

## NOTES OF ADDRESSES IN ILFORD

*These notes were discovered in manuscript form; they have been reviewed for publication, but there is no record that they were revised by the author*

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD

*10<sup>th</sup> June 1916*

#### **Luke 9: 18-36**

I have read this wealthy and interesting passage to help me in bringing before you the subject of the Kingdom of God. It is my purpose to speak of that, and my point is, that, in the measure we have Christ as our Head we know what the Kingdom of God really is. How is it produced, ... how it is understood and enjoyed we shall see as we go on.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of the 1<sup>st</sup> of Corinthians the apostle there says "The Head of Christ is God" (v 3) and the Man Who has God as His Head proposes to become our Head.

The gospel by Luke has a peculiar character and a fitting title would be, I think, "The Head of Christ is God", for throughout this gospel we have set forth a Man who's every action was swayed by God in all things. He had God for His Head, and God would recover us for His pleasure in the life of that Man who had God for His Head.

It is very important that we should know the truth of the Kingdom for it affects us individually and I have a feeling that we are defective there. If we are not maintained in the truth of the Kingdom we cannot understand and enjoy the spiritual truths of the assembly. The truth of the Kingdom of God touches us individually. What is proposed for you in the Gospel is, not to go to heaven when you die, but to be controlled by Christ as Head now, and thus to be for His pleasure. It is noticeable that none of the preachers of the Gospel throughout the Acts of the Apostles, speak of heaven as the goal - not one of them presents the Gospel in that way. We must get rid of notions and be controlled by Scripture. The spiritual thought is for each one of us to be set up in the knowledge of God here - to know God and to be supremely happy in spite of circumstances. Undoubtedly, we shall be happy by and by but it is God's thought for us to be happy now and not to be dependent upon circumstances for our joy.

The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. That is what I see in the truth of the Kingdom exclusive to Luke and Paul and I think Luke illustrates Paul's teaching. I refer, of course, to one aspect of it.

This is a marvellous passage that we have read; as a fitting title for it I would suggest, 'The journey from the speculations of men to the appreciation of the Father'.

The Lord is seen here in prayer and afterwards He addresses His disciples. He turns and asks them a question which shows what was passing through His mind. He had ministered to the multitude; He had fed them in their need, and now He wishes to know what they say about *Him*.

Do their thoughts stop at what they had received from His hand, or do their thoughts rest as to Him? He does what He does, and He gives what He gives, that we may know Him, and that constitutes our blessing. Their need was met and now there are idle speculations as to whom He is. Moses, Elias or one of the prophets. How truly He has met the need - He has left nothing

undone. He has rendered you the greatest possible service. Why? That you might be able to sing with greater reality the verse that we commenced with:

We love Thee for the glorious worth  
Which in Thyself we see.

That is the end of it, not only to meet my needs, but that I may know Him.

He is seen in prayer. He that has God for His Head prays and the Kingdom of God is there. The great end is dependence; thus, in the next chapter but one (11) *we* are taught how to pray and it is the Lord that teaches us. You say, 'We have got the Spirit'. Yes, but the Lord will teach us. In this gospel the Lord is seen seven times in prayer and we have to learn the lesson of dependence upon God from Him - from the Man who had God for His Head.

The Lord is seen in circumstances which sin had created. He is weary, tired and in sorrow. He is not in a garden as the first man was, where all spoke of the pleasure of God. The first man in that environment gave all that up for Satan. The second Man holds all for God in spite of untoward circumstances. God has a Man who will have Him as Head in the very circumstances that sin had created.

Throughout this Gospel, Jesus is seen as the dependent one in prayer to God in every circumstance, whether favourable or otherwise.

It is an interesting study to trace it. Seven times He prays, beginning at His baptism and finishing at Gethsemane. He prays when the people would make much of Him; when His fame goes abroad and the multitude throng Him He retires to pray. He prays when the attitude of the multitude is reversed and their hatred is shown. "They have rewarded me ... hatred for my love"; prayer is again His resource.

Here He prays when He is neglected and His gifts put before Himself. Immediately He goes up the mountain and prays and the fashion of His countenance was changed.

Then He descended and teaches how to pray; and lastly, He prays in Gethsemane. He prays in His sorrow. He had God for every resource. He had God for His Head.

I simply mentioned those points as to prayer just in passing but I feel the importance of them. While you may speak of the privileges of the assembly, remember, there is another spot where no stranger can intrude - you must have your own private history with God, you must not depend upon meetings only. Bethany sets forth what you get there, but Bethany and the Mount of Olives are very closely connected geographically, and so must they be spiritually. We cannot do without the Mount of Olives. Power and communion will be seen by that. You remember His prayer, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt". That is the seventh presentation of Him in prayer.

If Christ is our Head, we shall be taught how to pray - we need to ask the Lord to teach us how to pray. Then shall we be delivered from those mental recitals that go no higher than the roof. *He* will teach us.

I go back to the passage we first read. "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God". They saw it in that Man. Let us never forget that as to His own Person, He was God over all, blessed for ever. He could not cease to be what He was because of what He became. It is the perfection of what He became that we have here. It was God set forth morally. It could not be otherwise for He was governed in every movement by God.

God-conscious and governed by God-consciousness - happy proposal; how little we know of it. It would be a great gain if we are in even a small measure aroused to it. It is in the measure in which Christ is our Head that we can be in God's kingdom.

I want to illustrate this by reference to four passages in this same gospel, in each of which the expression "at His feet" occurs and which show progressive apprehension of Christ as Head.

The first is in the seventh chapter. It is well known to you all: "a woman in the city which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat ... stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with her tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head". That is the first introduction to Christ as Head. The point is that you are taught to appreciate Christ. I am sure, beloved brethren, the point of the passage is the way He endears Himself to us. That is the start, the first note struck in her heart. She "wiped them with the hairs of her head". Her glory is all gone. The first introduction to Christ is through His feet. You understand me, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things". He evangelised God. He is the vessel of the grace of God, and the Person in whom the blessing is, is endeared to you and you are awakened.

What a contrast between the woman and Simon! With him there was not a single pulsation towards Jesus. He was living in the environment of selfish satisfaction. This woman had reached a spot where you always find Christ. *I am nothing*. She had affection for Him.

Every young Christian listen. This is the way of introduction to Christ - through His feet - through the glad tidings of the grace of God. Then she hears the glad message, "Woman, thy faith has saved thee, go in peace".

In the next chapter she is seen in the company of those who had been taught to love Christ. She is introduced into the circle of divine affections. God give us grace to remember that *He* is the only bond, let that be powerfully maintained and happy will be the results. That is the first way you are introduced to Christ - He is the vessel of the grace of God.

In the eighth chapter we get another thought - it is the mind of the Spirit in presenting these things in this order - in the 35<sup>th</sup> verse it says they "found the man ... sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind". That is the next step - He that endears Himself to you subdues you. This man was entirely under another domination but he is now found sitting at the feet of Jesus. That is the place of subjection; happy subjection which is the fruit of affection. The man is in restfulness, now subdued to Him.

The you come to Mary in the tenth chapter - you know the passage well. Now Martha served and Mary sat at His feet and received His word. Her ear was opened to Christ. That is the right thought for one who has Christ for his Head. He not only subdues you but He teaches you. Under that subduing influence He pours divine thoughts into her heart. That is what we want. Martha is cumbered about much serving - she is a type of the one in the seventh of Romans who is not free from the first husband. Mary is set free.

What always produced life in you is the enjoyment of the life as expressed in Him. I could not say anything more important to you than that. There is a helpful parable I sometimes use to express what I mean and to illustrate my point. It is this: There is the sea out yonder and it sighs and moans, 'O that I might reach the heavens'. So, the wind, willing to help, blew and blew again till the sea rose high. Under the pressure of the wind the sea rose high and mounted up in huge billows, only to fall back again after the mighty effort was made. Again, the sea sighed and moaned and

again the wind exerted all its force, causing the waves to mount high up the cliff but alas, only to fall back again into the ocean. Just then the sun shone out. 'Be still' it said 'and I will draw you up'. That is what we want - the shining of Christ and to drink in His glorious perfections. The love which we enjoy in Him shall be seen in us. There is no effort, the sea was marked by effort. There should be energy, divine energy, but no effort. We have the privilege of coming under His influence and it is to this end: that these moral features shall be seen in us and we shall be governed by what is suitable to God.

How shall we pray? His ear is opened to the cry of need, to the cry of sorrow, to the cry of woe. I love to think of that. The 68<sup>th</sup> Psalm begins with the God of power, yet that is the God of the widow, the God of the fatherless. He is cognisant of the solitary ones and His ear is open to the cry of distress.

How sweet it is to pray intelligently, so often our prayers abound with "me", "my", "mine" where it should be "Thee", "Thy", "Thine". O that we might pray the right way up! The Lord sets the example, "O Father which art in heaven". That is the start - God and His interests first. I grant often with us it is otherwise yet He graciously hears our prayers, I quite admit it, but it is a very great thing to get the moral order as set forth in Luke's Gospel.

I have tried to show you that in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter He endears Himself to you. It is an affection which is not natural, it is engendered by the Spirit. Then He subdues you. Thirdly He teaches you by presenting Himself to you. Last of all as the great climax, you get in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter what is greater than all these - you are effaced.

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell on his face at His feet giving Him thanks". That is the climax, He effaces you. That is it - he was on his face. He was effaced - he glorified God. That is, he came into the position of God-consciousness instead of self-consciousness. Christ effaced him - the Kingdom of God was reached.

These few scriptures show the progressive apprehension of Christ as Head. That produced the Kingdom of God. This man would not go to the priests - they only stood for the Jewish system of law which was marked by demand. God's kingdom is marked by revelation. Happy going back, one had discovered the Kingdom of God - Christ had effaced him. These are very real things. The spiritual man is the man who is effaced. We think perhaps of a spiritual man as one who can expound scripture, unfold doctrine etc. There is always too much of self-consciousness - I deplore it in myself.

The Pharisees come at this juncture and demand when the Kingdom of God should come. It is here in your midst and ye do not see it. Sovereign mercy is there too, that is another mark of God's Kingdom, but they do not see it - their religious environment kept them from it.

As a climax to my address I desire three things, three hindrances which keep us back and account for, I think, our small knowledge of experimental things. Three great hindrances to our practically entering the Kingdom.

From this chapter regarding the Pharisees we pass on, after a dispensational parenthesis, to a parable (chapter 18). In this, two men are presented as going up into the temple to pray. I would have you understand that this is recorded for instruction to Christians. I know the Gospel is preached from it and rightly so too, but it is for our learning. The Pharisee stood up and said, "I thank Thee P". That resembles greatly the man in the other chapter who gave thanks, but put your

ear close down to it and it is “*I* thank Thee *I*” etc. The other man said, “I thank Thee *Thou*”, the *self-righteous* “*I*” shuts us out - it is the leaven of the Pharisees that spoils us. The self-righteous “*I*” has no place in God’s Kingdom.

Secondly, the ‘*mental I*’ has no place in God’s Kingdom. Verse 15 goes on to speak of little children. Let each stand here and learn the lesson. “Whoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein”. What is the charm of a little child? It is its simplicity. I have often grieved in watching a little child to think it must sooner or later lose its simplicity. Have you a desire to enter God’s Kingdom? You say, ‘I do not understand it’. No but do you believe it? Believe it and you will understand it. In the outside world we understand and then believe but not so with God’s things. Do not say, ‘It is too deep for me’. I do want each one of you to know these things experimentally. Only as we have experienced things can we help others. Gehazi put the staff on the face of the child. He had for a long time been living in the presence of the testimony and yet the child never moved. We want a ministry that is living.

Thirdly and lastly there is the ‘*I of acquisition*’. The young ruler (v 18 onwards) went away sorrowful for he was very rich. Beloved young men, if you are set for riches beware. It is not having riches that is the danger - not the possession, but the acquisition that is harmful. Riches of course may be a snare also, they make you independent and able to carry on your own will.

I wonder why it is we scarcely ever pray for people who are prosperous. A brother prayed recently that those who had become suddenly rich through the war might be kept. He was right, such people need far more grace than the poorer saints. To be rich is to be in a place of danger. The only way to be kept from the ‘*I of acquisition*’ and all it involves is to be kept under the influence of Christ.

Now as I close I would ask you not to try to remember all that has been said, but just to get hold of the little bit that is from the Lord for you. May we each be kept under the influence of Christ that we may reflect His image. God grant it for His name’s sake. Amen.

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# ABIDING

*17<sup>th</sup> June 1916*

**Luke 24: 29-31; John 1: 3-39; John 13: 23-25**

You will remember that last week I drew attention to the distinctive character of Luke's Gospel. It is extremely helpful to have the distinctiveness of each book before you in reading - it helps so much in regard to detail.

The four Gospels present the Lord in very distinctive ways. In Luke we have the presentation of God as Man; God is seen in a Man - that is the great idea. In that true, perfect, holy humanity God was seen - as I said before, a fitting title to the Gospel would be, THE HEAD OF CHRIST IS GOD. He was seen in circumstances which sin had created but was not moved by that in which He was found. He had God for His Head. We can never forget that though Man, He was still a Divine Person - Christ is God. You cannot understand it? No. Nor reason about it? No. You can only leave the mystery of His Person, for if you could understand it you would be as wise as God.

God has been pleased to come down to us in a Man - in Jesus the true and perfect Man. So much false doctrine is floating about now, even among Christians, in regard to the deity of Christ, that one has to hold tenaciously to His divinity. He never ceased to be what He was because of what He became but was perfect in what He became. Luke presents Him in that way - in the perfection of what He became.

The great thought is that God proposes to recover us to Himself in the life of that Man. If Christians, we come under the influence of the Spirit to that end. Luke's Gospel always goes with Paul's teaching and Paul's doctrine consists of the great moral foundations of the Gospel of the Grace of God - the removal of one man in the death of Christ and the bringing in of another Man in the power of the Spirit. That is it - and yet it is even refused by God's dear people. Blessed removal - God will recover you in the life of another Man.

You remember the incident (2 Kings chapter 7) the young man lost the axe-head, it went down into the waters. By the side of Jordan there grew a tree, which when cut down and cast in, caused the iron to swim - the axe-head came to the surface - it was recovered for the owner's pleasure.

Another thing in Luke's Gospel is the priestly grace of Christ. The Gospel begins with the Priest and ends with the Priest. At the commencement the priesthood is in weakness. Zacharias is in weakness - he is aged, there is barrenness - no child, it all figures the failure and breakdown of that system. The Gospel ends with Priesthood, Christ ascends on high. "And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them, and it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven". He went up into heaven giving the priestly benediction. That was the last time they saw Him. They saw Him in that attitude where He blessed them and so He was parted from them. Beloved brethren, His hands have never gone down. Two thousand years He has been exercising His priestly grace. There is no departure there, He is Priest and Blesser.

"He led them out ...". If you will let Him separate you - but it can only be known in separation from the world and its principles - He will place His hands upon you in blessing, for His hands have never gone down and His heart has never grown cold. We often sing of what His love has done, but what is He doing now. He is active now. His heart of love is still the same and desires

that we may be drawn from religious formality to know Him and to prove the present activity of His love. If we were all here in the power of that, what a blessed meeting we should have. Oh the constancy of that love, every exigency of God's people brings out His service.

I have said all this by way of preface, my aim tonight is to show you, if I can, the difference between the two "abides" (Luke 24: 29 and John 1: 39).

The hymn 'Abide with me, fast falls the eventide' is very familiar and very sweet. I am not saying a word against that. It was written by a godly minister in the parish in which I lived as a boy. People speak of, and sing it, as if it were the acme of a Christian experience. No doubt the theme is taken from these words in Luke's Gospel.

They needed Him - not that they knew Him - but He was one to sympathise with the lonely and sorrowing ones. Their hopes were blighted, the shadow of death had fallen upon their spirits and their earthly hopes were dashed to the ground. Death is *very* blighting. It was His death they were thinking of - the death of Jesus, and they reasoned and were sad. If you reason you *will* get sad. The fruit of reasoning is always sadness but if you believe you will be glad. Their sadness drew Jesus to them. What will draw Him to you today is the sad countenance, the sad heart, cry of distress, the falling tear. He is sensitive to it all. He drew near to them and comforted them, though He rebuked them too, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe" and then He expounded the Scriptures to them. That is not my point just now though much more might be said on it, so I hasten on. *He abode with them*. It is sweet to have Him in your sorrows, sweet to have Him on your side when you are distressed. He will come near - His heart is full of tenderness when we are in trouble. He sympathises like no other for He has tasted every sorrow. He can<sup>i</sup> come so near in our earthly troubles - He can say, "I have been there".

I thank God for all His mercies, His goodness, all the natural relationships of life which He allows us - how good God is. Yet the blessed Lord knew nothing of them. He had not where to lay His head. He was the Man of Sorrows and directly your tears begin to flow His heart is toward you and He can say, 'I have passed that way'. He was hungry and weary, He travelled all the way of sorrow, thus you can have Him nearer in your sorrow than in your joys.

His sympathy is very real, and now, as I turn from it to the other Scripture, do not think that I would in any way belittle it, though I say we have something better.

Let us come therefore to this 'something better' in John's Gospel. The "abide" in John's Gospel is what I consider to be the culmination of His teaching. You have divine love here working for its own satisfaction. What the Son is to the Father and what the Father is to the Son and divine love working in order that we might be brought into a scene of rest of love - that we might be found in love's resting place. What I read in the first chapter is the whole thesis - it is the revelation of God to man in a Man, and God's great end is to have man for His own satisfaction. John exemplifies that in his person as I shall hope to show you. Paul was an exemplar of what he put forth - he could say, "thou hast fully known my doctrine, my manner of life" and in like manner John presents the great thought of his preachings both in the Gospel and in the epistles in his own person.

John the Baptist had to render a testimony to the Lord; it was two-fold and very wonderful. First "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (v 29) and secondly, "the same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost" (v 35). That is a very wonderful testimony.

Christ, as Son of God, is great enough, by the power of the Spirit, to fill the whole universe with the blessing of God. He will not only give the Spirit to you and me individually but presently He will fill the whole universe; He does put away our sins and give us His Spirit but that is more in the verse preceding those I read.

In verse 35 it says, "Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking at Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God". Notice the difference to verse 39. Here it is a look of admiration - it is the person that attracted him not His work. John was looking at the Lord and his heart was so charged with the greatness and the beauty of His Person that he exclaims "Behold the Lamb of God". It is always a true testimony that is rendered in the spirit of worship. His heart was so full of what Christ was that his testimony is vital. Alas that we so often hold the truth in terms and there is no vitality.

John gives his testimony and his disciples left him and followed Jesus. His mission was on earth with God but here was One come from heaven to bring heaven down to earth. A vital testimony produced results - they left John and followed Jesus.

(I will just say in passing that Paul's doctrine puts you in heaven. The apostle John always brings heaven down to you. Paul in his teaching says, 'God is your Father', John says, 'Your Father is God'. You will profit by the distinction.)

They followed Jesus and the blessed Lord turned and saw them following and spoke to them. If one soul desires to come nearer to Christ the Spirit will help you. Alas, alas, how often we listen and still we are left where we were. How many appreciate but do not follow up. May the Lord fan the flame which may have been kindled by our meeting here tonight. If one shall have come nearer to the Lord - I trust many more may - yet if only one, it will have been worth my while to come. It is our heart that He desires.

You may have heard the story before but I repeat it to help my point. The father sat in his study when there came a tap on his door and the little boy Charlie appeared with a broken plaything. 'Please will you mend my toy?' The father, a kind man with consideration for little children, stopped and mended the toy, sent the child away happy and then pursued his studies. Not long after another knock came and the child entered, again carrying something that needed attention in his hand. Again the damage was repaired and Charlie sent away happy. Again, there was a tap on the door. 'What is it now Charlie?' 'I want to be with you, Father'. That is it, so he came and sat on the rug happy and contented to be with his father.

May I use the illustration - I do so reverently - God will mend our toys, He will comfort our distresses, He will send us away happy. But may the time come when we may say, 'I want to be with You'.

The Father's love the source of all  
Sweeter than all it gives

The disciples say, "Where dwellest Thou?" and the answer is, "Come and see". There is a great deal of doctrine pressed into that statement. You must be with Him, not bodily but in Spirit. I would write those words over the Epistle to the Colossians. It would be a fitting title for that is the doctrine that you get there - you leave earth morally to get heaven. You are dead with Christ and risen with Him. You come into a scene where you are prepared for heaven. Do you shrink from this? I beg you not to. He will give us to see how earth is death-shadowed. He will, with loving hands, undo the tendrils that bind you to the earth so tightly and He will set you free.



It is not that you neglect anything here - you go back to those daily duties, but in the spirit of your mind you are free, these things do not govern you, you have priestly grace for the pathway down here.

But, “Where dwellest Thou?” - “Come and see”. You shall be richly compensated for your loss here. Happy Jacob, he said to Joseph, “As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when there was yet a little way to come to ... Bethlehem”. It is but a little way to Christ in that deep sorrow of yours. In that deep sorrow, how near He is. How often the grave of our earthly hopes is the birthplace of our heavenly blessings. This earth has too great a place in our minds. I don’t ask you to neglect anything here but I do feel we are not free, we are not free in our spirits, we are so much detained by earth. You will never be a spiritual man whilst earth has first place. We perhaps think of a spiritual man as one who can talk about Scripture and bring our truth in a meeting. We have ideas in our minds but they find no foundation here. Are we free in our spirits? Can we joy with Christ in His circumstances? Do we know anything of that?

The 13<sup>th</sup> of John is a wonderful chapter. I might take up feet-washing in many ways and speak of the service, the spring of the service or the manner of it. “He was come from God, and went to God” verse 3. O the grace of it, but that is not my point tonight.

Then I might take the chapter up on other lines, the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter as following morally on the 12<sup>th</sup> - perfect testimony in the 12<sup>th</sup> and the close proximity of Jesus to the little circle in the 13<sup>th</sup>. Yet Satan was there, flesh was there. Satan and flesh are both there though they do not come out yet. Is there, can there be a man there to betray the blessed Lord his Master? Being three years with Jesus, did that not alter him? He was in the same outward proximity to Jesus as the other eleven. Alas, it is so - may it speak to each one of us tonight. We may be outwardly in the right place, apparently in fellowship, probably taking the Lord’s supper, and yet in heart away from Him. Not even the dearest earthly friend may know the state of our soul, but He is cognisant of it and sensitive to it. There was treachery in their midst.

Then again, I might speak of the chapter in connection with Peter. There you have, not treachery as in Judas, but self-confidence, and weakness because of self-confidence. Weakness and self-confidence go together, so do dependence and power. But the Lord says to Peter, “I have prayed for thee”, otherwise it would have all been over with him. Satan claims the fallen flesh of man and if not kept in the silence of the death of Christ, he will handle it to dishonour the Lord.

I leave all these details tonight, although how one could enlarge upon each one of them, and pass on to John and the position he is seen in the chapter.

Now John, with his feet washed is *in* the bosom of Jesus, not lying *on* the bosom but *in*. He is in the bosom of the One who is in the bosom of the Father. That is where he dwells.

I have not gone into feet-washing tonight but I would just say it is for the defilement of earth. There are many things which defile, almost unconsciously, many things which perhaps your conscience cannot take cognisance of. For instance, you come home wearied from the city and go to the prayer meeting. Your feet are washed by the sweet sense of love you find in the company of the saints. There are many other ways, I cannot go into them now. John was in the bosom of the One who was in the bosom of the Father. Sweet spot.

Now a question is raised and none of the disciples know the answer. “Who is it?” Why did Peter not ask? Ah! it is the one in the bosom of Jesus who will have all questions answered. There

is no question left unanswered if you are in communion. We run here and there to get our questions solved, we seek advice from this or that neighbour. This last two years has exposed us all and has shown how much we were resting on circumstances, and how much more we were detained by earth than we thought we were. We have sought advice from others and have become bewildered.

John with his feet washed asks the question, lying on Jesus' breast. He was in the bosom of Jesus and now he leans on Him, that is, I don't lean on my own understanding but I rely on Him. 'Lord, You tell me'. That is very beautiful - you cannot ask if you are not there, and you cannot be there if you are not washed, feet washed I mean. All questions are answered on the bosom of Jesus. There you are able to receive divine communications. That is my point in taking up John as illustrative of his own teachings.

Secondly, you are energised by divine love. Now in chapter 20: 4 it says, "So they ran both together [Peter and John] and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre". You see, the second, energised by divine love, outran the first. So shall it be "Yet went he not in" v 5. "Then cometh Simon Peter following him and went into the sepulchre". Beloved brethren, you need not think the Spirit records these details without intent. You are energised by divine love<sup>ii</sup>.

Thirdly, he was reverential. Love always makes you that. Peter rushed by - impulsive Peter - John halted. There is liberty in divine love that is not licence. There is amongst us, I feel, a great danger of being unconsciously irreverent - we don't mean to be I know.

Fourthly, love recognises the Lord. The 21<sup>st</sup> chapter is an appendix to the Gospel by John. It is the last thing the Spirit wrote, later even than the Revelation. I thank Him for it. Where should I be? Where would any of us have been if it were not for that chapter? "On this fashion He showed Himself. Simon Peter saith unto them (some of the disciples) 'I go a-fishing' They say to him 'We also will go with thee'". What is the result? Night, nothing, nakedness. That is always and always will be the result of going away from the Lord. They went out into the wild waste of waters. It is a sad thing to be away from the Lord - a sad and wearisome thing to take things into one's own hands and leave the Lord out. But if you don't go after Him, He will come after you. The Lord speaks and acts and John says, "It is the Lord". He was the first to discern that and he tells Peter and it moves him. Peter's heart was right at the bottom but it was drifting.

Have you known the sense of distance? Have you come to the meetings as a mere form? Has there been backsliding in affection? Have you still taken the Lord's supper and it has not meant to you what it used to do? The people that you live with may perhaps not know - nobody knows - but you know and the Lord knows. There is no act of public backsliding but what has been preceded by a long private backsliding. The Lord would spare you the publicity - He would recall - He is so tender. He will speak again and again and again in many ways. You find the Bible irksome? You have little interest in the Scriptures and prefer light reading? Is prayer neglected? LISTEN! CHILDREN HAVE YOU ANY MEAT? Answer that dear young Christian.

When Peter got to the shore he saw there was a fire of coals. In effect the Lord says, 'You want to keep warm by the world's fire, Peter, now come and warm by my fire'. He will probe you and will warm you. Come and warm by His fire and get right. It all has to come out. "When they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" "Thou knowest that I have affection for Thee". Again He asks him. He had first warmed him and then He probes him. How clumsy we are. I was much impressed by a dear old brother whom I accompanied on a visit to another brother who had backslidden. He knew the case very well and

had great affection for the man but was received very coldly and one could see the brother was very much hardened. He spoke to him on these lines, 'Twenty years ago you gave up that for Christ, and that, and that and that and now you are spoiling it all'. It was very lovely, he narrated the beautiful things in him through the grace of God. The stiffness was gone and he was broken down and recovered to the Lord. May the Lord give us grace and skill to handle one another in that way. Peter says, 'I admit it all, Lord. You know all things. You know that I love you. You know the love that is in my heart - you know you put it there'. Peter is recovered to the Lord.

My fifth point in regard to John is that he followed. "He saith unto him. Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following". It is in the power of divine love that we follow - the one who loves is the one who follows.

Lastly, when Jesus was on the cross He saw John standing there and to him he committed His interests. "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother!" That is, I commit my interests to you.

I would like you to consider these six points in connection with John. It is a pathway open to each. When the feet are washed there is a place *on* the bosom of Jesus and *in* the bosom of Jesus where all questions are answered. You are energised by the power of divine love, you are reverential, you discern the presence of the Lord, you follow and then all the interests of the Lord are committed to you. May we each know something of it in our practical experience. May the Lord bless this word. Amen.

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# THE HOLIEST

24<sup>th</sup> June 1916

## Hebrews 10 : 19-25, 35-39

As I have said on previous occasions, I repeat now, that all my addresses are spiritual lessons. I do not stand here as an expositor of scripture - not that I say a word against that (we have our Bible readings for that purpose and scripture must be carefully expounded) but my object is that the truths with which we are very familiar may be put into practice, that what we learn as truths we may experience in a practical and experimental course otherwise it will be of no use to us. I say this for the young, there are many present here tonight and my desire is that you may make progress and not be diverted from the path. There is a great difference between the glory of title and the joy of possession - the greatest possible difference - and very often we run away with the thought that we have possession because we have the title. We may indeed have very great joy in that and think we really possess. Of course, where there is title there must have been faith - where there is possession there must be continually a divine work; exercise will be produced and by that, I mean desire and prayer. That being so, the things we have title to we really possess. I think the distraction will be helpful for there is a very great deal we know we have title to which we have never taken possession of. Now I will try and illustrate my point having the young especially in view. I come into a large estate; a fine mansion standing in its own extensive grounds and at the entrance a charming little honeysuckle lodge. I am charmed with this latter place, it is a very pretty spot and I enter it and take possession and am quite contented. One day I am asked, 'Have you been up to the house?' It is two miles up through the wealth of trees. 'No, I have never been. I am quite content in my honeysuckle lodge'. I have title to all but I have only got as far as the honeysuckle lodge - don't you see?

I come now to my subject, which is an excessively important one - the Holiest, and the way in which we are affected by - two very large subjects. There is the Holiest in relation to our coming together and on the other hand there is the Holiest in regard to the ways of God with us down here. The key to the position lies in a sentence I am about to give you and I pray you may be affected by it. This is it: *Distance and silence are unbearable to God.* We have all had to suffer the fruit of departure and distance and with these come also destitution and degradation. Those four things, hateful to God, are set forth in the story of the prodigal. We have all had to feel the sorrow of that state of things. All the sorrows of this world are the results of distance from God; such things could not exist in His presence. A time is coming when every sorrow shall be removed. He will wipe away all tears and He will be greater in wiping away tears than in creating a universe.

Distance and silence are unbearable to God, therefore He came in from His own side to remove the distance and break the silence. What a blessed God He is! He loves to have His creatures near Him. There was the hunger of the prodigal but on the other hand, there was the hunger of the father's heart for the boy. It is a great thing to have that thought before your heart. The father says, "I miss him - I will have him back" not to be reinstated to the position in which he was but to something far better. The Father takes the opportunity to show the largeness of His heart.

Let us return to our subject of the Holiest. What I have said in regard to the prodigal is beyond the Holiest. You get the Holiest set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This epistle was written to people who had been in relationship with God outwardly but now had come into Christianity - they had left the shadow for the substance. They had come into this vast system which stood in contrast to the old and which can only be understood by those that have the Spirit. You are not

cognisant of it by your senses - it is all known by the Spirit and the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to show the superiority of the New over the Old. That was the object of its being written. And since we are in the presence of a Judaised [system] - Christendom, I mean - the Epistle to the Hebrews has a loud voice for us now. If this epistle were properly understood it would be morally impossible for anyone to be a Ritualist. The sacrifice has been "once offered" - not twice; that would destroy Romanism and Ritualism. Don't think I am speaking against persons, I am not - it is not persons but the system I deplore. The Epistle to the Hebrews, if rightly understood, would deliver from that state of things and therefore I beg you to pay close attention to the passage that I read. (The sacrifices are dealt with in previous chapters.)

In the old system the way into the Holiest was not made manifest - the veil was up, which kept God in and shut man out. There was distance, and the reason was this - man was under probation and as long as that is the case he must be kept at a distance. But when the substance comes the shadow disappears. Christianity is another system entirely - the veil was rent and God came out to man and man went in to God through death. Now God and man come together through the efficacious death of Christ. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus ... through the veil, that is to say, His flesh". (vv 19, 20). Now I ask you to consider this passage. The former part of the chapter shows the glory of the Person, His work, His position, and because of that you are invited to draw near. The nearer you come the more happy you are and the nearer you draw to God, the more you realise that the silence is broken - you *must* praise Him.

Now how do we draw near? The first thing I need in order to draw near is a purged conscience - that is that everything between your soul and God has been divinely met. A purged conscience is the fruit of the death of Christ. If you have not that, how can you happily draw near? You would be disturbed. Now what is the meaning of a purged conscience? My conscience took cognisance of guilt to bring me into judgment - my conscience said, "You are a sinner responsible to God" and it created a very great disturbance in my soul. I thank God that for 49 years my conscience has never taken cognisance of sin as bringing me into judgment. My conscience marks time with the present value of the blood. While I say that, let me preserve my subject. My heart is now awakened to a new love, thus my conscience is no longer cognisant of sin as condemning me, is kept tender by love to Christ. It is not the thought of sin now as bringing me into judgment but my conscience works now in the power of affection. I realise in some measure what sin is as having brought Him into judgement and in the measure that I realise that I realise that it becomes abhorrent to me. I am a Christian now. I love Christ.

Are you established there? If not, you cannot know anything of the Holiest. Who can tell me what sin is? Who can tell me what the consequences of sin are? He has come to bear all the consequences and in the power of affection alone I learn what sin is, as I see what it meant for Him to bear it all. The marvellous efficacy of the blood of Christ! That efficient sacrifice! And if you are a simple believer in the work of Christ you are seen alone in the value of that.

First then, there is the blood and secondly there must be a "new and living way", and the third thing is the great Priest over the house of God. These are the three points here and we are encouraged to draw near and find our home with God. There must first be the removal of sin but there must also be a new and living way. If I am to find my pleasure in God I must know that He finds pleasure in me. It is in another Man that we draw near to God - in the life of another Man. In other words, "Bring forth the best robe etc". I want to have him near Me in suitability to Me, don't you see? Ask the prodigal about his ring, his shoes, his robe. 'Yes' he would reply, 'I know,

I know, but what a father I have got. I never knew I had such a father. He is most blessed'. That is worship. What a sweet thing it is.

If you draw near you must be in suitability. His way in is your way in - it is affection that carries you and makes you follow. Then there is the Priest - He is the administrator of all the blessings of the house of God.

What is the Holiest? What shall I find there? What is involved in that word? In another part of the epistle it says, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need". At the throne of grace you receive help in time of need. The Holiest is where you receive divine communications - there you are in the presence of the glory of God and in the light of another world. What a wonderful thing! Christ is the expression of another world to which I belong. Would to God we knew it better! "Send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill and to thy tabernacles, then will I go unto the altar of God and unto God my exceeding joy etc". (Ps 43: 2-4). God is your exceeding joy in the Holiest. It is what He is, not in relation to you but to Christ. Have you ever been there? You say, 'Is that open to me?' Yes, to every Christian. I don't know how you are going to get through this world if you are not in the light of another world. We are invited to "draw near". The first two chapters of this epistle are the Holiest. God said of the Holiest in the book of Exodus, "There will I speak with thee". The second chapter is more the ark of the covenant. The Holiest and the mercy seat are both in chapter 1 - the light of another world shines there. Keep those points in mind and you will find them very helpful in reading this epistle. The blood is there on the mercy seat; let us draw near in the efficacy of that blood, of that work. His death has removed all defilement.

"In full assurance of faith". What is that? My heart is assured of the love that won the victory. Notice how the verses follow in beautiful succession:

Verse 22 - "Let us draw near"      That is inside  
Verse 23 - "Let us hold fast"      That is outside  
Verse 24 - "Consider one another to provoke unto love and  
good works".      That is the Christian.

I have been into the Holiest and I come out to hold fast and then I consider others to provoke to love and good works - I look upon my brethren, not in the light of any social worth but as they stand in the estimation of divine Persons. If it were so continuously, what a great difference it would make to our meetings. I come out of the Holiest and find every saint beautiful in my eyes, as they are in God's. I would raise my hat to King George and give honour to those in authority but the weakest saint on earth is more precious in the sight of God than any earthly potentate as such. Remember, had we not known Christ we should probably not have known one another. That is the only possible link we have with one another - there must be none of these intrusions. I consider you in the light of the sanctuary and so I shall not provoke your flesh but I shall provoke you to love. And how shall I do it? By loving you.

There would be a great deal of recovery if we knew more of this. We want spiritual power and we want to consider one another more in this way. It is intensely individual. You come from the Holiest carrying an atmosphere with you. It is not the meetings, though it is felt there and we contribute to the happiness and prosperity as we are in the spirit of the Holiest. You have been at the meeting and the Scriptures have been illuminated for you? You have felt the power of the word? Yes, and the reason? We were in the power of divine love. That which is merely mental is absolutely ruinous. Your measure of spirituality lies in loving the saints and caring for them - it does not consist in standing at a desk and talking to them. There are far more spiritual ones oftentimes among the listeners. I do not judge any man but I do feel that we confuse spirituality with gift. Your spirituality is measured by your manner among the saints and such an one contributes to the assembly far more than the gifted one. I am not underrating gift - if rightly exercised in divine love it works mightily. My greatest comfort in coming to address you is this, oftentimes feeling my inability and weakness the Lord says, 'They love Me and I love them'. It is the sweetest thing possible to speak to people who really love the Lord. Gift is valuable, it has its place but the spiritual stature of the one who ministers must correspond with it. The father has a beautiful coat and his boy admires it, and there it is trailing in the dust. We need stature to carry our gift and stature lies in the knowledge of divine love.

Paul, that blessed apostle, could say, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved". (2 Cor 12: 15). When I consider the Apostle's stature how small I feel in the face of it. In effect he says, 'You may despise me and slight me but I will love you more and more and more'. Besides the 'slighting' side I think we are apt to err on the flattery side. Our blessed Lord and Master never slighted or flattered any one. He never made a wrong judgment. May we be preserved from the two extremes, then shall we pursue our way provoking one another to love and good works.

We have spoken of the Holiest - we are there inside with God. Then we come out with men - you get that at the end of the chapter. There is always the opposition of the will of men but "the just shall live by faith". How are you going to behave in relation to the outside? By accepting all that Man puts on you. How can you do that? By first going inside. Then you learn your destiny - you will then come out and bow to the will of that Man.

To illustrate this point I have often told the story of the late Queen Victoria when she was but a child of ten years of age. One morning being very self-willed, her governess put before her the table of succession and for the first time she found that she was nearer to the throne than she ever thought. As the truth dawned upon her she looked earnestly up into the face of her governess and said, "I will be good, I will be good".

In the light of your destiny you learn the reason of your education. If you live in the light of your destiny you accept discipline. God permits man to do what he does to educate him. If we realised this there would be no cry of 'Had it not been for this ... or that ...'. No, we are not creatures of circumstances. In the same epistle, in Hebrews from which we read, we find these early Christians taking joyfully the plunder of their goods. Why? Because they knew that in heaven they had more enduring substance. How would you like your goods spoiled? Could we take such things joyfully? It was the will of God for them and it proved to them the reality of their Christianity. Never take anything second-hand. The Holiest will help you - that is the key. If you are there you will accept the will of God for you here and will never think of second causes.

How we waste our time! How little we make progress! Why are you left here? Why did the Lord not take you when you were first converted? Why did He not take me forty nine years ago? Are we left here to make a fortune? Am I left here to make a cosy nest for myself? You are left here to be educated for your destiny.

Read Psalm 73. The opening verses show the foolish and wicked prospering, the unrighteous man flourishing, the ungodly and the corrupt walk through the earth oppressing and full of pride. "When I thought to know this it was too painful for me, until I went into the Sanctuary of God; then understood I their end". (vv 16-17). That is where you get understanding. You could never envy anyone here if you could consider what a marvellous destiny is yours. Accepting the education - that is our difficulty. Why do you hanker after this or that? Leave it to God. Don't try to make an easy path for yourself. I tell you, you will be disappointed and spiritually blighted if you take things out of God's hands.

Psalm 66. "For Thou, O God, hast proved us: Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; Thou laidest affliction upon our loins, Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads ... but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place". (vv 10-12). If you are in the Holiest you will be prepared to receive education in the nature of discipline by the hands of men. There are many other ways also, but I must not stop to speak of them now. You see that building yonder being erected? There is a huge scaffolding around it - yes, it is very ugly and unsightly, yet it is necessary it will be taken down and then the building, the glory and pride of the architect and builder, will show to perfection. A silent and blessed work is going on now which will be all to His praise and glory.

You may say, 'I don't understand the ways of God'. No, very likely not. God is always thinking of your destiny and is working accordingly. He is working with that great end in mind - He will explain all by and by and it will be a vindication of Himself. Shall my heart say in that day, 'It could not have been otherwise'? It shall. He will vindicate His ways with me and in regard to His ways with me, my heart will say, "It was absolutely necessary. I had to pass that way. Quite necessary that I should experience that sorrow or that trial".

Now, "The just shall live by faith". We are to hold on, not to cast away our confidence. We are to live by *faith*. That quotation is from Habakkuk and it is three times quoted in the New Testament, in Romans, Galatians and here in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Habakkuk is a remarkable



book and I will just give you a brief sketch of it in closing. It is undated - nobody knows when it was written. It is the experience of a man of God in a day of trouble and ruin and is on that account psalm-like in character.

Verses 1-4 of the first chapter give the burdens of Habakkuk the prophet. There is spoiling and violence, iniquity and grievance, the law is slacked and judgment gone. And Habakkuk cries and gets no answer. From the 5<sup>th</sup> verse onwards God says, 'Habakkuk, you are perfectly right, I will destroy them'. And the prophet answers, "We shall not die, O Lord, Thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, Thou hast established them for correction".

Then a doubt came into the prophet's mind. 'The people you are using Lord are morally worse than the people you are disciplining, I cannot understand'. Look at chapter 2. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon my tower" (that is the Holiest in principle). And what does he see? In his deep sorrow he goes to enquire of the Lord, and the Lord answers him by giving him a vast outlook upon another world. God is bringing in another world and "It will surely come, it will not tarry". And he is to write the vision and make it plain upon tables "that he may run that readeth it". The light of another world will make you run through the world.

Next Habakkuk begins to preach, "the just shall live by faith". In chapter 3 he prays - it is the prayer of Habakkuk upon Shigionoth. The chapter ends with singing. Shigionoth denotes the wind instruments. Negionoth is the music of the stringed instruments - it figures Christ. As sure as you play on Shigionoth you will play on Negionoth.

Notice the order - he weeps, he watches, he preaches, he prays, he sings. A beautiful climax. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive tree shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength - He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me walk upon mine high places. To the chief musician on my stringed instruments". (vv 17-19). The stringed instrument is the heart that has learnt to value Christ and because of that, produces a sweet note of praise. It is not the recital of truth, not remembering certain pamphlets, good though they may be. What is acceptable to God is the heart that overflows. John overflowed. Let us speak well of Christ, let us sing on the stringed instruments.

Now I realise I have taken you over a very large tract of ground this evening but don't be downhearted, don't say, 'I can never remember all that man said'. Get the little bit that is meant for you. I can't tell you what will serve you but the Lord can impress it upon you. He can make a little go a long way. I would like you to leave this meeting sensible of these things - If I know nearness to God I shall learn my destiny and I shall accept my education. You say, 'I cannot understand many things that happen about me today. Why must I take part in that which I would like to be free of? Why is this war allowed?' Oh, the questions that arise in our hearts!

The necessity of it all lies in the unreality of God's people - the war with all its terrible consequences has fallen upon countries professing to know God. Take our own country - God has been patient with this country for long enough. Think of the pleasure-seeking, self-seeking, God-forgetting. Don't find fault with God - the mischief lies with ourselves. I feel, very many feel, these times are very trying naturally, yet they are a splendid opportunity for Christians to prove the reality of what they have believed. May the Lord stir us up to wait for Him. His coming cannot be far off.

The Lord grant it for His name's sake. Amen.



# THE SECRET OF JOY

1<sup>st</sup> July 1916

**Psalm 90: 1-2; 91: 1-4; Matthew 11: 25-30; Luke 10: 17-22**

I want to show you tonight, If I can, the secret of rest and the secret of joy. Those are two points I have on my mind this evening and I am sure the Lord would have us to know rest on the one hand and joy on the other hand. Though it is so, and these are things that we as Christians should be familiar with, yet I am very well convinced we are very much strangers to them - we do not bear the marks of restfulness and joy as we should. I have read these few scriptures to illustrate the spiritual lesson I wish to speak of tonight - the secret of rest and of joy - and as I travel round amidst Christians of all kinds I find sadly enough very few are in these two secrets. The line we generally take is, we shall be happy by and by - we have these things in hope. That is perfectly true, it will be so, it must be so then. When the presence of Christ is reached we shall be in unalloyed joy but we want to know the NOW of these things. We sing of the sweet by-and-by and in many of our hymns anticipate the time of rest and joy to come. I am not finding fault with the hymns - many of them are very beautiful - but the Lord is saying, by the Spirit, "I want you to be happy now, I want you to be restful now, I want you to know the joy now". We need to know the *now* of it. I hope the few scriptures I have chosen may lead to exercise so that this end may be gained and we may indeed know more of these things in the present.

In the Psalms we have Christ prophetically, in the Gospels He is there in person. The Spirit of Christ was in the prophet David when he wrote and so we see Christ in all the Psalms very largely. I will come to detail presently but first will just rapidly give a brief sketch of the book.

In the Hebrew version the book of the Psalms is divided into five separate books (Psalms 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150). Each ends with "Amen" and the first four books have distinct subjects - the fifth is a recapitulation of the other four. The book of Psalms took a period of, roughly speaking, one thousand years to write. Though they are commonly spoken of as Psalms of David, David wrote only about half of them. Some were written prior to David's time, others many years after he was dead. The Spirit of God inspired them all, but the one hundred and fifty Psalms cover a period of one thousand years - they go from the time of Moses to that of Ezra - and not only were they indited by the Spirit of God but they are put together with marvellous arrangement and skill. There is a marked spiritual design and nothing gives you a greater sense of the inspiration of the Bible than an insight into the marvellous design of this book.

The 90<sup>th</sup>, 91<sup>st</sup> and 92<sup>nd</sup> Psalms go together and form a preface to the fourth book - that is well to understand, it is full of teaching for us. Psalm 90 is the prayer of Moses the man of God. It is the first Psalm that was written. I give my judgment here, I would not be dogmatic, but my judgment is that the Psalm was written in the circumstances recorded in the 14<sup>th</sup> of Numbers where God's earthly people refused to enter into the land and they were told that their carcasses should fall in the wilderness. It is a chapter of disaster and failure and they fall under the government of God. In that chapter it says, "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord". God says, as it were, 'I have to punish you for your failure but your failure cannot thwart me'. God cannot be thwarted. He works out His will in spite of all. That is a great comfort in times of perplexity - in the presence of the disaster and pressure of the present moment God is working. God is behind everything and above everything and can turn the most untoward circumstances for the working of His will and the blessing of His people. Therefore the hearts of Gods dear people can be at rest - I speak now of what is national and of what is world-wide, and

as to it all we should be exercised but not under the power of things. Don't be depressed, be serious but don't get under it. We should not wonder at these things happening. If we were near to God we should only wonder that they had not come before - such sad departure. But God is above all and behind all and He is turning it all to His own glory.

Moses writes this prayer when in the circumstances recorded in the 14<sup>th</sup> of Numbers, that long chapter of disaster. Listen, what does he say, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God". (vv 1-2). I am particularly fond of that - I cannot tell you what a comfort it has been to me. *He remains the same*. Your blessing lies not in what you can be to God, but what in God is *unalterability*. "From everlasting to everlasting - Thou art the same - "Thou art God". God is God - He remains the same, and our blessing lies in what He is. When Moses was first told to go to the children of Israel, after his sojourn in the wilderness, he said to God, "Behold, when I come unto the Children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them? And God says to Moses, I AM THAT I AM ... I AM hath sent me unto you". (Exod 3: 13-14). God says, 'I remain the same'. You may not at the moment see the beauty of that word but God may flood your soul with the light of it some day when you want it. God's earthly people never reached it but they will by-and-by in fulness of blessing on the earth. When the blessed Lord was here He said, "Before Abraham was I AM". The blessed Lord - the Jehovah of the Old Testament - had come down and was seen in Jesus our Lord. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever". That is the Rock of Ages.

If I have to learn, as I must, what I am, if Moses was used of God in that way (the law came by Moses) it is to introduce me to Jesus, the I AM THAT I AM. What a magnificent thing to get the power of that in our souls. Don't reason about it - there is no room for reasoning here - bow to it. You would be as great as God if you could understand it.

I will now sketch Psalm 90 in a little more detail. It proceeds in verses 3-12 with the cry of what man is - it is the cry of Moses - it is the cry of the man who has forfeited his title to live. The law said, Do this and thou shalt live. But man has not done it and he dies. In verse 12 he begins to pray. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom". The he goes higher still, "Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants" - higher yet - "And Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us". That prayer is not answered yet. Moses prayed for the future - he prayed for the world to come. Will there be a time in the history of this world when there will be no intrusion of death? If the beauty of the Lord their God is upon them will they die? No - it is not possible. Moses' prayer stops there but it will one day be answered. What is the bottom of all the confusion in the world today? It is that people love themselves. They do not love the Lord their God with all their soul and their strength and their might - they do not love their neighbour as themselves. That is very evident. Why do you lock your door at night? There are thieves about. Just men don't love God with all their hearts but one day they will. "All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" - not the glory of England, nor of France, nor Germany or Russia, but the glory of the Lord will fill the whole earth. Moses' prayer is going to be answered. The moment you come to Psalm 91 you get the answer to Moses' prayer in *Christ*. God has one answer to your sorrows and your tears and your prayers, one absolutely perfect answer, Christ. I should like you to get hold of that thought. On the mountain of transfiguration Moses and Elias saw Him glorified. Moses, you wept many a tear over Israel, you bore the burden of My people on your spirit for many long years - here is the answer to it all. Moses was a wonderful man. On one occasion, you remember, he said to the Lord, "Blot me, I

pray thee, out of Thy book”, but let Thy people go. He said, “I will go up unto the Lord, peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin”. No Moses, you are not great enough to make atonement. On the mount of transfiguration Moses was there and Elias was there. They were together - the leader of God’s people and the would-be restorer of God’s people, two blessed men, and as it were the Lord says, ‘Moses, you were shut out of the land of Canaan but you are in the land now with Jesus’. There is the answer to all his prayers. Would that we had hearts to take it in, or that we could get clear of theology and the notions of men. I grieve as I see Christians cheated out of their rightful inheritance by the thought of man.

Psalm 91 is prophetic of Jesus. It starts with a proposal, “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty”. Most High, Almighty - by those two names God was of old pleased to reveal Himself. In verse 2 another voice speaks, it is Jesus. It is Jesus in incarnation. “I will say of Jehovah, He is My refuge and My fortress, My God, in Him will I trust”. Jesus accepts the proposal in verse 1. We must ever remember the Lord never ceased to be what He was because of what He became but He was perfect in what He became. It is the perfection of what He became that I am dwelling on now. Every true Christian would hold that in his heart, and rather than give it up would die for it.

In verse 2 therefore, Jesus steps forward (I speak with reverence) and takes the place. He steps forward in His humanity to that secret place under the shadow of the Almighty and of His God. The three names: Most High (maker of heaven and earth), Almighty and Jehovah are put in this remarkable Psalm.

In verse 1 therefore we get the proposal; in verse 2 the proposal is accepted and in verses 3 and 4 the Spirit speaks and shows us the consequences following the proposal. Put your ear close to it - “Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers and under His wings shalt thou trust” etc. That brings me to my subject - that is the spirit seen in Matthew 11. In the Gospel the blessed Lord was here in true perfect humanity. The fowler is Satan; his snare has been tried in the temptation in the wilderness. The Lord has been hungering forty days with all the true and proper feelings of a Man. Don’t reason about it, don’t bring in His divinity to weaken it. Jesus was hungry and Satan came and said to Him, “If thou be the Son of God command these stones to be made bread”. Satisfy your hunger. No, He replies. It is recorded man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God shall he live. If it be God’s will for me to be hungry, I am satisfied. The blessed Lord is in the circumstances which sin had created - He came here to taste it all, the hunger, the weariness, but He was perfect in all. Magnificent words these, “In Thee do I put my trust”. Do you not love Him? He was in the environment of the secret place - absolute dependence and obedience - and though Satan went around he could not touch Him. What a defeat! Spoiler of our race, has he insinuated to *you* that God is not good? Do you think God is not good in holding something back from you? What is natural to us is to distrust God - all other sins are the result of that. Here was One who trusted God and Satan could not touch Him. Why? Because He was dwelling in the secret place. Magnificent defeat! Unreachable by Satan! The spoiler of our race was foiled by the obedience of a dependent Man.

Verse 4. “He shall cover thee with His feathers and under His wings shalt thou trust”. Let us turn to Matthew 11, and may we know the warmth of the feathers tonight - we need it badly. Matt 11: 35. “*At that time* Jesus answered ...”. Answered what? The circumstances in which He was found. At that juncture He could answer and say, “I thank Thee, O Father”. And what were the circumstances? He was not successful - His ministry to Israel was refused and He was rejected.

In the words of the prophet Isaiah chapter 49 He was saying, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain". (v 4). Yet *at that time* the blessed Lord gives back the reply from the warmth of the feathers, "I thank Thee, O Father". Doesn't He stand in contrast to John the Baptist, blessed servant that he was, at the beginning of this chapter. John the Baptist is in prison and he cannot understand why the Lord does not intervene - but supposing it was God's will for him to be there? He never was set free you remember, his head was the prize given to a dancing girl - she danced for it and she got it. Could the Lord have intervened? Do take this home. Are you in untoward circumstances? Is there much you cannot understand? Is there sorrow? Are you put on a bed of sickness? It is to chasten your spirit and do you good. I have seen some of the happiest Christians I know in a home for incurables in London. As to their bodies, they were in all sorts of pain and misery but in the midst of their bodily afflictions they were glorying in Christ. How God is glorified in them! I thank God for the remembrance of such people. Truly it is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting. (Eccl 7: 2)

Jesus answered and said in the midst of all the trouble, "I thank Thee O Father ... Even so, Father for so it seemed good in Thy sight". We are often found away from home and the storms drive us there. Jesus was always anchored there. He was always at home - He never had to be driven there by trouble. "He shall cover thee with His feathers". How God loved the Man who trusted Him. Man was not made like the beasts, but put on his feet to look upward and to say, "In Thee do I put my trust". The moral dignity of man is to trust God; his degradation is to distrust Him. Man does not naturally trust God - it is the fruit of the lie of Satan. But why should you not trust Him? What evil has He done for you?

Dear Christians, we are all under the wings of protecting love, but it is another thing to nestle under the feathers. Every Christian is under the wing, so to speak, but how many of us know what it is to be in the warmth of divine love? "Even so, Father" etc. that is the warmth of the feathers. That is it, there is no will there, the only thing to silence your will is the warmth of the feathers. In the warmth of divine love you are content with the approval of God and there is no hankering after the approval of other people. 'I am content with your knowledge of me'. It is individual communion with God that we want. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever *the Son will reveal Him*". "Come unto me". (Matt 11: 27, 28). That is the key. "Come unto *ME* . . . and I will give you rest". Weary saint? Yes, and weary sinner too. Come into the warmth of the feathers. I will teach you the Father loves you as He loves Me. That is rest. Rest is known in the Father's love. Does He love me as He loves Jesus? Yes, He has said so - "and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me". Those are indeed waters to swim in (Ezek 47: 5) that we were speaking of the other day.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls". Why is the yoke easy? The Father's love makes it so. The secret of rest is learnt in the Father's love. Is there anyone here with a peculiar sorrow? Has the voice of death made itself heard in your circle? Hear the voice of Jesus speaking over the wild waste of waters; Come unto *ME* and keep close to *ME* and I will teach you the Father's love and ye shall find rest. How often we are driven home by these things. Never so, the blessed Lord. Circumstances only brought out the perfection of what He was. How the last two years have exposed us - don't put it aside, don't shrink from the exposure - it is a great thing to know our state before God. We are finding out that we are not so close to Him as we thought we were.

Now turn to Luke 10. Here we get a remarkable contrast. The circumstances are entirely different and yet the Lord uses the same words, "I thank Thee, O Father". In Matthew the words

were uttered in the presence of rebuff and rejection, His mission was unsuccessful. The context here is absolutely different. His mission is successful, prosperity marks it. The Lord had sent the seventy out two by two. (You get in the early verses of the chapter the true marks of a servant and how he is to behave and the spirit in which he is to carry the Gospel - all very helpful and should be studied by anyone wishing to serve the Lord. But I do not dwell on that.) And the seventy return to the Lord rejoicing at the wonderful power which He had conferred on them so that even the devils were subject through His name. They were impressed by that. The Lord diverts them from it - after all it was power of destruction - and turns their attention to the administration of good. "Rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven". That was to say, your blessing is heavenly. Then He looks forward in spirit to what we get in Revelation 21, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven". That has not yet come to pass. We must not be governed so much by present things. Christ was looking forward and speaking prophetically and what He saw was this, in the heavens, (there are three distinct heavens, this I need hardly say is not the third heaven, the presence of God) where Satan is influencing the world for evil, God's dear people are going to be, to influence the world for good. This is a sad war? Yes, but what lies at the root of it all? It is glorification of man, and where does that emanate from? Through pride Satan was turned out of God's presence - surely the spring is there. Satan and all his power is to be done away with in Revelation 21. The heavenly Jerusalem is seen coming down out of heaven having the glory of God. The prayer of Moses could not be answered without the church.

The blessed Lord looks up and rejoices in spirit. (That is the only place where it says He rejoiced in the Spirit.) And why? He saw His mission would be successful. He saw the triumph of good over evil. He saw there would be a response in happy hearts as to the results of what He would accomplish. If God destroys evil, it is to put something better in its place. The secret of joy is the administration of good. The heavenly city comes down "having the glory of God: and her light was like to a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which were the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the East three gates; on the North three gates; on the South three gates; and on the West three gates". (vv 11-13). The gates are for the administration of good and from them flows out the goodness of God. The secret of all unhappiness lies in self-occupation - self-love is the root of all unhappiness. It is the story of the Good Samaritan we spoke of on Sunday night. He pours in the oil and the wine. The Good Samaritan brought love from the top to where self-love was at the bottom. The love of God delivers me from self-love and makes me think of others. What is the cure for self-love? He has given us the Spirit. Has He put the love of God in our hearts? Do we love God with all our hearts? I am sure we are defective there. Self-occupation, self-interest, thinking always of self. 'What will you do for *me*?' Oh that we might be set free to minister to others. Oh the blessedness of thinking of others - of loving God with all your heart and your soul and your mind and your strength, and your neighbour as yourself, and there will then be on your "East three gates" and on your "West three gates" nothing but the administration of good flowing from you. It is a practical thing - it is not preaching. Would you like to be like that? The spring of all true service is, "I love". The Hebrew servant (Exod 21) is the type. He said in his heart, "I love ... I will not go out free". That is the picture of Jesus the true servant. The living spring of all that He did was love and that is the secret of joy.

Please consider - 'You do something for me'. I would like this or that - all that is the product of self-centred love. Would you not like to be free? The Lord rejoices in spirit as He looks forward to this time of administration of good to the myriads of happy hearts. If I think of the future - what

delights - I shall never think of myself once. I shall never have a thought for myself. That is unalloyed happiness. I shall be occupied with Christ. I shall be in the presence of God, 'Like Him to know that glory beam unhindered face to face'.

Unfallen angels are those who have never thought of themselves. They were not jealous at Christ's birth, they *suddenly* broke forth. They could not help it, they must give the acclamation, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards man".

The spring of happiness and the spring of praise is in forgetfulness of self. It lies in dependence, not in myself but in God. When my mother was alive I did not go about saying, 'I am trying to love my mother'. That would have thrown discredit upon my mother. If I spoke like that people would have said, What kind of mother can she be? No, I loved my mother, I was a poor helpless babe. Morning, noon and night she tended me. The spring of unwearied service lay in her own bosom. She was the source of it and soon my little heart came to respond to it. My mother loved me into loving her back again. No-one could call my name like my mother. And why? Because she could put affection into her tone like no-one else. "My sheep hear my voice". I love you. "Mary" - who could say "Mary" like Jesus? God proposes to love us into our loving Him back again. A grand proposal, would we accept it more readily. "We love Him because He first loved us". You cannot love God by trying. I can no more help loving God than I can help breathing. Would to God I loved Him a thousand times more. Every Christian loves God even though that love may be covered up by a lot of rubbish. The source of it is in Himself.

Now in conclusion I would just say, once again, don't try to remember all that has been said. I would like you, however, to carry away these two thoughts which have engaged us this evening; the secret of rest is in divine love, in the warmth of the feathers, and the secret of joy is in the administration of good. God has been pleased to be good to you that you might be good to other people. "Go and do thou likewise". In 'doing likewise' is the secret of joy. May the Lord bless the word for His name's sake. Amen.

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# APPREHENSION OF OUR GLORY LEADS TO DISCIPLESHIP

6<sup>th</sup> July 1916

## Mark 8: 10-33

I have read this scripture wanting to speak of it especially in regard to the blind man. You will have noted in all my addresses I have kept very much on individual lines but I feel that is the line very much needed. I may perhaps later be led to speak of that which pertains to Christians in the company, but the company, after all, is made up of individuals and our corporate condition depends on our individual walk.

Our spiritual lesson tonight is this, *that the apprehension of our glory leads to discipleship*. You may not understand that statement at the start, but I hope to make it clear to you before I have done. We cannot be in the path of discipleship apart from knowing our glory. That is what is before my mind tonight and the incident of the blind man recorded here, and only here, will help me to develop my thought.

There are two blind men to whom sight was recovered mentioned in the Gospels - this one in Mark and the other in John and I need not say the thing is not repeated. There is a distinct difference between the two and the difference is this, the blind man of John has his eyes opened to see the Person of Christ; Jesus says to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" and he replies, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" Jesus saith unto him, "Thou hast both seen Him, and He it is that talketh with thee", and he said, "Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him". (John 9: 35-38) We have in that account his progressive apprehension of Christ. He was turned out of the synagogue, they made him an outcast, but at the last he became a worshipper. That is characteristic of the Gospel by John: all the signs in John are given to show the glory of the Son of God - the blind man saw it and he became a worshipper.

Mark's account also has a distinctive character. In Mark you never get the assembly or church as you do in Matthew; Mark is occupied very largely with the subject of discipleship. Therefore this blind man gives character to this Gospel. I will briefly give you the context that leads up to it. The Lord had fed the multitude and He crosses the sea and "the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him". They didn't know what they were asking, for if the Lord had given them a sign to meet the case it would have been judgment. "There shall no sign be given unto this generation". The Sign was there in their midst, the lonely Jesus, but they had no eyes to recognise Him. Very well! There was no sign to be given and immediately He leaves them and goes over the waters again. From that time there is a definite break with that generation.

When in the boat, the Lord instructs His disciples. He warns them against the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Herodians. In Matthew He warns them against the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Mark the accuracy of Scripture and the beauty of its detail. The three warnings are given and what do they mean? They present man in three aspects:

- a. What he is religiously
- b. What he is mentally
- c. What he is politically.

And that is man, not only as God sees him but as we know him to be in ourselves. Here it is religious leaven and political leaven put together; but they do not see the moral force of the Lord's

remarks. They think of their material need, "They reasoned among themselves saying, it is because we have no bread". *They* were the loaf the Lord was speaking of but they were too much taken up with material interests to understand the spiritual thought imparted to them. The blessed Lord says, "Have you forgotten?" It is very touching. The Lord reminds them of how He fed the five thousand and then the four thousand. These disciples were very much like the Pharisees in spirit - there was affinity between them and that nation they were leaving. The Lord recalls to their memory those two miracles. The feeding of the five thousand with twelve baskets of fragments gathered up is perfect administration through man - that refers to Pentecostal times. The feeding of the four thousand with the seven baskets of fragments refers more to Remnant times - that is those times in which we live. In a sense it is the breaking up of the church - we do not see full administration of blessing, but I would rather be here now than at Pentecost (not putting aside, of course, God's will is best for each one of us as to where we come in the stream of time). And why? Because in the miracle of the seven loaves there is the divine sufficiency of Christ to all who look to Him. (Seven is the perfect number and four the universal number.) What a comfort in the present broken up state of things - the fruit of the will of man - we have Christ and He won't fail us. He will greatly bless you! *Now* is the time to prove the divine sufficiency there is in Christ. He will prove it to be so if you but come to Him.

Just one lesson before I pass on; the Lord says, 'Now don't you remember?' How often it is when we are in distress that He comes in. He hears our prayers, He answers our distresses, He soothes and relieves us. Now, if through that exercise you have not a better knowledge of God the thing has failed. When the joy of deliverance is over you will forget. Why does He allow these things? Could He not spare us everyone? He allows them that I might have a better knowledge of Himself. That is the gain of going through a trial with God. *They* soon forgot. The point was, Jesus was there and what could He not do.

Now we will look at the incident of the blind man. It is full of remarkable detail - all these incidents are given to teach us spiritual lessons and therefore they are full of instruction if we can but see it. Why is this incident introduced just here? It is because *they* did not see, they did not understand. The blind man shows why it is and that is why the Spirit brings it in just here. Here is this blind man and the Lord is going to bless him and the first thing He does is to remove him from adverse influences. "He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town". (v 23) This blind man represents the disciples' state. Though they companied with the Lord when here they had not, as yet, received the Holy Ghost and they had not as yet the ability to look up nor to see. "How is it that ye do not understand?" When the Spirit should be given they would see all things clearly. Beloved Christians, we often ask the Lord to bless us, we are constantly thinking of our needs down here. However in His grace and goodness He does most wonderfully consider us - assuredly He does - but that is not His great concern. His greatest care is for your soul. As to our bodies, He won't let us lack anything - God cares for the fifth sparrow, that is the one that is thrown over - but He is working on spiritual lines. He has our destiny in view. He would draw us from influences here. To be withdrawn, to be laid aside in weakness or sickness, to have some deep trial which perhaps almost stuns you at the time being, these things are often the forerunners of great blessings. What are you after? Is it soul prosperity you are seeking? That is the only thing that can make you truly happy.

You remember the incident in 2 Kings 4 of the woman who cried to Elisha in her deep need, saying, "Thy servant my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen". What does Elisha say to her?

“What hast thou in the house?” And she replies, “Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil”. Now after she had borrowed many vessels, what was she to do? She was to bring her sons into the house and shut the door - a very happy thing that man was excluded and God was there. She is there with her pot of oil and her deep need. If the door is opened or half opened the clamour of man will intrude, the voices of men will confuse. How often the Lord lays us aside on a bed of sickness maybe; it is that in the rest and stillness His voice may be heard.

You would not like the Lord to leave you alone would you? Would you care to be like an old horse put out to graze, no longer of use here? Are you seeking an easy pathway? Christianity is not an easy pathway but it is a pathway full of joy, often marked by sorrow and trial, but marked by learning what God is.

The blind man was removed from the influences of the town, and mark - he never goes back to the town. That is a very important point in this passage. In the town is the leaven of the Herodians: in the town you are an Englishman, in the town you are a politician. Christianity never gives you a place in the town. Christianity opens out a new town, a new city, the new Jerusalem.

The next thing is that Jesus spat on his eyes (v 23) and virtue went out of Him so that the eyes of the blind man were opened. As I said before, this man represents the disciples as they accompanied the Lord here, before the Spirit was given. What was the result of His action? The blind man saw “men as trees, walking”. His vision was distorted. I do not think we perhaps realise the difficulties in the minds of the disciples. They were poor feeble things drawn to Jesus by affection and though in close proximity to Him were fondly nursing the idea that the leaders of their nation would receive the blessed Master. Their hearts were beating high with this hope - it comes out in their thoughts and their actions in many passages. Before redemption was accomplished and the Spirit given it must be so. They were, so to speak, in the infantile stage, it could not be otherwise.

You see the mother yonder in her cottage. She is ironing, and in the cradle lies her baby, and as she irons she talks to it. ‘Your father is coming home’ she says and so she goes on ironing and talking. Does the child understand? No, not a bit, and yet she talks to it. Exactly, she finds her pleasure in talking to her child of her interests.

The Lord said much which the disciples did not understand, but afterwards they understood. The Spirit would bring all things to your remembrance. At present they had an exaggerated idea of men, they gave undue prominence to them in their thoughts. Their religious leaders were to them “as trees walking”. We want to get clear of the scribes and Pharisees - clear of the three leavens in fact, to see all things clearly.

I trust you are following, I am gradually working up to my point that the apprehension of our glory leads to discipleship. This is the road to it. Lower down in the chapter the Lord tells them He is going to suffer. He was their Master - they loved Him and when He begins to teach them that “the Son must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders and of the chief priests and scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again”, Peter cannot bear it. Peter “saw men, as trees walking” - the elders, the priests and the scribes - those who sat in Moses’ seat had an important place in his mind. Peter rebukes the Lord! He really loved his Master, he could not bear to think of Him suffering. Don’t go that way, Lord! Peter had been trained to look up to these people and in effect he says, ‘I cannot bear you to suffer at the hands of these men’. “But when he had turned looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan:

for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men". Jesus really says to Peter, 'Satan is handling your flesh'. Striking words, "Get thee behind me, Satan".

The Scripture said, Christ must suffer; the Lord Himself said so and yet Peter stands up before the Lord and rebukes Him. The Lord replies, "Thou savourest not the things that be of God but the things that be of men". I trust that you will pay attention to this, beloved brethren, Satan is always watching uncovered flesh, especially in the Lord's servants, in order to dishonour the Lord and to distress His people. The cross of Christ alone keeps flesh in the silence of death. Satan works to dishonour Christ and to injure His beloved people. It is necessary therefore for us to walk in constant self-judgment. We must be practical. It is not what we say at the desk but what we *are* that matters. It is a serious question - Christianity is intensely serious and real and it behoves us to be real also. It is not what a man says but the way in which he says it and the way in which his life is affected by it that tells. A person may speak of the removal of man - these three kinds of man, the religious, the mental and the political - at the cross, but what do we know of it in our practical experience? We shall be free of them in proportion to our appreciation of the way in which they have been dealt with at the cross.

In verse 25 we get the second touch of Jesus on this man. "After that He put His hands again upon His eyes and made him look up and he was restored and saw every man clearly". The second touch lies in the gift of the Spirit. He commanded him to look up. How far did he look up? Into the glory of God. The Man in the glory of God should be your glory. So later, it came about that Peter, after receiving the Spirit, was a very different Peter from that one in this passage - a different man entirely. Under the second touch he was delivered from the religious man here. A time comes when you are brought not only to the precious Saviour, as you all do, but you look up and are occupied with a Man in the glory. Then God's purpose for you becomes your purpose for yourself. How many of you have looked up into the glory? How many of you are conscious of a link with Him there? He is your precious Saviour - one could not make too much of that - but have you reached that point in your history when Christ becomes your true glory. It is then that we see things distinctly. We talk about conversion, that is a conversion indeed! It would revolutionise our lives. God's thought for you is presented in Christ and where He is, is God's thought for you. I cannot bring you there; I can effect nothing. It is by the Spirit alone that it can be done.

I cannot, of course, follow out this passage without linking it up with the third chapter of Philippians. That is essentially the blind man under the second touch of Christ. But before doing so I will relate an anecdote which may help you to grasp my meaning when I say that every man has his glory. I relate this especially for the young people. It is told that the Earl of Roseberry, and I believe it to be quite true, that when a boy at school he once said, 'I propose three things for myself: I will be Prime Minister, I will marry the richest woman in England and I will win the Derby'. He did all three. It is an illustration of my point. These three things constituted his glory. What you propose for yourself becomes your glory. I am speaking now of natural things.

What you propose for yourself you seek after and your whole life is coloured by it.

A certain man I knew spoke to me once thus, 'If I could earn £500 a year I would just settle down comfortably'. He reached that figure but then he said, 'I would like to reach £1000 a year'. He shifted his glory from £500 to £1000 a year. That is what he was pursuing.

The true glory of a Christian is Christ, Christ where He is. As He is known in your soul by the power of the Spirit, you see Him and know Him where He is, and you will have reached the point that HE is your true glory. Man does not reach true happiness by attaining his object here, but

when your eyes are opened to see Christ where He is there is true satisfaction. There is no mistake about it, you have come under His gracious influence to become like Him. 'Grace will end in Glory'.

I will now return to what I proposed saying as to the third chapter to the Philippians. This is the language of Paul. In the twelfth to fourteenth verses he says, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus".

What a blessed thing! These are the words of the man who hated Christ with deepest hatred, in whose heart was concentrated Jewish and Pharisaical pride. He hated the name of Christ, he pursued the saints even to their deaths. He raised his voice against them and hailed them to prison. He it was who sat and witnessed the death of the martyr Stephen - and yet a blameless man in his outward walk. In his religious days none could bring a charge against him - the most blameless man the world ever saw.

He is only a pattern of hundreds of others in this day of great religiousness - outward zeal, yet burning with hatred to Christ. The Lord looked down on Saul as he set out on his mission of destruction and said, 'I will capture him'. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" A light from heaven shone upon him and he fell upon his face. The blessed Lord took charge of that man. He placed love in that heart where there had been hatred. 'You shall go my way now, Saul'. There never was a man who loved Christ so much; never was there a man who, after conversion, loved the saints so much. "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved". (2 Cor 12: 15)

The early verses of the third chapter of Philippians tell what he was. (vv 4-7). "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more" etc. etc. He was jealous, orthodox, blameless. Imagine in front of you a blackboard and with a piece of chalk let to write out all that he was. In the centre of the blackboard is a small spot in which one can read the words, 'Gain to me, I get the credit of all that'. That spoils the whole thing.

Now what follows, "but what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, etc". (vv 7 & 8) All *that* life could be written out on another blackboard and what is in the centre of it this time? 'Christ the living spring of it all and getting the credit of all that He did'. Now this man speaks, his eye and heart fixed on that blessed Christ. He is drawing nearer and nearer to the glory and his apprehension of it is increasing as he approaches. The first time he speaks of his conversion it is "a light from heaven" that shone round about him. In his second record he says, "a great light". In the third account, when he stands before Agrippa it is "a light above the brightness of the sun". His appreciation gets stronger. Now he says ardently, 'I am going after that'. There is power in Christ to draw that man's foot along a path of suffering, shame and loss. It was the gain of Christ that drew him along that path. Well now, the apostle is pursuing his course, "Not as though I had already attained" etc. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded". (vv 12 & 15) Note the word "perfect" in each of those verses. What is the difference between the "perfect" of v 12 and that of v 15?

We are told of a celebrated artist in Italy who had several young students. These young men had been under his tuition some long while and one day he said to them, 'I want you each to paint

me a picture'. He had a high gallery and he allowed them take their choice from the same. The young men loved their master, they were willing to please him, so they spread their canvasses here or there according to their choice and all settled down to work - all except one. He roamed the gallery till at the bottom he found a masterpiece, a perfect picture, and there he stopped drinking in all its beauties as only an artist can. 'If I must copy' said he, 'It must be this' and he commenced his work. At last the master, going round reached him and enquired, 'How are you getting on?' 'Oh!' he exclaimed, 'don't look at my daub, look at that', pointing to the original and he commenced to dilate on the copy before him. The master was pleased; he recognised in this student one with an eye for what was perfect.

In the presence of present circumstances, leaving out the natural side of it, ask yourself, why is all this permitted. He has permitted it to show us how little we know of our heavenly calling. We have to own it, and yet, we need not be downhearted, yet if we would but let the truth work, our lives would be revolutionised. If you "see all things clearly" you will say, "All things work together for good", you will begin to acknowledge all His ways with you are according to His purpose for you here.

Many a time I have stood upon the beach and watched pieces of driftwood washed up by the waves and washed back again, and I have said to myself, 'William, that is like you'. Again, often in the Downs I have watched the ships riding majestically over the waters. Ah! When you see Christ and have known Christ, *then* you will ride majestically. No longer driftwood, Oh no! no longer a creature of circumstances, degraded as a Christian. What are you here for? I ask you, since the Saviour drew near to you in your night of misery, what have you learnt of Him? What headway have you made? He had in His mind for you that you should be like Him and with Him for ever. It is a very great thing to live in the light of your glory. And how encouraging it is to know that He is helping you on in that line. If you walk up to the light you have got, more will be revealed to you.

Listen to the apostle, as he writes by the Spirit the tears drop on the paper as he sorrows over the "earthly minded". There is the contrast, "as many as be perfect" and those who are "otherwise minded". He recalls them to their calling. "our citizenship is in heaven" (v 20) "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" etc.

The blind man was to go back to his house - he was never told to go to the town. You go back to your house to bear the heavenly character and you will be a better man, a better child, a better wife, a better husband, a better servant - whatsoever relationship you are set in will be filled in a better way. But you are not told to go to the town - there is no direction given by which you may be a magistrate or other official, and why? Because your citizenship is in heaven.

I ask the Lord to help you. He alone can effect anything. Look to Him. If you want to be miserable look in; if you want to be distracted look around; if you want to be perfectly happy look up. Sweet is the thought that I belong to another world where Christ is. God has touched me from the place where He is to show me that my place is where Jesus is, and the support will come from that place. We have a spot, let us look up, may it be so.

The knowledge of our glory leads to discipleship and the knowledge of a glorified Christ will enable you to pursue your way down here in this world. I had to come here because I had to go there. What sets me in movement is Christ in glory.

May these feeble words be used of Him to rouse each one of us to follow in that path, for His name's sake. Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> The manuscript has been changed twice in this sentence to substitute 'can' for 'cannot'; read with both the preceding and following remarks, 'cannot' appears to be a mis-transcription.

<sup>ii</sup> the original manuscript had 'loved by divine energy' here, but see the final paragraph of this address.