

THE  
WISDOM OF SOLOMON

W. J. H.

BIBLE & TRACT DEPOT  
8 Regent Place      Melbourne

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# THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

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Notes of a Reading at Kyneton.

2nd November, 1937.

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1 Kings, Chapter 2.

W.J.H. I have suggested this scripture in the transition period between the close of David's reign and the magnifying of Solomon as affording instruction as to what the Lord would help us to judge, so that Solomon's work might proceed, both in our own hearts individually and amongst the gatherings of God's people. I believe the true Solomon is proceeding with His work, with all its blessedness, and we all want to make room for it to take effect, so that features of the house of God might be more definitely in evidence in our localities, and with that the blessed presence of God, which is what we can look for if we have the features of His house.

One feels that many of us are delighted to be in David's kingdom with all its benefits and protection, but the Lord is moving on and it is a question now of what the Son of David is doing as building assembly fea-

tures in His people, and this transition period comes in between the two reigns, as affording us opportunity to make room for what Solomon would do.

R.H.V.A. Does it represent for us that it necessitates the recognition of the need of displacement in my soul in order to make room for the coming in of Solomon?

W.J.H. Exactly. I think that we should see, that these persons that are judged in this chapter represent what is working in our own hearts naturally, which hinders the true Solomon operating according to His purpose. These matters are in the way in many localities, and they are in the way naturally in all our hearts.

W.G. The throne of Solomon must be established without any difficulty being in the way amongst us.

W.J.H. Solomon means peace, and you cannot have peace in any company of God's people, and you cannot have it in your own soul if what Joab, Adonijah and Shimei represent is not judged.

M.H. Would you suggest to us what these represent?

W.J.H. They set forth various features of the flesh which perhaps we can refer to later, but one would like us to seize a little more

the supreme blessedness of what Solomon has in mind. He has before him the thought of God dwelling among His people. In our localities we know a little today of a visit, and individually we occasionally know something of a visitation, but God's great end is to dwell permanently, to have a residence suitable for Himself, and Solomon has that in mind, and nothing less — a *settled place* like what is in heaven, a house that Solomon would build to be His settled place where He would be permanently; and if we can make a little more room for something of that in the various gatherings we come from, no one can tell what the result would be for God. So that it is worth our facing what hinders.

J.D.U. He sends to Hiram and says, "There is neither adversary nor evil event" (1 Kings 5 : 4) and he says, "And behold I purpose to build" (1 Kings 5 : 5). Does the thought of dwelling suggest that not only we are at rest but that God is at rest amongst us?

W.J.H. That is the point, and the thought of God abiding comes right down even to *one* heart. The Lord says, "If any one love me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our abode with him". (John 14 : 23.) Think

of such blessedness being available to one heart — “We will come and make our abode with him” — that the touches that we get for a moment should be extended to be continuous, if conditions permit.

J.N.G. Does the thought of *dwelling* suggest that God is at rest amongst His people?

W.J.H. Quite so. Rest is the greatest thought probably in a dwelling. “This is My rest for ever”, God says, “here will I dwell.” (Psalm 132 : 14.) Conditions permit God to rest.

J.W.H. Could you help us as to why these things are left over from David? Two, at any rate.

W.J.H. Because, I suppose, they were not ready for the thought of a dwelling place for God, because of conflict. David being a man of war there is much conflict, and also his rule is a gracious rule, so that on the side of the kingdom the Lord often leaves much till there is the desire to have a house for God, and then He does not leave anything. The reason why many matters are left, perhaps for years, in localities is because the features of the house of God are not in evidence, and there is not the exercise to have them, while enjoying the beneficial rule of David and His protection.

C.D. The kingdom is established under his hand before the house is built?

W.J.H. David sees to that side, so that what is secured by David's rule is that all Israel loves David. The Lord gets the love of our hearts by His gracious rule, and on that line He often leaves many matters until the truth of the house of God is raised.

J.D.U. So you would bring before us the supreme blessedness of God dwelling in our hearts, so that we would be ready to have everything else eradicated?

W.J.H. I think the touches we get of the presence of God are to woo us from things that hinder this being permanent. The Lord graciously gives touches of His presence to the saints together, and to our own spirits individually, but He has more than that in His mind, and if we are prepared to provide the conditions He would extend the enjoyment of His presence beyond a visitation to "our abode" (John 14 : 23).

E.B.McC. The maintenance of the truth is very necessary in every locality. If not maintained the Lord may cease to work there.

W.J.H. I suppose the truth would secure the rights of God recognised according to His command.

J.D.U. Is it that gracious rule of David

in our hearts? “If ye love me” (John 14 : 15) — it is His gracious rule that makes us love Him, is it?

W.J.H. Do you think some of us rather shrink from facing the next step? There is a sense in which even Saul could love David. Saul loved him, and it says “Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (1 Samuel 18 : 1) — his soul was knit to the soul of David; and it even says Michael loved him, (1 Samuel 18 : 20) and Hiram always loved him. On that line things go on very well, the gracious rule of the Lord bearing with us and not raising any questions—perhaps we would like the local meetings to go on like that, but that is not the house of God, that is the kingdom, and the kingdom is to prepare the way for the house of God being established, and as soon as that comes into view, matters must be taken up.

G.A.v.S. I wish to ask if the exercise you are suggesting to us is that we are prepared for the removal of everything that would interfere with the outgoing of the affections of God for His house?

W.J.H. Quite so. Touches of the Divine Presence were known under David, most blessed moments, David himself longing for it, his heart panting after it, “As the heart



panteth after the water-brooks", (Psalm 42 : 1) but he had before him in his reign that there would be more than this, a permanent residence for God amongst His people, and he knew there were certain matters that would have to be faced, but in grace he left them until the exercise of the house of God should arise.

A.B.J. Seeing the house of God is in view in Solomon's reign, is not the question of holiness in view in the clearing up of these matters?

W.J.H. There cannot be peace without it. David means "beloved" . . . and that is how all Christians know Christ; every true Christian loves Him because of what He has done, how He gave up His life for us; but Solomon means peace, and that indicates that conditions are according to God.

C.D. Is it not more a matter of righteousness in the establishment of the kingdom and holiness coming in in relation to the house.

W.J.H. This chapter closes with the kingdom being established under the hand of Solomon — all that offends must be removed for peace to prevail.

J.D.U. So that settling of difficulties in local companies is not everything. We get these matters settled in view of God having

His place amongst us.

W.G. There is something beyond the exercises of care and so on — we have to move on.

W.J.H. What is beyond is unity in the service of God, so that all make one sound in praise, and then “the glory of Jehovah had filled the house of God” (2 Chronicles 5 : 14). The true Solomon is seeking to secure this in the hearts of His people where saints are governed by the truth of the assembly. And if we get a touch of that in its blessedness and glory, we shall be emboldened and encouraged to face questions which arise in our own hearts primarily, and deal with them.

W.G. In speaking of holiness, do you think that there is a state allowed in these men here which had gone on for years unjudged — they had not faced the matter before David, or before the Lord?

W.J.H. That is where we all come in. Mr. Stoney said we must face private suicide or public hanging. There is no doubt that these three persons represent what is in every single heart in this room, and if allowed will definitely hinder features of the house of God where we are. If we do not deal with them privately — and there was ample time given

by David to deal with them — then they must be faced publicly.

W.G. In spite of Shimei's apparent repentance, the matter remained unjudged before the Lord.

W.J.H. *It always comes to light if the time allotted to each of us to judge ourselves is not embraced.*

J.D.U. It would look then as if the Lord is intent upon producing these heavenly conditions, the unity of praise, etc., preparatory to taking us to heaven.

W.J.H. The thought of something on earth that corresponds with heaven is the divine idea and it was Solomon's thought that the settled abode of heaven and the settled abode on earth should be characteristically the same.

L.G.L. Were the sons of Barzillai in line as those that would eat at Solomon's table?

W.J.H. Quite so. They are men that are prepared for Solomon's reign.

R.H.V.A. What would be the moral effect of a state that holds itself available for the Lord in self-judgment — what would be the moral effect amongst the brethren?

W.J.H. Such would be a contribution towards the Divine presence amongst the saints, "I will love him and will manifest myself to him". (John 14 : 21.) When

together, such would promote conditions for the Divine presence. We only get as together what we bring; no miracle happens.

The Lord definitely commits Divine Persons not only to visit, like God did to Abraham, but to abide with the one who loves Him and keeps His commandments. One speaks humbly for we know so little of even a visit.

W.G. Do we need to have our affections carried by what the Lord is doing now in relation to the assembly?

W.J.H. Quite so. I believe the position in a certain sense today is that we are passing through the transition period between David and Solomon, and that moral questions and questions of holiness are arising in many places that had been left for years. The Lord has in mind that the features of the house of God should be in evidence.

E.B.McC. If I sit to adjudicate on a matter, should not my own state be taken into account, and if I judge wrongly it will come back on me?

W.J.H. Indeed, it is an abomination to judge another if we have not judged ourselves, it is sinners judging sinners.

E.B.McC. You would need the sense of the support of heaven in any matter you take up in connection with the saints?

Ques. Would the word of the Lord come in? Benaiah gets the word from Solomon, as being one whose allegiance to Solomon is as true as it had been to David.

W.J.H. Evidently he was one fit to judge; a man who had already judged in himself what Joab and Adonijah and Shimei represent.

Rem. It is interesting to take account of the name "Benaiah" which means "built up of the Lord."

G.A.v.S. I was wondering how far affection for the Lord and the Lord's interests in His beloved people would have the effect of opening our eyes to the real character of different forms of evil which must be dealt with before the holiness of God's house can be adequately borne witness to.

W.J.H. There is a tendency with us to go *back to David's day when things were not raised*, and say, "What a pity these matters are raised, why not let us go back to David's time when he left matters?" We have come to that time in the testimony when the Lord is acting definitely now as Solomon, that in a special way Solomon's work is to go on.

J.D.U. What a delight to the heart to be able to wipe away the tears caused by the sorrow that these things bring about as the evil is dealt with, the sorrows removed, and God

can come in.

W.J.H. Solomon is magnified. Further back, in Samuel, David is magnified, and we love to magnify David; but they desire that Solomon's throne should be greater than David's throne.

G.A.v.S. I would like to ask how comes it that David is the one who lays injunctions upon Solomon, although he was more definitely acquainted with what was working in the hearts and minds of these men, looking at them representatively, while Solomon was really the one who was to deal with the matter officially. Solomon moves in regard to each one, but each one betrays his own situation.

W.J.H. David leaving it did not mean David did not feel it. He had a very definite judgment about these matters until this subject of the house of God is definitely brought forward, that is the matter in view. I think it denotes that the Lord is going to establish the features of a dwelling place for God amongst us and we want to give ourselves to it whatever it means in the way of self judgment.

J.D.U. In Matthew's Gospel we have those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matthew 5 : 6) — that everything that is wrong should be put right, all righteousness

fulfilled.

W.J.H. Quite so. The Lord has in mind that the glory should be amongst His people as united as one.

E.B.McC. The saints are enlarged by the handling of these difficulties, if matters are taken up in a right way. Solomon, like Joseph, is binding princes and teaching his senators wisdom.

W.J.H. That is a very interesting scripture as it says of Joseph, "To bind his princes at his pleasure and teach his elders wisdom" (Psalm 105 : 22). That is what Solomon is doing here, he is binding his princes according to his pleasure, and he is teaching his senators wisdom; it covers an immense range.

E.B.McC. That would bring before us the importance of the present moment.

W.J.H. How great Solomon became, the largeness of his heart was as the sand upon the seashore.

H.C. Many of these cases are past. Would the scripture "God bringeth back again that which is past" (Ecclesiastes 3 : 15) have a bearing in relation to present holiness?

W.J.H. The Lord has given many a lengthy opportunity to put matters right. If we put things right in the period He gives us to judge them, we are free to serve in the

house of God, but if we go beyond the allotted period of grace that David gives, then they must be dealt with publicly. The matters that need to be dealt with in self-judgment lie at our door for many a day.

G.A.v.S. Are you indicating that these men had time allowed that repentance might characterise them?

W.J.H. David waited as to Joab and he bore with Shimei, and he knew what Adonijah had done, and did not deal with them; but Solomon does not tarry when the time comes for the house of God to proceed, these matters are then dealt with. And we can be encouraged to feel that the features of the house of God are coming into view, that is what the Lord has in His mind.

A.B.J. We may go back in our minds to a day when peace was more amongst us, but these matters being raised are a sure token that the Lord is indeed with His people.

W.J.H. I think we should take courage, that these matters are being raised now, for it denotes the Lord is moving on another line; that He has brought in a measure of subjection thank God; we can say there is to some extent the element of subjection through the grace of the kingdom, and now the Lord is definitely moving to secure a dwell-



ing place for Himself and for God, may be in one heart in Kyneton or in any local company, or in His people generally, the same principle governs each situation.

C.D. The throne of Solomon is to be greater than the throne of David. It is a greater thing to secure something for the heart of God in which He can rest, than for the grace of the kingdom to protect us.

E.B.McC. Would you say a murderous heart, a spirit like Joab's, would not do for the house of God?

W.J.H. There are two principles of evil operating in Joab which are as natural as anything to all of us, one is envy, and the other is hardness. "The sons of Zeruah are too hard." (2 Samuel 3 : 39.) He saw in Abner and in Amasa potential rivals to himself, they were *great men*; the Lord had recovered them to David; but Joab saw possible rivals to himself and nothing would do for that man until they were removed. We shall never have part in the house of God if we make room for these activities, even secretly.

W.G. What would operate to bring about the exercise and review of the past that this might be brought up?

W.J.H. The very grace of David that accepted the self-judgment of Abner and the

transferring of his allegiance to David after being such an inveterate enemy at that time.

C.D. Apparently there was no change in Joab.

W.J.H. It is too late when Solomon is on the throne. He has had his opportunities, David says "do not let his hoar head go down in peace" — the movements of envy and hardness till the head is hoary — alas there is little hope then.

W.G. David allowed him to go on that he may be judged in the end.

W.J.H. Well he had a long period to judge himself. I think we hardly know how much the secret workings of envy are in our hearts. The Lord is prospering someone else, He is helping another brother in Kyneton as well as the one He usually helps — what are *we going to do?*

G.A.v.S. Are these moral elements absolutely incurable in each one of us and for that reason it is necessary for us to act definitely in putting them to death as it were?

W.J.H. If we do not secretly put them to death, it will have to be done publicly. If we do not secretly judge hardness, we shall have to be judged ourselves. The house is going to be filled by God, not by Joab. Joab is not going to have any glory there. When

that house, which Solomon builds, is finished, the glory is coming down to take possession of it, so that even the priests cannot minister. What would you do bringing in a Joab then?

J.D.U. What did you mean by dealing with it secretly?

W.J.H. How many a time Joab must have thought of Abner and Amasa, and he might have gone to David and put it all right in self-judgment, and he did not. So the time comes when David says to Solomon, "You are a wise man and you are not to let him go down to the grave in peace," the thing is to be settled here.

J.D.U. Do you think it helps as the glory of Christ and the perfection that shines in Him shine in our hearts?

W.J.H. My impression is that every appearing in any little measure to the hearts of the saints will raise another challenge, because the Lord wants conditions to permit of His presence being permanent.

"As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." (Psalm 42 : 1.) There was nothing that compared to a day in God's courts with David. You could bring a thousand of anything, and nothing could be compared to it.

C.H.W. Is not the end of the second book

of Psalms on that line, "the prayers of David the Son of Jesse are ended"? (Psalm 72 : 20.)

W.J.H. The end of all longings is to have God dwelling with His people.

The 21st chapter of Revelation is the goal of all divine activities, "The tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them" (Revelation 21 : 3) eternally.

J.D.U. Evil is confined in its own place and the effect of it on the hearts of His people is removed. We can well understand the Joab spirit is utterly foreign to that.

W.J.H. Joab's spirit began in Satan when he was jealous of God; he says, "I will be like the Most High". (Isaiah 14 : 14.) Joab's line will end in the lake of fire.

G.H.McK. The sons of Barzillai are in contrast to that — true sons of the kingdom, eating at the table.

W.J.H. Quite so. Ready for any move that David may make, and Solomon may make.

A.H.S. Then when matters are raised in the two instances, there is a further period of probation under Solomon.

W.J.H. Further opportunity for Shimei — Joab does not seem to get much; Adonijah does not get much, but Shimei gets a good

deal — how gracious the Lord is in these matters.

J.D.U. Solomon's action is very summary, it is drastic.

W.J.H. With Joab and with Adonijah it is final; with Abiathar there is a door to recovery; with Shimei he is put under restriction in view of salvation. The Lord has His own way of dealing with each situation, the principle of envy and hardness the Lord will not tolerate.

Adonijah usurped the kingdom — the place of Christ.

G.A.v.S. Adonijah says the hearts of the people are towards me. The hearts of the people were no indication of divine choice, for God chose Solomon.

W.J.H. Indeed he knew the throne was Solomon's from God, nevertheless he tried to steal the hearts of the people.

J.D.U. The word is addressed to the hearts of all and we are given ample time, "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed and without remedy". (Proverbs 29 : 1.)

W.J.H. Indeed Adonijah was given a further period, open rival as he was with Solomon, yet Solomon sent him to his house; but when he attempts to break through he is

dealt with forthwith. These principles are in us, so to say, and if we want the features of the house of God where we are, we must face them.

J.D.U. The Holy Spirit raises matters with us individually, and if we do not face them, it is to our loss.

H.C. "For if any man reputes himself to be something being nothing he deceives himself." (Galatians 6 : 3.)

W.J.H. How far from Adonijah's spirit Paul's was as he went to Corinth; he went there as a wise architect; and he did not go down there seeking to control and capture their affections; he says "Ourselves your bondmen for Jesus' sake". (2 Corinthians 4 : 5.) It was for Jesus' sake He was working as an architect.

W.J.H. Evidently Solomon detected the same thing back again in Adonijah seeking Abishag. He says, "Ask the kingdom also". If you ask for her, you might as well ask the kingdom; that is what he was seeking. The period allotted had not produced self-judgment with Adonijah.

R.H.V.A. Does it not represent the moral distance between the judgment of the Lord and what is purely judicial?

W.J.H. Quite so. "Thou art a wise man",

David says, and the next chapter develops that greatly, reference being made to the proverbs of Solomon, 3,000 of them. (1 Kings 4 : 32.) That is the wisdom of Solomon and it unfolds itself in connection with the house of God. You do not know what proverb he would use, he has 3,000 of them to meet every situation, and how do we know what proverb to use, unless we hear from the true Solomon? If you are judging judicially you will just quote what has been done before.

J.S.B. You spoke of the great need to judge hardness and envy, can it be only judged at the cross?

W.J.H. Where else would you go! One should seek by all means to judge this jealous spirit in our hearts.

W.G. It is a very real exercise, because it involves our accepting death; you spoke of suicide.

W.J.H. Joab had the opportunity of judging this and burying it morally, and he would have had his part in the house of God if he had done it, and Adonijah might have had an opportunity also. There is a tendency when a leader dies for someone to desire to be king. When Gideon dies Abimelech virtually says, "I will be king". When a leader dies or is removed, there is something in every

heart that says, "I will be king". But Solomon will not have it, because he has the building of the house of God before him.

G.F. I suppose Adonijah's method was to make a party of it?

W.J.H. The hearts of certain were towards him. Like Abimelech, who went to his mother's brethren, to his special friends, to those who saw things as he saw them. Jotham says, as it were — and that is the word for us all — "My intention is to go on in the place in which the Lord has put me". The fig tree says, "Shall I leave my sweetness", the vine says, "Should I leave my new wine", but the thorn bush says, "Come put confidence in my shadow". (Judges 9 : 8.)

Adonijah is the bramble here who says, "I will be king". The assembly is the body of Christ, and in the body all we have to do is to fill our part as under the Head. The ear just fills its function, the hand and the foot the same. What the Lord is helping His people to come to is the truth of the body, the Assembly.

J.D.U. So that the fig and vine properly function under the head, the sweetness, etc., coming from the Head?

W.J.H. Quite so. Could you have anything better in Melbourne may be, than to



honour God and men if you were an olive tree? The spiritual person has nothing else before him than to honour God and man. The fig has nothing more before him than to bring in sweetness in a bitter world, the vine's service is to make glad the heart of God and man, but the moment we say, "I will be king, I will wave over the trees", then that moment we are lost to the house of God. If this is not judged then Solomon must deal with it.

J.D.U. Is it an anti-Christ spirit?

W.J.H. Yes, apostacy is the final development of such a spirit.

W.G. Would you say there should be quietness and dignity in our service — no ambition?

W.J.H. Well, as we are under the influence of Christ, the true Solomon, we are happy to be one of His men. When the Queen of Sheba comes to this wonderful scene she says, "Happy are thy men" "these thy servants". (1 Kings 10 : 8.)

H.C. Paul was morally superior so as to be able to deal with the conditions at Corinth, because he had been in the third heaven and had moral superiority to deal with the root of things in Corinth.

W.J.H. What is in the third heaven, in paradise, is the tree of life, Christ there as

the great Centre of the pleasure of God. Paul came down to Corinth to seek to maintain that there.

L.L. We do not want to confine this exercise to leaders.

W.J.H. These principles operate naturally in every human heart. We deceive ourselves if we do not think that.

G.A.v.S. Would you say that as we follow the way in which each one of them was dealt with, we are enabled to judge these things as they come to light in our hearts?

W.J.H. He would help us to deal with them, first in ourselves, and if we do not He will as Solomon deal with them, and there is no escape then.

Ques. What came to light in Shimei?

W.J.H. Shimei retained the longing for the "good old days" when Saul was reigning; he looked back to the days when things were outwardly correct enough in a certain way, but when the first man had definite recognition and the best of Amalek was spared. He looked back to those days and he thought they would come back again and he cursed David; he had ample opportunity to judge this, and Solomon gave him more time to judge it, to accept restrictions, to allow what was spiritual to prevail; but he refused the restric-

tions.

G.A.v.S. Is it not important that Shimei was actually directed to live in Jerusalem, so that every opportunity was given him to see that these days were better than Saul's.

W.J.H. Fancy going to Gath after living in Jerusalem! Going to the Philistines' land! I believe if we could interpret what is in some heart still we would see a longing to go back to the former things. There have been periods in every meeting like that and some call it "the good old days", but the Lord is giving ample opportunity for us to judge that, and to give place to Solomon.

You are not wise in that, Saul's days are not better than David's days, nor than Solomon's days.

Ques. Are we apt to seek every trivial excuse for going back to those days?

W.J.H. It was rebellion at heart against the conditions Solomon had brought in.

## THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

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Notes of a Reading at Kynetton.  
No. 2.

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Tuesday Afternoon,  
2nd November, 1937.

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1 Kings ch. 3, v. 23-28,

1 Kings ch. 4, v. 29 to end.

W.J.H. It is instructive to take account of these two chapters following what we had this morning, as also preparatory to the construction of the house of God. In the 5th chapter, Solomon definitely begins the great work of his life, but the Spirit of God has brought forward these other matters prior to the erection of God's house, and I think they afford us help to approach the realisation of the thought of the house of God. Not only that what is in the way morally in all our hearts should be judged, but we should be prepared to face the question of the word of God, the discerners of what is within. The idea in Christendom of the house of God is

what is external, and is of very little value. What is merely external, formal and dead yields nothing; but the word of God brings to light what is living and we need to allow its scrutiny to come into our souls as we approach the subject of the house of God locally and generally.

J.D.U. The enemy would destroy everything that is living, would he not?

W.J.H. There is never any conflict in a cemetery. If things are dead, the enemy can leave us, but the true Solomon by His judgment, by His word, brings forward what is within in a living way outside externals.

A.H.S. Are you referring to the sword in connection with the word?

W.J.H. Yes. Solomon says, "Bring me a sword". The apostle makes clear what that is; the word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, and it pierces what is inside, and as we approach the thought of having a part in the house of God, we must be prepared for His word to search us and bring out what is within.

R.H.V.A. Is there a moral connection in what you are now bringing before us with what we had this morning? Does the judgment of Joab, Shimei and the others prepare the way for the operations of the work of God?

W.J.H. Quite so. For the house of the living God is in view. What is merely formal and external but dead is worthless in the house of God. So we need to face the word of God to bring out what there is within, that is, where there is life and living affections. However much under reproach, because of our past history, what Solomon is looking for is what is living. "For a living dog is better than a dead lion." (Ecclesiastes 9 : 4.) These women might be regarded as dogs, but one of them is a living dog with living affections and she is better than a dead lion; Solomon discloses by his word that she has living affections in her soul and as such she is serviceable to the house of God.

J.D.U. So it goes back to the scripture quoted this morning "If any one love me". (John 14 : 23.)

W.J.H. And love would always seek to preserve life. The other woman does not care because she does not love; she is quite willing for the other child to be cut in two; but where there are living affections they find expression in suffering.

J.D.U. Prepared for any sacrifice?

W.J.H. Yes, even to giving up her own child to another if life could be saved.

R.H.V.A. Does the child represent Christ

as held in the incorruptible affections of the soul?

W.J.H. Well, I would rather say that, in the setting it is in, it represents living material for the living house. What Solomon really has in view typically is the house of the living God and one of these women will sacrifice anything to have living material preserved.

G.A.v.S. Does the matter then represent the exercises in a locality for the preservation of life, even though it might involve the sacrifice of ease and comfort, and perhaps the object of its affections might be lost to it?

W.J.H. Quite so. The position is remarkable coming in at this juncture, the past of the woman is not ignored and brings before us what marked us in the past, like the Lord being in the house of Simon the leper; the Spirit of God does not hide it, yet becoming serviceable by the activity of living affections sacrificing to preserve life.

C.D. And it is the word of the king that brings it to light.

W.J.H. There is power in the word of the king; like the word of God which pierces to dividing between soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. So that as we approach the subject of the house of God, we

have to face the word of God, for in His house is the oracle where God speaks.

W.G. Would what we speak of as care enter into this in relation to God, the way in which care is carried out, readiness to sacrifice? She cared for the living child.

W.J.H. I think so. We often have to have our affections stirred for the preservation of what is living.

E.B.McC. In adjudicating would you say the spirit of a little child enters into it, that would be the proper attitude?

W.J.H. Yes. The potentialities in a little child who can tell? For a little child is going to lead the various features of the work of God in a coming day — “A little child shall lead them”, (Isaiah 11 : 6) referring to the various animals that Solomon speaks of.

E.B.McC. So that having the spirit of a little child you would naturally care for life.

W.J.H. The Lord took a little child and said, “And whosoever shall receive one such little child in My Name receives Me.” (Matthew 18 : 5.) There is a correspondence between Christ and a little child.

A.B.J. Is it not essential to see that in no other way and in no other place could this matter have been settled? Is not every matter to be solved in the presence of the king?



In the 16th verse they came to the king and stood before him.

W.J.H. You cannot judge by externals. There are no means to judge by externals, one person's word against another's, but bring the matter into the presence of Christ and His word looks beyond externals.

C.D. It brings to light the inwards.

W.J.H. So if we are going to reach this great thought we must be prepared to have the Lord look inside; God's house and God's presence, is a very searching matter. Not a question now of our acts as in Joab's and Shimei's cases, but the searching eye of Christ taking account as to how far we have living affections for His interests.

J.S.B. In contrast to what we were speaking about this morning as to what was hard and envious, the motive for the preservation of what is living is seen here to be love; the inward affections of this woman were moved to preserve life, "Love never fails". (1 Corinthians 13 : 8.)

W.J.H. "Bears all things." (1 Corinthians 13 : 7.) This woman was prepared to bear a most terrible situation that her own child should pass into the care of another rather than the child should die; indicating that what is living will bear sacrifice to preserve life.

W.G. Solomon's wisdom is excellent in the way he brings out the affections in the mother and discloses the true relationship.

W.J.H. The word of the king — it brought out where life is. In a case of judgment when the Lord speaks He will bring out where life is, where there is anything to be preserved.

G.A.v.S. Do we cultivate interest and affection in every manifestation of spiritual life in the Christian circle?

W.J.H. That is it exactly. Take the children and young people growing up amongst us; we should be prepared to make great sacrifices that they should not be engulfed or destroyed by the callousness of the present day. The next chapter we read develops that further in what Solomon opens up, he speaks of trees from the cedar to the hyssop, and he speaks of cattle and of birds and creeping things and fishes, disclosing his valuation of the work of God in its various forms. All that precedes the building of the house.

Ques. The maternal element amongst us is of great importance in that respect, is it not? I was thinking of the maternal affection being brought to light; there is the maternal side of care.

W.J.H. A very great side and we want

the Lord to search us as to whether we have got it or whether we are going on formally as to our care meetings and assembly meetings, or whether there is the mother heart behind it all.

C.D. Prepared to sacrifice would be the test of that as with Moses' mother.

W.J.H. . Quite so. It must have broken her heart to take Moses and put him in the ark in the river by the bank, but her object was to preserve him for God.

C.D. That is the test of reality instead of formality.

W.J.H. I feel we want to take that to heart in facing difficult matters, whether there are these feelings of living affections or whether it is just a matter of bringing the sword and cutting the child in two, and there is an end to the matter.

Ques. Or even conforming to what is outwardly right.

W.J.H. Quite so. That is the point for us to see — the word of God — a sword such as that is. I believe if we would face the fact that God is speaking and let Him search us; it would promote the living condition, whether in prayer or praise or thanksgiving, for He is the living God.

J.S.B. You spoke of what is potential in

a child. Moses as a child was beautiful, we need spiritual sight to see beauty in the children of God.

W.J.H. I am sure that is right, but by the action of some parents you would wonder whether they value the child at all for God; Moses' parents hid him as long as they could, but when they could not hide him they prepared an ark and put it in the sedge by the bank of the river; they did not put their child right out in the stream as some parents do, but they put him into the minimum of it, not the maximum, for they wanted him for God.

J.D.U. Is that not where the passover comes in, a lamb for an house, we shelter our households?

W.J.H. Quite so. The firstborn child in that house would have particular attachment for that lamb.

J.D.U. The protection in that way of what is for God as seen in the firstborn.

W.J.H. We have had some heart-breaking experiences of parents pushing their children into the stream as if they did not value them potentially for God, so that they have been swept away in the great current of Egypt's river. Moses' parents put him among the sedge in the border of the stream.

E.B.McC. Timothy was brought up in a

right way; as a child he knew the scriptures, able to make him wise unto salvation.

W.J.H. Very good. What is instilled into Moses from his birth is the acceptance of being hidden. For three months while he is entirely under his parents' care they hid him. He is hidden from his birth and all the way through. If we could instil into our children that they are not for this world, they are hidden here, in the first three months of their spiritual history, they would never depart from this.

Ques. Would you attach some importance to taking account of spiritual life and interest in any person who comes under the power of the word of God?

W.J.H. That is the point here, that this mother would save the life, that is her objective at all costs.

G.A.v.S. Is that the care and solicitude of those in whose care the child is?

W.J.H. The apostle speaks of Jerusalem above being "our mother" (Galatians 4 : 26).

Ques. You spoke of being hidden for three months by the parents. Does what you refer to come out in relation to the preaching of the gospel also, God saving souls to hide them?

W.J.H. The hidden position is the position for all of us, but if it is not brought into

our souls when we are young it seldom gets in at all. When the Lord found what He valued He hid it.

G.A.v.S. We see that in active exercises in the government of a country, how most of the laws of that country are directed towards making provision for the preservation of those who are young and unable yet to guard themselves against the great dangers which surround them, and I suppose that is just as true in the commonwealth of God as in the commonwealth of a nation.

W.J.H. This mother would look at her child like that — the possibilities in view of Solomon's kingdom and Solomon's work — Solomon is on the throne and he is going to build a house that is exceeding magnificent.

Ques. To be an element in it?

W.J.H. That is what she rightly would look for.

A.B.J. This child would take a right account of himself later on, he would owe his life and existence to this word that came from Solomon.

W.J.H. Indeed, we are born again by the word of God says Peter, and we live by every word of God; and as this child grew up and understood that he owed his life to the word of Solomon, every word of Solomon would

have weight with him. This brings us to the next chapter.

G.A.v.S. Is Paul's solicitude for Timothy of a similar character?

W.J.H. And found more clearly still in Onesimus, how anxious Paul was; so much so that he wrote a special epistle to Philemon that the child begotten in his bonds should not be injured.

E.B.McC. The maternal side comes to light, and the Lord places the child where it gets proper care.

J.D.U. I suppose here we would be encouraged to sacrifice the natural whatever that may cost us?

W.J.H. That is how life is preserved. She is prepared to sacrifice what she would naturally claim, for the preservation of life.

E.B.McC. The Lord sees she gets the living child. The young man in Luke is given to his mother.

W.J.H. Yes . . . What I had in mind — more than the child itself — was that we should have to do with the Lord who searches our innermost hearts, and thoughts and feelings, and thus we are on the way to the house of God.

G.A.v.S. In regard to wisdom in the passage at the end of the 4th chapter, is

this wisdom of such a character that it covers everything in earth, air and water?

W.J.H. "In wisdom hast Thou made them all" (Psalm 104 : 24) it says. Wisdom is in every sphere of God's activities. God gave Solomon wisdom and largeness of heart — that is a great matter. Largeness of heart — immense affection—complete with the wisdom so that he has a heart that can think of every feature of the work of God. Having got that, he speaks three thousand proverbs, which I think means that there is a word of wisdom from Solomon for every matter that ever arises. The three thousand will cover every matter. There is far more than the actual Book of Proverbs, there is the living word as well as the literal scripture.

J.D.U. The application by the Spirit of the written word perhaps?

W.J.H. Never outside the boundary of scripture; yet you have to get to Solomon to find these three thousand proverbs and with such a range of them you do not know what He will use.

G.A.v.S. With Christ there is power to deal with every possible situation that could arise.

W.J.H. Judgment is to begin at the house of God, that is what Solomon has in view,



the house of God being there, judgment is there, these three thousand proverbs are for judgment, to know what ought to be done in every circumstance.

Ques. So that He may apply a scripture which has never been used before?

W.J.H. Which is very testing.

J.W.H. Do you suggest that the three thousand proverbs are for the working out of judgment in detail?

W.J.H. Quite. The general position is that the Lord will recognise living affections, but then in the question of judgment He has a word of wisdom for every matter; the range of wisdom under His hand is expressed in the three thousand proverbs, and He has a word of wisdom for every situation.

A.B.J. In the 30th and 31st verses, all human wisdom disappears before the true Solomon's wisdom?

W.J.H. That is interesting. Various characters of wisdom are referred to. The sons of the east, but Solomon is wiser than they are! There are persons that go back to the religious traditions of men. There is the wisdom of Egypt, of this world. There are brethren who have helped us in the past, grandsons of Jacob may be. We might look up their writings to get a proverb for the

situation, but that is not the way at all.

W.G. The scripture says he "spoke" of them, not "wrote" of them, would that bring in the presence of Christ?

W.J.H. That is so. We are approaching the house of the living God, there are living expressions and living wisdom from the mouth of Solomon.

H.S. Ethan and Heman wrote psalms.

W.J.H. Ethan the Ezrahite thought very highly of David. Solomon is wiser than he, however much we may value Ethan. The other three may be grandsons of Jacob and belong to the past. What is the proverb that Solomon will say now, is in view in an assembly meeting and it is very testing as to whether we are with Solomon. What we did in an apparently similar case weeks before or years before is not to guide now.

Ques. These men would speak from their experience: Solomon has the word from God to meet every situation, it is not a matter of past experience.

W.J.H. The apostle in the Corinthians says, "Thus there is not a wise man among you" (1 Corinthians 6 : 5.) We do not despise these serviceable brethren, whether living or gone, but what we want in a difficult situation is a proverb that Solomon speaks.

C.B. Is there any wisdom apart from Solomon?

W.J.H. Well there is the wisdom of the world which comes to nought and there is the wisdom from beneath too.

C.B. With all this available wisdom, how is it that we so often miss the point?

W.J.H. It is a question as to whether things are living with us, we never miss the proverb if we are livingly in touch with Solomon, in living affection.

G.A.v.S. Would the wisdom come out in the application of the proverb? In any given situation the wisdom that brings the word of Christ to bear upon it would be the proverb for the occasion?

W.J.H. I suppose that three thousand would cover all the moral questions that would ever arise, there is a proverb for each one.

C.D. It is a matter of what he spoke, not a question of what others say, but rather the true Solomon, it is what He says that counts and what we wait for and listen for.

W.J.H. That is what you get in the house of God. The time has come for judgment to begin from the house of God.

H.C. We often quote what valued brethren say believing Christ is speaking through such.

W.J.H. The Spirit of God conveys what

Christ says through vessels. Christ is not actually here physically, but He is Son over God's house and He does speak and we are to discern His voice.

E.B.McC. He credits the assembly with having those proverbs.

W.J.H. How testing as to whether we are near enough to Him to get the proverb for the occasion, or whether we look up to see what Mahol said.

Ques. Then there is the testing as to whether we have discernment to accept it.

W.J.H. That is what is so searching.

H.S. In connection with the morning meeting, there is nothing mystical about getting the song from the mouth of Solomon.

W.J.H. If indeed we should be near enough to get it and dependent enough . . . . . Solomon has the house of God in view in all this, first his proverbs to order and adjust things according to divine wisdom and then these thousand and five songs.

C.D. The proverbs would put us in tune for the song.

A.B.J. The right use of these proverbs in solving matters would mean unity?

W.J.H. Quite so. It would adjust us in every moral question so that things are right according to divine wisdom; but what is next

in view is the praise of God; there is a great range in that, a thousand and five.

E.B.McC. Why a thousand and five?

W.J.H. I do not know. The only thing I would say is that there is a vast range of living praise to be maintained by the true Solomon, not one note or one song, but a thousand and five songs.

E.B.McC. Do you think it begins at the weakest and increases one hundredfold?

W.J.H. Quite so. But we come together under the Son over God's house. What song will He sing? He has a thousand and five to select from.

C.B. Only one song is recorded.

W.J.H. Quite so. Who knows when the saints come together what song the true Solomon will take up? We used to see brothers come with their hymnbooks turned down.

J.D.U. I was thinking of young brothers that we long to see taking part in these songs. What is necessary with them is life, if they were living they would be available.

W.J.H. The Lord might choose any of them to introduce one of these songs — the songs of Zion they may be called.

G.A.v.S. Are the songs only in the hymn book?

W.J.H. "Singing and chanting with your

heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5 : 19) — not with your hymn book. The Lord might use the hymn book, but it is a question of what is in the heart.

J.D.U. The thing with us is to see that we are living and then we are ready for any one of the thousand and five.

W.J.H. The Lord would help us and is helping us to recognise that if these living affections are with us, and if there is matter of discernment and judgment, there is a word — a proverb from the mouth of Solomon. He would select one for the occasion. If it is a question of the service of God in praise, there is a living song which He will lead the saints to sing.

W.G. Would the proverb be limited to judgment?

W.J.H. A proverb is a word of wisdom when it is needed for any matter.

W.G. Would you help us as to the giving out of hymns?

W.J.H. It is only in wisdom they can be used. Take such a proverb as "God is in the heavens and thou, upon earth, therefore let thy words be few". (Ecclesiastes 5 : 2.) That is a word that needs to be listened to from the mouth of Solomon, specially in the prayer meetings. We cannot help one another

except as things are living. You cannot draw up anything for the service of God, there is no schedule, there are a thousand and five songs, and you never know what one Solomon will select. It is really how far we are in touch with Christ.

W.H. Do you think if we apprehended the Lord in connection with the three thousand proverbs, we would be drawing from the Head in such a way as to be intelligent as to what is given expression to?

W.J.H. Yes, I do.

C.B. Tell us why that one song is recorded.

W.J.H. It is called the Song of Songs. I suppose it is the greatest of all of them, whether applied to Israel or to the assembly. There are many other notes that Solomon may strike at times, and we are dependent upon Him for that.

G.A.v.S. Are they included in what Paul says "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"? (Ephesians 5 : 19.)

W.J.H. Quite so. The Songs of Zion are referred to in Scripture — they are all in that book.

J.N.G. Why Songs with Solomon, and Psalms largely with David?

W.J.H. He is the sweet Psalmist of Israel, and a psalm has to do with experience with God, but a song has to do with joy in the heart Godward, and God delights in such songs. I do not know that I can say much about the difference.

J.S.B. In the preservation of that which is living you have touched upon the meetings for prayer, and reference to our words being few. If we are given to prayer at very great length, can that make for preservation of what is living if there is that which is wearying to the saints? We speak practically.

W.J.H. If we turn to the Lord about that, we will find He has a proverb to put us right, and there is a proverb that tells us what is suitable if we will only listen. Solomon's prayer that follows is the longest prayer in scripture, and can be read deliberately and reverently in seven minutes. It covers the greatest range that our minds can take in.

W.G. The prayer that is livingly in connection with the house of God usually holds the saints.

W.J.H. Well, if we have as much real exercise as Solomon's we might sustain public prayer for seven minutes. There is no prayer other than the Lord's equal to it! . . . We might pass on to this next point in the same



connection. Solomon spoke of trees "from the cedar tree that is on Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall". Then he spoke of cattle, and he spoke of fowls and he spoke of creeping things, and of fishes. I believe all this would help us to value the work of God in view of the house of God, for in God's house there is a place for every feature of divine workmanship.

E.A.K. Would you connect this scripture with the sheet that comes down from heaven in the Acts, where similar things were spoken of?

W.J.H. Yes, only this is much wider. Solomon spoke of trees. There were no trees in that sheet, there were no fishes. I think the meaning of it is that approaching the subject of the house of God, Solomon would teach us to value any feature of the work of God in one another.

R.H.V.A. Every whit utters His praise.

W.J.H. Every whit — quite so.

J.D.U. Is that the thought of the hyssop — no matter how small?

W.J.H. Yes. What it must have been to hear Solomon speak about the feature of God's work in a cedar, and in an oak, and in a palm, and in an olive tree, and in a vine, and he comes right down to the hyssop that springs

out of the wall. So that everyone would value these plants as never before.

E.M. Does that apply to one seeking fellowship?

W.J.H. Indeed it applies in our attitude towards the work of God in every way. That you do not despise God's work — you value it. It may be small like the hyssop or great like the cedar, but whatever feature it bears, it is the work of God and Solomon has something to say about it, for he values it.

C.D. He has taken account of everything in God's work, so that he speaks of them all. Every creature came under his notice and he has something to say about it.

W.J.H. He *spoke* of these things . . . . All these things are living. They are trees that he spoke about, not timber simply.

G.A.v.S. Would the spiritual key be, "For thy will they were and they have been created"? (Revelation 4 : 11.)

W.J.H. That is what the elders know. They know that everything was made for the pleasure of God, to express something of Christ.

C.B. Was Paul valuing the hyssop? He says the weakest is necessary.

W.J.H. Yes, the weak brother for whom Christ died. Christ values such, though he

may be like hyssop that springs out from the wall.

R.H.V.A. Is not there a blessed sign that it was used to sprinkle the blood on the lintel?

W.J.H. Yes, though small it was serviceable.

J.D.U. "Less than the least of all saints."  
(Ephesians 3 : 8.)

W.J.H. It means, I think, to get the gain of hyssop we must be small. Indeed hyssop is the means of cleansing. The Psalmist says "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean" (Psalm 51 : 7). Coming down to the thought of hyssop is the divine way of cleansing. The fig tree or the cedar or the palm, all have features of God's work, but if we want to be cleansed it is by way of the hyssop.

W.G. "The trees of the Lord are full of sap."

W.J.H. The word there is "the trees of Jehovah are satisfied" (Psalm 104 : 16). Every tree of the Lord is satisfied to grow in his own place, and fill his own part. You have never heard of a cedar wanting to be a vine, his service is prescribed for him and he is satisfied. Solomon has something to say about every feature of the work of God and the necessity for it amongst His people.

G.A.v.S. The spiritual value of the work of God, so that they are spread abroad and appreciated.

W.J.H. I have no doubt every item listed here is descriptive in some way of the work of Christ. If you want to see the true Cedar, go to Him; if you want to see the true Hyssop, you go to Bethlehem or Calvary. If you want to see any feature of the beasts that are clean you see it in Christ, the ox and the lamb and the goat and the lion, all these features of the work of God are seen in Christ; but Solomon would help us to value them as seen in one another.

C.D. All the way through it is an important matter to hear what the King has to say, whether in regard to the living child or the mother, or the proverbs or the songs, or as to the vast range of the work of God.

W.J.H. That is important. That touches our readings and meetings for ministry. What will Solomon say, he has all this range before him and he has something to say, what will he say today?

J.D.U. Does that apply when seeking to distinguish where the work of God is in one who comes to the meeting for the first time?

W.J.H. Exactly. If you could see things

as the Lord sees them you might speak to him about the lamb, or about the lion, it depends upon what is suitable for the moment, what he may need is preparedness to suffer, what he may need is courage to face an issue that God has brought to his door.

J.D.U. There are the unclean elements — the creeping things?

W.J.H. Well Solomon no doubt had something to say about these which would be very extensive, how he would bring home what man is in himself, his own nothingness — “Thou worm Jacob” (Isaiah 41 : 14). What Solomon could open up as to this line!

G.A.v.S. How do we speak of fishes?

W.J.H. I think the fishes speak of the reserves that God has under His control. The sea contains living things innumerable. The reserves of divine resources are unlimited.

J.D.U. Do you link these with what we have in Leviticus?

W.J.H. Quite so. Solomon would help us to understand what is clean and what is not.

J.D.U. One has been feeling the importance of that book very greatly, in connection with things in the house of God.

W.J.H. I have no doubt in the wisdom that God gave Solomon he would open out the chapters in Leviticus in connection with

the creeping things so that we might understand what God meant by these things.

The house of God is to be a house of prayer for all nations, and so you find a little later on the Queen of Sheba comes up to hear this wisdom; there is a place where matters come up to be solved and where the light can be reached.

A.B.J. So that if we are in the good of that it will radiate and others will come into blessing?

W.J.H. That is what is in view.

C.B. Is that testimony?

W.J.H. Yes, God "who desires that all men should be saved", (1 Timothy 2 : 4) as the apostle says in Timothy as to the house of God.

R.H.V.A. Is there any connection between this and the second of Colossians, the mystery, in which are hidden the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?

W.J.H. I think that is very good in connection with what we have had, behind all these features in the physical creation there lie typically the treasures of the house. Solomon opens that out in all that he has to say. Ministry is largely to help us to locate features of Christ and value them and make use of them.

W.H. Are you suggesting that ministry

allows for the true Solomon to speak today?

W.J.H. That is it, to tell us about oaks and cedars and doves' and eagles' wings, indeed all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

## THE ARK IN ITS PLACE.

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### 2 Chronicles ch. 5.

One would desire to enlarge our interest in the present work of God. Nothing can be more important and greater than what God is doing, for dear brethren there is nothing like the work of God. In the world of nations, each nation is anxious to know what the other is doing. In business, rivals are always anxious to know what their competitors are doing, but I would like to enlist your living interest in what God is doing. If we look at the work of God as it is visible in the creation, how trifling it makes men's doings appear! Who would compare the sun in the heavens with all its wonderful light, with the tiny globes that men make — but that is the relative difference between God's work and man's work. What can you compare with the work of God, what is there like it? If we look into the heavens the work of His fingers, it is calculated to bring every man down to the dust in the sense of his own nothingness. If you take the lily, for the Lord bids us to consider it, what is there that men could do compared with the lily?



So it is with *all* the work of God. Perhaps some of you think that God is not working. Many live to-day as if God is doing nothing — what an outrage on God that any should think He is not doing anything! Nations are busy, cities are busy, men and women and children are busy doing something — can we conceive that God is not working? What is God doing? It truly says, “And the heavens and the earth and all their host were finished”. (Genesis 2 : 1.) Finished so perfectly that no revision for thousands of years has been necessary, no modification — made as God does everything — perfectly, but finished. Has He done nothing since? The Lord says, “My Father worketh hitherto and I work” (John 5 : 17) — has the Lord Jesus been doing nothing for thousands of years of men’s history? What is He doing? The greatest interest for your soul and mine is to be profoundly concerned as to what God is doing and what Christ is doing. What the Lord did in the three and a half years of His public life was so great that John supposes that the world could not contain the books that should be written if everything that Jesus did was listed.

So I want to dwell a little on what God is doing now and what Christ is doing. “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing” (Proverbs

25 : 2). He does not advertise His works. They need no advertising, and in any case where sin is active He hides His hand, but every kingly feature in man would find out what God does. It is the only thing that matters.

So I wanted with the Lord's help to suggest a little as to the great end that God is working to. When it is unveiled, what will there be? Well, first of all there will be a suitable place for the ark. It says when Solomon had finished all the work of the house of God, when there remained nothing whatever to be done in this connection, then they brought up the ark of the Lord into *its* place. It had never been in *its* place before, it had been in many other places, but not until now was it in its own place, the place that was suitable for it. Where had it been? It had been in the wilderness, it had gone three days' journey into the wilderness, it says it was a "Great and terrible wilderness of fiery serpents and scorpions." (Deuteronomy 8 : 15.) The ark had moved three days' journey to search out a resting place for Israel, to find in those dreadful conditions a spot where Israel could rest. It had gone forward before them all to face the enemies, and as the ark went out they said, "Rise up Jehovah and let thine enemies be scattered", and when it returned

they said, "Return Jehovah to the myriads of the thousands of Israel." (Numbers 10 : 35, 36.) The ark had been down into the waters of Jordan at a time when Jordan overflowed all its banks, the flood tide of that river in evidence; it had been into those waters and driven them back. The psalmist said, "What ailed thee . . . thou Jordan that thou turnedst back." (Psalm 114 : 5.) The ark had been round the walls of Jericho, that entrenched city of spiritual wickedness, and brought down its wall to the dust. It had been in a tent at Shiloh, a tent which God placed amongst men, largely forgotten by Israel. It had been into the land of the Philistines, taken into the house of their god; and the Philistine god had fallen upon its face, and they put it up again and then Dagon's head and hands are cut off in the presence of the ark. It had been in the house of Abinadab on the hill, cared for as best may be until finally David says as to that position, "We found it in the fields of the wood," (Psalm 132 : 6) — apparently unwanted and unappreciated by anyone. And as David sees that holy vessel in that position there arises a mighty vow in his soul that "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for Jehovah." (Psalm 132 : 4, 5.) What we have been

looking at earlier to-day began with that vow. The ark is found again in the house of Obededom, one solitary family that loves it; if everyone else is afraid, even David, Obededom opens his house to care for that holy vessel. It is found later in a tent within, guarded in the city of David, but, dear brethren, these positions do not denote *its* place. This holy vessel has been in all these places, but none of them was *its* place, the great end of Solomon's work is to provide *its* place. And all the people, the priests leading, join to bring up the ark into its place within the oracle. That is one feature of its place. The oracle is the place where God speaks, it is where the Divine voice may be heard, that is its place. Anyone that wants to hear the oracle must find the ark, for the ark's place is in the oracle where the voice of God is heard; — into the most holy place — into the very holiest spot in the universe, the most holy, that is the place of the ark. Under the wings of the cherubim, guarded perfectly, guarded by every attribute of God, where none could ever touch that vessel again with unholy hands — passed under the wings of the cherubim, that is its place.

We know, dear brethren, what all this means, it is the place which the Lord Jesus Christ has for ever. He has been into the

manger at Bethlehem, but that is not His place. The grace that took Him into such a situation fills our hearts with wonder, but none would say that is His place. Grace took Him down into Nazareth of Galilee; where is the heart that would say that is His place? Grace took Him into the house of Simon the Pharisee, unwanted and unappreciated and yet He went, but Simon's house is not His place. Mighty love took Him into the waters of death, even the death of the cross, that is not His place. Though He has been there indeed at the time of its flood when all the power of death had to be met, Jordan is not His place. His conflict with the spiritual powers of darkness, which Jericho represents, has been entered on and He made a show of them openly, but Jericho is not His place. The betrayal and unfaithfulness of His people have found Him in the modern Philistine's land only to bring out the wretchedness of their gods, that they have neither head nor hands but just the stump.

Some hearts have opened to find a place for Him, such as Martha did, for she received Him, conscious surely of how unworthy her place was for such a Visitor; and so it has been during the dark ages and onward, there have been the Obed-edoms who cherished in their affections that blessed Person so un-

wanted in a Philistine world and so neglected by His unfaithful people.

I am sure we are all deeply conscious that at best we are but providing Him a tent. In grace He accepts the tent. It is but a tent. But when Solomon's work is over our blessed Lord Jesus Christ will have a place that is His, enclosed in the holy affections of His people, their willing ears and hearts attentive to the voice of God that comes from Him, never again to be touched by unholy hands but guarded for ever under the wings of the cherubim. This is part of the great work of Solomon which David had in his heart when he determined to build a house for God. "Arise, Jehovah into thy rest thou and the ark of thy strength." (Psalm 132 : 8.)

And so this great work is proceeding and we are all glad to be part of it, to provide something for His place, to provide some living material which will give Christ His suitable place, where He will be for ever. The staves being drawn out signify that He will never move again, He has reached His place in the holy affections of those who love Him in His assembly.

But, then, dear brethren, what is God doing?

What is there for God coming into view? That is the next feature; for when the ark

was enshrined in its place, then we have brought before us what is for God Himself. What begins as Christ has His place is the service of God; no one can have part in the service of God until Christ has some place, let no one deceive themselves, the true measure we can serve God is the place Christ has in our hearts — when the ark has its place, then there begin the movements of living praise, every part of the being brought into it, the hands and the lips and the breath, one might say, spirit, soul and body, brought into the service of God, and all united as having one common object; for as sure as Christ is in His place, there will be one sound of living praise. The jargon of the religious world is because of Christ being displaced, but unity in praise Godward springs from the supremacy of Christ in the affections of His people.

The priests were suitably clothed in white linen, in holy purity. The singers used trumpets, lutes, harps, cymbals — instruments which bring into activity every part of man — and all the singers and trumpeters making *one* sound. Supposing you brought in Joab what would happen? He will never come in thank God! Supposing you brought in Adonijah, who would usurp the place Christ has, everything would be marred. Supposing that Shimei could come into that scene, who

would make room for the flesh which gratifies itself — but it never can be, dear brethren. They were one “to make one voice to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah.” Everything that would bring in discord is judged in what we have been looking at this morning, and these priests have been attentive to Solomon’s instructions, to his proverbs, to his songs, to his unfolding of the great work of God in the universe in all its living character. So that it says they make one voice. And when that point is reached which God loves — *one voice* — then it says the cloud filled the house and all activity ceased while the blessed holy presence of God filled the scene — God all in all. That is the end. Then cometh the end. The end that God is working to is that His presence should fill the universe, not that of course service Godward ceases in another sense, but this is the blessedness of the presence of God, so wonderful dear brethren, that no heart can fathom it. The few moments we have known in power in our souls stand out in our histories, never to be forgotten, but the great end of this present period of divine workmanship is this — that God has a dwelling place that He takes possession of as His own.

Let us not think that all this must await the future and nothing be known of it now.



The Lord promises to give one heart a touch of it if only that heart will yield Him the conditions He requires, "If any one love me, he will keep my word." (John 14 : 23.) His word is His known mind kept in holy affection, and the Lord promises that "We will come to him and make our abode with him." (John 14 : 23.) If, dear brethren, in our localities where the Lord has set us, where the Lord is working in our souls to form us into living stones to have part in this spiritual house, we will face having conditions suitable to Him, He will give us even now a taste of what is eternal, Christ having His place — the responses being united as one, the cloud of glory coming over our spirits. If one could quicken the longing for this to be realised, how thankful we would be. We would have it far far more if we would face the adjustment of the various moral questions that He brings to our door; if in holy living affections we would devote ourselves to His precious interests; if we would be attentive to His wisdom and His songs and His words. The consequence would be that He would be supreme in our hearts, there would be unity in the service of God and we should know something of the cloud of glory, the greatest moment ever known here when God is present and the cloud of the divine Presence is known

to our spirits. These moments stand out as the foretaste of eternity, and let us not rest, and let us not evade the constant questions the more than Solomon raises, for He is but preparing the way for the great end to be known in our souls, our gatherings, our individual hearts may be, pending the great day of the unveiling when it shall be said, "What hath God wrought"! (Numbers 23 : 23.) At that time it shall be said from a wondering universe, "What hath God wrought"!

May the Lord help us to honestly face what the true Solomon is raising with us each one individually as well as collectively, in view of this wonderful end, that the ark is in its place, that the service of God is united, making one voice, and then the conscious sense of the divine Presence filling all, for His Name's sake.

—W. J. H.