And he answers his own question, because "it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." They you have the same day spoken of in Daniel 12 - "And at that time," we read, "shall Michael stand up, the great prince...and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was," and the prince that stands for Israel will come in the day of deliverance, as described in this Psalm. Then again, the Lord Jesus tells His earthly people to flee from Jerusalem immediately in that day, for fear, it may be, of pursuit by their enemies, and He tells them that day of great tribulation, smiting upon His people, will usher in an age of great joy. I think any serious Rabbi and Jew would recognise in these panels, one after another - they cannot fail to recognise what it is. The day of testing in the wilderness, a lost caravan; the seventy years exile in Babylon, when they sat in prison; the time when our Blessed Lord came, when the nation was sick to death, and the Word was sent and He healed His people; and then the last great tragic storm, threatening to break, I believe, in the very near future. When the storm breaks, Michael and his hosts will come, and for the fourth time, Israel will be delivered as she was in the past.

And now I think we can say farewell to that line of things, and I want you to see, first, four very common pictures of Christian life as it is being lived today amongst us. Let us take the first picture. Here are men who set out in a caravan, the guides do not know the way, and the result is that the caravan peters out in the wilderness. The men look at one another and wander backwards and forwards, they murmur and are discontented and call the ways of God into account. Is that an unfair or disloyal picture of the lives of an enormous number of the professing Christians today? Lives that are marked by constant restlessness, by greed, by ambition, by every kind of fear falling upon them, - lives that are constantly in patches, arising to some pitch of joy today, and sinking back into despondency tomorrow. "Why," you say, "that is a picture of hundreds of people." It may be that when you last looked into the glass, someone like that looked back at you. "Well," you say, "what is to be done?" What did Israel do? They got tired of the wandering life that is always coming to the brink of the promised land and being driven back, always coming to the edge of the life of spiritual power and gladness and then going back to the desert to murmur against God and call His ways into account. The first thing to be done is that the man who is conscious that his life is restless, and the woman who finds herself murmuring at the ways of God with her, is to cry to the Lord in her trouble, and begin to praise the Lord for His goodness and His wonderful ways to the children of men. You can do that at least.

"Well," you say, "there is another picture." And in this case it was a man held prisoner. Again that useful looking glass might have to be raised and might have its message. There may be someone on the even grosser side who is held in the prison of sin, and in spite of Paul's word in Romans being true, sin does have dominion over you; and you may be here tonight and in the private chamber of your own heart you know you are a divided man, and while you may march with Christians, and keep your appointments in prayer meetings and breaking of bread, you are doubly conscious that the bondage is upon you still. You say, "What is to be done? I am a prisoner." There may be prisoner souls of another character. Many of God's people press against the bars of their cages, and there may be a lad

here whose whole soul was set on being a doctor, and perhaps because of some family need you have to go to the factory or the office and your soul rises to its feet in protest. You say "That is the path I wanted to take through life, but I am a prisoner here, I am tired of the desk, I am tired of the machines," and you hurl yourself against the bars of your cage. Maybe there is a young girl present and perhaps the paths of marriage and earthy happiness were stretching in front of you, and then an ailing mother with her thin, low voice called you to her sick bed, and you had to push away from you the prospect of all that life might give you, and you find yourself perhaps chained to a bedfast and it maybe a fractious invalid with small thanks for all your sacrifice: you sit in the prison house and your soul frets itself and again you beat your breast against the bars of the cage of life. It may be that you have not lost your way, and have not been conscious of any prison bars, and yet the Psalmist may catch you on his third point. He says, "Are you sick?" "Fools because of their transgressions and iniquities are sick." And the symptoms of sickness, as any doctor will tell you, is that the patient cannot take his food. His soul abhors meat - he is spiritually starved. There may be some of us here tonight who are much more prepared to immerse ourselves in a novel or to spend half an hour over the newspaper than to yield that measure of time to this dear, deathless Book of ours. You do not know it, but you are sick. How long is it since God really spoke to you out of Holy Scripture? I do not mean that you read somebody's book about a book of Scripture, that is well enough; but when did God last speak to you from the Book itself? When did you last have an answer to prayer that made you rise up and praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works? And how long is it since you spent a season with God in prayer, when you lost sight of the clock and you scarcely knew whether you were in the body or not, you could not tell but you knew you were touching the fringe of Christ's garment so closely that you felt you need only put your hand out to touch Him, and yet you hardly dared to do it lest you should break your vision?

Then again, somebody perhaps is passing through a storm at sea. Those who have been through it know what it means, when you see a fifty-thousand ton giant tossed in the Atlantic and you are pitched up and down like a cockle shell. You hold on at some safe vantage point and see the whole thing reel to and fro, and you feel your own impotence. It may be that you are passing through some storm of perplexity now and you do not know which way to take. Maybe some parents are at their wits' end about trouble with their children, or maybe some other trouble like a bolt from the blue suddenly overtakes you. You look this way and that way and search distractedly for help. And you are in the storm and do not know which way to turn or what to do - then the Psalmist's words come back, "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end, then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble."

Well, now, we must see what all this is about, for the Psalmist has got a very distinct purpose. He says, "What I want to do by showing you these pictures is not to amuse you by fine pieces of etching, but what I want you to do is this - to say so, in regard to redemption." "But," you say, "why should I? Cannot I go through life treasuring the fact that Christ has delivered me from the desert, the sick bed, the dungeon and the stormy sea? Yes, I have been saved from them all, thank God, and cannot hide it in my heart?" No, you cannot, and there are just three reasons why the Psalmist says we should say so.

The first is this "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so," for their own sakes. Did it ever strike you that blessings from God which are not testified to and witnessed of, very often evaporate as far as any practical enjoyment is concerned. I believe that one reason why the great bulk of modern evangelists are criticised (sometimes very unfairly) is because converts hide their new-found joy and very soon they lose it. The first reason why we have to bear witness for Christ as we go about the world is a purely selfish one and that is to keep our own hearts in joy and gladness. Now, supposing you go for a whole week, and never bear testimony to anybody about the Saviour, and you never tell anybody that the Lord Jesus has blessed and saved you, now what would be the state of your soul as far as freshness and joy was concerned at the end of that week? "Well," you say, "I don't think I would be very bright." Neither you would, and the best way for a man to keep his soul fresh is, as he goes about the world, to see to it that he lets the world know what Christ has done for him. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

I was in Genoa some time ago, in Northern Italy, and like everyone else who goes to Genoa, I had to go and see Paganini's famous violin. There in a glass case was a simply priceless Cremona violin, beautifully finished, a piece of art for which the State would not have taken ten thousand pounds, but the guide told me an interesting thing about it. He said, "You know, they think so much of that violin that they never allow anybody to touch it; nobody touches it, nobody is allowed to play it, and a sort of Nemesis is coming upon that violin because it is slowly beginning to rot and crumble. The reason is, that for thirty years it had known the warm touch of a human hand, but now it is lying there in its glass case, dead and cold, and no one has ever warmed it and it is slowly crumbling to dust. If they would only let a man come over every day and spend an hour on that violin, it would last for ever." And on the day that you cease to play your Saviour's music and cease to bear witness and say so, on that day dry rot begins to set in.

Then the Scripture gives us the second reason why we should say so, and that is for the sake of the world around us. I suppose more and more as the world goes on one looks with tragic pity on the state of mind of many of the people. Now I am well aware that the thing I am going to say applies less to the Southern Hemisphere than it does to the Northern, but you must never imagine, and I don't suppose anyone here does imagine, that the Southern regions will be screened from strife and warfare; at least, if you do think so, you are living in a fool's paradise. The majority of men are driven by a secret fear that makes them do desperate and foolish things. The ancient landmarks have been to a great extent shattered, and the reason why men care very little about the old truths is that they have very little intellectual security, that at the end of a lifetime of self denial nothing will be left to them, and again and again when I meet men in steamships and trains, men who make no pretence of religious knowledge, I find that if you speak with a note of quiet certainty, and claim that you have found complete joy and intellectual rest in Christ and the Eternal God, that they respond with pathetic eagerness that tells its own story. So you can do the men around you no better service in life, better than giving them a good job or a thousand pounds, you can say how the Lord Jesus Christ has blessed you and made you intensely happy and delivered you from the things of the flesh, namely, sin, death, pride, indulgence. You are able to stand before men and tell them that by the grace of God you are free of these things, and that you are master of the man that walks beneath your hat, that Christ has made you happy, and the world will know it. "He satisfieth the longing soul." What will men think of you if they see you going about your work with the air of a man intensely happy? Why, the souls of men will break out. I have had men challenge me on that account. A man said to me "You are a fool, but I wish I had what you have got." Of course he did. What have I got? I have come into an assured haven, I have come into the breakwater behind the storms, and got in living touch with Christ, and life has nothing like the joy of telling people around you of what Christ has done.

The next reason why we should say it and not only think it is for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. He did a great act of renunciation when He went back to Heaven. He had been a wonderful Evangelist; for three years He had preached as nobody else ever preached before and His whole heart was in the business and at the end of three years He gave up His personal evangelistic work. I only know one case where He broke His rule, and that is where He came down Himself to meet Saul of Tarsus, but as far as everyone else is concerned, since Pentecost, Christ has given up the work of an evangelist, and given it to His followers. And He wants us to go about it as He did, in the liberty of love, and deliver people groping about this dark world, counting it life's highest privilege to be able to tell people about the blessed Saviour. He might have come Himself, with hosts of angels, but instead of that He graciously gives this service to men and women of humble circumstances. "I am going to put you there," says Christ, "in that office. I have put you there among those six clerks because I want a person who is going to throw the shadow of their influence over that place." Perhaps there is a servant girl here in a house with a master and mistress and children. Why did the Lord put you there? Because He wants you to be a witness to these people for God. And here again a boy goes into a shop and there are twenty assistants at the counters. Why did the Lord Jesus Christ send you there? You look around on the right hand and on the left, and they say "No one else thinks like you do." What do you think? You think, "My Saviour has redeemed me and I should tell it."

More and more as I go about the world I see that hungry men and women are looking at us. They are not reading Bibles, and they are not enormously interested in the Lord Jesus. He seems so far away and remote. But find the man or woman who is incarnating the Lord Jesus, the man or woman who is telling out the joys of the Lord, the man or woman whose life is sealed up in the first verse of that Psalm, "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord....let the redeemed of the Lord say so," when the world finds that, they will listen quickly enough. They don't want half convinced ministers, they don't care about their preaching, but they do want men and women who love the Saviour, and say so whenever He gives the opportunity. Now, quite simply, let us challenge ourselves as we close tonight-- here we are, say, two hundred and fifty people, in a city with one hundred and twenty thousand people; just imagine two hundred and fifty people let loose and every person with a love for souls, and every person entering into two hundred and fifty different circles. Now let us challenge ourselves. In the month of June, to how many people did I speak about the Lord Jesus Christ and to how many people did I tell the story of the Cross? How many times in the thirty days did I say so, and let them know that the Lord had redeemed me from the hand of the enemy?

We speak about revival, and we mourn the coldness of our modern Christian churches, but brethren, the remedy lies hard and fast in our own hands. I was very much struck lately by an experience. I was standing by the side of the road not long ago, with two heavy bags; there were no buses there and I was about a mile and a half from the conference that I wanted to attend in town. So I asked the Lord about the matter and told Him my position, and just as I told Him, a man drew up and said, "Excuse me, can you tell me where such-and-such a place is?" I said, "It is three miles down the road," and he looked at me and said, "Can I give you a lift?" "Thank you," I said, and after I had been there for a few minutes I said to the man, "Do you know what I thought of as I got into this car?"

"No," he said. "Well," I said, "it is an old Book that says 'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.' Do you know anything about that?" He stopped the car and swung round and said to me, almost fiercely, "Why did you say that word out of the Bible to me?" "Why," I said, "it is the first verse that came to my mind." "Well," he said, "the last time I was in church sixteen years ago the minister preached from that text and I have never darkened the doors of a church since." "Well," I said, "what was wrong with the Scripture?" "Oh," said he, "There was nothing wrong with it, but he read at the beginning of some chapter" (he didn't know where it was) "'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ,' and then he said the next verse" (actually it is three verses further down) "'every man shall bear his own burden.' It says we have to bear one another's burdens and then it says we have to bear our own. I asked the clergyman what he meant by those verses, and he said he did not know!" So I said, "Very well, we will look it up for one moment. You must understand that there are two words for burden, when it says 'Bear ye one another's burdens' the word means 'a weight under which a man is staggering.' It is a simple exhortation to kindness, to do as Christ did when He bore the burden of our sins." "Yes, Yes," he said, "but what about the other verse?" "Well, that is quite simple. The word translated there 'burden' is a nautical word, the word sailors use. It is used of the cargo of a ship. Now, a ship's captain never wants anybody else to carry his cargo, for he would lose all his profit, and everyone must therefore carry his burden of responsibility." He said, "Is that really right?" I said, "Yes, it is perfectly right. Doesn't that look as if the Book is not as stupid as you thought?" "Now, I said, "You just drive up to that place where I am going and we will sit down in a quiet corner and we will go through those sixteen wasted years, and I will tell you what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for me and what He can do for you." So there we sat for about an hour in a side road, in his car, and I evangelized to him, Josus. Now I simply give that illustration to show you that you meet the strangest and most out-of-the-way people all the time, and thousands of them, literally thousands, are ready, and if we will only preach to them with the wisdom of Christ Himself, we shall have done what the Scripture says, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy."

ADDRESS ON PSALM 119.

References: Psalm 119, verses 1 - 18

I have really got just one verse in front of my mind this evening, but I will say just a word or two as to that remarkable Scripture which we have been reading. I expect the youngest knows that the words at the head of each eight verses first represent the Hebrew Alphabet. They are its letters, each one of them in order - twenty-two of them. They represent something else as we shall see in a moment, but to begin with, any man reading a Hebrew Bible would see that the first eight verses all begin with the letter "A" eight times over. It is no use looking down, you won't see it in your English Bible. In the second section the verses all begin with letter "B" so if you have a friend who is a Hebrew scholar ask him to show you the 119th Psalm and you will notice this strange acrostic formation. It is not the only time you get this. For instance, we are all familiar with the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs, and many a wise young man has read the inscription, which begins "Who can find a virtuous (model) woman?" If you read these verses down you will find that there are twenty-two of them, and the first verse begins with "A", and the second with "B" and the last does down to "Z", and many a young wife might read these twenty-two verses and inquire "Why does the Holy Ghost when He describes me put all the letters in the alphabet in order like that?" Because, my dear young friend, it is your privilege to be as orderly as the alphabet, when you begin housekeeping, in spite of the fact that you have an exceedingly untidy husband. That merely means that you are to be always as tidy as when the Holy Spirit describes the ideal woman. Thus every verse begins with A.B.C. etc. Then you will find that the first of Lamentations has 22 verses and they go A. to Z. and the second repeats it, and the third chapter has sixty-six verses, and the poet managed to begin the first three verses A.A.A. three times, and so on right through the alphabet, the fourth chapter the same, and in at least nine of the Psalms do we find the same phenomenon. And yet you have the right to ask at once, "Why should that peculiar arrangement be found in these Psalms and passages?" You will find in every case that these passages have to do with the very practical and simple things of life. Leaving out Lamentations for the moment, everyone of the Psalms and the passage in Proverbs deals with the simple things of life and the passages so distinguished are all of them the kind of Scripture that you might learn by heart with the greatest of profit. Look for a moment at the Psalm in front of us. What do these letters of the alphabet mean?

ALEPH. What does that mean? It means the head of an ox, because the Hebrew character is shaped like an ox head. And why is an ox the name of the first letter of the alphabet in Hebrew? Because the ox is man's best servant. He takes out the seed for sowing and goes and brings back the harvest in the Autumn. Thus the ox that dies for man in the Hebrew economy was the first letter in the alphabet.

BETH. And what is the second? Beth. That is a house because that is the second thing a man needs.

GIMEL. And the third one, Gimel or Camel, the animal that bears man's burdens.

DALETH. Then the fourth is Daleth (you will note, 8 verses to each one) and that means the door, the door of a house.

HE. And the next little word is He - a window.

VAU. And the next is Vau - that means a tent peg.

ZAIN. And the next is a weapon.

CHETH. The next is a fence that keeps the sheep in and the wolf out.

TETH. Next a serpent that stings.

JOD. The hand. A thing that grasps.

CAPH. The palm of the hand.

LAMED. An ox-goad.

MEM. And the next the water you drink.

NUN. The next a fish that swims in the sea.

SAMECH. A staff you lean on.

AIN. The next an eye in the head or fountain in the desert, a very beautiful piece of imagery because the well in the desert is like a shining eye amongst the sand all round it.

PE. The next means the mouth with which I talk.

TZADDI. The next your side on which you lie when you go to sleep.

KOPH. The whole of the ox head which you must keep in proper order.

RESH. The next, your head.

SCHIN. The next, a tooth.

TAU. The next, the mark you make when you sign your name, if you cannot write properly. A cross.

The writer's point is to show that all the simple, daily things of common life may be shot through, blessed, ripened and governed by the Word of God, not a single thing in your life, your hand, your foot, your eye, the ox that serves you, that may not be brought beneath the blessed sway of the Word of God. So you find this great Psalm with its 176 verses, ringing the changes on seven

great words, commandments, statutes, judgments and so on, seven great words, and these words occur in nearly all the verses.

Well, now, I want to talk to you about a short verse, and it is the 9th one - "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" It is the most important problem that any young man or young woman can face, and in the eight words in the English version we have the answer "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." In the Hebrew there are only six words, the question takes up four and the answer takes up two, that is all. And I am going to ask you to investigate this problem with me, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" There are three important words in that verse, the first is "young man" and the second in the verb "to cleanse" and the third is the word "way." Now that looks a deceptively simple verse. I remember sitting once and it was the first verse in my morning reading, and I was just going on to something else when the thought struck me to investigate this verse. That was seven o'clock in the morning, but the luncheon bell at 12.30 called me from my search in that verse. I shall never forget going into the meaning of that problem and its answer. I suppose I was there at least five hours and I did not leave that verse, I was worrying it like a terrier till it came out and gave me its light. I shall try to show you one or two things that I saw that morning. First the words translated "young man" have nothing to do with young men as a class, the word is "youth". There are two words translated "young men" in the Old Testament; the first is "Rejoice young man in thy youth" - that means young men as opposed to young women, a matter of sex. "Rejoice in thy youth" but it is not the word that is used here. It is a word that means "youth" as opposed to age and it is that with which we have to do this evening "wherewithal shall youth cleanse his way?" Boys as well as careless young men and young women alike, for there is nothing masculine in this word itself. "Wherewithal shall youth cleanse its way?"

Look again at the word, and we are struck with this, that it is a rich and not stumbling and primitive language. These words are pictures, and I am going to run the risk of gravely offending my young friends this evening when I tell you what the Hebrew word "youth" means. First it means to shake up and down and then to rise up and down like a lion's mane, and Jeremiah translates it, to yell, and the last one means to throw yourself about on the floor. You young ladies will say "That does not describe me, I never throw myself up and down on the floor." You are doing it all the time; I know what I am saying, for I am not speaking to babies or little children, but to the class of people addressed in this verse, those who are passing from childhood into young manhood or young womanhood. While you disdain to do physically the things I have said, your whole life is one great interrogation point. You are restless in your life as youth always will be, challenging everything that you hear, and that is the quality and that is the province, and that is the essential glory of youth, that it falls into despair, and flings itself up and down and walks ahead in protest against unjust and unrighteous acts. It has well been described as being a volcanic age, and what is a volcano but the protest of the inner forces of the earth against the crusts that bind them, and when it ripples over the external crust of Mother earth you know it is only an internal protest coming to the surface. That is the supreme glory of youth, to protest against things, and the day may come when you will become cynical and too lazy to protest against anything. Keep your youth intact, and the days of your youth virgin, all these glorious days of your life, when you don't know very much, but you think you know everything, the days when you have no colours in your painter's palette and no hues upon your canvas saving the blue of the sky and no tint of grey anywhere, and everywhere is very, very good.

Have I insulted you, youth, with the meaning of the Hebrew word, rising up and falling, here in the height of enthusiasm and here in the depths of dark despair? Why, the capacity of youth for suffering is one of the most tremendous and tragic things in the world. I have known it myself. God forbid that I should ever suffer again as I did in childhood. And so, says the Psalmist, "Wherewithal shall youth (with all these qualities which we have looked at, those qualities that lie inherent in us) wherewithal shall youth cleanse...." Stop - we must look at the word "cleanse." Now this is a very interesting word, in this way, that it combines two ideas for which we have to put in English two distinct words, where a thing is clean and where a thing is clear. We may notice a subtle and slight difference between the two ideas. "Clean" means we have taken away defilement and "clear" means you can see through it and there are no shadows on it. Now, this very interesting picture language of the Old Testament is one that can give the two ideas in one word, and that is what he does here. "Wherewithal shall youth cleanse its way" and "Wherewithal shall youth make clear its way."

Now the best word I can find (of course if there are any school teachers here they may rend me after the meeting, and tell me that I have used a word wrongly, but you need not trouble yourselves - just go to the Oxford Dictionary) is "translucent." Trans-across, lux- light; light falling across. Wherewithal shall youth ensure that light falls across its dark way? I remember thinking of this one night when we were coming into Southampton on board the great steamer "Berengaria," no, we were going out - , and the vessel had been answering with her sixty thousand tons to the touch of the pilot. When the pilot had done his work he went down the companion ladder and got into his small tossing boat in a rough sea, and one wondered how he would see to get across the harbour in the dark, chilly, tempestuous night. As I sat on deck and watched him, suddenly someone must have touched an electric switch, because the broad beam of a searchlight

that came right across the sea and struck the other side of the distant harbour, and they had only one thing to do, and that was to bend their backs and row and follow that track of light across the darkness, and the moment they left it anything might have happened. Had they got out of its friendly light on the right hand or the left, anything might have happened, but the searchlight made the path translucent, and the beam of light guided the pilot to his desired haven.

Very well, wherewithal shall youth find something that will fall across the path of life and make it translucent? We have one word to glance at still, and that is the word "way." There are two words for "way"; the first one is in verses 1, 3 and 5. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way," the word there meaning a path that is open, a path of many human feet, a trampled way. But this is not the word in verse 9. Here it is a word that points to the end. "Where is the way going to 'lead you?'" says the peculiar word he uses. How shall youth find a light that shall shine across its path so that it shall reach the desired goal? There are indeed two words of Hebrew to express that sentence of eight words, but we don't need to examine any of the words, saving "take heed." That is to guard as a man guards a precious thing, to observe it narrowly. But what do you mean by the "word of God" "Thy word?" You will immediately think of a Bible, but you must remember that the terms "thy word" and "the word of God" in Scripture are used in three distinct senses. First we read of the expression "thy word" throughout this Psalm, as meaning the known and revealed will of God. We see the will of God revealed in the days before any Bible had been written on parchment, when no person in five thousand could read, where there was no written Scripture known, saving to a little coterie of priests. What did the Psalmist understand by the "word of God?" He would say, "We understand by the 'word of God' everything that we have learned of God down the centuries. All that He has taught our fathers, the things that He said to Abraham and Enoch before a line of Scripture was written." Then again they would point to the great nature Psalms, for instance Psalm 19. That is, to the Hebrew the "word of God" meant many things before it came to mean the writing in a book. For instance, a Hebrew stood by the altar and watched a lamb yielding its life for himself (God's way to his conscience), pointing him to One Who would come in the course of centuries, Who would offer Himself as sufficient sacrifice for the sins of men.

When you read the expression "thy word," in this chapter, it means primarily this; anything that God says to the human conscience through nature, through ritual, through any message that reaches the human heart. God still speaks to us beloved friends, and many times when we see the might and power of God in natural things we learn at least His eternal power and Godhead. But the second meaning of the phrase "thy word" is certainly a reference to Holy Scripture (we will see the third in a moment). Here we come to this dear Book that we have learned to love as we love light, and here we shall notice two blessed testimonies answering old and new as hand fits glove, and everywhere we see that God has chosen not to illuminate the whole world with Holy Scripture. There are great tracts of this world, and there have been thousands of years during which no line of Scripture has reached any man in those areas, but that does not mean that God has left Himself without that peculiar and written witness that we call Holy Scripture. I am sure none of us have ever learned fully how thoroughly and how deeply we can afford to trust the written Word of God as here and there one comes across fine testimonies to His power.

I used to have a friend, a doctor, on the North West Coast of India, and he had a very remarkable case of conversion. It was quite simple. Away over the Tibet border, in a certain Tibetan Monastery, one of the monks was fumbling in the library and a little piece of cardboard fell out of a book that he opened. He scanned it curiously. It was in Tibetan and he read it, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." He knew nothing about the Speaker of those words, and he had no idea that they came from a Christian classic. He gazed at that little scrap of Scripture and as he said afterwards "My whole soul was plunged into midnight. 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God' and here am I a Buddhist monk, living in a monastery, amongst men who are unclean and evil in their lives, men who observe their ritual and live abominable, and I am no better than the rest. If that little card is true I am banished from God's presence for ever, for I am not pure in heart." He tells us how he went on for more than fourteen months in the most profound conviction of sin, deeply searched and deeply moved, then one day he left on a journey on some business for his monastery. He managed to get across the Tibetan border and came to the hospital where my friend was and showed the little card and asked them if they knew anything about it. "Yes," they said, "these are the words of our Teacher." "Well," said the monk, "His words have filled me with despair. He says that the pure in heart shall be able to see God, and I am evil and unclean in heart." The good doctor was able to tell him that that was not the only sentence in the New Testament. It was short, it was true, but there was another sentence you could put by the side of it, and this was the sentence he chose "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." It was not many days before that Tibetan monk, a Buddhist, was rejoicing in these two things, only he had them in the right order now, first that the cleansing blood of Christ could set him free, and secondly that pure in heart he would be able to see God.

We might easily spend a long evening telling of the triumphs of the Word, and the more we learn to trust Holy Scripture, and the more seriously we take its

teaching, the better for us in the coming years. For I believe the great battle of the future for the church will be between false superstition and Holy Scripture. The battle has already commenced. The great majority of the so-called Christians of today are prepared to place side by side with Scripture the traditions of men, and more and more I see (if we are to have a future) a cleavage and dividing line, that will not be drawn between professing Christian and others, but between those who accept this Book as the last word from God to the human race, and those who accept and exalt the traditions of men to an equality with Holy Scripture. That is the question between evangelical Christian churches and the superficial Christian churches. God's Word means God revealed in many ways, and the second meaning is God revealed in Holy Scripture.

But there is the third expression of "the word", and that we looked at the other night. "In the beginning was the Word" - that is not the Bible - "and the Word was God" - that is not the Bible. He is the Word, it is Christ Himself and in this we read the third sense of that term "thy word." We shall never, never have our ways cleansed in the way that He wanted them to be cleansed without Him. That is, dear friends, it is not enough for us to be living in the Book, blessed and holy as that book is. It is always rigidly possible to be greatly engaged with the text of Holy Scripture, and even be considering its meaning without ever reaching Christ. So remember that the Bible is never the end itself, it is not the home of the heart, but it is the official highway that leads to it. It is the path by which you reach Christ, and it is that which tells you all that you know about Him historically. But tell me, is that all you want, is it only a historical Christ that satisfies you? Is it simply to know facts about him as he went across the stage of time? Or is it to keep company with Christ, to have Him show things to your heart that are in the Bible, but come fresh from Him to you? In this we have reached the third meaning of "thy word." Again I say, our hearts will never be cleansed without Him.

There is no man in this building who gives more reverence more honor or more love to this Book, but I am sure that even in the use of it there is a danger lest we should stop short of reaching the One to whom this Book bears witness, and if your mind has merely been engaged with texts, and you have been merely considering passages out of the Bible, you have lacked something. You have not gone all the way, for all the way is this, that the Lord Jesus Christ should present Himself to you as the only safe guide on the dangerous road of life, and the only way by which you can keep your pathway shining and the way translucent. That is, when the face of Christ shines upon you, as we read in Corinthians, "We all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord..." The Word, yes, but not the Word only, always the Word with the Spirit. There are scholars in Germany who have devoted forty years to the most painstaking study of every preposition and word in the Old Testament, and some of them are a million leagues away from Christ, for they have given forty years to the study of the Bible. So remember this, here is our problem "How can youth keep its way shining through a dark world?" How can you reach the goal - Christ? By taking heed thereto, stepping carefully on and guiding life and governing it first by that which your soul is learning of God, and secondly by the text of Holy Scripture, and thirdly by keeping company with the Lord Jesus Christ, as life's best Friend, and never ceasing until you are on such terms with Him that you talk to Him more intimately than you talk to wife or child, lover or friend, and He talks to you, as He Himself has said again and again "I will be with you till the end of the age." That does not only mean that you have got a Bible in your pocket, thank God if you have, it means that you have got Christ in your heart, and even more so - youth - in your tumultuousness and your constant rising up to righteous things, and your challenges, see to it that you take the Word of God in all its breadth of meaning, and take it into your life as a guide and master for the pathway of life.

THE HEAVENLY PLACES.

References:

Ephesians, 1: 3 to 6a. which is the end of the first stanza of a prose poem which extends from verse 3 to verse 14. The last two words "in love" as on several occasions in Ephesians, probably belong to the next verse. "To the praise of the glory of His grace" - that is the chorus of each verse in this prose poem.

Chapter 1: 18 to 20. Here you find that Paul is praying "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling..."

Chapter 2: 4 to 6. There he is describing the present world under the illustration of a cemetery.

Chapter 3: 8 to 10. May I mention in passing that there are no such things today as the unsearchable riches of Christ, they do not exist, the very point of the passage is that the riches are searchable now. Paul has been saying that they were unsearchable in times past, but now the very point of his expression is to show that the riches can all be explored. Thank God they are now open and you can pass in and take all you want. The seers, patriarchs and prophets in the old days stood and looked and said, "We cannot search the riches, they are unsearchable." But Paul says, "Here they are. I am a guide to you, would you like to go in?" "And to me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I am able to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Chapter 6: 10 to 12.

Now, the Epistle from which we have read is by universal consent today agreed to be a circular letter addressed to a large company of Churches in Asia Minor, and as Ephesus was the most outstanding of these cities or Churches, the copies that have come down to us are usually headed "The Epistle to the Ephesians". I have one Spanish Testament which calls it "The Epistle to the Laodiceans" because the translator of that copy worked upon a letter which was addressed to Laodicea and not to Ephesus. Like the First Epistle of Peter, and the Second and Third Chapters of the Revelation, this masterpiece of Paul's writing, the crown and climax of all his literary services is addressed to something wider than the local church, it is for the catholic church as a whole, and every christian must bow in the presence of the message.

In every paragraph in this epistle there are side references of Luke's account of Paul's three years' stay in Ephesus, and these are largely groupable under one of four headings. First, Luke has told us that Ephesus was a focus of spiritism, it was a place where the evil powers of the unseen world, in every kind of unclean diabolism, were rampant - where one would leap upon seven others and say, "Jesus I know, and Paul I am acquainted with, but who are you?" - And they fled naked out of the house. "Now," says Paul, "Listen! Ephesus may be the home of diabolism, but it is also the residence of God; and the Spirit of God, and the powers of God are more than a match for the unleashed powers of Satan." Then, the second thing that struck you was that the Ephesians worshipped the female principle in religion which is now so common on the continent of Europe.

The feminine principle in Ephesus was represented by Diana of the Ephesians and, as you know, the worshipping of the feminine in religion always results in a most corrupt and immoral system. Therefore Paul mentions specially that he worships the Father and not the mother - "For this reason I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" and every man and woman in Ephesus would recognise the inward meaning of that expression. (iii. 14, R.V.)

Thirdly, Paul knows that they worship an image which was said to have fallen from heaven to earth. "Well," says Paul, "you may do that if you like, but the Lord Jesus Christ whom we worship has gone a great deal lower than the earth, and a great deal higher than the heavens. If you like to worship a piece of wood so shapeless and blackened with age that you know not what it is, we worship a Christ who has gone far below the earth to find us, and has carried us up far above heaven to be with Himself."

The last comparison Paul makes is this. In the city of Ephesus there was a great temple, one of the seven wonders of the world at that time, and again and again Paul glances at it. At the close of his second chapter he gives a hasty look at the Ephesus temple and dims and dwarfs it as he tells his friends "Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone..." and he goes on to describe the holy temple, that habitation of the Spirit, instead of that unclean house, that cage of every evil thing, before which they had bowed their knees in earlier days.

Now, it is not my ambition this evening to take up the Epistle to the Ephesians, but I merely wish to take one phrase that occurs five times, running like a brook of silver across meadowland, and it is the phrase we have read together, "the heavenly places". We know that this term occurs in the New Testament - in Hebrews 8: 5 and again in 9: 23 "heavenly things" and once on the lips of the

Lord Jesus we get the same expression, "If I have told you of earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things." (or places). John iii. 12.

We are going to confine ourselves wholly to that phrase in Ephesians, and the first thing we notice is that it occurs five times, no less, no more, and I think we agree that the numbers in Scripture are used with the most meticulous accuracy, and the Spirit of God so uses them that you never change one for another save with disadvantage. The number five in Scripture is the number of the hand. You can easily see the reason by my lifting my hand with its five fingers. "Well," you say, "What does the hand stand for?" Two things. That is, all through the Bible when the hand is closed in order to clasp something it is always used as a symbol of power; when the hand is open as if to bestow something, then the hand becomes a symbol of grace, and so the two outstanding expressions are these, "That we may know the exceeding greatness of his power" that is, the hand that holds, "and the riches of his grace" the hand that is open to bestow. But that we may have some experience of the word we must pass that and journey further. When God took hold and smote the throne of Pharaoh, as he smote with ten plagues the people, both hands of God as it were came down upon His enemies. Then in Exodus you get the expression five times that He brought them out with "a strong hand." Then in Deuteronomy you get the expression ten times again, but when you want the open hand you come to Ezra and Nehemiah where you get, "the good hand of our God" or similar expressions ten times. I merely draw your attention to this little piece of exactness, and whenever you think of the hand of God, think of it first as the Hand that holds the sheep and never lets them go, then as the hand that is open to bestow - so let us thank God for these five great references.

Chapter 1: 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ..." That is, the heavenly places are where all my blessings are. Then in verse 20 we read that God has carried His Son far above principalities and powers and has set Him in heavenly places; so, not only are my blessings there, but my Saviour is there. Then in chapter 2: 6 I make a great discovery that I would never have dreamed of or dared to express. I find I am there too. "And made us sit together in heavenly places." In chapter 3: 10 I find there is something other than my Saviour and myself, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places (that is, the friendly citizens and rulers of the unseen world) might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. Then in chapter 6:12 I get what Bunyan would call "a dash in my spirit" to hear that the unclean spirits are there. "Spiritual" wickedness in heavenly places."

My blessings are there, my Saviour is there, I am there, friendly spirits are there, and hostile spirits are there.

Now we shall surely do well to sit down beside the river of God for a few minutes and find out what these phrases may have to say to us. We take the first expression, "all spiritual blessings". Well now, what exactly does he mean? We have all of us considered at times, no doubt, the distinction which we may fairly make between our mercies and our blessings. I have good health, I have a wife second to none in the earth, I have five children who, as the Scotsman would say, "are no so bad," and I have a great many other good things, but they are all mercies and not what the New Testament would speak of as blessings. I have some blessings too. I have peace with God, eternal life, justification by faith, the love of my brethren, a home in heaven, and I could go on all the evening telling you of my blessings. Well now, what is the underlying distinction between mercies and blessings? First, that the mercies may be swept away in a moment by a bolt from the blue. Health, love of wife, children, friends may be swept away in a flash, you have no certain tenure of your mercies. But nothing in the universe of God can touch a single blessing that God has given you. If you have eternal life, you have it for ever - as long as God lives. Every mercy that I hold stands on this side of the river of death, and every blessing stands on the farther side of the death of Christ. That is why blessings can never go; because they are all secure in the death of God's Son. The other distinction is that every man can share his mercies as a rule, but you cannot share your blessings. Every man must go to God for these, distinctly, definitely, and personally.

"Well," you say, "What are those blessings of which the writer is thinking?" The first two are these. "According as He hath chosen us..." "Having predestined us..." What is the difference between election and predestination? Election looks back and predestination looks right on, and Paul says, "To begin with, let us look at our blessings." The first thing is that God loved me before the foundation of the world, that is, before a single corner-stone of creation dropped into its socket, and before the flutter of the first angel's wing ever disturbed the ether, God was loving me with all His heart, and the fact that I did not exist made no difference. He loved me then, and He chose me from the rank and file saying, "I am going to have that person with Me, as a companion for my Son throughout all eternity." Then He said, "I predestinated that person for Myself." He is to go to heaven?" Certainly not. Predestination and election are not to be confused. The Bible always makes election to be a question of character. You were chosen to be a good man, or if you like the Bible term, "holy and without blame." That is why the Bible never says that I know of that a man is elected to go to Heaven, but I do read that God has elected people to be companions for His Son in holiness, and he will take care of that if they look after the holiness.

Well, now what is the next blessing, for there are seven of them in the passage? The next is that I am accepted in the Beloved - redeemed by His blood, and with an illuminated mind which has learned to think God's thoughts. Then I have an inheritance, and lastly, I am sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Now I wonder when you last went into the treasury, or paid a hasty visit to the heavenly places, to have a look at your blessings. The heavenly places are not in Wellington they are in the courts of light, and you don't have to make a long journey, but you have to make a journey by faith to visit the heavenly places, and a good thing it is to get in there alone and survey your wealth - look at the sacks of diamonds and gold and silver that is all yours - like a miser counting over your coins - election, acceptance, redemption, illumination, a heritage, sealed with the Spirit.

You say, "Thank you, Paul, for lifting the fringe like that, it is good to know that I have all that treasure." "Well," says Paul, "The second thing is this: God doesn't want only things in the heavenly places, He wants people." The first person who must go up is the Lord Jesus, and that is not an easy thing either, for the Lord Jesus was lying for three days and three nights under the guardianship of death. "Now," says God, "I am going to do the greatest thing in the world, I am going to take My Son out of that rock-hewn tomb, breathe into Him the breath of life, quicken Him, raise Him from death and take Him up to Me; but every step of the way there will be the massed forces of the universe who will dispute every point of the way with Him." But He did it. "And now," says God, "He was there, and now He is here!" "He was in the lowest depth of the earth and now He is far above the heavens." "Well," says God, "What power is that," says Paul. "It is the kind of power that is working in us, the power of the Holy Spirit working in you and me is the same as that which defeated the hostile powers of evil, and carried our Lord up into the heavenlies."

Again and again the prophets and the psalmists go back and say, "Look what God did at the Red Sea." But this is not to be compared with the resurrection of the Son of God, and so the old standard is set aside, and it is the risen Christ alone, that Christ ascended and glorified, and it is the same power which daily works upward. Does it not then make us seem cheap and impoverished when we see how lightly we treat the power which is expressed in terms that at first reading seem so extravagant. The same power which works in Christ works in you and me.

"Well," says Paul, "In the second chapter I have got something more." representing that the Lord made the journey in three stages. First was the journey down to death, secondly He was raised, thirdly He was taken up to heavenly places. "How," says Paul, "You must make the same journey. You died in your sins and have been raised again. He was taken to the heavenly places, and He has taken you up and made you to sit with Him in heavenly places." These words are so tremendous that a man rather falls back and fears. Think what it means - seated together with Christ cannot mean less than this - that we have found the secret of undisturbed repose. Sitting down first suggests rest and in these full, perspiring and rushing days of ours it is the last thing that many of us do, but it is the third thing God has for us. Blessing innumerable - yes. A place in glory - yes. But the third thing He has to give us is the gift of rest; and when I think of the wearied lives and restless hearts that almost every day reveal themselves in letters I receive, and in interviews I find that with men and women everywhere, the great outstanding trouble of their lives is just spiritual restlessness. Why do you suppose people go to see pictures? Because they are restless. Why are they always rushing backwards and forwards to this place and that?" Because they are restless. Their unanchored souls have never found the solace of God's peace, the peace that is strong enough and broad enough so that when the shock of evil tidings, the twinge of ill health, and the fear of this and that comes to you, the heart is garrisoned in its own private cloister. Do you think you would ever be disturbed if you lived in heavenly places? Even if some stroke of calamity fell upon your home you would say, "Well, that is a trying thing, but I have got a home where no shadow ever falls, where no stain ever mars the whiteness of the scene. I have a home in heavenly places, and there I sit in quiet peace." The God we serve understands perfectly our need of rest, and that is why in Genesis the first gift He gave to man was the Sabbath of rest. The Sabbath was not Adam's seventh day, it was the first day of his week. He was created on the sixth day of the week, in the afternoon presumably. "Now," you say, "Adam, go out and work for six days and then have a day of rest." "Not at all," says God, "Your first full day shall be a day of absolute rest, you start from it and then you do your work." It was reversed in Israel under the law, but it was not God's thought in creation. We do not work six days and rest on the seventh, we begin our rest on the first day of the week and then work through.

Then we have Noah - what does his name mean? Rest. He was given rest from the work of his hands, thus God has always been striving, so to speak, to get these restless hearts of ours into a state of quiet peace, and the reason why we hear Him so distantly and in such a brokeb fashion in our prayer seasons is just that we have never understood the meaning of rest. First blessing, then power, then rest.

In chapter 3, the question is not one of power or rest, but of our working to manifest or reveal certain things, the first being the unsearchable riches of Christ. Then in 3: 9 that we should "make all men see what is the fellowship

Matthew:

13: 1 and 2 and 36 to 52.

Now the scripture I had in mind in commencing the subject of this address was a verse in the 66th Psalm, which runs as follows: "We went through fire and through water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" and I do not know of any motto that I should care to write more freely about the history of the saints than that. The outward side of the church's story and the kingdom proclaim fire and water - the testing of outward failure and breakdown - but the inner secret of the church's heart and the kingdom's true growth are revealed, and we would all say with enraptured hearts "Thou hast brought us into a wealthy place."

Now, I propose to speak tonight on these two sides of the kingdom of the Heavens and of the Kingdom of God. To begin with, may I remind you that the Kingdom of God has its history written in three distinct phases. First from Exodus 19 down to Malachi we have nearly sixteen centuries of the progress of the kingdom, always with a visible head and limited to one elected nation, and passing from glory down to gloom and degradation. Then in the future, if our Lord Jesus Christ comes back tonight, as I hope He will, the story of the kingdom will begin a fresh, and this time a universal kingdom will shortly be set up, there will be what we call the millennial reign (the thousand years reign of the Saviour) and this again will be a visible kingdom with a Head that can be seen, and centres of worship that can be visited; but it will be a wider one than that of the Old Testament, not one elect nation, but every nation shall come up to Jerusalem to worship. "But," you say, "You have left out a very important thing. What is the kingdom in the days that lie between Pentecost and the rapture of the saints - what is its form today?" Well, here we find a word never used in the Old Testament kingdom, and never used of the future prophetic kingdom, that is, we have the expression "the mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens." Today, the kingdom exists but there is no outward human Head, she takes no visible and universal shape and form that God can recognise. There is the fast structure of Christendom with its mingling of heresy and truth, light and darkness, conjecture and revelation, and standing between, two views of the kingdom, we see on the one hand that vast fabric, dissolute, worldly and deified, and here on the other side that secret and select shrine where Christ dwells in the hearts of the saints. Here "fire and water", there "a wealthy place," and it is of these that I wish to speak tonight.

You will notice in Matthew 13 that there is a series of eight parables spoken by our Lord Jesus, and the first and the last are not kingdom parables, but from the 2nd to the 7th, that is, six parables, we have the formula "The Kingdom of Heaven is like", or "The Kingdom of Heaven has been likened," or ("The Kingdom of Heaven shall be likened", that is, in the case of the ten virgins). Now, in this chapter you notice the two significant actions of the Lord Jesus, how first He sits Himself in a small boat and there, placing a sheet of water between Himself and His audience, He simply tells eight parables with two explanations, ten paragraphs altogether. You are struck with this - that when the Saviour has spoken four parables and one explanation, in the 35th verse, He leaves the scene at the beach - leaves the crowd and retires into a private house with a selected knot of His disciples. There He gives one more explanation and four more parables, and you might well ask why it is that He can speak four parables and one explanation to the crowd and one explanation and four parables to the private circle of His redeemed. Well, now, the first thing that you have to see is that these phrases "in the boat, by the sea" and "entering into the house with His disciples" represent something more than geographical and physical facts, they represent a moral position. When the Lord Jesus is seated by the sea addressing the people, He is giving truth that deals with the outward form of His kingdom, when He enters into the private cloister of that house, He is giving truth that is valid and understandable only by the inner circle of faith. Truth by the sea for the crowds. Truth for the saints inside the house.

In the first verse it says that the Lord Jesus left a certain house, and what was the house He had left? To understand that you must go back to chapter twelve, and without entering into details, you remember that the commencement of that chapter says. First, the Lord Jesus enters into the corn fields, His disciples take the ears of corn and eat them and the Pharisees say "we have got no bread for you, but you should not do that on the Sabbath day, we would sooner see you hunger than break our interpretation of the Sabbath." "Very well," says Christ, "you are pure legalists and knew nothing of the truth." In the ninth verse of that chapter He goes into the synagogue and He finds there a man with a withered hand helplessly dangling, and the Lord Jesus shows them that that man with the withered hand is a kind of incarnate symbol of the state of the nation of Israel. They are paralysed and their Pharisees are withered men - they are powerless. Then in the 22nd verse He shows them something else, "Religion has no bread for hungry people," He says, "and religion has no power to do the works of God," but He finds a man that reveals three things, first he is a demoniac, then he is blind, then he is dumb, and Christ points to this man and He says in effect, "this represents the nation of Israel, she is possessed with a demon, she cannot recognise Christ when she looks at Him, she is dumb in speaking His praises." When the Pharisees heard this they knew He was speaking of them, that He singled

out a demoniac, blind and dumb, as a sort of perambulating parable of their condition, and they went into a house and plotted in order to murder the Lord Jesus; but the Lord too went into another house, we read, and He described the house where the Pharisees lived. "There was once a devil," says Christ, "who lived in a house, and he went out through a waterless place, seeking rest and finding none, and when he found neither rest nor water this lonely devil said to himself, 'I will go back to the house I have left, but I do not like loneliness,' so he got seven other devils worse than himself, they came back and set up housekeeping. When they come back they find the house is empty, someone has been there with a broom and a house decorator has been in, the house is swept and garnished, and they say 'This is just exactly the house we like, we can do just what we please here.' And the Lord Jesus points to that house and He says, 'That is where religion has brought the nation of Israel, seven devils have come back since you came back from Babylon.' They say, 'Now Christ is here and we are going to crucify Him' and then says Matthew very significantly, 'He walked out of the house and went down to the seaside,' that is, He pronounced the sentence of desolation against the nation of Israel that day. In figure, He broke the links that were actually broken by the cross, and from the day that Christ went out of the demon-possessed house with its eight demons governing Israel and sending Christ to His death, from the day that He left that house, Israel has been an empty place without Messiah there for nineteen hundred years. But, thank God, He is coming back to that house which for the present is empty.

But Christ is working in another way, for, says the Lord Jesus, "I am going to tell you prophetically that is going to happen in the next nineteen hundred years. First, I will tell you the outward history of the Church and the kingdom and then the inner secret of the joy that will possess the hearts of a number of men and women. Now these eight familiar parables, as you know, are divided as follows: If I had a blackboard with me, this is what I would do; I would write upon the blackboard 1,2,3,4. - 4,3,2,1, and then I would show you that the first of the parables, the sower, exactly corresponds to the eighth, that is, the Scribe instructed, or in other words, the first parable, that of the sower, deals with the work of the evangelist scattering the seed in the world, while the scribe in v.52 deals with the work of the teacher, opening the scripture inside the house, bringing out of his treasury things new and old. I am not a sower tonight, I was a sower last night preaching the gospel. I am seeking to be a scribe tonight, instructed to the Kingdom of the Heavens, and I want to bring out things new and old. Then I should write underneath the second parable "The wheat and the tares," and underneath the seventh, that is the last but one from the end "The good fish and the bad fish" - the parable of the drag-net. I should show you that the second answers to the seventh in this way, that each of them speaks of two things, two kinds of seed and two kinds of fish, that is these parables only are the angels brought in to distinguish, that in these parables only is there the furnace of fire and that in these parables only is the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then there is the third and the sixth, and I should write against the third the words "Mustard seed" and against the sixth the word "Pearl," and I should show how the mustard seed and the pearl each spring from a very fine nucleus, a grain of seed or a grain of sand. In the case of the mustard seed there is abnormal growth in size, in the case of the pearl there is abnormal growth in costliness. And the two parables, the mustard seed and the pearl exactly one giving you the outward and the other the inward secret. Then I should take the fourth and fifth, the two centre parables, the leaven, where the woman does the hiding, and the treasure, where the man does the hiding, and I should find that hiding is the key word of the two parables. The woman hides in an evil sense and the man in the delight of his heart hides the treasure and so I have four parables dealing with the outer kingdom and four parables dealing with the secret joy that is in the hearts of the saints.

Well, now, we shall stand on the sea shore with the Saviour and listen to what He is going to say. First, He says the sower went forth scattering the seed and the fate of the seed is exceedingly tragic judging by earthly standards. First, it falls on hard ground where sceptical people trample the truth down, then it falls on stony places where superficial people waste their time and trifles with the truth, and then it falls into the midst of thorns where fussy people, taken up with social duties, thrust the truth of God into the remotest corners of their hearts. Here and there, thank God, says Christ, it comes to an honest and good heart (and there are very few honest and good men in this world) and the seed strikes down and the man brings forth one hundredfold in Luke, one hundred, sixty and thirty in Matthew, and thirty, sixty and one hundred in Mark. In every case there is one hundred percent yield, and then says the Lord Jesus, as soon as I have gone with my immediate discipline, there will come a dark day when the devil will come in and sow tares among the wheat of God. It will be forbidden to attempt to root up those tares, and everyone of our Saviour's words fulfilled themselves, when, later, there were four dark centuries in which every kind of oriental philosophy, Greek mysticism and Jewish legalism were thrust into the Church's life and the tares were everywhere. The empire became a system of vast christianised paganism, with millions of professing Christians, but as to the pure wheat only God saw how few there were.

Then, says the Lord Jesus, the third state will come to pass. From a tiny little seed there will come a shrub, and in the parable the shrub becomes a mighty tree and all the children of the evil one, the birds of the air, rest in its branches, and that again becomes precisely fulfilled about the seventh century

after Constantine and his successors, when every country in Europe was christianised and every foul and evil thing took shelter in the branches of the professing Christian church. Then again says the Lord Jesus, Christianity has become popular, all the nations of the western world have taken it up and are marching beneath its banner, trampling the truth beneath their feet. Then there is a last phase, where a woman is in her kitchen and she has got three measures of meal, and if the meal is left, there it will lie true and strong in its own proportions. But the woman takes a small handful of leaven and inserts it into the meal and bye and bye it begins to expand and grow and becomes three times its normal size. The result being that that leaven, whether it be the leaven of the Pharisees which is ritualism, or the Saducees which is modernism, or the Horodians which is worldliness, have doctrinally corrupted the church, and look where you will you will see the whole standards of christianity and the mighty fundamental truths of the faith frittered away by superstition modernish, legalism and worldliness in all their forms. The Saviour quietly rises and walks away from the sea and leaves them like that. "But", you say, "Lord Jesus is it possible, Lord Jesus can it really be that this is the end of that thing which began so strongly, so white in its robes, so unutterably pure and clean and Godly, the dwelling place of the Eternal and the Holy Spirit - Lord Jesus can it really be that this is the end of this thing we call Christianity, that great hope given yesterday, is it all overthrown and corrupted by false doctrine so that it looks as if there is nothing left?" "No," says Christ, "that is not the end, that is not the real end that is what it looks like to the historian, and to the newspaper writer, that is what it looks like to religious people as a whole," but He says, "you come into the house with Me, and I will show you those things that will give you penetration and balance, and gladness in your thinking." So we file into the house with Him, just a fisherman's cottage, and outside the crowds are discussing His words and chattering with one another and wondering what it means.

"Now," says the Lord Jesus Christ, "In this house there are five things that I want to find in every Christian assembly, in every company of Christians down the centuries," and you say "What are the five things?" Well, I will come to them in a moment. We will take what the disciples asked first, "Now," they said, "Lord Jesus we want you to explain to us what you did not explain to the crowds, dost thou mind telling us what that parable of the tares meant?" "Why," says the Lord Jesus, "of course I will tell you," and He shows that every detail is vital. He says, "The sower is Christ, the field is the world, and the good seed are the sons of the kingdom and the bad seed, the tares, are sons of the evil one, (and then you will notice both in the parable and in the explanation He puts together three very striking things. He says, "Towards the end of the age the tares and the wheat will be gathered into bundles, the wheat will be gathered into the barn, and all the tares will be burned." Notice the order, first gather the tares into bundles, then, catch away the wheat and then judge and destroy the tares. Now, when do you suppose the gathering of the tares into bundles is going to begin? My dear friends it has begun already and far and away the most significant sign of our times, far more significant even than the going back of the Jews into Palestine, or the formation of the League of Nations, or any detail of that sort, far and away more significant than any sins of the times is this gathering into bundles. Do you doubt it? Take the commerce of today, the ordinary business life, and what is the marked nature of it? In every civilised land today is a gathering into bundles, great trusts, chain stores, mighty amalgamations, governing millions of pounds in capital, trade unions, master's unions, sorting into bundles wherever you go, and the whole tendency of our time, in the commercial and the industrial world is this "gather things into great big bundles so that when the crash comes things can be readily moved and manipulated. Then you go into the social world, and here you will find the key note is "gather them into bundles", societies. Then in the political world, Fascism, Bolshevism, Nazism - all these things - I am not saying whether they are good or bad, I am simply stating a recognised fact, that the watch word of these things is "gather the people into bundles, have them ready so they can move at a Dictator's word, have the people in great masses and blocks so that we can challenge at once when occasion may arise." You come to the religious world and you have got precisely the same gathering into bundles." There is that great system with its three hundred millions of devotees, and their great cry is "gather all religions into the compass of Mother Church," and then the great Protestant Churches are sitting down and conspiring how they can amalgamate and gather in other bodies. I am simply stating facts that I have observed in England, Canada, the United States and other lands during the last ten years, which furnish ample illustrations. If you doubt the binding into bundles take the political happenings of our times and you will see that the whole thing that men are engaged in, is to try and get the nations into little groups. There may be the larger group of the League of Nations, there may be the Eastern group headed by Russia, there may be the Italian group or the German block or the Anglo-French block, what you will, everywhere in the world is gathering itself into bundles - religiously, politically, socially and industrially, and the Saviour sat in that house and He told His people and He told the crowds outside that the first thing would be to get ready for the end and bind themselves into bundles. Then, says the Lord Jesus, take the wheat up into the garner, and when is the wheat going into the garner? O, dear friends, I hope it is going up tonight. That is the hope that has given backbone, joy and strength to my faith for more than forty years, since the night I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, that the time for gathering the wheat into the garner may be very near, and the more as I see the gathering of the tares into bundles. And after that, as soon as the

wheat has been caught away out of the scene and you have got nothing but those great prepared bundles, there breaks out an awful time, of trial and tribulation, and at last the Saviour speaks of "a shining out in the kingdom of the Father, the righteous shining like the sun." There is Christ's great programme, first the gathering into bundles, second the catching away of the wheat, third the time of chastisement, punishment and burning, and fourthly the setting up and shining out of the great kingdom in which nothing that offends will be allowed to exist.

Now, finally, I want to tell you something that I believe is even more important than details of prophecy, and that is what the Lord Jesus says to His disciples. "I expect to find in my house, that is, every house where my authority is recognised (and that should govern every Christian Church in Christendom) where believers want to build new testament churches after the pattern shown them in the mount." Now the Lord Jesus Christ tells us the first thing he wants in New Testament Churches, when the disciples come and say "Expound to us the parables of the tares." The first outstanding mark of a Christian assembly, is that it is a place where the scriptures are expounded. Now I wonder whether you have thought sufficiently of that. In the world they have their newspapers and their books of philosophy, in the world they have their intellectual giants and they speculate about science and the future, but in the whole universe today there is only one place on earth where the Word of God is being expounded, the word is "Declare unto us the meaning of the Scriptures." and may I say lovingly brethren, I am afraid we are not doing it as our fathers used to do it. I remember in my youth, when the late William Kelly used to come up to London and deliver his annual series of lectures, he would take perhaps seven lectures on Isaiah or the captivity books, and each year he would lecture on a broad portion of Scripture. He spent months in preparation for these lectures, there would be queues outside the largest hall they could get, and the good man would speak in very studied and cultured English for over an hour to crowds of folk, simply opening the Word of God. I spoke to some young people in a meeting, to which I came some time ago, because I wanted to know what line to take. I said, "When did you last have a series of lectures on the Epistle to the Romans?" and they looked surprised and said, "We have never had such a thing," and I said, "When did you last have a lecture on the Messianic Psalms or the Song of Solomon?" and they said, "We have never heard of such a thing," and I shook my head at those elders and wondered what they had been up to in not feeding the flock properly. Now, we understand that the first thing for which an assembly of God stands, is, that it is a place where the scriptures are interpreted as God gave them, that is, by chapters, books and sections, not in text preaching. I do not object to that but I am only saying that is not the way that God gave scripture. He gave it in big masses and in chapters, and not in texts, and I would say with great deference to my elders (of whom I always speak with bated breath) brethren, I beseech of you be exercised that you see to it that you feed the flock of God. On your shelves you have got books of series of lectures delivered by God's servants forty years ago, why are you not giving lectures like that now? Whatever is the use of having books of lectures on your shelves if you are not having any lectures? By thus doing you build the sepulchres of the prophets and then you stone them. "Very Well," says the Lord, "the first thing I expect is that my assembly will be a place for the exposition of the Word." Declare unto us the parable, open the Bible to us Book by Book, chapter by chapter, section by section, till your youth is grounded and settled in the Word of God as He gave it.

"The next thing I want to find in my assembly," says Christ, "Is that you must recognise that the assembly is where the treasure is." What is the treasure? What did Christ find when He came? He says, "I have not found so great faith." What did He find? Faith. Cries the delighted Saviour, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." The treasure in the Church today is faith, road the eleventh of Hebrews. If the first thing is that the scriptures must be read and expounded, the second thing is that the Lord has got His treasure, that of living energetic faith in Him, and an assembly like that is far on the road to perfection. Let us remember that the saints today are Christ's chosen treasure. If I remembered that should I ever dare say a critical or unkind thing about a Christian in my meeting? Of course not, why, you would look at that fellow christian and you would say, "There is a piece of Christ's treasure in the Church, and there is one of the excellent of the earth," and how we should love one another and serve one another, if we understood that the treasure is Christ in the hearts of His saints, living there by faith.

"Then," says Christ, "I must have the pearl in the house, and the pearl came this way; there was a certain merchantman seeking goodly pearls, (he may have found thousands in his travels) but he recognised at once the goodly one, a pearl of great price, and what does that mean? That the assembly is a place where people have spiritual appreciations. In the market place they appreciate money. To make £100 is an event in a man's life; on the sporting track they appreciate the muscles and sinews of a horse, in the football field they appreciate the strength and build of a runner, and what do the saints appreciate? Christ.

Then the third thing that Christ seeks is a people who know the best thing when they see it. A young man said to me on board ship sometime ago, "You know, Mr. St. John, these things are only a matter of taste." I said, "Yes,

you are perfectly right, I like the assembly, but you prefer the tavern. I like the prayer meeting, but remember that a man's tastes are the razor edge of his character, and the things that you prefer and the things that you like reveal the kind of man that you are and if you really prefer the pictures to the prayer meeting then that exposes you, and if you really prefer the prayer meeting to the pictures that reveals you. That is, our preferences are the most revealing things about us. Tell me the things you like, and the books you want to read, and the things you like to look at and I know altogether the sort of man you are. "Now," says Christ, "I came into this world with the finest possible appreciation and I found my pearl of great price," and here in the house He says, "I want to tell you that your appreciation and tastes will tell the sort of persons you are. And when you find a company of people rejoicing in Christ, sharing divine impressions, praying together, and cultivating spiritual relationships instead of social ones, then I say, there is a magnificent company of people whose spiritual tastes are so cultivated that they are feeding on Christ all the time.

"Then" says the Lord Jesus, "the fourth thing is, I want to know about that question of the good and bad fish." Can you distinguish between good and bad fish, have you discrimination to hate the evil and love the good? "Well," you say, "how is a man to distinguish between good and bad fish?" "Well," says Christ, "sit down and put the good into vessels but throw the bad away." "But how am I to know which is which?" "Have you ever read Leviticus, and don't you know that a bad fish is a fish that has not fins and has not scales, you must not eat that or have fellowship with that." Now what do scales represent? They are to keep out the surrounding elements, a life separate from the world. What do the fins represent? Guidance, the ability to thread your way through the paths of the sea. The fins give balance, the fins give guidance, the fins determine for the fish the track by which it shall go, and if the scales speak of divine protection, then the fins speak of divine guidance. "As many as are lead by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God," and the men guided by the Spirit of God are the clean fish, men protected by divine armour, the armour of light on the right hand and on the left.

"Well, now", says the Lord Jesus, "I have got these features, first the assembly is where they interpret the scriptures, secondly, it is the place where Christ finds His people, His treasure, thirdly, there are men who appreciate the highest, fourthly there are men who know how to distinguish between the good and the evil" and lastly He says, "Every scribe that is instructed to the Kingdom of the Heavens is like to a householder that brings forth out of his treasure things new and old." What does that mean? That the assembly is a place where there is constantly being brought out from the treasures of the soul a living ministry adapted to the needs of God's people. "Things new", that is we don't want a man to go round and round like the Gibeonites of old, that brought empty wine skins and worn out shoes. We don't want men coming round like a gramophone record, always the same things; we want a freshness in the ministry of the word and power that brings out new things, yes, things new and old. That does not mean new things and old things, but it means new lines of all truths which strike their roots deep into the old eternal things. The truth must be things now and old, and when you conclude an address of perhaps half an hour and some old brother shakes his head with pleasure and says "That is just what I was told forty years ago." You say, "Well, I am glad you have had a good time, but there was a word you did not hear forty years ago, and why not, because the Spirit of God reserved it for that servant to bring." Every servant of God when he plans to speak will have two things in mind, first there must be a fresh picture of Christ received from reading the passage, and then the background on which I rest are the landmarks that have stood since Pentecost. This makes the ministry of the Word so attractive that a man always stands up with a fresh word from God; in the centre of the picture is the divine piece as given to him by the Spirit, and then in the surrounding framework are the old truths which we have known and loved.

There are the secrets of the house told them, that the saints are Christ's treasure, that in the assembly of God's people there is seen the discriminating power of the Saviour, in the ability to judge between good and evil, there is that daily keeping your church pure and clean, and lastly you must have a living spring of constant ministry and the man who gives it may not know English or grammar very well, he may be as uneducated as you like, but he must be a Spirit taught man; of the two men to whom I owe most in the things of God, one was a miner who probably never earned more than 28/- a week, and the other was a peer of the realm, and I used to sit with those two men hour after hour. I owe more to them than to any other men on earth.

"Oh, that a man might arise in me
That the man in me might cease to be."

I am sorry for you if you have never felt like that.

But, with all these barriers and walls around us, we are conscious that we are held in the grip of tremendous forces, and that we are slaves to the things around us to a very real degree. We are not asked where we would be born, in what race or nation, in what place or age in history we should like to live; or who should be our parents. The barriers around us are so thick, and high and unscalable. But then a wise man accepts these things. By the time we are thirty or so, the pyramid of life has been settled for as long as we are to be in this world. The boundaries are set. I do not mean that the height is fixed; we may build as high as we like. But as a general rule, ^{when} a man is thirty (I cannot say what it is for a woman), by that time the usual base of his pyramid has been fixed finally for this world. Again I say, remember, you may build higher.

But I will leave that and take one or two of these fences that we are in constant danger of breaking down. The first one which I will take is that very delicate and fairy-like palisade that we call modesty, about which the Apostle Paul says so much in his writings. Now, by modesty, I mean this: that instinctive, deep-seated feeling that our minds and our bodies are very sacred things that are not common land for the feet of every stranger to trample on. There are certain physical and mental reticences that our fathers used to respect very highly, and which are in constant danger of being broken down in the days in which we live, and nature tells us a great deal about that. There are flowers so sensitive that if a passing stranger allows his shadow to fall upon them, they begin to retreat and curl up their leaves. There are plants so sensitive that the touch of an insect's wing is resented, and they begin to withdraw and pull themselves back. And it is a tremendous thing for us if we seek by the help and grace of God to keep that sense of modesty absolutely intact. It is like the down on the peach. These are days when that instinct, so deep-seated, is in constant danger of violation by the literature, by the speech, and by the common things that we see about us; and remember, there are certain sanctities which, once violated, can never be replaced, or at least are plants of very slow growth. Take for instance the very simplest things which you hear: jostling about Holy Scripture, jokes about the Bible, remarks with double meanings. Let your soul rise up in protest, wrap yourself in a mantle of disgust and refusal, for, again I say, this modesty is desired to keep the heart and affections pure. This desire is a thing that is being soiled and ruined, so that a man has lost, or a woman has lost that which is of incalculable worth in character-substance and building, when once modesty has been wiped away from the bloom of life.

Then behind modesty, there stands one of the fences which we call manners, and I make bold to say that manners are very little regarded in our day. I am not suggesting that you have bad manners in this country, but I do not think that everybody understands the value of manners. People think that they are ancient customs that are of no importance and can be flung aside - now you cannot do things that way. Take that instinct that makes a well-brought-up young man rise to his feet when a lady comes into the room, or that makes him give up his seat in a tramcar if a lady is standing. Don't imagine that that is a little piece of French manners imported from Europe - don't imagine that. Our manners are the defences of our morals. Let me illustrate it.

As long as man has lived he has been in the custom of building temples - great buildings supported by stout pillars. One day, thousands of years ago, a man had built a great stout pillar. He knew in those days that the usual thing of his neighbour was to come with an axe or hammer and break down his pillar, so one day, it struck him to do a singular thing. At the top of his pillar, he carved some lily work - just a little piece of decoration. I dare say his wife came in and said, "What is the good of that. That does not make the pillar any stronger. Why do you carve the lily work on your pillar?" "Well, my dear, it is like this. It struck me that many a man might come in with an axe and want to use it, and when he saw my pillar, he might say, 'Here is a pillar - let's smash it,' but when he noticed the beautiful piece of carved work he would think twice about breaking it down." (Psalm 74: 5-6) "A man used to be famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees, but now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers."

It is one of the greater sins to smash the lily work on some stout pillar which was built at the cost of time, care and good taste, and when you violate some piece of good manners, when you brush aside as a thing of no worth, some ancient custom, some standard of courtesy, some bit of lily-work carved upon the stout pillar of your life, you do a worse thing than you know; you destroy with axe and hammer, one of the vital things of life. The next thing is that the passerby will find it easier to violate your mind - just because the carved work has been broken down. Our manners are the defences of our morals, and nowhere is that more needed today, than in relations between the sexes. In the last thirty years women have emerged into a freedom to which their mothers and grandmothers were entirely strangers, and I am not saying for one moment whether that

freedom be good or whether it be doubtful, but I do say that it is a fact that they stand and compete with men in many fields. The tendency of such a movement necessarily is, to cheapen, in the minds of foolish and unbalanced men, the worth of women and to lower the delicacy of their feelings. So, see to it on both sides that you insist on this reticence by good manners.

Well, we find that these hedges are often broken quickly and we never fail to find that the serpent bites; so I ask you to consider briefly with me the Scripture from which we started. Here is a woman fenced around by a hedge in the garden of God, and from that her eyes are directed to a thing that is pleasing, a thing which she thinks will give her a thrill, and experience that she has never had before - "I should like to have my eyes opened. I would like to have some thrills," and the serpent's voice and the vision of the tree sent that woman away from that tree and from the garden, weeping tears that were never wiped away. How many since have trodden the same path of sorrow.

Then I come to my second Scripture, and there I see a man standing on a beach; not in a garden of beauty, but on a cold, bleak beach. He has two hundred and seventy-five people with him and he is the man to whom they all look for leadership; so Paul goes away and gathers some firewood, and amongst the bundle in his arms there is a long, stick-like thing, which he thinks is a piece of wood. He does not know that it is an hibernating snake, torpid with the cold; but as he warms it against the flames the heat kindles the beast to life and it strikes at Paul's wrist, and there it dangles. Paul stands there for a moment, with the serpent on his wrist, and the Barbarians with their eyes fixed upon him wonder what is going to happen to the man who has been struck by the serpent. Then, with one swift turn of his wrist, he shakes the beast into the fire. Just as John tells us, in the last page of Scripture, that an angel comes down and takes the serpent and casts it into the fire. They say that this man is a murderer because he has been bitten by the serpent, that he has broken some fence. But Paul stood behind the fence by which God had hedged his life and no serpent could bite that man. The world still thinks there is something Godlike about the man who can take the beast within him and shake it into the fire instead of yielding to it. And the reason why Luke finishes his great chronicle of Church history with Paul with the serpent on his wrist is this: that that picture incorporates the whole of Paul's teaching in the letter to the Romans. What is a man to do with the beast - that is, the serpent that is in him, that indwelling sin? Is he to take it into his breast, stroke it and warm it? NO! With one quick turn of the wrist shake it into the fire "Sin shall not have dominion over me, for I am not under the law." I am God's free man, and the serpent cannot bite me.

There is one Person Who never violated a hedge, that is the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is strange to say that the hedges were around Him so closely, that He could touch them almost on every side. Our Lord's life was nothing like so free or so full, speaking after the manner of men, as yours is. He lived for 30 years with four brothers and at least three sisters, and probably His widowed mother, and there for 30 years, in those narrow surroundings, He was behind the hedge of His Father's will. When He went into the desert the tempter said to Him three times, "Break the hedge," and each time the Lord said, "No," He stood before Pilate and He might have broken the hedge of human authority: He might have called twelve legions of angels to help Him and have broken the hedge of human injustice; but He stood behind the hedge of His Father's will. "He opened not his mouth" when they smote Him, "being reviled, He reviled not again," and so that perfect life, behind the hedge of the Father's Will, passed to its honourable close seated at God's right hand. And when you are tempted at times to break those limitations, and those fences behind which God has put your life, fences that each one of us knows and is conscious of, remember that there was One who made His hedge the strength and joy of His life: "I delight to do Thy will oh God."

Now, there are times when a man says, "I am not sure whether that thing is right. I am not sure whether it is a hedge of God." Well, I will give you a simple rule by which to find out. Never say, "What harm is there in it?" but "What fruit is there?" (Romans 6). I was crossing the Campus of one of our American Summer Bible Schools, and as I walked over I noticed a group of about fifteen young people gathered around a tree stump, arguing with great energy about some matter. One of them, a fair fluffy-haired little thing of about sixteen, caught sight of me and called me over to ponder a great problem, and she said "Now, Mr. St. John, what we are talking about is that: should a young Christian dance? We would like to know what you think." I replied, "First of all I am glad you said a young Christian, because an old Christian wouldn't want to, his bones are too stiff, so we will keep it to the young Christian. Now you have asked me a very great question and it is much too hard for me to answer. 'Should a young Christian dance?' Now, if you had asked me something simple, like the meaning of Ezekiel's wheels, or the wings of the seraphim, I could have told you at once, but a question as deep as that, I say that I cannot tell you," and there were fifteen disappointed faces. "But I will tell you now what I can do; I can help you to answer your own question." So getting a piece of paper, I drew a line down the middle, and in the centre I put a cross mark; so there was a blank sheet of paper with the sign of the cross in the centre, while I wrote on this side "B.C." and on the other side "A.D." "Now," I said, "On that sheet of

paper everything on the left hand side will be what is suitable to the days before you knew Christ, and everything on the right hand side will be suitable to the days after you knew Christ. Very well, I shall say a few things and you will write them down, left or right." I began throwing out words very quickly, "Country walk for exercise," "prayer meeting," this and that, and they went down one after the other as the case may be, and about the twelfth thing I threw out "Dancing." Like a flash they wrote it down on the left side. When the question was put to them suddenly like that, they knew instinctively whether it was right or not, and they had their answer.

I make bold to say that when you come to questionable things nearly always you can settle them by writing this text - "B.C." or "A.D." Do they really suit Christ? Can He smile upon them, and can you seek His favour on them? If not, you dare not do them. Should Christians go to the theatre? Well, I state, that all depends. I remember some time after I was converted having a free evening, so I went to the theatre, took my pocket full of tracts and at half time began handing out these tracts. I had not been there five minutes before a big commissionaire came up and asked me to go away, but I said "I have paid my entry - why should I go away? Am I injuring anybody?" He said, "We do not like that sort of little book here." Then the manager came up to me, so I left and began to give them out at the doorway at the end. When the people came down, why, there was a sister who was in fellowship coming down the stairs of the theatre. When she saw me with my little books she flushed up crimson. I wondered why she flushed up crimson. I was in the theatre and I was perfectly happy, and I just wondered why that sister looked so embarrassed. I was there, too, and I wasn't a bit embarrassed, I pondered over it all the way home, but I won't tell you what conclusion I came to. You can answer that for yourself.

There are certain deep and stable instincts that the Spirit of God has put into our lives as Christians, and it is well for us never to violate a God-given, God-raised fence, that is, some deep instinct that the Spirit of God has really settled; and if we are going to live clean, Christlike lives as servants of the Saviour, we have to keep and respect those barriers that God has erected.

Our business is to walk in separation from this present world, and I am not going to give you any broad or narrow interpretation of that. You may enjoy beautiful things, and I tell you this, that the Lord Jesus Christ never took from any man or woman any single thing that was good. If you think that becoming a Christian means that you must give up good things, it is a lie. He never took a good thing from anybody. He took the corrupting things, things that lessen, things that are base and common; but He never took a thing that will honour and bless His name.

I close with one very simple word. There may be some here who are just standing on the edge of the Christian way. I am not speaking of the most of us; we have already started with Christ, and if you tell us that we did wrong to start, we tell you it is too late, we are off. But some of you are hesitating on the threshold, and may be you have put a timid, trembling hand and touched the garments of Christ, but you never made up your mind as to whether it is going to be Christ and Heaven, or merely Christ and earth. Which is it going to be?

Then again, there are some who are not quite sure that they have touched the Saviour at all, which is the simplest thing in the world to do.

It may be that there are those of you who have been brought here by friends, who have a deep interest in you. The Lord Jesus came today to this meeting to take your sins away, and to send you out God's free man, behind fences, yes, but fences of love, of honour, of trust, of Holy Scripture, of the Spirit's guidance, and lastly, to go out and live lives radiant as God's strong men, and God's true women - as the Psalmist puts it, "That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth, our daughters as corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace," as dependable as they are beautiful.

May God guard us against ever breaking hedges, lest serpents bite us.
