

FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIANITY

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY

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AT BRISTOL

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INTRODUCTION.

CHRISTENDOM is advancing rapidly toward the apostasy, the spirit of antichrist is largely abroad, many false prophets have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ come in flesh, many so-called Christian pulpits to-day are occupied by men who deny every vital element in Christianity. Unitarianism and infidelity are rampant among those who have the form of godliness but deny the power. The young are exposed to these pernicious influences in the schools and colleges, and all are liable to come into contact with them in their intercourse with men in business, etc.

These addresses were given with the object of establishing souls in the faith, and so guarding them against the false teaching so prevalent in the present day.

In his second epistle the apostle John warns the elect lady and her children against those who do not bring the doctrine of Christ, such deny the Father and the Son. The great question to-day is, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" "What think ye of Christ?"

May the Lord help us to abide in that which we have heard from the beginning, so that we may abide in the Father and in the Son.

Most of the quotations are from the New Translation by J. N. D., Morrish, 20, Paternoster Square, London.

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I. THE PERSONAL GLORY OF CHRIST. HIS DEITY.

John i. 1-18.

John i. 27-34.

Heb. i.

1 John v. 20-21.

Col. i. 15-20.

WHAT I have before me in the present address, and in the future ones that may follow, if the Lord permit, is to set forth the great fundamental truths of Christianity—and what moves me to desire thus to do, is the fact that all these great fundamental truths are being called in question and denied to a very large extent in christendom to-day by those who are professedly Christian ministers. There is a great flood of infidelity passing over christendom at the present time, and, unless saints are established in the present truth, they are in great danger of being swept off their feet. Many a one has been carried away by it, we are all in danger of it, and it is not enough to receive the truth in a traditional way, as that which we have been brought up to believe, as that which is commonly taught and held amongst us. It is a great mercy to us that we should have been brought up in this way, and that we should be found amongst those who acknowledge the truth, and where the truth is

ministered continually ; but this is not sufficient, the truth must be received and held in our own faith, and not as from somebody else. Unless our souls are established and founded in the truth we are very liable to be swept away by the great flood of infidelity. Satan is most active by these means in preparing men to receive the antichrist, the man of sin who is about to come, and when he comes he will be received by the great mass of professing Christians—I mean those that are left when the Lord has come and gathered all His own to Himself, when all true believers will be taken out of this world, then shall that wicked one be revealed.

On the other hand, it is well to recognize another blessed fact, and that is that the Lord is active to-day in preparing the hearts of His people to look for Him, to receive and welcome Him when He comes. “The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” If I think of what Satan is doing on the one hand, and of what the Lord is doing on the other in preparing the hearts of His people, I say the coming of the Lord must be very nigh. It is not far off, and it is important for us that our hearts should be prepared to say, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

I mean by the fundamentals of Christianity, the truth as to the person of the Christ, the truth as to His Manhood, the truth as to His death and resurrection, and the truth as to His ascension as Man into heaven into the glory of God, His coming again, and, lastly, the Gift of the Spirit. Those are what I consider to be the great fundamental facts on which the whole truth of Christianity is based.

First of all, and most important of all, is the truth as to *the person of the Christ*. If souls lose

the Person, they have lost everything. The apostle says in that last verse I read, "Little Children, keep yourselves from Idols." Now, there are thousands of persons to-day in christendom who are idolaters though professing to honour Christ—to serve Christ—to worship Christ, but the Christ they have before them is the Christ of their own imagination. They have settled in their own minds an idea of what Christ is, and it is a false Christ. It is not the Christ of God, nor of Scripture. They are worshipping a false Christ, and a false God, because, if souls have not the true Christ, they have lost God.

Now I say solemnly, there are thousands of people to-day professedly worshipping Christ, and they are idolaters, it is not *the* Christ of God. Everything depends on the knowledge of the person; His own personal glory, and that is what I have before me to-night, and we have the most definite statement here in the first chapter of John's Gospel. The divine glory of the Son of God shines out in every chapter of this Gospel. John says, "I saw and bare witness that this is the Son of God," and the Son of God in John's writings is a divine person in Manhood, it is God in a Man. That is the thought of John when he speaks of the "Son of God." So he introduces the Gospel in this way: "In the beginning the Word was"; the beginning of anything that ever did begin. We cannot grasp it, but if you will carry your minds back as far as ever you may, and think of anything that began to be, at that moment when everything else began to be, "He was." He did not begin to be, He was God from everlasting to everlasting, the Eternal One, the Son. Then he says, "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made

that was made." We could not think of anything more definite than that—as the Word, He is the living exponent of the mind of God. That is how it is seen in this Gospel. "The same was in the beginning"—a divine person.

Now what is characteristic in Christianity is that God is revealed in three persons: The Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Each of those three persons is equally God, and the word often used in the Old Testament for "God" is *Elohim*, which signifies three persons. (Gen.: "Let *us* make man in our image.")

But then it says, "All things were made by Him." Whatever has come into being, has come into being through Him and by Him. God created all things by Jesus Christ. In this chapter (and in what I may read afterwards in Hebrews and Colossians) creation is attributed to the Son, the one we speak of as the second person of the Trinity. "All things were made by Him," and He is the originator of all that God has created, so that as we sing of Him, "Heaven and earth alike confess Thee as the ever great *I AM*." "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork."

There are three things declared in this chapter that could be only declared of a divine person: "The Word became flesh" came into man's estate, that divine person was pleased to enter into human condition. The Word was not made, but "*became* flesh and dwelt among us." Then follow the three things I have referred to.

First, (verse 18): "No man hath seen God at any time, *the only begotten Son*" (there could be no mistake who that is), "who is in the bosom of the Father" (He was just as much in the bosom of the Father when in this world of sin

and evil as in eternity), "*He hath declared Him.*" That is what no creature could do; no man, no prophet, no angel could declare God. The One who could fully express God must be himself God: He could not be anything else than God if He was to express Him as He has done, and that was the first great thing in connection with His coming into Manhood, so that He should bring the light of God to men's hearts. In His ministry He declared God, and He was Himself the living expression of what He ministered. "I am altogether (He says) what I say unto you."

Now again in the 29th verse He says, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Who could undertake that work? Do you think any creature could take up the question of sin in relation to God, and take it up in such a way as to completely take sin out of God's world? Here is One great enough to take up that question of sin, and remove it for ever. Who is He? Is He merely a man? Ah! He is God in a Man; He is a divine Person, and if you have a sense of what sin is and how it affects God, and what is involved in taking sin out of the world, I think you will acknowledge that none but a Divine Person could undertake that work! John bare testimony to this, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God." The Lamb that God provided. It involved, as we know, His death, the sacrifice of Himself to make expiation for sin, to meet divine claims, which was the foundation on which He will ultimately take sin out of the world. Thank God, that work has been done. He said, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." "Who offered *Himself* without spot to God." He entered into

Manhood that He might die, bear the judgment of sin, and on the ground of redemption establish a universe for God, where sin will never enter. Now that is the second thing that is predicated of Him, and could only be true of a Divine Person.

Thirdly, John says, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which *baptizeth with the Holy Ghost*." Could an angel do this? Or an archangel? None but a Divine Person, surely, could accomplish this, it is the Son of God who only could baptize with the Holy Ghost. The effect will be that He will bring men under the influence of all that has been revealed of God. The Spirit was outpoured at Pentecost, but when an individual really receives the testimony of God, he receives the Holy Ghost personally, and in that way comes under the outpouring of the Spirit of God, and what is the effect of this? The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. What has been revealed of God is made good in our souls; the work of Christ is made good to us through the reception of the Holy Ghost. There is a day coming when "He will pour out His spirit on all flesh," and all men will be brought under the power of the Holy Ghost, and thus under the power of the love of God, and the world, the universe of God will become filled with the blessing of God, and every intelligent being will respond to what God is. "God will be all, in all."

Well, now, who is going to bring that about? This wonderful and Divine Person, surely. These

three things are predicated of Him as showing definitely His Divine glory :—

He reveals God.

Takes away sin, and

Baptizes with the Holy Ghost.

Col. i. 19 is better read : “ For in Him all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell.”

Now the great danger of the Colossian saints was being robbed of Christ through the teaching of the philosophers of the day, Judaising teaching as well. Therefore the Apostle in this chapter enlarges very much on the greatness of the One who is the Head, and speaks of Him as the One “ Who is the image of the Invisible God.” A person who is the exact representation of the invisible God, for in Him “ *all* the fulness of the godhead was pleased to dwell.” God in Himself is invisible ; He is a Spirit that no man has seen, or can see, but here is One who is the “ image of the invisible God.” God has become visible to us in the person of Christ. The Apostle says to Timothy, “ God was manifest in the flesh ” so that in Him we have the full expression of God. He says “ the firstborn of every creature.” That is when He became man. As Man coming into the creation, He must necessarily have the first place in it, and He gives the reason why “ He is the firstborn of every creature, for by Him were all things created.” What a wonderful thing that is ! The Creator was pleased to come into the Creation in the form of a Man, that He might reconcile all things to God. “ He is before all things.” If He created all things, then He must necessarily be “ before all things, and by Him all things subsist,” and none but God could maintain these things. Then he goes on to say, “ For in Him all the fulness of the Godhead was

pleased to dwell." That which had to be accomplished could only be accomplished in that way. "All things reconciled to itself," that is to the Godhead. Everything has been put out of order by sin, the throne of God has been dishonoured, not only on earth, but also in heaven (in heaven through the pride and fall of Satan). God has a remedy in His mind—a blessed Person who was great enough to take up the whole question as to what sin had done. "Having made peace," he says, "through the blood of His cross." It is wonderful that this reconciliation of all things depends upon the blood of His cross. He has made peace (not our peace), but peace in connection with the throne of God, and here is One who has made peace, has removed the disturbing elements, and established the throne of God in righteousness and peace. In the end of Luke's Gospel, when there was no longer peace on earth, they sang "Peace in heaven." In another scripture He says, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I come not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." But there is peace in heaven.

How great the value of that blood! Do you think the blood of any mere creature could establish anything like that? No, it was none less than this One who has made peace and removed from before God all the disturbing elements, and only awaits the time when He will come forth in power, and establish the whole of God's universe, and bring about a world in which God will find His rest for ever and ever. This you get pre-figured in the day of atonement in Israel when the High Priest carried in the blood and sprinkled

it on the mercy-seat, and then from that point came forth and reconciled the tabernacle, the figure of the universe. How great and glorious the person who undertakes to reconcile all things to God.

The blood is on the mercy-seat so that God can look out now and carry on His blessed will, nothing can stand in the way of God accomplishing every iota of His will, and He owes it all to this glorious Person. There is a verse in the second chapter which puts it as a present fact, "in Him *dwells* all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The first chapter speaks of what is past, and the second chapter speaks of what is true now in Him as Man in heaven—"In Him *dwells* all the fulness." The fulness of God dwelling in a Man! It is too great for our finite minds, but we can believe it and accept it. To deny it is to deny the Christ of God.

I *Hebrews, verses 1-14.*

The object of the Spirit of God in setting forth the glory of the Person here is to emphasize the greatness of that which God is speaking to-day. The Jewish system was established on what was spoken by Moses. Judaism was a divine system, and these Jewish believers found it very difficult to break away from the system that had been established by God, and to embrace the glad tidings of the grace of God, and therefore the apostle lays such stress on the greatness of *the Person* by whom God is speaking to-day, and he says in the next chapter, if those who despised the word of God in the past received a just recompense of reward, "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us

by them that heard Him." Now in order to call attention to the greatness and importance of what God is speaking to-day (not by Moses or the prophets) but by the Son, He says, "Who being the brightness of His glory," the effulgence of the glory of God. A Man, a blessed Man, and yet so great in His Person that he could be the effulgence of the glory of God; every ray and every part of divine glory shone out in that blessed Person. The express image of His Person, corresponding to what we were considering in Colossians, and upholding all things by the word of His power. This is Jesus, the One we know as Jesus, the Christ our Lord! How glorious is He!

Why do not these great orbs we see in the heavens come into collision with each other? They are held by the word of His power. There is a Man in heaven who upholds all things by the word of His power. It says, "When He had by Himself made purification for sins *sat Himself down*," as One who had a divine title, on the throne of the majesty in the heavens; having accomplished the work, He Himself goes back and takes that place which was His from eternity. Would any creature dare to do that? or any angel? or archangel? He came down to do the will of God on the earth, and having done it, He went back, and *sat Himself down* at the right hand of the majesty on high. When it is a question simply of what He had done as Man, God answers it by raising Him from the dead and exalting Him, but that is not the point here, as it is the desire of the apostle to bring out the greatness of the Person, the One who could go back and set Himself down on the right hand of the majesty on high.

In this chapter the apostle established the

truth of His personal glory as the Son, by quotations from the Psalms, but it is remarkable that they all apply to Him in Manhood ; God addressing Him as Man. He was always the same, the same Eternal One, the *I AM* from eternity. As He said to the Jews—" Before Abraham was, *I am.*" It is in the estate of manhood that all these passages are addressed to Him. " Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." He is the Same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Foolish and ignorant men are ashamed to acknowledge the divinity of this Person. Speaking of all that He created, it says, " They shall perish but Thou remainest ; and they shall all wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up. But Thou art the same." The Apostle Peter says the " present heavens shall pass away with a great noise." The One who created them, will roll them up as a scroll to make room for a new heavens and a new earth, and God will then have all His rest and pleasure eternally. He is the "*I AM*" of the Old Testament, as He says to the unbelieving Jews, " Before Abraham was, *I AM.*" "*The Same*" is another form of it. This is the Christ of God, this is Jesus ; this is the One whom God has made Lord and Christ. You may say you love the Lord Jesus, but what is He to you ? A mere man ? The Lord Jesus to me is God over all, blessed for ever more. I think of Him coming down in His love unto man's estate and taking my place in death, but that Blessed Man is *God over all, blessed for evermore.* We own Him as such, we worship Him as such. Is this the Christ you have ? If not, you have a false Christ, and thousands have. God deliver every one of us from it. This blessed Person is One who is God over all, blessed for ever. Amen.

II. HIS TRUE MANHOOD.

Psa. viii. 3-6.

Psa. i. 9.

Heb. ii. 5-9

Heb. ii. 14-18.

Heb. iv. 15-16.

Heb. xiii. 8.

I Tim. ii. 5.

Matt. i. 18-23.

Luke i. 26-35.

I John iv. 1-3.

LAST Tuesday evening we were considering the Lord Jesus in His own personal glory, that is, as a divine person ; what He is from eternity to eternity, God over all, blessed for ever. We were seeing that if souls have a false Christ, they have nothing, and that is a very serious thing. If souls have a false Christ, they have lost God and everything, because everything depended upon a divine person coming into Manhood. "The Word was with God, and the Word *was* God," and "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." Here we have the incarnation, that is, One who was God coming into Manhood.

Now this evening what I have before me is to consider Him as Man, "*the Man Christ Jesus.*" These are the two great pillars on which Christianity is built up, that is, the truth as to the deity, and the true Manhood of Christ. To lose either is to lose the truth of Christianity—to lose everything on which the glory of God and our blessing depends. We must hold both. We cannot, perhaps, entertain the two thoughts in our minds at the same moment, that is, when we are thinking of Him as Man, we are not thinking of Him as God, for the moment, and when we are thinking of Him as God, we are not thinking of Him as Man, but both must be held firmly in our faith.

Now the confession that we read in the 4th chapter of John's epistle involves both. Many false prophets had gone out into the world even in the Apostle John's day ; how many more now ! Christendom is inundated with false prophets, and the minds of Christians are being perturbed and corrupted by their teaching. The prophets must be tried whether they be of God. How can they be tried ? A simple test, is " every one that confesseth *Jesus Christ*, come in flesh, is of God, and every one that confesseth not *Jesus Christ* come in flesh is not of God." This confession involves two thoughts—the *person* who came, and the *condition* into which He came. Who came ? The One who was with God eternally—the One who was Himself God. He came into human condition, He came in flesh ; that is the condition into which He came. His coming in flesh does not add anything to His person ; it did not take away anything from His personal glory. He was always the same. But that blessed Person has come in flesh—come into Manhood.

I might have read another passage in the 2nd Luke where the heavenly host, when they announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds, said, " Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, *goodwill toward men.*" The birth of that Child was the great expression of the good pleasure of God in men. It could not be expressed more definitely—God's own blessed Son had been pleased to come into this world in manhood. That Babe born in Bethlehem was the expression of God's good pleasure in men.

The Psalmist says, " What is *man* that Thou art mindful of him ? and the son of man that Thou visitest him ? "

Another wonderful thought connected with this

is, the marvellous expression of the grace of the Lord Jesus! That He, the blessed Son of God, was willing to lay aside His glory, and come down into this world of sin and evil, suffering and death, in the form of man. What grace! It is beyond anything that we can comprehend. One person in the Godhead, coming down into Manhood! What grace! What a descent it was! Where had He descended from? From God's fullest glory; and where had He descended to? Into man's estate, of course, apart from sin. This blessed person, the Son, came into manhood.

Now the passage in John that I referred to, says, "the Word became flesh," but it does not tell us *how* He became flesh. The passages in Luke and Matthew tell us *how* He became flesh—born of a woman, and it is important for us to mark the *miraculous* character of His birth. It was not a natural birth. Some of the teachers in christendom to-day dare to say that it was merely a natural birth. If this was so, then He was born a child of Adam, in a state of sin, born under condemnation, and therefore could never take our place as a substitute and die for us.

Well, now, that is what is involved when men say it was a natural birth, but it was not a natural birth. "Before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Ghost." "That which is begotten in her, is of the Holy Ghost." "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest overshadow thee, wherefore the holy thing also which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Read carefully the scriptures.

As Man, He was susceptible to hunger, fatigue, and everything that men could feel. "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

In all their afflictions, He was afflicted," so that *now* He is touched with the feeling of *our* infirmities. Having still, as Man, the feelings and sensibilities that are common to men, He can understand and feel with us in whatever kind of suffering (mental or physical) in which we suffer, is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and "was tempted in all points as we are, *sin apart*."

He has the affections of a man, and feels as a man. What a wonderful thing it is to know that we have such a One to represent us before God, and ever living to intercede for us.

There is another point—while I have said He is actually and truly Man (and ever will be), He is a Man of *another order*. He is not of Adam's race morally (1 Cor. xv. 45-49). The Apostle draws a contrast between the two orders of man; there is the natural man, and the spiritual man; there is the earthly man and the heavenly man; there is the first Adam (the head and source of a generation), and there is the last Adam (the head and source of a new generation). There are the two distinct orders of man—the first man, Adam, and the second man, the Lord Jesus *out of heaven*. Christ was the *Second Man*. In God's reckoning, there was no second man until Christ came. There was only Adam extended and developed in his race. You and I were born of Adam's generation, and we were born in sin and under condemnation, subject to death. The first man was an earthly man, made of earth and belonging to earth, and could not go beyond it. "Dust thou art," God said to Adam, "and to dust thou shalt return." Born into this world an earthly man, he dies and goes back to earth again as far as this world is concerned.

Now when you come to the second man, Christ, His origin was from heaven, the Lord *out of heaven*. That is, He brought into manhood that which was heavenly, that which was suited to heaven, and which must go back to heaven. As we know very well, when He had accomplished His ministry and His service here, He was received back into heaven. Well, now, every believer is of the generation of that Man. We are born again, we are born of God and not of Adam. When a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he receives the Spirit of Christ, and in receiving the Spirit of Christ, he partakes of the life of Christ, and belongs to another world. "As is the heavenly, so are they also who are heavenly.

Well, now, the spiritual man is a man of an entirely new order. Christ is the pattern, and God is working to that pattern, and the ultimate result will be that every believer will be perfectly conformed to Christ.

Now I want to go back a little to the generation of Jesus Christ, because we do not understand our generation if we do not understand His generation, and the word is very explicit—"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the *Holy Ghost*." Was that a natural birth? Again, the 20th verse, which is connected with the Prophet Isaiah vii. 14, where it says, "Behold, a *virgin* shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name *Immanuel*," which being interpreted, is, "God with us." Is that the result of a natural birth? Could any child ever born in this world be called "God with us"? Impossible! See also Luke's account (i. 26-28), and verses 31-35, as already referred to.

Now men are denying this, and then they have a false Christ. Those who say His birth was natural, would also say His death was natural, but His death was not natural; having borne the judgment of sin, and accomplished all that was spoken of Him, He delivered up His spirit to God. It was His own act—"I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it up again."

The scriptures are very definite as to the way He entered into manhood—"A body hast Thou prepared Me." He was a spiritual Man, begotten of the Spirit, and anointed with the Spirit, filled with the Holy Spirit and led of the Spirit, doing everything that He did in the power of the Holy Ghost.

If One who was Himself God comes into manhood, he must bring into manhood the moral qualities of God, holiness, righteousness, etc., so that in Him as man God saw the moral reflection of Himself, truly man of a new order, man in the image and likeness of God. This was God's original thought as to man, perfectly verified in the second Man.

Now I want to say a little as to the contrast between this blessed Man and every other man that was born into this world. If we think of Him in His relation to God, what characterized Him? Absolute obedience, absolute submission to His will, absolute dependence on Him. He was wholly for God. He said, "I delight to do thy will, oh, my God." All His life revolved around God; we might say He was God-centred, not self-centred. He never moved apart from God, never acted independently. Man's way has been to act independently of God all the way through. What a contrast! This blessed One

was found here wholly for God. He said, "I seek not My own glory, but the glory of Him that sent Me."

What did Adam do? How did he fall? By pride, seeking to exalt himself. That is the nature of every one of us, but this One humbled Himself, sacrificed Himself to God's will, never moving without God, although He had divine power. He never exercised it, apart from the will of God, never used it on His own behalf. Take, for instance, when He went to raise Lazarus—He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me." He was about to exercise divine power in raising the dead, but He would not act independently of God. He would not move apart from the will of God; He would not act apart from dependence on God. You say, "I cannot understand that; if He was a divine person, why not act in His own power?" Well, in doing so He would have acted inconsistently with perfect manhood. He would have done that which was not proper to man. Man's perfection is to be obedient and dependent, therefore He would not act independently, or apart from the will of God. As He said in the case of Lazarus, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the *glory of God*, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

In Psalm xvi. He says, "Preserve Me, O God, in Thee do I put My trust." He acted always suitably to the condition into which He had entered, and if we are to please God we must walk as He walked. That was what was suited to manhood, subjection to the will of God, and seeking only the glory of God. In all that, God looked down from heaven and found a man after His own heart. Everything that satisfied God's

desire was found in Him. Well, that is what He was Godward.

Manward, it says, "He went about doing good." He sacrificed Himself in serving man. He manifested the goodness of God, the tenderness and grace of God. He set forth the true character of God in all His ways and actions. They might come to Him at the end of the day when He was weary. He never said, "You have disturbed My rest"; He never turned any away. He sacrificed Himself for men, and went about doing good. He was always available where there was need.

Now you and I belong to the generation of the Second Man. How far do these things mark us Godward and manward? He is the Head and Source of the new generation, and none can ever live before God, save those who are of His generation, and because we are of the generation of the Second Man, we should exhibit His character, His ways. There is nothing God can take account of in us now, save that which is of Christ.

Well, now, that is the man Jesus Christ, very God and very Man. I do not go further to-night. He was the Holy One of God. "In Him there was no sin" (1 John iii. 5). "He did no sin" (1 Pet. ii. 22). "He knew no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21). Perfect Man, but of an entirely *new order*.

The Lord grant that we may have our hearts so engaged with Him, and admire Him, that we may partake of the same character and walk here as Christ did, and so exhibit the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

III. HIS VICARIOUS DEATH.

John xix. 28-30.

John xix. 34.

1 John v. 6-9 (omitting v. 7).

WE have been contemplating on former occasions the Lord in His personal glory as the Son, the One who is, was, and ever will be, God over all, blessed for ever, the true God. On the last occasion we contemplated Him in His Manhood, the man Christ Jesus, seeing that He was very Man; Man in every sense; truly Man, but Man of an entirely *new order*, altogether distinct from the Adam man, the very opposite in every sense to man as born after the flesh. Man wholly for the good pleasure of God; the One in whom God found the answer to every thought of His; the One in whom He was glorified, glorified in Man, even as He had been dishonoured in Man.

We were saying those were the two pillars on which Christianity is built up; to lose either would be to lose everything. To consolidate the matter, we might refer to Peter's confession which involved both sides of the truth. The Lord raised the question, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" That is the great question of the day. Then He appealed to the disciples and said, "Whom do ye say that I am?" and Peter confessed, "Thou art *the Christ*" (the anointed Man). That is what "The Christ" means—the One whom God could anoint as being altogether for His pleasure. "Thou art the Christ;" then the other side of the truth, "*the Son of the living God*"—a divine Person, and the

Lord said, "On this rock I will build My assembly." I hope we can every one of us answer to the appeal of the Lord in this way and can say, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." We acknowledge Him to be the anointed Man, the Son of the living God.

Now if the religious teachers of the day have lost the true Christ, it is no wonder they have lost the truth as to His death, and what I purpose to-night is to consider the true character and value of *His death*.

He came *to die*; "He came by water and by blood." He came into man's estate in order that He might die. It says, "He was made a little lower (or inferior) to the angels *for the suffering of death*, that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." Men say He died as a martyr, or, as an example of self-sacrifice for the good of others. They speak of those who have perished in the late war as in like manner giving their lives in self-sacrifice for the good of their country. They compare it with the death of Christ. Now if that is all there was in the death of Christ, we have nothing. It is true He did die as a martyr, as a witness for the truth, and His death was a great self-sacrifice (Eph. v. 2), but then what I want to say is that there is very much more than that in it.

Now the reason men have those false thoughts as to the death of Christ, is that they ignore the presence of sin in the universe of God and in themselves. Anyone who has any feeble conception of sin, could not possibly speak of the death of Christ in that way. It was the coming in of sin that necessitated His death, and it is well to remember that sin began in *heaven*. Satan fell through pride from the position in which God had

placed him, and many of the angels fell with him, of whom it says, "they are kept in chains and reserved against the day of judgment." The day of judgment is coming when sin will be judged, also Satan and his angels, and men who have despised the death of Christ and the grace of God. That is where sin began; it brought confusion into heaven, and disturbed the peace of the throne of God, and then, as we know, "by one man sin entered into the *world*." Sin came into the world by one man, under the influence, no doubt, of Satan, and death by sin, so that the creature was ruined, the creation marred, and everything was lost.

Now apart from the death of the Son of God, everything for God's glory, and everything for man, would have been totally lost; but God had a remedy. He had foreseen everything, and He had provided a Lamb before the foundation of the world. One who could take up the whole question of sin, deal with it for the glory of God, and ultimately completely remove it out of God's universe. John the Baptist bore witness to Him when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Now all the way down the line God had given witness to this fact that nothing but *death* could meet the question of sin, and deliver man from its consequences, so that immediately Adam had sinned, we find that God clothed him. What did He clothe him with? With that which was *the fruit of death*—with skins. If there were skins, there must have been the death of the animals. Now this shows that the only righteousness in which a man can stand before God, must be the fruit of death.

The apostle says, "Christ is the end of the

law for righteousness to every one that believeth." God's provision was Christ Himself, but as risen from the dead. Now again, directly man was driven out of Eden, God gave testimony to Cain and Abel. We are not told how, but God gave testimony to them as to how a sinful man turned out of paradise might return to God and obtain favour with Him. Abel offered his victim of the firstlings of his flock. It was a sweet savour offering, and the result was that Abel obtained witness that he was righteous. Cain, acting according to his own mind and will, despised God's testimony and the means God had appointed. God said to him, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? if thou doest not well, *sin* lieth at the door." He despised the appointed way.

Now all the way down the line you get the same testimony in the different offerings. Noah offered sacrifices, which rose up as a sweet savour, and God said, "I will not again curse the ground for man's sake," "and God blessed Noah." God made a covenant with Noah and his sons and with the creation, on the ground of Noah's sacrifices. Later God made a covenant with Abraham and confirmed it on the ground of sacrifice (see Gen. xv.).

When God was about to redeem Israel, death must take place—nothing could expiate sin but the death of a victim. They were to put the blood on the side posts and lintel of their houses, and God said, "When I see *the blood* I will pass over you." The blood was the witness that the penalty of sin had been borne, and God's righteous claims had been met. Then the sacrifices ordained all through the Jewish economy all pointed on to the different ways in which the death of Christ was seen, that great sacrifice which was to be

accomplished, by which the question of sin, and the state of the sinner, alone could be met. This was the only ground on which God could dwell in the midst of a sinful people, and the only ground on which He could bless them. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission."

Now I thought we might look at the different ways in which the death of Christ is presented in the Gospels. Its greatest aspect is seen in the Gospel of John, where it is presented in relation to the glory of God, but we will begin with Matt. xxvii. 45-54. Here we have the *sin offering* aspect of the death of Christ, that which shows to us what the true character of sin is. Here we have the Holy One of God, the blessed One of whom we were speaking last week, the One of whom it says, "He did no sin," and "in whom there was no sin," and again, "He knew no sin." Here was One who, unlike the rest of men, was not subject to death. He was the living One, the One who had a right to live because He was the righteous One, the Holy One of God. Such an One as that takes the place here as victim, takes our place, stood in our stead, took our sins upon Him. Think of what happened in those three hours of darkness from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. Man had already done his worst, had given expression to all the hatred and wickedness of the human heart and crucified the Son of God, and now man is entirely shut out, thick darkness enshrouded the earth; man had nothing to say now. The Lamb is on God's altar (as the prophet Isaiah says), "it pleased *Jehovah* to bruise Him, He hath put Him to grief, when *Thou* shalt make His soul an offering for sin." *Jehovah* took the victim, and made Him an offering for sin just as He said to Abraham of

old, "Take thy son, thine only son . . . and offer him there for a burnt offering." But when the time came He spared him, God said, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad." He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. There was no victim to take the place of Christ ; God could not stay His hand, it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him ; "Thou hast put Him to grief." You cannot dwell on it too much. That is the *vicarious* character of the death of Christ. At the end of that awful period, during which He suffered (what no human being can ever comprehend) the righteous judgment of a holy God against sin, He said, "It is finished." His personal holiness made Him feel what death was as none other ever could feel it. Every unrepentent sinner will know it, and suffer it in their measure when they are cast into the lake of fire, but none will feel it as He felt it. Death for Him was not simply giving up the ghost, it was not simply the act of expiring. He tasted death in all that death was as the wrath of a holy God against sin. All that, as we know from another Gospel, was passed through before He expired. In Luke's Gospel, before He expired, He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit." He could not say, "Father," during those three hours of darkness. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ; why art Thou so far from helping Me ?" Had He given any cause for this ? No, He was there in obedience to the will of God. He had prayed in the garden, "Oh, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me ; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." There never was a death like that ! Men may bear the judgment of God another day, but that will be receiving the just reward of their deeds, but here

it was the Holy One suffering for us as the victim to satisfy divine claims. Who can measure them? He glorified God and said, "It is finished," and the consequence is that, for God, sin has been removed. "He appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Thank God, sin has been removed and God is free now to come out in all the activities of His grace and love to accomplish all His will, and to establish a world in which everything will be to His glory. Sin does not block the way now. We sing sometimes, "His hand, His heart, His house is free."

Now the effect is shown in what follows. First of all it says, "The veil of the Temple was rent from top to bottom." God surely did this; because if man had done it, it would have been rent from the bottom to top. It meant the removal of the legal system of which that veil was the symbol. There was no approach to God under this legal system; God was hidden, and man was kept at a distance, but now the veil is rent, all that is done away with. No doubt this system had been established by God, but now His hand sets it aside, and, thank God, we are not on the ground of the law. We do not have to do with God on legal grounds; God is no longer hidden, and we are no longer kept in the distance. We are on the ground of grace; we are saved by grace; we are blessed by grace; we can draw nigh with liberty and boldness.

There was an earthquake, and the rocks were rent. I take that to represent the fact that the whole kingdom of Satan was shaken to its foundation. Satan had a kingdom, he is the prince of this present world, and men are his vassals, but

now, as the result of the death of Christ, Satan's power is annulled. The Apostle says, "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light : who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."

Every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is saved, and has found entrance into the kingdom of God. He has found safety and blessing in God's kingdom ; here is the foundation of it.

Then, again, "the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves *after* His resurrection." What does this signify ? The fact that the power of death and the grave were broken. Here were men (like ourselves) who died and were buried, but who came out of their graves as a witness to what had taken place in the death of Christ. This shows what a wonderful effect the death of Christ had ; *God vindicated* in regard to sin ; *the kingdom of Satan overthrown*, and *death annulled*.

I now turn to Mark's Gospel (xvi. 14-16, 19, 20). The result of the death of Christ here is that glad tidings of a present salvation are to be preached throughout the whole creation. There is no limitation, there is salvation for all men, in the One who died and is risen again. "He that believes." Believes what ? The testimony to the Man who had died, and had risen out of death ; "shall be saved." For all such the judgment of God is set aside, and the power of Satan and of death annulled.

Then at the end of the chapter we find man going up into heaven. This is a new thing and something that has never been known before—a Man going up *into heaven*, and taking His place

in the very presence of God. It is recorded here as a testimony to that which results from the death of Christ. He is the pattern and the example of what God's pleasure in man is, and Christ is gone up as the forerunner, and has taken possession of the place for us. That is our true place, and in a little while we shall go there too.

In Luke's Gospel (xxiii. 39-46 ; xxiv. 46-48, 50-53), again we get an account of the rending of the veil with a rather different signification. In Luke the thought is *God* being free *to come out* in all the fulness of His grace, so that man, as reconciled, may go in. How it must have delighted the heart of God to rend that veil and be able to say, "I am free now to come out towards sinful creatures in pardoning and saving grace." So we get in the last chapter, "It behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that *repentance and remission of sins* should be preached in His name among *all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem."

The testimony was to be rendered among all the nations ; God delights in forgiveness.

Another great point was what we see in the repentant thief. He justified the Lord and said, "This Man hath done nothing amiss," and then "Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." The Lord said, "To-day thou shalt be *with Me* in *Paradise*." Now is that not wonderful? Here is a sinner dying for his sins, yet going that day into the paradise of God. The paradise that was lost was not regained, but the *paradise of God* is opened to Man, the paradise that God created for Himself. So wonderful was the work of Christ, that He was able to take up the thief, and changing him into another kind of man, take him to be with Him in paradise. This

is an expression of the grace in which God has come out. The grace which saves, *changes the man* by a work wrought *in him*, and thus fits him to be with Christ, grace reigning through righteousness by Jesus Christ our Lord.

A further result in the end of chapter xxiv. is that we see a priestly company on earth. It says, "And they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." It is our privilege now to be filled with the blessing of God and the joy of His love, and to respond to it, in continually praising God. "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth Me." This is Luke's presentation of the death of Christ.

Now I turn to John (xii. 20-24, 27-30). I think that is a very marvellous expression; the Lord looking at death in all its terrors, says, "Now is My soul troubled." He might well say that. "Father, save Me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour." He had come to this hour for this very cause; "*Father, glorify Thy name.*" There was no other way; there was no other means by which it was possible for the Father to glorify His name. He would accept all that was in that hour, in His devotion to the Father's will and glory.

Now what does this mean, the Father glorifying His name? He does not speak here of God, but of the *Father* glorifying His name. I believe the way in which the Father is glorifying His name is in the deliverance of man from all the fruits of sin, and establishing in him all the good pleasure of His will, that which He had purposed in Himself before ever Adam was made, that which He is now accomplishing for the satisfaction of His love, for the gratification of His own heart. It is in the carrying out, and in making good in man of all those purposes of divine wisdom and love that

the Father glorifies His name. Now He (Christ) would remove everything that stood in the way. He would suffer everything that the Father might do all He had in His purpose to do. I believe that to take in not only the special blessing of the Church, that gives us a place with the Son in the Father's house, but also the blessing of every family named of the Father in the coming day. "Of whom *every family* in heaven and earth is named." These will be all blessed of the Father in the eternal universe of bliss. When all this has been accomplished, the Father's Will will be done, and with this in view the Son, with the full knowledge of all that was in the Father's mind, goes into death. "For this cause came I unto this hour." He has saved us from Satan's power, and has given us a righteous place before Him, and He is working in us and carrying out in every one all this to His own satisfaction, and to His eternal glory. There is another thought here (John xii. 23), when He saw the Greeks coming up and desiring to see Him, the future day of His glory, as Son of Man, passed before Him. Jesus answered and said, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." That is the day when He will be publicly glorified as Son of Man, and His universal dominion established; a day of blessing for heaven and earth. It will be a wonderful day, evil will be subdued, and men will be blessed and divine order established, under the universal Headship of the Son of Man. Then all things will be reconciled to God. But who will inherit the blessing? Those who are saved and blessed in virtue of the death of Christ.

He says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." Apart from His death He would be all alone. He dies that

He might not be alone. Thank God, He is not alone. He has already those He can speak of as "My brethren." At the end of this Gospel, when He arose from the dead, He could take up His disciples and say, "Go to My brethren." Again, "In the midst of the Assembly will I sing praise." In another day He will have another company in Israel and a great company saved from the Gentiles. All this is the fruit of His death. See the latter part of Psalm xxii.

That we may be with Him, we must be like Him. Christ through going into death has become the last Adam, the life-giving Spirit, and He has begotten a harvest all like Himself. Every true believer is *of Him* and therefore *like Him*.

In chapter xiii. 31, 32, it says, "*Now* is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." In what sense was the Son of Man glorified? In His death all His moral perfections were fully manifested; His absolute devotion to God's will; His absolute obedience—in that sense He was glorified as Son of Man, and God was glorified in Him. Think of all that God is as God, and how all that He had created for His pleasure and glory had been marred through sin! The creation over which man had been set as head had been ruined, but here is One who undertakes to glorify God in regard to all that sin had done.

Well, I take it that all that God is, and all that was due to God from Man, all that His glory demanded in regard to sin, was rendered to God in the death of the Son of Man. The believer can look at this glory now because it has been satisfied and glorified in His death. All that He has accomplished, and all that will be accomplished in bringing in the new heaven and the new earth—in which righteousness will dwell, and

in which God will fill all things—is based upon the death of Christ, and will display the glory of the Son of Man. Every intelligent being will answer to what God is. The basis and foundation of it has been laid in the death of Jesus. Without the death of Jesus everything would have been lost. God will glorify Him publicly some day in the presence of the whole universe, and everybody will have to acknowledge it, but in the meantime He is glorified in the presence of God. The Father has glorified Him, and this is God's answer to His death.

Well, I do not dwell on our side of it. We have everything through His death ; we are redeemed by His blood ; we are justified by His blood ; we are cleansed by His blood ; we have boldness to enter the holiest by His blood ; we are made nigh to God by His blood ; it is the ground of everything for us. What a wonderful death ! Was there ever a death like this ? He became a Man to die ; He could not die in the Godhead. " He took part in flesh and blood, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." That wonderful death will be the theme of our admiration throughout the ages. I trust that everyone here will be able to sing the song of heaven—" Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed to God by Thy blood, out of every tongue and people and nation." Amen.

IV. HIS ACTUAL RESURRECTION.

Matt. xxvii. 62-66.

Matt. xxviii. 1-8.

Luke xxiv. 1-9.

Luke xxiv. 23-43.

John xx. 1-22.

Acts x. 38-41.

1 Cor. xv. 1-8.

1 Cor. xv. 12-23.

1 Cor. xv. 29-34.

LAST time we were together we were considering the wonderful death of the Lord Jesus in its sacrificial character in its relation to God, and its relation to men, and we were seeing that, apart from His death, everything would have been lost and Satan would have gained an immense and final victory.

Now what I propose this evening is to consider God's answer to His death, that is, *His resurrection*, how God raised Him from the dead. That, too, is one of the great fundamental facts of Christianity that is being called in question by many of the religious teachers of the present day, and it is no wonder, Satan is the great opposer of the truth, and he knew very well what resurrection would mean for him ; it meant his complete defeat and the overthrow of his kingdom, and if he could not prevent it, he would prejudice people by his lies and try to persuade them it had never taken place.

In the passage we read in Matthew, we see how Satan (behind the Pharisees and Chief Priests) tried, if possible, to keep the Lord in the grave. They asked Pilate to make the sepulchre secure, lest His disciples should come in the night and steal Him away and say that He was risen from the dead, so that the last error would be worse than the first, and Pilate gave them authority to

make the sepulchre secure. To deny Him as Man here, as they could, was serious enough, but to admit that He was risen from the dead would be to acknowledge the complete defeat of Satan and the world. Resurrection was the evidence of His complete and absolute *victory* over all the powers of evil.

I think that to see the value of resurrection, we must remember that in entering into death the Lord met not only the judgment of God, but also entered into conflict with the power of the enemy (Satan and man), the whole world as it were, and it seemed, for the moment, as if the enemy had triumphed. The Lord said when He was about to go up to the cross, "Now is your hour, and the power of darkness." It was allowed in that hour to Satan and to men to do their will; to do their worst; it was given up to Satan that he might put forth all His energy and power against Christ to destroy Him if he could. That was the great conflict in which the Lord was engaged in entering into death. It was like David meeting Goliath and the Philistines. He went up alone, and when he came back having the head of the giant in his hand, the people shouted a shout of victory. Well, now, that is a feeble figure of the conflict into which the Lord Jesus Christ entered; it shows what was involved in His death and His resurrection.

Now suppose that He had not risen, suppose He had been left in the grave, what would that have meant? It would have meant, first of all, that His sacrifice (His death) had been unavailing to meet the claims of the glory of God, sin was not put away, and, on the other hand, Satan had gained a final victory and man was finally lost. That was impossible, but that is what it would

have meant. See what is involved then in men's denial of the resurrection of Christ. Now that is why the enemy is so active in seeking to deny the fact of the resurrection of Christ. It was that which brought the apostles into conflict with the world, and Satan raised up all the opposition he could to hinder the testimony, to destroy the witnesses, but the testimony was preserved and the witnesses were maintained in the power of the Holy Ghost. Christ was triumphant; He is the Victor, and His victory is God's triumph, God has triumphed by Christ. If Christ had not gone into death, if He had not overcome the enemy's power, there would have been no triumph for God. God has triumphed by Christ over sin and over Satan's power, as they sang in Exodus xv. when the children of Israel came through the Red Sea, "*Jehovah hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.*" How much more so is that true now in the presence of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ! God has triumphed gloriously, sin has been put away, and God has been glorified.

I was going to remark that with many Christians (who would not deliberately deny His resurrection) there is a very feeble idea in connection with it. They suppose that in the resurrection Christ ceased to be a real Man, they think of Him as a Spirit. (I fear there are uninstructed Christians whose thoughts of the resurrection state are very vague.) Now if that be so, there is no resurrection at all, because resurrection applies to that which went into death and the grave, that is, the body. The Lord took a body and in that body He offered Himself a victim and died, and in that body He was buried, and in that body rose again. In His *spirit* He went to the Father, He said, "Father,

into Thy hands I commit *My spirit*." So that His resurrection is a reality, He is as much truly Man to-day as He was before His death. The important thing to see is that in resurrection He retains the reality of His Manhood, and all that characterizes Him as Man here has been carried over to the other side ; all His tenderness, all His grace, so that He is still, as Man, able to enter into human suffering and feelings. He could not do this if He were not truly Man !

Now the Lord took pains to convince the disciples of this : He came into their midst and showed them His hands and His side and said, " Handle Me and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." He does not say, " Flesh and blood." It was no longer a body animated by natural life, but a spiritual body. A body that is the pattern of what ours will be another day when we are raised up in His likeness, but the Lord took pains to convince the disciples that He was the *same* Jesus, the One who could be seen, heard, and handled, and could eat and drink before them. I do not think He needed to eat, but He did that in order to convince the disciples of the reality of His manhood.† Peter refers to this in Acts x. 40, 41, speaking of how He showed Himself openly to witnesses chosen of God, the apostles, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead.

Then, as we saw in 1 Cor. xv., God took care there should be adequate testimony. He appeared to the women (Mary Magdalene and others), then to Simon ; to two disciples going to Emmaus ; then to the eleven and then to five hundred brethren at once. There were competent witnesses and adequate testimony to the reality of His resurrection.

! Now we may consider what is involved in His resurrection. It was the *evidence of what had been effected in His death*. The great work was effected in His death. His victory over the power of Satan was effected in His death. The work of redemption was effected in His death, but the resurrection was the witness of it. { What was that work for God? Had His holy name been honoured in the death of Jesus? Had God been glorified perfectly as to the question of sin? Had the work satisfied God? God raised Him from the dead the third day; God has put His seal on the work. Now that is an immense thing for our souls to understand and rest upon. God has been perfectly satisfied in regard to His righteous demands with regard to sin by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what we can rest in. Sometimes the question is asked, "Are you satisfied?" What do you want to be satisfied with? Something about yourself? No; the only thing that can satisfy you is the work that satisfied God and the knowledge that God Himself is satisfied. Whatever questions can be raised by the Holy Ghost in the consciences of men, have all been met in the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has raised Him from the dead. As to Satan's power, the resurrection is the evidence of the complete annulling of Satan's power, the earnest of the final and complete overthrow of His kingdom.

! In the presence of a risen Christ there is nothing to fear, He says, "Peace unto you." Peace is proclaimed when the battle is won and the enemy completely vanquished. ! The work of Christ has met everything on God's side and vanquished the enemy's power, hence He can speak peace to us. It is the believer's privilege, in the light of the resurrection of Christ, to enjoy peace, and it is

impossible for a soul to be in the light of a risen Christ and not enjoy peace—I say it is *impossible*. If this peace is not known, it is because souls are not in the light of a risen Christ.

“ By weakness and by death
He won the mead and crown,
Trode all His foes beneath His feet ,
By being trodden down.”

All this is outside the power and reason of man. Men admit that death is the end of their power. Nobody supposes that anybody has power to raise the dead. It is entirely beyond man's power, so that it becomes the great evidence of God's power (Eph. i. 19, 20). You cannot reach the thought of resurrection by any process of reasoning. By reasoning on the laws of nature a man may discover a great deal that is true in nature, but it is impossible to reach the fact of resurrection by reasoning on these lines—you might reach the fact of death by reasoning on these lines, but resurrection is outside of natural laws and outside of man's reason, therefore it must be a matter of faith, that is, faith in divine testimony. It is the great test of faith. I believe that Christ was raised from the dead ; I know it, because I believe it ; “ I believed and therefore have I spoken.” I believe in divine testimony by the Holy Ghost ; thus we know that Christ is risen.

I refer to the Gospels and how the effect of it is seen in each. In Matthew's Gospel the great witness there, is first of the great destruction of Satan's power, the overthrow of his kingdom, and the introduction of the world to come. At the end of this Gospel the Lord bids His disciples to “ make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and

of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." (That is the end of the present age.) What is in view is the bringing in of another age, and what will characterize the age that is to come ? Just the opposite of this age ! Things will no longer be dominated by sin and death, all opposition will be subdued, sin will be held in check, and there will be a state of universal blessing. The creature will be delivered from the bondage of corruption and brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, under the power of Christ. That is, the world or age to come and the resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of it ; He will subdue all enemies and establish God's kingdom on the earth.

In Mark's Gospel the result is that the testimony of salvation in a risen Christ goes forth to the whole creation.

In Luke's Gospel I think it is more the deliverance of man from the power of death—" By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." " It is appointed unto men once to die." We are all of us naturally under the power of death, but now a great deliverance has been accomplished. The witnesses at the sepulchre said, " Why seek ye *the living* among the dead ? " Could He remain there ? Was it possible ? No ; it was impossible that the living One should remain in death. There was no cause of death in Him, and if He went into death, He did so voluntarily, so that He must come out of it, He could not be holden of death. In His resurrection we see the way of deliverance open from the power of death, and every true believer in the Lord

Jesus Christ is delivered from the power of death and will never see death. The testimony of grace can go forth to men everywhere now, the testimony of forgiveness of sins, and salvation for all men in the name of the risen Christ.

In John's Gospel I think it is a little more ; that is, it is the introduction of a new day, and of a new world, a new and eternal system of things altogether. It is the *first day of the week* (it does not speak of the sabbath in John's Gospel, as in the others). There is a great deal of stress to be laid upon the fact that on the *first day of the week* the Lord rose from the dead, and on the *first day of the week* He appeared to His disciples. The result of the death of Christ is that in His resurrection we have the dawn of a *new* and *eternal* day, in connection with the introduction of a new and eternal system of things, what I think one may call the Father's world, a spiritual system of things in which the Father's pleasure would be established according to His purpose, a system of things which will abide for ever and ever. Of this heavenly system, He is the *beginning*, as the firstborn from among the dead. A divine system has begun ; something that is wholly of God and that in which we have our part as Christians. Every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ belongs to that new and heavenly system, and has part in all the blessing of it, in all that the love of God has planned and purposed for His own pleasure, and for the blessing of His children. So it is not only a day of peace, it is a day of *joy*.

The Lord said to His disciples when He was about to die, "Ye now therefore have sorrow," and well they might. They were grieved at the thought of His leaving them, and their hearts

were full of sorrow, but He says, "I will see you again, and your hearts shall *rejoice* and *your joy no man taketh from you*." When He saw them again was after He had been raised from the dead, as we read in John xx., "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." They began to taste the joy that could never cease. That is one thing that characterizes the new day, and the new world, the new system of things that His resurrection has given us introduction into. None can rob us of this ; it is wholly outside ourselves, outside this world and outside the power of man. Would to God we entered into it more, knew this joy more ! The Holy Ghost would engage our hearts with this blessed One, and knowing Him as the living One out of death ; knowing our part with Him in all that divine system of which He is the blessed centre.

What a reality is the resurrection of Christ ! The apostle says in that passage we read in Corinthians, "If Christ be not raised, our preaching is vain, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins, and we are without hope." What a solemn thing to deny the resurrection of Christ ! Those who do so are yet in their sins. But if Christ is risen, then we are not in our sins. Where are my sins ? Left behind, buried in His grave. Again he says, "If Christ be not raised . . . we have no hope . . . we are of all men most miserable." If we have no hope beyond this life, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." And then, again, those who have fallen asleep in Christ, have perished ? No, these saints have not perished ; to God they live. He said to the Sadducees, "He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." He is not the God of the dead but of the living. These men are living to God, although they are yet awaiting

the resurrection condition. All the departed saints live to God. "*But now is Christ risen from the dead* and become the firstfruits of them that slept." Not only has He risen personally, but being risen, He is the firstfruits of a great harvest to follow. "Christ the firstfruits, and afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." As in Adam all die, so *in Christ*, everyone will be made alive. Every soul that has died in the faith of Christ will be made alive, but every man in his own order. When the Lord comes He will claim all His own, the graves will have to give up His own, they will be raised up in spiritual and glorified bodies and will be for ever with the Lord. He will not lose one; He knows where every sleeping saint lies to-day, and He is waiting for the moment when He will come and claim them. Then we shall fully share in the great victory that Christ has won, but, even now, in the faith of our souls, we can say, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory." We have the sense of victory even now. When the Lord comes, then "death will be swallowed up in victory." "Oh, death, where is thy sting? Oh, grave, where is thy victory?"

The more we ponder on the resurrection of Christ, the more we pray about it, the more we shall see how much is involved in it! The Lord give us light, and grant that the light may shine into our hearts, so that we may taste that joy which has been introduced for us in the risen One, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

V. HIS EXALTATION TO GLORY.

Acts i. 9.

Acts ii. 32-36.

Acts vii. 55-60.

Acts ix. 3-6.

Acts ix. 15-16.

Heb. ii. 6-9.

Eph. i. 19-23.

Eph. iii. 8-11.

Phil. ii. 6-11.

WHAT I purpose this evening is that we should consider the Lord as *Man in heaven*, the *glorified Man*, the glory of the Christ, that is, that we should follow Him from His resurrection into the heavens, follow the cloud. It says in the passage we read in the first chapter of Acts, "He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Now that cloud is the same cloud that rested over the Tabernacle; that rested on the Mercy-seat in the most holy place, filled it; it was the symbol of the glory of God. So we see Him taken up into heaven and received by the glory of God. That accords with what we have in 1 Tim. iii. 16, "God was manifest in the flesh; justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, *received up in glory*." The One in whom God has been manifested, is now received up in glory, so that if we follow the cloud, we shall follow it to the place where it rests on the blessed Man. There is a Man in whom that glory has found its rest, its perfect satisfaction. How delightful for us to follow the cloud and to see it rest on a blessed Man in heaven. Now if we thus follow the Lord into His heavenly place in glory, we shall find ourselves in the region of divine purpose and counsel. He is the beginning, centre, and pattern of the

heavenly and eternal system ; all the eternal purposes of God had in view Christ, and Christ as a glorified Man, and now that blessed Man has taken His place according to divine counsel, God can unfold to us that which had been hidden in Himself from eternity—all the apostles testified the fact of Christ being glorified in heaven. The Apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, declared that the One whom the Jews had crucified, had been raised up by God, and had been exalted to the right hand of God. Man had dishonoured Him, and put Him on a cross of shame, but God had raised Him up by His mighty power, and had exalted Him. He is exalted to the highest point of heavenly glory above angels, principalities and authorities and every name that is named.

The apostle quotes Psalm cx., " Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou at My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." When He had been despised and rejected by man, and cast out of the world, Jehovah said to Him, " Come up here ; I have a place for You, sit Thou at *My right hand* "—the highest conceivable place of glory. That is provisional, it is not to be for ever, " Until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." It is what characterizes the present period, the day of grace. While He is sitting there the testimony of grace for all men is going out through the One who died and rose again. But the day is coming when He will rise up and come forth in glory, and all His enemies will be put as a footstool under His feet. God having exalted Him, has " made Him both *Lord* and *Christ*." As the *Christ*, He is the *Head* in whom God has established all His thoughts of grace and blessing for man ; all He had in His own infinite love and wisdom purposed to bring about for the blessing of the creature ; all

has been established in the Christ, and everyone who receives blessing derives it from Him; righteousness, salvation and every blessing God has for us, we have not to wait for it, it already subsists and is given to us in the Christ.

Then He is *Lord*, too; He is set in a place of supreme authority and power, that He may be the Administrator. All that has been established in Him as the Christ, is now *administered by Him*, so that if we receive anything of the blessing established in Him, we receive it through Him. It is in acknowledging Him as Lord, that souls receive any blessing or grace. It is all through His name. Whatever blessing it is, it all comes *through* the Lord Jesus.

Now that is a very great part of the truth connected with Christ as Man, exalted by the right hand of God. All the apostles bore testimony to the fact not only of His resurrection but of His exaltation and glory as Man. But in the early part of Acts we get the presentation of Christ to Israel once more. They rejected Him in humiliation, but God, in His mercy, gave them one more opportunity, so that the apostles preached that if they would repent, Christ would be sent to them again. The fruitless fig tree was spared one year longer. But they did not repent, they forfeited everything. Now when you come to Stephen he reviews the whole course of that nation, and shows how consistently they had rejected the Holy Ghost all through their history, so that it is all over with Israel according to the flesh, and there was nothing to look for as far as the earth was concerned, but then he, being filled with the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven. The Holy Ghost directed his eye away from man, away from the earth, he looked up steadfastly

into heaven. If we were under the control of the Holy Ghost, He would direct our eyes and our hearts away to Christ where He is. We have nothing to expect in connection with this world ; nothing to expect in relation to man after the flesh ; nothing to expect in relation to ourselves naturally, but the Spirit would turn our eyes, as He did Stephen's, to heaven. What did he see ? Well, he saw *heaven opened*. That was a new thing for heaven to be thrown open to man (it had been opened to Christ). He saw the glory of God. He turned away from a scene filled with the wickedness of man, of all that was dishonourable to God, and he gets a vision of the scene that is filled with the glory of God. What a relief to turn our eyes to heaven and look up into a scene that is filled with the glory of God. God has glorified Himself, in raising and glorifying that blessed Man who had glorified Him on the earth. In the Epistle to the Philippians we read, " God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

There in the centre of that glory is Jesus. Stephen said, " I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man " (the One whom you have rejected here) " standing on the right hand of God." Now that passage is characteristic. It is one of the things that characterize the present moment in which we are found, that heaven is no longer shut up. The heavens are thrown open to us, and having the Holy Ghost, and by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, what has taken place in heaven has been revealed, and we are able in that way to look straight up into heaven, and to see the glory

of God resting on Jesus, and all that God has been pleased to unfold to us of what He has established in Him according to His eternal purpose. Well, now, that is a new start, earth was done with for the time being, heaven is opened.

Now the next thing we find is that Saul, who was the great enemy of Christ, and who would destroy every witness to Him, as he is in his mad opposition going to Damascus, a light from heaven shone upon him and he heard a voice from heaven ; heaven speaks. The light from heaven comes to him, and the result is, in that light he is convicted, brought down, all his self-righteousness withered up, he is fallen to the earth a helpless sinner (in his own estimation the "chief of sinners"), but he hears a voice : it was not a voice of thunder, it was a gracious voice, it was Jesus the Lord speaking to him. He said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "What have I done?" "Why should you hate Me so?" and in the light of that glory he says, "*Lord*"; owns that blessed One, Jesus, to be Lord. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The light and the voice changed him into another man ; he came under the control of Christ, under the power of His love, so that he could say, "For me to live is Christ." "The life that I now live in flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." He was now to become the chosen vessel to open up to the saints the glories of Christ and God's purposes in Christ, as he says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of the Christ." What unsearchable riches ! As I have said before, all that God has revealed of Himself,

and all His purpose in regard to man in that blessed Christ, this was Paul's ministry.

Let us consider the passage read in Heb. ii., a quotation from Ps. viii., where the Psalmist says, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the sun and moon which Thou hast ordained" (he looked at the creation in the heavens), "what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man that Thou visitest him?" We may well wonder at this, that man, the creature that had fallen, should be an object of interest to God; we may well consider this. Do you ever wonder at it that God should ever take up a creature like you and make you an object of interest to Himself? In all God's eternal purposes, before the world was made, man was the object that God had in view. Wonderful thing! "What is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" What a wonderful thought that God should exalt man and that man should be crowned with glory and honour, and all things set under his feet, things in heaven, as well as earth. All this found its full expression in the Second Man, the Son of Man, the Son become Man. "Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, Thou hast crowned Him with glory and honour." You and I are going to share that glory another day. "But now we see not yet all things put under Him." Every thought of God found its answer in that blessed Man, but they are not yet carried out, publicly we do not see all things put under Him yet, "but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."

Now the Epistle to the Ephesians carries us a

little further. The apostle there speaks of the power that had wrought in Christ when God raised Him from the dead, and he adds, "He set Him down at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far 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, and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body." His headship is universal, but it has not yet come into display. All things are not yet brought under His headship, but in the millennial day everything in heaven and earth will be brought under the headship of Christ; He will fill all things and bring about a state of unity in heaven and earth a state of peace; a state of life and blessing everywhere, so that God's will will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. That is what we are waiting for, but in the meantime, He is Head over all things *to the Assembly*, which is His Body. We have already come under that blessed Headship, the Body derives everything from the Head. The Body here takes in all the saints from the day of Pentecost, to the day when the Lord will come to receive His own.

In the next chapter we are said to have been quickened together with Him, and raised up together, and made sit down together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That is the true relationship in which the Church stands to Christ. There is no other company in any other part of God's world that will stand in the same relation to Christ as the Church does now. It is like Adam and Eve, when God first created Adam, and made him head over all creation on the earth, He provided a helpmate for him (a wife). He was head over

the creation, but he was not head *over* the wife, he was head *to* the wife. That is a little picture of what we have here as to God's thought; the Church is that wonderful company that, in the sovereign love of God, had been called out and is being formed to occupy this remarkably exalted position in relation to Christ, to be the object of His affection, and to share in all His glory for ever. Like Eve, the Church derives her life and being from the Head. Nothing could be united to Christ, but that which is *of* Christ. Nothing would be suitable to Adam, but that which was taken out of Adam, as we read, God put Adam into a deep sleep, and took a rib from his side, builded a woman and presented her to Adam, so that he could say, "This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." That is how the Apostle Paul presents the Assembly in this scripture.

Now that brings me to another consideration. How had He come to occupy the present position in which He is as Man in heaven, in relation to God? The apostle, in Eph. i. 3, speaks of God as the *God* and *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now in one sense His exaltation and glory is God's *righteous answer* to His life of obedience and His death on the cross. He was willing to suffer everything for the will and glory of God. What should be a righteous answer to that? How could God display His righteous appreciation of that blessed Man? Well, nothing less would do, He must exalt Him to glory. God's righteousness would be displayed in raising Him from the dead and exalting Him to glory, so that His position in glory is the expression of God's righteous appreciation of all His obedience and self-sacrifice. It is a matter of righteousness.

† There is another thought—He is the *Father* of

our Lord Jesus Christ. What does that convey to us? Well, "Father" brings in the thought of *love*. What would the *Father's love* do for His well-beloved Son? His well-beloved Son was willing to come into this world, to enter into death, that the Father might glorify His name. Then we read He was raised from the dead by the *glory of the Father*. The Father's glory demanded that He should be raised from the dead, but not only that, He set Him before His face in glory. That is what the Father's love would do. The Father took up His well-beloved Son out of death and set Him in the highest place in relation to Himself in heaven. He is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, what about that? Why, that is how we know God; what He is as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He is to every true believer, and every true believer can say, "This God is my God." All the power and the righteousness, all that God is in that way in connection with Christ, is available for us; this God is our God for ever and ever. Then what He is as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He is to us. We are brought into the place of sonship, loved as He is loved: "Taken into favour *in the Beloved*" (Eph. i. 6). How has He taken us into favour? In the Beloved One. He has taken us into favour not through Him, but *in Him*, so that we can speak of Him as our God, and as our Father, we know Him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is Paul's ministry by the Spirit.

Now with regard to John's ministry, it is presented on a different line (read chapter iii. 12, 13). Here is One who has come out of heaven, He is about to ascend into heaven, and can tell us about heavenly things. Then chapter vi. 62,

“ What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before ? ” That is from John’s point of view ; He, as Man, goes back into the position He had as Son with the Father from eternity. It is not exactly something that is given to Him, or something that God does for Him, but the Son of Man *ascends* to the place where He was from eternity.

Now I will refer to a passage in chapter xiii. 1, 3. The hour was come for His departure from this world, when He would depart out of this world, and go to the Father, knowing that He was come from God and that He went to God. Having accomplished the mission for which He had come, He goes back to the One who had sent Him. He says in chapter xvii., “ Father, the hour is come ; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee.” Though it is His own right, He takes it up as Man, and receives it in that way as the Father’s gift. In chapter xiv. He says, “ *I go* to prepare a place for you, I will come again ” (it is His own act) “ and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” Now in chapter xvi. 28, “ I came forth from with the Father, and am come into the world ; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.” He speaks in the consciousness of what was His own right and title ; He did not belong to this world ; He came into it for the will of God, to accomplish the work that God had given Him to do. Now He says, “ I came forth from with the Father ” again “ I leave the world and go to the Father.” There was One who had been with the Father from eternity ; was in full communion with the Father’s thoughts of love ; the blessed Son, and He comes forth into Manhood, and after accomplishing all the Father’s will, laying the righteous basis on which the Father

could accomplish the purposes of His love and glorifying His name, He leaves the world and goes back to the Father. He takes it as His own proper place. In the well-known verse in chapter xx., when He meets Mary Magdalene after His resurrection, He says, "Go to My brethren and say, "*I ascend*," not, I am going to be exalted. In Mark's Gospel He was "*taken up*" into heaven; in Luke's Gospel He was "*received up*" into heaven, and the disciples "*saw Him carried up*." But here it was His *own* act; He was going to the place to which He belonged—" *I ascend* to My Father, and your Father." I hope you catch the difference as to the way it is presented in the ministry of Paul and John. In the former it is what He is made, or, what is given to Him as Man by God. In John it is in accord with the whole tenor of the Gospel in which His personal glory shines in every chapter. He re-enters the glory in His own personal right, now having accomplished His death and having glorified God thereby. He can associate others with Himself, so that we get the same blessed truth as we have seen in Paul's ministry, viz., our relation to the Father in the Son—" My Father, your Father; My God, your God." You get the double thought again, only in the reverse order.

Well, think about it, consider it, dwell upon it, pray about it. In whichever way we think upon it, whether as presented by the Spirit in Paul or John, it is the delight and joy of our hearts to contemplate this blessed Man, Jesus the Son of God, in His heavenly place in the glory into which He has entered as Man, in all the glory God has given Him, which glory will be displayed publicly in the world to come.

God give us, by the Spirit, to have our eyes

and hearts so directed to Christ that He may fill the vision of our souls, and that He may engage the affection of our hearts, so that we may be transferred in Spirit from earth to heaven, and find all our life and joy in contemplating His glory. God bless His word.

VI. HIS COMING AGAIN.

Acts i. 9-12.

John xiv. 1-3.

1 Thes. iv. 13-18.

Rev. i. 7.

Rev. xix. 11-21.

Rev. xxii. 12-17.

Rev. xxii. 20.

You will understand by the scriptures we have read, my purpose is to consider the *coming of the Lord*; to consider it in connection with the Church, with the kingdom of God, with Israel and with the world, in connection with the rights of Christ and the glory of God. I might say to begin with, there is no other hope for anyone, there is no other hope for us individually, there is no other hope for the Church, or for Israel, or for the world. There is only One person who can put the world right. I think the politicians of the world are to-day beginning to realize that things are getting out of hand for them, and there is only one hope and that is the coming of the Lord.

Now, first of all, in connection with the Church: I think we must first consider a little what is the character of the Church or Assembly—Christ's Assembly. It is a *heavenly* company; the apostle addresses us in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "As holy brethren, partakers of the *heavenly* calling"; that is, we are called to heaven. We are not like Israel, they were called to an earthly country and inheritance. We have no earthly hopes, and no earthly promises, no blessing in connection with the earth, we have been called out of it, we have been called to heaven. We are of the heavenly One, i.e., we derive our being and life from the heavenly Man; the apostle says, "As is the

heavenly One, so are the heavenly ones." Christ was altogether a heavenly Man when on earth. "The Son of Man who is in heaven," and no one will go to heaven except those who are of Christ. Every believer derives his life from Christ. Well, that is what characterizes the Church ; it is composed of heavenly people, called out from the world for heavenly blessing and glory. That being so, our hope is to go to heaven, to be *with Christ* where He is. That is what we are looking for.

So when the Lord went away, as we read in John xiv., He comforted the hearts of His sorrowing disciples, sorrowing because they were losing Him. He was going away, and the Lord knew they would feel His absence. He said, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me." He was not to be lost to them, He would be an object of faith to them ; as the Apostle Peter writes, "Whom having not seen, ye love, on whom not now looking, but believing, ye exult with joy unspeakable, and filled with the glory." It is a sad thing if Christ is lost to us, and gone out of our minds and affections. "Believe also in Me ; in My Father's house there are many mansions" (or abodes). The Father's house is a very large place, there are many abodes and many families to occupy it, and I suppose ultimately the whole universe will become the Father's house, and every family named of the Father will have an abode there. But there is a special place the Lord has prepared for His own in the present day. The Church will ever have a unique position in relation to Christ and God, and will occupy a special place in the Father's house.

The moment the Lord took His place with the Father in heaven, the place was prepared, it is

His own place. "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." That is what He held out to them as their hope and prospect—"I will come again." Nothing would satisfy the love of the Lord, but that He should have His loved ones with Him. He is looking forward to it and we await it. That is our hope. that is the immediate prospect in connection with the coming of the Lord. That is what we might speak of as the first event in connection with the Lord's coming. This is a private event; when He appears publicly, the Saints will come *with Him*. Therefore they must first needs go to Him—"When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also *appear with Him*." "The Lord, My God, shall come and *all the saints with Thee*." "At the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ *with all His saints*."

Now in the passage we read in Thessalonians, the apostle opens that out a little. The Thessalonian believers were in trouble in connection with one and another of their company that had fallen asleep. They were looking for the immediate coming of the Lord to set up His kingdom. They were wondering what would happen to those who had fallen asleep—would they miss something of the glory of that kingdom? and the apostle writes to instruct them and to show them that we do not sorrow as others that have no hope. Men of the world have no hope, they are without God and without hope, but we hope. The apostle does not say we should not sorrow, but we sorrow not, even as others who have no hope, for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring *with Him*. That is when He brings Christ into the world

publicly, manifesting Him in glory, He will bring with Him all that have fallen asleep, He will not lose any, and the apostle goes on to explain how the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with archangel voice, with trump of God ; these are not three different persons, it is the Lord Himself in a threefold way.

Well, what will happen ? He says, " the dead in Christ will rise *first*." They will have the precedence. Every sleeping saint will hear the quickening voice of the Son of God and will arise. The grave must give up its dead at His mighty voice. " Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, so shall we ever be with the Lord." From the passage, 1 Cor. xv. 22, 23, we know that all the *saints* from Adam downwards will have part in the first resurrection, all that *are Christ's* will rise up. " Christ the firstfruits and those that *are Christ's* at His coming." You could not shut out Old Testament saints from that.

Later on in the same chapter we read, " The trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The dead here are those that have died in faith. He always puts it in that way, as if the Lord might come at any moment, as if it might have been at the time when the apostle wrote, he says " We." It is always the present expectation for the Lord's people. Our wisdom is to live by the day, and look for the coming of the Lord. Well we know not when it will take place, but " He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." Now that is a very blessed part of the gospel as the apostle preached it, so that those who received the gospel turned to God, to serve Him, and to *await His Son from*

heaven, our deliverer from coming wrath: they did not look for death. Now are we thus waiting God's Son from heaven? We are never supposed to be awaiting death, though we know that if we should depart it will be to be with Christ, but *we await His coming* and the final victory over death—"Our Deliverer from the coming wrath." We know there is a day of wrath coming, but we do not fear it, we shall never see it. Why not? Because before that day comes, the Saviour will come. "We are not in darkness that that day should overtake us as a thief" (1 Thess. v.). We are awaiting Christ as Saviour, to deliver us from the coming wrath, by taking us out of the world before the day of wrath comes. Enoch was translated that he should not see death. He knew that there was a day of wrath coming upon the world that then was, and prophesied about it, but he was translated before it came. That is the prospect of saints to-day. The Church, like Enoch, will be translated before the day of wrath comes. The Thessalonian saints were awaiting the Lord Jesus Christ as Deliverer from the coming wrath. "He died for us that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." Again, the Lord says to the Church at Philadelphia (Rev. iii. 10), "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."

There is another passage that speaks of Him as the coming Saviour. In the end of Phil. iii. we read, "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall transform our bodies of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory." In a moment He will complete the work of God; He will

transform our bodies into the likeness of His body of glory. Then we shall be wholly conformed to the image of God's Son.

There is another passage that will help us (Eph. v.) ; the Spirit speaks there of what the Church is to Christ. It says, " Christ also loved the Church." It is the special object of His love ; it is the pearl of great price that He saw in its beauty before the world was, for which He gave up everything that He might possess it. He is now sanctifying and cleansing it, and awaiting the time when He will have the joy of *presenting it to Himself*, all glorious, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. It will be like Isaac, coming out at eventide to meet Rebecca and receiving her to be his wife.

Now every true believer belongs to Christ's Assembly. He gave Himself for it. What for ? That He might, having washed and cleansed it, present it to Himself a glorious Church. It is the thought of the Lover there—the Lover coming. He loves the Church, and He is waiting the moment of His joy when He will present it to Himself, all glorious, the suited companion for Him in glory, and to come out with Him, to be manifested with Him in glory. Well now that is our hope, and we are looking for the day when He will be manifested. He is hidden now in the heavens, but He will not always be thus hidden in the heavens. " When Christ, who is our life, shall *appear*, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." The Son of Man will come in all His glory and in the glory of the Father, and we shall appear with Him in glory ; that is what He is waiting for. He will not appear in glory until the Church is with Him ; she will be like Him, sitting on the throne with Him, so that the apostle says, " If we suffer with

Him, we shall reign with Him." We shall be glorified together.

Again we read (1 John iii. 2), "We know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." All that shows what place the Church has in the heart of Christ. Again we read (Titus ii. 13), "Looking for that blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." The "blessed hope" is the immediate prospect of His coming at any moment to claim His own. The next thing is the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. There are no signs to be looked for, no events to take place, it may take place at any moment. There are many things that have to transpire, many scriptures to be fulfilled, before the Lord comes forth publicly, but His coming for the Church might take place at any moment. It was ever the present hope of the saints. He is the bright Morning Star, the harbinger of the coming day. Only people who are awake in the early morning, the watchers during the night, see the Morning Star. It is the glad sign that the day is about to break. So the Lord presents Himself in that way, where He says, "I am the bright Morning Star." It is night now, and if we are watchers (the danger is of settling down and going to sleep, seeking our home and rest in this present world), then we shall see the "Bright Morning Star." That is our immediate hope, that is what will be to us the ushering in of the coming day. But the Lord also says, "I am the Root and Offspring of David." He is the hope of Israel. David was the one who God raised up to deliver His people from their enemies and to establish the kingdom, so that the people might in peace enjoy the

blessings of the kingdom. Then Solomon came in to complete that figure as the one who built the house of God so that He might dwell among His people. All the human efforts to restore Israel to Palestine will not further God's kingdom, though it will prepare the way for anti-Christ. There is no hope for Israel but the coming of Him Who is "the root and offspring of David." This involves the thought of His divine glory—He is the root of David and He is the offspring of David, the One in whom all the promises and prophetic scriptures will be fulfilled. Hence every hope of Israel centres in Christ. After the Church is gone, God will then begin a new work in connection with Israel. There will be a remnant converted from among the Jews, and they will be the witness in that day; the messengers to the nations of the coming King. They will be the subjects of Satan's great hostility; they will be looking for the coming of the Messiah to deliver them from their enemies and to establish His people in the promised earthly blessing. He will be their hope, as it is written, "All Israel shall be saved." Not only the two tribes, but the whole nation of Israel, and every word of God and every promise made to the Fathers, will be fulfilled in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the world, the coming of the Lord will be a day of judgment.

In the Gospel of Matthew the Lord says, "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." The world went on as if no evil were about to overtake it until the day of the flood came and swept them all away. Man had filled the earth with evil, God could no longer bear with it, and He cleared the whole world that then was, by the waters of the flood. There will not be a flood again, but there will be a day of

judgment. It will be like it was in the days of Noah. The world will be filled with iniquity and sin, and God will bear with it no longer, and the whole system will be swept away to make room for another world. With that there will be the binding of Satan, the prince of this world. Satan is the present ruler of this world, and he it is who controls the nations of the earth at the present time. When the Lord comes, Satan will be bound and shut up in the bottomless pit; he will be imprisoned during the thousand years when Christ will reign. So that the world and its prince all go together.

Then, as we read, the Lord will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and kingdom, the living at the beginning of the kingdom, and the dead at the end of His reign. In Matt. xxv. it is the judgment of the living; in Rev. xx. it is the judgment of the wicked dead. Then having purged out of His kingdom all things which offend, having subdued all enemies, the Lord will establish the kingdom of God and will reign for 1000 years. After that there will be new heavens and earth (2 Pet. iii. 13).

What marks the present world is that man has taken possession of the earth in utter disregard of the rights of God. But "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." He is "the Lord of all the earth." But the different nations have taken possession of it and are fighting against one another to possess it with utter disregard of the rights of God. That is what marks the present period. The rights of Christ also, who is the appointed Heir of all things, have been disowned. They said, "This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him and let us seize on His inheritance." Well, that cannot go on for ever. The time will come

when the rightful heir will come into possession. (Rev. xix.). He will come forth as "King of kings and Lord of lords," the One in the place of supreme authority and power and using that authority and power to establish the rights of God on the earth and the will of God, so that the will of God will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. He will put down all evil, and establish peace, life and blessing for the people of God.* Under His rule, the earth will become like the garden of Eden and men will enjoy permanent peace and blessing, so that the whole earth will be filled with God's praise (Psa. cl.). What a day that will be! What a change of conditions when the glory of God will fill the whole earth. It will be God's complete triumph over evil. Every thought and word of God will be fulfilled, and the result will issue in ceaseless praise and blessing to God. He was before all evil, and He will be at the end of it, as He saith, "I am the first and I am the last."

Well, that is what we are waiting for—the day when Christ will have His rights, when creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption and all the groaning and suffering will be exchanged for joy and praise.

The Lord grant that all that is connected with the interests and glory of the Lord may have a very living place in our affections, and that we may be as those that are really awaiting the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and ready to welcome Him at any moment, ready to say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

* "The Lord God shall give Him the throne of David His father, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Luke i. 33.

VII. THE PRESENCE AND INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

John xiv. 15-20.

John xiv. 25-26.

Acts ii. 1-4.

Acts ii. 14-18.

Acts ii. 36-38.

Acts xi. 15-18.

Acts xix. 1-6.

Eph. i. 13-14.

Eph. ii. 19-22.

Eph. iv. 3-30.

Rom. viii. 4-9.

Rom. viii. 16-22.

IN considering the fundamentals of Christianity, we cannot omit the truth of the presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is characteristic of the present day. On the subjective side, Christianity subsists in the power of the Spirit as far as it is made good and wrought in us. Whatever we have experimentally, and whatever is wrought in us of God, is in the power of the Spirit. In previous times the Spirit wrought in men; indeed whatever there was of God in men from Adam downward, was by the Spirit, and at times the Spirit came upon men for a certain purpose, and even upon a wicked man like Balaam, making him, against his own will, to utter the word of God. The prophets uttered the word of God, and at times did not understand the purport of what they spoke, as Peter says, "searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify," when testifying of the suffering of Christ, and the glory which should follow. Again we read, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." But at this time the Spirit was not *dwelling* on earth, nor *indwelling the saints*.

In John xiv., speaking of the coming of the

(i. 13, 14), "In whom also having believed, ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance to the redemption of the acquired inheritance" (N.T.).

The reception of the Spirit is spoken of as the "anointing," "sealing," and "earnest" (2 Cor. i. 21, 22), and as the "firstfruits" (Rom. viii. 23). The thought connected with the *anointing*, is *understanding* (1 John ii. 20-27; 1 Cor. ii. 14-16) and *power for service* (Luke iv. 18). The *sealing* signifies God putting His mark upon us, claiming us as His own. Christ was anointed and sealed at His baptism, and a voice came from heaven saying, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"; it is a mark of *divine favour*. Then the inheritance is not yet redeemed, but we have the *earnest* of it, in the gift of the Spirit. In 2 Cor. v., speaking of the glorified condition which we await, when at the coming of the Lord we shall put on our house from heaven, the body of glory, the Spirit is spoken of as the *earnest*. In Rom. viii. 23 we read that while awaiting Sonship, we have the *firstfruits* of the Spirit. The relationship is made good to us in Christ, and we have already the spirit of Sonship whereby we cry, "Abba, Father," but the fulness of the blessing involves a glorified body and conformity to Christ. This we await, while by the Spirit we now enjoy the firstfruits.

The question may be asked, *When* does a person receive the Holy Spirit? The scripture already referred to (Eph. i. 13, 14) answers that question—it is on *believing* the gospel of our salvation; that is, the testimony of the Spirit to a risen and glorified Christ. Paul always presented salvation in a glorified Christ. There could be no salvation short of resurrection; all the apostles preached a

risen Christ, and presented salvation in Him. In this passage there are three things—hearing, believing, and sealing, that is the order. God gives the Spirit on the ground that sin in the flesh has been condemned in the death of Christ. There could be no mixing up of the flesh and the Spirit; these too are contrary the one to the other. In former times man in the flesh was before God and under probation. The Spirit could not rest upon that kind of man; the Holy Spirit and sinful flesh could not be together. But in the cross of Christ that order of man was condemned and removed from before God. Now only one Man is before God, and that is Christ, and those who are of Him. So in Rom. viii. 9 we read, “Ye are not in (the) flesh, but in (the) Spirit if so be God’s Spirit dwell in you.” God no longer regards believers as in the old Adam condition, because that has been condemned in the death of Christ. “Knowing this, that *our old man* has been *crucified* with Christ” (Rom. vi. 6).

Until a person receives the Spirit, he cannot be regarded as in normal Christian condition. “If any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.” The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; the same Spirit which dwelt in Him as man, and is given to us not to improve the flesh, but *displace it*, by the *formation of Christ in us*. The Spirit will only recognize one Man, Christ. Paul, speaking of himself as a man in the flesh, says, “I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live I, but *Christ lives in me*.” His former history in connection with the flesh and sin was closed in the cross of Christ, and in the Spirit he had begun a new history in connection with Christ; living beyond death.

In Rom. viii. 2 the Spirit is spoken of as the power of life in the believer, "the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus." Life is seen in the One who died, and has been raised again. "In that He died, He died unto sin once; in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." He lives as Man to-day in the favour and love of God. If we give place to the Spirit, we live in the favour and love of God, and are free from the law of sin and death.

In verse 4 the Spirit is spoken of as *the power for our walk*. As the apostle says in Gal. v. 25, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." We cannot walk according to God except in the Spirit, all fleshly energy will fail us. When the Good Samaritan had healed the man who had fallen among thieves, he set him on his own beast; he brought *a power to carry him*. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you." The flesh has to be continually disallowed, so that the Spirit may become in us the source of purpose and power. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him." The Spirit is given not to improve the flesh, but to displace it practically, by forming what is of Christ in us. As *Christ is formed in us*, the Spirit and grace of Christ will be expressed in us.

So the apostle adds, "if Christ be *in you*." "I live, yet not I, but *Christ lives in me*" (Gal. ii. 21). The Galatian believers had gone back to law, and man after the flesh; they had the wrong man before them, Ishmael, instead of the true Isaac, seeking to be made perfect in the flesh; what so many Christians are doing to-day. So that the apostle speaks of travailing in birth for them a second time, until Christ should be formed in

them. The formative work of the Spirit had been hindered, so that he stood in doubt of them ; that is, as to whether they had really received the Spirit—there was so little evidence of it.

The body of the saint is sanctified by the indwelling of the Spirit, so that it will ultimately be quickened, on account of the Spirit which has dwelt in it. It is important that we should take account of the Spirit which has dwelt in it. It is important that we should take account of this. The body can no longer be allowed to be the vessel of sin ; it must be possessed in sanctification and honour for the will of God (Rom. xii. 1, 2). " The Spirit is life because of (or in view of) righteousness." The Spirit is the power of life and righteousness in the believer. Practical righteousness must be the fruit of life. It is not mere legal righteousness ; that would not suit God. It must flow from life—" I delight to do Thy will, O God." As the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, we live, and find delight in His will, we hate lawlessness and love righteousness. " Yea, Thy law is within my heart."

Finally, the Spirit leads us into the consciousness of *Sonship*. " As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are Sons of God." " We have not received a spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received a spirit of *Sonship*, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bears witness with our Spirit, that we are children of God." (See also Gal. iv. 6.) This is all on the individual line, but there is another side of the truth. The saints viewed collectively are the house of God. " In whom (the Lord) ye also are builded together for an *habitation of God* in the Spirit." This would include all the saints living on the earth at any given time. If the Spirit is

abiding here, He must have a habitation. No material building can be recognized as God's house. In the present time the house of God is the assembly of the living God (1 Tim. iii. 15). The house is a spiritual one, composed of living stones (1 Pet. ii. 5). The Assembly of God, in any given place, that is, all the saints in that place, form the local exhibition of God's temple. The apostle, addressing the Assembly at Corinth, says, "Know ye not that ye are (the) *temple of God*?" (1 Cor. iii. 16). Again, "What agreement hath *the temple of God* with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor. vi. 16).

The house of God is the place where *God dwells*, where He is known, where His living voice is heard, and where He is served in a priestly way. It is a place of light, of fatness and blessing, but it is a *holy place*. How important it is that we should recognize the fact that God is here in the person of the Holy Spirit, and that we should seek to maintain the holiness which becometh His house for ever.

Another truth which should be mentioned is that all true believers constitute *one body* in the unity of the Spirit. "By *one Spirit* have we all been baptized into *one body*." "We have all drunk into *one Spirit*." The Spirit is the living link between every true believer on earth, and Christ the living Head in heaven, and thus they are constituted His body, *one body*, animated by the life of the Head, to be the living expression of Christ here. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

By the same Author.

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