

# MINISTRY FOR THE CHURCH OF GOD.

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*Addresses and Readings on  
Various Scripture Subjects.*

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# EDITORS' NOTES.



**G**ATHERINGS for Reading and Ministry of the Word were held in the Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, in the Autumn.

Large numbers attended and all realised the Lord's presence, and felt the power with the words spoken. A general wish was expressed that the ministry then enjoyed should be available for not only those who were present, but specially for others who were not so privileged, and the present volume is issued in answer to this desire.

Shorthand notes were taken by two Christian friends and after revision are now sent forth with the earnest hope that glory may be brought to the Lord therefrom, and blessing to His saints.

In some cases addresses delivered will not be found here, no notes having been made of some of the earlier meetings.

The remarks of various brothers are embodied in the questions asked and the answers given, in the Notes of Readings. And it is to be observed that some statements are included in order that they may have fuller consideration, the editors not taking responsibility for every opinion expressed. All must be judged by the Word of God.

INGLIS FLEMING  
ROBERT WHYTE

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# CHRIST AND THE BRIDE.

(Revelation xxii. 16-21).

HAMILTON SMITH.

**I**N these verses we have the formal conclusion to the Book of Revelation and the fitting close to the whole Word of God. Three great themes are presented:—First, and foremost, the Lord Jesus is personally brought before our souls; then we have the Church in relation to Christ as the Bride; and finally, we have a gospel message to the wide world. It is of these great subjects I would speak a few words.

I think it is clear, from Scripture, that at the end of every dispensation the ministry the Spirit of God brings before the Lord's people is one that, in a special way, directs the eye and heart to Christ Himself. In this connection I would refer to John the Baptist. It was said of John that he should be great in the eyes of the Lord, and what constituted him great would be the fact that many of the children of Israel would "be turn to the Lord their God." Other prophets had turned the people back to the law they had transgressed, to the Sabbath they had broken, to the sacrifices they had neglected, or to the Temple they had desecrated, but when John the Baptist came the nation had entirely broken down, and the dispensation was about to end. Hence he turns their hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ—the One that was coming. And so John, the Evangelist, having presented the ruin of the Church in responsibility at the beginning of the Revelation, turns our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ—the One that is coming at the end of the Revelation.

In the course of this Book there pass before us many wonderful visions of coming glories—the glory

of the Millennium, the glory of the new heaven and the new earth, and the glories of the holy city—but finally we are left alone with JESUS. What indeed, would all these glories be without Jesus, beloved brethren? And how should we reach these glories or get through this wilderness world without Jesus? So at last these visions of coming glories pass away, and we are left alone with Him. He Himself speaks. As it is written, so blessedly, "I JESUS."

In the course of this Book, angels have spoken, trumpets have sounded, the voice of a great multitude has been heard, but when all are silent, Jesus speaks. He must have the last word. Hence this closing passage begins with the words, "I Jesus," and it must touch our hearts that the Lord presents Himself by His personal name "Jesus." In the Revelation, the Lord passes before us under many titles, presenting His varied dignities, as King of kings and Lord of lords, as the Word of God, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, but at the close we come to the Name that is above every name, the name "JESUS." The name that is individually so precious to all our hearts. And may we not say that of all the Names He wears there is none so precious to His heart? It was the one name He had to die to make good. Had He not died He still would have been the King of kings and Lord of lords, and the other titles would have been His, but if He is to wear the name of Jesus—the Saviour—He must go to the Cross to verify it. It is the name He came into the world with, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS." It is the name He passed out of the world with, for over the Cross it was written, "This is JESUS." It is the name He ascended to glory with, for the angels said to the disciples, "This same JESUS, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner." And it is the name He still wears in glory to-day, for in this last passage He is speaking from the glory and says, "I JESUS."

Moreover, the Lord presents Himself in three different ways, first as "the Root" of David; then as "the Offspring" of David; and lastly, as "the Bright and Morning Star." Not only is He the Offspring of David, but He is the Root of David. Solomon was indeed the offspring of David, but never could it be said of Solomon that he was the root of David. As the Root He is the source of all vitality and life; the One that secures a life of blessing for God's people, whether earthly or heavenly. Job can say, "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again . . . though the root thereof wax old in the earth . . . yet through the scent of water it will bud and bring forth fruit." So Israel as a tree has been cut down, but the root remains, and hence final blessing is secured for Israel and the world.

Moreover, Christ is the Offspring of David. He is God's anointed King, the Heir to the throne. The world's great aim is to get rid of all thought of God, and His King, in order that man's will may be carried out without restraint. Nevertheless, God says, "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." As the Root of David He is the source of all blessing, and as the Offspring of David He inherits all the kingdoms of the world, and secures the blessing.

But further, Christ is seen as the Bright and Morning Star, and as such He is presented in relation to the Church. The Old Testament closes by presenting the Lord Jesus as Sun of Righteousness, but at the close of the New Testament He is presented as the Morning Star. The day is coming when the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in His wings. He will chase away the darkness and end the sorrows of earth, and as such the world will see Him, but they will never see the Bright and Morning Star. When the sun arises the stars go out. It is the privilege of the waiting Church to know Christ as the Bright and Morning Star before He shines forth as the Sun of Righteousness.

Three passages of Scripture present the Lord as the Morning Star. First in the second Epistle of Peter, i: 19, we read, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." Peter wrote his epistle in a dark day. He warns of the approaching apostasy. He sees that men will arise who will deny the Lord that bought them. But, in the presence of these false prophets, Peter reminds us that we have the "sure word of prophecy" to guide us as "a light that shineth in a dark place." But he tells us that we have more, for we have the "Day Star," and there is a great difference between prophecy and the Day Star. Prophecy is like a lantern; it lights up the darkness; but the Day Star does a great deal more, it tells us that the day is coming. The Morning Star is the harbinger of the coming day. Prophecy exposes the condition of things around, and warns us that judgment is coming upon all the evil, but the Day Star tells us that the day of glory is coming. The end of all prophecy is this, to bring all to see that Christ is the only hope, and so link the heart with Him as the coming One. Prophecy tells us the hopelessness of everything here, and fixes our hopes and affections upon Christ, and when this end is reached, prophecy has done its work and the Day Star has arisen in our hearts.

Then there is a second passage that speaks of the Morning Star. In Revelation ii. 28, we hear the Lord speaking of it to the overcomer in Thyatira, "I will give him the Morning Star." All spiritual and moral darkness is found in Thyatira, but the overcomer has the light of the Morning Star. Before this, the Lord said to the overcomer, "To Him will I give power over the nations." But if this were all that He gave would it satisfy the heart? Even if you had power to rule over others would it satisfy? No, indeed! And so

the Lord says, as it were, "I will give him something else, not only power over others, but I will give him an object that will have power over him, I will give him the Morning Star." Nothing will satisfy us in truth but an absorbing object that holds the heart by the power of love, and there is no object in all the great universe of God that is great enough to absorb our affections and hold our hearts but JESUS, the One that is coming—the Morning Star.

Then when we come to the last passage (in Revelation xxii. 16), we have a word added. Not only is the Lord Jesus the Morning Star, but He is presented here as "the *Bright* and Morning Star." And when we see Him as the coming One, our only hope—the One who alone can set the Church right, Israel right, and the world right—then indeed, the Bright and Morning Star has arisen in our hearts.

Passing now to the next great truth in this passage, we see the immediate result of this beautiful presentation of Christ is that the Church comes into view in an exceedingly interesting way, for here the Church is spoken of as the Bride, as we read, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." This is the proper response of the Church under the control of the Spirit to the presentation of Christ as the Bright and Morning Star.

It is important to remember the different ways in which the Church is viewed in Scripture. First it is presented as the Body of Christ, then as the House of God, and lastly as the Bride of Christ.

Much has been said of the Church as the Body of Christ and as the House of God—and rightly so, of course—but it would almost seem that the aspect of the Church viewed as the Bride of Christ has been somewhat overlooked.

It is interesting to recall how the truth of God has been reinstated to us. We all know how that great vessel Martin Luther was used in the early part of the sixteenth century to restore the

great truth of justification by faith: then in the early part of the last century, there was the gracious recovery of the true Scriptural thought of the Church. In that revival of truth the first aspect of the Church that came before God's people was that of the Body of Christ. Later in the century the Church as the House of God came more prominently into view. But if we read the written ministry of these days, I think we shall find comparatively little as to the Church seen as the Bride of Christ, and I would suggest that possibly the Holy Spirit has waited for these last days, just before the Lord's return, to give greater prominence to this aspect of the Church.

When we think of the Church as the Body of Christ, we should probably all admit that the leading thought is, that in it the fulness of the Head is to be set forth. For this thought we should turn to the closing verses of Ephesians i, where we read of Christ the Head, and "the Church which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." In the Church as the Body of Christ there will be the full setting forth of the fulness of the Head.

Then, as the House of God, we know the Church, as such, is said to be the pillar and base of the truth and in it God dwells that through it He might make Himself known in grace to the world.

But when we think of the Church as the Bride of Christ there comes before us the amazing thought that, in the Church, God has purposed to secure *an object that is entirely suited for, and worthy of the love of Christ*. We do well to pause and take in this great thought. We can easily see that in the Lord Jesus there has been disclosed to us an object that is suited to, and worthy of all the love He will ever receive from His people, but the wonder is, that in the Bride God secures a people that will be perfectly suited to, and worthy of, the love of Christ: It is not simply that He is the object for the satisfaction of our hearts, but

that in the Church viewed as the Bride there is found *an object for the satisfaction of His heart.*

As the outcome of the purpose of God, and on the ground of the death of Christ, God can take up lost creatures such as we were, and so mould and shape and form us that at last we can be presented to Christ all glorious, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, perfectly suited for Christ to love, and hence, an object in which His heart will find eternal satisfaction—"He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." This, as I understand it, is the great thought in the Church viewed as the Bride.

As showing the importance of this aspect of the Church, it is deeply interesting to see that it is the first view of the Church that is presented *in picture* in the Old Testament. We know that in the formation of the woman and the presentation of Eve to Adam; as recorded in the second chapter of Genesis, we have a picture of Christ and the Church. We are left in no uncertainty as to this for the apostle Paul quotes Genesis ii. 24, in Ephesians v. 31, and immediately adds, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

And mark, brethren, this picture of the Church as the Bride of Christ comes into view before the fall brought sin and death into the world: That is to say, the instant creation was completed God says, as it were, "I will tell you the great secret of My heart, I will tell you why I have brought this creation into being, I am going to secure out of it *an object to satisfy the heart of Christ.*" It gives us a sense of the importance of the Church, viewed as the Bride of Christ, in the mind of God when we see that Genesis opens with the Bride and Revelation closes with the Bride. In Genesis we have the Bride in picture and in Revelation the Bride in fact. With this thought God brought the creation into being, and throughout the long ages God has never given up His thought;

and here at last, in spite of all ruin and failure on the part of man, we see the Bride at the close of the dispensation coming into view, and according to the mind of God, for she is seen controlled by the Holy Spirit on earth, with her affections set upon Christ in heaven: presented at the end of her wilderness journey alone with the Holy Spirit looking up to Christ in the glory and saying, "Come."

Thus this closing passage of the Word of God first presents Christ and His glories, and then the Church as the Bride in right relation to Christ. And when the Bride can say "Come" to Christ she is ready to turn to the world around and say, "Come." And first she turns to those that hear. "Let him that heareth say, "Come." The fact that they hear is a proof that they are believers, but that they are invited to say "Come" would show that they are not in the conscious joy of bridal relations to Christ. Then the witness is borne to those who are "athirst," Needy souls who would fain partake of the blessing, but doubt the grace of Christ. To such the Bride can say, "You are welcome, Come." Finally, there is the world-wide gospel appeal, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The Lord Jesus "gave Himself a ransom for all," and hence He has the right to appeal to *all*. The invitation is to "whosoever will," Should it not touch our hearts that the last message that comes from the lips of the Lord Jesus is a message of grace from Christ in glory to a needy world.

Then we have two solemn verses—solemn for all of us, but so intensely solemn, in view of the attacks of the Modernists upon the Word of God. We write numerous books and pamphlets seeking to expose in detail this terrible evil, but God will not stoop to argue with such: He dismisses them with two verses. They may deny every vital truth of Christianity, but in so

doing they "take away from the words of the Book," and this alone seals their doom.

Then, in response to the Spirit and the Bride saying "Come," "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." And if, beloved brethren, our hearts are turned to Christ, if we think of Him as He presents Himself to us in His personal name of JESUS, if we think of Him as the Root and Offspring of David, if we know Him as the Bright and Morning Star—the Harbinger of the day of glory—then surely our hearts will respond, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Finally, we have the closing touching words, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints." And we need these words, for though the Lord is coming quickly, yet He may tarry for an hour, a week, a month, a year, even a few years; but be it so, we shall have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with us until the end. And this grace is "for all the saints," for thus it should read. It is not simply with "you all," which might confine the grace to some particular company; it is for every saint on earth. And if the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us, we shall find that whatever difficulties or trials we may have to face, His grace will be sufficient. Hence, when we read, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints," we can surely add from our hearts, "Amen."



## “CHRIST JESUS OUR HOPE.”

H. J. VINE.

**W**HEN you pray, dear brethren, about a meeting, and in the presence of God, are led to read and consider the very two Scriptures that have already been read in your hearing, and unknown to yourself, the other servant labouring with you has also been led to the same Scriptures, would you then allow yourself to be turned away to some other Word to speak from, or would you conclude that the Spirit of God desires to have these themes specially brought before us to-night? I feel it is to be the latter, so I will read from the same chapters and present them perhaps from another aspect.

First of all, 2 Peter i. 16-21; Revelation xxii. 7, 12, 20 to end. When speaking of a theme like this, beloved brethren, conscious as we are of the near return of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is necessary for us to have the Scriptures themselves as the basis of all we say concerning our blessed Lord and His coming again, and not that which might rise in our own imagination. We find Peter is conscious of what men would say in the latter days,—that many of these things are fables—that many of these things are invented by pious-minded men—but the apostle here assures us that they had not followed “cunningly devised fables.” They had given to them a vision of the kingdom glory, as well as the glory of Christ’s relationship with the Father. This confirmed to them the prophetic Scriptures. But he desired us to understand there is nothing fabulous about it at all. Moreover, beloved brethren, in these last days how good it is for us to be brought back to the inspired Volume, and discern what we can speak of so surely as

that which the Spirit saith. Having the Spirit of God dwelling in us we can reverently approach the writings of the Spirit, and having the capability given by the Spirit to understand these writings, we shall not be shaken by the attacks of men against them. I thought as the closing words of the Book were brought before us to-night, what an encouragement it is to all true believers to see the golden threads of divine truth appearing all through, from Genesis to Revelation. We have the thoughts of God in connection with Christ and the Church set forth in that marvellous type of Adam going into the deep sleep and the rib taken from his side. Then we behold the woman who is to share with him in his supremacy over all. Thus we see in Adam and Eve a type of Christ and the Assembly! the "great mystery" (Ephesians v. 32)! bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh! And then, as we pass through the marvellous Volume and come to the close of Revelation, we see Christ and the Church in glory. There she is—the Bride, the Lamb's wife; and she is the outcome of His own death, of His going into the deep sleep, but now sharing in His supremacy.

But if you look again at the Genesis of the Book of Inspiration, and behold Isaac with his father, a type of Christ risen, who had been received back from the altar, in figure from death, and now there he is with his father! The nameless servant goes to the distant land, between the two rivers (after having taken counsel with the father of Isaac, swearing with his hand under his thigh) faithfully carrying out his mission, bring back one who was to share in the position, wealth, and love of Isaac. Isaac did nothing save receive her as the result of the father's counsel and as the result of the work of the nameless servant, pre-figuring the Holy Spirit. And, as we travel on in the Book, we find at the close the Bride of Christ, not only as the outcome of His death, but also of eternal counsel and of the Spirit's mission on earth.

Now let us observe another fact in Genesis. Look at Jacob, the servant. For the one who was to share with him, he serves; but the seven years of toil were only as a few days to him for the great love he bore to her: and, oh! brethren, let us be careful when we speak of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, or His death, and not speak of it simply as tasting *the article* of death. He had to toil, He had to suffer, and oh! what He endured tongue cannot tell. He even died to make us His own. He served that He might have us with Him, but He went through it with a heart full of love for us, and all His toil, we may reverently say, was undertaken willingly for the great love He had to us, and for the joy which was set before Him. And so we see the Church sharing with Him in the glory as shown in Revelation xxi., where John is taken up to a great and high mountain to behold the heavenly City, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

But, beloved brethren, there are other aspects. Let us go a little further back. Let us begin where we did this afternoon. God causes the light to shine out of the darkness, when the Spirit had moved upon the face of the deep,—God said; "Let there be light," and light was. Then when you follow the light right through to the end of the Bible in Revelation, again you find the glorious day reached when the light will be that of the glory of God, and the Church, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, will be fully capable then of radiating that light to the nations on the earth, so that all the nations will walk by that light which streams from the Church in glory. It should not read quite "the nations of them which are saved," but simply, "the nations shall walk by its light," because it will be a question of the millennial blessing, and the nations set up in proper governmental order. God will cause the light for guidance and government, to shine from the glorified Church in heaven. We, brethren, have a wonderful day before us! Would to God, while rejoic-

ing in the marvellous grace that has taken us up to be the associates of the Lord in His glory, that meanwhile, it might take such a hold on us that we might go through this little time of schooling here as diligent scholars, learning our lessons well, knowing that the trial of our faith will be found in that day to praise and honour and glory. Oh, that we might keep so near the Lord, that we might not lose the lessons we should learn in our present pathway in view of the glory to come.

Again let us refer to Genesis. God made Paradise, where Adam and Eve were placed, but soon to that Paradise sin and death came, and the whole thing was spoiled; on the other hand, the thoughts of God are not going to fall to the ground. Travel again to the close of the Book. There is the Church in glory, and there the Tree of Life is seen in the midst of the Paradise of God. No sceptical scholar need come and tell me that the Book is not inspired. We find out by the Spirit what God has before His mind and as we read through the Bible we find that everything eventually comes out in magnificence and glory in "*Christ and the Church.*"

A river flowed out in four main streams from the Paradise in Eden, but sin spoiled it. Those flowing waters were soon tainted through man's corruption and fall. But come once more to the last chapter of God's Book and there is "*Christ and the Church.*" The City, the Paradise and the Tree of Life are there, and the water of life is seen flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb, which is now set in the heavenly Jerusalem, there firmly and stably fixed for ever, and forth flows the river of the Water of Life, blessed be God, as pure and bright as crystal. Not one thought of God will ever fail. All will come out in abiding glory and splendour, and, praise God for His grace, we are going to be there! As the outcome of *His* death; Christ shall have His Body and His Bride with Him

in glory. As the outcome of the Father's *counsel*, the Son's completed *service*, and the Holy Spirit's *coming*, Christ shall have us there with Him. It is a grand thing to look onward in faith!

Nothing cheers my heart so much as the precious word which comes after. In that day of glory His servants shall still serve Jesus. There will be no weariness in it and we shall not be groaning in bodies of humiliation then. We shall be like Him, and to serve Him will be the joy of our hearts. His servants will still serve Him, but it is this which is so cheering. "We shall see *His face*." What a sight!—To see the face of Jesus! That Name is sweeter to us to-night, I am sure, after what we have heard than ever it was! "I, Jesus," Jesus! Did it not bring the knowledge of forgiveness of sins to us at the beginning? Why was He called Jesus, Jehovah—Saviour? Because He should save His people from their sins; and, thank God, before He saves His own people, Jehovah's people, before He saves Israel, He has saved us! "It is a faithful saying," says Paul to Timothy, and don't let us lose sight of it,— "and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Through that Name, blessed be God, is preached the forgiveness of sins; and we love that word where He does *not* say, "your sins are forgiven you because you believe, or because you trusted in the Lord,"—but, "Your sins are forgiven you *for His Name's sake*." For the Name's sake of Jesus: Just as if God said, "I could not but forgive your sins for the Name's sake of Him who has glorified Me.

Some of us tried all sorts of things to get salvation—religion, reformation, good works, etc.—but one day we discovered the fact that God's Word is true when it says, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). I heard of a man teaching that salvation is in the

Church. There may be preservation in some measure for those already saved, but salvation is in none other than Jesus, as this Scripture tells us. Paul said, "Salvation is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy ii. 10).

How sweet is the name of *Jesus*! Right at the close we hear Him say to our hearts—to the heart of the Assembly—"I Jesus," recalling us to Himself and assuring us of His great, present, personal care of us. That name is our standard, too, for service. It is good to meet servants who go forth for the Name, taking nothing of the Gentiles (3 John 7). There are some away in South America, in Africa, and in other lands; some in Spain, in Portugal, and other countries; aye, and some in Britain, going forth "for the Name." Not lowering the standard, not begging from the unconverted! It is their honour, and joy too, to honour "*the Name*." They reverence and love it: They think too much of it to use it for begging from unconverted men! If one is here unconverted, my advice is, get saved to-night! Trust Jesus now! Then you can put your hand as deep in your pocket as you wish, and you will have the honour of "*giving to the Lord*"—of giving to Him through whose Name forgiveness and salvation are received! The Name to be owned by all eventually.

The knees of all the intelligencies in heaven and on earth shall yet bow at the Name of Jesus, and of the intelligencies in the infernal regions too—in the realms of the lost—yea, of all the intelligencies in the universe. At the mention of the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow! And then, for "the glory of God the Father," every tongue shall confess the universal lordship of JESUS! Through grace we have already confessed Jesus as Lord.

As we have seen, it is near the close of God's Book we read, "I *Jesus*, have sent Mine angel to testify unto you those things,"—not in the world quite—but, "in the assemblies"—that there might be maintained in

the assemblies the truth concerning Himself—His official and personal glories, for He says I *Jesus* “am the Root”—before David,—*David's Offspring*—after David,—the one involving His deity, the other His humanity: Then we have the Morning Star, as we have so helpfully heard, in connection with the Assembly. If you studied the present matters of world government you might lose heart as well as communion with God. You would say, Things are going all wrong! But, as we see *Jesus*, as we know Him, we have the key to the whole situation, because as Son of David and Son of Man He will take up all government questions as well as those relating to the Assembly. The Son of God, the Bright and Morning Star, is the Assembly's hope, and He will settle all our difficulties. But, meanwhile, let us grow in the knowledge of the One who can do it! If I were looking for His assembly which He is building to-day, I would look for those who have the revelation from the Father of Himself—those who confess *Jesus* as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, for He, as the Son of Man, builds His assembly on this, the Father's revelation to the soul and this confession of Himself. Where *Jesus* is thus known and owned, His Assembly is. It is being built by Himself upon the revealed truth concerning Himself, as Peter confessed Him in Matthew xvi. 16. It was Peter, too, who wrote, “We have not followed cunningly devised fables: we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord *Jesus Christ*” (2 Peter i. 16). He and others were “eyewitnesses.” They saw in the Holy Mount the shining forth of His glory—*of His Majesty!* They saw Him in His humiliation—His lowly life; the gentle and meek One, walking here, but says Peter, too, “We beheld His majesty!” It shone above the brightness of the sun. His garments were white and glistening. On Monday evening, brethren, we were praying that He would show Himself to us in His glory so that we might be strengthened and fitted to meet rightly what obtains

here in this world at the present time. In regard to kingdom and government His majesty was shown—they beheld His glory. It was a divinely given foresight of “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” the Root and Offspring of David. Peter, however, speaks of Him here also (as nowhere else, except in the confession of Matthew xvi.) as *God’s Son*. He says, we heard such a voice when He received honour and glory from God, the Father, and the voice came from heaven on the Holy Mount, it was uttered by the excellent glory and said, “This is *My beloved Son*, in whom I have found My delight!” On the one hand we have His kingdom glory, and on the other His personal glory with God the Father; the second being indicated in the voice from “the excellent glory.” You remember the bright cloud came upon them and the voice came from the bright cloud. If He be David’s Son in connection with kingdom glory, He is also God’s Son; and He who will take the government upon His shoulders is revealed to us in His own personal glory as Son of God. By the excellent glory He is there singled out, so Peter can say, “The prophetic Word”—the Old Testament, was “made surer”—for so the Scripture should read. It is not that it was not always sure, but having seen Christ’s glory shining in the miraculous way we have spoken of, and having heard God the Father’s voice distinguishing Him so wonderfully, the Old Testament which points on to Him, was made surer to them by this manifestation of His glories—both kingdom and personal. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, when He rose from the dead, made the hearts of those who heard Him burn within them when, out of all the Scriptures, He expounded unto them the things concerning Himself. And so here, “the prophetic Word” is “made surer” by the sight of His glory. It might be said, we have seen the King; we have seen His glory; His majesty; and we have heard Him distinguished personally as the Son of God by the excellent glory. Now, therefore,

you do well to give good heed to the "prophetic Word," because as we heard already, it is as a lamp that shines where obscurity is. Up to a certain point, Take heed! that is, until the One who is the great theme of that Word arises before you, and oh! how glorious when that One fills our hearts—when His beauty shines before us! And though we are in the midst of the darkness—the great apostasy which is reaching its culmination, but which we should not dwell on—we are led to the glory side, to the positive side of the truth by the Spirit—to the good. In passing, just a word as to this. We are told to be wise concerning what is good. We greatly need, in these days when men think they are clever if they know about something evil, to heed Paul's word, "Be simple concerning that which is evil, and wise concerning that which is good." Those who help are those who show us the good, and all the good of our God is in Christ for us, and we are in Him.

We have spoken of the Bride, the Light, the Paradise, the Tree of Life, and the River of the Water of Life. We have seen how all is to be established in abiding glory. Genesis is fruitful in Revelation! Foreshadowed in the beginning, the substance is at the end. Now when we come to Exodus, God sets up a Tabernacle on the ground of redemption from Egypt, and He is in the midst. But it failed at Shiloh through man's sin. Nevertheless, when we come to Revelation xxi., we behold on the very verge of Eternity the *Tabernacle of God* with men! His thoughts will not fail! Not one design of His shall fall to the ground! They will be carried out and established "in Christ and the Assembly" when the full glory of eternal redemption is displayed.

Just one more step, to encourage us as to the perfections of the inspired Volume and as to the One who designed all. Over Jordan, in the land, the city was set up,—Jerusalem, the place of Jehovah's Name

was built! But there was no river. Failure and breakdown overtook this earthly Jerusalem! But in Revelation xxi., the holy city, new Jerusalem, shines forth as a Bride adorned for her husband, and the river of the Water of Life flows out in eternal blessing! God Himself will carry out all that He has counselled, therefore, Christ and the Assembly are seen in everlasting blessedness and glory, and the river of God's pleasure flows on for evermore.

God grant, then, we may be cheered and encouraged, and that we may grow in the knowledge of the Bridegroom, our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we may understand Him better! He is David's Son, but also David's Lord. He is Israel's hope, the world's hope and the hope of the Assembly,—“CHRIST JESUS, OUR HOPE!”



## WATERS TO SWIM IN.

J. C. TRENCH.

**I**N turning to Ezekiel, chapter xlvii., verses 1 to 12, it is to the younger people here that I desire specially to address myself.

Just before this chapter we have elaborate descriptions, measurements, and ordinances of the Temple, to be erected in view of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to reign over His earthly people Israel and the setting up of His Kingdom. And we have in the vision seen by the prophet a description of the waters which will flow out from beneath the House of God, towards the east, in increasing volume until they reach the Dead Sea, resulting in the "healing" of that Sea. These living waters flowing produce life and blessing where they go and also fruit-bearing trees of all varieties of luxuriant growth, where previously all had been barrenness and death.

The waters, it will be noticed, find their spring in God Himself, and flow from under His dwelling place by the south side of the *altar*—which indicates that the love of God could only reach this world by way of the Cross (which the altar typifies) where our blessed Lord by His atoning death made a righteous channel for the love of God to flow down.

Jerusalem, where shall stand the Temple, is separated from the Dead Sea by about twelve miles in a direct line east which there reaches the northern bounds of that sea. The man with the measuring line measured 1,000 cubits, and the waters at that point were *ankle* deep: then he measured another 1,000, and the waters were up to the *knees*: then again 1,000 more, and the waters were up to the *loins*, and finally,

when he had measured the fourth thousand cubits, they were so deep he could not pass over them, "the waters were risen, *waters to swim in*, a river that could not be passed over."

Then the man that had conducted the prophet so far, caused him to return to the brink of the river. "Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country and go . . . into the sea (*i.e.* the Dead Sea) which being brought forth into the Sea the waters shall be healed."

And he is told that it should come to pass . . . that wherever the waters should come there should be life, and a very great multitude of fish *because these waters* (from under God's House) should come there, "for they shall be healed, and everything shall live whither the river cometh . . . their fish shall be according to their kinds as the fish of the Great Sea exceeding many."

The Great Sea is the Mediterranean, and we know from Joel iii. 18 and Zech. xiv. 8, that there will be a great valley created between the Mediterranean and Jerusalem, and thence to the Dead Sea, which accounts for "Great Sea" fish being in that wonderful day, found in the Dead Sea.

Now read the 12th verse, and notice that along the banks of this glorious river, "all trees for food shall grow, whose leaves never fade, nor the fruit be consumed" (endless supply), "and they shall bring forth new fruit according to the months." Why? "*because their waters issued out of the Sanctuary,*" Note well this statement.

So far for the passage we are considering. But it is the application to ourselves spiritually that is important, and I would now refer you to the Gospel of

John for the antitype to-day. For whilst our chapter speaks of *physical and material* changes for the earth, you can see from chapter xxii. of the Revelation, verses 1-7, that very much the same figures are therein used to describe the *spiritual* blessings and glories in the new Jerusalem—the Lamb's Wife—the Church, in the millennial day.

Let us now trace the water in John's Gospel. We shall find its spring in chapter iii., where our Lord tells Nicodemus that there must be new birth to see or enter into the kingdom of God. He must be born again, born of water and of the Spirit.

Now it would be well that all of us should understand clearly as to new birth. This is the necessary start, and it is very blessed not to have a doubt as to one's having really been born of the water and the Holy Ghost. But let us not be satisfied with just being born, for it is only the start. Shall I say just "ankle" deep? The ankles suggest walking, and we cannot begin the Christian walk until born again. Many seem to be satisfied with just being converted, and do not make much further progress. Now again let me press that this is merely *the start*, though a very blessed one.

Turn now to chapter iv., the next chapter, where we read of the woman at the well of Sychar. She was in character the exact opposite to the man in chapter iii. The Lord had to administer some pretty hard blows in dealing with the proud Pharisee, to show him that however fair religious "flesh" might appear, no amount of sanctimoniousness could make "the flesh" anything but "flesh," and "they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

The Lord uses very different treatment with this poor, degraded Samaritan. He disarmed her at once by putting Himself, as it were, under an obligation to her by asking her for a drink of water, which, by the

way, we do not know that He received. She was amazed that a Jew would have any "dealings" with such as she, and the Lord soon showed her that He knew something worse about her than her Samaritan origin. But He attracts her by saying, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water." "From whence," saith she, "hast Thou that living water? The well is deep, and Thou hast nothing to draw with." And the Lord replied, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give Him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into eternal life."

Now surely this phase of the water is more advanced than what we have been considering in chapter iii. Here it is, no doubt, eternal life in the power of the Spirit of God, because in chapter vii: 20, where "living water" is again spoken of, we read "this spake He concerning the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given because that Jesus was not *yet glorified.*"

Chapter iv. does not speak of the Holy Ghost's indwelling, but of life received in His power, a fountain of living water springing up into its source, eternal life.

The Samaritan worship (always false) was not only now to be set aside, but even proud Jerusalem, with its divinely authenticated services was to cease, for God was seeking worshippers in spirit and in truth, and as the "ankle" deep water suggests a move towards God, this further development of it, the enjoyed spring of divine love in our hearts, suggests waters up to the "knees" and we prostrate ourselves before God in adoring worship. Let us not be satisfied with anything short of a heart flowing over in praise to our adorable God and Father.

Then she leaves her waterpot, forgets all about what she came to the well for, and goes off to the men in the city to say, "Come, see a man that told me all that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" and the river of mercy flowed freely for some days in Sychar and many believed.

Now let us look briefly at the viith. chapter. Here we find that the Lord would not go up to Jerusalem to take part in the Feast of Tabernacles, which was the last feast in the year, and the only joyful one. He *always* went to the Passover Feast, which was to gain its fulfilment in His death, but the Feast of Tabernacles awaits what it was typical of, viz: the re-assembling of Israel when nationally converted and gathered back into their own land, owning the Lord Jesus, whom they murdered, to be their Messiah and King. The Lord could not take part in this Feast, for He, who alone could give it reality, was rejected by the Jews.

But at the last day, the great day of the Feast, He went up and cried, "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink: He that believeth on Me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Thus He exposed the shallow hypocrisy of the whole scene, and invited the many unsatisfied formalists to come unto Him for living water and then out of their very inmost souls would flow rivers of living water. That is surely the spring of all true testimony of Christ Himself to the world.

In chapter iv. the water flows up to God in worship, and here in chapter vii. it flows out in ministry to man. How can we have anything to impart unless we continue to draw water from the wells of salvation. Here, then, we have water up to the *loins*, and if we are to serve God in spreading the fame of our blessed Lord and seek to lead others to Him, we need to gird up our loins as it were for service.

And now, finally, let us turn to chapter xiii., which gives us the wonderful climax. In this scene,

we are told that the Lord was aware "that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, and "having loved His own which were in the world He loved them unto the end." Then, "during supper, Jesus, knowing that the Father "had given all things into His hands and that He "was come from God and went to God, He riseth "from supper and laid aside His garments and "took a towel and girded Himself. After that "He poureth water into a bason and began to "wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with "the towel wherewith He was girded."

What He was about to do was symbolic of the service He would enter upon when He had left the world and gone to the Father. What He did they could not know at the time, but they would know hereafter.

"If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me," He says to Peter (verse 8), and again, "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (verse 10).

The bathing took place in chapter iii., so to speak, then they were washed all over, never needing repetition, but what the Lord was teaching them in chapter xiii. was, that to enter into the heavenly joys revealed in chapters xiv. to xvii., and to have communion with the Father and the Son would be impossible unless there was separation from all defilement. This the Lord provides for by His ministry at God's right hand, in the first place by His priestly services to prevent our going wrong by His sympathy and His intercession, which the Epistle to the Hebrews unfolds; but if, in despite of all He does as preventive, we sin, then the other ministry comes into action, and He has to apply the water of the Word to our consciences to bring about conviction and restoration.

So that the water in John xiii. is the cleansing process from defilement in the believer's ways and walk to fit him to enter into the heavenly blessings and

joys discovered by the relationship we are brought into as children of our God and Father, whom the Lord Himself reveals to us, together with all the blessed things associated with Christ in the new place He has entered into, and that we may enjoy by faith, and by the ungrieved Spirit's power.

“Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

Here we may assure ourselves are waters that cannot be passed over—waters to swim in—and the result will be what we have in the xvth. chapter, namely, the fruit-bearing displayed in connection with the river of living water flowing down from its heavenly source by way of the Cross to us, and leading us in varying measures to be found bearing fruit for the Lord, for “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples.”

Then may we all be encouraged to press on, “not as though we had already attained, either were already perfect, but to follow after, if that we may lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of us,” and so continue until He comes.



## THE PATH OF GOD'S PLEASURE.

(Psalm xvi):

INGLIS FLEMING:

**T**HIS is "Michtam of David," one of the "golden psalms" of David—one of those "fine gold" psalms which refer to our Lord Jesus Christ.

The first verse, "In Thee do I put my trust," is embodied in Hebrews ii, "I will put my trust in Him," and the closing verses were quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, as speaking of Christ's death and resurrection.

Thus we know that the Psalm has direct reference to our blessed and adorable Lord.

I have turned to it to engage your thoughts for a little with something of the grace of Him whose glories we have been considering—with something of that moral glory that shone out in Him in all His blessed goings in that path in which Jehovah delighted.

What was it to God that in such an arid, desert scene as this, there should be one track across it where He was perfectly honoured. Where, in all His way, the Son glorified His Father for whose glory He had come, and thus was found the perfectly dependent man in the world. "From the womb of the Virgin to the throne of God," as some one has said, we find Him brought before us for our soul's delight, that in some way we may have the Father's thought of Him in whom He found all His good pleasure.

He is "over all, God blessed for ever," but presented before us in this precious portion of the Word of God, in His Manhood here for the worship of our hearts.

If we look at the verses now in more detail we may see His moral excellencies shine forth in surpassing beauty.

The first verse presents Him as *the Trustful Man*, perfect in His confidence in and dependent upon Jehovah.

In the second verse He is viewed as *the Lowly Man*. Read verses 2 and 3 thus:—"As to Jehovah, thou hast said, Thou art my Lord, my goodness extendeth not to thee. As to the saints that are in the earth, they are the excellent in whom is all my delight." We see Him here as the lowly One, speaking out of that place which he had taken saying, "Thou art My Lord, My goodness extendeth not to Thee."

As to the saints we find Him as *the Gracious Man*. He would link Himself with these saints, these godly ones, a little remnant in Israel as they took their first right step in owning their ruin and need at the waters of baptism. Our Lord, who was the sinless, peerlessly perfect One, would identify Himself with them. But then, at once we find Him singled out by Heaven. The Father's voice is heard saying, "Thou art My beloved Son in whom is all My delight." And we can say of that same all-glorious Person, "He is our beloved Saviour, and in Him is all our joy."

We turn from ourselves and all that we have discovered ourselves to be and we find our rest, our delight in Him in whom the Father delights. Shall we not take comfort from this, beloved friends, that we who believe are like them, numbered among "the excellent of the earth" in His sight, and among His loved ones, "His own which are in the world" to-day.

Not any limited few, not any section of that company in any limited fellowship, but all "His own" are "the excellent of the earth" in His judgment. And do not our hearts go out to them, to all "His own," with that love of which we were hearing in Ephesians this morning—to embracing "all saints" in our prayers?

In the fourth verse we see Him as in His temptation *the Separate Man*. He gave sin and evil a wide

berth indeed. In that dread temptation where Satan would at length have Him bow and worship him; "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, Him only shalt thou serve, get thee behind Me, Satan," is His stern reply. He would have nothing to do with that which is false.

And you and I are called to tread a separate path, and do not let us shrink from it, beloved. We are all in danger; but Christ can keep us, and seeking His company in prayer and meditation and loving His Word we shall be maintained in true separation *to Himself*. And it is this He values. Someone has said that mere outward, physical separation from the world is nothing worth, and a mere legal separation because of what this one or that one will say, is nothing worth, but separation *to Christ*—your heart taken up with Him, His Father and our Father delighted in, that separation is what God looks for and that which He values in His own. We see it perfectly in our Lord Jesus Christ. He found all His heart's joy in His Father.

He is *the Satisfied Man* in verses 5 and 6. "Jehovah is the portion of Mine inheritance and of My cup; Thou maintainest My lot." (How different from the "portion" in Psalm xvii. 14). He found His meat in doing the Father's will; He was here for the Father's pleasure and for the Father's glory. He could say, "I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me." "Jehovah is the portion of Mine inheritance." That is future. "And of My cup." That is present. He knew whether in the future or in the present what it was to have Jehovah as His only, His all-sufficient portion.

And you and I are privileged, beloved friends, to follow in His steps (alas! how far off and how feebly we do so). We are called "to live unto God." The heart will have an object and "self," now being

judged, God Himself, manifested in His grace; revealed in His Son, becomes the object, the all-satisfying Object for our hearts.

And then we find Him saying, "The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage." As to His outward circumstances, we know that our Lord Jesus was "the Man of sorrows," the grief-acquainted One, but, inwardly, He had joy in the accomplishment of His Father's good pleasure. There were the pleasant places in that lonely pathway. Was not that a pleasant place to Him at Sychar's well, where He might pour heaven's fulness into an impoverished heart, where He might unfold to that Samaritan the story of the Father seeking worshippers, and so fill her heart that, leaving her water-pot, she will hasten to bear witness of Him. It was a pleasant place indeed. And such we find again and again as our souls peruse with delight the Gospel story in the four evangelists. Joy was His, meat was His, in doing the Father's will, whatever that will might be, and so shall it be with you and me, beloved, as we, through grace, follow Him in His blessed pathway.

Then in the seventh verse we find Him *the Worshipping Man*, saying, "I will bless Jehovah who hath given Me counsel." You get that note of worship in the Gospels. We hear His telling forth of praise as in Matthew xi. "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." He pours out His soul's delight before the Father, and this in circumstances that were so contrary, circumstances where all seemed opposed to Him, and when His ministry seemed to be a failure. It is "at that time" the Lord Jesus turns with thanksgiving to the Father.

Then, as *the Devoted Man* in absolute devotedness in verse 8. "I have set Jehovah always before Me." Unswerving, unflinching, in faithfulness, we have His course depicted before us in the pages of the evangelists. How unlike to what any of us can say.

As *the Rejoicing, Hopeful Man* we find Him in verse 9. "Therefore My heart is glad, My glory rejoiceth, My flesh also shall rest in hope." If in some way thus we have traced the Lord, as seen in this Psalm, from the earliest moment of His earthly journeyings, if His baptism, His temptation, His blessed service, His devotedness in life, have been before us hitherto, we come now to the Cross, to dark Calvary, and to that sepulchre in Joseph's garden, and we hear Him say in His perfection, "My heart is glad, My flesh also shall rest in hope, for Thou wilt not... suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." "Thou wilt show Me the path of life"—a path that led down into death, but out into the glory, into that sphere where is fulness of joy at His Father's right hand and the pleasures for evermore. "We know Him now as *the Glorified Man* at the right hand of God. "We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour." So we have followed Him in that wonderful pathway, and admire and adore in His presence.

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Some may say now, "That is a beautiful life in truth, but it is not for me to follow." So I want to add a few words concerning this before I close.

As you trace the path of the Lord Jesus in the Scriptures, and you see His moral beauties and excellencies shining out in life and in death, dear believer, you are entitled to say, "That is my life."

Christ who is our righteousness is also our life, as we read, "When Christ who is our life shall appear."

All that you have had part in in Adam as fallen, all that volume of your history, so dark, so sin-marked,

so spoiled, has been closed in the death of the Lord Jesus, and you live now before God "in Christ," and Christ lives in you for manifestation here. It is that which we find in Galatians ii. 20, where the apostle Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ." "Christ liveth in me." All that I was as Saul of Tarsus has been brought to its close in judgment at the Cross; I have been crucified with Christ. "Nevertheless, I live"—I am a living man—"but no longer I—Saul of Tarsus—but Christ liveth in me." It is the apostle expressing personally for himself that which was good in his own soul, that which is our proper Christian position. "Our old man has been crucified with Christ." The only life we are to know, and the only life God recognizes is Christ as our life, and God works in every one that something of Christ may be expressed in us day by day; that there may be something of the grace that shone out in Him shining out in each one of us in the power of the Holy Spirit. And so you find as to service the apostle saying, in Romans xv. 18, "I will not speak of that which Christ hath not wrought through me." *All that which he valued was that which Christ wrought through him.* Some of you younger men may say, "What can I do for Christ?" No! Put it like this, *What can Christ do through me?*

I would like to ask you in view of this, are you the Christian you might be? (The rifle kicks as I fire it!) Am I? Am I the Christian I might be? Am I a Christian in the divine thought for one? I know I am a believer; I am justified from all things, I am saved by the grace of God, but am I the Christian I should be? Am I the Christian God would have me be? Am I the Christian I might be by the power of the Spirit of God, treading in Christ's steps? And as we own that we are not, shall we not turn to Him and say, "Lord, make me just what Thou wouldst have me to be"?

A young man electrified a prayer meeting as he prayed, "Lord, make a good job of me." Will you pray that prayer? You may not in those words, but will you pray it from your heart this afternoon, "Lord; work Thine own work in me and through me for Thy pleasure and have me here for Thy will alone?"

Do you say, "I have tried to do it and failed?"

Yes! we may say this all of us. *But Christ can make you a success.*

In Florence there is a wonderful statue by Michael Angelo. It is of the stripling David taking the sling and the stones. That statue is formed of a block of marble upon which another sculptor had done some work, but who had set it aside as valueless. Michael Angelo saw that stone and he took it in hand and formed a most beautiful sculpture. So Christ can take you in hand this afternoon and by His grace He may take me also. Some of us have only a few more steps in the desert to tread, if our Lord tarry, while some of you young men, if the Lord will, have life before you. What shall that life be? Shall it be a lost life, just plunged in mere commerce and pleasure? Is that worth while? Put yourself in Christ's hand that He may form you for His pleasure, so that out of your life there may be something of His grace shining, something of His activities, through you in blessing to others; redounding to the glory of God. So, in some measure, shall we follow Christ's steps in the path of God's pleasure. God make it so with all of us, for His Name's sake.

## THE CLAIMS OF GOD.

JAMES BOYD.

I DESIRE to say a few words on the subject of the claims of God, the claims that God has over every intelligent being on earth, claims that are wickedly denied by the men of this rebellious world: People seem to think that they are left here in this world just to please themselves, and that they are not answerable to the great Governor of the universe. Their bodies, their tongues, and all their members are their own, and thus the claims of their Creator are altogether denied. Now I turn for light regarding this to the Holy Scriptures, and I read from verse 15 to verse 22 of chapter xxii. of the Gospel of Matthew.

I do not intend to speak of all that we have here, but only to refer to the hypocritical question of the Pharisees and to the answer of our Lord. I notice in Scripture that our Lord does not usually answer questions, but rather does He answer the man who asks them. He knew what men were. He knew in what hearts and minds the questions originated, and it was to the state of the questioner that His answer appealed, and not to the question merely. So it was in this instance. These men—He calls them hypocrites—were now in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, from whose eyes there was no hiding. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews iv. 13): He knows our hearts better than we know them, and He knows what prompts questions better than the questioner himself does.

He asks to be shown the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. He says: "Whose is this image and superscription?" They say it is Cæsar's. Why then ask if he should have it? Every man has a certain right to his own. The answer to their question was stamped upon the coin. Why should not Cæsar have his own? "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's."

But that is not all. He lets them know they are to render to God the things that are God's. If the coin bore the image of Cæsar, and therefore, was his, on whom was the image of God stamped? It was stamped at the beginning upon man, and in spite of the fall it has not been altogether effaced. The image and superscription of God are still discernable. Man was made in the image and likeness of God. No, I do not mean that skeleton of yours, with its load of human flesh, sheltering something that death cannot touch. Infidels tell us that Scripture represents man as in God's image, and that man is framed much after their ancestors that lived among the trees of the wood. I do not mind in the least whether a man's skeleton is, or is not, like that of a gorilla, a chimpanzee, or a dog-faced baboon; God has made him in His own image and likeness, and this is moral, not physical. Man has been set as centre and head over a system that has been subjected to him, and upon which are his fear and his dread. Not only this, but he has been endowed with an affectionate regard for all that have been placed under his dominion. In this way, and not as to his physical frame, is man the image of God.

Man is God's, for he bears His image. And the Lord says: "Render unto God the things that are God's." Had these men rendered unto God the things that were God's they would not have had the image of Cæsar on their money. Everyone here belongs to God. Perhaps you say you are not a Christian—you make no profession of religion. That matters not, you are His

creature, you are in existence to serve Him, and woe betide you in the day of judgment if you have not done it. You may reply to this that it does not seem very like the Gospel, that you supposed we were all to be saved by grace. You are, if you are saved at all, but saved or unsaved you exist for the service of God. If you are still in your sins you are not rendering to God that which is God's. You are robbing Him. You are God's and you claim yourself. You have no right to yourself, for you bear His image and superscription. People murmur a great deal because they have to render to the nation that which belongs to it, but if they did not pay tribute they would soon be before the judge; and as to God, all must give account to Him. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Why? Simply because we belong to Him, and are responsible to serve Him. We must give account to Him. We should render to God the things that are God's. We are made in His likeness. He put His stamp upon us. It is upon every man. How could we then with the tongue bless God, and curse the man made in His likeness? Or how refuse to give ourselves over unto His will, seeing that He has an indisputable claim upon us?

There is another reason why we should lay ourselves at His feet, and that is because He has bought us. I turn to 1 Corinthians vi. 19. I am well aware the epistle is addressed to believers, but what is said here is true for saved or unsaved. He says, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The Lord has bought this world and all in it. He bought it for the sake of a treasure that lay in it, but *He bought it*; it belongs to Him on the ground of purchase. Even though you may be a disbeliever in the Gospel, still you are His—His by the right of creation, by the fact that you bear His image

and likeness, and also by the fact that He bought you with a great price. He tasted death for every man: Do you admit the claim He has upon you, or do you "deny the Lord that bought you"? If you do deny Him you bring upon yourself swift destruction (2 Peter ii. 1). May you admit the righteous claim He has upon you, and escape the judgment to be measured out to the rebellious!

Let us turn to Romans xii. It is to believers the Word is addressed here. He says: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." The mercies—or compassions, of God are set before us in the first eight chapters of this epistle, and this reference is to those compassions. There is a verse in Psalm cxviii: to which I would turn your attention for a moment—verse 27: "God is the Lord, which hath showed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." The light is in the first eight chapters of the epistle. There we get the intervention of God on our behalf, that we may be delivered from sin's dominion, so that we may be able to yield ourselves—our members—our bodies to the service of God.

The light has shone upon our benighted souls—marvellous light—the light of the revelation of God—and by this light we have got the salvation of our souls. Our souls have been emancipated from the bondage to the power of evil under which we lay, and now we are exhorted to take up another order of service—service to God. When the light of God enters our souls in the power of the Spirit, our souls are set free for God's service. We are to render to Him intelligent service: The point in this passage is not that it is reasonable that we should serve God on account of the compassions which He has shown us, but that our service should be characterized by the knowledge of His will whom we desire to serve. And this sacrifice is holy, acceptable,

and living. It is not a dead sacrifice, like the bodies of beasts slain at the altar in the past dispensation, but a life devoted to His service. And it is in this way we prove how good and acceptable and perfect His will is.

The apostle *beseeches*. It is not a command with a curse attached to it in view of possible disobedience. It is an appeal to those who have obtained infinite mercy to enter upon a new career of unspeakable joy and happiness. It is an exhortation to those who have not only been bought, but who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ to "render unto God the things that are God's." The power of sin, Satan, law and flesh, can dominate us no longer. We have come under a new control, and it is not only that we have power to yield ourselves to God, but the desire of the renewed mind is to walk in the pathway of His will. It is a service of love. We have been brought into new and eternal relationships with God, and we rejoice to know that He is willing to accept of our very imperfect service.

Now what would be the effect of our presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God? In answer to this question I would ask again, what effect does He desire His Gospel to produce in us? Is it not that in this world, out of which His Son has been rejected, we may be exponents of the grace that perfectly shone out in Him? That the light of God that was radiant in His person might be continued during the time of His absence? He set forth God in His true character before the eyes of men. He was the perfect expression of the invisible God. This is what is meant by His being the light of the world.

And this is the way by which we have got to know God. I believe in God by Christ: I do not believe in Him by nature, astronomy, or geology, but entirely by Christ. God not only sent His Son into this world that we might live through Him, but He raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory that our faith and hope might centre in Him. God has not only become the

object of our hearts, but the all-controlling object. We delight to do His will. Our bodies are brought under His gracious control, and thus Christ is reproduced in us down here. We walk as He walked. You say, that is a very high standard. But would you not prefer a high standard before a low one? What name has been placed upon us? What superscription has been written upon our foreheads? Christ. That is the holy name that has been placed upon us. Even the world has thus designated us. They called the disciples of Jesus Christians, when at Antioch the Gospel was first preached. Christ is continued in His people down here.

How is that to be brought about in us? It will be brought about in us if we render to God that which is God's; in other words, if we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, our intelligent service. I turn to Paul's epistle to the Philippians, and there I find the great desire of the writer was to have Christ magnified in his body, whether by life or death. He was about to appear before the Roman emperor, the power before which his Lord had once appeared, and in the presence of which He had witnessed a good confession. He was in prison for Christ: The devil had been allowed to place him there, but had defeated himself by so doing, for now there were more preachers than ever before. This was encouraging to the suffering apostle. But he also counted on the prayers of the Philippians and on the Spirit of Jesus Christ, in order "that in nothing he might be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." This was the only thing that seemed to cause him any concern. He calls it his salvation to be delivered from everything of self—either his natural cowardice or his courage, and that nothing but Christ would be exhibited by him. Christ had been before this tribunal, and was condemned to the cross, now these rulers and judges were to find this same

Christ in the body of Paul. He was not concerned regarding their sentence upon himself. "That Christ may be magnified in my body, whether by life or death." Let what God will befall me, only let Christ be seen in my body. This was the only thing he seemed anxious about, it was all his salvation and all his desire.

Now if the Philippians were to occupy themselves with the Gospel, there was to be no strife and contention between themselves. He desires them to be all of one mind, but that the mind of Christ: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." When in the form of God He emptied Himself, and when in fashion as a man He humbled Himself. Here, where every man was seeking to exalt himself, Christ was humbling Himself. Here everyone seeks to rise above his fellows, does his best to get into a position of exaltation, and that by fair means or foul. What a world it is when viewed in the light of the incarnate Son of God! What must the holy angels think of it! We were born into it, and have grown accustomed to it; just like people brought up in filth; they do not trouble about it, it has become their natural element. Put a person into filthy surroundings who has been brought up in cleanliness, and he will be miserable.

Jesus was "obedient unto death." That was the mind that was in Him. With Him, no one but God was worthy of the slightest consideration. What claim had the death of the cross—or any other mode of death upon Him? None. He gave Himself up to the will of God: "I come to do Thy will"; and He did it. With Him there was no reasoning, no repining, no

self-seeking, no murmuring. He says: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." He takes the place of deserving nothing, as being unworthy of the least consideration: "I am a worm, and no man." God alone is to be considered. He has a just claim upon us: We belong to Him. Whose image has been stamped upon us? God's. Then let us render to God the things that are God's.

What should characterize every human being? Obedience. Therefore, the apostle exhorts the Philipians: "As ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." What about Christ? He was obedient unto death. All that He said and did was the outcome of the will of God. What about us then? If we do the will of God we shall be practically Christ over again. This is walking as He walked, and this is the way to have Christ magnified in our bodies.

Turn to chapter iii. The apostle is in the first part of the chapter speaking of the effect upon his life of the knowledge of Christ. He speaks of the excellency of that knowledge, and of the power that it had over him. It made him throw every fleshly decoration that he had possessed (and he had more to boast of than any man) on the rubbish heap. He counted what he had lost, after the flesh, as useless encumbrances in view of what he had found in Christ. Then he looks forward to the day in which Christ will put forth His almighty power to subdue everything to Himself, and He says, that our Saviour shall change our bodies of humiliation and fashion them like unto His own body of glory. Then we shall no more require exhortations, for His servants shall serve Him, see His face, and have His name upon their foreheads. In the meantime, let us keep well in mind that our happy and eternal privilege is to render to God that which is God's.

## PROSPERITY AND POWER.

(2 Samuel xiii. 4).

W. BRAMWELL DICK.

“And he said unto him, Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day?”

**I** THINK we have been feeling during these meetings that the Spirit of God has been seeking to lead us on very practical lines, and very particularly so in the ministry that we have had the last two nights. We have been made to feel how He is pressing upon us the question as to what response there is on our part to all the precious truth that He has been pleased to make known to us; and I want for a few minutes, as the Lord may help me, to use the striking and arresting question in this Scripture by way of seeking to press that question still further home upon my own heart and upon yours. That there is leanness I don't suppose any one of us will question. We realize that, do we not, when we meet each other as individuals? and we notice how very little response there is when the Lord's name is mentioned, and when the precious things of God are spoken about. We feel it sometimes when we are gathered together week by week in what we usually speak of as a prayer meeting, and which perhaps, sometimes is a prayer meeting more in name than reality. We are conscious of it still more, perhaps most of all, when we are privileged to be gathered together around our blessed Lord on the first day of the week, and when sometimes such gatherings are little more than what we might call testimony meetings. We thank God that our sins are forgiven, and that some day

soon we are going to be free from our woes, our pains, and our trials, and we are going to be happy in heaven with Jesus. We are made to feel how little there has been of that which was presented to us yesterday from the ivth. chapter of John—that worship that the Father seeks; and that brings such joy and delight and satisfaction to His heart. In the case of Ammon there was no excuse for his leanness, and therefore it is, I suppose, there seems to be almost a tone of reproach in the question that is asked him, not simply, “Why art thou lean from day to day?” but, “Why art thou, *being the king’s son*, lean from day to day?” It suggested that it was a shame to one in his exalted position that leanness should characterize him. I presume he had at his command all that he wanted, and, having that, it was quite evident there was something that was sapping at the root of his physical constitution that made him, though a king’s son, weak and lean. Beloved brethren, you and I are favoured, through God’s infinite mercy, with most precious ministry, written and oral, and above all, we are favoured with the sacred Word of God—that we hold in our hands, and we have the Holy Spirit of God. Yet, with all that, have we not got to ask ourselves the question, why are we—in the favoured circumstances in which we find ourselves,—so lean?

Is it not possible that there is something that is sapping at the root of our spiritual constitution, and is making us, though children of God, sons and heirs of glory, who have been invested with all the wealth of heaven, and with blessing that it will take us all eternity to explore, lean? I now ask you to turn to a brighter picture and read Judges viii. 18 and 19: ‘Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king. And he said, They were my brethren.’

This is a much brighter side. Gideon was not, strictly speaking, a child of a king, and yet they were able to say to him, each one of his brethren was like himself, and they "resembled the children of a king." Gideon found himself in circumstances not unlike those in which we find ourselves to-day. He was surrounded by the enemies of God and of His people, represented by Midianites and Amalekites, and those who were opposed to God and to the people of God. Gideon maintained a path of separation in the midst of all that. That is rather an old-fashioned word, is it not—*SEPARATION*? I remember, when I was younger than I am to-day, I used to go to meetings like these, and I heard the beloved servants of God—and there were giants in those days—ring out that word "separation" with no uncertain sound; and it was not only that they rang out the word with no uncertain sound, but there was that power behind it, that one felt the men who exhorted us to separation were men who knew something about it themselves. I am afraid it has dropped out of our vocabulary, and we have to ask ourselves whether the reason is not probably that it has fallen largely out of our practice.

But here was Gideon, and he, as I have said, seems to have maintained a path of separation. He was very, very much affected by the circumstances in which God's people found themselves. You go back to chapter vi. in this book, when the angel brought a message to him, and we find how he seems to have been well nigh overwhelmed as he thought of the people of God in the sad plight in which they were as the result of their own sin and rebellion against God. But there is something very fine said about Gideon, he threshed wheat in secret, notwithstanding all that was going on around him (verse 11). Notwithstanding all, that might be called, the unfortunate circumstances in which he was, he threshed wheat, he threshed it in secret; and I think we can infer something more from the 19th

verse of chapter viii., he shared it with his brethren, with the result that his brethren were like himself, they "resembled the children of a king." It is a good thing for us to know the secret of threshing wheat in secret. Some one said yesterday at our Bible reading, "We do not read the Scriptures in order to give out," and that is perfectly true. If we read the Scriptures only to give out, it will be a poor thing, but if we read the Scriptures, if we are threshing wheat, there will be one inevitable result, we shall want to share the wheat with our brethren. I find it a happy thing as I go up and down, and sometimes a brother comes to see me, or I call at a house and get into conversation with a sister, and they say, "You know I was just reading a certain portion this morning, and I saw so and so in it," and they give me some sparkling gem, and I thank God for it. I am changing the metaphor somewhat, but that doesn't matter. They share their wheat with others. That is what is meant, is it not, when Paul exhorts his son in the faith, Timothy, that he should give attendance to reading? And the result of his giving attendance to reading would be that his profiting should appear unto all (1 Timothy iv. 13-15). God give us to know a little more, in the midst of all the failure and the break-up with which we are surrounded, amidst circumstances that may be calculated sometimes to depress us, may He give us to know something more of what it is to thresh wheat in secret, and then to share it with our brethren. Some one may say, "What exactly are we to understand by threshing wheat?" Let us turn for a closing Scripture to the New Testament. (Hebrews iii: 1), "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." A very excellent translation puts the word "confession" instead of "profession," and renders the last clause, "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus." If we know something of

what it is to consider "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus," then we shall know something of what it is to thresh wheat in secret, there will be one inevitable result, that is, we shall want to share the wheat with our brethren. If we "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus," the first effect will be that we ourselves shall become increasingly like Him, and the second effect will be, as we seek to share the wheat with our brethren, they too, with us, will be made more and more like that glorious Person.

In the first chapter, as we know, we have Him brought before us as the Apostle and our eyes are directed to Him in all the preciousness, all the excellence of that glory where He ever dwells. He is "the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His Person; He who upholds all things by the word of His power," and you and I are called upon to consider Him. As we seek to consider the greatness, the majesty, the glory, the excellency, the power of God's eternal Son, what an occupation is that for our hearts!

Then we come to the second chapter, where He is presented as the High Priest. If we view Him in chapter i. in all the excellency and majesty of that glory that ever was, is, and ever shall be. His: now the Spirit of God in chapter ii., conducts us in His downward path, as He stepped off that throne eternal into manhood, came down into this world, went lower and still lower, and "tasted death for everything"—we travel from the highest height to the lowest depth, and we consider Him in that wonderful path that the last speaker has just been bringing before us, the lowly, the homeless, the friendless, the penniless Stranger; the One who was here only and wholly and altogether for the will of God—we consider Him, and we find some precious wheat to thresh there.

Then we follow Him upward as Man, as He ascends from the lowest depths, He "who tasted death for everything," we see Him, as Man, pass through the

opened heavens, and, taking up the language of chapter ii. 9, with glad, rejoicing, triumphant, worshipping hearts, we exclaim, "We see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour," and we consider Him there. We have got some precious wheat to thresh in that, have we not?

Then we find in this verse that the saints of God are addressed in a wonderful way. We are not going to speak in general about the saints of God this afternoon, though we know that it is true of all saints. We are going to be selfish enough for the moment, to think of ourselves gathered here in this hall, for it is only thus that we shall get the sweetness, the freshness, the power, and the benefit of it, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." Oh, my beloved brethren, we want to realize a little more of what this means. Someone has said that "As Apostle, He brings us up to the height of our calling, and as High Priest, He maintains us there." What a calling it is! "Holy brethren." "But," some one may say, "I don't feel holy." I don't suppose you do. If you said you did, no one would believe you. but God says you are holy, and God takes account of us as "holy brethren," and "as partakers of the heavenly calling." Children of a king! We are something a great deal better than that. We have a calling that is much more exalted than that of the children of a king. We have been brought into intimate association and relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, that of those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, and we are taken account of as "holy brethren." Not only that, but "partakers of the heavenly calling." We may be surrounded by the Midianites and Amalekites, but we may realize in the midst of it all, that we are "partakers of the heavenly calling," and thus we are outside of the whole system of things down here. Do not say "That is all right in theory, but it is difficult to work out in practice, and what we find here is, as I have already said, quoting the words of another, "We have the

Apostle to bring us up to, and we have the High Priest to maintain us at the height of this wonderful calling." All these glories, His Godhead glory, His glory as Man, the glory of redemption, the glory that He has at the right hand of God to-day, He who has been exalted "above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. i. 21)—they are all centred in Him whose name is Jesus. Does not that stir our hearts? Our precious Saviour, Jesus. God's eternal Son, Jesus. Our living, loving Lord. Our eternity is going to be spent in considering Jesus. It is our privilege to-day to consider Jesus. May God bless us, and may God grant we may be kept by His grace in a day such as this to thresh wheat in secret—not to be lean, but to be like the children of a king, if we use the word of the Old Testament. To be in New Testament language, like those who are "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," yea, to be like Jesus now, as we shall be when we see Him face to face.



## THE MIND OF CHRIST.

(Isaiah lv. 9, 9; Luke ix. 18-22; 43-56).

A. G. TAYLOR.

**I** HAVE it very much impressed on my spirit to read *these Scriptures to you this afternoon.* Not that I am able to say very much about them. It is good for us to get God's thoughts and to see how very different His thoughts are and Christ's thoughts are from what our thoughts are. How often do we find our thoughts are like the thoughts of the disciples of old. Frequently we are fault finding, censorious and hard with others who are seeking to do the Lord's will just as much as we are. How the Lord had to rebuke His disciples for their thoughts in this matter. Should it not touch our hearts as we read His beautiful words to them. How He was seeking to put them on the right line, the line of grace that He, Himself, was on. "The Law was given by Moses, Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ." Beloved, as we pass along, let us see to it that we don't do anything or say anything to discourage or hurt our brethren in Christ.

We are too apt to look down on other Christians and inclined to think that when they are doing things that we don't do, that they are doing evil. We make a great mistake in thus thinking of them, and we do well to constantly and continually look to what the Lord Jesus Christ says and how He taught His disciples.

I just wanted to make these remarks because I feel if we cannot say anything to encourage and help our Christian brethren who, perhaps, are not walking as we judge they ought to walk, let us say nothing to discourage, nothing to hurt, nothing to harm, but let us seek to be here having the mind of Christ, acting as Christ has taught us to do, and doing as He would have us do.

## THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S SON.

(1 Corinthians i. 9).

J. T. MAWSON.

**T**HERE is a great deal of exercise as to Christian fellowship, and surely it is much to be desired. For we have all been called into one fellowship, and that fellowship is the fellowship of God's Son. The epistle that brings it before us is the second of Paul's epistles as given to us in the Word. In Romans we are set right with God, and following on that there should come this exercise as to Christian fellowship, in which we are set right with one another. First, the basis of everything laid in righteousness, that is Romans, and then each one of us brought upon that righteous basis to be together in holy, happy fellowship, according to the truth. It is well for us to consider this very full verse at the opening of this epistle which speaks to us of Christian fellowship. We are told it is the fellowship of God's Son. We cannot understand its character unless we consider and understand Him, for it takes its character from Him, God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. This fellowship could not be in those Old Testament days, for God's Son had not been revealed, and men, even men of God, broke down and failed, there were none of them who could found a fellowship according to God's mind. We often turn back and think of them, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon—all of them broke down somewhere. God could form no fellowship out of what they were. But when God's Son came there was a Person here who was altogether for God, who never broke down.

There has been one Person here, who entered His life of responsibility in dependence upon God, and in absolute obedience to Him. He never turned aside one hair's breadth from the will of God, and always, in every word He spoke, in every thought He thought, and in every act He did, He was delightful to the heart of God, His Father. Blessed for us, indeed, to contemplate Him, who was found in absolute and full concert with the Father's heart. Communion between Himself and His Father was continuous. He was fragrant in all His ways. He was always in harmony with heaven. As we consider Him, the path of light He trod, how blessed, how wonderful it is to us! We are conscious of failure and break-down, but what a comfort, what a joy, to turn back and contemplate Him and be able to say, The Father has found His fullest delight in a Man, here on earth! I know He was more than Man. That is not the side I am speaking of to-day. He was here as the full revelation of God, and He could not have been that if He had not been God. He came forth as the Son to make manifest in the darkness what God is. That was one side: It is the other side I would dwell upon. He was here as a Man before God, fulfilling the will of God in all His ways. In Him the Father's will was done on earth, and if we would know what man is according to the thought of God, if we would see what God's intention for man is, we must look at that blessed Man and study Him, and as we study Him we know what pleases God.

But our Lord was alone on this earth. He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone." In His life-time He trod a solitary path. Nobody walked that path with Him—He had to tread it alone. Nobody shared His delight in His Father's will. There was no one to enter into His feelings. Nor could there be, unless He imparted His own life to them. "Except a corn of wheat fall into

the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He went into death that we might live in His life, and that God might call us into His fellowship, that He might put us together before Him, where His Son stands, that we might be brought into concert with Him where He is in heaven, and might tread the path that He trod where He is not now. He died and rose again that He might gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad, and found a fellowship, the life and power and principles of which, are heavenly and not of the world. What could be greater than this? It is usual for men to desire to rise into some sphere or circle above that in which they were born, and if a man is made a peer of the realm he thinks it a great honour; if he is invited to Court, or called into fellowship with royalty, he is elated. But what is this into which we are called? It is not the fellowship of the noble, or the fellowship with royalty. We are lifted above men as we know them, and above angels also, up into the fellowship of God's Son. And the fellowship will not be understood unless we understand Him.

We cannot enter into it in its power and blessedness unless we come under His influence. So often do we make it ecclesiastical and thereby spoil it, and hedge it round with our rules and regulations, and limit it to our poor notions of what it is. It is not our fellowship, but the fellowship of God's Son, and in that, the first thought is of relationship. We are brought into that blessed relationship He stands in, and the first thought in that relationship is love. The Father loveth the Son, and the Son responds to the love without reserve. That we should all most readily accept. But is there not another thought in it? You get it illustrated in the way Paul speaks of Timothy. He spoke of Timothy as "My son, Timothy," and then you remember he said of him, "As a son with a father he has laboured with me in the Gospel." Timothy was in full accord with

Paul, there was oneness of mind and thought. It is a great day in a man's life when he can change the style of his business. Up to a certain point it has been David Cameron. Then the day arrives when he describes the firm as "David Cameron & Son." He has some one of one mind with himself, some one in concert with himself. Some one who will take counsel with himself, who will carry out his thoughts, and rightly represent him when he is absent, not as a servant, but as a son. It seems to me the thought comes in in connection with God's Son. Such He was when here upon earth, and it is God's purpose that that should be continued here, and He has called us to be in the continuation of that, so that here on earth now, there should be something in full accord with the mind of God. Grace has wrought in us with this end in view, and we have been sanctified in Christ Jesus. But we must come under subjection to Him. He must direct us, and He is Jesus Christ, our Lord, unless we are subject to Him, of course, we are going our own way—each doing what he thinks right, and there will be no unity or fellowship, but if we know what it is to be subject to the Lord, each one of us, then everything becomes simple. It is instructive, in this epistle to the Corinthians, to see how the Lordship of Christ is pressed. We have the Lord's table in chapter x., we have the Lord's Supper in chapter xi., we have the Lord as the one Administrator in the xiith., and the xivth. closes with words something like this, "If any man among you thinketh himself to be spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things we write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." We must all own His Lordship. But how may we know where and how He will direct us? We get it in the Word, the things written therein are the commandments of the Lord. We have also spiritual sensibilities. It is a very blessed thing that, having received the Spirit and the divine nature, we have spiritual sensibilities, and these

are developed by the Spirit who dwells in us, and they answer to the Word of the Lord, and when we hear the Word these spiritual sensibilities, if we are in a good spiritual state, and not carnal like the Corinthians, answer to the Word, and blessed indeed it is, when we find ourselves desiring, not only to hear the Word, but to do it. But we must be subject to the Lord Christ, as the One raised up from the dead and exalted, and now the great Administrator, the One in the place of authority, the One to whom we have bowed, the One whom we own as our Lord, and from whom we may draw all the grace and guidance we need in this fellowship which is His.

These first three chapters of 1 Corinthians are helpful. In chapter i. towards the end, we get the basis upon which we stand and are kept in this blessed fellowship to which God has called us. You get the cross of Christ brought before us. The cross of Christ in that character of it that removes all that cannot be built in and fitted in to this fellowship. The cross is the condemnation and removal of the material that won't do for God. So we find no flesh should glory in His presence. Flesh brings in discord, for its root principle is self-exaltation, it glories in its own distinctions and powers, every man against another. It does not give glory to God, it wants it all for itself. But we are to glory in the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ is that in which we see the power and wisdom of God, and by the cross God has brought to an end the wisdom of the wise and everything in which men can boast. One way in which the flesh showed itself at Corinth was in the formation of parties and the boasting in leaders, and this is a subtle snare, more destructive to fellowship than what is flagrant and gross.

We must glory in the Lord, then, with one heart and voice, we show what fellowship is. And that we might glory in Him, we are told what He is made unto us. God has made Him to be to us who are in Him

and are of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Everything we need is in Christ. Blessed things these are, they cover everything we need as before God. The cross of Christ is the basis of it all. It brings us together on to common ground. Suppose the most learned man in the land comes into this fellowship, he comes in in the same way as the most illiterate man, and the cross is the end of all he can boast in as of the flesh. And he gets something better than he could bring. We are now in something greater and better and more glorious than the best man has got. It is the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and He is the Administrator to us of what God is as well as the pattern to us as to what the fellowship is.

Then the power comes out in chapter ii. The Spirit has been given, and in connection with the Spirit of God we have the subject matter of our fellowship—the Spirit of God has come to show unto us the things of God, these things are not understood by the natural man. The natural man understandeth not the things of God. He cannot enter into this fellowship. That is why we have so much Modernism to-day. It is the natural man boastfully claiming that he can find out the things of God. Man thinks he can by searching find out God. He won't receive God's revelation to him. He won't take the place of a little child: He won't acknowledge that if he is to know God, God must reveal Himself.

It is not here man's mind investigating, he has his own sphere in which he may pursue his investigations, but in the sphere of God's things there must be revelation, and the Spirit of God reveals to us what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and what has never entered into the heart of man. But these things, the things that God hath prepared for those that love Him, He reveals them to us by His Spirit, for "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." And the

power of the fellowship, and the intelligence by which we understand the substance of it, is in the Spirit of God, the cross of Christ is the basis of it—the death of that blessed Person, the Son of God, who laid down His life for us, that is the basis, the intelligence and the power of it is the Holy Spirit.

When we come to chapter iii. we find it is all for God. Ye are God's building: Ye are God's husbandry, Ye are God's temple. Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. What a blessed thing to know the Son of God was here and He was all for God! What joy, what delight, what wealth for God in that blessed life! And the devil was determined to get rid of it, and he worked upon men, until in a frenzy of passion they took that blessed Person and put Him to shame and crucified Him, and at last He lay in the silent tomb. Did the devil think he had got rid of what pleased God, and that He would never again have anything of that sort on earth? Did the devil think he had banished from this world everything for God? I Corinthians iii. shows us there is a continuation of that blessed life in which everything was for God, now, and you and I, beloved saints of God, are brought into this fellowship that God might have His delight in us. Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. In His wisdom, God having baffled all the force of the devil, and all the subtlety and the wisdom of the devil, has something on earth in which He can find His delight—the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. A spiritual condition is necessary on our part if we are to live and act together in fellowship, as partners together in the things of God. He would put us in concert one with another, but we cannot be in concert one with another unless we are in concert with God, and we cannot be in concert with God unless we are subject to the Lord. His mind must control us. As we are put into concert with the Lord we shall be in concert one with another, and not only will God's heart be delighted, but we shall

know the power and the blessedness and the joy of the fellowship into which we have been called.

We look on Christendom and see numberless fellowships and much failure, and we are apt to get discouraged, to have the heart taken out of us, and say, Well, is it any use any longer seeking to walk in fellowship according to the truth? But we have this for our confidence and encouragement that **God is faithful**. We may have failed; we may have broken down, and with shame of face we have to confess that break-down is everywhere, but God is faithful, and, beloved saints of God, the God of Pentecost, the God that Paul knew, the God of the Ephesian epistle, is the God who abides to-day in His mighty resources, and those resources are in Jesus Christ, our Lord Himself, and we may turn to Him and find His resources to be enough for us. He has not abandoned His present purpose for us, and we should not abandon it either.

The Lord grant that we may be content to learn of Him, God's Son, and be subject to Him, Jesus Christ our Lord, and then we shall walk together in happy fellowship.



## COMPANYING WITH CHRIST.

2 Chronicles ix. 1-12; Matthew xi. 25, 26.

JAMES McBROOM.

**I** HAVE heard again and again since coming here, in our conversations, the statement that this is a day when the whole moral tone is lowered. In varying words the idea has been pressed again and again, and the question is a serious one for every one of us as to how the moral tone is to be raised. I have often said that in the first epistle to Corinthians, the writing of the apostle was to raise the whole moral tone. If Christ gets His place with us and one part of our lives is elevated, the whole soul is elevated. But then, how is it to come about? I feel as I stand here to-night, after all that the Lord's beloved servant has put before us, much cast on the Lord, and it brings before my heart the peculiarity of the Book of God, and of the things of God, because, after all that has been told us, there still remains something to be said, and after all our meetings are finished, if the Lord tarry, there will still remain something to be said. As each of the servants of Christ finishes his ministry for the moment one feels as though it were the last word was said, but after all, each of us can dip his tiny vessel into that which is unfathomable and inexhaustible. Not only these meetings, but all the meetings and all saints down the ages to the end of time, will continue to draw waters from the wells of salvation, and will find in them inexhaustible comfort and encouragement, to the praise and glory of God. Then there is a way I think God

has marked out for the elevation of the moral tone, and I feel, if you will bear with me, that we lose sight of it to a very great extent, and my point to-night, is to endeavour, in the presence of my Master and His beloved people, to point out what He would put before us as the right way to raise the moral tone, and that is, that we should know more of His company and know more of the blessedness of "going in." In doing that, of course, I am necessitated to open it out, but what I would begin with is this: that with all the effort that is put forth to-day in Christendom, there is great need that we should cultivate more communion with the Lord. Every honest mind will admit that the tendency with us is to leave out the first great essential.

If we are to be true followers of Christ we must know Him, and spend time in the presence of our Lord. Therefore I repeat again, the first thing is, that, if we are to come out, we must be intimate, we must be in the intimacy of His affection inside. Before I go into that, my impression is that we, the people I look upon to-night, are part of the most favoured people in God's creation. To refer to it, in relation to the day in which we live, we all admit that the Church period is the time of the full revelation of God, the time when there is a Man sitting up yonder who, blessed be His holy Name, is much more than a Man. *The time when that Man sits there is the grandest period in all time.*

Until He went there the Old Testament could not be unlocked, what marvellous treasures lay enfolded there till Christ was glorified. Like the sun in the heavens, which blazes forth in the whole space of the solar system, filling it with light and heat, so the Man, Christ Jesus, has gone up on high that He might fill all things. He who is the Sun of righteousness, radiates forth in the moral desert, making many hearts glad with the blessing of God. God orders history, prophecy, promise and type in view of Christ, and the moment He takes His place on high, redemption accomplished, the

Holy Ghost comes to shine on that blessed Book. Until then there could not be the unfolding of the treasures of God. Whoever could have known the typical meaning of the story of Adam and Eve until Ephesians v. was written? Who could have known the meaning of the story of Joseph and his brethren until Christ was in glory? Who could have unfolded the first seven chapters of Leviticus until Christ was there? Whoever could have pointed out the wealth of those blessed, eternal verities that lie hidden in the pages of inspiration until Christ was in heaven? You say, why emphasize that? I will tell you. I emphasize it because of this, when Christ took His seat up there, not only was the revelation of God complete, but there was an answer to it in a Man at His right hand. On the one hand, He came out to declare God and make known His heart of love, and on the other, to take up a place before Him by redemption on behalf of those who were the subjects of His eternal thoughts. Job had thought He lived at far too great a distance from His creation to take notice of His creatures, or, as some thought, that great Being in the heavens was striding through creation to see how He could deal out sufferings to His creatures. No, brethren, Christ came here to unfold the heart of God. But there is more. The One who has declared God (John xvii.), is the One, blessed be His Name—who has gone in in answer to it all, and if you tell me something of the greatness of the revelation, I will tell you that that shows more and more the greatness of the Man who answers to the revelation. But in connection with that I want to associate it thus: not only are we living in the time when the grandest things God ever made known to man are spoken of, and when God presents Himself, so to speak, in a great mirror, that we may see all His character, nature, and being, and when we can read Him in that Man. But there is something more. Not only are we living in that day, but we are favoured at the end of the dispen-

sation when the Lord Jesus Christ has recovered for His Assembly, the unfoldings of the counsels of God. I think I see at the end of the dispensations of Scripture something like this, hard times, dark times, but I see also, that the Lord comes out in the revelation of His will in a special way to those who seek Him at such a moment. In the twentieth century, when the forces of evil are gathering themselves together for the last, great, closing drama of the ages, the Lord Jesus Christ, our adorable Head, has brought out for us the full unfoldings of His truth, so that we, and all who form His Church, might be fitted to stand in the presence of those forces that are thus massing themselves for the final conflict. Things get so bad at the close of a dispensation that the professing people of God may be found doing the enemy's work. "His own" people lent themselves to Satan in crucifying the Lord. So it is to-day. We find the leaders in the professing church in Satan's hands denying all that is fundamental in the holy Book of God. We all know these things are true, and now in the light of it all, what I want to insist on is, that if we are face to face with the worst of the worst, we are brought into the best of the best. If He who sits in heaven, our glorious Head, has unfolded the truth of the revelation of our heavenly calling, of being sons of God, in association with Himself, it is that we may answer to it in the presence of Satan's worst. Not only do we see sonship unfolded in the Word, it is declared to us in perfection in His own Person. Sonship is an eternal relationship brought into Manhood by incarnation. The eternal Son becomes Man, brings it here, and sets it before us. On account of His death and resurrection, the Holy Ghost comes down from heaven to lift sinners like you and me out of our sins and the sin state and make us sons of God. We were under Satan's power, living at a distance from God, hateful and hating one another, but a Divine Person comes down, the Ascended One sends the Holy

Ghost, to bring us into association with Himself as sons. I say this: we are at the end of the dispensation, and if we glance back upon the centuries, none of our forefathers had the light we have from God to-day, I repeat, therefore, we are the most favoured people on earth. As faithful men of God have been quoted, men whose faith we all surely desire to follow, we must see to it that the truth brought to us may be valued. There has been recovered for us by our glorious Head, through men of God of the last century, the whole truth of God. We need to wake up to this, the truth of the unity of the Body, the truth of being united to the Man at God's right hand (and if I am united to Him there every saint is also), and in view of that it is possible for us to have acquaintance with Christ in glory. An old servant years ago gave an address—you may find it to-day—and he gave the title to it, "Acquaintance with Christ in glory." Can I be acquainted with the glorified Man? Yes, thank God. But if so, I am out of the fashion here. It cannot be possible for us to be in the fashion, maintain status, and position here, and at the same time have intimacy with Him whom the world refused. It cannot be possible to have part with Him, it cannot be possible to be in the enjoyment of association with the Son of God if we are going on with the system that crucified Him. So in the Scriptures read I just want to show you the importance of the journey of the soul from this world to where He is. It has been well said; and as you all know, there are Christians who read the Bible and get their lessons as coming from God; they say their prayers, learn the Scriptures, but there are others again that seek to read the Scriptures and to go into where the Scriptures came from.

I have read an illustration in the Chronicles, but the New Testament is full of it. If you read Hebrews x: you go into the holiest of all, to where Christ is, and if we are to be workers, devoted, faithful, Christlike—it

is in touch with Him as going in and being at home there, acquainted with Him in the blessed intimacy of a soul at home in His presence. One has seen it in men who should be the happiest of the happy, grovelling and complaining, we may see people whom God has made His sons for eternity and enriched with every blessing in Christ, who should be walking through this world like princes, burdened with the care of this world. Is this not because they are not in the enjoyment of the company of the Lord Jesus Christ? So I read these two Scriptures to say a word on the elevation of the moral tone. I don't think there is any intelligent Christian looking for the recovery of the Church as a whole. The whole tone of Scripture, in its bearing on the present moment, is "See to thyself." If you do this you will not only put yourself right, but you will be a saviour to somebody else, and there is nothing so blessed as that. That is true service. We have to see to ourselves, and if we do so there will be a moral influence, a spiritual power that will characterize us that will be able to bring in a little of Christ to suffering saints of God.

And so, in this woman who heard of Solomon in a far country—it cost her something to make the journey—we have the illustration of a person who makes the journey to Christ to sit down in His presence and company, and have His mind about everything. And, hence, if we do so, there is what the apostle call "formation." You cannot shut your eyes to the fact that in much of the work of Christendom there is a lack of men after the character of Christ. What we want is character, for conduct springs from character, and the character Scripture gives us is the character of another Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and hence, what we want is to be formed, and if we are formed it is the result of a Divine Person coming down here to form us after Christ.

And now she comes to him, and we see that all her difficulties, all her hard questions, are answered by Solomon. Go farther back a moment to the case of Joseph and his brethren. They came to Joseph; they didn't know him, but he knew them. they were speaking about what they had done to him, but they didn't know they were in the presence of Joseph. There I judge we have the record in figure of the experience of the soul before it comes to the knowledge of peace with God. But here we have in figure one who comes into company with the glorified Christ and sees Him in all His present glory, Himself the centre of it all, not content with merely reading about Him but going to where He is. "When she saw the wisdom of Solomon, the house he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants." The New Testament tells us we can see — that the eyes of your heart being enlightened (Ephesians i.), and before you see, before you go in, John xvi. shows us we have a guide to lead us in, even the Spirit of God. "When He is come He will guide you into all the truth." A vast and unexplored territory lies before us that we may go in and enjoy the fulness of what belongs to Christ. The Holy Ghost is given to lead us into all the grandeur of that which belongs to Him. If we are to answer to the claims of God and stand to-day in the presence of an ecclesiastical system that is lending itself to corruption, if we are to stand in a world which is shutting out God, and in a time when the apostasy of Revelation is in evidence all around, how is it to be if it is not in the enjoyment of something better? I might illustrate it in this way. A good father and mother, the parents of a child, who see the state of things going on around in the world, what do they do? They strive to make home better than what is outside, it works with the exactitude of law, that the way to be delivered from anything is to get something better, and wise parents, in connection

with all the merriment and attraction the devil is presenting the present age with, know that the only way to save their child is to have something better in the home, far better. The only way to be delivered from what is going on in this world of sinfulness is to be in the enjoyment of all that Christ can give in a scene of heavenly bliss. The testimony of God is here, and the only way is to be a man of resource, in constant touch with the source; to be inside. I ask you, young man, do you accustom yourself to go into the presence of God, to go in and sit down in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ? Not because you want something, nor because you need anything. It is the instinct of the Christian to pray, the necessity of our souls to pray, but I ask you this, do you accustom yourself to go inside, into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ? If you do, it will stamp an impress, the heavenly impress on you, and you will be able to go out with that impress and you will not be afraid if you are out of fashion, not up-to-date in the ways of the twentieth century, and your language and your walk will be clean in character because we cannot help being influenced by the company we keep. And so notice it says, She saw the meat at the table. God who created the heart knows how to satisfy it, and the wonderful favour He puts upon us is that we share with Him in His food. *The Bread of God* is He who comes down from heaven to give life. Your soul needs food. There are depths in the human heart that nothing in the world can ever satisfy. Make Christ the object of your life and perfect satisfaction will be yours. Everyone is seeking for something—politics and one thing and another. I have said, politics for the politician, military tactics for the soldier, money for the misers, and everything else, but Christ for the Christian. Cultivate that going in and sitting in His presence, and you will see the meat at His table, there is everything to satisfy the desire of the heart. I am thinking of Psalm xxxvi., “abundantly satisfied

with the fatness of Thy house." I wish I could make it clear, the thought I have before me. To study to be imitators of Christ is a great thing, beloved brethren. We are getting nearer the end, and it is almost the only thing necessary, because we have all so much knowledge in one way and another, and our hearts are needy. We need food for our hearts and the ministry of Christ is what is needed.

But turn to the Gospels and see Him there. I see in the Old Testament something that tells me of the food of His table, yes, and the sitting of His servants, and the abundance of His house. Truly it may be said of "His own," "*Happy are Thy men.*"

You know what the Lord says about "the men whom Thou gavest Me"? The Father's love-gift to the Son—the men that He favoured. O, the heavenly favour that shines on us. Are we to give it up cheaply? How is it to be maintained? By organisation, companies or bands, or societies, or anything? How is it to be maintained? There is a way in the nature of things—God's way, and that is, that it must be maintained by living in touch with the source, and if we are to be maintained, if we are to come out in the place of our responsibility—whether as to every-day life or business, or whether in connection with the testimony of Christ here in the world—how will it be maintained? Only by the blessedness of having the company of Christ.

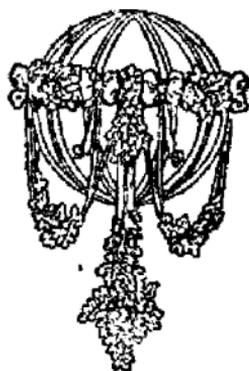
And so here we are in type in the true Solomon's house. It speaks of our being made companions of Christ: He speaks of saints as His brethren in John xx., the Spirit of God describes them as His fellows in Hebrews i., His companions in Hebrews ii., and He calls them His friends in John xv. If that laid hold of us, that we are the friends of Christ, and that all these holy and endearing relationships are ours, surely we would not live a life of worldliness here. Whether do you

desire a place, where Christ is refused or where He is received? If that dawned on us it would materially alter the character of our lives, we would not be going on with the tinsel of this poor callous world. I appeal to you to-night to seek to spend more time in the company of Christ.

Then, as I said, in the Gospels, there comes before us a Man of a different order. God has been so delighted with Him that He is determined to perpetuate His generation. In studying that holy life we see every detail gilded with the colour and character of heaven, whether in the domestic circle or among men, the village, the town, the city or country, all was for the delight of God. He came down from heaven not to do His own will but the will of Him that sent Him. Your will and mine, as natural men, is not in line with our duty, the fall estranged us from God, but in Christ the will of God was His delight and pleasure. The Holy Spirit is here to form you and me in His nature, in His love, in His relationship, and the flesh which comes in opposition to that is to be kept in the place of death. Are these things great realities or is it a little story we are telling that is pleasing to the ear? May God our God, as a result of these meetings give us to be more at home in these blessed divine things—make us more careful about the company we keep. Christ died to have our company, and He wants it now, and that is before all our service. If you give Him your company your service will be coloured by that, which to the true heart, is a very precious reality. Oh, dear brethren, we are living in solemn times, when often the very bearing of the preacher is the denial of the testimony he speaks about. What is to be done? Keep in the company of Christ. We have access to the very source of all good and blessing, and we can be at home in the company of our adorable Lord and Master. We can trust Him in all His perfection. There is one Man who has brought glory to God and He is accessible to

everyone of us to-night. The revelation of God with all its fulness is set forth in Him at the same time as approach to God on man's behalf is made good also

If we keep the impress of Christ laid upon our hearts by the Spirit we shall hear His blessed voice, and be well pleasing to Him. There is often on the part of the saints, a morbid resignation in facing difficulties, and a feeling that all this is a necessity, but it will be all right when we get home. It is blessedly true that it will be all right then, but the Lord would have us in the sense that it is all right now, and if we seek His company our souls are kept in the enjoyment of all that which is to come out when He comes. May we be kept there for His Name's sake.



## SETTING FORWARD.

Deuteronomy viii. 1, 2; Numbers xxi. 11.

S. ELVIN AZIZ.

**T**HE passage in the book of Deuteronomy describes God's tender care and gracious dealings with His people Israel in the wilderness; and the other, in the book of Numbers (they have no connection apparently) makes a statement from which we learn that Israel "set forward," and began to make a real advance in their journeys and they pitched their camp in a place called IJE-ABARIM. If you consult a map of the journeys of the children of Israel you will see the new position they have taken. Israel had now arrived at a new stage in their history—a transition stage—that is to say, their wanderings in the wilderness had come to an end. Miriam, the prophetess, has passed away, and Aaron, God's Priest, the brother of Miriam, also lays aside his official garments and passes out of this scene (Numbers xx.), so Israel are set free to go forward, and make real progress towards their objective (the land of promise) unhindered and unhampered. They are now on the border of Moab, "towards the sun-rising." What had happened that they have suddenly come to this place? They wandered aimlessly for no less than thirty-eight years in mid-wilderness, going backward and forward to Kadesh-Barnea two or three times. Now there are only a few months left for them to finish up the fortieth year to enter into their possessions.

Beloved, friends, it is very important for us to notice that there are two significant facts in the history

of Israel which give the key to the situation, and reveal the secret of their being able to go forward.

The facts are these,

First, the brazen serpent.

Second, the new order which came into existence, through the death of Aaron.

I will make this plain by giving a brief summary of the truths set forth in the previous chapters.

The book of Numbers is pre-eminently the wilderness book, and gives the walk and service of the saints in the wilderness. The first ten chapters are the preparatory chapters. they tell us in the first place that they were numbered; they were taken account of individually, as we are taken account of in Christ Jesus. Secondly, that separate places were appointed to them in relation to testimony, that is, to the Ark of the Covenant. All their places were assigned so that the Ark of the Covenant must take the very central place, and all their tents should be so arranged as to surround and safeguard the interests of the Ark of the Covenant and the Tent of the Testimony. In the taking account of them, God was preparing for Himself a people of His own choosing. In Exodus xix. He says, "I brought you unto Myself," and so He could come and dwell in their midst, and appropriate them for Himself. No other place could satisfy God's heart, and no other place can be His, that is the central place, the place from which He can act, from which He can govern and direct the movements of the whole camp, for the pillar of cloud rested upon the Tent of Testimony, and not upon anything else. Therefore, the Israelites were required to keep their eyes steadfast upon the tent of Testimony so that they might, at a moment's notice, when they saw the cloud lifted up, be able to move and march. And so the first thing is God taking the central place, and the next thing is the appropriation of

the people to Himself, so that they should defend the Ark of the Covenant. You may naturally say what was there to defend; who were there to contest the right of this large army of the Israelites passing through their borders; what was the object of having warriors in the wilderness? Well, there were the Amalekites, who might attack the Ark of the Covenant. We read that *not only were some numbered as warriors, but there were those who were numbered as Levites, to carry the Ark of the Covenant and the Tent of Testimony.* Upon these minute details I don't wish to dwell long, but what I want to present is this, that the Lord in the first ten chapters sets forth one great truth, that He will have nothing of man or his will, in connection with the Tent of Testimony or in the arrangement of the Camp. And from this you will see that God had a place in the midst of His people, surrounded by them, and they were to defend the Testimony.

The forces being marshalled and the Camp being arranged in perfect order, according to the mind of God, they left Horeb for Kadesh-Barnea. The journey being of eleven days, they did it in three stages. God was leading them through this wilderness, not only to show how good and gracious He was towards them; but also to show them the utter worthlessness and incapability of flesh to do anything for God. That was the great truth that God was teaching them, from the xith. to the xvith. chapter. Here you will notice the various features of Israel's unbelief and their downfall.

Until they came to Mount Horeb there was no Ark of the Covenant. And it was God's purpose that they should learn something about the Ark. The first thing was, they murmured against God, and fire came down from heaven, and then we read that Moses interceded on their behalf, and the fire was quenched. They lusted again for flesh, and Jehovah gave them quails, and while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of God was kindled against them.

and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague. This was at Kibroth-hattaavah. Here they found the graves of lust. Then we read of the jealousy on the part of Miriam and Aaron, because of the authority placed upon Moses. And when you come to the xiii<sup>th</sup>. chapter it is the climax of the great unbelief of Israel. The land of promise was before them, they could have easily crossed over, but they did not do so because of their unbelief. Oh! beloved friends, if there is one thing that is our formidable foe, it is unbelief. The Epistle to the Hebrews (chapter iii.) very clearly sets forth two great enemies—one is sin and the other is unbelief. And therefore, Israel could not enter into the land because of unbelief. When we come to the rebellion of Korah, it culminated in the religious apostasy of the worst type. After this we find that Miriam and Aaron pass away and a new priest is installed, in the person of Eleazer, after the order of resurrection. He was the priest on the ground of resurrection. According to the ordinance of the Red Heifer, we notice, that Eleazer was to witness the sacrifice; it was to be slain before him. And because he was the one who was going to succeed Aaron, Moses took Aaron's robes, or priestly garments, and placed them upon this man, Eleazer, who was to take his place. He was a new priest altogether, of the order of resurrection. You will now see that there is a new company, a new priest, a new sacrifice, and a new leader—the old order had passed away and a new order had come into existence. Oh! beloved friends, you see that God's principles and God's ways in the Old Testament are the same as His ways in the New. His mode of deliverance might be different, but the ways of God do not differ at all. Everything is going to be set upon resurrection ground, and everything of the old man must pass away. And now a word as regards the xxist. chapter, where the brazen serpent is set up. What does the brazen serpent mean? It is a symbol of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a

type of the cross of Christ. It was God's answer to the perverseness of flesh, which proved incorrigible, there was nothing for it except to be condemned and put away judicially before God, in type I mean. It also meant the bringing in of a new life, and they "shall live." God judicially removed the very cause of that from which they were suffering, for He imparted new life, new vigour, in their hearts and in their souls, so that they may go forward, and no longer to be aimlessly wandering backward and forward. They were hindered, they could not advance because they were held back by the flesh, and until the flesh was set aside and removed, they could not go forward. The apostle Paul distinctly tells us that these things happened to Israel for our admonition, that we might learn lessons from them. We shall not make progress in spiritual things and grow in grace if we have not come to the brazen serpent, where the old man is set aside judicially. And if we are going to make advance in spiritual things we shall have to feed on Christ. The wilderness provision for God's people was manna, food that came from heaven. That is what we need. Unless you eat His flesh and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Eating and drinking, symbolically, mean appropriating Him.

May God help us to set forward, to feed on Christ, and to become strong and stalwart in our most holy faith.



## FAITHFUL MEN.

WM. H. WESTCOTT.

"Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, that they may be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy ii. 1, 2):

**I**N connection with this passage, I read in Exodus xxv. verses 10-11, 16, 21-22:

The ark was made of shittim wood. In studying the tabernacle, the ark is that which suggests the Person of Christ. The shittim wood represents His humanity, the Son of God come down here as Man. I take the pure gold to represent that perfect suitability to God which was and is found in Christ, perfect suitability to the glory of God. In the ark was to be put the testimony which the Lord gave to Israel. The two tables of stone, or "the testimony," showed that what God required was perfect love toward Himself and perfect love toward men. These things are seen in Christ in all their completeness, and are fulfilled in Him alone. Upon the ark was placed the mercy-seat, of which I do not now speak particularly. Christ, in the presence of God, is the One in whom God's testimony is from first to last preserved intact. As to the wanderings of the children of Israel, when they left Egypt they turned *eastward* to Sinai, and from Sinai they turned *northward* to Kadesh-Barnea. From thence, they went *southward* to the shores of the Red Sea, and again turned *northward* to the plains of Moab; finally they went *westward* into the land. But whether they turned

east or north, south or west, the testimony of God was preserved intact in the ark. There was no abatement of God's standard, and His eye rested upon that which, in the type, maintained that standard at its full height. You may wonder what that has to do with the Epistle to Timothy. But no one can read the second epistle without noticing how that again and again in the midst of all the frightful failure spoken of, there are certain things that are preserved intact *in Christ Jesus*. Israel, the people of God, in the course of their journeyings, at times seem to be turning their backs upon their true and proper direction, as when they turned southward to the shores of the Red Sea. Nevertheless, the ark, with its testimony inside, preserved everything for God in perfect suitability to Him.

In this 2nd Epistle to Timothy we have seven things preserved for God, and for us, in Christ Jesus. In chapter i. we have "*life* which is in Christ Jesus." What a comfort for us, what security, what suitability for God, that the life which God in grace has made ours is secured and set forth in Christ Jesus. Then, lower down, in verse 9, "*His own purpose and grace* which was given us in Christ Jesus." Further, in verse 13, "*faith and love* which is in Christ Jesus," and in the verse which I read in chapter ii., "*the grace* that is in Christ Jesus." Further on, in verse 10 of chapter ii., "*the salvation* which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory," and then, "*all that will live godly* in Christ Jesus," in verse 12 of chapter iii., and finally, "*faith* in Christ Jesus" in verse 15. You have the testimony preserved in the ark. Christ's perfect suitability to the glory of God secures everything for His people, whatever their changing experience may be.

Now, as to the condition in which we are found in these last days, turn back to chapter i. 15. You will notice that Paul says, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me," a

very serious state of things when we remember the peculiar place that was given to the apostle Paul in the Christian economy. He is the one to whom was committed the administration of the mystery, and who was constituted pre-eminently minister of the Gospel. For these Christians of Asia to turn away from Paul meant decline from, and the surrender of, the teaching of Paul. In chapter ii., verse 16, you find "Shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness." If men turn away from the full truth of Christ and take up with profane and vain babblings, these things spread like a canker.

Then in chapter iii. it says, that "in the last days difficult times shall come," and, in verse 5, there would be found "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," and in verse 13, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." There is the intensifying of evil as time goes on. Finally, in chapter iv., verse 3, "the time will come . . . when they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables." We seem to have reached this ivth. chapter. In journeying through the Church period, from the day of Pentecost until the return of the Lord, a long period has elapsed, but these are the *last days*. One need hardly stop to speak of it, but it is unquestionable that people are turning away their ears from the truth, and what they offer us in the place of the truth is "fables." We marvel sometimes to see the writings and hear of the speeches of some of the cleverest men of to-day in our Christian profession; we marvel that they descend to such profanities and frivolous ideas, but they are turned from the truth to fables, and the professed people of God love to have it so.

Now, in these two epistles to Timothy, what has struck me is this, that a great deal seems to be connected with *Ephesus*, and the teaching of Paul,

which reaches its highest unfoldings in the epistle written to the Ephesian saints. In order to see what I mean, will you turn to the first epistle, chapter i., verse 3. "I besought thee to abide still at *Ephesus* . . . that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." We shall see in a moment what doctrine it was they had received; but he wrote these words to Timothy, who was his own child in the faith, and who was true to him, of whom he wrote, "I have no man like-minded." He was willing to part company with this close follower and imitator of him, and to leave him at Ephesus, because he saw the coming in of that which would corrupt the very best bit of Christian work we find in the New Testament. Then, a little further on, in verses 10, 11, of that chapter he speaks of the "sound doctrine according to the glorious Gospel (the Gospel of the glory), of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." Further, in chapter iv., verse 16, he says to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." That is, Timothy, by personal continuation in that teaching which he had received from the apostle, would not only be preserved himself in the midst of all the growing corruption, but would become an instrument in the hands of the Lord for delivering others from it too. Then, see the second epistle, chapter i., verse 15. Time had elapsed between the first and the second epistles, not much perhaps, but Paul draws attention to the fact that by this time, beside those who were teaching evil doctrines, the whole of the saints in Asia had turned away from him. They were giving up the truth as he presented it at Ephesus. Again, in chapter ii., verse 2, it says, "The things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men, that they may be able to teach others also." Even then there had come in the necessity to call for faithful men.

Now, if you are going to have faithful men, they must be faithful to something. I have suggested that at the back of all he says in the first and second epistles, you have the doctrine or ministry of the apostle as unfolded in all its breadth and length in his epistles, and crowned by the blessed truth embodied for us in the epistle to the Ephesians. In order to test what there is around us we need to have some definite understanding, more or less large, according to our measure, as to what this teaching of the apostle was. I would just like to refer briefly to the stages in which the truth of God has been unfolded to us, as written by Paul in Romans, Corinthians and Ephesians. I hope not to weary you. In the epistle to the Romans you have the individual brought out from this sinful world, his guilt covered, and propitiation made so that he can be brought to God in a manner suitable to the divine glory. You have him set up in this world for the will of God, and brought to know God in such a way that, not only is there peace and deliverance, but the will of God becomes a positive delight to his heart. Beloved fellow-Christian, is there not a danger of our wasting a lot of time, and squandering a great part of our lives in doing our own will because we do not understand God's will, and because our hearts are not definitely and intelligently committed to it. I commend the Epistle to the Romans to everyone that wants to get on in the things of God. Therein you have the laying of the foundation in the soul of the believer of the holy work of God. Note that first of all, the individual is blessed and set here for God's will. Then, at the end of the epistle, we are introduced to the fact that we, being many, are one body. The subject is not opened out, but the fact is stated in the way of an illustration. It shows we are not all alike, and it is not intended we should be; but every one—in that mould in which the grace of God has cast him—is to be here definitely and positively for the will of God. This

adjusts us in our relations here as responsible men, living in this world; the one thing that governs our life and conduct is the will of God.

In the epistle to Corinthians, the very first verse links on with the preceding epistle in this way, that Paul is an apostle by the will of God. But he talks in *this* epistle not exactly of *individual*, but of *collective* responsibility—collective responsibility viewed in connection with the locality in which each one of us lives. Let me turn to verses 1 and 2 of chapter i., because it may be important in connection with our subject of this afternoon. “Paul . . . unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both their’s and our’s.” I suppose that is all based upon the truth which we find in Romans. But notice again, “With all that in every *place*, etc.” Locality is before his mind; *but not only Corinth*. The instructions given in this epistle were not given only to the Corinthians, not only to Christians in that locality, but apply equally to every locality wherever there are Christians. Moreover, they are to “*all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,*” in that locality—that is, they are not addressed to any select number only, any tiny community, any part of the Church of God; but the *whole* Church of God in any locality; all Christians in the town or city are instructed according to what we have in these two epistles to the Corinthians. Thus, no one can say, “That is out of date.” Jesus Christ is Lord still. He abides, thank God, and all that is committed to His keeping is in safe keeping. The testimony is hid in the ark and nothing can take it out; the standard is irreducible. Wherever Christians are, in that locality these instructions hold good. In a double way uniformity is to be secured in the administration of the Assembly; namely, first by the written instructions of the apostle, inspired as he was by the Holy Ghost,

which remain to us for our guidance down to the end; and, second, it is to be secured by the unchangeable and universal Lordship of Christ; we call on the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. I think this important in connection with our subject this afternoon for this reason; the idea of several independent assemblies in one city is very widely held; and perhaps increasingly held, and is attractive to many people because of the way in which they escape exercise the one with the other. The result is a spirit of independency which is gravely opposed to the maintainance of that fellowship into which our faithful God has called us (see verse 9). The epistle is directed to *every locality* where there are Christians, and to *all the Christians* in that locality, so that that which is instruction for one meeting in a city is instruction for every meeting in that city. They are united by one common Lordship for all matters of administration.

This applies to binding and loosing also. Now we are in days of brokenness, and we cannot get back to the re-constitution and re-construction of that which, outwardly at least, has tumbled to pieces, but if we are to be faithful men this is what we are to be faithful to. I fear many drop out of testimony in regard of that very thing, and that there is not that subjection to the Lordship of Jesus, not that attention to the instruction of the apostle which the Spirit is here to produce.

In Corinthians, then, you get instruction for the saints in connection with the locality in which they stand. Wonderful it is to study all the detail of it; but—not to linger over it—turn to the Ephesian epistle. It is different from Corinthians in this way, that it speaks of what Christ is, and what the Assembly is, according to the counsels and purpose of God. That is not its local order and administration, seen to be governed by the written Word and revealed will of the Lord; rather is it the viewing of

the Church of God from the standpoint of God's eternal counsel and that which He has wrought in the saints in view of it. I will briefly refer to one or two things that seem to be salient features in it, so as to help in a more detailed study.

The Epistle to the Ephesians is the crowning ministry of the apostle Paul; he unfolds to us there the counsel and purpose of God. He says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. Observe carefully the Name of the One with whom the blessed God connects Himself in Ephesians i. 3. The central thought in that wonderful name is, of course, Jesus. We know Him. Have we not often sung, "How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds, in a believer's ear"? Here it is not exactly in *our* ear; we are introduced in this verse to "the God and Father" of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not so much what *we* think of Jesus, but what *God* thinks of Him and what God has set forth in Him. In Acts ii. we are told, "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." Both His Lordship and His Christhood are brought into view when we use the full name, the Lord Jesus Christ. I ask fellow-Christians not to use that name indifferently and thoughtlessly, but seek to consider what is unfolded in it; viz., that the One who bore the Name of Jesus here is now exalted by God's right hand, and at His right hand is made both Lord and Christ. It was the sphere where He is thus owned on earth into which those, on the day of Pentecost, were introduced. By their baptism they came under the Lordship of Jesus and into that circle where the fulness of blessing connected with His Christhood was available for them. This Person is the One in connection with whom God now speaks. His eye is upon the One who, in His life and death here, and in heavenly glory now, is found covered with pure gold; in every place and circumstance, and under every condition, in absolute suitability to the glory of God. He, and not Adam, is the One

in whom we see the divine pleasure. He is the One upon whom the eye of God can turn with unchanging delight, and in whom the testimony of God is abidingly preserved. This speaks to our hearts: we are encouraged, and drawn to share God's delight in Him. God, then, is presented here as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This I commend to you as the first great theme. With His eye upon that holy and blessed, and now glorified One, it is as though God turns round and says, What can I withhold? What is there that I may not do in connection with Him? The apostle, in intelligent response to that which God had bestowed, says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." The heart of God is opened without reserve, and all the wealth and resources of God in grace are opened too, so that every spiritual blessing is unreservedly poured out upon us and secured for us because God loves Jesus. It accounts for everything you find in the epistle.

Now, when you come to look at what follows, because of our being in Him, it is impossible to compass all the glories of Christ that are referred to. You turn your eye on a clear night to the sky and you see some stars that are unquestionably prominent. They are visible by their own light to the naked eye, and you can distinguish them. But you turn your eye on the milky way, and there is such a collection of glories that the mind cannot conceive their number. You cannot possibly speak of everything in detail. But here and there are great constellations that stand out and our eye notes them. In connection with Ephesians you get a milky way of celestial glories opened out in connection with the counsels of God and the delight of God in Christ. However to look at just one of them, see verse 9. After speaking of the blessing God has bestowed, he says, "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will," etc. That is, the second great

theme, that comes out in this epistle, the Headship of Christ. First of all, the fact that God has found a Man in whom everything is suitable to His glory and in connection with whom His heart has found rest and perfect complacency, and on account of whom He can open His heart in immeasurable blessing; next Christ is referred to and distinguished as head over all things in heaven and in earth. We must distinguish between "Christ" and "the Christ." Some of our black Central African friends used to marvel when we told them that the same sun which shone in their country shone in our distant land of Europe. Said one to me, when journeying from village to village. "I cannot make the sun out—it seems to rise in a different direction every day," he could not place himself. He had no compass, and when the sun rose it seemed always to rise opposite from where he thought it would. He said, "I have always had the impression that every fresh place we went to had a sun of its own." After all, it was the same sun everywhere. If we study the sun we see this ball of fire coming out of the horizon in the morning and taking its journey across the sky. Some inquire as to its movement and constitution, its revolutions and its spots, and puzzle their brains over the material of which that sun is composed. That is studying the sun by itself. Another may study it as it is known to be, the centre of a great solar *system*, this marvellous system in which we find ourselves. This earth is a planet in it; other planets revolve around it; the comets move in relation to it; the sun is the centre of this huge system. It is the same sun which we were considering before, when we were examining its own individual make-up; but then we considered the sun by itself. Now we think of it in relation to that whole system in which it moves, and as the centre around which the planets, etc., revolve. If you think of Christ, He is always the same Person, but "Christ" personally may be studied in His own personal glory;

but when you read of "the Christ" it seems to be more Christ in connection with the whole system that revolves around Him and the whole universal system of blessing. All things are to be headed up in the Christ in heaven and in earth. It includes the mystery of the Church and a great deal more beside, but if we read of "the Christ," it is Christ in relation to all that is His.

The third theme is *the Spirit*. That is in itself such a vast subject in the epistle that I can only commend it to your notice. If a person wanted a theological study he should sit down and make Ephesians his study for life. If you take up the subject of the Spirit of God alone in this epistle, the various themes suggested in connection with Him are a profound theological education. I hope our beloved brother who follows me this evening, may be able to set Christ before us in some such way, that our hearts may be drawn out to Him in bounding affection—but one just looks at the outline of things in Ephesians to see what it is we are to stand for, and be faithful to, in second Timothy days.

Then, not only is there the Spirit of God, the competent Person to undertake the making good in our souls of everything God has substantiated in Christ, but you have *the Church*, presented in so many different ways in connection with Christ that, as I was saying, you see a milky way of glories, yet cannot speak of them all.

Another thing is power. In chapter i. of the epistle you find power *toward us*. The apostle prays to God that He might make known to the saints the greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ. All God's power wrought in Christ, and took Him from the lowest place in death, where He had gone that He might make it possible to fulfil the counsels of God, up to the right hand of God. That

same power is in operation now in order to take us out of things here just as death and resurrection would take a man out of things here. The mighty power of God is to usward in order to give us this mighty uplift, that we might apprehend Christ in the place where He has gone. The Church already sees Him there, Head over all things. The Church, which is His Body, is to be enabled to be in full accord with Him, though still down here.

Then in chapter iii., the power is seen to be working in us. The Holy Spirit sets the Christ in the hearts of the saints, giving effect to all the counsels of God, enabling us to apprehend the breadth and length and depth and height of those counsels, and to know the love of the Christ which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled unto all the fulness of God.

Then, finally, in chapter vi., we have the mighty power from us, that can enable us to stand against the wiles of the devil.

In the midst of all the enemy's wiles and the saints' weakness, the apostle says to Timothy—this promising young man, eminently gifted, and desiring to get on, yet weeping because he saw the state of things around—"Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." It carries us back to the teaching of the apostle, to "the things which thou hast heard of me." We do not of course attain to teach others in five minutes. But would you not like, dear fellow Christian, brother or sister, to be numbered among the *faithful*, faithful to the full light God has given us as to the Christ (because, of course, Christian sisters can be faithful too). Would you not pray to be numbered among these faithful ones who, while, main-

taining the whole truth which God has taught us, are able to teach others also? Right down to the very end we should be able to stand in all the good of that which is revealed, in spite of the slide-away on every hand. May God grant this to be the case with us all. Every line of the truth remains true in Christ, and we may give nothing up.



## THE LORD'S TWOFOLD CLAIM UPON YOU.

Mark x. 17-22;

John vi. 66-69; 60-63; xx. 26-28; xiv. 1-3.

JOHN T. MAWSON.

**M**AY the Lord deeply impress upon our souls that solemn line of things that has been before us, that we may, from this time forward, as never before, be rendering to God that which is God's. As long as Adam did that in the garden, he was blessed; and all was well. But he refused God's claim—God who had made Himself known in His goodness as the Creator to him, and when he refused God's claim and listened to the devil whom he did not know, and who had never done him any good, then instead of the blessing came the curse, and instead of life came death, and as every man has followed in that foolish, self-willed way, death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Every man born into this world, except Christ, the Holy One of God, refused the claim of God and was a sinner.

When God created man, stamping upon him His own image, He did it with a great purpose in view. His delights were with the sons of men and He had great things in store for them, but it seemed as though His purpose was to be frustrated since man, having refused God's claim, had ruined himself and was found lying under the power of death, a poor, disobedient, self-willed dupe of God's arch enemy. What was to be done? God was not baffled, He had eternal life for

men who had brought themselves, by their sin, under the power of death. Something greater than they had lost by their folly—But how was that life to be reached? How was that life to be secured? The story is a wonderful one. From Godhead's fullest glory came our Lord. The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father was found here in the manger at Bethlehem, a little babe. That blessed Person had come to show us the will of God; He had come to tread the path that our feet should tread; and He had come to be eternal life to us. There it was, the will of God manifest in Him; no other will moved Him, but God's will, and there is God's claim upheld by Him, for in Him was eternal life for us; everything that God could desire in Him; everything that we could need in Him—the only begotten, full of grace and truth. He showed forth the path of God's will. That is one reason why He said to men, "Follow Me." The path of life is the path of God's will, and if we would tread that path of life we must see it in Him and follow Him. But there is another point of view from which we may look at this word of the Lord. "Follow Me." It was the Divine claim. He claimed the men whom He thus addressed. He was here in lowliness and meekness, going down even to the death of the cross, yet He was, notwithstanding, God over all. His feet trod the narrow, filthy streets of those Eastern cities, yet they were the feet of God. He was the Creator of all things; in His own blessed Person He was God over all, and so He had a right to every one of His creatures, and He put in His claim. And in Him God claims men, and all who own the claim have eternal life. He said to the rich young ruler, "Follow Me." Own My rightful claim upon you and eternal life shall be yours. This man had got many things which other people covet. He had a good reputation; he had riches; all that which made life comfortable and made something of him, but there was evidently in his soul a sense of need. "What

lack I yet?" he said, as Matthew's Gospel records. "Good Master," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He felt there was something out of the range of sight and sense, that his earthly goods did not supply. Up to that time he had been moving in a circle of which he himself was the centre, a material sphere, and it had not satisfied him fully; but there was a sense in his soul that outside of that sphere there was something that he had not grasped, there was eternal life, if only he could add that to what he already possessed he would have nothing more to wish for. So he says, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" The Lord first of all put before him the Commandments, God's will as the Creator, for His creatures upon the earth, which, if they kept them, would be life to them. Every one of us has failed in that just as this young man had failed, although he didn't know it. Having failed on that road another was opened up to him. "Go," says the Lord to him, "and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor." Oh! that tested him. I have no doubt the Lord laid bare that which was at the root of what held that young man to the sphere in which he lived—self was his centre; riches were his idol. The Lord did not say that to others; He said it to him. Yet, has it no application to us? There are people who imagine that their riches, or something that they possess naturally, will be of use to the Lord, and if they brought these things and threw them into His cause, how greatly that cause would be advantaged. The Lord does not ask for those things. He does not want them; it is YOU He is wanting. He could give to you a hundred-fold more of all those things if that would be good for you. It isn't that that He is seeking; it isn't what you possess that He wants, it is YOU. Beloved friends, the Lord would put in His claim in regard to every one of us. Above father and mother, wife, husband, or children, His claim must stand; it must be first, uncompromised, absolute. And in making

that claim He declares that He is God, for none but God has sovereign and absolute right over us. It is you He wants. He says, "I want you for Myself, and you need Me for yourself."

"Come," He said to the young man, "follow Me!" There is wonderful music in that word "COME"! The wooing note enters into it and the Lord is saying to us to-night, "COME." A crisis was reached in the life of this rich young ruler, a crisis I believe has been reached in the lives of some of us here. And the Lord is saying to us "COME." "You have filled your life with other things; and you have not been satisfied; you believed in Me long ago, but I haven't got *you* yet; you have trusted Me as Saviour, but I have not possessed you yet, and I have a right to you. Come." Thus He would talk with us. His words are easily understood. Isn't it a blessed thing that the greatest Divine verities are presented to us in words that children can understand. Why, that babe of a few months knows what you mean when you say, Come. If you stretch your hands out to it, and put the meaning of the word into your tone and smile, it knows what you mean, and will respond if it can trust you. To us the Lord stretches out His hands, and He says, "Come, come, follow Me"—HIMSELF. The engrossing Object of the heart, the Pattern, Guide, Leader—displacing self and every other claim. If we withhold ourselves from Him, it matters little what else we yield to Him, we are withholding from Him that which is His, and our lives are not righteous lives. Once, our whole lives were lived without reference to Him. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." And it was just there that we came face to face with the infinite, the unspeakable love of God. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." All that self-pleasing, that denial of the Divine claim, all that doing of our own will instead of God's, brought the blessed Son of God into the place of shame and death.

The young ruler reached this crisis in his life, and he refused the Lord's claim. He made his decision. He turned back again into darkness from the light to which he had come. He returned again to that circle of which he himself was the centre; away from the One who had rightly claimed to be his Centre. "He went away grieved for he had great possessions." We may be sure that the heart of the Lord was grieved. Oh, who can tell the grief that filled the heart of the Lord as He saw that young man choose earthly wealth to eternal life, and himself and his own will rather than Christ and the claims of God. How, beloved Christians, shall we treat this claim of the Lord? We have Gospel meetings in which we earnestly desire to bring sinners to decision for Christ—shall not this meeting take somewhat of that character in regard to us? What shall the answer be to this claim; this Divine claim on the part of the Lord?

What sort of path was it that the Lord trod? It was a path of rejection; He had to go into death. That comes out in chapter vi. of John's Gospel in a very definite way. The will of God is declared in that chapter. "This is the will of God," says the Lord Jesus in answer to those people's questions, "that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." The will of God and eternal life are inseparable, to refuse God's will is to tread the way of death. Then He presents Himself as the bread that had come down from heaven. It is not only that He has a Divine claim upon us, that He needs us because we belong to Him, but *He is indispensable to us.* Scotland is the land of cakes, and great is their variety, but you can do without them, but not without bread; bread is a necessity. You can do without dainties, but you must have bread, it is fundamental, and the Lord says, "I am the Bread of life," an absolute necessity to life. He presents Himself like that. Do we know Him as the One who is absolutely indispensable to us. The One, blessed be

His name, on the other hand, who is all-sufficient—but do we know Him as indispensable to life itself. How was He as the bread of life to be appropriated by us, who, when we saw Him, desired Him not? He changes the figure, and He speaks of His flesh and His blood. He had to die. The One who came from heaven had to go into death, and He went into death that He might communicate life to us; yes, to us, who had forfeited life because we had refused the claim of God, because we had refused the will of God and done our own, He came down into death for us, to die our death; to suffer our judgment, that He might communicate to us that which was the will of God for us, eternal life, a life that sin and death can neither spoil nor touch. And He says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you," but the one that eateth the flesh of the Son of Man, and drinketh His blood, hath eternal life."

It was a hard saying to these Jews that gathered about Him and to some who professed to be His disciples. It is a hard saying to-day—it was never a harder saying than it is to-day. You find a great number of His professed disciples here in Edinburgh who find it a hard saying. They don't like the death of Christ as the way of life and blessing, they would like Christ without a cross; they would like a Gospel without blood. They will not own that death lies upon them because they are sinners, and can only be lifted by the death of the One who never sinned. They are saying what the Jews said to Him when He hung upon the cross—"Come down and we will believe on you"—leave that cross behind; leave the suffering behind; be silent as to sin and its judgment, abandon the cross, we will believe on you. We know that if He had come down from the cross, it would be no use believing on Him. What use would He have been to us if those hands He stretches out to us were not nail-pierced hands? Apart from the cross He would have

been our Judge, He could not have said "Come" to any one of us. There is no Gospel without the blood. We come to the cross; we come to His death, we eat the flesh and we drink the blood of the Son of man, and we find life through His death. But what can that mean? Well, that which we eat becomes part of us; we appropriate and assimilate it; it is something that cannot be taken from us. Somebody may break into your house and steal some precious possessions that you have locked up in a very strong safe; that which you prize most and which you are keeping in the greatest security, as you think, may be taken from you but nobody can take from you that which you have eaten; that has become part of yourself, that is in you, and nobody can take it from you. But how do we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man? It is by faith and in love that we do it. What does the death of Jesus convey to you, dear Christian? Of course, it means that by His precious blood those sins of deepest dye have been washed as white as snow before God; all the guilt of your life-time has been obliterated. Blessed by His name! It means He bore the judgment for you. But why did He do it? He came to do the will of God; He manifested His love of the Father by going to that cross—and at the same time He showed out the love of God to us. But more, "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me." That was why He did it. Feed upon that—let that become the food of your soul, and you will realize that His claim upon you presses from another point. He has the right to put in His claim because He is God, but He has got the right that love gives, and the greatest verity that God has brought to light in His universe is this, that **self-sacrificing love has got an absolute right to the loved object.** That is demonstrated in the only instance of Solomon's wisdom that is given to us—the mother and the child. You remember the story. Two women claimed one living child, one wanted it because it

was *her own*, she loved it, the other wanted it out of envy and spite. "Bring a sword and divide it," said the king. "No," cried the true mother, "do not destroy it. I will sacrifice myself, and all my feelings for its sake, I will suffer, but it must live." "Give it to her," said the king, "the love that would suffer for it has the right to it." And all the power of the king's throne was behind the decision to give effect to it. And this is a great truth for us to-day. Self-sacrificing love has got an absolute right to the loved object. You see self-sacrificing love in the cross of Christ, and He who sacrificed Himself there has got a right to you and me.

The rich young ruler turned away from Him; all these professed disciples had turned away from Him, they couldn't bear the hard saying; and then He turned to the twelve and said: "Will ye also go away?" And Peter, speaking for the rest of them says, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Who is there beside Thee?—"Whom have we Lord, but Thee, soul thirst to satisfy?" To whom shall we go? "Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Holy One of God." They had watched the One in whom God's will was manifested; the One who was life and health to them; the One whose words were the words of eternal life, and they wanted none but Himself. Happy men!

But if we follow Him as they did, to where will He lead us? He said to those people who were turning away from Him, who were cavilling at His words: "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" He was rejected here below; the world wouldn't have Him; and He said, "The Son of Man is going back to the place from whence He came." He has gone up there; He is not rejected up there; He has been received and enthroned up there, and the question is, beloved Christians, are our hearts in the world that rejected Him, or in heaven that has received Him? Is He our treasure in that

brighter sphere? The young ruler refused to have treasure in heaven, because he would not let self go and the world go. We are not going to be as foolish as he was. Our hearts surely have followed Christ where He has gone. He is enthroned in brightest glory; soon everything will be put under His feet; soon every will opposed to God's will be broken and crushed, but not yet. "Not yet do we see all things put under Him." This is the "not yet" time, but in the "not yet" time, what have we? A cross here—a treasure there! A cross here—Christ there, and our hearts separated to Him, bound up to Him there. We have not seen Him, but we know Him and love Him, and gladly own His claims over us, surely, as Thomas did. The Lord said to Thomas—Thomas with the materialistic, unbelieving heart; Thomas that would believe nothing he couldn't feel or taste or see—"Come, Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." When Thomas saw the wounds, the wounds that in His love His Lord had suffered for him, he prostrated himself before Him and cried, "My Lord and my God!" Could he ever claim himself for himself again? If we come to that point, can we claim ourselves for ourselves? When we come to that point, must there not be this complete surrender; this yielding of ourselves to Him. The One who was wounded unto death because of His love to us is our Lord and our God. Here we see His two-fold claim upon us, and we cannot deny Him. If the glory of His Person, and the greatness of His love, dawns upon our souls, we shall be with Thomas, at His blessed feet, saying, "My Lord, and my God!"

What is the end of the road upon which He leads us? "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto

Myself: that where I am there ye may be also." When we turn our backs upon the earth, heaven is prepared for us. If we follow the Lord Jesus Christ, that is the end of the journey. "In My Father's house are many mansions." The normal Christian's life is to share His rejection here, and that is the place to which He will bring us. He says, don't think that there in heaven there is no room for you; don't think there is only room for Me there. There is room for you there. If that had not been so, I would not have asked you to follow Me. If I had not had something infinitely better to offer you than the earth can give you, I would never have said to you, Follow Me. I ask you to follow Me because in My Father's house are many mansions. There is a place there for you, and I love you so much I will not send an angel for you, I will not send a servant, I will come Myself. Nobody shall receive you into that place that I have prepared for you but I Myself. That is the destiny, that is the goal, that is the end to which He is leading; to that place He will bring all who have owned His Divine claim. He says, Follow Me; own My claim; I am all that you need; everything is in Me that is lacking in you--Come! come! follow Me!

May those words, pressing upon us as they do the Divine claim, be in our hearts in such power to-night, that every one of us may respond and say, "Lord, by Thy grace, that is the path for me; I fully and gladly own Thy Divine claim over me, and the claim that love that passes knowledge has given Thee!"

The Lord grant that it may be so for His name's sake.

## THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

(John xv. 9-17).

JAMES GREEN.

**L**ET us start our evening meeting with the passage that came before us in the reading this morning (Ephesians v., verses 1 and 2), connecting with it the xvth. chapter of John's Gospel, verses 9-17. Could anything be more precious to our hearts than these words of our Lord Jesus Christ? As we read them let the circumstances under which they were spoken, hold our hearts. He had just left the upper room where He had instituted the Supper, which was to be a continual reminder of His searchless love, and now, in company with His disciples, He has passed outside the city wall, and is treading the moonlit valley road which leads across the Kedron to Gethsemane. Beyond that He knew there was the betrayal—the mock trial—the cross, but ere He enters the garden where His holy soul is to be bowed under the awfulness of the cup He is about to drink, we hear Him speaking:—"As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love." If our blessed Lord were here amongst us to-night, might He not be saying the same in regard to that which He has brought before us in these meetings. Has He not spoken to us of His love that His joy might abide in us, and that our joy might be full? adding also—"This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you."

As we have listened to the things that God has brought before us by one servant and another, we have sat under the shadow of our Lord Jesus Christ with great delight, and His fruit has been sweet to our

taste, and now we are going back to the trivial round and the common tasks of life—soon to be separated one from another. But I am sure that I am expressing the thought of every heart in this hall to-night when I say, that there is a great desire in us that our lives and ways should be different from what they have ever been before. These meetings, beloved saints, are solemn in this respect, that they will not leave us the same as they found us. They will leave us either more dull than ever to the claims of God, or by His grace, with our hearts more warm and tender, more susceptible to His touch; more yielding to His gracious dealings, more purposeful to keep His commandments.

Might I just at the outset, allude to what I think is the great and subtle danger that may beset any of us, and if we know ought of the awful treachery of our own hearts, we shall admit it. There are things that hinder us from entering into and living in the path of God's will and having the joy with which He would fill our hearts. Let me allude for a moment to the incident recorded for us in the xvith. chapter of Matthew's Gospel, when, you remember, our Lord was about to speak for the first time to His disciples of that which was very dear to His heart—His Church. He was about to tell them of how He would build it on Himself, the Son of the living God, and before He did so, He uttered these words of warning to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matthew xvi. 6-12). And if you look up the parallel passage in Mark's Gospel, (viii. 15), you find that He also added "Beware of the leaven of Herod." Now I think that one or other of these three leavens may take such a subtle hold of our hearts, as effectually to prevent us entering the blessedness into which the Lord would lead us, and spoil the joy and communion of our hearts with Him. I believe that the three things are included in what the apostle John calls the Pride of Life. We may escape

the lusts of the flesh; we may escape, by His grace, the lust of the eyes, but the pride of life is a deadly and a subtle snare. What I see in the leaven of Herod is worldly pride—pride of being something in this world. It may be position; it may be more of this world's goods; anything that gives us a place in relation to worldly things would come under the designation of the leaven of Herod. But it is the subtle working of this of which we have to beware, for we may think that the cause of God will be advanced by the adoption of some of the world's methods and resources. Earthly position and influence may count for something with us, and we be unaware that these things shut the door upon the activities of the Spirit of God, and sap the joy of the Lord in our souls. The working of this leaven brought about the ruin of the early Church, and later on, spoilt the work of the Reformation.

The leaven of the Sadducees is intellectual pride, exalting itself against the revelation of God. It was never more in evidence than at the present time. Men are venturing to criticise the Word of God, intruding into things which they have not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind, and seeking to find out God by the specious deceit of human learning and a false philosophy. Although, through grace, we may escape this leaven in its grosser form, we need to beware lest an evil heart of unbelief ensnare our feet, and rob us of our portion. Full and absolute surrender to the full authority of the Word of God is our only safe guard. Or again, the leaven of the Pharisee is religious pride, that which seeks a place, not in the world, but amongst the saints of God; that which would exalt in a religious way, and surely there is nothing so terrible in the eyes of God as to take the Church of God—that which cost the life-blood of His own beloved Son—and use it as a platform for the exaltation of man in the flesh. It is easy to see the havoc wrought by this in the profession

of Christianity, but none of us is immune from this deadly poison. The root error of the Pharisees was their love for tradition. Our Lord's comment on this may be read in Mark vii. 1-13. It produces first of all, spiritual blindness, secondly, an exaggerated idea of ourselves, and lastly, the tradition of the elders has a greater place with us than the pure Word of God, which, where it commands, only brings forth lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, and forbearance in love. One thing only can preserve us from this leaven, viz., the love of Christ. Pride of any kind or sort cannot exist in the soul that is filled with the love of Christ. And thus we may well ask our hearts to-night as to how far we are abiding in His love. Beloved saints, has Calvary taken possession of your souls? Think of that great servant of God as he wrote those words, "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me." Let us individualise ourselves in the presence of that love for the moment as did the apostle, as though there were none other for whom Christ died. He died for you: He died for me. "See from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flowed mingled down"—for you and for me! But it was not only that He might save our individual souls that He loved us so and gave Himself—He loved the Church and gave Himself for it. How wondrous it was in His eyes, that pearl of great price! He saw its beauty, He estimated its value to Himself, and in view of that, to have it for His own, He went and sold all that He had and bought it. Yes, He loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

But let us return to the xvth. chapter of John's Gospel. On the surface of things, John does not speak of the Church, but the words of love with which that Gospel is filled express the very heart of the love of Christ for His Church. Paul speaks of the greatness of the position; the place, the structure, the eternal glory, but the beloved apostle John, who rested his head upon the bosom of our blessed Lord, sets forth the love

that fills the Church, the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. And the Lord speaks here wonderfully of it. He says, "As the Father hath loved Me, even so have I loved you." That is His love for His Church. Yes! Loved as the Father loves Him! Do we not stand amazed in the presence of such words? Can you measure the Father's love to the Son? Twice in this Gospel he speaks of the Father's love to Him very specifically. In chapter iii. verse 35—"The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands." He speaks again in chapter v. verse 20—"The Father loveth the Son and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth." Yes, and that is the love wherewith the Lord loves His Church; a love that will not rest content until He has given to His Church all that He possesses; a love that communicates all the deep secrets of the Father's counsels made known to Him. What intimacy! He will have us there in the glory with Him; there in all the bright radiance of that heavenly scene; there before the Father's face; there as the very love-gift of the Father to Him; but, at what a cost! Here He says, "Greater love hath no man than this, than a man lay down his life for his friends." He speaks of it in that way, because He values and counts upon our friendship for Him. He tells us of how He laid down His life. Could there be a greater claim upon us, to do whatsoever He commands? A beloved brother brought before us last night, the supreme title of the Christ that He bears. And I think there is nothing so enhances the claim of Christ upon us, as to think that He who bears the highest, greatest, and most glorious title that could be bestowed upon a Man—the Christ of God—stooped so low as to bear our sins. View Him, the Lord of glory, where He is in that bright and excellent majesty. He left the heights supreme and came down to Calvary in death to lie, that He might have us for Himself. He laid down His life for us. He tells us here in these verses what He

values, shall I say, in return for that love. Well, one hardly likes to put it like that. But surely when we think of the condescension of the love that stooped so low for such as we, we can only say, as Saul of Tarsus said, when he was captivated by the love of Him whose face he looked upon in the glory—"Lord, what would'st Thou have me to do?" Do you not feel that you would like to do something that would please Him? For love ever desires to be doing. He is higher than the heavens. What can we do for Him? He tells us in this very Scripture. "This is My commandment"—"I will tell you what you can do for Me. Further, I will put it in the very strongest way, I will command you." It is the command of infinite love, leaving us with no option but to obey. Angels fly at His bidding, they do His commandments—Michael, the archangel, yields swift and certain obedience to the voice of His word. And shall we be neglectful or find excuse for not obeying when He commands us, not simply by the word of command, but by His own most infinite love that gave Himself, saying, "This is My commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." But, Lord, is not the demand too great? How can we love one another as Thou hast loved us? Yes, but that is His command. He does not say as much as, but after the same character. How has He loved us? He has loved us by going beneath all that we were that He might lift us into His love. And you and I, beloved saints, are to think of the members of His Body, of those for whom He died, wherever they may be on this wide earth, as objects very dear to Him, and to love them not in word only but in deed and in truth. Let us confess our poverty in such love. He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. He gives us here in this passage some reasons for loving the brethren. Commencing at the 12th verse He says, "Ye are My friends." We are to regard each other as friends of Christ. And if He has

laid down His life for each one of us, what a wonderful regard we should have for all saints, lovingly desirous of sharing with them all the riches He has given us in Himself. They, with us, owe all to the purchase of His precious blood. Of this we are reminded whenever we partake of the Supper of the Lord, for it is the fellowship of His blood. But then, all saints are also one Body, precious to Him; those whom He considers necessary for the bringing out of His glory; those whom He has gathered out from the wreck and ruin of this world to adorn that glory and to be the objects of His love. Surely that is a powerful motive for loving one another. Again He says, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." Why, He has brought us into the same love wherewith the Father loves Him, and He has communicated to us the very thoughts of the Father's heart. Failing to abide in this love, the saints of God have been scattered every one to his own, and our communion together of the things that Christ has revealed to us of the Father's has been sadly interrupted. What a wonderful thing it would have been if the saints had been kept together in the Father's love. Alas, the enemy has wrought only too successfully in scattering, and the effect of that has been that we are impoverished, and in result, must deplore the leanness that we heard of yesterday afternoon.

Then He says in the 16th verse—"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." Do you think He has repented of His choice? Oh, no! But there are some of the saints very far away; and it is only too true that many of us are cold and many of us are worldly, and many of us are occupied with anything but His love, and yet—yes, you know—that underneath it all we are His. Is He disappointed with His choice? No! We may well sorrow over such poor returns to

His love, nevertheless, every believer in His precious name is a part of His choice. And for what has He chosen us? He says, "I have chosen you and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." He has chosen us that there might be reproduced in us the very likeness of Himself, to remain for eternity. What is it that delights the Father's heart? It is that which presents to Him the image and likeness of His beloved Son. Does not this put love to the saints upon the highest level and provide the most powerful motive for loving one another? If, instead of finding fault with each other, if instead of holding our brethren aloof, we would recognize that they are the very choice of Christ, and chosen that His image should be reproduced in them, would we not carry to them the words of His love? Would we not seek them? Would it not be our great desire—not to hold them at arm's length—not to ignore them so that we scarcely know whether they are well or ill—but to carry to them the blessed words of Him who loves them and has chosen them that they might be like Him? As we go forth from this place to-night, may our hearts be more deeply affected by that infinite love of Christ for His Church, and may we yield ourselves to Him in order that His love may flow through us to all the saints of God wherever they can be found. You say it is difficult to find them; difficult to get at them. It is difficult to get at them, and I rather think that when the apostle says in the last days difficult times shall come, he alludes to the difficulty there would be in getting at the saints. But you can reach them, in the first case as he did, by the way of prayer. The shortest way is up through Him who is upon the throne of glory, and He has wonderful ways of doing things if we will only yield ourselves to His hands and let Him use us, in His own way. But do we really pray for all saints?

We have come pretty much to the end of things in the history of the Church, and at the end of every

dispensation things become very individual, that is to say, you must start at home; you must begin with number one. If others will not follow, at all events you must start in this most blessed pathway. So in the xivth. chapter of John, verse 20, the Lord says, "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them." What does that mean? Have them on our bookshelves? Shut them up in a box? Lock them up in a cabinet? Memorize them? It means much more than that—it means to keep them so that we do them. Do you think that the Lord takes pleasure in those that are simply hearers and misers of His Word? Nay, it is *doing* that He looks for, and by that He measures our love for Himself. If He gives a commandment, He gives a commandment to be done, and if He gives a commandment, you may be very sure that there is grace for you to fulfil it. We need not look at our own resources—our resources are in Him. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." I think it was said this morning that the Lord does not tell us to love Him—no, but He tells us something else, He tells us to love each other, and in so doing, we love Him because all the saints, whoever they may be, are members of His Body; we are part of Himself. The weak, the feeble, those greatly instructed in the things of God or those who have only learned the very elements of it, all are loved with "that great love, that rests on Him in those bright courts above," and that which you and I do to them, we do to Him. Yes—"He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me"—that is the way to love Him, by loving one another. And look at the result. As you read this verse—does it not put a thrill through your soul? "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love

him"—I will pour out My affection upon him. You are acquainted with the way a mother loves all her children—yes, but sometimes, just to show how pleased she is with some small act of obedience, she takes the little one in her arms at bedtime and just loves it. That is the special intimacy of love, the children know what this means. That is what the Lord wants to do with you and me. He wants us to do as He commands, and His commandments are not grievous, then lay our heads upon His bosom and let Him love us and tell us of the Father's love, and show Himself to us. "I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." Yet further, He goes on to say (verse 23) "If a man love Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The word that reveals the Father's heart, opens the eternal home of love in which all the saints have part, and gives the capacity for loving all saints, yea, puts us under the obligation of so doing. "We ought to love one another" (1 John iv. 11). Beloved saints, I cannot explain it—I can only say to you I long to know it, don't you? to know the abiding love of the Father and the Son—to be brought into those Divine affections—the Son's love to the Father; the Father's love to the Son, and then rooted and grounded in love, able to comprehend with all saints the height, the length, the depth, the breadth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and so to be filled into all the fulness of God. That is His desire for us. It is magnificent. The world surges around us the darkness deepens, but here is the sanctuary of peace, light in our dwelling. Here is that which will lift us into the joy of His own heart. "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

May He send us forth from this place in this joy, keeping us as we go to the various places in which we are set—the home, the business, and the places of service for Him—with this love filling and flooding our hearts and flowing forth, so that as He shall give the opportunity and direct, we may feed His sheep, shepherd His lambs, and follow Him until He shall come.



## CHRIST MAGNIFIED.

F. B. HOLE.

**I** WILL ask you to turn to an Old Testament Scripture—Psalm cxxxii., verses 1-9. Then verses 13 to end. I shall read also the two succeeding Psalms.

There are various ways of reading the Psalms. You may read them prophetically, and that with very great profit, for they are highly prophetic. You may read them to find Christ pre-figured, and there is always great profit in this. Again, you may read them in a historical way, for many of them are dated for us, and that, too, is profitable. To-night, it is in that historic way that I want to speak of Psalm cxxxii.

I must, therefore, speak to you a little about David and his experiences, for this Psalm throws the greatest possible light upon why it was said of David that he was a man after God's own heart, in spite of his glaring defects, in spite of his most atrocious sin. I wonder if you have ever noticed what David is led to say of himself in chapter xxviii. of the first book of Chronicles. I will read from verse 4, "Howbeit, the Lord God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever: for He hath chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father He liked me to make me king over all Israel." Do you know anybody else in the Bible of whom it is said that God liked him? Yes, you may say, there are many. We have just been hearing about love; why, the love of God flows out to all! Ah, but there is a very great

difference between God loving and God liking. Of course He loved David, but He liked David. "*He liked me.*" It would be a very fine thing, dear friends, if one great result of our meetings here were this, that we are conformed more to His thoughts, that so we may become the kind of people that God really *likes*.

Now God likes a man who is of the stamp that you have recorded in this remarkable Psalm. And what it shows us is this, that from the very outset of his history, David was a man who seized the Divine thought and made the Divine objective his objective, so that all his life was centred in one great overmastering passion, one great desire. Here in this Psalm you are taken behind the scenes and shown the secret spring of the things that David did.

He had, as the first verse reminds us, many afflictions, for David was raised up of God in a very dark day. It was not the beginning of a new dispensation, but still it was the beginning of a new movement of God's Spirit in the midst of Israel. The old order of things had come down with a crash; the Priesthood had most miserably and disgracefully failed in the godless sons of Eli; the Ark had been treated as a mascot—brought down into the camp of Israel with a superstitious idea that, if they brought down this sacred vessel into their midst, the luck would turn in their direction. The Ark of God, the precious kernel of that whole typical system, all else was the shell, it set forth Christ enshrined as the heart and centre of all God's thoughts. They took this precious kernel of the whole system, and brought it down into their midst as a kind of charm to turn the battle tide in their favour. And God would have none of it, and, in His just anger, He let His glory pass into the enemy's hands. Once among the Philistines, He vindicated His glory, and finally, afraid of it, the harassed Philistines sent the ark back, although that did not relieve the

Israelites of their responsibility. Then, further, even godly Samuel had sons far inferior to himself, and the people got tired and they said, "Make us a king"—we don't want to be peculiar any more, give us a king. And God let them have a king, in His wrath.

Saul came on the scene as the man chosen to be the deliverer of His people from the Philistines who were treading them under their feet. A giant fellow he was, but instead of defeating the Philistines, his days were spent in chasing and harrying David, and David was plunged into deep afflictions. And what was the great overmastering desire that marked David, think you? He was being chased over the land of Israel, hunted as a partridge upon the mountains. Then it was that "He swore unto the Lord; he vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob."

It was not surprising that under such circumstances David should aver to the Lord and utter a vow. The surprising thing was that he did not vow, "If the good Lord will grant me a decent house to live in, where I can be free from this everlasting maltreatment on the part of Saul and his men, if He will give me a decent little cottage and a comfortable bed to lie on, then I will serve Him most devotedly the rest of my life"—anything for a peaceful and quiet life! Instead, he vowed, saying, "Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." So David, when he was being hunted over the mountains does not think of himself at all: it is the Ark of the Covenant and the glory of his God. The Ark had been lost; where it was nobody seemed to care. God had lost His place in the midst of His people, and it is far more important, said David—*young man though he was*—that God should have His place than that I should have my place. Far better that God should have a habitation, where He

shall go into His rest, than that I should be free of my tormentors and enter into my rest. Oh, David, well done! Instead of self being the centre of your thoughts, you are a man that cares for the glory of God. You are a man that is able to seize what is the Divine thought, and to say, "Look, if that is God's objective, then by His grace, it shall be my objective, and I will not give myself any rest until the Lord, who has been set aside and dethroned from the midst of His people, shall be enthroned and shall have a resting-place for Himself and for His Ark."

You may say to me, now translate that into the language of modern experience. Well, we live in a very dark day, when God is still being set aside: a day in which man is going forward at a great pace and Christ is being ousted from His place. We live in a day, when the professing church has practically dethroned from the place which is ostensibly His. No place for the Lord. Some years ago we were hearing a great deal of how the nations wanted to have "a place in the sun." All around us men are fighting for place. One of the saddest things I think I ever heard was the saying of a man who shall be nameless. He said, "Well, I am very thankful that God has given me a *place amongst the brethren.*" If I should name him, I should name a man who wrought much mischief in the interests of Christ. A place—a place for himself—a little place amongst the brethren, or a little place in another circle! Oh, that is the natural tendency of all our hearts. It was not David's mind. If you are to be the kind of man or woman that God likes, you will not be seeking your place, but a place for the Lord. You see, the Church of God is really the place for the Lord in the enemy's land. "On this rock I will build My Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Thank God, that is true, the Church has been left down here in the scene of Christ's rejection, under the charge of the Spirit of

God, and thus put into communication with heaven, so that Christ may still be represented in the place of His absence, and that He might have a place, as the Heir of all things, in the Church which has been given Him out of this rebellious world. Oh, alas! alas! how little is Christ considered! Men talk about their plans and their schemes and their doings and the advancement of their causes, and there is no place for the Lord. Are we not all of us more or less guilty in this thing? God grant that it may be our great and increasing desire, that He may have His place.

Now see how it worked out in the case of David. He says, "We heard of it at Ephratah" (verse 6); the "it" plainly being the Ark of the Covenant, and "at Ephratah," indicating that it was very early in his history, in his boyhood days, at the old home. Then he says, "We found it in the fields of the wood." I understand that "the fields of the wood" is just a translation of the name Kirjath-jearim. That is exactly where he did find it. You can turn up 1 Chronicles xiii. 6, and see. He heard of it as a boy at Ephratah; he found it at Kirjath-jearim, and there he carried out his vow. We turn to the early chapters of the second book of Samuel, that is what we find. As soon as Saul was slain, David came to the throne. First Judah owned him, then the people came to him, and at last he became king over the united nation. Then David made war upon the Philistines, and immediately after he had overcome and smitten them with great slaughter, he said, "Come, we will get the Ark." As soon as there was a possibility of a place for the Lord he said, "Give the Lord His place." He began by making a mistake, but in spite of the mistake he finally brought the Ark back to Zion, which was the appointed place.

Now, it was not merely David's choice. We might think, from the 5th verse, that it was, and we might say, "Well, can we not find out a place for the Lord; are we not at liberty to choose any place which

seems nice and convenient to us?" No, no! David found the place that was God's place—you will find that very clearly in verse 13. After he brought the Ark back, David says, "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou, and the Ark of Thy strength." "*For the Lord hath chosen Zion. He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell: for I have desired it.*" David found the place of the Divine appointment, the place that the Lord had chosen, and to that place for the Lord he brought the Ark of the Covenant.

We are sometimes too much occupied with David's mistake, but in spite of the mistake the vow was fulfilled. So with Peter. Peter had a desire that was right enough. "Lord," he said, "I am ready to go with Thee both into prison and to death." There was self-confidence. Yes, but there was very genuine love! Peter had to be rebuked; Peter had to learn his feebleness; and when he had learned it then, as recorded in the last chapter of John's Gospel, you have the Lord telling Peter that he should do, in the power of God, what in his own strength he miserably failed to do. The people of God often seize a Divine thought, and then they attempt to do it in their own strength. Moses did. He knew he was to be the deliverer of the people, and he slew the Egyptian, but God had to give him forty years quiet waiting at the back of a desert; held on the leash by God until he was fit to be sent. He was well broken in when he went back; so well broken in, that he came back the meekest man in all the earth, and in perfect surrender to the will and power of God. So with David, when he brought the Ark up into its place.

Now, I appeal to you all, young men and young women especially, have you got hold of the Divine centre? Have you seized the Divine objective? Is God's thought going to be your thought? Is Christ the supreme object? If you are going to be such a

Christian, then it will be said of you, the Lord likes you. Is the result of our meeting together here in Edinburgh going to be for every one of us greater devotion to the Lord? Oh, for the exaltation of Christ! Oh, that Christ may be seen! That is it.

Well, there are certain great results that flow from this. The Psalm does not close without revealing to us what flows from God's objective being made man's objective, and that is, that there is most evident *blessing*. At the end of the Psalm you have the Lord accepting what David did, saying in fact, "David, you have done the right thing; you have brought the Ark into the right place." The Lord immediately adds, "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread." Emphasize in your thoughts for one moment those two words, "I will *bless*." "I will *satisfy*." The blessing into which Christians are brought is soul-satisfying blessing. How few satisfied people there are! Never was the world so full of objects of art and of delight; never were there so many charming and beautiful things, and yet men to-day are more absolutely dissatisfied than they ever were. Everybody has a grievance; everybody is ready to grumble. Are we Christians, I should like to ask, marked by soul satisfaction? Do you, where you work, in the circles where you move, give people the impression of one who, not like the majority of folk, has reached satisfaction. Oh, when God blesses and when our souls are fully in the enjoyment of His presence, we become satisfied. We have read, perhaps, of those great cyclones that sweep over tropical lands. Somewhere in the centre of those terrific hurricanes there is a great calm. There is a devastating wind for hours, followed by a deep calm for ten or twenty minutes, and then the wind begins to rage in the opposite direction. That means that the centre of the cyclone has passed over our heads. The tumult of the world is like the cyclone. The devil himself is the source of it, but at the centre there is a

calm. To have the soul centred on Christ, God's Son, means blessing and it means satisfaction.

We pass on and we come to Psalm cxxxiii. If Psalm cxxxii. is the Psalm of the Ark, that is, of Christ the central Object of all God's thoughts and ways, Psalm cxxxiii. is the Psalm of the Ointment, that is, of the Spirit, who has descended from our exalted Head. Now in this Psalm you have not blessing but unity. We have been dwelling upon the Spirit, and the unity of the Spirit is strikingly pictured in this Psalm. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Is it not so? Do we not experience the pleasantness of it. I think we do. But some may ask how this very desirable thing, this very rare and precious unity, is to be produced. It is the experience of most of us that there is nothing easier than to get disunity—so many minds, so many thoughts—for people are all various; all taking different angles of vision; all seeing things from a different point of view! Well, the Psalmist begins to explain what unity is like.

First of all it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that special ointment which was appointed according to Divine directions in Exodus. It was poured upon Aaron's head in his consecration, and it ran down, say the Psalmist, "upon the beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments." This ointment that began at his head diffused itself to the very extremities of his robes, to the very fringe. Now unity is like that. It all begins from the Head. It all begins, mark you, from the priestly Head—not the kingly head, for it was not like the ointment that was poured on David. The ointment that was poured on the priestly head ran down on the priestly garments. We, through grace, are constituted a spiritual priesthood, and put into touch with the great exalted Priest in heaven, and the Spirit and the grace of our Priestly Head, flowing down upon us diffuse themselves among

us, and so produces unity. All begins with Christ at the right hand of God, though it comes down to the utmost skirts of His garments here on earth.

Then the Psalmist changes the figure, and turns to the realm of nature. It is like the dew of Hermon. The four following words are in italics and should be omitted. It should read, "The dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion." Hermon was a very majestic mountain, the loftiest peak of Lebanon, and the Israelite would, on a clear day looking northward, see its snow-capped peak glistening in the heavens—a lovely sight. And the dew of Hermon comes down upon the comparatively insignificant mountains of Zion. Christ is Himself the apex of all God's glory, and upon the humble hills, representing His people, the dew descends. When everybody is viewing things in relation to Christ; when the supreme question is, not what I think, but what Christ and His Word, as the authority in the midst of His people; when everybody is zealous that Christ should be in His proper place, what copious dew descends upon us from Him. Unity is to be found in proportion as the grace of His Spirit is upon us.

And then we turn to Psalm cxxxiv., the last of the Songs of Degrees. And if Psalm cxxxii. is *the Psalm of the Ark*, Christ the centre of all God's thoughts and ways; and cxxxiii. is *the Psalm of the Ointment*, the Spirit's gracious influence from the exalted and glorified Head, producing unity; Psalm cxxxiv. is *the Psalm of the uplifted hands*, or, as we can say, *the Psalm of the uplifted heart*. "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord"—evidently His priestly servants, because it says "which by night stand in the house of the Lord," and thus you have worship. Now, no earthly sanctuary have we, but still we are constituted a spiritual priesthood.

The world walks in the feeble light of Science. The torch of philosophy is burning, but it is very dark

and the light does not penetrate far. Man has his little lights and is well pleased with the little toys that he has himself created, but the night persists, and Israel, who has rejected her Lord, remains silent. She has not a word of praise. The poor Jew talks about building his university to show us how he can diffuse his light, but he has nothing to give us, nothing in the way of light, nothing of praise to offer to God. You and I are brought into this priestly place, and whilst it is the night of Christ's rejection, I think we can see the first dawning of the day. We, who are privileged to stand in the sanctuary by night, may lift up our hands and bless the Lord.

It is a great privilege to be called to serve the Lord in these dark days. We are poor feeble folk indeed if we measure ourselves by the great men before us. If we read Hebrews xi. how small we feel, yet we are, at the end of this dispensation, called upon to stand for the interests of Christ just before He comes again, called to keep the light burning, and in the sanctuary to lift up our hands, giving praise and worship to Him. "Behold, bless ye the Lord all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord." Oh, how rich the praise that goes from our hearts when Christ is the Object of all.

At this point we may be inclined to think, well, that is the top note; you cannot get any further than that. But the story does not end with the uplifting of our hands to God. The last verse says, "The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion." The matter stands thus: we give the Lord our praise, and the Lord says I will roll it back in blessing. The Lord blesses and always has the last word. The last word of the Songs of Degrees is this. It is not the climax when we praise in the sanctuary of God.

Would the Lord need the praise of such little creatures as we when He has the praise of ten thousand

times ten thousand angels? Yes, there is a sweet note of praise from His saints that will excel amid the praise of creation. There is nothing to be compared with the sweetness of the song of those who by His blood have been redeemed. Nobody can preach the Gospel, except those who have been saved by grace. It was an angel who came to Cornelius and said, "Send for a man named Peter." He might have said, "Oh, angel, to save time, why not tell me yourself?" The angel could not do it. No one can do it except having been a sinner, he has felt the rapture of being redeemed. So no one can praise like the redeemed saint, and we must lift up our hands in the sanctuary and bless the Lord, and as our praise rolls upwards, God rolls it back in blessing.

All began with David as a stripling, putting his affection upon God's interests, and saying that it was much more important that God should have His place than that he should be comfortable. May we be marked by the same thing. May Christ be magnified, magnified in our body, magnified in His people. If Christ be magnified there will be unity and worship; praise and worship to God, and blessing still rolling back upon God's people.



## RECONCILIATION.

H. J. VINE.

**Romans v. 10, 11; xi. 13-15; 2 Corinthians v. 17-21.**

**F**OUR times, beloved, we have "*reconciliation*," as such, spoken of in the New Testament, and the very fact that it crowns the first great division of the Epistle to the Romans, shows its importance. For when we reach this 11th verse—the mountain peak of the first part of this epistle—we see it shining with that crowning truth—"We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have *now received the reconciliation!*" And in chapter xi., verse 15, we are told that the casting away of the Jews is the "*world's reconciliation.*" Not that the world is yet brought into reconciliation, but, in its bearing, it is not confined to once-favoured Israel, nor to the remnant called from among Israel, but it is towards the world! There we see the width of the thought of reconciliation from God's side at the present time! But when we come into the vth. chapter of second Corinthians, we read of the "*ministry*" of that "*reconciliation*,"—that which, at the present time, is maintained by God; and then the "*word*" of that "*reconciliation*" given to the apostles in view of our being brought into all the joy and the blessedness of this wonderful reconciliation. It is important for us to recognize this, brethren. You may depend, the place given in Scripture to this truth shows that God would have it made good in power in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, so that the joys of reconciliation may be ours! The prodigal would rejoice when he came home from the far country and was

brought inside for his father's joy and delight, clothed in his presence in the best robe, with the ring on his hand, and the shoes on his feet. I know it is joy on the divine side which that xvth. chapter of Luke shows—the chapter of divine merry-making—giving the joy of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but then there is also our side in the presence of the 'Father; therefore, the believer is suitably received where the Father's merry-making is known, where the feasting, the music, and the dancing tell of the rich fulness of the reconciliation and of the joy of God over the one who is brought nigh! We prayed recently that we might taste a little of the fatness of God's house, that we should—as was called attention to yesterday afternoon—be as those who are of God's royal family, and not be lean! If there be great provision made for the regal families of earth, we may be sure that God's provision for the heavenly royalty is not limited! And how good it is, at times like these, when we are together, to be led into some of the abundance of God's house. Aye, "and they that dwell" there—because there is no reason why we should not dwell there, in spite of all the breakdown and failure in Christendom—it is said, "will be still praising Thee!" God will be praised! and He would have us in the good of that which He Himself has provided! It is not proposed for us to go and put Christendom right. Do we think we are going to put *that* right? Are we so proud that we think we can do what the apostles could not do when they were on earth? No, beloved brethren, but, thank God, inside the house at the present time there is abundance for us in Christ, so that we may be kept above the breakdown and the failure.

Now, let us see first of all what cannot be reconciled. Oh, how we have learned that lesson—haven't we? Yes, we have learned experimentally that "sin in the flesh" cannot be reconciled to God. It cannot come into the rich provision that is known

inside in the power of the Spirit. Some, however, instead of settling that matter in communion with God in their souls, are trying to find joy in the things of the world. And then, after all, it is a poor, trifling affair, the little bit they do get. Oh, God desires us to be in the deep satisfaction of reconciliation. What is needed to-day is inside ministry, that, by the Spirit, we may be so in the blessedness of what is ours before God. we are glad to leave alone these poor, worldly trifles. No, sin in the flesh cannot be reconciled! Moreover, the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God! It is enmity against God! Let us take this home to ourselves. It is not subject, "neither indeed can be" (Romans viii. 7). We might say this without any lack of reverence, God Himself could not make sin in the flesh or the mind of the flesh "subject to the law of God,"—He could not do it! Did He not deal with man in the Old Testament during all those long centuries of probation, and prove fully for our edification that man in the flesh was incapable of being reconciled to God? Sin in the flesh is neither forgiven nor reconciled, it was "*condemned*" utterly in the sacrifice of Calvary. But not only can sin in the flesh not be reconciled, neither can the spirit demons—Satan himself, their chief, and all his hosts, are incapable of reconciliation. They fell, and there is not one word that I know of in the Bible to show that ever there was a proposal to reconcile them to God. I know the Universalist says the "*all things*" of Colossians i. 16 and the "*all things*" of verse 20 both embrace the universe; but it says, all things "*in*" the heavens and "*upon*" the earth, whatever *positions* of dignity are named there—these will be reconciled! But the fallen spirits, whether great dignities and intelligences of mighty power, as Satan himself, or menial demons, are irreconcilable; therefore, their part will be eternally with all those who go in the way that ends where the devil and his angels go—outside the scene of joy, happi-

ness and blessedness for ever—in the lake of fire. Neither sin nor Satan is ever reconciled to God. But then, you ask, “Who are reconciled?” Glory be to God, poor sinners like ourselves, who were once enemies, far from Him! Yes, those that had sinned against Him, those who were enemies, are “reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” Brethren, we would not be here in the communion and holy joy of God’s favour to-day if that were not true. But how could a holy God—how could One whose throne is established in justice and judgment—bring a guilty sinner, an enemy, into reconciliation for His own joy and for His own pleasure?—how could He do it? He had resource for this in His beloved Son. He had Christ, and so we read, “*Him who knew not sin He has made sin for us, that we might become God’s righteousness in Him.*” That is how God could bring it to pass! That, if you notice, remarkably enough, ends the vth. of second Corinthians. I often used to wonder why it came in there so abruptly, but it is just explanatory of how God could have us righteously in the blessedness of this reconciliation. He could only do it by making His Son sin upon the cross, who knew no sin, and through that, opened the way whereby, in perfect consistency with divine holiness, we could be there as the very “righteousness of God” in the full joy of reconciliation! I love that word “*reconciliation.*”—Don’t you, beloved brethren? God did not need to be reconciled to us, but we needed to be reconciled to Him, and His grace has brought us to receive the reconciliation Christ’s death secured. You may depend it means all the best you know even in the natural sphere; but then, learning it in God’s way, it will make us, shall I say, happier saints as we understand it intelligently. It is a great day for our souls when, by the Spirit, we see that we are in God’s presence suitable to God’s own holy character, and naturally, when we take our place in His presence with spiritual intelligence, He gets more thanks and praise

then, brethren! He gets more worship! The meetings take on a very blessed character as we are before Him intelligently in the joy of reconciliation! For, if you notice, when He speaks of this reconciliation—whilst saying they are sinners and enemies who are reconciled—He indicates that there is a lot more in it than simply individuals being reconciled. We read of being reconciled “in one body” in Ephesians ii. In the vth. chapter of Romans He speaks of our receiving “*the reconciliation.*” What is that? Oh, you say, I am reconciled as a sinner who has believed. Yes, thank God, so are all true believers! But what is this reconciliation?—what is this wonderful thing here spoken of? Well, it is something like *salvation*, and yet there is a difference. You see someone saved, and he says, “Thank God, I am saved.” Well, he has good reason to! but then, he may be making more of his salvation—of the deliverance itself—than of his Saviour. The salvation which is ours to-day “is in Christ Jesus” our Lord. It is a grand thing to be set up in “the salvation which is in Christ Jesus!” That salvation, mark you, brethren, is ours, in every part of it. We have that salvation as regards our souls in the first aspect; and, day by day, we are proving it livingly, it may now be in Edinburgh especially, in its second aspect; and presently we shall experience it in its third aspect—when our Saviour from heaven will change our bodies of humiliation and fashion them like unto His own body of glory! It is ours!—the salvation which is in Christ Jesus—covering the past, the present and the future. And it is the same with the reconciliation. We have received it, but there are three great aspects. Take *redemption*,—you have again the same thing. Through redemption, it says in Romans iii., “We are justified freely.” Mark, that is how God does it!—“through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus!” Well, this redemption in Christ Jesus also has three parts. We possess it, thank God, in regard to our

souls; but then, we have not got it yet as regards our bodies. We are still in bodies that are connected with the first creation. We have the firstfruits of the Spirit now, but we are still in bodies linked with the first creation, and that is how it is we have very bright saints often groaning. I was sitting beside one awhile ago, a very happy saint, but groaning. There will be no groaning in heaven, brethren. It says, "We groan within ourselves." Now! Even Paul did. And so do all who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, why? Because we are waiting for the second aspect of redemption—"the redemption of our bodies!" And if the Lord came this afternoon, He would wake every sleeping saint, and the living ones would all be changed, and, in a moment, we should all be in glorified bodies! The third aspect is also yet to take place, as we were seeing in the reading on Ephesians, when "the redemption of the purchased possession" takes place. The full redemption which is in Christ Jesus is ours, and we, as believers, have been redeemed, but we wait, as we have seen, the redemption of our bodies and of the inheritance of the purchased possession, which He is going to take up in redemption power and fill the universe with redemption glory. It is similar as to reconciliation. We were reconciled when we were enemies, through Christ's death which put all our sins away—through the death of God's beloved Son—through what He did upon the cross! We have that part of reconciliation—"we have been reconciled!" But then, brethren, not only are we before God as reconciled, but we have received in faith as a whole "the reconciliation!" It goes a step further than our being reconciled to God as individual sinners. We have that in Romans. Now in Ephesians ii., as we said, we see that we are reconciled to God in one body by the cross. Many thank God for their individual blessing, but they are missing this side of it—"reconciled in one body to God." We were saved when we were

redeemed by the blood of Christ, and we were also reconciled to God,—not only to go to heaven by-and-bye, but even “NOW” are we reconciled in one body to Himself. I believe, beloved brethren, one of the most precious things on earth at the present time for us, is that the reconciled of God should be together before Him in the truth of being one body. I shall not then be in a meeting saying, “Oh, I won’t take part because so and so is here!” I shall not be looking at someone in the flesh,—James so-and-so, or Thomas so-and-so—no, brethren, leaving distinction in the flesh behind, we shall be there in the sense of our being one body, in a new creation in Christ, reconciled to God by the cross, where sin in the flesh was condemned. If I am in communion with God I shall be there in the joy of reconciliation. And, being reconciled in one body to God, walking together simply in the truth, presently we shall prove the third aspect of reconciliation, and then, on the ground of that same work on the cross, we shall see all things reconciled to God—all things in the heavens and upon the earth, whether they be “thrones or dominions or principalities or powers,”—whatever they are—all will be reconciled, for the fulness was pleased to dwell in Christ, in view of the reconciliation which we have already, and in view of the reconciliation of all things eventually, on the ground of peace having been made by the blood of His cross. You may be sure, beloved brethren, this reconciliation is a glorious thing, and faith has received it. So Paul speaks to the Romans, “We joy in God through our Lord Jesus, by whom we have now”—before the fulness of it is seen in splendour and glory—“received the reconciliation!” What does all this result in? “JOY IN GOD!” We are to be a joyful people, going through the world in the joy of these great things—of this vast wealth which is ours! I thought it was very helpful last night the way the truth came out. We need it in these days. We need inside ministry too, or faithful

men will soon disappear. Faithful men are needed as regards the truth, and happy men enjoying the bounty of our true Solomon's table.

In Ephesians i. we have *the administration* that flows outward from the fulness that is in Christ, but in Colossians i. we have *the reconciliation*, which is inward, and so, as we have seen, we are told we are reconciled to God now. We don't shrink from it, do we? Who loves us like God?—the holy God, against whom we sinned. We had done the sinning, but He devised the plan to put all our sins away, and so we read, God delivered our Lord Jesus Christ for our offences and raised Him again for our justification (Romans iii. 25). It was God who did that. "Therefore, being justified by faith"—faith in whom? Faith in God!—faith in God who delivered Jesus and raised Him again! So "we have peace"—but with whom have we peace? "We have peace *with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ." And then, what do we rejoice in the hope of as we stand in His grace at this present moment? "We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God!" We are going to be there for His praise and for His eternal pleasure. Do we truly rejoice in hope of the glory of God? An old saint was very ill. She was a quiet, peaceful old saint, perhaps lacking a little of the spring seen in some, but she was a godly soul, and a brother who was visiting her said, "Well, sister, you are very ill!" "Yes," she replied, "but I am quite resigned to go whenever God calls me." "Oh," said the brother, "are you resigned to go to heaven? Suppose I went down to Annie there in the kitchen, and said, Annie you are going to leave the kitchen, you are going to say good-bye to the servant's place, and you are going to be adopted into the family. You will be provided for accordingly, and you will take meals in the dining room, and you will sit in the sitting room, and use the drawing room—What would you think of Annie if she answered—" *I am quite*

*resigned?*” But that is just the way some speak of going to glory! No, “we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God,” says the apostle, and even now we have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is given to us. God commendeth that love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. We see its commendation at the cross. We see its manifestation in God sending His Son. In Romans v. we begin with faith in God and peace with God follows. The grace of God, the glory of God, and the love of God, as reconciled to God, are all ours, and “we joy in God,” for we have “received the reconciliation.” Then, as we said, in chapter xi., we see the world-wide bearing of reconciliation to-day. It is called there, “the world’s reconciliation.” In contrast to Israel’s past place of favour, at the present time, God has come out to the Gentiles and Israel is meanwhile set aside. It is worldwards to-day! Then, in chapter v., Corinthians 2, we read of a new creation in Christ, it is not simply that man should be a new creation, but “If any one be in Christ *there is* a new creation,” the old is gone—“Old things are passed away,” and we are now where “all things are become new, and all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.” Surely we are wealthy indeed, and we should be full of joy in the Holy Ghost. Well, you say, Paul had plenty of sorrow! Yes, he was “sorrowful, yet *always rejoicing!*” They say the best nets are well loaded down at the bottom—that may speak of being *sorrowful*. But it would be a bad job if the nets were only loaded at the bottom! They are well corked at the top too!—“sorrowful, yet *always rejoicing!*” We are to rejoice with joy unspeakable, being full of the glory to come. The “ministry of reconciliation” spoken of in this chapter was given to servants like Paul, and, in a way, might be confined to the apostles; Paul magnified his ministry; but, thank God, brethren, it is in our hearts, and we can tell

each other about it. We may not be Pauls or Peters, but we are brethren, and we can talk to our brethren in Christ about these glorious things that are ours through divine grace. John does not say, "*I am an apostle,*" but he does say, I am "*your brother,*" and he wrote that our "*joy may be full.*" The great truth is that God Himself came down in grace!—there is the truth as regards reconciliation—He was in Christ, "reconciling the world to Himself." It all began from God's side! Look at that sinner in the viith. of Luke! She came from the street to the Saviour's feet. But the Lord told Simon, "To whom little is forgiven the same loveth little. *She loveth much.*" God gets response when His love in Christ is received. He was here reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning their offences unto them. Did the father say anything to the prodigal about his sins? Well, the repentant prodigal came back full of his sins. But what did the father say about them? Not one word! He fell on his neck and kissed him! That is His attitude. Here He was in grace to reconcile, and not to reckon to men their offences. He also put in the apostles "*the word of that reconciliation*" as well as the ministry of it, and they entreated on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." No one loves as He does, brethren, and yet He never sacrificed one atom of His holiness, He never lowered the standard of His righteousness, but He has brought us into His favour where His love can flow out freely. God loves with a perfect love, God is love, and we are received to Himself, for His own good pleasure, for His own delight. Then the ground of it is, as we have said, and repeat again in closing, "*Him who knew not sin He has made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him.*"

Presently, grace will place us in the full blaze of the glory in the hope of which we have rejoiced. It says, in symbolic language, in Revelation xxi., "The city lies four-square." It is all of gold—pure gold—

transparent gold—a gold that we have never yet seen ! This would be laughed at by a mere scholar, but those taught by the Spirit understand the symbols of divine righteousness and glory in the golden city. Its length and its breadth and its height are all equal ! It is a man's measure, but it is the angel's. Yet it is the "measure of a man." That city of God shines with the glory of God, and its shining is like to a stone most precious, clear as crystal. Having "become God's righteousness" in Christ, the wonderful triumph of reconciling grace will then be fully manifested to a gladdened universe. On the inside, we are for the good pleasure of the heart of God, and on the outside for the display of His righteousness to the praise of His glory: on the one side are known the deep joys of "*the reconciliation*," and on the other is seen "*God's righteousness*" in manifestation.



## NOTES OF READINGS.

### *Ephesians, chapter i.*

**T**HERE are three things with which we should now be well acquainted; they are the counsels, the ways, and the acts of God. "He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel." To the saints of this dispensation He has made known His counsels. His counsels are counsels of love, and are all that He purposed to accomplish for His own glory, and to establish for ever upon an unshakeable basis. His ways are traceable only in Christ, and embrace the whole of His activities from the foundation of the world until the bringing in of the new heaven and new earth. His acts are His public dealings with men upon earth in connection with His government.

I think Moses got to understand that everything put into the hand of man must result in failure, and that all God's ways with our rebellious race tended to the introduction of that Man—"the Man Christ Jesus." He plainly told the people. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren; like unto me, unto Him shall ye hearken" (Deuteronomy xviii. 15).

It is impossible to think of God as beginning to act in making worlds and various orders of beings, human and angelic, without having some wonderful purpose before His mind. And we cannot but believe that all His activities within the universe must be for the fulfilment of that purpose.

This epistle to the Ephesian saints places before us in a very special way those counsels, and the work of God with a view to their fulfilment.

In the epistle to the Romans the activities of God are presented more as meeting the need of sinful men. Man is there viewed as the active slave of sin, and requires deliverance from that thralldom, in order that he may be free to serve God. Therefore, his loathsome condition is depicted in all its hideousness; his justification in the power of the blood of Jesus; his deliverance from sin by the condemnation of sin in the flesh, and by the gift of the Spirit. But even this leads up to the "called according to His purpose," for "whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

It is very encouraging for us surely, that, since God is good and everything He does must therefore be good, every eternal thought of His must be carried out and fulfilled. He is love, and all His thoughts are thoughts of love; and by His ways He carries out His thoughts. When He began to work all His counsels were formed. During the history of His operations nothing was added and nothing needed to be revised. From the outset He has gone on quietly and steadily, carrying out His original intention; making everything serve His purpose—the fall of man, the entrance of sin and death, and the murder of the Christ: For everything fallen and unfallen has to serve to the perfecting of the end He has in view. If the objects of His counsels were helpless sinners, He found for them an eternal redemption. The work that met the deep need of our souls is the basis upon which the counsels of His love shall be fulfilled.

Is there not more in redemption than meeting the fallen condition of sinful man? Has not God's own nature been manifested in the work of redemption?

Surely: but it was man's lost condition that gave occasion for the doing of that work. There would have been no need for Christ to die had men not been sinners; but this very fact gave God the occasion to manifest His love and lay a basis of righteousness on which His counsels shall be fulfilled.

What is "the volume of the book" in Psalm xl ?

The book of divine counsel. God knew very well that the man He would make out of dust would fall at the first attack of the enemy, and the counsels of God were in harmony with that fact. While it is true that by means of the lawless hands of the Romans the Jews had crucified the Christ, it was also true that He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

There was sin before *man* sinned ?

Yes. The devil sinned from the beginning. Sin came into the world by one man.

The death of Christ would be in relation to the sin question, when or wherever ?

That is so. But after all it was for the blessing of man that Jesus died, and that by redemption God would be glorified.

Would it be when man fell that the whole universe was involved ?

The whole universe seems to require reconciliation, but before man fell sin had defiled the heavens where Satan has his seat. Reconciliation of all things in the heavens and the earth is on account, not only of the defiling of the creation, but on account of the perfect manifestation of God. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ in order that all things should be reconciled to Itself. To be placed in relation with God as revealed in Christ does not seem to me to be the same thing as to be set rightly in the presence of the Creator. The former is blessing of a much

higher order. I think it is important to emphasize the blessing of men. The incarnation itself, apart from our blessing is the great witness of the interest of God in man.

The epistle begins with a note of worship in relation to our spiritual blessings. Would you name some of them?

They are all that we possess in relationship with the Father and the Son. Sonship itself is the highest blessing, for thus are we taken into favour "in the Beloved." There are a great many blessings of a spiritual nature spoken of in the Old Testament along with the earthly blessings with which Israel shall be blessed on the earth; but while Israel shall partake of these under the new covenant on earth, we have all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.

Then would you say you have the topstone reached here in the glory of God?

Yes, in the first six verses. There is nothing greater in the epistle, nor in Christianity. Union with Christ is an unspeakable blessing, but it is union with Christ as Man. Here we are viewed as in direct relationship with the Father. We are sons before His face.

Then it has a peculiar relation to those who form the Assembly as Christ's Body?

Yes. I think this high character of blessing is introduced first of all, because nothing can be united to Christ but that which is of Christ; that is, of His life and nature, His kindred. Eve was taken out of Adam, and the bride of Isaac was of his kindred; so we are of the kindred of Christ, "all of one" with Him, and therefore fit to be united to Him.

Do you say that in verse 5 it should be "sons" not "children"?

It is adoption. Verse 4 and 5 refer to counsel. Of course they have a present application, for we are in Christ now, and as in Him, "holy and without blame before Him in love"; and we have also received adoption, or sonship (Galatians iv. 5). Still, in another sense we await "adoption, the redemption of our body" (Romans viii. 23). Then we are already taken into favour in the Beloved. We are also blest with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. Still we await the fulfilment of the eternal counsel, though, as having the Holy Spirit we can anticipate things that we can only have in perfection when we are glorified. The things we have now, and which we enjoy in some measure, we have *in* Christ; but when we are glorified we shall not only have them *in* Him, but *with* Him.

Is it necessary for our hearts to be at rest in the sense of His love, before we are able to enter in any measure into the counsels of God and enjoy them.

Yes, indeed; and to be well instructed in the word of righteousness, otherwise we cannot take strong meat such as we have in this epistle. You will find plenty of good, pious people who are very shy of the counsels of God. They prefer milk to solid food. They seem not to be able to view everything as in the hand of God. They prefer to have some hand in their own salvation. Even their faith is supposed to be some work of merit of their own whereby they become entitled to salvation. Such require instruction in the word of righteousness; that is, the righteous foundation upon which the soul is placed in relationship with God.

All this that we have here is for our blessing, but also for the glory of the One who blesses?

Most surely. There never can be any other purpose before God than His own glory, because

when His counsels were brought forth there was no one whose blessing needed to be considered. His counsels were before all His works, and therefore, there was no one to take into consideration except Himself. But He has been pleased to create myriads to be spectators of His glory, and others to share the glory that can be shared by the creature. He has bound up our blessing with His glory. And as we have it in this chapter, "That we should be to the praise of His glory," and as the hymn has it:—

"O mind divine, so must it be, that glory all belong  
to God,

O love divine that did decree, we should be part  
through Jesus' blood."

I think you said that unless we were instructed in the word of righteousness we could not enter into these things?

That is so. The word of righteousness is set forth in the Epistle to the Romans, and in spite of the amount of attention that has been paid to it, it is an epistle that is little understood. We make so little progress that the term "dull of hearing" might well be applied to us. The fault is certainly not in the Spirit of God, but in us. Romans and Ephesians are the only two epistles written by Paul to the assemblies in which he does not associate another with himself. The former is occupied with the compassions of God, and the latter with His counsels, though His purposes are touched in Romans and His compassions in Ephesians.

Would you say a word as to "the mystery of His will"?

It is simply that which was not revealed in Old Testament times.

What connection has that with verse 10?

Then there will be no mystery about it. Christ will be manifested as Head over all things, and as the One of whom all who had previously been set by God in prominent positions were figures. In a way, you get this in the Old Testament, though if you take the eighth Psalm you will, I think, be compelled to say you would not have taken the things in the heavens to be included in the "all things" that are said to be put under the feet of the Son of Man. The Psalm says, "Thou hast set Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under His feet." But it immediately adds, "All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." I do not think that anyone would be likely to gather from that that every created thing in the universe would be gathered under the Son of Man. We now know that everything in heaven and earth is to be put under this Son of Man.

You said that God had ever His own glory before Him; but how do we come in?

It was for His glory that He took us up out of our wretched condition as sinners, and in the day of display we shall be to the praise of His glory. He did not bring about the fall of man, but He allowed it to take place. The "riches of His grace" are seen in His dealings with us viewed as lost sinners; "the glory of His grace" is witnessed in the exalted position in which He has set us in Christ. By His kindness to us in Christ Jesus the exceeding riches of His grace will be displayed in the coming ages. All that God can do for our eternal blessing He will do. God is love and His counsels are counsels of love. His only begotten Son is the Man of His counsels, and only by the death of that Son could those counsels be fulfilled.

The blessings that are ours are infinitely beyond all that we grasp, even with the reve-

lation that has been made to us, and by the Spirit that has been given to us. We are unspeakably better off than we should have been had we remained in innocence. I am not sorry I was a poor, sinful, fallen creature; had I been anything else I never could have said of the Son of God, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." To see Christ glorified—to see everything made subject to Him—to hear the voices of the angels celebrating His praise—to join in the song and shouting of the sons of God brought to glory—to fall at His feet and own ourselves captives of His love: the joy of that hour no tongue can tell.

What do you take "the fulness of times" to be?

The Age to come, in which all the ways of God in the past will be seen to lead up to the placing of everything in the universe under the Headship of Christ. Shadows were cast in the past dispensations by means of men placed in high positions of responsibility. Christ will take all up that has been foreshadowed, and a great deal more also, for all things in heaven and upon earth will be taken up under His headship, and will be faithfully maintained to the glory of God. And in Him we have obtained an inheritance, "that we should be to the praise of His glory."

Would it not be well to speak a little of the blessing of sonship that is brought to us as the fruit of eternal counsel, and speak a little of what follows as to inheritance? God is greater than what we have as inheritance?

That is just where the prayer of the apostle comes in. He prays for them, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the greatness

of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead." All these things are known as we know God. His calling, and the intimacy and glory of it are only truly known as we know Him. And as we know Him we can grasp a little what this wonderful administration will be, because it will take in, not only the kingdom over all under heaven, but all in heaven itself.

Do you mean that our relationship to God as sons is higher than the inheritance?

Man is always greater than his possessions. Your inheritance is beneath you—you look down at it—you look upward at your blessings. The hope of His calling, that is above all else; the inheritance is less than this.

Could we say a word about the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Himself?

It may be difficult to say much about it. Wisdom calls to the sons of men and says, "Behold. I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you" (Proverbs i. 23). This I think, is the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge—rather full knowledge of Him, as it ought to be here in Ephesians:

Is the knowledge of Him here the knowledge of God or of Christ?

The knowledge of God, I should think, but the better we know Christ the better we know God, for it is in Christ God is made known. The hope of His calling can only be truly known as we know Him that has called us, Who is He before whom we are to be holy and blameless; and also to stand in relationship with Him.

Is the inheritance only connected with this world?

No, it is all things—this world and all else.

What are the conditions necessary to the reception of the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Himself?

Holy desires to enter into the deep things of God. The apostle could ask this for them because he knew them to be true to the centre and circumference of Christianity: they had faith in the Lord Jesus and love to all the saints. People who are sectarian in their thoughts could not possibly enter into these things.

Let us have a word on the rest of the chapter.

The power that is active toward us to place us at the height of God's calling has been exhibited in the resurrection of Christ, and in placing Him in the exalted position He now occupies, and giving Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all. And this same power is working in us and has so wrought that we can be said even now to be seated in Him in the heavenly places. From this glorious position the whole inheritance shall be easily taken for God.



### Chapters ii., iii.

**W**HY does the apostle emphasize the fact that he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ in the first verse of chapter iii?

That the nations might know the interest that God had in them. But perhaps we should look for a little at chapter ii. We have not touched that. The first fourteen verses of chapter i: set forth the purpose of God; then, from verse 15 to the end we have the prayer of the apostle, at which we looked for a little yesterday; and then from verses 1 to 10 of chapter ii., we see that mighty power of God, which was exhibited in the resurrection, at work to place us in the position which was given us in His counsels. Already we have our position *in* Christ, but soon we shall have that place *with* Him. Then from verse 11, he exhorts them to remember what they were as once nations in the flesh, and what they were now in Christ. At that time they had been afar off, without promise, without hope, and without God. But now, "in Christ Jesus they were become nigh by the blood of Christ," He says that Christ is *our* peace. When speaking of Gentiles, and of their privileges he says, "*your*," but when speaking of what was distinctively true of all saints, he says "*our*." "He is *our* peace," peace with God, and peace between Jew and Gentile.

What do you mean by peace between Jew and Gentile?

It takes two to quarrel. He has made both one. He has broken down the middle wall of partition, "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," in which the Jew gloried and which distinguished him from the Gentiles, in order that He

might make in Himself of the twain one new man, who would be neither Jew nor Gentile, thus making peace: In this new man neither Jew nor Gentile has any existence.

Can you tell us what is meant by "one new man"?

One new man is the truth concerning all saints of this dispensation viewed abstractedly as in Christ. In this man there is not the Jew and the Gentile, nor is there the bond and the free. Such a man only exists in Christ. Reconciliation comes in here also. "That He might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Both are reconciled to God, and to one another.

Is the new man referred to divine nature?

In the flesh, you have here on earth, Jew and Gentile. In Christ there is neither, but those who had been Jews or Gentiles, now in a new condition of being, in the life and nature of the risen Christ, without one element of the old order of man, either fallen or unfallen, in their being—in Christ and wholly of God. Such a man never was heard of before. But to understand the truth concerning this man you must learn it in Christ and view the saints as in Him, apart from their complex condition down here, in which we are connected with the old order by mortal bodies. Here there are those who can be viewed in their pilgrim life as Jews and Gentiles, male and female, and in the epistles the saints are in this way addressed. But if you view saints as in Christ you cannot have such distinctions. Paul says He will glory of a man in Christ, but of himself he would not glory except in his infirmities. And yet he was the man in Christ, although he speaks as if he had another man than himself under consideration (2 Corinthians xii.). The characteristics of this new man are set before us in the life of Jesus upon earth, and these are displayed

in our mortal bodies while here below: We have the cross for all that is of the old man.

Are you looking at all saints on earth at the present time?

Yes, but of course, the "one new man" takes in all saints of this dispensation. The Body of Christ takes them all in. But to get the truth of what we are as members of the one Body, we must strip them of all that in which they appear down here as children of Adam. Of that Body we are now members as truly as we shall ever be, but we must not introduce here what we are as in the flesh.

Would it help if a little was said as to life and position?

We were all dead in sins, but by the life-giving power of God we were made to live. "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ . . . and hath raised us up together, and make us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We are in the life in which Christ lives, as risen from the dead, and we have been set down in Him in the heavenlies. The earth is all right for the children of men if they could keep it; but it would not do for the children of God, or the members of Christ's body:

Would this be the settlement of all kinds of strife among us if we entered into the truth concerning the new man?

Surely, if our walk were in the Spirit. We may come to that in chapter iv.

What is reconciliation?

Being brought into right relations with God.

Would it come of the two thoughts of life and position spoken of here?

Yes. There is only one way of being in reconciliation. The cross has made an end of the flesh, and the believer is in the life of Christ. The old man could not be reconciled to God. Now the apostle goes on to say, "Through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. This is the greatest privilege of all. This is all what is true of Gentile believers, and is contrasted with what they were by nature.

Why is the foundation here the apostles and prophets, and in other places Christ?

Christ is the Rock in Matthew xvi., as Son of the living God, the living Stone in 1 Peter ii. I suppose the reason we have the apostles and prophets here is because they were employed by the Lord in the ministry of the word by which the structure has been brought into existence. Christ is the Builder in Matthew, living stones come to Him as Lord, and are built up into the spiritual house. This is not completed. No one is said to dwell in it. The saints are the stones that compose the building, and they are also the priests who offer the spiritual sacrifices.

Would you say that this part of the chapter presents a wonderful range of things established by God in virtue of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ?

Surely. And is it not a great thing for the youngest of us when the power and blessing of it dawns upon the soul?

It is indeed.

Is not that which represents God's house here largely a system of lust, evil, sin and death?

Your reference is to verse 22. But there it is not so much what is vital that is before us, but profession, which may be holy or corrupt. It is largely corrupt to-day.

Referring again to Matthew xvi. In Matthew He is the Foundation Rock, here He is the Chief Corner Stone?

You see the rock and the foundation are two different things. In every house it is so. We speak of a house built upon a good foundation, though we have not in our minds that any part of the house is the foundation—it is builded upon a foundation. Again we speak of the first part of the house as a foundation which we lay, not what we lay it upon. We speak of the foundation in two ways.

What is the chief corner stone ?

I do not know, unless it be for strength and beauty.

In 1 Corinthians, Jesus Christ is the foundation.

That is a different thing. There He is the foundation laid in the souls of the saints. I do not think you will ever get two Scriptures exactly the same. One may help you a little with respect to another, but you will find that each is in its own setting, from which it is not to be removed, and that it presents a different phase of the truth.

Why is the third chapter introduced at this point in the epistle ?

It is introduced in a parenthetical way, setting forth the mystery and Paul's administration of it. The fourth chapter is the continuation of the second, but it was necessary that they should know the special ministry that was committed to him, by means of which the Gentiles should be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ. This mystery was committed to him, though the mystery itself had also been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the power of the Spirit.

And in speaking of this he brings before us that which is vital in the habitation of God ?

Yes; only I do not think the administration is going on at this present moment. It was committed to one man, who perfectly carried it out. He was the one specially chosen of God to bring in the Gentiles, and without them the mystery is not complete.

Would you say a little more as to what that administration was? The Church was set up by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost?

That is true, and I do not doubt the mind of God was to bring in the Gentiles; but according to this chapter you could not have the mystery until the Gentiles were brought in, for that is the mystery—the Gentiles joint heirs, joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ.

Now, leaving the administration, will you tell us what the mystery is?

You go back to chapter ii. for that. It is Jew and Gentile one, in the body of Christ.

Would not the administration of the mystery include the actual gathering together of the saints on the ground of it?

We see the apostle did thus gather them.

Were not the local assemblies to be the expression of Christ? Was not that included?

Surely. There were difficulties about receiving the Gentiles, but the truth ministered by Paul had the effect of settling that difficulty. All believers are gathered on that ground now, whatever practical differences may exist—all are in the one body.

That is not what I mean. Are we not to gather together on the ground of the Assembly?

If you mean when we come together into one place we certainly are. But if you have not the thought of the house how are you to exercise discipline?

Discipline belongs to the house, not to the body.

A word on verse 10?

The reference there is to the inhabitants of the heavenlies, who observe the ways of God on earth with His fallen creature man, and with unspeakable interest contemplate the wisdom of His ways; but now,

in the gathering of souls out from both Jew and Gentiles, and bringing them together under the headship of Christ, see the all-various wisdom of God. Peter speaks of the desire of the angels to look into the grace that had come to the Jewish believers, but in the Assembly, as gathered under Christ and as part of Himself, there are brought to light the eternal secret of their Creator, and a wisdom that surpasses all that they had previously witnessed.

This mystery was the secret of the Creator, hence the whole creation had some reference to the mystery. When the Assembly has its place in glory it will be a blessing to the whole creation. It is the Body of Christ, and it is His Bride. It is part of Himself. By means of our bodies we give expression to our whole mind and thought; and as He is Head over all things, His Body must render marvellous service in illuminating, comforting, cheering and rejoicing the whole redeemed universe. The rays of the sun enlighten, warm and vivify the whole solar system. His rays reach the darkest corners, and light up all places. They go from their glorious centre. Christ will do everything through His body. Through it He will give expression to Himself. That is what a man has a body for. The tree of life is in the holy city, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations.

How was this mystery brought into existence?

By the Gospel. The Gospel that Paul preached included the mystery. He speaks of the mystery of the Gospel.

In 2 Timothy Paul speaks of "my Gospel," "my doctrine." Is the distinction there?

The Gospel includes everything. I admit there are ways of viewing it as that which is declared universally to men—repentance and remission of sins, but it is all to lead up to the mystery. The apostle laboured "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,"

There is no halting place in the Gospel. If you speak to a man about his soul, what you have before you is that he may be presented perfect in Christ.

This touches our hearts. Would you go on to say that the Gospel is the presentation of God Himself?

Yes, as revealed in Christ.

Would you say that all His activities have been for His own glory and that of Christ?

Surely. All glory belongs to God.

Do not these prayers show the desire of the apostle for the growth of the saints? For, having unfolded the truth, he has to bow his knees that a state to receive it might be brought about in them.

The one who ministers the Word should not imagine that he can effect anything in the hearer. He can present the truth as he knows it, but only God can bring it home in power to the soul. No man can accomplish anything.

Do you not think that the lack of prayer may affect all kinds of ministry? And is not this our danger?

Not a doubt of it.

Will not ministry bring to pass all that is necessary in the saints?

It is brought about by ministry, but if the one who ministers desires the soul-prosperity of his hearers, he must accompany the Word with prayer. Here Paul says: "I bow my knees." He does not say this regarding his prayer in chapter i. I do not say he did not bow his knees in his first prayer, but he does not say so to the Ephesians. I think he desires to impress upon their hearts the greatness of the subject he is dealing with. The first prayer is to the *God* of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is to the *Father*, of whom

he says, "Every family in heaven and earth is named." The name "*Jehovah*" took in but one family in Israel, the name "*Father*" takes in all families in the universe.

"Strengthened" "in the inner man"?

The outward man has nothing to do with this. Samson was strong in body, but that will help no one here. The inner man must be strengthened by the Spirit of the Father. This shows us that our affections must be engaged with the things brought before our spiritual vision here.

What is the immediate object of the strengthening?

That we may be fully able to apprehend with all saints the vast sphere of divine counsel radiant with the glory of redemption, in which every saint in this dispensation shall, as a member of the Body of Christ, have part with Him who is the supreme Centre of that world of glory.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"—What is that?

Christ in your affections.

What is the force of that expression—the Christ?

The Anointed.

Does it involve the mystery?

No!

Is it a title that belongs to Him?

I do not think the article has much to do with it. In Luke xxiv. our Lord says, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory." And similar statements are made in other places. This cannot mean Christ and the Church. In 1 Corinthians xii. 12, we have, I suppose, the mystery—Christ and the Assembly, but I do not know that we have it anywhere else. Throughout the Acts it is nearly always "*The Christ*," but it seems to have

become, by use, a personal name of the Lord, and the article, therefore, is left out.

And should not "*dwell*" be emphasized? Some seem satisfied to have a visit, but He wants an abiding-place there.

You may be sure that we dwell in His heart; and He has died that He may have a place in ours.

Why is the expression "*in love*" so often used?

Because God is love, and to be rooted and grounded in love is to have our roots in the revelation God has made to us. It is wonderful how much you apprehend of the things of God when your heart is deeply in the enjoyment of His love. You are then intelligent in the things of God. Unless this is so, you read the Scriptures and get nothing out of them.

You may enjoy things beyond your ability to give expression to them?

Yes. It is not the one who is best able to talk who is most in the enjoyment of God's revelation. What a wonderful finish to this prayer: "Glory to God in the Church by Christ Jesus unto all generations of the ages of eternity." We shall learn these things better on our knees.



**Chapter iv.**

**W**OULD you say a word or two on the divisions of this chapter ?

The first few verses relate to our walk with respect to the calling, then we have the gifts given from the ascended Christ for the ministry and building up of the body of Christ, and from verse 17 to the end, the exhortations with regard to our walk, that it may be in harmony with the privileges into which we have been brought.

Could you break the unity of the Spirit ?

Practically, yes. It is already broken

Could you break it vitally ?

No, because it is the Spirit.

What is the unity of the Spirit ?

It is the oneness of the Spirit of God.

Would you mind helping us, so that we may see what you mean, because we have always been taught a little differently ?

So have I, but I think it is simply the oneness of the Spirit—In 1 Corinthians xii. a similar thought is set before the saints. There are various gifts but "the same Spirit." One prophesied, another spoke with an unknown tongue, another had gifts of healing; but all was by the same Spirit. It was not different spirits at work. Now in Christendom, one might reasonably suppose there were a thousand different spirits at work, because we are not in the least in practical unity. I know what has been said on the subject, and have no special objection to what is said, but I cannot see it in their way.

But does not unity convey the idea of a formation ?

Not always I think. You get in this chapter: "The unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." You would not call that a formation. This is the way in which I view the statement, I do not press it. It will be the same thing in the end whatever way it may be taken.

Does the unity of the Spirit contemplate Jew and Gentile ?

Yes. Through Christ by one Spirit we both have access to the Father. Still, it is not Jew and Gentile that trouble us to-day, but Gentile and Gentile. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, has been said to be maintaining in a practical way the unity that the Spirit has formed on earth, but I do not think so, though I greatly regard the opinions of some who have said it.

What is the force of keeping the unity of the Spirit ?

It is walking in such a way that it will be evident that we are both energised by the one Spirit. If two saints are quarrelling, like those two sisters in Philippi, some other spirit is at work in one of them—perhaps in both. To keep this unity we require to walk in self-judgment, in lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. The beautiful characteristics of Christ are to come out in us.

There must be the comprehension of the unity of the Body connected with it ?

It goes on to that. There is one Body and one Spirit.

So the flesh would be the difficulty ?

That is just the difficulty. We shall not need these exhortations when we are in heaven, but here the flesh is in all of us, and we sometimes forget to walk in self-judgment, and the practical unity is broken on the spot.

Would you not say that to keep the unity of the Spirit is to keep in practice what exists in fact ?

That is true, but you can find that all opened out in the writings referred to, but you can also find just the other thing too, that it is more the one mind of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit can only have one mind, and it is not that we are to have one mind simply, because that might not be His mind, but we are to have the Spirit's mind. There is that which the Spirit formed at Pentecost, and we are surely to walk in the light of it. It is our privilege and responsibility to walk in the light of the whole revelation of God. There is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, and the knowledge of these great truths has a powerful influence upon us to produce unity; and unity will assuredly be produced by them if we walk in the judgment of that which has no part in them—the flesh.

Will you say a word on these three unities in verse 4 ?

The "one Body" is, of course, the Body of Christ, formed by the baptism of the one Spirit, who unites all the members of the Body together, and is the bond that makes one that vessel, of which Christ is the living and vitalizing power. The "hope of your calling" is one also, and refers to verses 4 and 5 of chapter i., but this in verse 18 is said to be His calling, because the apostle would have the greatness, the glory, and the blessedness of the calling to have a powerful effect upon the saints to draw their minds and hearts heavenward. Here the calling is said to be ours, because he desires it to produce in us down here a practical unity.

Is it to bring divisions to an end ?

Yes, for if the fleshly will is excluded there is nothing to divide about. There cannot surely be dissension where there is only one Body, one Spirit animating that Body, and one hope of glory before every heart ?

Is there any hope of such a practical state being brought to pass before the Lord comes ?

That it is the mind of the Lord is evident by the fact of its having a place here in the Word; but whether it will ever be seen again on earth we cannot say. It certainly will be at His coming, but then we shall all be glorified.

What about these other unities ?

These take in a wider circle to-day, I think always did.

Are these necessarily vital ?

No, they are not. As far as true believers are concerned, of course they are. But this takes in the sphere of profession, and for a very long time the sphere of profession has been much larger than the vital sphere. There is one Lord. None could be a Christian even in name, who refused to acknowledge Christ as Lord. There is also one faith, which all profess to acknowledge as God's revelation.

And would you say baptism brings all into that circle ?

Yes. No one is rightly in the Christian circle, the circle in which Christ is confessed as Lord, unless he has been baptized.

You would say that Cornelius was in the first circle one Body, one Spirit, one hope--by the gift of the Spirit, but came into this second circle by baptism ?

That is so. In the first three you could not bring the *Lord* in as such, for He is not Lord of the Body, neither could you leave Him out in the second, for He is Lord of the individual, the object of faith, and the One in whose name people are baptized.

And the one faith is the common faith ?

Yes: the revelation of God.

In the third circle, what is meant by the expression "In you all" ?

That is vital: the Father is above everything, through everything, and in all believers. It does not mean that all are in relationship with the Father in a vital sense, but God has been revealed as Father, and He is supreme, omnipotent, and vitally in all true believers.

Do I understand the first circle to be the Church, and the second profession ?

The first is the Body, the second the House, and the third the Universe, the last sentence coming back to what is vital, "*In you all.*"

This last expression in verse 6, "in you." Does that only apply to believers ?

That is all.

Not to any other family ?

I would not say that. I think it will be true of all believers.

Is the term characteristic ?

It is life and nature. There are many things stated in the epistles that are true of others also. The apostle always had before him those to whom he was writing.

Say a word on the gifts--what is this in verse 7 ?

That is grace given to every one of us. Every member of the Body has some function to perform, and grace has been given in the wisdom of the Lord, for all that we may have to do. The grace is given according to the measure of the gift of Christ, according to the measure of His giving. Though every one has some service to engage in, and requires grace for the carrying of it out, yet it is not necessarily gift for the ministry of the Word. This is found in verse 11: But these gifts are persons. There are no apostles in "the Body," Those gifts in verse 11 are "in the Assembly," but the

Assembly viewed more as the House than the Body. In 1 Corinthians xii., the apostle has been speaking of the members of the Body in function, but when he comes to the gifts he says that God has set them "in the Assembly."

In verse 7, is the gift there grace itself ?

Certainly. The verse says so. We require grace for the exercise of every service we have got to perform.

Is it for servants ?

Yes: but we are all servants.

In writing to Timothy, Paul says: "Stir up the gift that is in thee." Was that a particular gift ?

Yes: it was a gift for the ministry of the Word.

Has not the Assembly been endowed by Christ from on high, and of that endowment every one of us partakes ?

I do not think so. I know it has been said, but I believe it to be a mistake. The administration of the Lord Himself is continued right through the whole of this dispensation, and everything comes directly to us from Himself. Paul got nothing from the Assembly: He says, "When it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me" (Galatians i.).

Does the Lord give directly now ?

Yes. As I have already said, Saul received everything directly from the Lord; and that was some time after the supposed endowment of the Assembly. The Lord might use an apostle to confer a gift on a disciple, as He used Paul to confer a gift on Timothy, but the Assembly had no hand in it. The Lord, not the Spirit, gives the gifts.

Are we warranted in saying the gifts in verse 11 go right on to the end ?

The apostles and prophets were at the beginning, and shall continue to the end, for we have their ministry

in the New Testament, though they themselves have long ago fallen asleep. The other gifts are, I do not doubt, continued from our exalted Head.

Are we right in looking to the Lord to raise up gifts?

Absolutely. Our privilege is to look to Him for everything that we see to be necessary for His interests.

Would you press that there should be exercise in each one as to what his gift is?

Everyone who has received a special gift from the Lord should have no difficulty regarding what that gift is.

Why is it to "men" the gifts are given?

I suppose angels do not require them.

Where do you get gifts to the Assembly?

Here: He gave some apostles and others for the perfecting of the saints.

What difference do you make between the Body and the Assembly?

The Assembly is the Body, but it is also the House, and we must gather from the connection what special aspect of the Assembly is before the mind of the writer.

Then, you would say, the gifts are for the building up of the Body?

Yes. The great object of the evangelist is to build up the Body. These gifts are under the direction of the Lord Himself and every one who puts himself under the direction of the Assembly has lost sight of the Lord.

What is His "leading captivity captive"?

Taking the whole power of the enemy out of his hands; leading captive him who had held man captive, and using them whom He has delivered from the grasp of the foe to deliver others.

Is it right service when the Assembly is lost sight of ?

No. The servants object in ministering the Word is to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. But all who have received the Spirit are in the Assembly. If the Gospel is clearly preached, all who believe it receive the Spirit. The servant may bring into the House by baptism of water, but into the body he cannot bring anyone. Still, as I have said, if he preaches a full Gospel, the one who believes it receives the Spirit and is in the Body.

Who does the work of the ministry in verse 12 ?

The gifts given by Christ.

Do you mean the shepherds and teachers ?

Not only they, but all the gifts. We have the apostles in the Scriptures written by them. But while the Body itself is edified by these gifts, there is also the work of the ministry by lesser gifts than apostles, and whose labour is not so distinctly with those who compose the body.

What is the unity of the faith ?

The faith as a whole. We learn it in its various parts, but there comes a time when the great edifice of God's revelation is seen as a distinct whole.

Is it the same as "one faith" ?

Yes. We learn the compassions of God, and the word of righteousness in Romans; the order of God's House in 1 Corinthians; and the carrying out of divine counsel in Ephesians; but we need to be able to take in all these various parts as one whole.

Would you connect the gifts with the ascended Lord, and the members of the Body with the Head ?

Yes. Whatever gift a man possesses he is responsible to the Lord for the way he uses it. You could not speak of Him as Lord of the Body; He is Head of it.

Will you give us an outline of the rest of this chapter ?

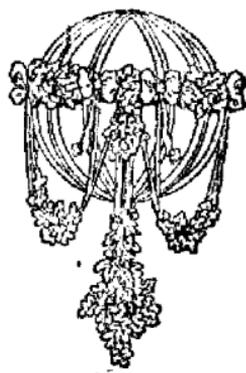
In verse 16, we see the whole Body, from the exalted Head, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply to the working in measure of each one part, works for itself the increase of the Body to its self-building up in love. Love, which is the divine nature, is that which nourishes and cherishes the Body so that it increases, as is said in Colossians, "with the increase of God." Here, as it says, "in love," there is no need to bring God in, for "God is love." This is not viewed here as the result of the ministry of the Word, but as the healthy action of the Body itself, assimilating that which it receives from the Head—it edifies itself in love.

From verse 17 we get exhortations based upon the privileges set before us in the part we have been looking at. They were not to walk as the Gentiles, who are alienated from the life of God, that life with which we have been made to live. God has quickened us together with Christ, and this reference is to that glorious fact, to which our attention is called in chapter ii. Therefore, the characteristics of this heavenly life are to be exhibited in us here on earth. These we have seen exhibited in Jesus here below. The truth of all that is of the life and nature of God shone out in Him who was God manifested in this world of sin, and, in the school of Christ, Jesus is the One set forth as our example. For this, the old man must be put off, and he has been, at least professedly, and the new man, who is created after God in righteousness and holiness of the truth has been put on.

Why the change from Christ in verse 20 to Jesus in verse 21 ?

Because the truth has been set forth in Jesus, without regard to His relations with others. It is His personal name. Christ is not quite His personal name,

though it seems to be often used that way in the epistles. But Christ is our Head, and He teaches us to come out in the life of Jesus. We have put off the old man and put on the new; therefore, we put off falsehood, which is one strong characteristic of the old man; and having put on the new man we speak truth with our neighbour, for we are members one of another. The Holy Spirit is not to be grieved. Until the redemption of the purchased possession we are sealed by Him. We are called to be imitators of God, but as it was in Christ God was declared, we keep our eye upon Him



**Chapter v.**

**C**OULD we have a little help on the way to be more practically in the power of these things ?

By walking in the light of Christ, who has given Himself for us, and in the power of an unrieved Spirit. We are to be imitators of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. We can only imitate Him as far as we know Him, but in Christ He has been perfectly revealed; hence our eye must be fixed on Him.

What do you mean by "perfectly" ?

Perfectly declared in Christ as far as creatures could know Him. We could not know Him in His essential Being. He is the invisible God. In Christ His nature has come to light. It is clear we could not know God in the perfect way in which He knows Himself. It is our unspeakable privilege to know Him in the way in which He has drawn near to us.

Is that not in His essential Being ?

No, but in His nature and attributes. I do not think any one believes we could know God as God knows Himself. It would be no comfort to us to imagine He could be comprehended in all that He is by such creatures as we are, or by any creature. But all that He is He is for us, because He has associated us with Christ, His Son.

In John I. 11, does there seem to be any limitation to that: "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" ? Would you limit that ?

No. I think the Son declared the Father as far as the creature could be made to take in the declaration.

But is not the name of God different to that of Father ?

Yes. God brings in the thought of responsibility, Father, that of grace and relationship. The Son is the Image of the invisible God. In Hebrews He is said to be "the effulgence of His glory and the expression of His substance," or essential Being, but I do not think that goes farther than *nature*. And there is what He is as dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen, nor is able to see. If He were known absolutely there could be no hindrance of approach to Him.

You speak of light unapproachable, but we are spoken of as children of light ?

We are children of the light that came to us in Christ, for that light has brought life to our souls, it has produced a generation of God upon earth. We are children of the revelation that has come to us in Christ.

Is it true that the glory that Moses saw was the glory of the Lawgiver in that character, and that we see the glory that excelleth in the face of Jesus ?

Yes; but it was not pure law in that case; there was a mixture of grace with it; otherwise Moses would not have answered as he did: "Let my Lord, I pray Thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance." He declares Himself in goodness and mercy and forgiveness.

Why does it say "light in the Lord," not in Christ?

To say we are light in Christ would be to say we are always light, whatever our practical state might be. "In the Lord" introduces the idea of responsibility and we can only shine in the light derived from Him. The moon and planets get their light from the sun, and the Lord is our Sun.

In connection with chapter vi., following on what you say, "walk in love," does it not mean that being imitators is produced in that way?

I rather think we walk in love because we are imitators of God. He is before us in Christ, who is the manifestation of God, and in this way we get hold of Him in His true character, and imitate Him in His pathway of love down here. And that is a sweet savour to God.

Is this sacrifice not atonement?

It made atonement; but that is not the way in which it is presented here, but as an example for us.

What is light in contrast with truth?

Light is that which makes manifest. Christ was the light of the world because He declared God, and therefore, everything was seen as it was by those who had eyes to see it. Truth is that which sets things forth in their true character, and in their right relations to one another. Light manifests all things as they exist, but in this evil scene, in which everything was out of order, the truth was seen in Christ, for He was the perfect expression of all things in their right relation to God, and therefore to all else.

Is it not remarkable that in John's Gospel He speaks of Himself as the Light, but when He gathers His own in the inside place in the upper room, He drops that word and speaks of Himself as the Truth?

The light is the revelation of God, and whoever receives that light by faith in it has got the knowledge of God in grace and love. The light is for men that are in darkness. Where the light is received the darkness is dispelled; then the soul requires instruction in the mind and will of Him with whom he is set in entirely new relationships: he wants instruction in the truth; and in turn, he becomes a light in the midst of this world's darkness. Light shows me things as they

really are, but when I know the truth I see how different everything on earth is to that which it should be. So that the truth may be said to be light. "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path" (Psalm cxix. 105). The light of the Gospel shows one how thoroughly under the power of Satan he has been. Christ is both the truth and the light. They are very near akin.

"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Is that the same?

Yes. A man asleep is in darkness. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isaiah lx. 1). This will be the word to Jerusalem one day. Spiritual sleep means that your affections are dormant; and you have sunk to the level of those dead in sin.

What is the evidence of being filled with the Spirit?

"Speaking to yourselves," and praising and blessing God.

Is that normal Christianity or something special?

Normal. Melody in the heart to the Lord is sweet music. You cannot get that out of an instrument: Some get impatient because others have not good voices. Every voice is good if it comes from a heart full of love to God.

How do you differentiate between the normal of this chapter and the Acts?

"Filled with the Spirit," is normal, but if one is to do any special line of service for the Lord with relation to the Lord's things, then the Spirit takes complete control, so that all he does and says is of God. The Lord gives him all the power he requires, and that power is by the Spirit, the Spirit has complete control.

Can a man be filled with something else than the Spirit?

He might be filled with himself.

Is to be filled with the Spirit here connected with singing ?

Yes, certainly.

Not audible singing ? It is to God in the heart ?

No: "with the heart." It rises from the heart. I do not see how you could sing in your heart. It must be audible.

May I ask in connection with the melody, as to whether being filled with the Spirit is limited there, because it goes on to giving thanks and submitting ourselves to one another ?

True, Christianity cannot be approached except in the power of the Spirit. You take the tabernacle; it was sprinkled with blood and anointed with oil, indicating that the true tabernacle with which we have to do would be placed on the ground of redemption and in the power of the Spirit. You cannot engage in the service of God in any way except in the power of the Spirit. It brings a heavenly colour into these things, so that a saint will come out as a father, husband, or wife, in a new way. The husband loves his wife, not as Adam loved Eve, but as Christ loved the Assembly; and the wife takes her example from the Assembly in subjection to her husband; and fathers bring up their children in the discipline and admonition of the Lord. For all this we need to be in the energy of the Spirit. We walk according to the rule of new creation in the old creation relationships, "In Christ" is new creation.

Will you open that out a little ?

"In Christ" is entirely a new order of man, but down here we are in old creation relationships, and the question is, How are we to walk in these ? Well, we are not to take pattern from the world. We are not to walk after the flesh. We are like people in a foreign

land who bring there the customs of their native land, and who refuse to follow the trend of things in the land wherein they are strangers.

Would you say that in our life in this world we are brought into a system which God has specially in view in Christ glorified, and in the Holy Ghost down here ?

While we are on earth we are connected with that system, but not "in our life in the world." Flesh and blood has no part in that system. It is an out-of-the-world condition of things, and can only be entered in the life of Christ and in the power of the Spirit, but it greatly influences our human life down here. Christ was never other than heavenly, but He was in relationships that belonged to flesh and blood, and in these He walked perfectly to the pleasure of His Father. He is no longer in these relationships.

What relation has this to the unfolding of the counsels of God in the earlier part of the epistle ?

These exhortations set before us the character of walk becoming those who are the objects of these counsels. Our walk is to be in the power of an un-grieved Spirit, and we are to make progress in the knowledge of Him who has called us. The knowledge of our heavenly relationships affects our ways in all our earthly relationships. If rightly taken up, earthly relationships are no hindrance to our spiritual growth, but rather a help.

Why is it that the husband is exhorted to love his wife ?

One reason is that he might fail in doing so. She is not told to love him, because love is ever on the descending line. She is told to be subject to her husband, for he is her head. In Christianity we are not told to love God but to believe in the love He has to us.

As Christ is Head over all to the Church, and we are to grow up to Him, might not this line of things in chapters v. and vi. be included in the fact that you have Christ before your mind, and even in the earthly relationships to grow up to Him? I thought, in connection with our understanding of that verse—"grow up unto Him in all things"—we sometimes limit it to the abstract spiritual things of the Assembly. But it includes all those earthly details, so that Christ being before us, His impress is left on the ordinary details of life?

To grow up to Him in all things is in all that is revealed in Christ. In all earthly relations we are to set Him forth. But the measure in which we can do this depends upon our growth. We are heavenly people, and here in the life of Christ, and we must be ourselves wherever found. We are not heavenly men in one place and earthly men in another. Christ was always Himself in all relationships of life.



## Chapter vi.

Then even entering upon this conflict we are to be strong, *not in ourselves but, in the Lord?*

Yes. We have no strength for this holy war. The power of God acts through us. To Joshua's challenge to the man with the drawn sword in his hand: "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" the answer, practically, is for neither: "But as Captain of the Lord's host am I now come." The battle is the Lord's, and must be fought in His strength: we are weakness itself.

Why do we get fighting at the close of this epistle?

Because the enemy is in possession of the land given to us of the Lord. We have got the position there in Christ, but we are not there yet ourselves. There are three ways in which the people of Israel can be viewed as typical of Christians. In the wilderness, where all the men fell who came out of Egypt by Moses; on the east of Jordan, where in the land of Bashan, two and a half tribes made their home; in the land which was God's thought for all. Those who fall in the wilderness are unbelieving Christians; those who make their home on the east of Jordan are worldly Christians; and those who settle on the west of Jordan are the faithful who enter into the purpose of God. Those who settle on the east of Jordan are real believers, who never rise up to the height of the calling of God, those who enter the land and make it their abode do. Still, the two and a half tribes had to fight and help their brethren to possess the land, though they did not take up their abode in it.

Are those in conflict for the truth of the Gospel fighting?

Yes: and all who preach the Gospel; and some of them fight better than those do who take heavenly ground. Every saint on earth is in this conflict, and for success in it we must put on the whole armour of God.

The wiles would be something like the cunning of the Gibeonites ?

Yes; though I suppose all the attacks of the devil are of the nature of wiles. Wiles and fiery darts are all that are mentioned here. There are blessings, or rather territory, that we may possess that does not lie quite over Jordan. Israel had for an inheritance from the Red Sea to the Euphrates. The land of Bashan was theirs, but the land on the west of Jordan was to be their place of abode. Our blessings are given to us in the heavenlies, and we should go over to possess it; but some of us are content with enjoying salvation, deliverance from sin's dominion, and such like, without laying hold of our heavenly calling. As far as their practical lives are concerned they seem to be men of the world, though really no more of it than those are who stand for their heavenly position. You will sometimes find such men forward and fearless in conflict with infidels.

Would you say a word about loins girt about with truth ?

It is the loins of the mind that are referred to. We are not to allow our minds to be occupied with everything that meets our eye. They are not to be wandering all over the place, but to be girded up so as not to hinder us in the conflict. There is a great deal in the world to engage our attention if we allow it, things perhaps, that are not in themselves wicked, but which would hinder our view of the heavenly inheritance and weaken us in the battle.

Why is this first ?

Because it is that which is the chief thing to maintain. You see this armour is not like the armour people used to wear in the field of battle, which was made for them by the armourer, and was put on when they were about to fight. This armour is put on from the inside like the feathers of a fowl. It all refers to practical state. Therefore, if the loins are not girt about with truth, you will never have on the armour of righteousness, for this is practical righteousness; and if the mind and affections are set upon the things of this world your own will, and not the will of God, will characterize you, and that is sin; your heart will be condemning you, confidence in God will be lost, and your vital parts will be vulnerable. If the armour is on we walk in a calm and unperturbed spirit. Our heart reposes in the love of God, and in the peace that results from a walk in harmony with His revealed will. The grace that has come to us in Christ is in our hearts, and our feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace as the result.

What are the fiery darts ?

I know not. There are such things, but we have the shield of faith as a guard against them. Perfect confidence in God will preserve us from them. We can say: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" If we have the first three pieces of the armour upon us, the shield of faith will not be wanting. The darts are fiery, and thrown with a fierceness that is appalling, but confidence in God is a perfect defence. "In God have I put my trust."

Next, there is the helmet of salvation. The helmet here is not the hope of salvation as in the word to the Thessalonians. God had not appointed them to wrath, but to obtain salvation—salvation from the wrath to come. But in Ephesians you are already saved, for you have got your place in Christ in the heavenly places. Here you have the salvation of God as a helmet upon your head.

Why is the helmet for the head ?

Because the head is a very vulnerable place, and requires protection in the battle.

In what sense is the Word of God the Sword of the Spirit ?

It is the only weapon in the panoply of God. It is for offensive warfare. All the other pieces of the armour are for protection. The Sword is that which no evil power can withstand. But it can only be used in the power of the Spirit. Young men are said to be strong, and the Word of God abides in them, and they have overcome the wicked one. Our Lord met the devil with it in the desert, and he fled before it.

Is it not important to distinguish between the mere quotation of a text of Scripture, and the speaking of that word, which is God's Word for the moment to that particular person ?

Still, one would be most certain to use a passage of Scripture—the Lord did. It must be the Word, for the devil, for sinner or saint. It brings conviction to the hardened sinner, meets the need of the awakened conscience, sets at rest the troubled heart, builds up the saint in the knowledge of God, and defeats the devil; but nothing of all this apart from the Spirit's use of it.

Is there time to say a word on prayer ?

Prayer brings in the power of God. We are to pray at all seasons, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching unto this very thing with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, and for the servant who seeks to make known the mystery of the glad tidings, that all such may have utterance given to them.

Is it not a mistake to distinguish between the saints of God? We often hear the expression, "Bless Thy gathered saints."

The saints are all one, and the apostle says we are to pray "for all saints." Besides, there are no saints who can be spoken of as always gathered. They are gathered when they are gathered; that is, when they meet together. I know no other gathered saints. I have heard people say they have been gathered forty years. I have thought that was a long meeting.



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