Notes and Jottings

John Nelson Darby

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Notes Of A Reading At 3, Lonsdale Square

In Luke 15 the elder son stood on the ground of righteousness, and never got into the house at all.

In human science I learn what names of things and definitions mean, and then go and learn the things themselves; but in divine things, you must learn the things to understand the words.

God graciously gave miracles to confirm faith, but when they believed only through miracles, it was all no good.

In John 8 the eldest had more reputation to save. The writing on the ground was in a certain sense a dignified contempt of their hypocrisy.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of John are a preface. Christ had not come forth into His public ministry until John was cast into prison. (See John 3:24.)

Chapter 4 is worship in spirit and in truth.

Chapter 5 is the life-giving Son of God.

Chapter 6, Bread that came down from heaven.

Chapter 7, feast of tabernacles, and shewing to the world, closing the account of Christ personally.

Chapter 8, His words are rejected.

Chapter 9, His works are rejected.

Chapter 10, He will have His sheep in spite of everything.

Chapters 11 and 12, full testimony is given to Him by God when He is thus rejected.

Chapter 13 is He must depart out of this world unto the Father.

You get no forgiveness of sins in John’s gospel, except administratively.

The work of Christ applies to my conscience, and His Person to my heart.

In John, the Lord does not say, “You are sinners,” but “Ye shall die in your sins,” treating them as reprobates.

John is almost entirely at Jerusalem, the other gospels chiefly in Galilee.

It was the people who came from Galilee, who did not know what the Jews were about, who asked, “Who goeth about to kill thee?”

Ques. What is the difference between hearing His voice and hearing His word?

In the former there is the additional attraction of His Person.

Metaphysics never can be right, because if they bring God in, it is religion; and if they leave Him out it is nothing but folly.

Ques. Do all Christians get all the rewards in the seven churches?

I suppose there will be a special sense of them given to those who have been faithful. All will sit upon His throne, though to me that is the lowest.

Reward is encouragement; if it is motive, it is wrong altogether. The crowns are all one to me, but different circumstances may bring out the characters;

faithfulness to death has a crown of life, but all believers will get it.

In Isaiah 32:15, “Wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest,” means the total change of the whole thing. Verse 14 is judgment on Jerusalem.

“Again a new commandment I write unto you,” i.e., this loving one another; it is no new thing, and yet it is, because you have it now as “true in him and in you.”

Apollos would not go to Corinth, when they had slighted Paul.

Christ has become not the light of angels, but the light of men.

Eternal life is what Christ is, as the risen Second Man.

The great subject of John’s communication is, eternal life downwards, not righteousness upwards.

People say they can pluck themselves out of Christ’s hand; then I say, ‘Very well, let them,’ but they can never perish if they do.

Ryde Meeting

It is no question at all now, whether a man can stand in the day of judgment by a certain course of living.

We live under the revelation that he cannot; Christianity begins with that revelation. We cannot stand before God; all the world has become guilty.

The law put man on probation, but when Christ came, the full evil of man's heart was brought out; he crucified the Lord of glory. And now we get the deeper apprehension that we are not only guilty but lost; lost as a present state.

Guilt refers to the day of judgment, but there is, too, the actual condition. I am not only exposed to judgment but I am lost also.

Then at the cross, when man's sinfulness was fully proved, the love of God was shewn out in the accomplishment of the work of his salvation.

The whole question of good and evil, perfect evil in man and perfect goodness in God, all was brought out.

The consequence was that man has gone into the glory of God. Jesus Christ sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. That is where Christianity begins; it is with the full testimony of evil in man, and then I have another Man, who perfectly glorified God, and who is now glorified by God.

The mystery of the cross is this, that in that place where sin came out absolutely in full light before God, there, too, was the place of perfect obedience and full love towards God.

But, this being accomplished, “if God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him,” and the Son of man goes straight up into the glory of God.

There I get a new platform altogether, not with my responsibility in question, for on that ground I am lost as well as guilty; but there is a Man gone into the glory of God, so that I both know God in the perfectness of His love, and Man in the perfectness of God’s righteousness. This is the starting point of Christianity; every thing is put on an entirely new basis.

Then at Pentecost the Holy Ghost came down, and.His presence on earth is the consequence of Man in the glory of God. Every direct operation of God was by the Spirit; “By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens”; prophets spake by the Holy Ghost; demons were cast out by the Spirit of God; but all that is a very different thing from the Spirit’s coming.

Christ made everything; but He did not come until the incarnation. He was there in one sense, but there was also a distinct personal coming.

So the Holy Ghost has now come, and He dwells in a believer, and becomes the power of Christianity and characterises the Christian himself.

We now stand between the Holy Ghost sent down and the full result in glory. “He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit,” i.e., He has wrought us for the glory, and has given us the earnest of it. That is where the Christian stands, and he is thereby associated with Christ in heavenly glory.

How can I know that I have the Holy Ghost? Do you fancy that God dwells in me, and I shall not find it out? I may not be able to explain it, but that is another thing. We cannot have it without knowing it. You must have a knowledge of Scripture to explain it, but there will be a consciousness of the fact in one's self, and there will be true liberty, too.

But then the life of Jesus is to be manifested in me, and there I get my proper responsibility as a Christian.

Since Christ appears in the presence of God for us, we are to appear in the presence of the world for Christ.

If He dwells in you, then let us see Him in you.

A Few Detached Notes -- Romans 7

The moment the law said, “Thou shalt not lust,” why you might as well tell me not to be a man. Even if my will is right—the case supposed here—yet I am in such a state that I cannot succeed in mastering the flesh.

Then he learns that it is not he that does it, but the sin that dwells in him, and next he learns that it is too strong for him, and he cries, “Who shall deliver me?”

This is what a man must be brought to. Then he gets “in Christ Jesus,” and that is a new place; the slave is free.

If I have a rogue in my house, and I trust him, he pilfers me at pleasure; but if I distrust him and lock things up, it may be unpleasant, but still, I am safe.

One word about forgiveness. There is what I should call an administrative forgiveness, but this was not known until Christ’s coming.

They did spell out of old about eternal judgment. But the Lord says, “That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,” etc., and He shews His competency to do it by saying, “Arise and take up thy bed and walk, go thy way into thine house.”

You get no spiritual knowledge of what sin is in the Old Testament. I do not speak of sins, but of sin.

The keys of the church were not given to Peter; that is all a blind delusion. People say the kingdom of heaven and the church are the same thing, but it is all wrong.

There is a building which Christ is carrying on now, and which grows to a holy temple.

When you speak of succession, I see there is one, but then it is, “I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”

Remember nobody else is Simon Bar-jonas but Simon Bar-jonas.

Two or three in Christ’s name is God’s succession; and no other is; apostolic if you like to call it, but God owns it.

I shall not want a conscience in heaven; it is positive infinite enjoyment there.

Priesthood is that they may behave well.

Advocacy is when they have not behaved well.

Priesthood is for mercy and grace to help.

The Advocate is, if any man sin, we have one.

Advocacy is one fruit of propitiation. Priesthood keeps the heart in constant dependence. But in neither of these is there any question of imputation. You never find that we go to the priest; a Jew of old might. We go boldly to the throne of grace, because Christ is there in heaven for us; but that is not intercession. It is the priest now who is there, and the priest is connected with intercession, but intercession is not the exercise of priesthood, properly speaking.

Ques. When does the Lord act as advocate, is it when a saint sins?

It does not say, if any man repent, and confess; but, if any man sin, we have an advocate.

Ques. Then does nothing begin with us?

Nothing but sin that I know of.

And confession is the effect of advocacy; but, remember, imputation is not in question.

Ques. What do you mean by that?

I mean the charge of guilt upon a man's conscience. Hebrews gives you your standing before God, and there is no more conscience of sins. That is the scriptural doctrine; whereas, now-a-days, nine-tenths of Christians could not tell you what that passage means.

We are not Jews under law, or there would be imputation. If Christ has not put away all our sins totally and for ever, and absolutely, it never can be done.

Ques. Does Hebrews contemplate failure?

Apostasy it does, not failure strictly.

Ques. What is the difference between infirmities and sins?

Christ can be touched with the feeling of my infirmities, but He never had any sins, or any sympathy with them. I can get help for my infirmities, and in a sense can glory in them, but I could not in my sins.

There are two kinds of temptations; one is from without, all the difficulties of Christian life; Christ went through them and He has gone through more than any of us; but the other kind of temptation is when a man is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Christ, of course, never had that.

You want the hatchet of Scripture for these latter; the word of God discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, and so helps us in that way to go through the wilderness.

Ques. How far ought unconfessed sin to affect a man's conscience?

He never can get a good one until he has confessed all to God.

The existence of the flesh in me does not give me a bad conscience; but the moment I let it act, that does. If you mingle the question of imputation with the sins of a saint, then it is no longer to you simply a question of holiness, but of righteousness and justification, and therefore you never judge sin really and thoroughly until you have got the certainty that nothing is imputed to you. The sense of sins and imputation is all quite right until you are justified—the deeper you feel it the better.

But when I learn that Christ has borne all my sins in His own body on the tree, so that God must pass them over, and cannot impute them to me, for He sees the blood of Christ; then, if He were supposed to impute them to me, it would make Him disown that blood.

A person who raises the question of imputation does not know what it is to be justified.

Ques. What is the difference between non-imputation and forgiveness?

If nothing could be imputed to a sinner, then there is no need for forgiveness.

When guilty, you are justified; when you have offended, you are forgiven; and when you are defiled, you are washed. If I look at guilt, I want justification; at offence, forgiveness j at defilement, cleansing.

All is provided; God leaves no loop-hole for Satan.

There is no proper holy affection until a man is certain of his standing before God.

Ques. What is the difference between a bad conscience and “no more conscience of sins”?

I have no more conscience of sins in virtue of the blood of Christ, but then that gives me a conscience of sin in my failure of holiness. A person in a dirty condition generally would think little of another spot; but if he is spick and span clean, he would think a great deal of the first spot.

Ques. Is Numbers 19 connected with John’s epistle?

In a particular case it may be, for there, taking death as the sign of sin, the man was defiled.

Ques. What of the third and seventh days?

The first effect is what I have just said, that after the sacrifice, or, rather, the bringing of the ashes, no question can be raised as to imputation, and when I get my soul fully right, then comes the sense of superiority of grace to sin, so that I get back into communion.

Only you must ever remember that ashes are not blood.

Ques. Is the third day resurrection.

I don’t know.

Ques. Is it not rather abundant testimony?

Probably. He was not allowed to be sprinkled on the first day: there was no levity in dealing with sin. I think you lose the beauty of the truth, if you leave out the proper power of the seventh day.

Ques. What is the difference between imputation and substitution?

Substitution is that which takes away imputation.

Ques. In what way does confession come in with John 13?

John 13 produces uprightness of heart in the confession.

Ques. Is there any particular form for discipline to take?

No. All manner of forms, in your family circumstances, such as will meet the state of your heart. And it need not necessarily be for sins. It is God's wisdom to be able to unite what disciplines the new man with what also keeps the "old man" down.

Ques. What was Paul's thorn?

Something that kept the old man down.

At the same time, he was suffering for Christ, for if he had not gone and preached, he would not have had the trouble at all.

Ques. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood"—what is that?

You are not killed yet; you must not be frightened. And so he says, too, don't you faint because God loves you; neither despise His chastening, for you need the rebuke.

Ques. What of the "holiness "in verse 10?"1

It shews what it is; it is God's nature, and a separation from evil that He is working out in us. We want some things checking that He may give us more light. It was the same in Job, before dispensations began, to "hide pride from man."

As To Repentance

This is a more important question.

In Luke 24:47 you have that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” There can be no question about that, but what has enfeebled preaching among ourselves and others is, there has been such a sense that repentance is preliminary to faith.

We are all apt to topple over from one side to another, and so the true place of repentance has become obscured, and its presentation enfeebled.

This is mischievous for the reason that the claim of God is left out or enfeebled by it.

God is now gathering His own in haste, if I may so speak; the Lord is coming, and woe be to us if we say He delays His coming.

God is gathering out hurriedly the joint heirs, and, as of old, so now it is, “save yourselves from this untoward generation”; that was when Jerusalem was going to be destroyed.

He now calls upon “all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.”

Repentance is God’s claim upon people, and if in preaching I merely say, ‘God loves you, and you are a poor sinner, here is grace for you’ (and that I surely would say), and then leave repentance out, it is leaving the man’s conscience out.

Ques. What is repentance?

The judgment we have passed upon ourselves, and all that we have done, and have been, in God’s presence under grace.

Even now, as under grace, there may be a legal repentance.

But if it is put before faith, it unsettles the whole ground we stand upon before God; it is then something that I am doing in my own heart, and that won't do. When I preach repentance, therefore, I must preach it in Christ's name, and so I said, "under grace."

As I get to God, I see what I am in true light, more and more clearly every day. It is infinite love, that, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; but if I carry God's message to others, I must carry God's claim, and I say, if you don't repent and turn to God, you will be lost.

Yet if I call on people to repent, in the name of Christ, they must believe in Christ in order to repent. As a man you have to say to God and what state are you in before God?

If your heart is not changed, what have you that is at all fit for God?

But if I call upon a man to be in God's presence with God's claim upon him, and that in grace—perfect grace—then if he returns, he returns to God. Repentance ought to be preached as God's claim upon man, but as putting in that claim in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God calls on all men to repent, but if they do not, they must come under judgment.

You cannot have your eye open on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not hate yourself as a sinner.

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Ques. Why is mention made of the “morning star,” in Revelation 2:28?

It shows that Thyatira is at midnight.

In Thyatira there are two ways of judging; the one is what He begins with, and the other is the coming of the Lord. As in Isaiah 5, God asks, “What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it; wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?” So He will break down its wall, and it shall be trodden down.

Or, take up Adam, and say, is that what God made you? Have you answered to it?

Whether it is the world, or Jews, or the church as a dispensation for the time, it can be judged so.

But on the other hand I can say, Christ is coming, are you ready for Him?

In the three primary churches the Lord had spoken of the possibility of going back to the former condition, but to Thyatira (which I do not doubt gives us a true picture of Rome), He gives time to repent, and He says that she does not repent, so she is going to be punished, and therefore it is that this church is the first that goes down to the Lord’s coming.

When you get the judgment of the whole body of the professing church as thus corrupt, then you have, “Hold fast till I come.” The kingdom and the heavenly glory will then take the place of the corrupt church.

Ques. You get the morning star again at the end of the Revelation?

The end of the Revelation forms no part of the prophecy. Before He enters on prophecy, you get the Lord's coming and then, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Although earthly things are going to be spoken about, Christ's coming in grace calls out the church's feelings towards Himself.

And again, at the close of the book, He calls out the affections of the church. In the beginning, by what He has done; at the end, by what He will do when He comes again.

Ques. Under what circumstances is confession made to man, as well as to God?

If I have wronged another, I confess it to him. If I go wrong and find someone more spiritual than myself, or if I get my heart engaged with anxieties and it is burdened, and I know a person who is really spiritual and has the mind of Christ, I may go and open my mind to him; but do not go to one not spiritually minded.

Ques. What is the difference between "crucified with Christ," and "I am crucified with Christ"?

None at all; because the "I" there is the old man.

Ques. Then how does "I" live?

You have three "I's" in Scripture, and, in terms, they are contradictory. "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Then have I no flesh in me? Yes, indeed, and that is another "I." It is plain enough for people's consciousness.

There is no crucifying of the new life of Christ in me, but the crucifixion is of the flesh.

Ques. What does it mean by God repenting that He made man?

In speaking thus of God, it is just human language that is employed.

Ques. What of “repentance to salvation not to be repented of”?

That should be “not to be regretted.”

Ques. Did any know that they were “lost” in the Old Testament?

God never told people they were lost, until Christ had died to save them.

There were two trees in the garden of Eden, the tree of life and the tree of responsibility; man took of the latter, and is lost. The law takes up the same question, but it puts the accomplishing of the responsibility before the enjoyment of life. But when I come to Christ, I find Christ has met all the responsibility; that is settled, and life is given.

In the Old Testament, wherever God wrought, the repentance was real, but they had no thought of asking, “What must I do to be saved?”

The young man asked, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life? “The Lord in His answer does not say “eternal life,” but, “This do, and thou shalt live.” The law referred to particular acts, and they could go and get their consciences cleared, by a lamb, or a kid, or a goat; it was a general clearance for a need. But repentance in the Old Testament referred to the same thing as in the New.

The judgment, too, of sin was according to the measure of the rule given.

The measure of sin is not the duty of man; but the measure of judgment is, for men will be judged according to their works.

The question now is not whether I have done what a man ought to do; but it is, am I such that I can go to where God is? and that is a very different thing.

Ques. Repentance could not occur until a soul was quickened, could it?

Or they may go together. If I believe, there is a reflex action and I repent. To be convicted is not the same; the law might convict. Sins and my state are two distinct things. The law may convict me of my sins. But suppose I go and preach to a person anything you please, the law or Christ, and suppose he does not believe what I say, will he be converted or anything else? Rather will he say, “Did you ever hear such nonsense?” and off he goes.

Ques. What of “Repent ye, and believe the gospel”?

If they did not repent they would not get into the kingdom, for it was the kingdom that was preached. And supposing he did not believe that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, he would not repent.

I have often said when preaching the gospel, God is now revealed. He never was revealed before. You might have thunderings and lightnings, but they were the signs of His power, while He was behind a veil and would not be revealed, but sent out to man a rule of what man ought to be.

But now we have God revealed in Christ, abundantly in the cross, in every shape, but God revealed; and the moment I get that, I must have all that God is.

God is light, and God is love; and whenever a person is brought to God, the power of light and the power of love are both acting. In the poor woman in the city, that was a sinner, her whole heart is trusting Christ; the love has made the light precious to her, and she comes in, in that way.

Ques. What should be preached in order to produce repentance?

It is always preaching Christ, but the claim of God must come in; the law may come in; but the full thing would be Christ.

Ques. What of Paul's preaching at Athens?

He defends himself, and appeals to their consciences; but that was not his preaching, it was his defence or apology.

Ques. Sometimes there is a fear of urging repentance on souls, lest it might be regarded as leading them to do something for themselves?

Scripture is plain, "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

Ques. How would you define repentance?

The definition that it is merely change of mind is not enough; that would reduce it entirely to faith; but it is the soul judging itself before God—the eye turned inward, not outward, by the Spirit of God.

Ques. What is God's repentance? How do you reconcile such scriptures as when it says: "It grieved him at his heart"?

I don't reconcile them; I believe them. If you speak about God, you must always speak imperfectly. But just because God had not changed He judges the state of the man who has. It is constantly used about God, in that sense, because God Himself does not change.

Ques. What did you mean by preaching the claims of God?

Preaching them in grace, of course, but God has perfect claim on my whole being in connection, now, with the cross of Christ.

Even as Creator He has, but, now, there is a double claim, through the gift of His Son.

I have broken away from God, and I have listened to the devil; and I must come to God and own it.

Ques. In what sense is Christ "head of every man"? Do they belong to Him?

Certainly; and He will judge them accordingly. Adam was the natural head of every man but Christ has bought "the field" or world.

In that verse (1 Cor. 11:3), "the head of every man," man is a little distinct from the woman.

Ques. But the woman is to "guide the house"?

Oh, yes.

Ques. Would that verse authorise a mother in praying with her sons?

If they remain as children under her hand, of course, she may; but if they are emancipated, in my judgment she had better let it alone.

It may require spiritual judgment in any given case.

Ques. Is the anointing in contrast with the sealing?

In contrast! The anointing is the sealing. The gift of the Holy Ghost is the anointing, and is the sealing, and is the earnest. You may distinguish them a little as to effects, but not as facts. Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and “him hath God the Father sealed.” The Holy Ghost gives me the knowledge of all these things.

Ques. May a wife pray with her husband?

That is just as the husband likes when they are alone with God.

Ques. What is the difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven?

When the King was here, the kingdom of God could be said to be present, but, for that very reason, the kingdom of heaven was not come; the kingdom of heaven could not come until He went away. When the kingdom of God shall be set up in power, it will still be the kingdom of heaven. When He comes again, it will be the kingdom of God according to Mark and Luke, and will be the kingdom of heaven according to Matthew. The moral force of it is the great point of difference.

Ques. How is it different from the church?

The church is God’s assembly, and, viewed in its heavenly place of association with Christ, it is the body of the Head. The kingdom is the sphere of government. The church is very distinct as God’s house, the Spirit of

God makes it His habitation; but it is the body of Christ, united to Him, the Head, in heaven; a wholly different thing. Government is the great thought in the kingdom; but grace is the thought in the church; that which God calls, that which He elects.

Ques. The kingdom of heaven and the great house, are they co-extensive now? Could they be applied to the same sphere?

They are distinct thoughts. The great house is a comparison drawn from the ruin of that which professes to be the church of God; all kinds of corruption and wickedness have been brought in where God's Spirit is, where God dwells.

Ques. Does the sphere of the kingdom of the heavens now go beyond the professing church in its present state?

When you compare things, you must have something to compare with; what is there to compare between a kingdom and a house?

The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of God when the King is in heaven; it is, too, the kingdom of God even in His absence. Kingdom of God is the universal form, but it may be in different states and shapes, because the King is in heaven, but it is all the kingdom of God.

Ques. Could you speak of the kingdom of God, before Christ came?

They were waiting for it.

Ques. Could you say that any of old were in the kingdom of God?

Certainly not, that would lose the idea of a kingdom that God would set up.

Ques. Can the kingdom of God get wrong?

The kingdom of heaven could.

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I believe antichrist is the second beast.

There are the three characters of Christ—prophet, priest, and king. When Satan is cast down from heaven, his anti-priestly character is gone, he can't accuse any more.

The second beast has two horns, and is an anti-king. The anti-prophet character, the prophet, is seen in the other beast, and this anti-prophet character abides, when the two others are given up.

Ques. Do you find the first half-week in the Revelation?

What goes on then, you do; until you come to the little book, you get a certain time elapsing, which is before the half-week.

Ques. What is "that good thing" Paul committed to Timothy?

The truth of the gospel, I suppose.

1 See note in New Translation in loco.

Detached Memoranda From A Reading Meeting

Ques. How is it, He says, “the world seeth me no more,” when every eye shall see Him?

That is, looked at in His then character, as come in grace.

Christ met all that was needed, when He came into this world; sin’ was there, and He was “made sin”; death was there, and He died; judgment and condemnation were outstanding against man, and Christ drank that dreadful cup, so that God has anticipated the day of judgment in the cross.

Death, the curse, sin, judgment, the power of Satan—all are over; and, as man heard from the horns of the unicorns, Christ has entered in and sat down in the glory of God. There you get the one blessed foundation for all that is new.

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Whoever hinders the direct authority of the word of God upon the heart is meddling with God’s rights. If I send a message to my servant, and someone prevents his getting it properly, it is not merely hindering my servant, but it is meddling with me. We are told to read the fathers, but they were not “from the beginning”; that would be what God said and taught, and then I know from whom I have learned it. To say the fathers were “very early” is more or less true, but that is not the “beginning.”

I have God's warning about it, and I must stick to that, or I shall not "abide in the Father and in the Son." Men want you to lean upon failure, for the last times were already come, while the apostles were there to shew it. Take the last thing we have about the church of God, and what do you get there? Is it that you are to hear the church? No; it is just the contrary; it is, "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." How can I hear the Spirit judging the churches, and listen to the churches as my authority and rule? It is all flying in the face of what God has taught us for these last days.

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Whatever has been ruined in the first man will be gloriously established in the Second Man. Adam fell, and was ruined. Christ is in the glory of God.

The law was broken. It shall presently be written on men's hearts.

The priests failed. Our Great High Priest can never fail.

The kingdom failed. His throne is for ever and ever.

It will all be a thousand times more glorious than what was lost—infinitely more so.

And so with the church. He will have it for His bride, He will be "glorified in his saints, and … admired in all them that have2believed, … in that day."

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Just as the Son came down in the incarnation, though He was God upon the earth before, upholding all things by the word of His power; so the Holy Ghost came at Pentecost, though, at the beginning of Genesis, He, too, moved upon the face of the waters.

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No one can hinder there being “one body,” but when you come to keeping “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” you get that power of the Spirit of God that makes me practically realise the unity of the body in the path down here. God alone can carry it out, but that is what I get down here.

In the house are false brethren crept in unawares; but there is no such thing as false members in the body. If you strike my hand, I say, why are you striking me? But I do not speak thus of a house. Failure does not destroy the character of the house as such; if badly built, it is still a house. Just as the Lord says of the temple, “My Father’s house,” though they had made it a den of thieves.

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I believe we all ought to be on our faces for what has become to Christ’s beautiful flock.

Paul tells them in 2 Corinthians 3 they are the epistle of Christ; but look and see what they are now doing—all going to the theatre and getting money! Why they can do that in China, without Christianity. How different to see the power of the Spirit of God, which associates the hearts so completely with Christ, so that He says, “They are not of the world even as I am not of the world.” Are we then epistles of Christ?

Do we not owe it to Christ—to His love that kept back nothing but gave Himself for us, that we should be as such, “known and read of all men”?

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There are no keys to the church; that, is just traditional nonsense; people do not build with keys; but Christ builds His church.

If people really heeded the word of God, and took simply from Scripture what Scripture states, such things would never be said.

Nor do I talk about private judgment on such things; between man and man that is all very well, reasonable enough, but do you think if God has spoken to me, I am to talk of private judgment on what He has said?

Why, it is blasphemy.

I can understand an unbeliever not knowing what is God's mind, and reasoning about what is written; but man by reasoning never got faith at all; and man's reason is perfectly incompetent to judge about God and His words.

If my mind could judge about God, then God is the subject matter, and my mind is the master of the subject matter.

It is a mistake altogether. You want a word from God to reach conscience, that is the first thing. I grant you man's mind is the measure of all the truth he can have, but the first thing I want is a hammer upon conscience.

Suppose I knock you down, does it not make an impression upon you? You are acted upon. This is what conscience needs. But people think it must be the activity of their own minds.

I do not take a candle out to see if the sun is shining! But if I do not see the sunshine, everybody who has eyes will say to me, "You are blind."

* * * * *

My “flesh” belongs to the old creation, and for that reason the Christian is in a mixed condition; his spirit belongs to Christ in heaven, and his body is still part of the old creation, so that we groan being burdened. There is sin, too, but Christ has borne my guilt, and I have nothing to do now but to judge the evil.

Where a person is in earnest, he is really more concerned at finding sin working in him, than he is about things done in the past.

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The only perfection put before the Christian is conformity to Christ in glory. I have got Christ in glory as my life, and I am never satisfied until I am in that glory. The only perfection presented to the Christian is a glorified Christ in heaven, and you will be conformed to that when the time comes, but now, meanwhile, I must be as much like Him as I can; 2 Cor. 3:18.

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You will never find such a thing in Scripture as our having to die with Christ. We have died. So he who is alive in sin is dead to God. But Christ came down to where I was, dead in my sins, and put my sins away, and then God takes me, and puts me in the place where Christ now is.

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As to flesh, I am no debtor to it, nor can be, for it ruined me.

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Are you part of My bride—My body—and you won't take the cross here with Me? What is crown up there is cross down here.

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If we want real spiritual understanding, it is to be found in clinging to Christ.

The highest privilege we have as Christians is in the Lord's message, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

But was it the disciples who carried it? No, they went to the sepulchre, and saw, and went back; but it was Mary Magdalene who took it to the disciples; for she clung to an empty sepulchre.

2 See the New Translation in loco.

Reading At 3, Lonsdale Square -- Hebrews 5

Verse 2 is as to priests “taken from among men,” but the Irvingites took all this, and applied it to Christ.

It is not strictly priestly work, though it is what the high priest did. In the end of Hebrews 2 you get Christ making reconciliation, and, in that sense, He was High Priest on the cross. It was not intercession there, but it laid the foundation of all subsequent priesthood.

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On the day of atonement, the high priest stood, not as priest between man and God, but as representing the whole people.

Ques. Would the scapegoat come in, as in resurrection afterwards?

No, certainly not. The second bird in Leviticus 14 was more in resurrection.

On the day of atonement the high priest did everything, carrying in incense, and then the blood within the vail. Nobody could go in but himself, and he did all the work; but he was not there as a go-between, which a priest is, but as a representative. It was not, therefore, properly priestly work, though he did it.

The people stood on the ground of this day of atonement throughout the year.

Ques. What are the “gifts” in our first verse?

Gifts were not for sins; they were the first-fruits and all kinds of things.

Ques. How far could you speak of Christ as High Priest on the cross?

Only as in the end of chapter 2. But Christ confessing my sins on His own head, is not as priest but as substitute. It is a mere expression to say He confessed them, but He stood there under them. I said "confessing" because the high priest of old did so.

Ques. When do you connect the calling of God a high priest, with Christ?

It is "saluted." Calling there means just as you would salute a king, "Long live the king!"

Ques. When do you put the moment of His appointment?

It was really on the cross that He first acted in a high-priestly character.

As to the question of time, you get two steps; though first, in Psalm 110, you have testimony as to His appointment.

He becomes a man to be able to take that place, and then it is, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." You must carry this thought with you in Hebrews that the order according to which He is addressed is not the order according to which He is exercising His priesthood now. His order is that of Melchisedec, but His priestly service is after the analogy of Aaron. He is a priest on the throne in the order He belongs to, and, as long as I get Him a living Man, He is a living priest.

Ques. What of the second Psalm?

There you get the counsels of God as to Christ. At the same time the kings stand up, and for the moment, it was— one can hardly say, frustrated, and yet in a certain

sense it was so. But “he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision.”

In Psalm no it is, “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” Afterwards, when He says, “Sit at my right hand,” you have the person glorified. This Man, who was going to be the priest, is the Son of God; He did not glorify Himself, but God did so who said to Him, in Psalm 2, “Thou art my Son.”

Nathaniel owns Him, Son of God and King of Israel, in these characters of Psalm 2. Psalm 8 goes beyond what we are now speaking of.

Ques. Was He not glorified on the day of His baptism?

Yes, in a certain way, and publicly so.

The Jews could have no confidence in a person who was not called of God; and this was not lacking in the One whom the Spirit of God was now presenting to them.

Ques. What was the moment of the official calling or saluting?

He was a competent Person in His incarnation, but His baptism was His public inauguration. He could not enter upon His functions until He had something to offer, and He did not actually take His place as a priest before. And now, having passed through the heavens up to the third heavens, He is as Aaron.

Ques. Is that the force of rending the vail?

Not His going through it, but His opening the way into the holiest. The blow that fell on Him rent the vail, but that is quite a different thing.

On the cross, He is victim as well as priest. He dies; and then the great day of atonement is carried out. He is

now priest at God's right hand, just as Aaron went in, only He has not yet come out again.

After His baptism, He goes through the processes that try Him; "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."

And then He becomes both victim and also priest.

Ques. Does Psalm no only apply to Him in resurrection?

Yes, and also when He comes back again.

Ques. But Psalm no commences with His going up?

No, clearly not. That is what we see in Hebrews: "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." The Melchisedec priesthood is not yet come. He is sitting upon His Father's throne, not upon His own throne.

Ques. Then we are instructed by Aaron as to what a priest is?

Yes. Melchisedec is of a different character. In Genesis 14 it is blessing up and blessing down, after triumph. But bearing us through the wilderness is not Melchisedec at all.

Ques. Yet that comes nearest home to us now?

Of course it does. He is not viewed here as priest for our sins, except, as we have seen, to make reconciliation for them (Heb. 2:17), and that work is finished.

Ques. I have heard some expressions such as, He ever lives to plead His blood?

Well; I don't know.

I have nothing to do with a bad conscience in Hebrews. I have a conscience perfected for ever, and so no more conscience of sins.

And so I can't have a priest for my sins in Hebrews; I have for my infirmities, but not for my sins. The work He has done on the cross has perfected me for ever. But in the evangelical world the habit is to have a priest for my sins, and to go to a priest—Christ—to get to God. I get an absolutely perfect conscience as regards my sins, so He cannot be pleading in that respect. The question is, can I come into the holiest?

In I John 2, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," it is a question not of imputation, but of communion. If I let sin in to my mind, communion is interrupted, and then it is not that I go to the Advocate, but the Advocate goes for me. That is for the restoration of the soul to communion which has been interrupted as the consequence of sin; but in Hebrews I have nothing to do with that; here I want grace in time of need.

Ques. But is there, then, restoration of communion the moment I have sinned?

No, indeed, there is not. Take Peter's case. The Lord, after His resurrection, goes to the root of the mischief with him, and says, "Lovest thou me more than these?" There is no practical restoration to communion with God, until I have judged the sin, and confessed it. But then it is advocacy for that, and not the priesthood.

Ques. What would you say were infirmities, as distinguished from sins?

Well, even Christ could say, “Reproach hath broken my heart,” and could look for someone to have compassion, and He can now, be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. That is very distinct from sins. In Hebrews 12 it says that He “endured such contradiction of sinners against himself.” Am I to shrink back as Peter did?

Ques. That would be sin, would it not?

It turned into sin, for he cursed and swore he did not know the Lord, when he did.

Ques. Would sorrow for sin committed in time past come under Christ’s priesthood?

In one sense He sympathises with you in this. He delights at any rate to see godly sorrow. The troubles and trials He went through in the path of obedience fitted Christ to be a priest. We have to learn to be obedient, and what obedience is; but Christ was always obedient, and He learned what it is in the place of obedience. Christ was not like Jewish priests, compassed with infirmity while a priest, but He learned the lesson while here, and now uses it in favour of us while He is there. Such a high priest became us because we belong there; therefore He has to be a priest there, yet knowing everything here.

I want a high priest where I go in, worshipping, and so now Christ has gone into the true holy place in heaven. But the fact is, I find the difficulties are down here; in spirit I go into the holy of holies, but I want the help of the high priest, in my walk down here, as well as His maintenance there, where, in spirit, I enter.

Ques. Why does it say “eternal salvation”?

You find that word in Hebrews in contrast with what Jews had. The Lord has been thoroughly consecrated; He has got His anointing, and is completely fitted for His priesthood, and therefore it is eternal salvation.

Ques. But we are not seated in the heavens in Hebrews?

Just so, we only go in as worshippers. Viewed as seated in Christ in the heavens we don't want a priest. But down here we do. Now Christ has learned the difficulties, and I am to walk in the path where they are, while He helps me.

Ques. There is a parenthesis to the end of verse 10 in chapter 6?

Yes, He is anxious to take the Hebrews out of the earthly things into the heavenly things.

It is "the principles of die doctrine of Christ," i.e., the doctrinal beginning of Christ. A godly Jew might have had all that he names, but he says, 'I can't go back to that; it is all true, and had its place in the Jewish system, but I cannot go back to it'; though they were in danger of doing so. But if you have what Christianity gives you, you can't fall back on Judaism.

"It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, etc." The nation had crucified the Lord, but they were guilty of that when they had only the doctrine of the beginning of Christ; but now, after they have got all that Christianity has brought, if they reject that, then they have crucified Him individually; just the very thing they were guilty of nationally j and there remains no other gospel for them.

There were two gospels, the one which, so far as it went, the Jews had before Christ rose, and that which was

announced when the Holy Ghost came down from heaven and revealed the powers of the world to come. Well, then, the apostle says, if a man gives up all that, there is no other gospel. Such an one is not converted. The illustration in the verses 7 and 8 shews us that. Verses 9 and 10 are a contrast; the moment I get the fruits of life I know life is there.

Ques. Why does he say, “Renew them again”?

They had been professedly brought in before and might have been speaking with the tongues of men and of angels.

Ques. Indeed!!?

Yes, the apostle says so in 1 Corinthians 13, that is why I quoted it; they had been brought into the presence of the whole power of the Holy Ghost.

Ques. Would it apply to any in Christendom now?

Well, many in Christendom hardly own the Holy Ghost; they have more John Baptist’s teaching and truth. In this passage it is the Holy Ghost, and what is showered down from heaven; while in chapter 10 it is the same reasoning as regards sacrifice. If you are not converted by all this immense blessing, there is nothing else for you except judgment. The danger of falling back was there, though God keeps His own.

Ques. Is it anything like “anon with joy receiveth it”?

Perhaps so; but that is a bad sign, unless consciences have been reached before. The passage here speaks of the sin of apostasy; they confess the thing and then turn away.

Ques. “Sin wilfully”?

Just so. It is doing it deliberately. It is the giving up Christ and going back to Judaism.

Ques. Is it a present professing of Christianity and then going into infidelity?

Only you must see if such an one is snared by the devil.

Again, there is power to be thought of, and the way in which I preach the gospel to such a person. Paul could say, “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them,” but I could not say that, because I could not say that I preach it so.

You may, too, get the understanding convinced, and the affections moved, but nothing done at all. Man’s understanding was convinced at the end of John 2, but it was merely a rational conviction that God must be with Christ. Not one of them went to Christ, for there was no divine life.

Ques. What of those in John 12?

I don’t know. It says many believed on Him, but at the same time they did not confess Him, though they got their minds convinced.

Ques. Are not these in Hebrews 6 in the place of Cain?

The great thing is, I have got Christianity which has brought the Holy Ghost. He is come, and these professors have been made partakers of it like Balaam; or like the many who say, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? “But He shall say He never knew them.

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People have forgotten that the Holy Ghost is come. All recognition of Him is so utterly gone. To my mind, the very principle of “the clergy” involves that; and if you look at 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, you will find you have now to watch that you do not mistake a demon for the Holy Ghost. “False apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light; therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.”

In Galatians 3-:5, Paul speaks of him “that ministereth to you the Spirit.” Ask any ordinary person what ministering the Spirit is, and he does not know what you mean by it. But to the Galatians who in their minds were falling from grace, he could say, “How did you get the Holy Ghost?”

Ques. Was not the receiving of the Holy Ghost in the Galatians deeper than an outward thing?

I have no doubt it was really, for he says, “I have confidence in you through the Lord”; but they were going on so badly, that he did not know what to make of them.

Ques. You would make the gift of the Holy Ghost distinct from the gifts given by Him?

Of course.

Ques. What is the difference between 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4?

In 1 Corinthians 12 you have gifts in power, and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, so

that in the case of the gift of a tongue, one may have to hold his tongue. That is power.

In Ephesians I get Christ going on high, and earning the church on to the end; it is no question of the Spirit and power, but of Christ caring for His own body. A person having a gift is a very different thing from its exercise. People were not used as mere machines.

There is a difference, too, between a revelation and my spiritual apprehension of the mind of Christ in what is already revealed.

The doctrine of Irvingism was that the Holy Ghost had come back again. But the Lord said, “that he may abide with you. for ever.” None of their apostles ever got the gifts. Gifts of healing I think nothing of, because if we had the faith, they would be seen now. I have seen them at Plymouth.

Ques. Is “salvation” in verse 9 future? (Heb. 6.) In one sense salvation is future, for there is a waiting for “salvation ready to be revealed,” and yet you have salvation; it is so with eternal life, and even justification, for Paul says, “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law” —that refers to the display of it all. Here he is speaking of the things that accompany salvation.

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Ques. Would you say more about a person being led by the Spirit in power to speak or not?

What we see here is, that a man may be a partaker of the Holy Ghost, and yet not be saved. Remember, the most glorious prophecy that you can find in Scripture was uttered by Balaam, the wickedest man that ever

was. But a divine person come down from heaven with power is what people don't believe.

Ques. Would Christ give power to anyone now to cast out devils?

I think the church ought always to be able to turn a devil out.

Ques. Do you think persons are ever possessed in that way novo?

Yes.

Ques. What is the manifestation of it?

That is a question of discerning of spirits; I believe I have seen it; but that is a question of my discernment.

Ques. Do you think any believer may have power to turn a devil out?

We ought to have.

3Prince—of the Agapemone—once said he could do nothing at all while brethren were in the town.

3 Henry James Prince (1811-1899) founder of the Agapemonites, a small sect.

Reading Meeting Held At 3, Lonsdale Square -- Hebrews 7

The great point here is the total change of the whole system and order of everything. It is in contrast with the law founded on the priesthood. In shewing this, he takes up this mysterious person who appeared to Abram in the character of priest of the Most High God, not of Jehovah.

In putting Himself into relationship with man, God has taken four distinct names, viz.:

1. Almighty

2. Jehovah

3. Father

4. Most High.

He protects Abram in the character of Almighty. In the bush He takes this name Jehovah—one who never gives up His promises.

To us, He is Father. The Lord says, “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.” The name of “Father,” carries with it eternal life.

Life and incorruptibility were not brought to light before the Lord came; not that they were not there, for as Son of God, He quickened from Adam, but there was no revelation of eternal life. Eternal life came down in the Person of Christ. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men,” “that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us,” so that, “he that hath the Son hath life”; and “this is life eternal that they

might know thee (the Father), the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

The fourth name is "Most High," possessor of heaven and earth; that will be when He takes to Himself His great power and reigns—all the earth taken into possession.

Ques. Was not the name of "Father" in the Lord's prayer?

It was there, but they could not cry it, though He taught it them and was the Revealer of the Father. Of old the name was used in a very vague way, but there was no individual knowledge of God as such.

We, however, are already the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Of old, no one ever really got into the place of a son. But the Lord was teaching the disciples according to the revelation of the Son down here, while as yet they had not the Spirit of adoption. It was a transitional time with them.

Ques. What is "Abba, Father"?

Merely, "Father, Father." The Lord revealed the name of the Father, but, until He had accomplished redemption, He could not put them into the place of sons, so that they might have the conscious knowledge of it.

But He did reveal the Father.

The same kind of thing runs right through the gospels. The disciples were utterly incapable of entering into what He told them. They had no idea of redemption, nor of the place into which redemption would bring them; but still Christ revealed the Father. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." They ought to have seen this, but they did not.

"Most High" is the name revealed to Abram when he had conquered. (Notice there is no intercession by Melchisedec.) In Zechariah, Christ takes that character as priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between them both, i.e., between Jehovah and Christ upon earth.

The revelation of God at each particular period was what faith had to go upon. That makes these names so important; while as for our names they merely distinguish us from one another. So when He wrestled with Jacob, He would not give him His name. In Deuteronomy you find, "Thou shalt be perfect with Jehovah, thy God "; but to us, it is not said, "with," but "be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

"Most High" is when all things are headed up in one, and He has taken possession. It comes out here, but it is not fulfilled yet.

Though Christ is priest after the order of Melchisedec, His priestly service is analogous to that of Aaron. Melchisedec is a mysterious person, a king, too, on earth, both king of righteousness and king of peace. But as to the present condition of things, the Lord says, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, but a sword."

Ques. Who was Melchisedec?

Melchisedec.

Ques. Was he Christ?

No; because he was “made like unto the Son of God.” He is purposely made mysterious.

Ques. What of his descent?

I don’t know. He is put there, and that is all I know, with neither beginning of days, nor end of life as to priesthood. The sons of Aaron were limited and began at twenty-five or thirty years old, as they may have been initiated for five years. But that is the contrast.

Ques. What is the normal idea of priesthood?

“To offer gifts and sacrifices,” it says in Hebrews.

Ques. Would Noah be one?

Up to Sinai the head of the family seems to have acted as priest both for himself and for his family, but not for other people. Aaron and his sons were mediators. In Exodus, sacrifices were offered by “young men”; but there is no statement of their institution.

Ques. Would Exodus 19:22 and Exodus 24:5 be the same thing?

It is not quite the same occasion, but the “young men” acted as priests.

Melchisedec has nothing to do with all that; he does not offer sacrifices at all, he blesses up, and he blesses down. After the victory of Abram is complete, he blesses him from the Most High God and then he blesses the Most High God.

And Christ abides a priest “continually.” It is important to notice that word all through the epistle; it means uninterruptedly—for a continuance.

It is the same in chapter 10:12 for Christ sitting at the right hand of God. He is King of righteousness, and King of peace, but He does not talk about the throne yet. He is constantly a priest and does not give that up to anybody else, and that is the reason it is intransmissible.

Aaron's sons were obliged to transmit their priesthood by reason of death, but Christ's is unchanging and unchangeable.

All this argument is most effectual with a Jew. Great as Aaron was, Melchisedec was greater. And Levi paid tithes in Abram. What he is seeking to shew is that the whole Jewish system must go; it is superseded so that there must be another priest. There would not have been any disannulling of the old thing, if it were to continue. But the priesthood being changed, you must have the whole system changed.

None but the sons of Aaron could be priests, but now another priest having arisen, all must be changed.

He is addressing Jews. They would admit the teaching of Psalm no. Then what becomes of your Aaronic priesthood?

At this moment the new Priest is sitting at the right hand of the Father until His foes be made His footstool. And it is left at that, so that no one can tell when He will come forth fully as Melchisedec. But the Aaronic priesthood is set on one side; and people could not offer anything themselves— could have nothing to say to God, except through the priesthood.

Now in that we have been speaking of God was dealing with man upon the earth; He "spake on earth," He came down here into the tabernacle; God was on the earth

and man looked at as living and responsible; therefore God says, “You cannot come near me.” He placed a barrier round Sinai, and a vail in the tabernacle.

Most interesting figures there were of things now revealed in Christianity, but man could not then draw near to God. God gave a law of ten commandments, and it was a perfect rule to man as alive in the flesh in this world. He took up the Jewish people for the purpose, but the whole nation turned to idolatry. What more could God have done for that nation than He did?

Nothing. Thus it was with God Himself on the earth, and a priesthood on the earth; and God says, “I will bless you if you behave well.”

All this supposes man to be alive on the earth—the cross supposes man to be dead, while in another sense it brings in death to him. And it rends the vail as well. The law treated man as alive and responsible, but never as dead.

Then God came into the world in Christ, and man would not have Him, but crucified Him. And in the death of Christ God was no longer a hidden God. Now death comes and says two things to me: if you are not a believer, you are dead; and, if you are a believer, you have died in Christ, and are now alive unto God in Christ.

So when, in death, Christ had by Himself purged our sins, He “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”; and the vail of the temple was rent in twain.

Ques. You say man was alive and responsible under law, is he not so still?

The history of man in responsibility goes on up to the cross; but, since the cross, a man, though individually he goes through the discovery of what he is, is not in a state of probation at all; responsibility in that sense is over. Here is a man who, say, has been trading, and has not a farthing left. It is of no use saying to him, “Take care of your money.” He could only say, “I have no money to take care of.”

So, as a present thing, when I have really found out my state, I find I am lost. Christ came to seek and to save the lost, not those who are in a state of probation. Still, I personally must go through the learning process.

I see I am lost already, my state is enmity against God; that is a present fact, i.e., in my unconverted state.

Now, when in my enmity I rejected Christ, God gave Christ to cleanse me from it, and I am brought to own this. As a man, I am done with, and I am no more in the flesh, for it was condemned in the cross; but I am clear now, and through the rent vail I go into the holiest as white as snow.

But to return to the Melchisedec priesthood. Christ is not yet acting in that character; His title to it is all clear, but He has not entered upon its exercise; He is exercising His priesthood according to Aaron.

Ques. Is there nothing for us of heavenly blessing through the Melchisedec character?

I know nothing of it. There is nothing now in connection with Melchisedec except patience. Melchisedec is king as well as priest, but he has not yet taken to Him His great power and reigned. The object here is to shew Jews how completely Judaism is set aside. That part of it

that contains instruction for us is the Aaronic comparison. When the temple comes, it will be Melchisedec; but in Hebrews it is tabernacle, not temple.

Ques. Does the latter part of verse 19 follow on from verse 18?

The parenthesis is in the words, “For the law made nothing perfect.” Ques. What is the “better hope “? Christianity. Coming to God by Christ. Confidence in the grace manifested in Christ.

Ques. What is the difference between “law” and “commandments”?

None here. None anywhere, except Christ’s commandments. Commandments involves not merely doing right, but obedience.

But I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. And then I get another responsibility as a Christian; if I say, I abide in Him, I ought also so to walk, even as He walked. Christ ever manifested God in grace, in all His ways through this world. I am responsible in the place I am set in; but as a man I was totally lost; now, I am in Christ.

Ques. As lost, am I responsible to repent, and believe the gospel?

Oh yes. But such an one has not to walk so as to see whether he can stand in judgment, and he is not under law to Christ.

In i Corinthians 9 they have put out of that verse the positive declaration that we are not under law at all. In verse 21 of that chapter it is, “To those without law, as without law, (not as without law to God, but as

legitimately subject to Christ), in order that I might gain those without law." There they have kept the saving clause as to himself actually, but in the twentieth verse they have omitted it: "To those under law, as under law, not being myself under law, in order that I might gain those under law." So it should be without a doubt. I suppose they thought it might do mischief, and so left it out?

Ques. Who left it out?

Copyists left it out. But the Sinaitic, Alexandrine and Vatican MSS. have it with C.D.E.F.G., i.e., pretty much all of them. For our version they had not many MSS. Stephens in 1550 had only thirteen at Paris, and perhaps the Beza at Cambridge, though that is doubtful. The Elzevirs in 1635 made some additions to the text, saying it was received by everybody. They made the two Lord's prayers alike in Luke and Matthew, because they did not like two Lord's prayers.

The English Authorised Version was made in 1611, but the "Textus Receptus" was not issued until 1665. Ques. Why "Under law to Christ"? Well, the term should be, "Rightly subject to Christ." Do not be afraid of the word 'commandment,' only remember it is not mere doing right that is wanted; if we did everything right, nothing would be right, if it was not obedience.

But the moment you put a man under law you put him under condemnation, i.e., if you talk of it as a rule of life. I say it is a rule of death. Have you loved God with all your heart to-day? No. Then either the law must lose its power, or you are damned.

The seventh of Romans is clear enough that you cannot have two husbands at a time. If you are under law, you

have not got Christ risen; but if you are in Christ risen, you are not under law. It is important to see clearly that the law has power over a man so long as he lives.

Nor is God's law a merely arbitrary thing. Neither is the Sabbath, for that was instituted when man was created; the law put God's sanction on man's various duties, duties which flowed from his relationships. All these duties had existed prior to the law, but the law was the perfect rule of those duties; on that ground I am lost for ever.

Worse! When Christ came, I would not have Him either.

So now, in the end of the world, the end of all God's moral dealings with the world, Christ did a work which places us on a totally new ground. But then, that is the work which is done—a work by which God is both just and a justifier.

So the question now is, To which Man do I belong?

I belong to the Man that is in heaven.

On earth lawless sin was found in the Gentiles; law-breaking, in Israel; added to this, grace has been refused in Christ; so that now all is over. Only, I have to find this out for myself.

"In the end of the world," i.e., in the end of the dispensations—not dispensation— "in the completion of the ages, Christ hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Consequently I get Christ's work as the ground upon which I already am with God.

Instead of going to the judgment-seat to find it out, I know that I am damned before I go there.

Ques. It says in I Peter 4:1, “He that hath suffered in the flesh.” What is that?

It is the same in principle as Paul; you cannot get on to the true ground of practice except by reckoning yourself dead. “Ye are dead,” because Christ has died, “and your life is hid with Christ in God.” I am dead; that is not suffering. If you come to practice, it is “always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.” If I constantly carry the cross, the flesh never can stir, and nothing but the life of Christ flows out.

Peter’s is the experimental reckoning self to be dead. There, I arm myself with the same mind. If I always reckoned myself absolutely dead, Satan could do nothing with me whatever.

In 1 John 1, verse 7 is absolute. I am walking in the light, as God is in the light. We have fellowship one with another. And the blood cleanses from all sin. These are the three parts of Christian standing.

The law takes up the conduct fitting for man as man; but, now the vail is rent, the question is, can I stand in God’s presence in the full light, without any vail at all? This is quite another thing. If I can stand there, then I can have to say to God. And I have boldness to enter into the holiest, and the effect of the light is to show me that I am as white as snow.

Ques. Then would you say that every Christian is walking in the light?

Yes, he is walking in it, but I would not say according to it; he may not even know his privileges.

Ques. Would you say that a Christian is walking in darkness when he commits sin?

He would be walking according to darkness.

Ques. Does not John suppose a Christian walking in darkness?

No, never. I get no uncertainty; as being a Christian my walk is in God's light, according to His nature. The passage does not contemplate failure or otherwise.

If any one cannot view such statements abstractly, he will never understand them at all.

Ques. But in Galatians 5:17 it says, "Ye cannot do the things that ye would"?

That is really nonsense, and abominable doctrine, too; the flesh tries to hinder me from walking spiritually; the true reading should be, "So that ye should not do."

Ques. Is being "in Christ" the same thing as having the Holy Ghost?

It is not the same thing, but I know it by the Holy Ghost. "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you," that is when the Holy Ghost is given.

Ques. It says that Christ as High Priest is "made higher than the heavens "?

Yes, because that is where I must go.

Reading Meeting At Edinburgh

Ques. What would be looked for rightly in a person who was seeking fellowship?

Taking it on simple ground, it is that he should have the Spirit of Christ and be walking according to it.

Ques. Being a member of Christ's body?

Well, that is having the Spirit of Christ.

I have these two great principles to get hold of, the original principle of the unity of the body; and, then again, that we are outside the camp; or at least, I am; I don't know if everybody is.

Forty years ago there was nothing but the recognised systems, and so far the path was simple; but now, the idea of liberty to meet together is spread all over the country. Indeed, what they call the universal freedom of Christians as in the evangelical alliance is just on that ground, only they accept, in practice, the camp.

One has to reconcile these two principles, which I believe is simple in practice, where there is singleness of eye. There is no difficulty if people are but real.

Ques. What is the "camp"?

It was an arrangement of religion for the world. In Israel, God raised that question for man as he was, and it could not be carried through. Then, as we know, God brought in His Son but He was rejected, and was taken up to heaven. God did spare the Jews, but as they rejected the testimony of Stephen, heavenly things were brought in; there was thus an end of the camp, i.e., of God's owning it, for the cross had already put an end to

it; then the supplementary grace through Stephen was refused, and he was put to death. This put an end to the camp, and you get the church formed with a heavenly character.

Gradually it gave up its heavenly character, and settled down to the earth, and became a camp.

It still pretended to be the body.

But now in God's mercy, we turn back to the heavenly character of it, the heavenly calling, and the unity of the body; and maintain that, and go outside the camp, i.e., the worldly system of religion. And that is where the difficulty comes in. Here is a person who is a member of the body, but who stays in the camp, now we have carefully to maintain the unity of the body, or we have no ground of fellowship at all.

Whoever has the Spirit of Christ is a member of the body, and that we own; though if one be walking inconsistently, and in some actual thing that calls for it, he must be put out. For fellowship, therefore, he must be not only a member of the body, but also a member of the body walking uprightly.

Ques. How would you define the camp?

It is an earthly religious system, connecting the name of God with it; whatever does that, has the character of the camp. It is a matter of spiritual discernment and judgment. The word 'camp,' of course, refers to Israel, and to Moses, pitching a tent far off from the camp. He, himself, went back into the camp in testimony, but Joshua did not.

Ques. You said the true thing became the camp?

Yes, that which had been the true thing in the first instance. One great thing that characterises it is, de facto, the clergy. I do not say this constitutes it; but that is its flag.

Ques. Then would you have anything to do with one of them?

I should not go habitually with clergymen. I could associate with any Christian on grounds that are scriptural; but where there is openly that which is not scriptural, it must make a restraint as to communion. But if I meet a saint in a train, I do not ask him who he is.

Ques. Then could you acknowledge a church? I should not go into one at all. But as to individuals, you find various perceptions of principles, and must discern.

Here was a good man with meetings at his house, and he asked me to go; I did not refuse to go down to a reading meeting in his basement; but, I said, if I stand up there so, I should be standing up as a clergyman. But he stuck to his system, and would not alter his way.

Ques. Then is it wrong or not to go on with Christians in denominations for the furtherance of the Lord's work?

Well, I did for a little while, but I found the trumpet gave an uncertain sound.

Ques. If a clergyman were to ask you, would you go into a fair, and stand up with him to speak?

It might be, but that would depend. If I saw him hooted, I might stand by him as a Christian, though I could not as a clergyman.

I should say, keep your feet in the narrow way, and your heart as large as you can.

It is of no use trying to make fellowship; it is not real; you can't shake oil and water together, and not find that they will soon separate again.

[Reference was here made to much connected with "Bethesda," and is omitted.]

There are cases where you could do nothing. For ten years I did not go to Italy, because they were half Newtonians, and so I left it with the Lord. Then they all got into such a bad state, that I could go clearly, and no difficulty be raised by it.

If I found that any one's manner of work was not right, I could not go with it or them.

There is a large system that recognises the camp, and that I could not do.

Ques. If you owned them in any way, they would want you next Lord's day to break bread with them as well?

Very likely.

Ques. Do you not find that most of them are holding some bad doctrine such as that Christ bore the sins of all?

That is very often so.

Ques. Is there not sufficient work to be done among those who are true, without going to seek it elsewhere?

I believe there is plenty. We are often charged with narrowness in not going on with others, but that I don't mind. It is a narrow way that we have to walk in, but it is the narrow way that is objected to.

Ques. To go back; if you receive a person to the breaking of bread, it is on the ground of his being a member of the body of Christ?

Quite so.

Ques. Could you work with every one who is breaking bread?

Oh dear, no; I break bread constantly with some with whom I could not go to preach at all.

Ques. What about those whom you sometimes hear of who wish to break bread as Christians?

I should insist that such should put no condition on the church of God, any more than the church should put a condition upon them.

Ques. Should not a person be baptised to be received at the table?

As to order, he should be baptised first. If any one refused intelligently and deliberately to be baptised, I think he should not be received.

Both as to reception and as to fellowship in work, specially the latter, there are plenty of difficulties, which nothing but spirituality or communion with the Lord can solve. And the difficulties grow.

Remember you put ships into quarantine from ports where it is known that disease is raging; and that is done in ports where otherwise all ships would be received. When I met T. I did not ask him whether he were a thief or not, because I had not the remotest idea of such a thing; but if he had come from a thieves' home I should have liked to know if he were clear.

Ques. What are the evidences of a soul being really a member of the body of Christ?

Ques. What would you judge as unmistakable proof of a person being sealed?

Does he say, “Abba, Father,” really?

Ques. But then a person may get into darkness after that?

Ah! but I don’t think such would have the consciousness of the relationship. And therefore I said “really” You may find “Father “said from habit of training as to words.

Ques. Do you think a person sealed ever does get into the seventh chapter of Romans?

I do not believe that a person who has got hold of the redemption that brings him out of Romans 7 ever gets into Romans 7 again.

There is a distinction between the person and the work of Christ. A man may believe that Jesus is the Christ through God’s work in his soul, and then he is a child of God. He may believe that, and not know that Christ’s work has put all his sins away. That may happen, and it did happen when they said, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” It was because they believed that Jesus is the Christ, and that they had crucified their Messiah and all was over with them, and they were lost, that they said so.

Ques. Then do you connect the sealing with the knowledge of forgiveness?

I do. But I should not dogmatise upon it.

The Scripture order is, washed with water, sprinkled with blood, anointed with oil.

Ques. In Romans 8, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ” —is that the Holy Ghost?

Yes, certainly. Only in applying it, it is necessary to make allowance for all the bad teaching people get.

Ques. But every quickened person is a child of God?

Yes, surely.

Ques. Can one be a child of God and not be washed?

Yes; that is to say, he has not got it in his own conscience, though he has it all in God’s mind for him; but then he has the glory in God’s mind, though, clearly, he has not got that yet.

Ques. And “dead with Christ,” too?

Yes; but many of those breaking bread—and who are rightly doing so—do not know what it is to be dead with Christ.

The resurrection is the seal God has put upon the value of Christ’s blood.

Ques. What is the earnest of the Spirit?

The Holy Ghost dwelling in me is the earnest of all the glory which I have not got yet.

Ques. What is the difference between the earnest and the sealing?

The earnest is a particular operation in my heart of the seal.

Ques. What is “anointing”?

It is all the same thing. Christ anoints us with the Holy Ghost, and that is putting the seal upon us, which is the earnest.

Address At Ryde

There are two things which I should like to touch upon—Salvation, and separation from the world.

The two practically run into one another: “Who gave himself for our sins, so that he should deliver us out of this present evil world.” And these connect themselves, too, with deliverance from self.

Flesh has its religion as well as its lusts and pleasures.

As to Salvation; it is important we should know ourselves lost; but I think you will find many that have not got the simple plain consciousness that they are lost —not really got it, I mean.

But if they are alive in this world, they are lost to God. I do not say “guilty” now, that is true, of course; but, lost. If I am lost, now I am; and there is nothing to judge.

I do not mean, shall be lost finally, but that now am lost, as to my state.

People don’t believe it. They believe that they have sinned, and that Christ has died for their sins; but that does not touch this question of being lost.

But if I get the consciousness of being lost now already, and that Christ dealt with that on the cross also; I then get saved, and that now, and that is just what people have not got thoroughly. They know neither what it is to be lost, nor what it is to be saved.

It is not the first thing we get hold of, my conscience takes knowledge of my sins, and that must be settled, but there is this other thing.

As in the case of the prodigal son, he was just as much a sinner when he crossed his father's threshold, as when he was eating the husks with the swine. He had not degraded himself with the riotous living, but he had just as much turned his back upon God, and in that sense was lost just as much.

Now the world tries to check the evils of sin, and seeks to put down drunkenness and the like, and that is right so far. That is the difference between the old world before the flood, and after the flood.

It was corrupt and God had to destroy it, as it had become intolerable to God and man; after the flood, God put the power of the sword into the hand of man. That was not a restoration of man to God. Man was the same after as he was before. But then, what was the first thing God did after He had put outward restraint upon man?

It was to call a person clean out of the world, saying, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." And connected with that, there was the promise of a seed, i.e., Christ, of course.

There I get a second man, another man, much more than a man, but still a man. And now the question is, What is my place? Is it in the second man, or is it in the first?

The world's place is in the first, i.e., the old creation; but the Christian's place is not in that at all. We are in it outwardly, and, as regards the body, we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption" of it; but this we shall not get until the glory. But as regards our spiritual condition, we belong to the new creation entirely, and this is of immense moment. The change is total.

Look at all the human ordinances of the day we live in. Do you think we are going to have that kind of thing in heaven?

No. The first man—Adam—is done with for ever, as unchangeably evil, and the death of Christ has, to faith, closed this scene for ever. The moment God's Son was rejected, all that belonged to the first Adam was set aside, and God's dealings with it, as such, ended.

The world may try to imitate the new thing which God has set up, and get a religion in the flesh; it may have some sense of the church as in nominal Christendom, an outward thing to shew; but that will be instead of having it in heaven.

And then, too, there is a practical worldliness that sticks, more or less, to us all, even if we do not stick to it.

It all hangs on the one question: Am I alive in this world, or am I not? I mean, of course, looked at as in relation to God. I say, I am God's, and then, I have to go through this world. Christ had, but He said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." That makes all the difference.

Before God, can you mend the first Adam? Will you educate,him, and get any good out of him? You will not. God tried it, and it ended in the death of His Son. The very world we are living in is the world that had God in it, but it turned Him out. The flesh that I have got in me has had that Christ presented to it, and it rejected Him—morally, that is. We cannot now, of course, kill Him outwardly.

But people put this flesh under law, and they fancy they can school it. Do you think they would insist so upon law, if they were sure and certain that the only thing it can do is to damn them?

For God, the world's history has been gone through and finished; and it has proved this, that no matter what man is, his church and all else, as having to say to God, man is found utterly bad and lost.

When God has set up anything good, the first thing man has always done has been to spoil it. Adam, Noah, Aaron, Nebuchadnezzar. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God.

And have not we got that nature?

Are you then going to educate and improve, and cultivate enmity against God?

It is lost, as to all connection with God.

The death of Christ was the moment of putting flesh to the test. It was not merely that men had sinned lawlessly, and then broke the law; but when God Himself came into the world in goodness, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, bearing their sicknesses, and carrying their sorrows, in the Person of Christ, then, because God was with Him, they would not have Him. That is what the cross of Christ tells me, and tells me about myself, and therefore I say that I am lost.

And we must learn that, if we are to get clear and straight; but you will find many a Christian that has not yet learnt it.

I quite admit that the first question we have before us is our guilt. Conscience must be reached, and that ought to be the first question for the soul. But if I want to get

understanding in the path of the Christian, and get clear from the delusions of Satan, as well as from religiousness in the flesh, then I must get hold of the truth that I am lost already.

You will never know what it is to be saved until you know what it is to be lost.

It is a totally new thing brought out by God.

And now look at the cross in that aspect; you will see it is God cast out of the world, i.e., God in Christ.

Flesh's religion was Judaism, and people are very fond of it now, but God says, "I will not dwell in a house made with hands."

If I were to go into a church nowadays, I may have to-take off my hat, but what to? What does doing so say? That it is God's house. Then I won't go into a temple and say that. I won't take my hat off, to say that that is God's house.

I merely give that as an illustration, not that I would offend anybody, of course not, not even a Turk.

But God has judged all that; He tried it, and it utterly failed, and finally it rejected Himself.

Yet now, wise man will go back to flesh's religion and says, you must get the temple, and the vestments, and the music.

They come of man's mind, and what are they all?

Only flesh. Then I say, it is wrong altogether.

As a Christian I am not in the flesh, for that is outside Christianity. I am sure if anybody could delight in

religious music, it was myself, even as a schoolboy, but then, what was that?

Now the cross was God's testing-place of it all.

I know there was supplementary grace, God responding to the prayer of Christ on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The Jews were led away by Satan to crucify Him, and the Lord interceded for them, so that Peter said, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it; repent, and Christ will come back again; if you will believe now in a glorified Christ, you shall have him back, though you would not believe in a humbled One."

But they would not. And so you get by Stephen, this testimony which I called supplementary; recounting the past history of the nation, he convicts them of having rejected Him whom God had sent. They had received the law by the disposition of angels, and had not kept it; they had persecuted the prophets, and they had slain those who shewed before the coming of the Just One; and of Him they had now become the betrayers and the murderers. But they gnashed their teeth upon him, stopped their ears, and stoned him.

There is the history of man, and of the testimony of God in the world; there is the end of religion for man in the world; and also, in a certain connection, with it as the object of promise, Christ rejected entirely, and man left simply and solely a lost sinner in this world. Not that he could not be saved, but such was his condition—lost.

The life of Christ only brought out the state of man's heart as to God; while He Himself shewed what God was.

At the beginning, Satan tempted Him by the privileges that belonged to the Son of God, and at the close, Satan came with all the terrors he could bring upon His path. So the Lord says, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.”

And death and judgment stood in the road, too.

But there was love enough in Christ to go through it all. He saw what the cup was, as none of us can, and in His own infinite and blessed love, He accepted it in full.

And man’s history as man, was thus ended in the cross. It was not historically, but morally “the end of the world.”

And now, He who has accomplished that work is set by God Himself at His own right hand, for the display of God’s own righteousness.

The first man rejected Christ, and was the instrument of His death; the second Man, in the perfectness of His ways before God, is taken out of this world, and is set at God’s right hand; so that now the testimony of the Holy Ghost— His special work—is to convince the world of righteousness, because Christ has gone to the Father, and they see Him no more.

That is the end of the world.

There is now a Man in heaven. True Christianity is founded on that. We learn by degrees; but there was in the cross, the total, entire, complete condemnation of man, and in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, a totally new place is taken (which is the foundation of all blessedness), where Adam innocent was not, any more than Adam guilty.

It is a new thing altogether, and “if any one be in Christ, there is a new creation.”

We are not as yet fully in the new scene founded on the cross, but, in Christ, I am a new creation; and so now we have to manifest the life of Jesus in this mortal flesh, while we walk by faith, not by sight.

The Christian has to go through things down here, but now they are no longer his object; it is not merely that certain things will do him harm; of course they will; but he is looking at things not seen and eternal. He groans, too, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with his house from heaven. The apostle adds, “He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God.” God hath not only prepared a place there, but hath wrought us for that self-same thing, which is glory with Christ there. That is what God has wrought you and me for. The world comes to chain me down, but God has wrought me for that which is inside the vail, and the vail is rent. I can talk of it therefore as having it, because God has so wrought me for it, and prepared it for me, and though as yet I have not actually got it, yet I have the earnest of the Spirit.

The Christian is born again, and is not in the flesh before God; he is a renewed man, but a renewed man without salvation of body, and there comes the connection between two distinct points. The law has power over a man as long as he lives; but, in Christ, I have died away from under it; the cross has finished that. Law was God’s rule for a child of Adam, and now I am not a child of Adam. What am I then? A child of God. What is that? A new creation. The epistle to the Romans treats of our responsibility in the old creation, but in the

Ephesians it is the new creation, we are God's "workmanship created in Christ Jesus," and so on.

Now the law was very useful to kill me; it came, and required certain things of me, and I could not give them. It has a right therefore to kill me. But it is written, "Ye are dead."

Now, where did I die? In Christ's cross.

Suppose a policeman had apprehended me and that I had died while in his charge, what can he do with me but give me up to be buried? So now, "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." We "are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." When I began to try to do good, I found there was none in me, and it was "when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly."

I recognise my want of strength, and that Christ has come and taken me totally out of that condition, and put me in Himself, so that in Ephesians it is, "According to the power that worketh in us" and "According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead," etc.

Forgiveness, cleansing, and justifying apply to a child of Adam, but I am in the Christ, the last Adam, in whom alone I stand before God, for I cannot stand in both. In the first man I was helpless; in the second Man, I have the power of God. But until you have got into the thorough consciousness that you could not succeed in the first Adam, you can never get free from it, because you are trying to mend it.

You get a crab-tree, and you say the fruit is sour; but put it in your garden and do your best with it, and what do

you get? More crabs and bigger ones. The change has not made die tree good.

Then what would you do if you had a crab-tree? You would cut it down and graft it. So God has sentenced the "old man" in the cross of Christ, and brought in a totally new thing.

That is the salvation of God.

God has gone through the whole probation of man, his whole moral history, and has sentenced his entire state.

"There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable."

That shews God's view of the whole situation.

But He came in grace and sought after them, and now I can go to every poor sinner in the wide world with that grace.

But more than that. I find Christ has risen again into a totally new place as man, and the place He has brought me into is His own present place. God has given me the earnest of the Spirit until I come into that place in full, but it is mine now. That is salvation. So that I do not own the flesh, nor the world, nor its religion. I have the consciousness of the death of Christ, which has closed the whole thing for me. He has so settled all for God's glory, that God has set Him at His own right hand, and that is where I am.

That is the blessed condition into which I am brought as to salvation, and then consequent upon that, all the counsels of God come out "according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the

world began." Not according to my responsibility at all—I was lost according to that—and I shall be judged according to it if I do not escape by grace.

I am saved solely by the cross.

What part had you in that cross?

Shall I tell you? If you are saved by it, your part in it was your sins. Had you nothing else in the cross? The enmity that put Christ to death. What else? Nothing.

Nothing. Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

I am brought then to the cross, with the consciousness of guilt and sins, and of the enmity of my heart. But then, there, there was a death which on the one hand clears my sins away, and which on the other hand redeems me out of the condition I am in, and there I find salvation.

And, mark, the whole of this was God's work—a work done alone between Him and Christ.

All was darkness around, a mere outward testimony, but real—Christ was left alone with God. The disciples had run away, and the whole world was contrary to Him; divine power not screening Him from the cup, but enabling Him to drink it. And all was finished, finished for ever and righteously, and God's righteousness made known, because Christ went to the Father, and the world sees Him no more.

It will see Him as Judge, but not as a Saviour.

But life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel.

It was this purpose of God to bring us into the second Man that was never made manifest until the cross; the

ground of it was not laid. Promises and prophecies there had been; though, remember, there were no promises to flesh—none to the first Adam. There was that which Adam's faith could lay hold of; but it was not a promise to Adam. The seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head truly, but then Adam was not the seed of the woman. The seed of the woman was the man that was not. The promise really went clean outside the whole existing thing. It was to Christ.

And then you get God dealing with fallen man, up to the cross, and there proving what he was.

But there, too, God works His own work, whilst His purpose which existed before the world should be accomplished by it.

And then we get blessed fruits.

Not from man's works, but God's works.

Just as was said of Israel, "What hath God wrought?" Not, what hath man wrought? That was all to condemnation; but, what hath God wrought?

He has raised His Son from the dead, after He had been "made sin," and, in that, He has raised us too. We have our place with God in Christ after death, after judgment of sin, after the power of Satan is broken, and, as being raised out from the dead, in Christ.

We are saved—not our bodies—but we have got salvation, not simply forgiveness (which we do have, of course, but that applies to the old condition); we have a new condition; we are in Christ the second Man, the last Adam; we are not in the flesh; and you will never know what salvation is—what it really means—until you

understand that you are not in the flesh, but are in Christ.

I am anxious that this should rest on your minds.

God alone can teach us. He must be worshipped in spirit and in truth—so we are brought back to the Father, and we have the ring, the best robe, and the shoes. The very best thing God had in heaven to give He has given us.

Most surely there was repentance in the prodigal; he says, “Make me as one of thy hired servants”; but there was no such thought in God’s heart at all, though it is what the experiences of the prodigal bring him to. But his father meets him in all his rags—the proofs of his profligacy are upon him; but until he met his father, he did not know his father’s heart.

So we have nothing else to put on, we are all in rags. And after that you do not get one single word about what the prodigal son did at all. It is the Father says, “Let us … be merry,” “Bring forth the best robe,” and so on. That is just where we are with God.

Of course, we look for good fruit from all this; we ought to manifest the life of Christ in everything—buying, selling, the counting-house, dress, everything.

Are you doing so?

Do you do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus?

If not, you are giving up Christ for some folly or other. If you cannot do the thing in that name, do not do it at all. The way the Lord walked was by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God.

The fact is, I am not alive in this world at all. (I don’t mean physically, of course.) But Paul asks, “If ye be dead

with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" As to my place in Christ, "The body is dead because of sin"; and again, I am "dead to the law by the body of Christ." I have no more to do with the world or its religion, for I have died. I have, of course, to go through what is of the world; Christ Himself did that.

The Lord Himself give us to see the connection between living by faith and the clear apprehension of what salvation is; that it is not merely forgiveness, though that is the first thing, but also, the taking the believer out of the place he was in, in the first Adam, and the putting him into Christ the second Man, and seating him in the heavenly places in Him.

Reading At 3, Lonsdale Square

Read John 11:28 and on

In verse 25, “Resurrection and the life” is the power of life come into the world, in the Person of Christ.

It was a new thing. The Jews could all understand healing the sick, so Martha says (and Mary too), “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”

Ques. In what sense does Martha own Him to be the Son of God?

As born into the world. And, as Son of God, they were bound to own Him to be the Messiah.

This Gospel does not give us a genealogy to Abraham or to Adam. John presents Jesus as “Son of God,” and as “The Word” which “was God.”

We now get God’s final testimony to Christ’s three characters. Here, it is Son of God; in chapter 12:12-15, it is Son of David; and in chapter 12:20-23, it is Son of man; and as such He was rejected as come into the world. The Psalms open so. Psalm 1 gives you a remnant separated; it is not the nation publicly, but a remnant; that is the first principle of the book. In Psalm 2 you get Messiah’s place in God’s counsels, and then in man’s heart (not redemption at all) but in spite of man, He is set King in Zion. Next, out from that you get troubles, the result of Christ’s rejection by man. Then in Psalm 8 you get the Son of man crowned with glory and honour —God’s full intention accomplished in Christ. These three Psalms form a basis.

So in John. He was Son of God and King of Israel, but He says He must die for that.

The remnant will be looking for deliverance from Jehovah, but will not know Him as Redeemer until they see Him.

Christ entered into all the sorrow round Him at the grave; He groaned and was troubled; He saw the power of death over all these poor things; He enters thoroughly into it, and it presses upon Him. But He comes into the scene of death in the power of life.

Although He was One who could raise the dead, yet He does it only in service, because He had taken the place of a servant, and so He asks for it, “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.”

Ques. Would you pray for everything you wanted?

The prayer of want is all right. “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

But the prayer of faith is always answered.

Christ did die for the nation, that all the promises of God might be fulfilled in a double way. He had promised under law, “if ye shall,” i.e., upon condition; but to Abraham He had promised without condition; and, as to that, God was bound to perform.

At Sinai they took up the promises on condition of their own obedience, and they lost them all. They are to have all ultimately in another way, and so the apostle says, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” etc.

Losing the promises under the law did not go the whole way, but it threw them upon absolute mercy, just like the Gentile; yet God fulfils His promises.

Ques. What is the connection between the promises and the new covenant in Hebrews 8?

In that passage it is that they must be born again, and then the law is written upon their hearts.

The new covenant is the shape in which it is to be done.

Ques. In Romans 15 Christ confirms the promises made unto the fathers, and yet the Gentiles glorify God for His mercy?

Yes. It was for the truth of God that Christ confirms the promises. But the Jews were sinners as well as the Gentiles, and they would not have the promises. So the promises were fulfilled righteously to this rebellious people through the cross, for Christ died for the nation, it having rejected Him as a living Messiah, and thus lost title to them. God will fulfil them, only the Jews have to come in on the ground of mercy, not on that of promise.

So the Lord told Nicodemus, you can't have these promises until you are born again, not even the earthly thing. But God will carry out all His purposes.

Ques. All!!? It says, "That the world through him might be saved"?

That is not a purpose of God at all.

Ques. What is "the everlasting covenant"?

That is the whole thing, between the Father and the Son, I suppose you may say, "A body hast thou prepared me," and, "Lo, I come to do thy will." We are not under the

new covenant, though we do get the good of it, and a great deal more.

Ques. Is the difference between the old and new covenants this, that the old is conditional, and the new is unconditional?

Precisely so. In the old you have “two,” and it came to nothing, but “a mediator is not of one,” and in the new, “God is one,” and so God is bound and He says, “I will write.”

Ques. What is a “covenant”?

Terms on which God prescribes for His people.

Ques. If we are not under the new covenant, how is Paul an able minister of it?

There would not be a ministry if we were under it.

Ques. Has a Christian a new heart?

Yes. But that is not a cleansing of the old one, just as if this table, say, was very dirty, and then the mahogany was well cleaned. That is the Wesleyan or Arminian idea of a new heart.

Ques. Then instead of mahogany, you would have rosewood?

Only the mahogany is there still. While, of course, new creation does effect cleansing.

Ques. If that is the everlasting covenant, what is the “counsel of peace”?

That was between Melchisedec and Jehovah, and is for blessing upon the earth.

“Gather together in one,” is not church unity, but fallible unity.

John never touches the question of the church, it is all individual with him.

Ques. What was it that had scattered them?

It does not say that they had been scattered as by a single act, but only that they were then in that state.

Chapter 12

Mary's heart had been touched, and she was in spirit and in heart associated with Christ's death. That was a new place altogether.

I suppose her heart had gone beyond her knowledge—"Here is the One I love going to die." Mary entered into that and gave it a voice. The Lord knew what she meant. She was no prophet, but her heart had the intuitive sense of what was coniing on. They say that this Mary never went to the grave, and it does not appear that she did.

Ques. In Mark 14:3, she anointed His head; here, it is His feet; while in Luke 7 the woman of the city only anointed His feet?

It was not as a sinner that Mary came, so she anointed His head as well as His feet.

It is striking how the disciples came out at the end; Judas led, and they all chimed in with him, that it was "waste." Mary's is the one single instance of any one entering into the mind of Christ. You never get that among the disciples; they never understood Him; and, on that account, I take it, it is to be told for a memorial of her.

In verse 10 you get the dreadful hardness of the chief priests. They consult to put Lazarus to death, because he had been raised up by the power of God.

In verse 20 it is true Greeks, not Hellenists.

He could not have had joint heirs, if He had not died to redeem them.

A living Messiah was a Jewish Messiah, but a crucified Messiah became the attractive point for the whole world.

“If any man serve me, let him follow me”; that recalls a line I read many years ago, “It is harder to live a Christian than to die a martyr.”

Ryde

Two questions have been put into my hand, one as to preaching repentance, and the other as to preaching the kingdom.

Nobody questions as to whether people ought to repent; and as to the kingdom, Paul says to the elders from Ephesus in Acts 20: “Ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God”; and you will find it elsewhere as well.

You have it in John 3, which is often overlooked, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

I have no doubt it is an important point, too. Other things were preached, but it was testified by the prophet that God was going to set up a kingdom. When the Lord came, He, in a certain sense, preached nothing else.

As to that point, at least, John Baptist and the Lord exercised the same ministry. It was testified then, and ought to be so still.

Another thing has come out—the gospel of our salvation—a thing that was not promised or spoken of before the cross; while there were the prophecies that Christ should come, the grace that should be brought had not appeared. There was a testimony to its appearing from Adam on, but the importance of the statement of the kingdom lies in this, that it is not simply persons must have a change in them in order to be happy, but that God was setting up something. God did not own the world at all, but was setting up a kingdom, into which a man could not enter, if he was not born again.

Nowadays, Christianity is so reduced to the idea of being safe—leading people to look into their own hearts to see if they are—that the object of testimony is gone.

It has come down to this, a certain few outward things, and then there is nothing positive and substantial at all.

But there were two testimonies; the Lord's own upon which He was condemned (He was not condemned on the testimony brought against Him, for the two false witnesses did not agree), and which before Pilate was that He was a King—"Thou sayest that I am," that was the "good confession" that He witnessed; and the other testimony was that God was setting up a kingdom.

There are other things, the church, and so on—one of the great mischiefs done is the confounding of the kingdom and the church of God—but still, the kingdom is there as the subject of preaching.

In Matthew you get things brought out more in order, and there you get the rejection of Christ, and upon that, three things are substituted for what He was down here—founded though upon His work—the kingdom of heaven in chapter 13, the church in chapter 16, and the coming in glory, i.e., the transfiguration, in chapter 17.

These are very distinct. You could not call the kingdom "the bride," or "the body of Christ"; there would be no sense in it. The setting up of a kingdom is seen in the authority of a king, and he has his subjects; but in the idea of a body, or of a bride, you can't talk of a king. If you do, you lose the whole idea.

The kingdom had been spoken of, and the Messiah was to come, but the church never at all. That was hidden

from ages and from generations, but is now revealed. We have now the key to it.

We may understand certain things, but it is declared that there was no kind of revelation of the church in the smallest degree, until Christ had come and died.

It would have upset all that God had revealed, for the wall of partition was not taken down before.

But the kingdom was testified of; only, when the King came in Person—Christ—He was rejected, and so the personal thing was not set up, for the King was gone away to heaven.

He was rejected and taken up to heaven, nor does He sit upon His throne yet, but He says, “To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne,” as had been said to Him, “Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool.”

And presently in the Revelation it says, “We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.” And so He will reign, but those who are faithful to Christ own Him now as the true King, of course. There are other and better things for those who have believed, but His kingdom will be set up openly.

Say, as when Charles II was not in the country, those who were loyal owned him as the king, though he was in France. So now, the King is sitting at the right hand of God, until His enemies be made His footstool.

When the time comes He will leave His Father’s throne, and His kingdom will be set up.

Meanwhile you get the parables of Matthew 13, giving the state of the kingdom during the absence of the King.

It does not look a bit like a kingdom to the natural eye now for it is not yet manifest.

The devil is able to sow tares—not in the church but in the world. It is clearly said, “the field is the world,” and there the tares are sown; that is the devil’s work, and he has done it plentifully. In the last three parables you get God’s intention about it.

He took the world for the sake of the treasure; then, He is seen seeking goodly pearls; and lastly you come to that which has a certain analogy to the thought of the tares; they take a net and cast it into the sea, and it gathers of every kind; they put the good into vessels and cast the bad away. All that is the kingdom, while the King is no longer here.

The actual establishment of the kingdom in power is yet to come, but meanwhile, let Him at least gather those who are to reign with Him.

It is not yet the setting up of the kingdom, save in a mysterious way; but when He comes we shall be with Him upon thrones, for we are made kings and priests unto God and His Father.

In Revelation 4 it is said that the elders have twenty-four “seats”; the translators were afraid to say “thrones,” it looked strange to put twenty-four symbols of saints on thrones, and so they put the word ‘seats’ instead, but it really is “thrones.”

Well, if you want the kingdom in its manifestation in glory (which is not the highest thing), you get that in chapter 17.

In all three gospels, it is the next week that the Lord takes the three disciples up and shews them Moses and Elias in the same glory with Himself upon the mount.

He had said, “Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom,” and thereupon the account of the transfiguration follows.

Now refer to 2 Peter 1:16: “For we have not followed.cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.” There we get Peter’s account of Matthew 17. The “Son of man coming in his kingdom” is “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Three disciples went up, but they are not allowed to tell it until after He had been raised from the dead.

If you look at Luke 9 it comes out even clearer, with a blessed testimony to the Lord’s grace.

But in Matthew 16 Peter had said He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, i.e., the King, of course, and the Lord charges them to tell no man that, but began to shew them that He must suffer, and be killed, and rise again the third day; and adds, that we must take up our cross and suffer with Him.

Six days after, He takes them up into the mountain; and of that, Peter tells us that it was the “power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In Luke there is a difference. The cloud which came was, according to Peter, the excellent glory, and then the Father’s voice came out of the excellent glory, and Moses and Elias go into it. Now that is not the kingdom, it is the better part, the Father’s house. There was the revelation of the kingdom; and then glorified saints with and like Christ; and lastly those living on the earth.

The kingdom is set up in glory, in this vision of it, after the declaration that He could not be received as Christ. He ought to have been, but that was all over, and the Son of man must suffer. When ultimately He does come, and the kingdom is set up openly, He will gather out of it all things that do offend; and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. That is, I get the upper or heavenly part of the kingdom, separated like Luke’s cloud; and the Son of man setting this earth right in the power of the kingdom.

When the Jews were taken captive to Babylon, the great fact that took place then was, that God’s throne went away from the earth. He had had a throne—sitting between the cherubim, and when the Jews’ captivity took place, that was over. (When I say God’s throne went away, I am not speaking of providence, there is providence in a sparrow that falls; that is another thing.) But when the Lord came He said, “The kingdom of God is in the midst of you”; here it is, if you will have it, but they rejected Him the King.

When Babylon—the golden head—was set up, God’s throne was taken from the earth. Nebuchadnezzar took

Jerusalem. God had been there in the cloud of glory between the cherubim, but that arises, goes to Mount Olives, and finally went away. Then the thrones of the four beasts were set up; and ever since that, it has been the government of the last beast. In His providence God has been working (I do not now speak of that or forget it), but all the beasts had already been brought out before the Lord Jesus Christ appeared on the earth.

The Roman beast was then ruling in Jerusalem, and was joined with the Jews against Christ. “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together” (as Herod and Pontius Pilate) “against the Lord, and against his anointed.” They joined hands to reject God’s King, and Christ testified to Pilate, that He Himself was God’s King. So it has come about that the establishment of the kingdom in power is put off until the Lord comes again. When next He comes He will be “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Meanwhile, between Babylon and Infidelity all is now going on to judgment, as rapidly as ever it can. The will of man and the power of the beast are gathering strength every moment. But when Christ comes and establishes His kingdom, He will put down everything else; and He will have, if you look at Psalms 2 and 8, a much wider dominion than anything Jewish. Those who repent when they see Him will be reigned over, but we shall reign with Him, because we own Him when He is not seen, and we get more than that, for we shall be with Him and like Him. The kingdom had been lost sight of, but it has begun to be preached again within my memory; meanwhile, God is gathering the joint heirs, and when all are gathered, the kingdom will come and

the scene around us will be brought directly under the judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Peter you have a “more sure word of prophecy,” but it is literally “the word of prophecy confirmed” i.e., they had seen Christ in the glory, and that confirmed the prophetic word. And, he says, ye do well to take heed unto it, “as unto a light that shineth in a dark place,” which shews what all around us is going on to.

If you have got a heavenly Christ, it is much better to be drawn up to Him there than to be driven out of the things that disappoint here.

The world itself has become afraid as to what is coming. All is going on to the judgment of the beast—France, Italy, Spain, and, I am afraid, we must bring in England, too.

But for us, Christians, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is the bright and morning star, and when the Sun of Righteousness arises, it will be judgment on the earth.

If you look at the end of Malachi, you will find it is not the gospel that is there spoken of at all, but He discerns between the righteous and the wicked, for the day cometh that will burn as an oven; and the rising of the Sun of Righteousness is Christ appearing in this world, and putting down the wicked under the soles of His people’s feet.

Before that, we get the morning star—a heavenly Christ — that weans us out of this world; and that is our own proper portion, and when He appears afterwards we shall appear with Him.

Our privilege is that of complete, thorough association with the Lord Jesus Christ—the First Born amongst many brethren, and He takes nothing for Himself that He does not bring us into.

If He is a Son, we are sons;

If He comes in glory, we come;

If He makes peace—My peace I give unto you;

Has He joy? He would have it fulfilled in us;

The words God gave to Him, He has given us;

And, He has declared the Father's name, "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." All this is to bring us into the same thing with Himself.

The coming of the Lord is still preached, and wherever this is set out, it is still the kingdom. Sinners need surely to know what forgiveness is, but it is well that there should be positive testimony to the coming of the Lord. God is not slack concerning His promises as some men count slackness, and the Lord will come. We cannot tell the moment, but He will not come while there is a joint heir to be gathered in. When He does come, as we saw in Luke, we shall go into the cloud where the Father is.

I trust I have made the kingdom plain.

Memoranda From An Address At Kennington

Galatians 2:14 to the end

This epistle, generally, deals with the fundamental principles of the gospel, i.e., justification by faith, and another which I will speak of.

The Galatians had received Judaism, and it was that which made the apostle stand in doubt about them.

But Christianity is the fullest revelation of God, first in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"—and in the work of the Lord Jesus, and then in the gift of the Holy Ghost which followed; the full revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, i.e., the Godhead fully revealed. And, now, "through him [i.e., Christ] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." These are things which the angels desire to look into, elementary to Christianity though they are.

But the world into which God has sent salvation is utter vanity; and the Lord Jesus Christ "gave himself for our sins, so that he should deliver us out of this present evil world"; a world indeed whose true character is brought out by Christ's coming into it, as He says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me," and again, "Now is the judgment of this world." Our place is this, we are in a world which is in utter darkness from Christ having gone out of it ("The night is far spent"); it is here that we are, and it is here that we have this revelation of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. While

Christ was in the world, He was the light of it, but the Light has now gone to a much brighter and more blessed scene.

In Galatia, Judaising teachers had brought in the law, and it seemed plausible to insist upon it. But the law had power over a man only so long as he lived. Judaism belonged to this world, it was set up to try if man could walk with God in it.

Only God could not then reveal Himself to man. He dwelt in the thick darkness. Quite true His cloud filled the tabernacle, but what was the effect? Just this, that man could not go in. That was under law, i.e., the rule for man here, but not for heaven and a heavenly people; you do not talk of “killing” in heaven, or about stealing or false witness.

The Lord could pick out two words in it which went beyond this, but it was more contrast than likeness after all, shewing still that man could not be with God. It dealt with man on the earth, God saying, as it were, “I am behind the vail, and nobody must come near Me.” Indeed that was so.

The law was provisional with its washings and carnal ordinances that enabled a man to have to say to God, while He was still behind a vail. Had God displayed His glory, they would all have been cut off in their sins. By means of sacrifices certain legal failures were met, so that the people might go on; but they were still in the world.

Under it there was a continual memorial of sins. Sins were not absolutely put away. It was thus a provision that intimated something better was to come; but the vail was unrent and the repetition of the sacrifices

showed that the work was not done. It was grace in a provisional way only.

Looked at simply and purely, the law is condemnation to everybody, for the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins. It was a dealing with man as man down here, testing him. That was the great point of the law. It did not say that men were lost; it turned out they were, when they found it was spiritual, and they came to judge themselves; but they were under probation for our instruction while God was testing them.

And then another step was taken. Christ came, and God was in Christ; and there at last, God comes out, though that is only half the truth.

He clothed Himself with humiliation and dwelt with men in perfect goodness and in perfect love, removing every outward evil that sin had brought in; the Holy and the Blessed One passed through this world, manifesting the Father Himself amongst men where they were.

This was no law sent to men to require them to be something in order to come up to God and answer for themselves. It was grace.

And in it all, I find God sovereign above evil. He did not come to seek righteous men but sinners, and just because they were sinners; if the heart has found redemption, it is blessed to turn back and take the gospels and see all that He was there. The perfect goodness and love of God brought down even lower, in a sense, than men, that men might learn what God in goodness is.

Yet the Lord must say, “I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain.”

If He came into a world that was sinful, for His love He had hatred; His presentation among men was the last thing God could attempt, and, by itself, it only increased the sinfulness of man. All that passed in the midst of Judaism. By itself, His presentation would never have made a basis for Christianity, because there was no atonement made. In John 12, directly He takes the place of the Son of man, His widest title, He says, I must die or else I must abide alone.

In His dying for us the foundation of Christianity was laid-He was “lifted up,” not crucified on the earth, as He says, “Lifted up from the earth.” He must be an entirely rejected Christ, and that unto death, or there could be no point of attraction for men.

There were promises to the Jews and He was “minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers”; but man’s sin must be thoroughly brought out; not merely his sins, but the state he is in. Sins were there, no doubt, plenty; and as God looks down upon the world, what does He see but corruption and violence?

Now that the whole world has rejected the Son of God, its day of probation is over, so that it is said, “Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

And yet in another sense, the end of the world has not come; but when you talk of God’s dealings with man, as man in this world, it had come to an end. He could do no more for His vineyard than He had done, it was all of no use. Whether as without law, or as under law, or with Christ Himself among them, they would have God upon no terms whatever.

Then I see in the cross that man, in Christ, is gone from the world; on the other hand, He says Himself, “As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do,” and there you have man glorifying God in the place of sin.

So the whole thing is morally settled.

I get perfect sin in man, if I may use such an expression, because it was hatred against God acting in love, and I get this Blessed One perfect in His love to His Father, and perfect in obedience in the very place where He is “made sin.”

Therefore, you see, the whole work as regards God’s judgment, and what glorified God as the ground of God’s dealings, was complete and finished; and what is the consequence?

Man goes right up into the glory of God.

The hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father; but the world was done with. “All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” All was at an end before God.

People say, “But did not God create these things? “To be sure He did, but the devil makes people use them to reject Christ. You can’t have them in connection with the Father, because they are of the world which rejected the Son; “The friendship of the world is enmity with God.”

Since the rending of the vail, there can no longer be any religion for the world as such. Christ “gave himself for our sins, so that he should deliver us out of this present evil world”; and so He sends the Holy Ghost down to those who believe on Him, to connect them with Himself in heaven.

A real Christian, then, is a man who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and is sealed with the Holy Ghost. He is thus entirely connected with the Lord in heaven.

Just as the Lord came out of heaven to the earth, so now man has gone in to the glory of God; that is the other side of the truth; and it is as our Forerunner, too.

This is the complete salvation that I get when I get Christianity.

There is nothing of the flesh in Christianity, and nothing for the flesh. The apostle had been a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but now he does not know even Christ after the flesh; and therefore he asks the Colossians, “Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?” They that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; and the law applies to all that; but I have died in Christ, and the whole question now is one of connection with Him. We are passing through the world which rejected Him, but we are connected with Him in glory. He came in love, and is gone in righteousness, and we are “made the righteousness of God in him” —that which is fit for heaven, and nothing else is. Sealed with the Holy Ghost, I stand between the first coming of that Blessed One, and His second coming to put me into the full place that He has earned for me. My sins are totally gone for ever. I have not merely forgiveness at any given moment for what I have done; blessedly true though that is, it is only half the truth. But Christ has offered one sacrifice for sin, one only, and that, at the end of the world; if that has not wrought for me a perfect acceptance and justification, I shall never have one, because He cannot die again,” for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the

world.” If there is any sin left for Christ to clear me of, He must die again and shed His blood again to do it, and that cannot be.

But, having made propitiation by His blood, Christ is in the presence of God for us, and therefore, when I go to God at any time, imputation is impossible, or God would deny both the Christ who is before Him, and what He has done.

I have to humble myself for my faults, and the deeper the better, but if I allow imputation, I am denying the efficacy of Christ’s work.

Anything less is nothing better than mere priestly absolution; but that cannot be now, because God has accepted this one offering, and Christ is sitting. Sitting is an emphatic word. “Sit!” The priests of old never did, but Christ does; He has sat down in continuity from henceforth expecting until His enemies be made His footstool.

Then, He will rise up for judgment.

Now, for His friends He is sitting there.

Other blessed truths come in in their place; but as regards our standing, God never remembers our sins and iniquities any more; and the worshipper once purged has no more conscience of sins.

I insist upon this because it is most vital.

If your sins—I speak as to the work done for them, I am not talking about your feelings as to them—if your sins are not put away by the blood of Christ—I speak to Christians—they never can be. But He has borne my sins in His own body on the tree, and I am as white as snow.

Then another thing. There is the nature—the flesh. What about that? That is not sin committed. Nor does its existence in me give me a bad conscience; if it did, I never should have a good one. But how have I to deal with it? I am crucified with Christ. I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. But under the law you cannot live unto God; I am crucified with Christ; it is not merely that Christ has died—been crucified, but I have died—been crucified with Him. So in Romans 8, “What the law could hot do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, [for sin, not for sins] condemned sin in the flesh.”

Where did God condemn sin in the flesh? On the cross. Thank God! It is all condemned and done with; where it was condemned it died. Ah! then the condemnation is over, gone, and I, as in the flesh before God, am gone, and now have nothing more to say to it.

If I look at myself as a child of God, I say, I died as a child of Adam on the cross.

Whose child are you, then?

I am God’s child, and I do not own the flesh any more. So he says, “Yield yourselves unto God as those who are alive from the dead.”

I accept death unto sin also, and I do not belong to this world, or its religion; no, nor would I have it for I have Christ in the glory of God.

The apostle does not talk of sin in Philippians, because, though going through the world, he has passed out of that condition entirely, and is there simply seen as running through the world towards the prize.

So now, we know God revealed, not hidden behind a vail, and our place is with Christ where He is.

In Romans the Christian is always viewed upon earth; he has died to sin, is alive in Christ, and is perfectly justified; he is walking through the world in that condition, and has to yield himself up to God.

In Colossians you get him dead, as in Romans, but also risen with Christ, and he has a hope laid up for him in heaven.

In Ephesians you get a step further, as there he is sitting in the heavenly places.

Each of these three is a Christian state, so far.

And now let us see how the Christian lives. You cannot live in this world without an object before you; so he says, “I live by the faith of the Son of God.” How far can we say that we live by the faith of the Son of God? “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,” that will be by the faith of the Son of God.

I may fail, but here he speaks as a Christian.

And mark how this acts upon the heart and the affections, it is He “who loved me and gave himself for me.”

You get two things connected together: Christ lives in me, and is this blessed object, and I have the certainty of His deep affection for me. He has laid down His life for me, and I live by the faith of Him. How far can we say that?

His death has closed the whole history of man in the flesh. He loved us and gave Himself for our sins, and

now He is the First-born among many brethren. Then are we living for Christ, or has the world got hold of our hearts? It is possible to live like Lot for a time. Are we living in association of faith with Christ in heaven or are we living in this world?

The time is short; it is the time of God's long-suffering now, and Peter says, He "is ready to judge the quick and the dead."

God knows the moment when grace will cease to gather souls to Christ in glory. Be assured there is reality with God; "We walk by faith, not by sight." Which are we living by? Faith or sight?

Things to attract are stretched out on every hand. Shops are full of things everywhere; we know well what that is, but do we allow all that? Or are we so living by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us, that the world and the devil cannot distract us? We are liable to it, all of us. But can we say, "This one thing I do"?

The Lord is patient in His love, but are we with purpose of heart living to Him who died for us and rose again? We know how far short we come, but still, is there a perfect heart with us so that our conscience is good? Conscience is purged and made perfect before God, by the blood of Christ, but I speak of it now in a practical sense.

There is for us the present joy of having Christ in our hearts, by the power of the Holy Ghost, until we reach that blessed day, when He shall come and take us to be with Himself.

The great truth and essence of Christianity is that it takes the heart out of this world, and fixes it on Christ. It makes us live by Christ, on Christ, and to Christ.

Edinburgh Meeting Address

Titus 2:11-15

It is a great thing for us, beloved friends, in all our path, to know where we are, and then to know the mind of God, not only as to where we are, but as to our own place in the path in which we find ourselves.

Not only has God visited us in grace, but we have to take into our own mind what the present actual result of the grace is that has reached us, so that we hold fast the great principles under which God has set us as Christians, and at the same time be able to apply those principles to the circumstances in which we find ourselves. These circumstances may vary according to our actual position, but the principles never vary. Their application to the path of faith may vary, and does.

I mean such a thing as this:

In Hezekiah's time, they were told that "in quietness and confidence shall be your strength," and that the Assyrian should not even cast a mount before Jerusalem; they were to stay perfectly calm and firm. And the host of Assyria was destroyed.

But when, in Jeremiah's time, the moment of judgment had come, then he that went out of the city to their enemies, the Chaldees, should save himself.

They were still God's people as much as before, though He was saying for the time (in judgment), "not my people," and that made the difference.

It was not that God's mind was altered, or His relationship to His people changed; that never will be.

Yet in the latter instance the conduct of the people was to be exactly the opposite. Under Hezekiah they were protected; under Zedekiah they were to bow to the judgment.

I refer to these circumstances as a testimony that while the relationship of God with Israel in this world is immutable, yet their conduct had to be the opposite at one time to that at another.

And so we have to know where we are, and, at the same time, to learn what the path of God is in the position in which we find ourselves.

Look at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, as regards the church, God's assembly in the world. There I find the full display of power; all had one heart and one mind; they had all things in common; and the very place was shaken where they were.

But suppose I take the professing church now, including the Roman Catholic system and all else; if we look at that sort of thing and own it, at once we bow down to every thing that is evil.

Although God's thoughts never change and He knows His people, yet we need spiritual discernment to see where we are, and what the ways of God are in the circumstances, while never departing from the first great principles which He has laid down for us in His word.

We have, too, to take account of another thing as a fact of Scripture: Wherever God has set man, the first thing man does is to spoil his position; we must ever take that into account.

Look at Adam, Noah, Aaron, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar.

God goes on in patient mercy; yet the uniform way of man, as we read in Scripture, has been at once to upset and destroy the thing which God set up as good. Consequently, it is impossible that there can be any walking with a true knowledge of our position, if this is not considered.

But God is faithful, and goes on in patient love.

Thus, in Isaiah we find, “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes,” and so on; but it was not fulfilled till eight hundred years after; and when Christ came they rejected Him.

God waited in patience; individual souls were converted; various testimonies were rendered by the prophets, and a remnant was preserved still.

But if we should plead the faithfulness of God, which is invariable, in order to put a positive sanction upon the evil that man has brought in, our whole principle is false.

That is exactly what they did in Jeremiah’s time, when judgment was coming, and what Christendom is doing now. They said: “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these”; and, “The law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise,” when they were all going to Babylon.

The faithfulness of God was invariable, but the moment they applied that to sustain them in the place of evil, it became the very ground of their ruin. If we lose the sense of where we are, the very principles which would be our security become our ruin.

We get the word, “Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.

Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for 1 called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him"—a passage constantly misapplied. God is saying there, "Abraham was alone, and I called him." Israel, to whom God spake this, was then but a little remnant— "Don't let that make you uneasy, I called Abraham alone." Their being little was of no consequence; God would bless them alone, as He had blessed Abraham.

Now, in Ezekiel, that is denounced as iniquity. There they said, "We are many"; "Abraham was one, and he inherited the land," God blessed him, and so He will bless us still more.

From want of conscience, really, they misapprehended the condition in which they were, and with which God was dealing.

So now, if we have not the sense of our own condition, I speak of the whole professing thing in the midst of which we find ourselves, we shall be marked by an utter lack of spiritual intelligence.

I think we are in the last days, but sometimes I think people do not weigh the full force of that.

I think I can shew you from Scripture that from the very outset, the church as a responsible system down here has got into the condition of judgment, and that the state of it is such as to require individual faith to judge it.

Many seek to find a kind of resource from the present confusion in the doctrine that the church teaches and judges, and does this and that.

But, on the contrary, God is judging the church.

He does, shew patience and grace, calling souls to Himself as He did in Israel; but what we have to look in the face is that the church has not escaped the effect of that principle in poor human nature that the first thing it does is to depart from God, and ruin what He has set up.

When we speak of the last times, it is not a new thing, but one which we have in Scripture, one which God in sovereign goodness has given us before the closing of the canon of Scripture.

He allowed the evil to come up so that He could give us the judgment of Scripture upon it.

If you look at Jude—and I take now merely some of those principles which the church of God wants—he says, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.” The faith was in danger already; they were obliged to contend for that which was slipping from them, so to say,” for there were certain men crept in unawares,” etc., so that you must look at judgment now. As God saved the people out of Egypt, and then had to destroy them that believed not. So, too, with the angels in like manner.

Enoch prophesied of those of whom he speaks as having come in, as those upon whom the Lord will execute judgment when He comes again.

These were there then, and the starting point of the evil in the apostles’ days was sufficient to give the revelation of God’s mind by His word; the ground of the judgment when the Lord comes again was there present already.

If you take John's first epistle, chapter 2:18, he says, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

So that it is not a new thing that is developed, but it began at the first, just as in Israel they made the calf at the outset; yet God bore with them for centuries, but the state of the people was that which a spiritual man judged.

John says, "We know it is the last time." I suppose the church of God has hardly improved since then. In verse 20 he adds, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" —you have got that which will enable you to judge in these circumstances.

Again, take the practical state of the church as seen by Paul in Philippians 2:20, 21: "I have no man like minded who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." That was in his days. What a testimony! It is not that they had given up being Christians.

He tells Timothy, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge," 2 Tim. 4:16. Not one stayed by him.

Peter tells us, "The time is come, that judgment must begin at the house of God."

I name these as the authority of the word of God, shewing that even then, at the very beginning, there was that going on outwardly which the Spirit of God could discern and testify that it was the ground of final judgment. It was already manifest in the church of God.

There is another thing that shews this principle strongly, and that is the ground of action in the circumstances portrayed in the seven churches of the Revelation.

I do not doubt that that is the history of the church of God; but the point is, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” The churches could neither guide nor have authority, nor anything else of the kind; but whoever had an ear to hear God’s word had to judge their state. That, very evidently, is an important principle, and a very solemn thing it is. He is speaking to the churches, not as Head of the body, though He is that for ever and ever, but He is looking at them as responsible down here on the earth.

It is not the Father sending messages to the church, as in the different epistles; but it is Christ walking in the midst of the churches, to judge them. He is, therefore, seen here, neither as the Head of the body, nor as the Servant. He has His garment down to the feet, but if I want to serve, I tuck my garment up. He is walking in their midst to judge their state. That is a new thing.

It is a question of responsibility. So you find some approved and some disapproved. Their condition is the subject of judgment on the part of Christ; and they are here called to listen to what He has to say. It is not, properly speaking, the blessings of God which you get here in the churches, though they had many blessings, but the condition of these churches, when these blessings had been put into their hands—what use had they made of them?

Look at the Thessalonians; in their freshness, the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope were manifest. But in the first epistle to the churches, that to

Ephesus, you get: “I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience.” Where were the faith and the love? The spring was wanting. Ah! I will take your candlestick away if you do not repent. They were put in a place of responsibility, and He deals with them according to it. And the first thing is, you have left your first love; so the time was come that judgment should begin at the house of God.

Peter’s words allude to Ezekiel, when he says, “Begin at my sanctuary” —God’s house at Jerusalem; for that is where God looks first for what is right—to His own house.

I feel it is an exceedingly solemn thing, and one that should bow our hearts before God.

The church has failed in being the epistle of Christ—it was set as such in the world; but now, is it anything like it at all? Can a heathen—that is the way to look at it—see anything of it?

Individuals may be walking blessedly, yet where do we get faith like Elijah’s, though he knew no one in Israel who was true, while God knew seven thousand? Blessed man as he was, even his faith failed, and God asks him, “What doest thou here, Elijah?”

This should not be discouragement either, for Christ is sufficient for us. Nothing reaches up to the full perfect faithfulness of God’s own grace, and our hearts ought to be thoroughly bowed as to that.

Neither is it the thought of attacking or blaming, for we are all in it in one sense, but our hearts should take note of that which was set up so beautiful in the power of God’s Spirit— what has it all come to?

It casts us on the strength of Him who can never fail.

When the spies returned to Israel, the faith of ten gave way. Caleb and Joshua say: Do not let us be afraid, these giants shall be bread for us.

It is the same now for us in view of difficulty or opposition.

We are called to see where we are, and to know what the path and the place are, in which we have to walk, and to have a consciousness of the state all around us is in.

Yet though the church has utterly failed, the Head never can fail. Christ is just as sufficient for us now, in the state of things in which we find ourselves, as He was when at the first He set up the church in beauty and blessedness. It may require us to look at His word, to see what His mind is, but we must not shut our eyes to the state of things in which we are.

In reading the Acts it is most striking to see that there is power in the midst of the evil.

When we get to heaven there will be no evil at all, and we shall not want faith or conscience in exercise then; but now we do, and when evil is dominant, the only thing we have is the power of the Spirit of God, and, by it, we should be dominant over the evil in our path.

It does not say that every Christian will be persecuted, but it does say, all that will “live godly” in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. If a man shew the power of the Spirit of God, the world will not stand it—that is the principle. In the Acts, when we get the power of the Spirit shewn in miracles, as it had been in Christ before, what did it draw out? The enmity that crucified the Lord.

What we now have is good in the midst of evil (that is what Christ was, perfect good in the midst of evil), but the effect of the display of God in Him (inasmuch as the carnal mind is enmity against God) was that it drew out hostility; and the more the display, the more the hostility drawn out; and so, for His love He had hatred.

As yet, we have not got evil done with, that will be the case when Christ comes again, and therein is the difference between this present time and that time; that time will be the coming in of good in power so as to bind Satan and put down evil.

But the presence of Christ in this world, and afterwards that of His saints, what is that but good in the midst of evil, while Satan is the god of this world?

Directly these got mixed up together, the good was swamped.

Take the wise and the foolish virgins, while they are asleep, they can all stay together, why should they not? But the moment they trim their lamps, there arises the question of the oil, and they do not go together any more. And we shall find it the same.

Again, in Joshua, it was a time of power. True, they fail at Jericho, and get beaten at Ai, but the general character is power; enemies are subdued and cities walled up to heaven are taken. Faith overcomes all—a most blessed picture. Good in the midst of evil, power carrying on the good and putting down enemies.

In Judges, it is the contrary. God's power was there, but the power was manifested by the evil because the people were not faithful. They got at once to "Bochim," i.e., tears, weeping, whereas in Joshua they went to

Gilgal, where the total separation of Israel from the world had taken place; they had crossed the Jordan, and that was death, and then the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. But the angel of the Lord went to Bochim, he did not give Israel up, though they had left Gilgal. It was grace going after them.

And on our part, if we do not go to Gilgal, if we do not go back to the utter annihilation of self in God's presence, we cannot come out in power.

If a servant's intercourse with God does not surmount his testimony to men, he will break down and fail; he must renew his strength.

The great secret of Christian life is, that our intercourse with God should make nothing of ourselves.

God did not, however, give Israel up, and they built an altar unto the Lord; but at the altar they were weeping, not triumphing; and they were constantly being triumphed over. But though the people had lost their place, God sent them judges, and He was with the judges.

That is what we have to consider in the same way. "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's"; was not that losing their place? (Not that such ceased to be in the church of God, I do not mean that.) And unless we do consider this, we too shall get to Bochim—the place of tears. The whole state of the church of God has to be judged—only the Head can never lose His power; and there is grace that fits the condition, too.

What I see in the beginning of the history of the church is. first, this blessed power converting three thousand in a day. Then came opposition: the world put them into

prison, but God shews His power against that, and I do not doubt that now, if we were more faithful, there would be a great deal more of the intervention of God. The power of the Spirit of God was there and they were walking in a blessed unity, shewing that power, and that, too, in the midst of the power of evil; though we find, alas, evil working in that scene, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. They get credit for giving up their goods, falsely; the Spirit of God is there, and they fall down dead, and fear comes upon all, both inside and outside.

And that is the first display of it so.

Then before the history of Scripture closes, the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God.

It is a most solemn thing characterising the present time until Christ comes, when His power will put down evil—a different thing.

Next we get the testimony to the gross evil where the good ought to be: “In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves,” and so on.

There, the professing church—for such it is—has the same description given of it as that which the Apostle gives of the heathen in the beginning of Romans. It is a positive declaration that such times should come, and that the state of things would return back to what it had been in heathendom. And it goes on to say that evil men “shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”

But he tells Timothy to continue in the things he had learned; 2 Tim. 3:14. People say now the church teaches these things, but I ask, what is that? The church? What

do they mean? It is all something in the air; there is no inspired person in the church now to teach. I must go to Paul and to Peter, and then I know from whom I learn. Just as he says to the elders from Ephesus, “I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace.”

Evil men and seducers had waxed worse and worse, but the apostle casts Timothy on the certainty of the knowledge he had got from particular persons; to us now, it is the Scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation.

We have to learn this when the professing church is a judged thing, and the form of godliness characterises it.

And this is what I think Christians must look in the face. Do we not see men now turning away who were once called Christians—such turning infidels? A well-known person told me recently, “You would not find one young man in forty down in the South who is not turning infidel.” That may be exaggerated, but mere formality is throwing people more and more into open infidelity or open superstition.

It is notorious how things are going, even in an outward way. In itself Christianity is Christianity as God gave it, but outwardly as seen around us, it is gone. And it is Christianity that we want, as it is in the word of God. Not that there is anything to fear; it is a blessed time, in a sense, casting us upon God.

Only we must look at things simply and steadily.

There is not a more blessed picture of lovely faith and godliness, before the gospel came in, than that which you find in the first two chapters of Luke, amidst the

abounding iniquity of the Jews, we see Zachariah, Mary, Simeon, Anna, and other like-minded ones.

And they knew each other, for Anna “spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” Just as we ought to be doing in another way.

But I wanted to say that as regards the present state of things, viewing it from the side of man’s responsibility, man has departed from what God set up; and then comes in a growing corruption, until judgment is necessary.

John spoke of the last days as being already come, because there were even then many antichrists; but God’s patience has been going on, until at the close perilous times have come.

And now, I will add a word as to how we are to walk in the midst of such a state of things. It is clearly by the word of God, i.e., by immediate reference to it. Not that God does not use ministry. Ministry is His own ordinance. Still for authority we must turn to the Word of God itself. There is found direct authority of God, as determining everything. And we have the activity of His Spirit to communicate things.

It is an unhappy thing if a person only goes to the Scripture, refusing help from others; and so much the worse for him.

And again, it is a different thing for you to look at them as a direct guide, and deny the Spirit’s place.

A mother ought to be blest in the care of her children, and so should a minister among saints; that is the activity of the Spirit of God in an individual—he is an instrument of God. But while owning that fully, we must

go to the Word of God, and to that directly; that is what we have to insist upon. We all say that the Word of God is the authority, but we have to insist that God speaks by the Word. A mother is not inspired; no man is inspired; but the Word of God is inspired, and it is direct: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” I never get the church teaching; the church is taught and does not teach; individuals teach. But the apostles and others whom God used in that way were the instruments of God to communicate directly from God to the saints. So it is, Let “the letter be read to all the holy brethren.”

This is of all importance, because it is God’s title to speak to souls directly. He may use any instrument He pleases, and you cannot object; “the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee”; but when you come to direct authority, it is a most solemn thing to touch that. Neither do I talk of private judgment in the things of God, I do not admit it as a principle. You have to discern about many other things, but the moment I get into divine things, am I going to talk of judging the Word of God?

That is one sign of the evil of the times that are come in. When I own the Word of God brought by His Spirit, I sit down to hear what God will say to me. And then it judges me, not I it.

When the divine word is brought to my conscience and heart, who am I to judge God when God is speaking to me? It would be denying that He is speaking to me. To have real power, it must be the Word of God to my soul; and then I don’t think of judging it, but I sit down before

it to have my heart drawn out, and my conscience exercised.

But then I must have “that which was from the beginning.” Why? Because God gave that. At the beginning we have the thing not as it was spoiled, but as that which God set up.

It will not do to speak to me of the primitive church. I must have that which was from the beginning. I then get the inspired Word, and the unity of the body.

But after the beginning, the very next thing in ecclesiastical history was all wretched division; whereas John says, “If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.” You lose your place in the Son and in the Father, if you go away from that which was from the beginning.

It is evident, then, in applying this, I must take notice of the circumstances we are in, for there I find, not what was set up from the beginning, but what man has made of that which God set-up at the beginning. People say the church is this and that, but if I take what God has set up, I see the Unity of the Body, and Christ the Head, and this is what the church was manifested to be on the earth.

But do we get it so now? On the contrary we are warned. Paul, as a wise master builder, had laid the foundation, and when others would build he warns them not to build with wrong materials, wood, hay, stubble, all of which will be destroyed.

The work of building was put upon man’s responsibility; as such it became the subject of judgment. “Upon this

rock I will build my church" gives me Christ's building, and that is going on building, it is not finished yet; and again in Peter, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house"; there too, the building is seen still going on; then, in Ephesians 2, it is described by Paul, as fitly framed together, and growing unto an holy temple in the Lord.

All that is Christ's work—what men call the invisible church, and so it is.

On the other hand, "let every man take heed how he buildeth" (that is on the foundation laid by Paul), there you have man's work as a responsible instrument.

Now men have confounded these two things, they go on building with wood, hay, stubble, and then they speak of the gates of hell not prevailing against that, because they do not give heed to the word of God.

But we have to look at God's principles, and to the power of the Spirit of God; to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, and to discover truly where we are, so finding the path which God has marked out, and in which we are distinctly to walk.

We need also faith in the presence of the Spirit of God. The Spirit will use the Word, and make us take notice of the state of things, not confounding God's faithfulness with man's responsibility (what the superstitious world is doing), but owning that there is a living God, and that that living God is amongst us, in the Person and power of the Holy Ghost.

All is founded on the cross, surely, but the Comforter has come, and, by one Spirit, believers were all baptised into one body.

And now whether I take the individual or the church, the secret of power for good against evil, outside or inside; I find in this fact—the word being the guide—of the presence of the Spirit of God." "Know ye not," he says to people going on very badly to correct them, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?" Do we believe, beloved friends, that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost? Then what kind of persons ought we to be?

In 1 Corinthians 3 the same thing is true of the church, "Ye are the temple of God."

The presence of the Spirit gives power, and practical power, too, for blessing, whether in the church or in the individual; and He alone can do anything for real blessing.

Again, it is only on the footing of redemption that God dwells with man. He did not dwell with Adam innocent, though He came down to Him; He did not dwell with Abraham, though He visited him and ate with him; but when Israel came out of Egypt, He says He brought them to himself "that I may dwell among them." At once the tabernacle was built, and there was God's presence in the midst of His people.

Of course, now, we have true and full redemption, and the Holy Ghost has come down to dwell in those who believe, that they might be the expression of what Christ was Himself when He was down here. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God," and, "hereby know we that we

dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

Where a person is really a Christian, God dwells in him; not merely he has life, but he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, who is the power for all moral conduct.

If we believed that the Spirit of God dwells in us, what subjection there would be, and what manner of persons we should be, not grieving that Spirit!!

And further, in i Corinthians 2, I find, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God." Now the Spirit of God and the world are always in contrast.

But then I find the revelation is in contrast with what is our state. We have to say, "Eye hath not seen." These things are so great; we can't conceive them, but God hath revealed them by His Spirit.

Taking the state of the Old Testament saints, they could not find out or know these things. But with us it is just the opposite. We do know them and He has given us His Spirit that we might know them.

In this passage you get the Holy Ghost in three distinct steps: first, these things are revealed by the Spirit; next, they are communicated by words the Spirit taught; and then, they are received by the power of the Spirit, i.e., they are "spiritually discerned"; all three are the operation of the power of the Spirit of God.

If I were to take the Word of God by itself, and say, I can judge of it and understand it, then I am a rationalist; it is man's mind judging the revelation.

But when we get God's mind communicated by the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost the power to receive it, then I get God's mind.

There is just as much wisdom and power from God for us to meet the state of ruin in which we now are, as there was at the first when He set up His church.

And that is what we have to lean upon.

Address At The Edinburgh Meeting

I would just say a word as to obedience and dependence.

These are the elements of the new man, and they are exhibited in Christ Himself.

But until we have individually learnt ourselves, and come to the end of ourselves, we cannot walk in them. Even when there is in Christians an honest spiritual intention to be right, if self is not fully given up, the energy of self will mix itself in it, and produce failure.

If self is at work, there is no true guard against Satan's power.

I will refer to one or two examples of what I mean. Take Moses. He gives up and refuses to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, taking his place with the people of God, slaves though they were. But he has no true self-knowledge, and so he kills the Egyptian; then he fears the first person that raises an outcry against him, and runs away.

Look again at Elijah. He takes true ground, owns the twelve tribes, is entrusted with full power by God, gathers the priests of Baal and has every one of them killed; but what then?

When Jezebel threatens him, he runs away and says, "Lord, they have slain thy prophets with the sword," when it was he himself who had been killing the others —" and I am left alone." "Indeed you are not," says the Lord, "I have seven thousand left that have not bowed the knee to Baal."

Or take the case of Paul. You cannot find a more glorious example of grace than in him; but after having been taken up into the third heaven, Paul is in danger from the flesh, and is obliged to have a messenger of Satan to buffet him.

There must ever be the breakdown of self, not only the knowledge that we are sinners, but that we are without strength. Often we have not measured our weakness, and we go forward not thinking what it is, not suspecting it, but flesh is always weak in the things of God. The place of dependence is the place of power—Christ's power. That is what we have to learn, and that, too, by a process that makes us find out what we are in ourselves, and thus divinely taught, it makes us sick of it also.

If you had put Paul into a fourth heaven, had there been one, it would only have been more dangerous still for him. The revelation of grace does not help me if I am not in God's presence.

In 2 Corinthians you get two things put together; in chapter 1 Paul has the sentence of death written in himself; and in chapter 4 you have the way in which it was kept up, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

Paul was constantly acting in view of the cross, so that flesh could not stir, and, on the other hand, to test it, God puts Paul through circumstances which so tested it in his case, that he despaired even of life, the effect

being he received such strength that he could do all things. “Everywhere and in all things I am instructed,” etc.

Now this is not merely I am dead with Christ, but the positive learning that self will not do.

Another thing, too, I would mention with reference to the utter hopelessness of all that man has built up, and that is, that true succession—apostolic, if you like—is found in “two or three” gathered together in Christ’s name.

The power of binding and loosing—discipline practically—is by the word of God, connected not with a clergy, but with the assembly, wherever two or three are gathered. Of course it is merely administrative power, God alone can forgive absolutely. But administrative power was given to Peter, and then it was given to those who come after him.

God has provided everything for the church for all ages, and we have it, if we only take the word of God for our authority and guide. There is apostolic succession in the two or three.

The more difficult the times are, the more you find the word of God meets every thing. All sorts of things are arising, in these days specially, but the word of God is ready for all.

Since I was first exercised, I never found it fail me in any difficulty or heresy. I have failed it, that is another thing; but it has never failed me.

One thing more. We have looked at the failure but the present power is, the living God is with us; MY strength

is made perfect in weakness, that is the character of our strength.

Where was the strength that destroyed Satan's power? It was the weakness of death, Christ's death, of course; He was crucified through weakness.

And it is the same principle with us.

When you look at man as man, his is a false strength, because he has departed from God. It is only evil. Such strength has to be broken down. I am satisfied we never fully get the sense of this, until it is actually broken down in us.

You may be converted and know the forgiveness of your sins, but until you have gone through the breaking down itself, you never know what the true character of your own energy is, but you are liable to fall and slip into it.

You see there is something to be done—what then? You must go and do it. Ah! did God send you? That is another thing.

The soul that has learnt itself refers to God as the first thing; it distrusts the activity of its own will. If that is there, it is not obedience and dependence, though the soul may be very sincere at the same time.

I will now say a word as to the present expectation of the Lord's coming at any moment.

People who attempt to fix time are wholly mistaken. The Father has kept that in His own power. Not that we may not discern the times; the Lord says, "How is it that ye do not discern this time?"

There are moral elements around us that a spiritual mind discerns at once; but the fixing of dates is a mistake.

It is no mistake to be always expecting the Lord to return.

The object of the conversion of the Thessalonians was to wait for God's Son from heaven.

People fancy that the truth of the Lord's return is a bit of knowledge at the top of the tree; but instead of that, it is what the Thessalonians were converted for, and meanwhile they are to serve God.

People say Paul made a mistake, but I can tell you he is going to get precious fruit from it when Christ comes again. He has to wait meanwhile, but that is no great loss, for "to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Yet the apostle himself did not know how to choose between the two, because if he went up there, he could not work for Christ down here.

The present constant expectation of Christ stamps its own character on the Christian: "Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding."

It is by this that the Christian, in his mind and thoughts, becomes associated with Christ Himself. You find this specially in the letter to the church at Philadelphia, for there, besides keeping His word, and not denying His name, you read, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience." Whose patience?

Christ's. Christ is waiting; and He is waiting a great deal more truly and earnestly than we are.

We are waiting for Him, and He is waiting for us, with all the love that the Bridegroom bears to the bride.

True, He is waiting until His enemies be made His footstool; but, for His friends, He has perfected His work; and He sits expecting as to His enemies, and then He will rise up to judgment. He does not know the time in that sense (of course, as God, He does) but it is not a revealed thing yet.

He is waiting, and we wait for Him, but so complete is the association, now in spirit, and then in glory, that save His personal glory, He cannot take any glory until He has us with Him, for we are joint heirs with Him.

It is blessed association with Himself that we find in Revelation 3:8-11.

In the first four churches you find the ecclesiastical order of things in the world closing with Thyatira which goes on “till I come.” Thyatira ends entirely the whole moral history of the church of God until Christ comes. Consequently, you get there both the kingdom and the heavenly part of the saints. “He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.” That is the kingdom according to the second Psalm.

“And I will give him the morning star”—that is Christ according to the New Testament… As soon as he says “morning star” “in Revelation 22:16, “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.”

In the first four churches, when Christ is spoken of, it is in the terms by which He is described when among the

golden candlesticks, but this is not the case in the latter three.

“He that hath the key of David,” has no place in that which John saw in Christ in Revelation 1.

But it is Christ’s coming which is brought before us.

In Philadelphia we get, “I know thy works,” but there is not a word said about diem, the saints must be content to wait rill the Lord comes.

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience,” that was Christ’s own path down here, and we are to walk in it now—now that we are at the end of a dispensation, which, as an outward system, has wholly departed from God.

Christ down here had none of the things that belonged to Him. As a man, He simply lived by every word of God. He did not take up the pretension of power, but He walked in obedience, and that is just our place. And mark, they should, consequently, be kept “from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

At, and from, the very beginning, the Lord’s coming was presented as the immediate expectation and hope of the believer; while in no case. is the thought of the coming of Christ put beyond the life of those who were living then.

The history of the church is not given as a thing that is to continue, but it is all brought out in churches that then existed.

So, “the virgins “that go to sleep are the same as those who wake up.

Do not treat the Lord's coming as a matter of prophecy — prophecy concerns events in this world.

When once personal salvation is settled, then we delight in two things which are found in Scripture—the government of the world, and the sovereign grace which has taken poor sinners like us, and set us with Christ before God.

Prophecy concerns the first; but the sovereign grace which puts us poor creatures in the glory of the Son of God is a distinct thing. Christ will come and take us there, but (save in the lips of Christ Himself) you never find the "assembly" nor the rapture, except in Paul. (The mere name is used in 2 John.) Others speak of his appearing, but that has to do with the government of this world.

Ques. May I ask you for a word about "the hour of temptation"?

There is an hour of temptation coming upon the whole earth. I do not mean the special tribulation of Matthew 24, for that is Jewish, and Jeremiah calls it "Jacob's trouble," but, beside that, there is a time of trial which will pass over the whole world.

The "everlasting gospel" will announce that "the hour of his judgment is come," and God will not judge the nations of the earth until He has sent this message out to them.

Matthew gives you the judgment of the nations, according as "my brethren "have been received by them or not. That is here the only ground on which they will be judged.

Romans gives us the ground of the judgment of the heathen.

That is prophecy. It will be a time of trouble over the whole world, but those who are faithful to the word of Christ's patience will be kept from it, i.e., taken out of the way to the Lord.

Edinburgh

Detached Memo. From Open Meeting

I would just pick up a little point or two.

And first how can we get rid of this power of self? The end of Galatians 2 will introduce what I mean.

I do not take up now the question of righteousness by the law, but the question of the power of sin and self, which is sin really. Life is here made dependent on this great principle that “I am crucified with Christ.” People talk of this as if it were a lingering death, but that is false doctrine, though they may mean it well. Paul says, “I am crucified with Christ,” and then he looks upon himself as dead.

And mark, too, what is very practical, that death comes before life here. You must die first.

It does not say life was not there. “Nevertheless I live,” but it is not his own life, it is with Christ’s life.

It is not merely that a man is born again, but there is an additional truth, viz., that he is dead as regards the old thing; “crucified,” and “dead” —both words are used.

This is not a question as to guilt; it is as to what I am, not what I have done.

We are not only quickened, but we are dead as regards Adam (not physically, of course), and it is that which gives us deliverance from the power of self.

Instead of this, you find men pulling off the fruits, and fancying they are mending the tree; or again, they are using all sorts of things to restrain the tree. Like the

man they bound with fetters and chains, but still they could not hold him.

Now, God has dealt with the whole thing. Flesh is not subject to His law; and in grace He does not bring back the law to that which is not subject to it; but He cuts the tree down—the nature—kills it; “I through the law am dead to the law.”

The law brought in death. Death of what? Death of this thing that was not subject to the law.

And the law has done its work in that way. In 2 Corinthians 3 it is called “the ministration of death” and “of condemnation.” It has brought death on me, as in the flesh, a child of Adam, and it is just that—self—that I want to get rid of.

It will do other things, but it pronounces death upon me, upon “the old man.” And if the law pronounces death upon me by itself, it further pronounces condemnation upon me. And thus it is a ministration of death and condemnation.

Now the real place where the work has been done is the cross, and that is the reason that faith accepts death for self. It was there, that what “the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” And death, too, was in the cross.

I find now this horrid flesh in me, and I ask myself what am I to do with it? I can’t get the better of it. Do with it? Look what has been done with it. Look at the cross. There God has condemned sin in the flesh, and by it I have got death brought to me. Christ being “made sin”

on the cross for me, the condemnation is over and gone, and death is come, and that is just what I want.

God could not but condemn the state I was in, it could not be forgiven, but then it was condemned in death. Ah!! I see I am dead.

That's just what I want. So that I get, not merely life, eternal life, but the Christ I have for life is a risen Christ —a Christ that has died. When once I get this new "I," I say, I died. This new "I" is now myself.

If I look at the flesh, I know I am utterly condemned. But Christ risen is now my life.

Romans 7 is the going through the processes to reach this point. There he finds out that there is no good in him; then he learns a second thing (one that people are often content with), but it is no deliverance. I hate it, well then, it is not I; and the third thing is, that flesh is too strong for me; the will is present, but how to perform he finds not.

He is brought to the knowledge that the flesh is absolutely bad, and in that state he finds the old man too strong for the new; but when God has taught him that he is not merely ungodly, but also without strength in the flesh, then he finds that Christ is power and deliverance; and so he sums it up in chapter 8: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

I can then no longer excuse myself in the least degree.

The sin is still there in me; but I must learn what the flesh is in that way, and that I have it judged, and then, through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, I find deliverance.

You will find, too, the way faith takes this up in the second part of Romans 6: “Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.” Do not say, you have to die to it, but reckon that you are dead to sin. If I keep the cross in mind, flesh has not a word to say. I may fail in doing it, but that is what I have to do; while God in His government puts us through circumstances to try us, and deals with us correctively where we need it.

Christ living in me is the deliverance from Romans 7. I want an object, and that is where law totally fails. The law does not give me life, it gives me death. It does not give me strength, and it does not give me an object. It tells me I am to love God. Why so? Not a word of explication about this does it give me.

But when I have Christ, I get life, strength, and an object. That is where deliverance is; that is the great principle upon which, as the word of God shews us, we are entirely delivered from the power of sin.

We died with Christ, and therefore (although in fact we are not dead), we get the judgment, and mind, and truth of the Spirit of God, and we so reckon ourselves dead.

We put off the old man and we put on the new, or else it had been a fight between the two, and a kind of even chance which should get the upper hand. Conflict there will be, but now it is of quite a different kind.

If a man be struggling with me, it is a very different thing for me to have him down with my knee on his chest, from his having me down with his knee on my chest.

Fragments

Take the woman in the city that was a sinner. Christ is revealed to her, and she feels the horribleness of her sins, but she goes to Christ and touches Him. The love of Christ has got into her. If she cannot show her face to a decent person, she can shew herself to One who was the manifestation of the divine.

* * * * *

The Syrophenician woman owns that she has not a title to anything; but she says there is love enough in God's heart to give to dogs. She was a dog in the presence of the One who had come to the dogs. All is out before God, and all is out in her conscience, too.

God does not say, Come to Me because you are a sinner; but, I come to you because you are a sinner.

Romans 5

The first part of this chapter belongs to the former part of the epistle, and it expresses the joy of the forgiveness of sins.

Do you think Christ bore your sins up to the day when you were converted?

The believer has peace with God, but not by believing in his own acceptance of Christ's sacrifice. In preaching the gospel, I never say that the work is done if you accept it. God has accepted it, not you.

When you preach the death of Christ, you are preaching the good of the sinner, but when you preach the Son of God, Jesus Christ, you are preaching the value of His

Person; to leave out the Person is to losesight of the claim of that Person over one.

Ques. “As he is in the light,” 1 John 1. What is this?

It means, as “completely revealed”; but mark, it is not there, according to the light.

“In Christ,” is individual, in Romans; it is not unity. “He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit” is in individual unity, not in unity at large.

As we are all one with the Lord, it results in our unity.

It is a fact that I have died with Christ, and that Christ is as really my life as when I had life from Adam. Faith appropriates it.

Ques. What is the “law of the Spirit of life”?

It is the uniform principle of the Spirit of life, just as you speak of the law of gravity.

In chapter 7 you have a quickened soul; and the more he is in the sense of that, the more miserable he is.

In verses 2, 3 and 11 of our chapter, you have the same word, ‘rejoice,’ in the Greek.

You do learn by experiences, and when you have been well pulled to pieces by them, then you will be able to say, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

Man’s spirit reasons from what we are upward to God, i.e., from what I am, to what God will be. The Holy Ghost always reasons downwards from what God is.

Suppose you and I had got up to the highest pitch of spirituality, the thing that we should then delight in in God, is His love as shown in His dealings with the vilest sinner that can been found.

When you come to deal with individuals, you will find that there is a due time for dealing with each one.

There is an old proverb that says the man who learns by another's experience is happy; but that the one who learns by his own, is wise.

Do you say, I ought to be holy, and that if I did but strive I should be so? Strive away then, and wretched you will be!

Ques. What of "the law," in chapter 7?

The article 'the' is the sign of abstraction, in Greek, as well as being definite when the thing has been spoken of before. I believe the law to be a perfect rule of life for man in the flesh, and with that I include the sabbath.

Ques. Why does Paul refer to the law in Ephesians 6?

Because he is calling attention to the importance God attaches to the obedience of children. When God is giving directions in this respect, the law comes in there, though now, we have a much higher motive.

We know that the law is spiritual; but when the law says, you must not have a lust in your heart, you must not covet (the same word in Greek), well, then, I may as well give up, for I have lust. You might as well say to me, I must not be a man.

The Jews thought the law was all outside, but when Paul's mind is opened by the Spirit of God, he says, "We know that the law is spiritual."

According to the doctrine of the Council of Trent, if lust is in you, and it is not yielded to, then it is not sin!

I want to do what is right, and I have found that the evil nature in me is not "I"; and if it is not "I," it is

nevertheless too strong for “I.” Then I must get some one to help me. Sin is not “I,” and sin is too strong for “I.”

* * * * *

Ques. Is not 1 John 5:16 connected with James 5?

It is the same kind of thing. Popery has turned governmental forgiveness into absolute forgiveness. Absolute forgiveness is so little known, even among Evangelicals.

Ques. Could such a case as in James 5 occur now?

Yes, it might happen; only you cannot call them elders of the church in any official sense now.

Ques. Would you use oil?

If they asked for it, not else. Oil was a sign, that is all. It is the prayer of faith that saves, not the oil; the faith of the elders.

Elias teaches us another thing; that was a public act, in faith, and there is not a word about praying in the narrative.

John 15 is connection with Christ on earth. Judas was a branch. It is not members of the body of Christ.

You cannot say that Ananias and Sapphira were not converted, for God came in.

Ques. What might he be “sick” for?

I do not know. Paul got his chastening to hinder him from sinning. It may be to correct carelessness, or a thousand things.

Once, flesh was the only I, and now I do not own it as “I.” Then what is “I”? Christ is I.

“Keepeth himself” is, you must be living in the power of the new life objectively. You must have Christ for object.

In the Garden of Eden, there was nothing for Satan to act upon but the fact of man’s obedience.

Man got turned out of Paradise into a world of sin; but Christ came out of Paradise into a world of sin.

The relationships in which God Himself has set people, He maintains; though sin has come in and spoiled it all; and natural affections have suffered, though they are all right. Still, it is only nature; and if I am with God He owns this, and He has brought in a power which lifts you above them; so that you cannot act rightly in them only when you are out of them.

With Christ before me, if anything would come in between me and Christ, the more horror I have of it.

Law is the measure of the responsibility of the first man.

“We know,” is the expression of common Christian knowledge; we Christians know that as a part of Christianity.

Water, blood, and Spirit, in verse 6, are historical, and the water was shewn in His life; but “came by water” refers to His death.

Reading At Rochdale

Colossians 1

The epistle to the Colossians was written more expressly to Gentiles; that to the Ephesians was, too, but Colossians exclusively so.

The saint is here viewed as risen, but still on earth, and his hope is laid up for him in heaven; that gives a character to the epistle. And inasmuch as he is on earth, he is still in the desert, and so there is an “if.” You get no “ifs” in Ephesians, because you are there sitting in the heavenly places in Christ. But whenever you get the desert, you get “if.” It is well to keep the two clear and distinct.

Ques. In the first epistle of John there are many “ifs”?

It is just another kind of way of speaking, in many cases. I might say to you, if you are an Englishman, I hope you will not dishonour your country; that is the way in i John as well as in Colossians 3. It has no reference to progress; but “if we say,” “if we confess,” is merely putting the case; it is not, “you will be in glory if you are faithful to the end.”

God’s chastening forms no part of His purpose, but it is part of His way.

Ques. Is it in God’s ways, then, that we get priesthood?

Yes; priesthood, and “ifs,” and all that. Only remember that along with the desert “if,” you get God’s, certain faithfulness to bring us through. That is not simply salvation, but God’s keeping. “No man is able to pluck

them out of my Father's hand." Then there is somebody who wants to pluck me, I suppose.

Ques. But at the end of Exodus 4 you get Aaron brought to Moses?

Yes, but that is more apostolic than priesthood.

Ques. As to what does "if" imply a doubt?

No doubt as to anything else but dependence, so that I may not doubt. God has delivered me out of Egypt, and I am not in the flesh; but now, how do I know that I am going to get into glory? God will keep me, and that is dependence.

Ques. But there cannot be real dependence, if there is a doubt?

Precisely so. Then I have every-day cares, and God chastens me and proves me. He puts us through a process which both exercises us and shews us His own constant love and care. In Colossians i you get the fullest statement of not only our redemption, but also of our fitness for glory and of our being reconciled, and then we find an "if."

Ques. Is there any thought of communion in Colossians?

Yes; but that is not its subject. There is of the one body. The epistle to the Colossians treats of life; union is by the Holy Ghost, and He is not spoken of in Colossians save in the verse, "love in the Spirit," and that is only to shew the general character of the affection.

The presence of the Holy Ghost in us makes our bodies His temples; and if that was the same thing in itself as life, I should be an incarnation of the Holy Ghost.

If I am starting across the wilderness to reach Canaan for the blessing, I must get there before I can obtain the blessing.

Ques. Our place and title are in heaven, and we are not living in the world?

Yes, but we are living in the world.

Ques. Then why does he says, “Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances”?

Because he is blaming them for acting in the world as if of it; but then that shews they are still here.

In Romans, the Christian is looked at as an actual living man in the world.

In Ephesians, it is as a man in Christ in heaven;

In Colossians, he is risen, but not yet in heaven;

In Philippians, you get the full character of faithfulness in the race, and the like. Even justification is put before Christ there: “That I may … be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law,” etc. Not that he doubted for himself a moment, for he says, “I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”

Philippians is not so much the certainty of the place I am in but that God’s way, when He has redeemed me, is to bring me into a place of experiences through which I must go; only I have the certainty that He will keep me in it. Where people bring in this question of certainty, and connect it with their acceptance, all becomes uncertainty. And that is what systems do.

Ques. Would a servant be accepted in his work, if he has not the purpose of God?

Well, yes, he might be.

Ques. Would he not be deficient?

Yes, to that extent.

Ques. Why, “if by any means I might attain”?

If it cost him his life. He did not mean to say that he had attained.

Ques. What is “walking worthy”?

Well, it is just having the same motives and principles as Christ. There are three such passages:

“Walk worthy of God who calls you to his own kingdom and glory,” 1 Thess. 2:12;

“Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,” Col. 1;

“Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,” Eph. 4:1.

They are all substantially the same thing, but different characters of it.

When you come to full Christianity, you see the Lord Jesus always walked and spake in this world as the Son of man who is in heaven; and though they made a great outcry about it, He was a heavenly Man. He was a true, real and heavenly Man down here.

Ques. But, “Who is in heaven,” could not now be applied to a believer?

No, only as in Christ.

Ques. Would not, “in heaven,” involve His omnipresence?

Of course it would.

Ques. But in John is it not the existing thing on earth?

Yes, it is the divine presence. It proves the unity of the two natures. That verse is strongly quoted against those who deny the Deity of Christ.

You cannot separate the glory in which Christ is from the actual holiness in which we ought to walk down here. The character of holiness is always the reflection of Christ in the glory. So, “We all looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory.”

The end of the 1 Thessalonians 3 is almost nonsense, as man looks at things; if we had been writing, we should say, “stablish you unblamable in holiness down here”; but it is all made out, and manifested there. In John, I know I am going to be perfectly like Him in the glory, and so I purify myself according to that standard.

Ques. Is there any distinction between being in heaven and “in heavenly places”?

No; “heavenly places “is more general, that is all.

In Exodus 15:13, you find a difference which shews the thing, typically speaking: “Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation,” i.e., to Himself. But in verse 17, it is, “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance,” and there you get typified the heavenly places.

God is sovereign in love, and it is nowhere said in Scripture that we are love. I cannot be love, nor can I say that I am it; but as to light, it is said, “Now are ye

light in the Lord." Light is a pure nature. It shews the sovereign character of love.

Ques. "Preserved blameless." How do you understand that? Is it perfection?

It is a different thing from perfection. I am to be a babe in Christ, and I shall walk as a babe, but without tripping, as I lean on Him. Perfection is really being like Christ in glory. I have no standard but Christ in glory; and that is to be realized in my path down here, in thoughts, and motives, and feelings.

Ques. Then Christ's life down here is not the standard?

Yes, it is. Down here, He was the expression of what is divine and heavenly in heaven.

Suppose you have a motive that you could not enjoy in heaven, are you walking worthy of Christ? No.

There are, as to bodily necessities, a great many things I do here that I shall not do there.

But if I only eat because I am hungry, I eat in the same way a pig eats. Christ would not eat when hungry, because He had no word from God to do so. He walked down here as having motives and affections up in heaven. And we can never go rightly except so far as our mind and conversation are up in heaven.

Ques. Is that word 'conversation' a correct one?

It is not quite exact; it means the moral and the political life.

Ques. This makes a vast difference between the walk of a saint in the old dispensation, and the walk of a saint now?

Of course it does. Old Testament saints were not, as regards their actual faith, dead and risen at all, though of course they had life. And they soon found out that this world did not do for them.

But now, we have the Christian viewed as risen, with a hope which is of great importance as regards this practical life: “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Ques. Peter does not go so far as this?

No. Redemption, and born of the incorruptible seed of the word of God; that is the basis in Peter.

Ques. It is the moral effects of Christ’s death, in Peter, rather than the death and resurrection?

Yes: Christ has suffered, and he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. It is the same thing, but more the practical side of it.

Ques. He says, “being dead to sins”?

He does, but it is rather as “having done with sins.”

Paul goes to the root of the whole thing.

It is not only in the fact of having life, but also in the associations of life, that we belong to there where Christ is.

Those who have not the hope of the Lord’s return cannot apprehend what is the true path of a Christian; they may have life, of course, in one sense, but they have not the proper stamp of heavenly life in their dally practice down here.

I never would myself put forth the Lord’s coming as a thing to be proved, but rather as being a substantive

part of Christianity itself. You might have to prove it to an infidel.

Ques. Could a person walk “as he walked,” who did not know it?

No. But it ought to give tone to every-day life in a Christian. The Lord’s coming is an integral part of the gospel; it is put so here: “Whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”

Ques. Might not people have it in their hearts?

Yes; but, for that, it must be a fact before them. “Love his appearing” is the affections of the heart.

Ques. Does not the general idea that people have about the Lord’s coming give a certain character to them?

Well, it is more as taking place at the end of the world, in people’s ideas; but that is not waiting for somebody.

If I am waiting for someone to come and take me up out of it, what then is the world to me? What comes of its plans, and its running after money, and all that kind of thing? A man may not know much about the rapture of the church, and yet be waiting for someone to come and take him out of this scene.

Before ever I knew about the Lord’s coming, I think I loved His appearing. I knew nothing about the doctrine, but the principle of loving His appearing was in my mind, though I could not define it. I do not talk now of the rapture, though it is most blessed to get that, too. What I delight in, is Christ’s coming and setting aside the whole thing I am in.

Ques. Would that be more John 14?

Yes. But that brings in the full element of our place in heaven. John 13 and 14 are, that the Lord cannot stay with His disciples here, but as He is not going to give them up, He must take them there.

Ques. Is there any thought of the rapture in the parable of the ten virgins?

No. Matthew was to Israel, so you get no ascension there at all.

Ques. What is, “they … went in with him”?

They have a part with Him down here; and the marriage is with Jerusalem on earth, not the Jerusalem above.

Ques. How does that apply to saints now?

Exactly; they went out to meet the Bridegroom. It is not the heavenly side and the rapture, though when the Bridegroom comes and they meet Him, that would be practically the rapture to us.

Ques. Is it connected with responsibility more than with grace?

Well, it is more a history of what will happen. The difficulty is as to the virgins. They were converted, you may say, to wait for God’s Son, and they go out to meet Him. And while the Bridegroom tarried, they turned in to some place to rest; and then they went to sleep. They are heavenly saints, but not the bride, i.e., not viewed in that aspect. So they go in to the marriage.

Ques. But at the end of the chapter we have His coming in?

No; He sits on the throne of His glory, but it is not quite His coming in glory.

The kingdom of heaven, as we have it now, is without a king. When Christ comes it will not be so. The heavens rule in that general way after He comes, but then it will be the kingdom of the Father and of the Son of man.

Ques. Then the kingdom of heaven exists in three forms: first, in principles; next, in mystery; and lastly, in actual power at the end?

Quite so; but the mystery character is over when He comes in power.

Ques. What is the difference between the two terms "coming" and "appearing"?

"Coming" is a general word; you get the "appearing of his coming" in 2 Thessalonians 2. First He comes, and does not appear, and takes us up to be with Himself. But "when he shall appear," we shall appear with Him in glory.

Ques. What are the "saints of the most high places" in the seventh chapter of Daniel?

Those who are linked with God in heaven, during the time that earthly power is in the hands of His enemies. They are killed for their testimony, or by the beast when he is in power, and, being so killed, they would lose earthly blessing, so God takes them up to heaven, though it will be too late for them to be in the body of Christ.

Ques. What is the kingdom of the Father?

The heavenly part of the kingdom of heaven which will be our portion. That of the Son of man is the earthly part of it.

In Ephesians, we are seen sitting in the heavenly places in Christ, and therefore the inheritance is the inheritance of all things that Christ created. Creation is the inheritance. But in 1 Peter or in Colossians, the thing is in heaven, and you are down here; it is incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for you, or a hope that is laid up for you in heaven.

Ques. Then what is “the kingdom of the Son of his love”?

It is an expression only used here; we were under the power of darkness, i.e., of Satan; but now we have been brought not merely out of darkness into His marvellous light, but also into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in the oneness of the love.

In verses 9 and 10, our walk is connected with our spiritual state; God does not intend that these should be separated. To have simply the knowledge of God’s will, in fact, without walking worthy, would be mischief to me, because I should then be without exercise as to being a spiritual saint. But the being “filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,” is in order “that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work.” I must get divine wisdom and spiritual understanding; but then this acquaintance with His will is here connected with the state of soul. There might be something in the state of my soul that hinders the full following of Christ. It is, “that ye might walk worthy of the Lord.” How can I do that if I do not know what Christ is?

It should read, I think, “increasing by the knowledge of God”; that is its meaning.

Ques. You connect it all with knowing Christ in glory?

Yes; but I get also the knowledge of what God is in His nature. Christ as a man had perfect knowledge of God; and so perfect obedience and love to His Father flowed out in Him. He says: “If I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you.”

Ques. “Saints in light,” what is that?

The absolute purity of God’s presence, and that is what I am made meet for.

Ques. Whose “power” is it in verse 11?

It is God’s power. It is walk worthy of the Lord; but you get, “walk worthy of God” in 1 Thessalonians. If I am walking about in my Father’s name, I ought at least to walk worthy of Him.

The revelation of the name of the Father brings eternal life with it; “the Father sent the Son that we might live through him.” What brings eternal life is Christ Himself, who was with the Father and was manifested unto us; and if I get Christ, I get life. But if the Son is my life, I cry Abba, Father, through the Spirit.

Ques. Do you mean to imply that the millennial revelation (Most High) does not give eternal life?

Certainly I do. Christ can quicken whom He will, but life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel, not by the Most High as such.

Ques. Can you speak of that life as existing in the believer?

Certainly I can. It is not in me in an independent way, but He says, “ye in me and I in you”; and the life of Jesus should be manifested in our mortal bodies. If you talk of

it existing in the believer, it is not communicated to him without his having the Son in him.

Ques. Had Old Testament saints eternal life?

It was not revealed to them; it is the same thing essentially. It says “brought … to light,” it does not say that they then only began to exist by it.

The intelligent Jew had a hope; but Peter says, “Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister.”

People tell you that Christianity is the accomplishment of the promises. It is no such thing. They have yet to be accomplished. We are living between the sufferings and the glory.

Ques. Would not a converted Jew see Christ in the types?

Partly so. They had prophets, too.

Ques. Then we have eternal life in us?

We have eternal life in us, because Christ is in us, its source; He is it. Scripture is very accurate. This is becoming to be of immense moment. If I say it is not me, as me, then it is my own state, and not Christ my life. Some are urging, ‘How can you have a new me,’ but that is simply fighting Scripture.

The new me is Christ. “Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” This is most important, because now-a-days the setting human nature right is what they are all at.

When the prodigal son was converted and was going to meet his father, he says, “Make me as one of thy hired

servants," which just shows he had not yet met his father.

Don't you say "Father" if you do not know that you are a child.

Where a man is still in the flesh, as regards the state of his soul, he always mixes up his state with his acceptance.

Ques. Where would you place, as to the body, those quickened souls which have not the Holy Ghost?

They are not in the body.

The moment redemption was accomplished and everything was finished, so that Christ went back to God, then the Holy Ghost came down on all them that believed. He had previously wrought in the prophets, and in creation, too, but He had not come till then.

Ques. "They that are in the flesh," does that contemplate a quickened soul?

It is an abstract statement.

Rochdale

Reading in Colossians 1 (continued)

“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.” Patience is a wonderful thing; and it is a great thing to have patience that does not give way. You must wait until God has worked things out in people’s souls. James insists upon it: “Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” Not that that touches the perfection of the work of grace. People fancy they reach holiness by enfeebling the work of grace. They talk about being justified, and then made meet; but you will never find that in Scripture. There are plenty of scriptures about progress, but not one of them is connected with our being meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Ques. Do you distinguish between justification and being made meet?

Justification is more the clearing us from the old thing. There are two things in my acceptance, like as in the fifth and the eighth of Romans. Christ was delivered for our offences, that is one thing.

Ques. In Romans 4 you get the imputation of righteousness?

Yes; in Romans 4 that is used as the same thing with forgiving sins. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” is the eighth, and there I have a new thing—positive acceptance—I am fit for God in the life of Christ.

Ques. Then as to sanctification?

That depends; for we are sanctified to the blood of sprinkling, in 1 Peter 1. Whenever you get sanctifying and justifying put together, the sanctifying comes first, though that is very unorthodox.

But the clearing the believer from guilt, and the putting him in the positive place of acceptance, are two things. What is the measure of my acceptance? Is it only that my sins are put away?

Ques. What about “unto obedience” in 1 Peter 1?

The obedience of Christ is the character of our obedience. Suppose my child wanted to go into the town, and I said, “No, sit down and do your lesson,” and he does; it would be very nice and right; but Christ never obeyed in that way. The proper character of Christian obedience is that the motive for doing a thing is that it is God’s will.

Ques. Does not justification include the imputation of righteousness in itself?

It is the same thing. Justification gives me title to stand in the presence of God; but it does not tell me what I am when there. There is the fact that my sins are cleared away, but I also get the acceptance of Christ Himself. I find Him sitting now at the right hand of God, and I am brought to God in all His value.

Ques. But in Romans 5 the believer is justified by faith, and has peace with God, and rejoices as well in hope of the glory of God?

Yes; you find the favour of God is towards us, but you do not get our new place before God. In the eighth chapter you do get this, and it is connected with seeing you are

not in the flesh at all. Then where are you? You are in Christ. Heaps of dear people do not know that. They say they are poor sinners, and the cross of Christ just suits them; but let them put themselves before the judgment-seat, and are they sure they are perfectly saved? No, they are not. But what if I am the righteousness of God!!

It is one thing to say, I am clear from my sins as a child of Adam, and quite another thing to say, I am accepted in Christ as a child of God.

None of us values the cross as it ought to be valued by us, but the more we look at the cross, the more we shall see that every question of good and evil has been brought to an issue there.

Man in absolute wickedness, hating God come in goodness as a Man among them. The devil is there in all his power, and the rest are rejoicing in getting rid of God come in Christ. Then in Christ there is perfect Man in perfect goodness, and in perfect love and obedience towards God also. “That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.” There, too, I see God in righteous judgment against sin, and nowhere else, but God in perfect goodness towards the sinner. What God is, and what man is, and what the devil is, all is alike brought out at the cross!

Then as to acceptance and judgment, when I am called to give an account of myself at the judgment-seat, I am perfectly like the Judge who is sitting upon it, raised in glory!! But you will find a great many dear souls who have no idea of this. Bad teaching, and carelessness too, and going on with the world, have their sure effect; and so all is dim.

Ques. Is it not peculiar here, when it says the Father has made us meet?

Well, it is Christ, of course, who wrought the work.

Ques. Did the Israelites of old know the new place?

How could they? The brazen altar was justification from sins; and on the great day of atonement the blood was carried in to where God was. Now, in every sense, we have a totally new place.

Adam innocent had nothing at all to do with a risen Man. We are accepted in a Christ risen and glorified; we are in Him. And you must condemn Christ glorified if you are to condemn the man who is in Him.

In Romans 8 you have three characters of the same Spirit: the Spirit of God, which is in contrast with that which is of man; the Spirit of Christ, that is, as formative of what Christ was, and in whose power Christ acted and offered Himself to God; and then the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead, which includes the ultimate deliverance of the body itself.

Ques. It says in i Corinthians 2, “we have the mind of Christ.” Is that the same thing?

No; that is another thing altogether.

As to fitness, the thief was as fit to go to paradise as Christ. He went; well, but he had no time to get ready.

Ques. Is it the inheritance, or the saints, in the light?

Both are in the light. And the man that is fit, is fit for that light. There is this also now, that we walk in the light as God is in the light.

Ques. Is it saints in glory?

Yes; it goes on to that.

Ques. What is “darkness”?

The absence of the knowledge of God, and, as to that, it is not possible for any Christian to be in darkness.

As I get Christ, I get light. God is light, and if I know Him, I am not in darkness.

I could not be before God except through Christ; but He has let the light out, and has also put away my sins so that I should be as white as snow. In answer to Christ’s work, the vail was rent from top to bottom, but the rending of the vail has put me in the place of the light. I find love, too, as well as light. All God’s love is exercised in forgiving me, and I get also a position and standing before Him in Christ.

Ques. Is there not a difference between redemption and forgiveness of sins?

They are the same thing here; elsewhere, redemption may include the body, but not here.

Ques. Does not redemption imply the deliverance from the state in which I was?

Yes, in its full sense it does, but not here.

Ques. “Meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Is that the Red Sea, or Jordan?

I should say it was the Red Sea, although in reality the Red Sea and Jordan coalesce.

In the Red Sea I get Christ’s death and resurrection, and in this sense all is complete; but in Jordan I get my death and resurrection with Christ, and then you find the experimental sense of things, and also Gilgal.

Colossians is not quite in the land; it is a kind of in-between thing. Ephesians views a man dead in his sins, and then there is a new creation, quickened together with Christ.

Ques. In Colossians 2:11, is that circumcision after being in the land?

Yes; you are over Jordan, but without being seated in the heavenly places. In Ephesians we are; not of course with Christ, but in Him.

In Ephesians it is gross sins, and the highest privileges.

In Colossians, every part of the life of the Christian is developed. Verses 9, 10, and 11 give the foundation. Then follows the unfolding of the greatness and the glory of Christ, through whom we get all this. He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.

Ques. In what sense is God spoken of as invisible?

He dwells in the light unapproachable.

Ques. Will that be God Himself, or only in Christ?

In Christ is not there. I do not believe a creature can see God in His essence. But it is said that the pure in heart shall see God, and "in heaven … angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

Ques. How, then, do we see Him, if not in His essence?

I cannot tell you; but I am not going to be in my Father's house, and have nothing to say to Him.

Ques. If God ceased to be invisible, would not Christ cease to be His image?

Yes, of course; we should not want Him then.

You never could separate the Son from the Father, nor the Father from the Son, whatever we may see. You must distinguish between abstract names which speak of a Being, and names which express relationships.

Ques. What of the “glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ” in 2 Corinthians 4?

It is seen there now, and it will still be. The Lord was the One who expressed this on earth, and He has not ceased to do so in heaven. He is God, and if I see Him, I see God.

Rem. “I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.”

The Lamb is a distinct object; and it was so when Stephen saw Him at the right hand of God.

But the Father was revealed in Christ, in His life here below. That is not the same thing as here in Colossians; that would confound the Father and God. There is all the difference between my speaking of someone as a man, and my speaking of him as my father. So you might see clouds and lightnings on Mount Sinai, but not the Father. John says, “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him”; it is not the love of God there, but the love of the Father, because He has a new creation now.

Ques. “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God.” What is that?

Well, just so; but it does not speak of seeing or not.

Ques. What is the force of James saying “likeness,” and not “image”?

No particular force that I know of.

We know the Lord as the Word, and as Christ, and as Man.

Ques. How was Adam made in the likeness of God?

There was no sin in him, and death had no power over him; and other things, too; he was a centre, and everything around him was subject to him. An angel was not made a centre of anything. Although there was no evil in Adam, he was liable to fall, of course.

The reason the Firstborn takes this place is that He created all things, they were created by Him and for Him.

Ques. “Before all things”; was this as to time?

Not merely, I think, but as having pre-eminence. As John says, “He is preferred before me, for he was before me.”

Then everything consists by Him. People talk about general laws, but I do not admit any general law without constant power exercised.

God has blown on general laws in connection with Christian faith, for resurrection is certainly no general law. Christianity is based on resurrection, yet certainly resurrection is not the natural consequence of death. The general way in nature is all well, but Christianity is not nature. So science can neither explain nor contradict Christianity.

Then there is a second headship, that of the body. And another new thing: He created everything, and then went down into death, which is below everything. “A living dog is better than a dead lion.” The first man went into death by disobedience, but the Second Man went into death in obedience. He could not be holden of it, and He rises up out of it. So the Second Man has passed

death; passed sin; passed judgment; passed the power of Satan. He is a Man beyond it all. And we know Him thus, besides knowing the work of atonement. It is not like the first man, put to the test to see if he could glorify God or not, but Christ has been placed in the glory where He now is, after having glorified God, for His obedience was perfect.

God has been glorified, in His love, and majesty, and truth, and everything. This having been done, all now stands upon what is finished. As a Man, too, Christ is now Head of everything. “In him all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell”; (‘Father’ is in italics in the A. V.). He takes the first place because He has a title to it.

Ques. How is He the beginning?

Absolutely; He is the beginning of the whole thing.

Ques. It says, “head of every man” in Corinthians?

Yes, that is just the statement of the fart, as a question of order, but it does not go on to say there, why or how.

Ques. In Hebrews 1 it says, “When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world.” When is that?

Hereafter.

Ques. Is it “again”?

Well, not again, I think.

Ques. Is there then no reference to Bethlehem, when it is said that the angels worship Him?

No; I don’t think so.

Then follows another very precious thing: “And you… hath he reconciled.” Not only I have forgiveness, and am

made fit for God, and have been translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love, but also I am reconciled to God Himself.

All is sovereign love in Christ, and therefore the Apostle says, “We love him, because he first loved us”; but we do love Him.

If I realise what is in that passage, first, that God sent His Son the propitiation for our sins; next, that God dwells in me (which is by the Holy Ghost); and then, what about the day of judgment? “We… have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.” I enter into His love; I enjoy it in my heart; and, when I think of judgment, I know I am already as He Himself is.

Ques. Why does it say, “in this world”?

Because I am in it now; I do not wait for the day of judgment to know this.

Reconciliation here means and involves relationship as well as forgiveness. I am quickened together with Him; and body and all are to be raised up. My life is up there in heaven, and my body is down here. I am identified with heaven, in a certain sense, while at the same time I am identified, in fact, with the old creation.

Ques. What does reconciliation mean as applied to sins and the world?

That every thing is brought into order before God.

Ques. How are things out of order now?

Why did the angel, in Daniel, stay three weeks on the road, when he had given him an answer to take? You do not call that in order, do you?

Ques. When it says, “the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these,” what is that?

In the tabernacle you have God’s throne where nobody went; then the other place where the priest went to the altar of incense, and so on. These figured the heavens; but Christ has passed through the heavens, and is sitting at the right hand of God. The reconciliation will be made good, and every knee shall bow to Christ, to His power and authority.

Ques. But not until after the millennium?

Not finally and fully, but as to the heavens, it will be so when Satan is cast out. Luke says, when Christ rides into Jerusalem, “Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.” Until you get peace in heaven, Christ cannot ride in; but when peace is in heaven, you cannot hinder it.

Ques. What is the difference between “made peace,” and “you… hath he reconciled”?

He made the peace, by Him to reconcile.

There are two things, the abstract and absolute. When God sees the blood of Christ, He sees the victory which that death is over sin and Satan; but the full effect of it is not yet produced; it has to be wrought out.

Ques. Why, “in the body of his flesh”?

It was in the death of His body on the cross. His body connected Him with the creation, and made Him a responsible Man. People think of reconciliation as only something done in their own minds. Here, it is reconciling things in heaven and things on earth.

Ques. They talk of universal reconciliation?

That denies atonement; both annihilationism and universalism deny atonement entirely.

It is the state of things in heaven and earth that is referred to. Afterwards, angels will no longer be bothered and hindered by devils.

Ques. Is reconciliation, then, the state produced corresponding to the work by which the peace has been made?

Well, yes.

Ques. But surely it is persons?

Yes, of course, it includes them. “You … hath he reconciled.”

Then comes, “if ye continue in the faith,” etc.

Clearly, they are not sitting in heavenly places in Christ. If now you give up Christ, you won’t get to heaven. We are kept by the power of God, but then we are kept because we are in danger.

Ques. But a good Wesleyan would say, You may fall away?

As a professor, I am liable to fall away, but I have the positive certainty that I never shall.

Ques. What, then, is the use and force of the liability?

To make me feel my dependence every minute on Him who keeps me. I do not want to weaken one atom these “ifs.”

Ques. What does “castaway” mean?

Castaway means castaway. The thing Paul is there insisting on is, that I may preach to other people, and be a castaway myself.

I believe that “anon with joy receiving it” is a very bad sign, if people have not been exercised before.

In Hebrews, you never get people falling into sin, except it is finally, fatally; there is no restoring. Esau found no place of repentance, though he sought it, i.e., the blessing, carefully with tears.

Ques. In Hebrews 6 we read, “crucify to themselves the Son of God.” What is that?

The nation had already done it, but now if any still reject Him, they crucify Him again for themselves.

Ques. Will the sin against the Holy Ghost be a sin in the latter day?

I do not doubt it will be so, but still it was a sin in that day.

Ques. Could you take the gospel to a man who has given up Christianity?

You might; it might be a case of a man met and overcome by a cleverer man. One that has rejected Christ, as a man in humiliation, may be reached by knowing Him as a glorified Christ; but if he rejects that, there is nothing left.

God will keep to the end the one that is His own; but a man may make all sorts of profession, and he may even get his affections moved, without being converted.

To the Jews, Christ will be the crown of glory, but to us, He is the hope of glory now.

Ques. Does “perfect” here (v. 28) look on to the glory?

Here, he is looking at holiness; it is Christ revealed in my soul as the power of sanctification.

Reading At Notting Hill

1 Corinthians 1

The first thing noticeable here is the distinction between the Church and the profession of Christianity, as shewn in the address of the epistle; it is, “unto the church of God, which is at Corinth,… called… saints” (not, called to be saints), “with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their’s and our’s.”

In the latter part, you have the calling on the name of the Lord Jesus, which is the character of one who professes to be a Christian; that is profession; whereas you get others before, distinctly as the assembly, and set apart, as saints by calling.

Ques. Would that embrace the whole of profession?

Yes. He looks, no doubt, at all as sincere, and treats them as Christians, unless proved otherwise; still, you get these two characters, the church and the professing body; and I see that running all through the epistle.

Ques. Does that bring out the responsibility of profession then?

That will follow. As you go through the epistle, I think he makes the thing most distinct; only remember that he assumes them to be Christians, unless proved to be otherwise.

Ques. But he says, their Lord, and ours?

Precisely; that is the very thing.

Ques. Profession and the church of God were, then, coincident?

They were very nearly so. In the beginning, absolutely so; because the Lord added to the church such as should be saved, and He took care that it should be real.

Ques. Would not the expression, “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints,” apply to all?

No; or why should he make the difference?

Ques. Is this the only epistle where the expression occurs?

So far as I know.

Ques. Is it not, then, very remarkable, considering the state of things at that time?

Yes; and nowhere is it so clearly brought out as in 1 Corinthians. If you look at verse 8, he says, “Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless” —not merely safe, but blameless— “in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ”; and then he sets about to blame them for everything.

Ques. But what is the objection to considering the former part of the second verse as referring to the church at Corinth, and the latter part of it as extending to every true believer?

He does suppose all of them true, but He puts in another character besides that of the church, and “called saints.” He addresses them not as the church, but as individuals. You get much the same distinction in Ephesians 4: one body and one spirit; and then, one faith, one baptism. You get the one body clearly enough in our tenth chapter.

Ques. Would the salutation of verse 3 apply to those who called upon the name of the Lord?

Yes; still, he makes a difference, and that with another tide.

There is one great point of instruction. Those who called upon the name of the Lord were, of course, in the assembly, as a general rule; yet the Spirit of God is providing for a day when the difference should be yet more developed, and so He uses that different tide in Scripture in order to provide for the coming time, that the two things might be separate.

Ques. In Ephesians 1, it is to the “saints” and to the “faithful”; would you also see a difference there?

No; except as he gives a specific character to them, and so he does in Colossians; here it is “saints, with all that,” etc. In Ephesians and Colossians they are the same class of people, but he gives them a specific character, it is only emphatic there, after all.

At Corinth, as a general rule, they are supposed to be real Christians; only, as was said just now, by separating the characters, he has left a statement which would apply wherever such characters went.

In Jude, you distinctly get false brethren creeping in. I do not think we have any idea how provisional everything is until the Lord comes.

The first man was provisional; but it was the Second Man in whom all was to be settled; and so it is, I believe, with the church.

There is another thing to notice, and that is, “Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father,” (one Father), “and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Practically, the Lordship of Christ is overlooked; it is the common

address of the epistles, only it is lost sight of in Christendom.

There is a vagueness that has not seized the difference between the relationship of God as our Father, and the Lordship of Jesus Christ over His people.

Ques. The two meanings of the term “Lord” have often led to dangerous confusion; as, for instance, in “Smith’s Bible Dictionary,” “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36), where this is applied to making Jesus, Jehovah in resurrection!!

Wherever we have administration in a general way, we have the Lord.

Ques. Is that why, in 2 Timothy, it says, “them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart”?

Yes; and also in calling on the name of the Lord as sent to Israel; whosoever did so, should be saved.

Ques. And so it was in Genesis?

Yes, it was. I look on it now quite practically for us, not that there is anything special in the doctrine, but the Lordship of Christ is very little thought of—that there is a Person ordering and directing everything. Paul besought the Lord thrice; and he asked, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

All administration is referred to the Lord.

Ques. So chastening, too, in the end of chapter 11, “chastened of the Lord”?

Just so. Whereas I am a child with God our Father; personally, I am a child.

Ques. Does not the Lordship of Jesus run all through this epistle?

Yes; you get it in the gifts; the power was by the Holy Ghost, but the administration was by the Lord. And, still, it is one God that works all in all.

Ques. But is not, “our Lord Jesus Christ” distinctly a church character?

If you put in “our,” it is; but He is Lord of all, Lord both of the dead, and of the living. Again,” Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Ques. How is He the Lord of the dead?

Because He has gone down among the dead, and got a title over them, and He will bring them up, to judgment or to glory.

He is Lord of all. His Lordship extends over everything; all things shall bow to Him, things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth. “Under the earth,” in Philippians, should be “infernal”; it is not simply, “under the earth,” as in Revelation 5:13.

Ques. What is the difference between Master and Lord?

Master, would be more intimate, I should say.

Ques. Is there a difference between Lord and despotes (despot)?

Yes, there is; despotes is more the master of a slave. Despotes is used in Jude, where the one who bought them is denied. Christ has bought everybody, and they will not own His authority. The word is only used five times in reference to the Lord: Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4; and Revelation 6:10.

Ques. How do you distinguish between Lord and Head?

They are two thoughts. Christ is Head over all things to the church; and He is, too, Lord of all. He is our Lord, and we own Him, Lord, for ourselves; while He is also Lord over everybody that will not own Him.

Ques. One of the great errors of the Corinthians was their reasoning from the possession of gifts, through the Holy Ghost, to claiming a freedom in the use of them without responsibility?

Yes; and I see moderns now taking the same ground, though the Holy Ghost set it aside long ago.

Ques. Is not the denial of Jesus as Lord the great root of the apostasy, while acknowledging Him as here?

Only it goes much further; that is the way of its coming in, but not the way of its going out.

You get the coming in of it in Jude, and its going out in John, and there they deny everything. John says, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” That is the full character of apostasy, openly leaving us; but that goes a long way beyond Jude.

Ques. What would answer to John now?

Denying Christ altogether.

Ques. Socinians and such people?

Well, it is more open infidels. There are, nowadays, numbers who deny Christianity altogether.

Ques. But in John they had made a profession; and after they had owned Christ as Lord, they denied Him?

Just so; but in Jude they were still within, and they were practically denying authority, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. In John, you have the additional element of their going out, that is open apostasy.

Ques. What would you say, then, of those who “separate themselves,… having not the Spirit”?

They did not absolutely separate themselves in an outward way, because they were “spots in your feasts of charity”; but they set up to be something like the Pharisees. Now in John, not only had they gone out, but they denied the Father and the Son, and also, that Jesus is the Christ.

That is public infidelity after profession. A Pharisee set up to be a superior kind of Christian, and then he shewed his superiority by licence; of course, among the Jews, it was to be a better kind of Jew.

Ques. At the agape, love-feast or feast of charity, was the Lord’s supper taken, too?

Not necessarily; though very often they might have it at the end. In Corinthians, they brought their suppers, too, that poor and rich might be together at what we call a tea-meeting; a very nice thing in its proper place; only, in Corinth, we find they began to abuse it, and then the two were disconnected by authority; 1 Cor. 11:33, 34.

Ques. In John, it is final; it is the “last time”?

Yes, he says so; whereas Jude takes in the whole time; when he thought to write to them of the common salvation, he had to turn and exhort them to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. And

then he refers to these men that had slipped in, crept in unawares; they are those of whom Enoch testified, that such were to be judged at the coming of the Lord.

So you get in Cain, natural evil; in Balaam, ecclesiastical evil more; and in Core, rebellion; the three characters of evil; natural, ecclesiastical, and apostate; and in Koran's rebellion, they perish.

Ques. Would "having not the Spirit" refer to their denying the one body and one Spirit, or to their acting in their own will?

To their acting in their own will. They had come into the thing that was there, and in the judgment they are treated as still in. The final judgment is on them, but they had slipped in. In Jude these are treated as there, among them; the character of all of them is that they "kept not their first estate."

In Peter, it is more wickedness; he speaks of "angels that sinned"; Jude, of "angels which kept not their first estate."

Ques. Is the separation in Jude a pretentiousness?

Yes, that is just what it is.

Ques. And in John, is it public?

Well, in John, they have actually gone out.

Ques. What, then, is the difference as to the angels?

In Jude, it is in their leaving where they were; and in Peter, it is just the fact of their sinning.

Ques. Would you make a distinction between the angels now in chains and those wicked spirits, devils, against whom we have to wrestle?

Yes, the latter are not in chains.

Then, in 1 Corinthians, we have the principles of the church as established here, just when the church was going wrong. “Ye come behind in no gift,” and “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ,” you get the Holy Ghost, and that they were waiting for Christ’s coming. He puts them first of all in their distinct, positive place, acknowledging the good things that were in them; he always owns the good he can before he begins to reprove anything. We also ought to do so; it opens the heart to receive rebuke. It is interesting to see this in all his epistles, except the one to the Galatians.

This epistle is looking at developed evil, and it is very profitable to see how he settles things, while distinct principles remain unshaken. You have here the Holy Ghost, the waiting for the Lord, and the certainty of being blameless—the whole Christian security and blessing. I do not say the enjoyment of communion, but the actual conferred blessing.

Ques. But that which he commends is all on God’s side?

Yes, it is.

Ques. There is nothing like, as in 1 Thessalonians, “work of faith, and labour of love,” etc.?

No, nothing of that kind.

Ques. But the coming behind in no gift is seen in all its activity in chapter 14?

Yes; and a pretty mess they made of it, talking two at a time! The testimony of Christ was confirmed in them by these gifts being there. The testimony of Christ is abstract, but gifts were given as confirmation that they

had received it. Only the bestowal of gift incurred responsibility.

Ques. Did it embrace their testimony in the world?

No.

Ques. What is “all utterance”?

The power of speaking.

Ques. Would a person in a bad state of soul speak so?

Yes, he might. It is not what I should expect, but the Holy Ghost might take up such an one, in any given case —like, say, that of Balaam, though this was an extreme case.

Ques. But could such praise at the Lord’s supper?

I could not say they could not, though I should not expect it. I could understand such a case in a lecture or in a preaching, but at the Lord’s supper there is a difficulty. If such a person represented the assembly, you could not tell what God might put in his heart, but the natural effect would be that he would express more what was in his own heart. At Corinth, they were speaking with tongues through vanity.

Ques. Is not verse 9 emphatic, “The fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord”; and does it not bear on that?

Yes, into what else are they called? It is the very essence of a Christian’s place—fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ques. What is that really?

That we are brought into the same place with Christ; only, adoring Him when we get there.

The nearer we are brought to God, the more we shall own that Christ is God. Still, that is what He has done; He has made man's place in His own Person, and we are brought into it, predestinated to be ultimately conformed to the image of His Son: "He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." He is one of the company, only as the Head of it, He is pre-eminent in every thing. Remember that. Moses and Elias were in the same glory with Jesus, but when Peter would put them on a level, Moses and Elias disappear at once, and God says: "This is my beloved Son, hear him." That is what has been so lost.

Ques. Has the word 'called,' in verse 9, a qualifying sense?

Just this, that God has given them communion with Christy that is what God has called us to, to be in Christ's place, with Him. John 17 (except the first few verses, and the last three verses of the chapter) lays the ground of it; it puts Christians into the same place with Christ and with the Father, and then with the world.

Ques. Has not this "fellowship of his Son" an especial reference to the assembly?

It has to the individuals who compose the assembly.

Ques. I thought it had special reference to their communion as gathered to Him?

Yes; but you must take them up as individuals; they were called as such.

Ques. But is not the point here, to shew their responsibility to Christ as Lord?

Well, I do not think Christ is ever presented as Lord of an assembly.

Ques. Is it not the standard by which Paul is going to test their state at Corinth?

Yes; he is putting their place before them, and then judging them by it.

Ques. Will you enlarge a little on Christ not being the Lord of an assembly?

Well, He is the Head of the body—the Church.

Ques. And Son over His house?

No. In Hebrews 3:6, it is, “Christ, as Son over his [God’s] house,” though I know you have “own” in the English version.

Ques. But we have “in the Lord,” often?

That is another thing altogether.

Ques. May you not address Him as Lord when you are praying in the assembly?

Yes, because each individual may correspond with that. But it is not specific relation.

Ques. What is the title of authority for Christ in the assembly?

He is Lord of those who compose it.

The first thing is to ascertain whether this is a fact or not. I was led to notice the difference gradually, and I found there was no such thing in the Word, as “Lord” of the assembly.

Ques. There is the Lord's table?

I know there is; but there it is used just in the very way to shut out communion. In chapter 10, when he speaks of communion, it is the communion of the blood of Christ; but when he speaks of jealousy, he says, "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy," there it is changed to Lord. We have fellowship with God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and every Christian owns Him Lord, or he is not a Christian. The word 'Lord' never has the character of communion: communion with the Lord is a wrong idea, it is a confusion of mind. The moment I say Lord, I am looking up to somebody above me.

Headship is of Christ, and it is a much more intimate thing.

Ques. I should be glad if you would define a little more the difference between, "all that… call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," and others. You said that was profession, and yet might include real Christians?

It is profession, and there might be hypocrites. I have no objection to putting them all on their responsibility. Take anybody who says he is a Christian, and ask him, Are you dead to sin? I affirm the responsibility distinctly, and the professing body will be judged according to its profession as the house of God.

Ques. Might we say that this epistle gives us the ordering of the assembly everywhere?

Remember, profession is not the church; calling on the Lord might be where there is no assembly at all. Profession at that time was a most excellent thing, but now it has become a very base thing.

Ques. Is this written with a view to the latter-day condition of things?

It provides for it, a priori, though left in that way.

Ques. Then it would not be separate instruction?

No. Principles are always applicable, but if you confound the then state of the church, with its condition now, you make a difficulty. To separate then from the professing body was wrong; but now I am to separate from very much that is there. In Isaiah 51, Abram was alone, and God called him, and blessed him, and increased him; but in Ezekiel 33:21, etc., God judges Israel because they take that ground, and say, “Abraham was one, and he inherited the land,” etc.

Ques. It says, “with all that in every place”?

Yes; it takes in everybody that calls himself a Christian.

Ques. But the Holy Ghost wrote it for these days as well as for those, did He not?

It was written as a principle that embraces these days as well as those days, only you must look elsewhere for guidance as to the right use of it.

Ques. But are you called upon now to go out of the house?

No; you cannot go out of the house, if you try.

Ques. What introduced the actual state of profession?

It gradually grew up. It began quite early, and the instant the apostles went, the whole thing went totally. It is just so with everything that God originally set up right. In every instance, the first thing man has done,

has been to ruin it altogether. Adam fell. Noah got drunk.

A law was given, and they made a golden calf.

Priests were appointed, and they offered strange fire.

Solomon's royalty was established in peace, but he loved many strange women, and the kingdom was broken up. Nebuchadnezzar was made supreme, and he cast three faithful children into the fire. God's patience has gone on with His saints, but I believe it is just the same thing in the church of God. As soon as the apostles were gone, the whole thing became corrupted. People are writing books to shew how others have departed from the truth; but the ground I have taken is, it is not that the church has departed, but that the church is the departure. I mean, of course, what is commonly called the church—the professing church.

Ques. I suppose Paul hindered it for a while?

Yes; but you must remember that the Pope is the successor of Peter, not of Paul.

I mean the church, so-called, always was the departure. If you want to get a history of villainy, violence, and corruption, you must go to the professing church for it, not to heathenism. And it became so intolerable that natural conscience rose up against it. It went on, and on, and on, i.e., what is called the church historically; and that itself was the departure from Christianity. And that is true of all that you get recorded from the apostles' time.

As Paul said, "after my decease" this and that shall happen. The mystery of iniquity was already at work, but

there was then spiritual energy to make head against it; when Paul was gone, there was not.

Ques. Did you mean that the church corrupted everything?

No; but the so-called church was the corruption. It was in the church itself that the clergy were substituted for the Spirit as the power of ministry; and the sacraments for absolute acceptance by God. I mean the historical church after Paul had gone.

Ques. Is that what those became who called upon the name of the Lord?

Quite so. The apostle had sacraments, and elders, too, and they are very serviceable in their place; but while they may constitute an outward thing, they are not my place before God, and my place is not in virtue of them, though they are right in themselves. They are institutions from Christ; but I am in Christ, and that as down here. What is essential to my existence as a Christian is, that I am in Christ and Christ is in me.

But in the historical church, they got the forgiveness of sins by baptism (and baptism is all right in itself), and they had nothing after; they had no idea of a man being perfected in Christ.

Nowadays, take, say, the Evangelical Alliance; it makes the clergy and sacraments to be the essence of Christianity, and therefore it will not receive Quakers, and so-called Plymouth Brethren, because they reject both clergy and sacraments.

Ques. Is there not also a positive work of Satan going on by imitation, as well as by the departure and the corruption of what is really good, and is not all this

shewn by the “tares,” and by the “foolish virgins,” and finally, by the “great whore”?

I fully admit that; heresies had, and have, their part, ending one way in antichrist, and otherwise in Babylon.

Ques. You mean Revelation 13 and Revelation 17?

Yes.

Ques. Is there, in any of the fathers, any trace to be found of our being “perfected for ever”?

No; not a bit; and I have gone all through them. They got forgiveness through baptism, and then were at their wits’ end to know what to do with sins committed afterwards.

Ques. But if the very essence of Christianity was lost with the passing away of the aposdes, what an absurdity it must be to talk about the bulwarks of the Reformation?

Well, the Reformers brought out justification by faith, but as to the church, they knew nothing about it.

There are three distinct positions in which Christ is viewed: on the cross, working redemption; then, at the Father’s right hand, sending the Holy Ghost; and lastly, He is coming again. At the Reformation, the first was owned, and justification by faith was declared, giving the value of what Christ had done on the cross, and that much clearer than is now done by most of the evangelical people; but the other two positions of Christ were unknown. His coming again the Reformers rejected as heresy. In reality, this last truth makes the first all the clearer. Of course, everybody owns that Christ will come again in some way or other, even if it is only to judge the quick and the dead; but Protestants at

large, as well as Rome, ridicule the idea that the Lord will come as we are now expecting Him.

The thing the church of Rome is faulty in, is not so much foundation truth, as the application of it, and that is as faulty for us as if it were in itself wrong. They own the Trinity, and Christ's humanity, and propitiation, but not substitution; but when they come to the way God applies it, they stop His channel, and open their own, which is sacraments and work.

They talk about the unity of the body, but in a way that is false, for it is the use they make of it that really denies it.

Ques. The church of Rome is not only a corruption of truth, but it is also an imitation of truth?

It is both. If you take the trouble to inquire about what they say of catholicity, the greatest number of Christians is outside of them. In their reckoning, they deny the Greek churches altogether, though these include some sixty or seventy millions.

In itself, Rome is the greatest scene of barbarism in the world. Look at its history, and you will find that as soon as one pope put another pope out, everything was called into question; notwithstanding infallibility, he broke all the ordinances of his predecessor.

Ques. And Christendom at large owes its condition very much to not seeing what the true church is?

Just so. And we know how bad its condition is. If Paul came, and had not been ordained, he could not preach; but if the devil came, and had been ordained, he could preach.

Ques. Is it important to see that Paul does not treat the Corinthians as corrupters, but rather as being corrupted?

He takes care first to own them as the church of God, before He begins to blame them.

Ques. How soon after the apostles' departure would you say the evil came boldly in?

Not "after" at all, but before they were gone, only they resisted it. "The mystery of iniquity doth already work," Paul says; only, while it was working there was, so far, apostolic power to stop it.

Ques. In verse 10, you have again the Lordship of Jesus?

Yes; you find it all through the epistle; it is the common title here; of course, He is Lord everywhere.

Ques. Is it special in connection with divisions?

Well, he uses the name "Lord," as the ground of exhortation, whatever it is about.

Then he puts down man's wisdom altogether: "It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," and that is what takes the place of human wisdom.

Ques. Does he not put it down by the cross?

Yes; by the foolishness of preaching a crucified Christ, only that is a little lower on.

Further Notes On The Revelation

We find a very important characteristic in chapter 1:8, as well as in chapter 4:8, and that is, the name of “Lord God Almighty.” These names give to us leading thoughts, which are very valuable guides in the understanding of the Scriptures. The “Father,” that is to say, the relationship of Father, is not found at all in this book. It is prophecy, and this is not relationship, but a testimony to a people unfaithful in relationship, or who have not got it. It is not church-relationship, nor Son-relationship.

But we do get the Old Testament names of God, and these give us the character of the book, i.e., government, judgment. In chapter 4, it is a throne, not the Father’s house. These names are:—.

1. Almighty (Shaddai), with the patriarchs;

2. Jehovah, with Israel.

3. Most High, in the millennium.

But the name of “Father” is the name of God revealed in grace to us Christians.

Ques. Was “Most High” not given to Abraham?

It was told to Abraham when he had overcome all his enemies; and God gave him then the blessing of the millennial day; Gen. 14:18-20.

We have a most beautiful dialogue in Psalm 91 founded on these three names.

The subject of the fourth book of Psalms is, the bringing in the First begotten into the world; and it gives a kind of title to the book, “He that dwelleth in the secret place

of the Most High"; this raises the question as to who is the Most High, and the answer is, that whoever has found out the secret, that one "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty," i.e., of Abraham's God.

Then Messiah says, "I say of Jehovah, My refuge and my fortress; my God, I will confide in him." And the reply comes, in verses 3-8, "Surely he shall deliver thee," etc. In verses 9-13, it is the Jewish remnant that is speaking. Then, in verses 14-16, the voice of Jehovah is heard. But we do not find "Father "until Christ came and revealed the name of Father to us.

Ques. What is "Most High" in Deuteronomy 32?

It is the bringing in of the millennium. And so, too, after seven years of madness, Nebuchadnezzar owns the Most High.

Ques. Is his being a beast symbolical, or not?

It is both. It happened to him as written, and Nitocris took care of everything for him. He says, "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was walking in the midst of my palace," etc., and he who had been set up a golden head became really a beast until seven times passed over him. But it is also a symbol.

Ques. In Psalm 91:9, where the pronoun is changed, who is speaking?

The Jews or Jerusalem. In verse 3, it is the testimony of the Spirit in the same. This Psalm is, so to speak, a riddle propounded by the Holy Ghost: he who has the secret of the Most High, shall have all the promises and blessings of Abraham's God. This is the Psalm which the devil quotes to Christ, to shew that God would take care of Him. But what a key it gives to the devil's quotations!

Ques. In verse 2, is it Christ who is speaking?

Yes.

It is well to notice the difference between cherubim and seraphim, because here it is a judicial, governmental throne that will carry out God's purposes; but that which is seraphic is judgment according to the holiness of God's nature; at the end, there will be found both these things. There will be governmental judgment in putting an end to heathen power; and with this, positive judgment of evil: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," i.e., judgment according to God's holiness.

Ques. Does the seraphic character include government?

Well, yes, it will do so. But when they were carried away to Babylon, it was not seraphic judgment, because they were to be restored later on. In Isaiah 6, it is government: their cities wasted, and their land desolate, and so on. The whole relationship of Israel was broken; it was, therefore, condemnation as well as judicial government, though they were to be brought back. But when they rejected Christ, then it was all over with them.

Ques. How would you define "Providence"?

It is in God seeing and ordering everything, so that not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him.

Isaiah 6 is a testimony to judgment, but, of course, it had not been executed.

Ques. Was it then, final?

No; it was final only as under the old covenant; but sovereign grace will bring them in under a new covenant. Christ refers to this passage, "These things

said Esaias, when he saw bis glory, and spake of him." It was, therefore, all over with them: "Ye see me no more"; they were entirely lost and cut off.

Ques. The old covenant was law mingled with mercy and long suffering?

Yes; though it was still law; and although mercy spared them, they were, governmentally, put back under law.

Ques. Do we find any seraphic work in Israel?

Not that I know of, it is cherubic there.

Ques. But are the cherubim connected with the live coal?

"Seraph" means a burner. It is the word for burn, and the only other thing called a seraph, is the fiery serpent. The point is, that they cry, "Holy, holy, holy"; in the Revelation, they have eyes within and eyes without. He takes a coal, because directly a person is upright in grace, it purifies. When Isaiah said, "I am a man of unclean lips," etc., then the seraph flew and laid the coal upon his mouth, and his iniquity was taken away. In Isaiah 6, we find the final thing, as well as judicial government; there is the actual closing of the relationship, but a remnant reserved.

Ques. What, then, is Matthew 25?

It is both seraphic and cherubic; that is to say, there is the burning judgment of God in that way; if there is good, it purges the dross away; but if there is not, it becomes final judgment.

"Every-one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." Salt is the power of grace separating from evil. The sacrifices were salted with

salt; salt is that which purges entirely by separating from evil. Every sacrifice had it. It is called “the salt of the covenant of thy God,” because it was the complete setting apart to God.

The judgment, then, was the entire setting aside of Israel as to the ground of their responsibility. It was final, in the sense that God had gone through everything with them.

Christ is really the root and offspring of David. Priesthood had failed in Eh; prophets had been rejected in Samuel; then comes David, who was prophet, priest, and king. But Solomon also fails, and so Babylon is brought in, and God’s throne is taken from the earth. He then sends the true Son of David, who is rejected. That was final. Not that God cannot restore them in grace, for He will yet do this; but, as to responsibility, He cannot. He will restore them in sovereign grace under a new covenant.

In John 12, we read, “Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled,” etc. (vv. 38-41). There we find one of the proofs that Christ was Jehovah; for it says, “These things said Esaias; when he saw his glory, and spake of him.”

And therein is shewn the Lord’s patience; for the judgment pronounced in Isaiah, He never put into execution for more than eight hundred years.

The throne of Jehovah was thus removed from Israel, and His people were sent to Babylon; but a remnant was brought back to be tested by the coming of the Son of David; and this remnant rejected Him.

The rejected Son of David then assumes another character, and becomes Saviour of the world.

Ques. Is this rejection quite fulfilled until the end of the Acts?

No; but it was fulfilled in the remnant.

In Revelation 4, the elders give, as always, a reason for their worship; there is spiritual intelligence shewn by them; but the angels never give any reason.

Ques. Do the twenty-four elders include all the heavenly saints in glory?

Yes; the number is an allusion to the twenty-four courses of the priests. Here, they are seen as twenty-four kings crowned and sitting on the twenty-four thrones, and they cast down their crowns and worship. The beasts and the elders are here quite distinct from each other, and there are no angels seen.

The Lamb then appears, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is able to open the book; and the beasts and elders are now seen together, whilst the angels take a distinct place. In chapter 4, the beasts and the elders are separate, and there are no angels, because unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak. But in chapter 5, the living creatures (i.e., power) are mixed up with the elders; Christ having taken authority, there is transfer of power to men, the angels bung apart; and so the living creatures are seen distinct from the angels. The expression, “living creatures,” is, of course, symbolic.

Ques. Are they the same in chapters 4 and 5?

They are always the same symbol, but they are transferred in their connection. Here, they form part, as it were, of the governmental throne.

There are two words employed for “round about,” meaning, (1) that which forms part of the thing as round about, and (2) that which is in a circle around it; just like, for instance, the four legs of this table which are round about it; or, just as we are all sitting around it.

When the Lamb comes out, they sing (not “sung”) a new song. Notice that the angels never sing. People make them sing, but they never do in Scripture. Angels shout and cry, but there is only one note found with them. Man has all kinds of infirmities, but he can be tuned; it takes such as man to be tuned. The angels shout and praise, and that is lovely. And they stand. And at the tomb, two angels sat. But these elders sing a new song.

In verse 9, it is a question whether the “us” should read “them,” or be left out altogether; but in verse 10, “And made them” is settled.

When the Lamb is brought in here, then we find priests. “Which are the prayers of saints,” does not mean that they pray for the saints.

Ques. If, in verse 10, we say, “they,” is it as speaking of the church?

Yes; but if “us “is put in verse 9, and “they” in verse 10, then it would be the church speaking of those still on the earth.

Ques. How could the living creatures join in and say “us”?

It is not so, as I think; for we find here that the beasts and the elders are together, and the angels apart, and, accordingly, the “us” would be better left out.

The living creatures are the symbol of the governmental power of God. First, God employs the angels, as we see from Hebrews 2. Angels are in power until Christ comes out, but when the Lamb does come out, power is transferred to men; chap. 5.

Ques. To whom do the “they” and the “them” refer, in verse 10?

To those who are redeemed out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Ques. Would it include themselves?

Yes, of course it would.

Ques. What of, “they sing,” in verse 9?

That is an impersonal expression; it is not “they sung,” for that would carry on the history.

Ques. Has this anything to do with, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world”?

That to which that passage refers is more governmental — the throne proper; but in the millennium, it is not a question of seraphs.

Ques. You said angels do not sing, but in chapter 5:11, it says, “I heard the voice of many angels”?

Just so; it is “the voice”; that does not say they sang The nearest thing is in Job, when “the morning stars sang together”; but there, the whole expression is an image.

Ques. Do you distinguish between “the morning stars,” and “the sons of God,” Job 38?

One is clearly a figure. I had thought of them both as being the same, but I do not know that they need be so taken.

Ques. But if that is of creation, how then?

It is only “the earth”: “Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? “So that there is no difficulty. It is not necessary that they should be the same, though I had always taken them as the same.

Ques. “Seen of angels,” in 1 Timothy 3:16, has been taken to shew that God had not been seen by angels before He was manifested in the flesh; if this is so, how do you understand the words in Matthew 18:10, “Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven”?

Well, it is merely to shew they have the best and most honourable place.

When the Lamb begins to open the book (chap. 5), we have in a general way providential dealings in the earth.

Ques. What are “horses”?

They express God’s power, just as we see in Zechariah 1.

Ques. Are the beasts and the elders distinct, again, in chapter 5:14?

It does not say that the beasts fell down, but merely that they say, “Amen.”

It is a great thing to lay hold of symbols in an abstract way. Horses, as in Zechariah, are the symbols of God’s power introducing a certain state of things on the earth. A white horse is a symbol of triumph, it may be of good or of evil; what is important is to get hold of the abstract idea. So as regards the sun: Christ is the Sun of

righteousness; but, when it is evil, the sun scorches people terribly.

Ques. What about the other colours in Zechariah 1?

I do not know, just now, as to the exact translation about them.

Ques. Are the four horses, the four Gentile powers?

It is more God's overruling providence in the midst of them. They are found again in Zechariah 6. They had quieted His Spirit in the north country, because God had put down Babylon, which was the first of the four kingdoms of the Gentiles.

Babylon was put down by Persia, which thus became, in that way, a horse to execute God's purpose.

Angelic power is occupied in this; for when Gabriel came to speak to Daniel, he had been kept waiting three weeks, because it was a question whether the Jews should be restored; nobody stood by him but Israel's angel— "Michael your prince."

Ques. Does Michael represent the Lord Himself?

No, he does not; the passage in Jude makes that quite clear.

Ques. What are the four horns?

They are really these four kings, viewed in this particular character. Then the carpenters come to fray them away; and in the last one Christ is, so to speak, the carpenter, for it is He who puts down the beast.

Ques. What is the pale horse in Revelation 6:8?

It is the power of death; and hell (hades) follows him.

The Lord is here beginning to get ready the judgments; then the fifth seal is opened, and the martyrs are seen under the altar; they had been slain for Christ's sake and their righteousness is here recognised, only they must wait a little longer.

Ques. Are these future martyrs?

They are chiefly, but not necessarily, so; the future martyrs are those that should be killed like them. So these must wait for the martyrs of the last half-week.

Ques. What part will Israel have in these trials?

Here, we have nothing to do with Israel. And we do not find any Jews until chapters 10 and 11. Sealed of God they are in chapter 7, but they are not the subject of this prophecy.

Chapter 6 is a complete revolution; things are closing in, and they end in the breaking up of everything. The sun, i.e., supreme authority, becomes black; the moon, i.e., subordinate authority, becomes as blood; and the stars of heaven (inferior authorities) fall. The heaven also departs, i.e., the whole scene of government. The complete subversion of all earthly authority takes place.

They think, mistakenly, that the great day of wrath is come; it w, of course, judgment, but not that of the great day.

Ques. Why do they speak of the wrath of the Lamb?

Because they have been fighting against Him.

Ques. How do they know Him?

It is the Lamb who has to take the power.

Ques. Why is it the Lamb?

I think that, in the Revelation, the “Lamb” indicates that the suffering One is to be the glorified One, and that He is to come judging. It is not exactly the thought of atoning.

Well, although the great day of His wrath was not really come, this was a tremendous political convulsion.

Ques. Could anyone say that this could not happen in the lifetime of persons now on the earth?

No, they could not; but the Church goes up out of all this. The sixth seal is far on in post-rapture times j but it is not yet in the last half-week.

Ques. Does this extend beyond Christendom, or is it confined to this latter?

It takes place mainly in Christendom as a whole; but the Roman empire is more especially in view.

Ques. In verse 15, is “kings of the earth” only those of the Roman empire?

No; I do not confine it to them, for others also may be frightened. Russia and Prussia are not in the Roman earth; a little bit of Prussia still is.

Ques. Is Ireland?

No, but it comes under its feet; he shall stamp the residue with his feet. Neither does the north of Scotland form part of it.

Chapter 7 is a kind of parenthesis, shewing how God takes care of the remnant of Israel, and also of many from amongst the Gentiles.

Ques. Are these found in Christendom?

No, none of them, only in so far as Jews are found in Christendom, but they are not part of it.

If men reject the gospel now, they will not get the gospel in that day. People have thought that after the present gospel testimony is closed, they might still get a supplementary one; but 2 Thessalonians is clear enough. And, “He that believeth not is condemned already”; while “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” That embraces all who have had the truth and have not believed it.

Ques. From whence will come the innumerable company?

Not from those who have heard the truth now and have rejected it, but from wherever this gospel testimony goes.

Ques. Who will take out this gospel testimony?

Well, I believe it will be Jews.

Ques. Is there anything that speaks of the conversion of these Jews after the rapture?

You get the two witnesses.

Ques. Does their testimony commence as soon as the church is gone?

Yes; we find them in Psalms 94-100, which speak of the coming in of the First begotten. This last one is worship.

Ques. Is there any reason why there should not be quickened souls, as a sort of dovetail, between these two periods?

I cannot say. God may be now, in a certain way, preparing Jews, just as He may give peace to the earth for Christianity to spread.

Ques. Would men of understanding, in Daniel 11, help as to this point?

Yes; there will be such found amongst these witnesses.

Ques. They testify during the time of the covenant?

Yes.

Ques. But if the testimony begins at once, there is only one half-week left.

The angel flying in the midst of heaven, in chapter 14:6, 7. and having the everlasting gospel, is quite at the end, for the hour of His judgment is come.

Ques. Would the special action of the Spirit of God at the time mark the commencement?

Yes, but your question is, When will that begin? The moment I get the church taken away, I see God acting in this way: “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come,” but it does not say in so many words when that will be.

Ques. Has there ever been a time when there was no testimony?

No.

Ques. So that there is nothing to shew that there may be an interval without any testimony?

Well, except that there is a time of judgment such as that nobody can go into the temple. But that does not say that there will be no testimony, for the two witnesses will be witnessing at that time.

Ques. Are the names of the twelve tribes symbolical?

Not that I know of.

Ques. Why is Dan left out?

Twelve names are wanted. In Jacob's blessing, Dan comes in at the point of apostasy, but consequently, too, at the point of waiting for blessing. In the first ones, we have general responsibility; then Dan is like to an adder in the path biting the horse's heels, so that his rider falls backward. And then comes an interjection, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord"; faith says that God must now come in.

Ques. Has this any application to the antichrist?

It will have. The people are bowed down under the burden of the Gentiles (Issachar), with other details; they wait for Jehovah's salvation, and then blessing all follows on. Dan was the first that openly set up idolatry.

At the seventh seal, nothing happens; there is quietness for a little while. Then we come to the trumpets; this is the second series of seven. Judgment becomes now much closer, in consequence of the suffering of the saints, which shews there is a testimony near. This judgment is not merely general and providential, but it falls directly on the "third part," which I have no doubt is the Roman empire.

The three woe trumpets then follow. We see here, the division of seven into three and four, as is the case nearly everywhere in this book; the seven churches are divided at Thyatira, and so on.

Ques. What is the main idea of that?

I do not know. Four go on in a general way, and then come three more; there is quite a division in that way.

Ques. What is the character of the prayers which are put upon the golden altar in chapter 8?

It is the cry of the saints, answering to judgment in a general way. The Angel-Priest (Christ) offers the incense, not with the prayers, but to give efficacy to them, i.e., to make them effectual. The dealings of the trumpets are the effect of the answer to these supplications.

Ques. Is this the time of the imprecatory prayers of the Psalms?

Pardy so, but not exclusively. I connect it more with Luke 18:7: “Shall not God avenge his own elect?”

In chapter 9, we pass over to the East; at least, I think so myself. That gives us one division of the fours and the threes. Four is generally that which falls on the Roman empire.

And now we close in rapidly towards the end. The bottomless pit is opened, and we have direct diabolical power coming out of it.

When the seals are opened, a general providential ordering of events takes place; then, in the trumpets, we have bitterer judgments; and also judgments on men themselves, not merely on their circumstances.

Ques. Would those in the fifth trumpet be apostate Jews?

Yes, there it would be so.

Ques. And the seven trumpets would be within the seven seals?

Yes.

Ques. Why is the time specified as hour, day, month, and year?

To shew that God has exactly measured the time, even up to an hour.

Ques. This foretells the coming in of the Eastern hordes upon the Roman empire?

Yes.

Ques. Is it the same thing as the way of the kings of the East?

Ah! I did not say that.

The tail of the dragon draws the third part of the stars of heaven; that is, the Roman empire sweeps all these under its power.

Ques. Is there no judgment of the Assyrian in the Revelation?

No.

There were two classes of prophets; the one, when Israel was owned of God, and the other, when Israel was disowned of God; this latter is Daniel (the vision), and the Revelation, and partly also Zechariah; while in Ezekiel, Israel is never called “My people” as a present thing, but only in the future.

Chapter 10 is a parenthesis which runs on to chapter 11:14. “I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow,” i.e., the covenant with creation, was upon his head. It is Christ coming to take possession, with one foot on the sea and

the other on the earth; and then we have the declaration that there should be no longer delay.

Ques. Why does this parenthesis come in here?

Well, we have the trumpets going on regularly to the end; but he wants to bring in what is morally more important than the trumpets, and this he does by introducing, in this parenthesis, the ten-horned beast and all that belongs to it; and thus he includes it in the general history. All that closes totally at chapter 11:18. A number of details are given afterwards.

Ques. When does the last half-week commence?

I do not know. Half a week before the end; but then, when does the end come?

Ques. When is the end of the first half-week?

At the beginning of the second! In one sense, it was the end of the first half-week when Christ was put to death.

In chapter 10, Christ is seen asserting His title to the earth, but John is not allowed to write what the thunders say. A little open book, i.e., something revealed, is then given him. It was pleasant to the taste, to get this knowledge, but it was actually bitter in his belly.

After this, he sets to prophesy again. And, in chapter 11, we have described the state of things in Jerusalem, followed by a history of the evil in the world, which comes to its full head and crisis, together with the history of the beast and false prophet. God has a people the while. And witnesses testify.

Ques. Who are they?

All that I see in these witnesses is, that the testimony of two men is true.

We find here true worship, and adequate witness. The Gentiles trample down everything, but these witnesses stand before the God of the earth. God is asserting His power and title as to the earth, but men will not have it.

Ques. But they give glory to God, in verse 13?

Yes, but it is too late then, and will not do.

Ques. What is the meaning of the temple?

It simply means that He recognises it, that is to say, the house itself. The outside court is given up to the Gentiles. The true inward thing is still owned, but the general profession is trodden under by the Gentiles. There will be these two things; the worship of those that are really the Lord's, though in terrible trouble; and there will be prophecy, too. Both the worship and the testimony will be in the midst of the power of the beast.

Here, we have the same word as in chapter 8:3. "I will give power," or efficacy, "to my two witnesses and they shall prophesy." Not that these things are given in order at all; but there is adequate testimony: two candlesticks, two olive trees. These witnesses have the power of Moses and Elias. Elias prophesied when Israel was apostate, and Moses did so when the nation was under Pharaoh's power; that is the case here, for these witnesses have the characters of Moses and Elias. When they have completed their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit, kills them. Their dead bodies are then seen exposed, and, after three and a half days, the spirit of life from God enters into them, and all those beholding them are awfully afraid.

Now we see one class of heavenly saints, who are not of the church. This is the last act of the first resurrection. The close of chapter 11 looks right on to the end.

Chapters 12-14 are complete in themselves; chapters 15-18 give us another thing, viz., the plagues which fill up. Of both Babylon and the heavenly Jerusalem we have descriptions, but these do not give us the course of history.

First of all, there is the beast; then, in chapter 15, another sign is seen in heaven; then, Babylon, etc., and we find further details given of that which has been already summed up in the parenthesis.

Ques. What about the months and days in chapter 11?

They are the last half-week.

Ques. Not the two half-weeks?

Not as I take it. To support the theory of there being two half-weeks in the Revelation, you are obliged to transpose the verses entirely. In order to bring in the whole week, verse 2 must follow verse 3; for they say that the second half-week is after the witnesses are killed. I see no need to put verses 3 and 4 before the second verse, specially as it declares that the state of things lasts forty-two and not eighty-four months.

Ques. What is, then, the first half-week?

When the beast makes good friends with the Jews, and they think everything is going on all right.

The thing is, that the only place where we get a week is in Daniel. There are sixty-nine weeks up to Messiah, that is to say, seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks; the Messiah is then cut off. We have now one week to make up the

seventy weeks; in point of fact, the time of Christ's testimony. After the sixty-two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off, this was nearly three and a half years, or the first half-week; but the Jews not believing in Christ, when the beast comes and makes a covenant with them, he does so as if only the sixty-nine weeks were run out, but I know that sixty-nine weeks and a half have run out. And so I believe that there is left only one half-week for faith.

Ques. Was there not John Baptist's time of testimony?

But where do you find that John Baptist was testifying half a week before Christ?

Ques. Then will they have to go over the half-week again?

Yes; but the godly ones will not own it.

When the antichrist comes, the mass receive him and the remnant do not; then the beast, or little horn, in league with antichrist, begins to persecute them, and at the middle of the week, the sacrifices are taken away, with all else, and the Jews as a nation are put down. They say the saints are given into his hands; but Daniel 7:25 says, "He … shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand"; i.e., the times and laws, but not the saints. There we see what takes place; the Jewish sacrifices and all are put into his hand. "Shall… think to change times and laws." That is abstract.

The seventh angel sounds (v. 15) and Christ takes His power. And the twenty-four elders say, "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty … because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." And here we

have the whole thing going right on to the new heavens and the new earth.

Ques. Would, “change times and laws,” be like to cherubic action?

Yes; just so, like it. Power has come in (v. 18), and the whole thing is finished, going right on to the millennium and beyond. It takes in everything. The last verse really belongs to chapter 12. There, the temple of God is opened in heaven, and the signs of His power are seen.

Ques. Would you say, then, that “the time of the dead, that they should be judged” refers to the “great white throne”?

Yes.

Ques. And the giving of rewards, too?

It does not say here what they are, but it includes the great white throne. The rewards are to “Thy servants,” and “to the saints,” and so on. It is the general description of the result of Christ’s taking His power.

We come now to the development of things in connection with Israel; then, to antichrist; and then, to the last days. Chapters 12-14 go together; they give a summary of the whole thing as between Satan and God, Jerusalem being the subject.

Jerusalem is seen clothed with the sun, i.e., with power; she has upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and the moon (i.e., that which had been reflected light under the old covenant) put down under her feet.

Then a son is born.

The dragon, the power of Satan in the form of the Roman empire, stands ready to swallow up the child.

But he cannot touch the child, for it is caught up to the throne of God. There we have the church with Christ, and in Christ; and the woman flees into the wilderness.

I get here a purpose of God, and in the woman fleeing away, the oppression of Jerusalem in the last days.

Ques. Is that the same thing as in Ezekiel 20?

No; there, the ten tribes are seen in contrast with what we have here. The ten tribes are brought into the wilderness of the people, and there is all the difference between them and the Jews, for the ten tribes are passed under the rod, and brought under the bond of the covenant. We can see in this the righteous judgment of God in His ways, because the ten tribes, never having rejected Christ, are not put under the antichrist.

Ques. Is "the forest of the south field," in Ezekiel 20:46, Jerusalem?

I do not know; I should rather think it was Egypt. In the next chapter, we find Israel and Jerusalem. Revelation 12:6 shows how the last half-week begins. There is, next, war in heaven; Michael and his angels fight against the dragon. The devil is cast out, and thereby loses his anti-priestly character. As the accuser of the brethren before God day and night, he was anti-priest; but he has still his anti-kingly and anti-prophet characters. It is all over with his accusing; and there is no place for him any more in heaven, though he has place on earth. "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them," i.e., heavenly saints, including those martyred and taken up after the church has gone.

The dragon begins then to persecute the woman, and she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, i.e., three and a half times, or the last half-week.

Ques. What is the difference between the “fleeing” of the woman 1260 days, in verse 6, and what is said of her in verse 14?

The first is the general statement of the “dramatis persona” as they say, of that which is to happen to her; and then, in verse 14, we learn how it is to happen. The beast comes out of the bottomless pit; one of his heads had been wounded to death and was healed; because so far as the world’s history is concerned, the Roman empire had been destroyed and was now revived, and so all the world wondered after the beast. Power was given to the beast to continue forty-two months, and this being so, 7 do not understand how he can continue eighty-four months. Note that we have here the imperial beast, not the antichrist.

Ques. Is one the anti-king?

Two horns like a lamb is so far anti-king.

Ques. What is the difference between this beast of verse 2, and the fourth beast in Daniel 7?

In Daniel 7, it is a description of empire, but here, we find him in his last form. The one is more a temporal thing; but, in the other, we see all the moral mischief.

Ques. Should there not be some alteration in the reading of verse 8?

It should read, “Whose name had not been written from the founding of the world in the book of life of the slain Lamb.” As it reads in the Authorised Version, it is very good theology, but it is very bad teaching.

Ques. As to the “dwellers on earth,” will there be any people upon earth in that day who will be called dwellers in heaven?

We are dwellers in heaven; but these saints are too late to have that character completely; still, as they have suffered under the beast, they will be taken up.

The proper character of Christians is that we dwell in heaven; we are strangers on the earth, although actually on it. After the church is gone, the “earth-dwellers,” properly speaking, begin; but during the period that our chapter speaks of, if a saint is killed, he loses blessing on earth, and would lose blessing in heaven; so there is a supplementary taking up of such to heaven. To this class would belong those who had not worshipped the beast.

Ques. Are they not killed?

The beast goes to make war with them; he does not kill all of them, but all he can catch, he kills. The remnant of her seed is just that; when the dragon sought to destroy the woman, it was more the providential action of God that kept her safe; but all of these saints that the beast can catch, he kills.

Ques. Does the Lord refer to this time, when He says, “Except those days should be shortened,” etc.?

Yes.

We find, next, a second beast. The first beast had power, and a throne, and authority; but with the second beast there is found proper devil-power, as you may say; this last-named comes up out of the earth, not out of the sea. He sets up to be Messiah the King, but if anyone listens to him, it is the devil: “He spake as a dragon.” It is the

direct power and influence of Satan amongst the Jews, though his mischief goes out wider still.

Ques. Is this second beast like the horn of Daniel 8?

No, I think not; that horn will come, I suppose, at the end of the Alexandrian kingdom, and from the part of Turkey in Asia.

This second beast makes fire come down from heaven; it is very solemn testimony. In 2 Thessalonians 2:9, the same words are used in the Greek, for the works of the one whose coming is after the power of Satan, as those used for the proofs of the Christ in Acts 2:22: “Power and signs and wonders”; that is to say, the same things given to prove the Christ, are given also to prove the antichrist! The things given to prove that Jehovah was not man, but the true God, these same things are what antichrist does. When Elijah was to prove the true God, he says, “The God that answereth by fire, let him be God.” And fire comes down, licks up the water, and consumes the sacrifice.

Antichrist will do all this—but in a lying way, of course.

Ques. Will his power extend beyond the Jews?

His mischief will. He causes all to receive the mark, and that is very wide; but it is within the Roman empire.

Ques. What is the number “666”?

I do not know; it will come out in its proper time. Chapter 14 begins at Jerusalem (Zion), and we find here a company that has gone through all the troubles and sorrows, because they would not worship the idols; they are, therefore “virgins.” They are not in heaven, but they learn the song that is sung in heaven. They have been spared, and they follow the Lamb whithersoever He

goeth; they have a special privilege more than those who have had no trouble at all.

Ques. Are these the same as in chapter 20:4?

No; in that passage, we have all the raised and heavenly saints.

Ques. To whom does the number “666” belong?

To the first beast; at least I have always taken it so. The moment the first beast of chapter 13, i.e., the throne-beast (in verse 2, “seat” is really “throne”) goes to the east, the second beast, that is king there, is then seen more as a prophet. Prophet and king are both earthly characters, and as soon as the devil is cast down from heaven, he comes out in these characters.

Then, in chapter 14:6, the last gospel goes out to the heathen. The everlasting gospel is not our gospel; it is, I believe, the gospel concerning the Seed of the woman that is to bruise the serpent’s head; and that is now about to take place. “Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” God is here seen as Creator according to Psalm 96.

Then comes another thing and that is, the fall of Babylon, and it is followed by a warning about worshipping the beast.

Ques. What is Babylon?

Popery. But it may have daughters. As a Romish priest once answered one who told him Rome was Babylon, “But who are her daughters, then?”

Next, Christ comes; and we have, first, distinctive, separative judgment; and then, vengeance judgment; i.e., harvest and vintage. The winepress is trodden without the city. And thereupon the whole scene closes.

Chapter 15 begins a new thing. “I saw another sign in heaven,” etc.; and I get no sign but the seven last plagues in which is filled up, not the wrath of the Lamb, but the wrath of God. The difference is in the full character of it. God judges corruption, and uses instruments; but the Lamb comes in chapter 19 to execute judgment. Fire is always judgment; and glass is not for a man dirty with walking to wash in (v. 2). Here, they stand on purity, having gone through the fire to get at it. The sea is the same as in chapter 4, but here, it is with fire. They sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb: “Great and wonderful are thy works, Lord God Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, O King of nations.” Then come the last plagues of God upon the beast (see chap. 15:6 to chap. 16:2). Pouring out on the sea, is upon the masses of peoples; and “upon the rivers and fountains of waters,” is upon the moral principles which give an impulse to their movements. All becomes blood.

Ques. Are these judgments the same as the trumpets?

No, of course not; these are the last plagues. Then we see that the sun becomes an awful tyrannical despot. All is wretchedness and darkness. There is no conversion or repentance here. It is poured out, too, upon the beast’s throne (not merely upon his “seat”). The way of the kings of the east, whoever they are, is next prepared, that is, preparation for the wars and battles of the last days.

Then three frogs come forth; they are the spirits of devils, gathering all to the battle of the great day. People ask, What is this gathering? Well, at least, the devil is not the gospel gathering; it is the gathering power of evil. Nor is this the same as the close of chapter 14, which carries us through from the beginning to the end. It is another series, shewing all that takes place in the beast's country before the closing judgments.

In chapter 17, Babylon is a fresh object of government.

Ques. How is it that Babylon, which begins as the head of civil power, has here this other character?

That is hardly the correct idea of Babylon. She is noticed in the Old Testament for fornication and corrupting the nations. (Note that the vintage does not take place until all this is over.) When Great Babylon comes into remembrance, the judgments of God within the limits of the beast are closed; chapters 17 and 18 are a kind of appendix. We find the same thing with the description of Jerusalem, when he says, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Here, in chapter 17, we have a particular description of that which has been already judged: "Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters."

Ques. Why does it say, "into the wilderness" (v. 3)?

Because there, all was desolate and unproductive, no grass, no blessing, nor anything of the kind. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her (v. 2), just as they are now doing with Rome.

Ques. What is scarlet?

Grandeur, I suppose; purple is more royalty. Upon her forehead was a name written, “Mystery, great Babylon, the mother of the harlots, and of the abominations of the earth.” “Abominations” is idolatry, so used of Chemosh, and so on. It is the woman that is drunk, in verse 6, but it is the beast, the civil power, that does the wickedness. What a remarkable trinity of evil do we find in the dragon and these two beasts! The first beast was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit; it is a kind of resurrection; and then he goes into perdition. He was, and is not, and yet is.

We have here a description of Rome; the heads spoken of are different characters of Roman government, for this beast carries government.

The ten kings (v. 12) receive their power one hour with the beast, but this is not the breaking up of the Roman empire by the German power. The German nations upset the beasts entirely, while here they are all found together. It is Babylon, i.e., Rome. These different nations give their power to the beast. The Lamb overcomes them, but you have saints coming with Him: “They that are with him, are called, and chosen, and faithful.” These are men, i.e., saints. “Chosen and faithful” might be applied to angels, but not “called.” Angels are not “called.”

Ques. “Many are called, but few are chosen”?

No; that is called by the gospel, and is quite another thing.

“The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” John was astonished to see this. Then, in chapter 18, we have the complete pulling to pieces of Babylon. She is destroyed

by the nations as such; the authorities of the nations are troubled about it; and the infidel power which comes up at the end is astonished at it as well.

Ques. Do the ten horns destroy the power of Rome?

Well, it is the nations rather than the kings, because the kings of the earth mourn over it; when the crash comes, they are distinct. The ten horns are not here the individual kings, for these latter are sorry, because they have lost the means of governing.

We have passed over one thing in chapter 12:10: “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.” This is at the beginning of the three and a half years; that is to say, as soon as ever the evil power is cast out of heaven, and before the earth is made clear. And here, in chapter 19:1, 2, much people are saying, “Allelulia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments j for he hath judged the great whore.” etc.

Then follows the marriage of the Lamb. And heaven opens, and, in triumph, He comes out on a white horse, at any rate to victory.

Ques. But will the saints in heaven return to earth to find their place on it?

They will not come back to the earth, unless, like the angels, there is anything for them to do on it.

In chapter 19:15, we have a quotation from Isaiah 63: “He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” And His title, “King of kings, and Lord of lords,” is also displayed. In Timothy we read: “Which in his times he shall shew, who is …King of kings, and

Lord of lords." This refers to God. But here, in the Revelation, this same title is given to Christ. Again, the "Son of man," in Daniel 7:13, was brought to the "Ancient of days," whilst in verse 22, the "Ancient of days" came. This shews Christ to be Ancient of Days. In both these cases, the title of God is applied to Christ.

Ques. Would you say a word as to the righteousness of saints (v. 8)?

It should be plural, "righteousnesses," and it means, I believe, that God owns their practical walk. The language in the Revelation is very Hebrewish, and it is the custom in Hebrew, in moral things, to put the plural for the abstract idea.

There are no angels seen acting here; it is those who are associated with Christ as His companions.

Both the beast and the false prophet are destroyed; and then Satan is bound, and cast into the bottomless pit.

After this, comes sessional judgment.

Ques. Do you refer to Matthew 25?

It includes not that only, but also the judgment that goes on through the millennium. Satan is then let loose, and he deceives those amongst the nations who have not been kept by grace. He gathers them around Jerusalem, and fire comes down and destroys them all. The judgment of the wicked dead follows.

Ques. It says in chapter 22:8, that John fell down at the angel's feet to worship him?

Yes; but the Lord has guarded us against the worshipping of angels.

Ques. What is the judgment of the “great white throne” in chapter 20:11? Is it sessional?

Yes; this is all sessional; I mean verse 4 as well as verse 11; and all through the millennium they are sitting on thrones.

Chapter 21:1-8 shews us when God will be all in all; it is, God shall do this, and God shall do that. The mediatorial kingdom has been given up. Everything is closed.

After this, John turns back, and gives a description of the heavenly city, just as he had already done of Babylon. In chapter 21:8, the warning is given that closes all; and then it is too late to change.

Ques. What is the “book” in chapter 22:7?

This book, i.e., the prophecy of the Apocalypse.

Ques. Should it not read, in verse 14, “that wash their robes”?

Yes; in the Greek it is not “do His commandments,” but “plunontes tas stolas auton.”

Ques. Is not the transition from an angel to Christ remarkable?

Yes; but the book is closed. And He says, “I, Jesus, have sent mine angel,” and then He adds, “I am.” “I am,” is not prophecy.

He does not say here to the church “I will come”; “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

In verse 17, we have the whole circle of the church’s affections and activities. “The Spirit and the bride say,

Come," i.e., we have the coming Lord, and the Spirit in the church, leading it to say to the Bridegroom, "Come."

Then, addressing herself to the saints, she says, "Let him that heareth say, Come"; and next, the testimony goes out to those who are but half-awakened, "Let him that is athirst come"; and finally, the gospel message is to everybody, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The bride has the water of life for herself, but she has not yet the Bridegroom.

Ques. "Him that heareth," who is that?

Any Christian that hears. I am looking first of all for Christ; then, I can say to Him, "Come"; and then my heart goes out to the whole world; "Let him that heareth," join in the bridal cry, and say, "Come."

We see here what the heavenly bride is. Jerusalem is but an earthly thing.

Ques. Are the Old Testament saints found here?

We cannot say that, because the Spirit is in the bride. The bridal cry is in anticipation of conjugal affections; it is the state that should characterise us now.

Notes on the Revelation

If we look at the Book of the Revelation generally, we shall see its division into three parts:—

In the first part, we find not so much the divinity or the humanity of Christ, as His personal or official glory (chap. 1).

In the second part, we see Christ judging the seven churches (chaps. 2 and 3).

In the third part, we have that which takes place after the church has been removed (chaps. 4-22).

In the addresses to the seven churches, it is interesting to note that what is taken up by the Spirit of God is so presented that there should be nothing to check the expectation of the Lord's return at the time these letters were written, and still less so now.

And so elsewhere. When the Spirit of God speaks of the Bridegroom not tarrying, He takes the things then present, and uses them as existing on to the end. It is so in Matthew 25, where the same virgins go to sleep and awake; and in the parable of the talents, the lord, at his return, requires at the hands of the same servants that with which they had been entrusted at the first.

And thus it is in the seven churches. The evils seen therein at the end were there at the first.

Ques. Does that shew a cumulative responsibility?

I do not doubt it does. All the blood shed from Abel to Zecharias was to be required of that generation; Luke 11:51. And in Babylon was found the blood of all that had been slain upon the earth; Rev. 18:24.

After the seven churches, we find that which characterises the Book of the Revelation generally is the throne. In chapter 4:2, “A throne was set in heaven,” and in chapter 1:4, it is grace from before His throne.

Ques. What is meant by “to come,” in that verse?

It does not refer to futurity of time, but to the coming One. “Which is,” i.e., exists; “which was,” i.e., has been revealed in time; and “is to come,” i.e., the coming One.

Ques. Why is the “garment down to the foot”?

That is, as not in service. You have here a transitional aspect of Christ; there is no crown upon His head.

In chapter 4, the throne is that of Daniel 7, but with a larger development. It is not simply for judgment or government, for we find seraphim as well as cherubim.

Ques. What is the special difference between the two?

A cherub is the instrument of God’s judicial power upon earth; like the cherubim which stopped the way to the tree of life; Gen. 3. But in Isaiah 6, we find the seraphim, and there it is, not merely a throne governing in respect of responsibility but, God revealed in His own character; and so the seraphim cry, “Holy, holy, holy “; this was to bring man as man into God’s presence, whether clean or unclean, and it goes right beyond Israelitish government. It was government, but as having respect to God’s own nature in its holiness, and not merely to the particular revealed ways in which God dealt with Israel.

You do not find God saying to Israel, “I will punish you with the Assyrian”; but it was according to the terms in which He had made a covenant with them.

And it is so with us now. As life and incorruptibility are brought to light by the glad tidings, so God's wrath is "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

In the seraph, then, we have, not exactly the executioner of governmental power, but the nature of God coming out. All this is seen in the living creatures; they are cherubim, but with the attributes of God; the heads of creation are also seen in them (which is cherubic), man, lion, bullock, eagle, and they are here used as symbols of the throne of judgment.

Observe that, in this connection, we have nothing to do with the name of "Father"; the names used being those of the Old Testament; neither in Isaiah 6 is there anything to do with grace.

Cherubim are thus indicative of the government of God upon earth; seraphim, of His nature.

We find them both in Revelation 4, where the living creatures are of cherubic character, but crying, "Holy, holy, holy." Seraphim, means, "burners."

Ques. What is the character of the seven Spirits of God?

They indicate wisdom, power, etc., i.e., all that is necessary for this government.

Next, we find the heavenly saints sitting on thrones ("seats" should be "thrones"), round the throne; they are seen here as kings, and, in the next chapter, as priests.

Ques. Why are the cherubim said to be in the midst of the throne?

They are the pillars of the throne; in the Psalms we read, "He sitteth between the cherubim." These same

creatures are found in Ezekiel, and God is sitting on the top of them.

It is very noticeable that the sculptures which have been brought to this country from Assyria largely represent these attributes of God, which have been worshipped there, but there is no God upon them.

Ques. Are the cherubim, the church?

They may, or they may not be. In chapter 5, the beasts are identified with the church—saints, and the angels are viewed as a distinct, outside company.

The Lamb's taking the book marks the beginning of the coming age, though it is not actual as yet. Unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the habitable earth to come. Up to this time it is in subjection to the angels, but here no longer so; and we pass from angelic authority into saint authority. There are no angels in chapter 4, but in chapter 5, beasts and elders, and angels, worship together.

Ques. Are, then, the beasts symbols?

Yes, they are true symbols; for if they were persons, there would then be but four.

People try to make pictures of such things; but suppose you have seven heads and ten horns, as in Daniel, how can you put them together? How can they fit?

Another thing that strikes me is, that you never get angels giving a reason for their worship, but the elders, i.e., saints, do say why they worship.

I regard the church as the instrument of the power which is symbolised by the beasts.

Ques. “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” Does that come in here?

It will be part of it.

I do not take the Lamb in chapter 5:6, to be the Redeemer in character. He is the Redeemer, but this is not the feature of His humiliation that comes before us here. He is seen, not as Redeemer, but as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, and as such, He opens the book.

Ques. What are the seven horns and the seven eyes?

The perfection of power and the perfection of intelligence.

Ques. What is the difference between these eyes, and the eyes of the beasts within, as in chapter 4?

It is quite distinct action; here, they are sent out into all the earth; but in the other, it is divine perception of every thing—the direct government of the earth, in contrast with the indirect government of God as now. In chapter 4:6, the thought of the eyes is that of all-seeing; but in chapter 5, it is governmental intelligence. “Without,” i.e., as seeing events; “within,” as seeing by divine intelligence.

“Eyes within” are a real thing now; the spiritual man judgeth all things; we now have the mind of Christ; and, as to range, we shall not have more in the millennium. The church depends now, in point of fact, upon her spirituality. “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”

There is a perpetual contradiction between my place before God, as in the new creation, and the

circumstances of my body, which is still part of the groaning creation.

In chapter 4, it is the praises of creation, and in chapter 5, the praises of redemption.

Ques. In chapter 4, have we the resumption of God's action on the earth?

Not exactly; we see that the thrones are set in view of, all that is going to follow. When you get God in heaven, you must have that which is according to God in heaven, and therefore the seraphim are brought in here. When, too, man fails in his place, God comes out according to what He is in Himself. Just as, in the first three gospels, we have the presentation of Christ to men in their responsibility and their rejection of Him; so, in the last gospel, there is the bringing in of God.

Ques. But is not the gospel of John limited to the Jews?

No; "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world."

Ques. But has not such an interpretation been put on John's gospel?

Whenever you put an interpretation, you go wrong; there is a remark of one of the old fathers (so-called), to this effect, that "he reads Scripture well, who brings back a sense from it, and not one to it."

In chapter 6, the dealings of God, when the horses come out, are in view of the Lamb.

It is not God, but the kings who say, "the great day of his wrath is come"; this is not really the end, though it has been so taken.

In chapter 7 the church is no longer here; the closing verses do not refer to us, for it all takes place after the church is gone. It is a striking evidence as to the state of souls, that this description should be taken to be that of the highest kind of blessing, whereas, after all, it is blessing for those saints who will be found on the earth after the church has been removed. A frequent use of this passage is that which makes God a mere Comforter of man now, just relieving man where he is. Of course, it is blessed, because it is really consolation from God.

The presence of the temple shews it is not the church. Yet these saints will have the advantage over those who have their origin in the millennium, because they have had to go through the great tribulation in which they have learned most blessed experiences of God. At the present time, the church has dropped down to the condition of earth, so that Christians have assumed all this applies to them. It is not so, because it is written of those who have come out of the great tribulation.

Ques. If the church is already gone from the earth, where does this multitude come from?

Clearly from the peoples still living upon the earth.

Ques. What is the nature of the “everlasting gospel”?

It is an immediate warning of judgment, something like John the baptist’s gospel.

Ques. Does the great multitude include the hundred and forty-four thousand?

No. This is not the time of Jacob’s trouble of Jeremiah and Matthew 24, though contemporary with it. The great tribulation comes on all the earth, and is confined to the three and a half years.

It is my own conviction that in the Revelation only the last half of the seventieth week of Daniel is referred to.

Ques. What are the “white robes” of Revelation 6:11?

The sign, I suppose, of acceptance in righteousness. The sixth seal has the character of an answer to their prayer.

From Psalms 93-100 we can see the character of the everlasting gospel. Psalm 93 exhibits Jehovah reigning, and the throne established in holiness after all the raging of men.

Psalm 94 is a cry in distress for Jehovah’s coming in vengeance, and for the power of wickedness to be set aside.

Psalm 95 is a last appeal to Israel to come to Jehovah as their God.

Psalm 96 is a testimony that goes out to the Gentiles because Jehovah is coming.

Psalm 97 is Jehovah actually coming in the full power of His reign.

Psalm 98, that He is come; and that He remembers His truth to Israel, and sets aside their enemies.

In Psalm 99 He is seen sitting between the cherubim in Jerusalem on earth.

Psalm 100 is the call to the Gentiles to come up and praise.

Ques. What is the silence spoken of in chapter 8:1?

That after the terrible shaking at the end of the sixth seal, there is no action in heaven’s mind.

Thereupon, another angel—Christ—comes and stands at the altar, and gives efficacy (this is, I believe, the force

of it) to the prayers of the saints. It struck me, the other day, that when we see the saints as priests, they do not pray at all. But here, when Christ is priest, He adds incense and gives efficacy to the saints' prayers. These latter are suffering saints on earth; chap. 8:4.

In the first four trumpets, we have judgments on the state and circumstances of people. God is here clearing the ground. Christ is not seen in action through these scenes, His proper judicial action not being manifested until chapter 19. The Lamb does not anything more here than to open the seals. This continues to chapter 11:17, and then, in verse 18, we are carried right over to the end of all.

In chapters 12-16 we have the opening out of fuller details, with chapters 17 and 18 added as an appendix to the two previous ones (chapters 15 and 16).

After which, Christ comes out, and the final scene is then displayed.

In the earlier trumpets we have, I believe, the judgments of the western nations j and in the fifth and sixth trumpets, that of the eastern nations. The seventh trumpet closes up everything. In the first four, the state of things is touched. Grass represents general prosperity. In chapters 9 and 10, people are attacked. The contents of the little book of chapter 10 are found in chapter 11.

Possession is about to be taken of everything, and the angel, therefore, declares there shall be no longer delay; chap. 10:6 (New Translation).

Then follows the last persecution of Jerusalem. The holy city is trodden under-foot forty-two months; whilst from

chapter 13:5, we see that the beast continues for the same period. The forty-two months and the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, I take to represent the same space of time; if it were not so, the second verse should follow the third verse.

The only place where we have the whole week distinctly mentioned is in Daniel 9. He does not say how long after the sixty-two weeks, the cutting off of Messiah takes place. But to us, and to faith, Christ's ministry was the first half of the seventieth week; and that is just what unbelieving Jews do not own. Notice, too, that in Daniel 7:25, the times and laws are given, not, as some have said, into the hands of the saints, but into the beast's hands.

Ques. Do you think that the first book of the Psalms refers to the first half-week?

Yes, I do. Observe this, that when Christ came, the nation would not receive Him, though a remnant did; but when the false Christ comes, it will be the reverse of this, for then the nation will receive him, but the remnant will not.

There will be both worship and testimony during the forty-two months.

Ques. If the forty-two months and the one thousand two hundred and sixty days be the same period, why is it not forty-two months also in verse 3?

In verse 3, it is given in days to shew the constancy of the testimony, which is a daily one.

We must remember that all computation of time is Jewish, and not at all for the church; we belong to heaven, and we do not count time in heaven.

Ques. What about the children of the saints, after we have been caught up, if they have refused the truth?

In that case, they will be lost; but if they died now, it would be just the same thing.

The best thing for us is to have a heavenly portion and hope to draw our hearts out of the world; but so often it is by the candle of the Lord that we are driven out of it rather than by the drawing of the Daystar.

In chapter 11:19, God is giving a heavenly security to His covenant with Israel.

In chapter 12, the sun is the emblem of supreme authority. A circle is a divine thing; a cube is finite; you never get to the end of a circle, but you do to a cube every way.

To the woman a child is born. Then the devil, in the shape of the Roman empire, wants to devour the child, which is caught up to the throne of God, whilst the woman is left to persecution. This introduces the three and a half years. The devil is cast out of heaven at the beginning of the last half-week.

Ques. Is the woman Judah only?

She is Israel as well; for she has a crown of twelve stars. Chapter 13 gives us both the persecution and the instruments of it. We find there, also, a second beast, whom I believe to be the antichrist, because he has two horns and he speaks like a lamb. In chapter 12 the devil is anti-priest, accuser of the brethren, but here, he is seen as cast out of heaven, and consequently, no longer as anti-priest; so he takes the place of long arid prophet; it is false, of course. The two horns indicate power, rule.

Chapter 14 gives the process of God's dealing at this time; first, the everlasting gospel is proclaimed, and then the Son of man comes and reaps the harvest.

In chapter 7, we find a mystic number of all who may be gathered from east, west, north, and south; but here, in chapter 14, it is those who have been specially faithful in time of trial. They learn the heavenly song, though they are not in heaven. It is then too late to be taken up to heaven, unless they are killed, and they therefore follow the Lamb upon earth. They are the first-fruits on earth, just as we are the first-fruits in heaven. Chapters 12-14 g° together. In chapters 15 and 16, the vials of God's wrath are poured out Chapter 15 begins before the end of chapter 14. 'Each angel,' implies that there is a distinct testimony borne. And notice that there are seven distinct testimonies found in chapter 14.

Babylon is the evil of corruption, but the beast is the evil of power. Each is a centre; only the corrupt system rides the beast, and is finally destroyed, not by the Lamb, but, providentially by God.

In chapter 17, we have the connection of the beast with Babylon; and in chapter 18, the judgment of Babylon. Observe, too, that though the beast was the killer of people, yet all the blood of prophets and saints was found in Babylon, just as of old all the blood shed from Abel onwards was found in Jerusalem.

Corrupt religionism is the most hateful thing of all to God.

In chapter 19, the marriage of the Lamb is come, followed by Christ coming out and destroying the beast. It is Christ's coming and taking power.

In chapter 20, Satan is bound; and then we have the millennium and the resurrection of the wicked dead.

The eighth verse of chapter 21 finishes, properly speaking, the prophecy. From verse 9, we have the description of the heavenly Jerusalem; and then, lastly, warnings.

And just as, at the beginning of the book, we have the relationship of the church with Christ, so again, after the book is ended, do we find the same thing.

Ques. Is there any connection between this Jerusalem and that mentioned in Hebrews 12?

There, we have Mount Zion, which is royal grace on earth in contrast with Sinai; the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem; an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly; the church of the first-born which are written in heaven; God the Judge of all, not in sovereign grace, but power in judging; so, next, just men are brought in; then, the Mediator of the new covenant, which introduces earthly blessing; and, lastly, the blood of sprinkling.

Ques. But did not Abraham look for that city?

Yes; not that I believe he has it, but he looked for the blessing that accompanied that state of things.

Ephesians 5 settles for us who is the church, the bride, the Lamb’s wife; and also what is the heavenly Jerusalem.

Lecture At Rochdale

Deuteronomy 16

There were three great feasts when all Israel had to go up to Jerusalem.

Other feasts there were, such as the Sabbath constantly, the new moons, and the great day of atonement; but these three, the Passover, Pentecost or Feast of Weeks, and the Tabernacles, were solemn feasts in this way, that they were the gathering times of the people who all had to go up to keep them.

We shall see that whilst, in the bringing of the people thus together before God, there is a thought common to all, each of them has a different character.

As is well known, we have a distinct antitype to two of these feasts: “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us,” and, “When the day of Pentecost was fully come”; but of the Feast of Tabernacles we have had no antitype, i.e., there has been no fulfilment of it. The true Passover has been sacrificed, but the great gathering of the Feast of “Tabernacles” has yet to come; people will then own Christ to be their Passover, who will not have done so hitherto. That is, however, still future.

But there are important features for us in these three feasts. Notice that Pentecost is in immediate connection with the unleavened bread rather than with the Passover. It was then that they offered the first of the first-fruits, type of Christ risen from the dead; and from the time of putting the sickle to the corn, they counted seven weeks, i.e., typically, to the Church at Pentecost. On the day of the first-fruits they offered ears of corn

without leaven; but seven weeks later, when the first-fruits were offered, leaven was put in the two cakes, because there the Church was, in type, offered to God.

But they could not be burnt at all. Our bodies are offered to God, but they are not like Christ—a sinless, unleavened victim.

Leviticus 2 gives us this more fully; there, they were to take fine flour, mingled with oil, and anointed with oil, and so on. That is Christ without leaven or honey; no sinful nature and no sweetness of nature could be allowed in sacrifice. In Christ, there was no leaven and no honey, nothing but the perfectness set forth in the oil and frankincense. "Mingled with oil"— "that holy thing which shall be born of thee"; then, "anointed with oil"—Jesus of Nazareth anointed "with the Holy Ghost and with power." In the end of the chapter, we find the oblation of the first-fruits offered to the Lord. Salt was to be offered with all their offerings, that is the separative power of holiness as consecrated to God. The Lord refers to it in Mark 9—the separative power of holiness by the Spirit of God.

Then there was a meat-offering of green ears dried by the fire; this typified Christ offered up in His perfectness, and with only sweet savour coming out of the sacrifice.

But in the case of the two cakes of the first-fruits, a sin-offering was offered with them, which met the question of the presence of the leaven. The two cakes were first offered with seven lambs for a burnt-offering, i.e., Christ in pure perfectness; then came the sin-offering as meeting the leaven, "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves."

But let us turn to the character of the Passover. This was first held when Israel was coming out of Egypt, and for seven days they were to eat unleavened bread.

It is also one of the feasts in Leviticus 23; and in verse 10, you have the time of the first offering of the wave-sheaf— “When ye be come into the land,” etc.; and it was to be waved on the morrow after the Sabbath. That was, in type, when Christ was raised from the dead. Seven weeks later on, the wave-loaves were offered. The coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost connects itself entirely with this new place of man, and the church is viewed in the wave-loaves. In Christ is seen the new place of man in resurrection. After He had been “made sin” for us; after death; after the judgment of God had been passed upon Him, God raised Him from the dead. Having perfectly glorified God as to the wickedness of man, Christ is then raised from the dead; and now, consequently upon what Christ has done, man is in a wholly new place before God. It is a new state and place altogether. Lazarus came back into this world; but this is, in Christ, a totally new state. The responsible man having failed, God has met that failure in the death of Christ; He then raises Christ from the dead, and thus puts man into a totally new condition altogether; death hath no more dominion over Him, for He is in a place which is the result of having perfectly glorified God.

That is where Christianity begins.

The offering of the first-fruits introduces this, and the Feast of Pentecost is connected with the first-fruits, i.e., seven weeks from that day; and the coming of the Holy Ghost likewise connects us with Christ in that new condition. This is what I would press upon you.

You may turn to what was in the Passover, where man as man is a judged and condemned race. But the pride of man is such that he refuses this, and seeks to restore himself as he is. They make Christ coming into the condition of the children of Adam, as if it were to raise up men as men.

This is all false. On the contrary, it is a totally new place altogether into which Christ has entered. It is all over with the world, and God has proved His righteousness in setting Christ at His own right hand.

The righteousness of the Father has come out. As the Lord says, “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee.” The righteousness of God has been proved, not only in resurrection, but in setting Christ at His right hand. The world had cast Him out and slain Him. There where we find the fruit of righteousness, is in a Man sitting at the right hand of God.

God does not wait until the future when His Son shall come in the glory of the kingdom, but now already, in virtue of Christ having glorified God in the place of sin, there is a Man at the right hand of God. Man’s malice, Satan’s power, God’s judgment, and God’s love were all made manifest at the cross.

God has thus been perfectly glorified as to everything. He has been glorified in infinite love. Resurrection, now, is the first grand thing. Christ has been raised again for our justification. But God’s answer to His work was not complete until He had set Him at His right hand in glory.

There is now man in a new state altogether, consequent upon death and judgment having taken place.

All was settled at the cross.

I was one of the poor sinners who brought Christ there; but now I am not in the flesh at all; I am in Christ where He now is. My place and state is no longer that of a child of Adam.

For the old thing there was no remedy. It was tried without law, and under law, and by prophets. Stephen sums it up when he says: “You have broken the law, killed the prophets, crucified Christ, and resisted the Holy Ghost.” That drew out their enmity; they stoned him; he went to heaven. That is the historical beginning of the new thing.

What I still press is, that it is man in a totally new state as to his place with God. But we have not yet got this as regards our bodies.

Now let us turn and look at the state of soul connected with this. In the Passover you will see this state of soul. There was to be no leavened bread, nor were they to eat any for seven days. Bread of affliction was connected with it. If you look at holiness, which you must have, is it not the bread of affliction for you? Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord, but alas! I am not holy. The unleavened bread of sincerity and truth is connected with affliction.

Then mark another thing connected with the Passover in Deuteronomy 16:7: “And thou shalt cook and eat it at the place which Jehovah thy God will choose; and in the morning shalt thou turn and go unto thy tents.” No communion, no joy, no fellowship—not a bit. Unleavened bread is the bread of affliction. They were saved, but that is all, taking it as a present thing. They were a people in bondage and slavery, and God was going by as

Judge; but the passover-blood shut God out from them, I mean, the blood on the doorposts. How can I escape judgment, for God must have holiness, and I have none? Well, there is the blood, and God will not come near me, and so it is the bread of affliction.

Conscience is always individual.

Many a true soul finds his happiness in the contrast between what he has got out of, and where he has got to. And what has he got into? Into the wilderness.

This is constantly the case; the blood saved them from God's judgment, and that was all. Are there not many in that state? He sees he is ruined in Egypt, and that God is here as a Judge; that is the way he thinks of God, and the blood-shedding has met him in that state, and he is safe. I am glad he is. Look at the hymns that are sung, and where do you find anything more than the simple fact that I have got out from the ruin?

But conscience and justification must be individual; so they had to go to their tents and remain there.

The condition of many a soul is that of merely looking to get safe out of Egypt when God is acting as a Judge in respect of sin. Many true believers, alas! are not clear that God as a Judge does not now reach them in their sins. They certainly have no Pentecost, and still less have they any Tabernacles. They go to their tents, so to speak, where God is to them only a Judge. They see love in Christ in doing that which was needed to meet the judgment of God; and since it is met, they are therefore safe. Of course, that is perfectly true, and it is the foundation of everything. But we have not that only, but we have also the Holy Ghost, and that in our new place in the risen Man. That which characterises the Christian

position is the presence of the Holy Ghost and the waiting for Christ to come again.

Having drunk that dreadful cup, and having glorified God as to sin on my behalf, Christ has entered heaven as my Forerunner; and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, indwelling me, is what associates me with Christ where He now is at the right hand of God, and unites me to Him also. So that if death itself come, it is gain to me.

What, then, about my sins? They are put away.

What about righteousness? Christ is it.

And the Holy Ghost has come down with this blessed testimony, to bring me into the full sense of the effect of what Christ has done, and of the place He has now taken as Man. Christ is my life, and the Holy Ghost identifies me with Him; “He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.”

The sufferings of Christ are over, and He has entered into the glory as Man in consequence; and now what? The Holy Ghost is given to us, and we know our relationship; as the Lord Himself declared it, saying, “I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.” The babes in Christ know the Father; they cry, “Abba, Father”; but it is not until they have received the Holy Ghost. “Ye are all God’s sons by faith in Christ Jesus,” and, “because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

Again, in John 14, the Lord says that, “in that day” i.e., when the Holy Ghost is come, “ye shall know that I am

in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." We shall know it, that is what He says.

All springs out of the love of God. What is the proof? He gave His Son. How do you know it? By the Holy Ghost. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

So the day of Pentecost is brought to us.

And then, what about the inheritance? The Holy Ghost in us is the earnest of it.

He throws back all the light of divine knowledge upon what Christ has done, and makes known to us perfect, present, divine favour and that we are loved as Jesus is loved. We understand thus our place, and we live in it day by day.

If I believe that the blessed Son of God became a Man and died, was made sin for me, and suffered in my stead, then I can say there is nothing too great for me; He will freely give me all things; I am become part of Christ's glory. Supposing Christ were in His glory without His redeemed! Where would be the glory of the Redeemer?

"Seven weeks shalt thou count: from the beginning of putting the sickle into the corn shalt thou begin to count seven weeks. And thou shalt hold the feast of weeks unto Jehovah thy God with a tribute of a voluntary offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee."

Now then, it is that I come with a freewill offering.

There was no freewill offering at the Passover.

But the Holy Ghost having given us the knowledge of what is ours in Christ, He enables us now to carry up a

freewill offering from the heart, just as Israel did when put into possession of Canaan. It is not merely what we are saved from, but what we are saved to; that which fills up the affections and the heart. I know I am in the favour of God, that is the present grace wherein we stand. Christ dwells in me, and I in Him, and I come with these first-fruits to God. The heart comes to God and the Father with the things it has got from God and the Father.

The Feast of Tabernacles is not fulfilled at all, because it gives us the actual result in full. But Pentecost produces grace in power in the heart. Still, I am to bring "according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee." I may be in a cold state —the crop may be a bad one, and I have not much to bring. But even so, "Thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God"; you do not get that at the Passover. Not that I have forgotten that I was brought out of Egypt. Far from it. The spirit of grace in the power of the Holy Ghost makes the soul rejoice in it: "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt." I remember that I was once a captive, and that I have been set free in the power of the Holy Ghost.

As to the Feast of Tabernacles, if you look at John 7 you will see how the Lord acts there. His brethren say to Him, "Go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest"; "shew thyself to the world." But He answers," I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come." In the last day, however, that great day of the feast, i.e., the eighth day, which the other feasts did not have, "Jesus stood and cried, saying If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he

of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" There we see that, pending the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles, those who came to Christ should receive the Holy Ghost. The Feast of Tabernacles came after the harvest and after the vintage, i.e., after the judgment at harvest, discriminating between wheat and chaff; and after the vintage, which is simply pure vengeance—the indignation and wrath of the Lord God Almighty. But at the Feast of Tabernacles all that was over; and so they dwelt in booths, etc., etc. It prefigured in an earthly sense just the rest of God for the Jews. The time for its celebration had come in the seventh chapter of John. But we have a much better rest, and therefore there was an eighth day; and that is for us. It belongs to that which is new and heavenly, after judgment and vengeance are past. We were strangers, and pilgrims, and wanderers, but now we are such no more. Judgment is past, and here we are to enjoy the land. For us, of course, this is the heavenly thing.

The risen and glorified saints are the centre of heavenly blessing; just as the Jews will be the centre of the earth in the millennium. In verse 14, we read, "Thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord (Jehovah) thy God in the place which the Lord (Jehovah) shall choose: because the Lord (Jehovah) thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase"—not according to thine increase now, but

“in”— “and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.”

God’s rest and everlasting joy, that is the Feast of Tabernacles.

We have the Holy Ghost, which brings us into the present enjoyment of our relationship to God; and, what is yet more, He shews us things to come.

Because the Lord has blessed us in everything, we can keep the feast; besides which, coming things are shewn to us.

How can I understand what He says, “Set your affections on things above, and not on things on earth,” if I do not know what the things are?

Now, instead of the Feast of Tabernacles, Christ gives the Holy Ghost; but when the Feast of Tabernacles is come, Christ will shew Himself to the world; He could not do so then, as He told His brethren; but everything will yet be fulfilled.

And now arises this question as regards what we have been speaking of: How far do our souls realise, not only present grace and favour, but also our portion in that which belongs to us, so that our conversation is in heaven? It is only this that will take our hearts out of earth.

It is part of the very condition in which a Christian stands, that he should know the things that are freely given him of God. They are revealed unto us by the Holy Ghost. People think them so great, and wonderful, and blessed, that they cannot be known, but the Apostle shews that is not true. They are not revealed in the Old Testament, but they are to us Christians. No doubt one

Christian may see and enjoy more of them than another; we may differ as to spirituality; still, we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, “that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” It is expressly for this that we have received the Spirit. Many are the things thus revealed to us in this way. Christ, and Moses, and Elias were seen talking together on the mount; and therein was revealed something of that which is yet going to take place. Moses and Elias go in to there from whence came the Father’s voice.

We get a multitude of things in that way.

The Lord says, “The world seeth me no more, but ye see me”—not with natural eyes, of course.

Again, I shall see every one of you as perfect as Christ’s heart would have you be; is not that a joy revealed and known now—that we shall be like Him absolutely? Fully glorified; and it is only by the Holy Ghost that my heart gets hold of this.

Down here, I have to watch every step of the way, lest my feet get into the mud; but there is no mud in heaven; I shall be walking there upon the street of gold, where all is holiness, and there I cannot pick up anything else. Is that not something newly revealed to us?

I see that Christ is going to give me a white stone and a name written on it that nobody knows hut the one who gets it; there is a special interest between me and Christ, just as I call my child by a pet name.

And we shall sit upon His throne. But that is a lower thing. The Holy Ghost brings all this with living reality to

our souls. Only, remember that now we walk by faith, and not by sight.

Never to lose the Lord, never; for ever to be with Himself, with the One who has drawn my heart to Himself, with the One who loved me and gave Himself for me!

But up there, I shall not want to think of myself, because sovereign grace will have made me like Christ.

For ever with the Lord; no longer to wish for Him, or to hope for Him, but to be there, and, in the highest sense of it, to sit down under His Shadow with great delight, and His fruit to be sweet to my taste!

The Lord could not keep the Feast of Tabernacles, but nevertheless the Holy Ghost was to be sent down, so that there should be acquaintance with divine and heavenly things, and also that we should know the things that are freely given to us of God. Abounding in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost; having our affections set on things above, and not on things on the earth.

Mark the character that this will give, even to our worship. So often it is, “I was once a poor lost sinner, and here I am washed and saved.” But is that all? Suppose there was a storm destroying everybody, and that I found shelter in a house, am I only to say, I am saved from the storm? Have you found nothing in the house into which you have got? Yet how many are in that state!

What is the level of our intercourse with God? There is divine favour and present grace, but if we are really walking with God, He will lead our souls into

acquaintance with these things, which as yet are matters of hope, and He will shew them to us.

In this feast, which the Lord could not keep, the Holy Ghost is given to us that our hearts might live in the power of what He reveals; and when the Lord comes, it will be to put us in full possession of that which our hearts have been in meanwhile, for now is our conversation in heaven.

Thus even the holiness of our walk here is identified with our hope there.

Can our hearts, and how far can our hearts, look up above and outside of this world?

We have to plod through the world, of course; I know it. Christ had to go through it, and He did so for us; and now we follow Him through it, so that at least the character of our passage through it should be the manifest effect of our citizenship being in heaven. There is such a thing as having, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, so that we should be living where Christ sitteth, the One who has gone to prepare a place for us. We have to pass through this world; but where are our hearts, beloved friends? Can we say that our associations of life are all up there? Is that where our hearts are living? Does our worship bear the stamp of our conversation being in heaven? The stamp of the happiness and blessedness which is the expression of our association with Him there? “The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Let us, then, remember that the blessed Lord has spent Himself for us that we might have the unseen; and also that He has Himself entered there as our Forerunner.

Lecture

Luke 12:35-53

The Lord had been warning the world in the previous part of this chapter. There was the folly of those who sought their pleasure and comfort in it; and He says: “Seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

Now what distinguishes the Christian is this, that by the revelation of what is not seen, he is borne up out of this world altogether. He has, of course, to pass through it, but, as a Christian, he does not belong to it at all. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” Redemption being accomplished, this gives us a title, like the poor thief, into Paradise; but even so, we are strangers here, as in Hebrews, and we seek a country. There is nothing settled or established in this world; from the very beginning, its spirit has been that of seeking rest, whereas God, in judgment of it, has made us strangers.

It was all over with Cain, and as God said to him, and as he also said, he was to be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. He declared he was made a vagabond, and then he went and built a city in the land of Nod, i.e., vagabond.

Man was driven out of Paradise. Cain was jealous of Abel, and God’s judgment had come upon him; but he went out from the presence of the Lord and built a city and settled himself there, calling it by his son’s name. The next element is “cattle,” i.e., wealth; then, artificers

in brass and iron; and then comes the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

Sin had made man a stranger to the Paradise of God, and so man sought to make for himself a rest.

But that is not quite all; for when the blessed Lord came into this world, man not only saw no beauty in Him, but man cast Him out and crucified Him.

And so as to the world now. Not only the world exists as the result of man being driven out of Paradise, but its present state is the consequence of his having driven God out of it, when He came in grace into it. That gave an occasion to God for the unfolding of all His ways; but the moment the Son of God was rejected, then the moral history of this world was closed.

Yet the Lord could say, “Now the prince of this world he shall cast out”; and He broke the power of Satan, though Satan is still the god of this world. “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” The world has not come to an end yet, but in the rejection of Christ, the blessed Son of God, man’s moral history came to an end, and he is now treated as lost; not so lost that he cannot be saved, but lost as to his moral condition, and thus he now stands before God.

God has come down to this world and He says to man, not merely, where art thou? or, you have done this and that, but, what have you done with My Son? That is what He has to say to the world now; and what can the world say to this?

Christ came in goodness. Even Pilate asked, “Why, what evil hath he done?” But man cast Him out. And I cannot

take up Christianity now without saying, the world has rejected Christ. That is the position in which the world is; it has rejected Christ, and man is lost.

But God said to Christ, “Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” And the Lord Jesus Christ, rejected by man, is sitting at God’s right hand as Man, expecting until His enemies are made His footstool. Patient grace is working meanwhile to call sinners to a knowledge of the salvation which He has wrought.

First, He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and then, “Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” But that will surely be judgment for those who have rejected Him.

We stand between the first coming and the second coming of Christ; the first being when He accomplished redemption; and the second being the full fruits of it, including also the judgment of the dead.

Christianity is characterised as having this position between these two comings.

The prophets had prophesied beforehand of the sufferings of Christ. Look for a moment at 1 Peter 1:10. I only refer to it as regards the order of things. The prophets before the sufferings (and so, of course, before the glory), searched their own prophecies in order to understand them, and it was revealed to them that they ministered them to us; and they are now reported to us; they are not yet come, so that Christianity is not the accomplishment of the things themselves. The things are reported in the gospel by the Holy Ghost come down, and we are therefore to gird up the loins of our mind,

waiting for the grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

This is simple and clear; they searched their own prophecies, and they found that the grace they spoke of was not for them, but for us.

But now, Christ is personally glorified at the right hand of God, and the Holy Ghost has come, and we are walking here by faith, not by sight.

When the Lord was going away, He put the disciples into this place, knowing that the effect of it would be opposition from the world.

Peter testified; “whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand.”

And so the Lord says, “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee.” He had revealed the Father perfectly, but the world would not have that revelation; they rejected it. He had been faithful, and then, through accomplished redemption, He goes back to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

We have, then, this great fact, that the Lord Jesus has gone back as Man, having accomplished the work of redemption, to sit at the right hand of God. The One upon whom all had depended has finished the work, and accordingly He has gone to sit at the right hand of God.

He has finished it, as regards His friends, and just because it is finished, He has sat down.

Of old, the priests were ever standing, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which could never take away sins; but this Man, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down, i.e., He sat down in

perpetuity at the right hand of God. He is now sitting upon the Father's throne, expecting until His enemies be made His footstool. And, as regards His friends, i.e., all believers, it adds, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

In consequence of this, the Holy Ghost has come down. He never came until the day of Pentecost; just as the Son of God never came until the incarnation. There was a going and a coming, as He says, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."

But before the Holy Ghost could come, man must be in the glory of God; and the great fact is that man, the blessed Man, the Son of God, had been glorified in the glory of God, before ever the Holy Ghost came.

But on the day of Pentecost He did come to all them that had believed. There we have the Christian position. God had prophesied before of it, but God's word is a different thing from the accomplishment of the fact. Looked at as promises, "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." But there is more than that, He was the Object of the promises.

There was no promise to us that Christ should die for us; it was not a promise to us that He should ascend up into heaven; Psa. 68. But He is sitting at God's right hand. What was testified is, "Thou hast ascended on high." Christ has come down here, and, dying and rising, is now set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

All was testified beforehand, and all has now been accomplished. The world rejected Christ when He came, but God has set Him there in glory. Man saw no beauty in Him— He was wounded for our transgressions—but

He has glorified God in His death, and is now glorified of God at His right hand.

So that if my sins brought Christ to the cross, the consequence of it is that they are all put away. He “bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” If I go to God and acknowledge that my sins brought Jesus there, under His holy judgment, then they can never bring me there. The whole thing is completely finished, not merely for lawless people, not merely for law-breaking people as the Jews (and practically many people are now under the law), but God has stepped in, and settled the whole question of sin. Christ has come into this world and died, God manifest in flesh, so that I might be able to trust God in love, that I might say: Though I cannot trust man in the world, he is so vile, I can trust God who sent His Son; Christ has wrought such a work that He Himself who did it is at the right hand of God in righteousness. Here is the fact; it is not a promise.

There are precious promises to help us along the road more easily; but this is a fact. When I come to say, honestly as a sinner, my sins brought Christ to the cross, and that God has carried Him to His right hand, then do I know He is not sitting in my sins at the right hand of God. That is no place in which to sit in sins!

He glorified God on the earth. He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.” The more we look at the cross of Christ, the more we shall see that everything that is in question as to good and evil has been all settled there.

In the cross, I find man in absolute wickedness, i.e., as hating God come in love; for God had come not to judge the world, but to save the world.

The prince of this world came, and led both Jews and Gentiles to get rid of Christ. Man is against Him; Satan is against Him; but Christ is perfect in it all, “that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.”

You have man here in absolute (it is hard to say perfect) wickedness, together with Satan having complete power over the world, getting rid of the Son of God; and though they hated Him without a cause, yet He goes through all in perfect obedience, shewing thus absolute perfection in Man.

If we turn to God in this scene, we find perfect love to the sinner. All that man can be in perfection is seen in the Person of Christ, and also all that God is in His holy, righteous nature against sin, and in His perfect love to sinners.

So, every way, God is perfectly glorified in the cross; and every question has been settled there.

We find there both the perfect judgment of God against sin, and the perfect love of God towards the sinner.

If God had cut off Adam and Eve, it would have been all very right, but there would have been no love in that, and if He had passed over sin, there would have been no righteousness.

In the cross, and in nowhere else, you get all moral questions perfectly settled. It is the absolute bringing out of man, and of Satan, and of God.

And there all is settled.

Now God has owned that, in that He has raised Christ from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand, as Man, in the heavenly places, i.e., after that He had by Himself purged our sins.

The great truth remains, that when everything had been morally settled, man is found at the right hand of God; and in this, too, God has displayed His righteousness.

Then, the Holy Ghost is given upon the earth, the One who, when He is come, shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The Saviour came in grace; but the coming of the Holy Ghost testified to two things: first, that, having finished His work, Christ was gone for ever; and next, that He was gone so that God could set Him at His own right hand.

In John 13, speaking of the cross, He says, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him,” i.e., as Son of man, as well as Son of God. As God has been perfectly glorified in Christ on the cross, so God will perfectly glorify Christ.

Then comes the work of the Holy Ghost given down here. The Spirit of God brings to a man’s conscience his own individual sins; but He convinces the world “of sin, because they believe not on” Christ; “of righteousness, because I go to my Father,… of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” There is the testimony and proof of righteousness, because there is One who is a Man, who, in the very place of sin, sinless but “made sin,” perfectly glorified God; and God has perfectly glorified Him.

That is the whole thing.

At His first coming, He died, was raised again, and was glorified in virtue of what He had done. All was finished first of all, and then the Holy Ghost came down.

Christ, who bore my sins, is now as Man, at the right hand of God in glory, and down here, the Holy Ghost is the witness that He is there.

That is our place, and, through the Holy Ghost we have received, comes the knowledge of that perfect love of God in which He did not spare His own Son.

What this accomplishes, then, is this: it puts me in the place where Christ is, and therefore, even from John the Baptist's father, we learn it was "to give knowledge of salvation unto his people." It is by the Holy Ghost that this knowledge comes; and I know that Christ is at the right hand of God, and also that He it is who bore my sins; if the work had not been complete, finished, accepted, He could not have been there, but it was God who raised Him from the dead.

And, the Holy Ghost given, that is where it puts those who believe. It is given to believers, i.e., it is only the portion of those who do believe.

It is the presence of the Holy Ghost which gives me the consciousness of the place I am brought into.

Here I get infinite, perfect love; for God gave His Son to be a man, and He died for me that I might be in glory; and He told me, when risen, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God."

'We are all the sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ.' That is the force of those words in John, "To them gave he power to become the sons [or the children] of God." Then again, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth

the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." It is my place through Christ's work, and the Holy Ghost has given me the consciousness of it, for God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into my heart. I cannot call a man 'Father' if I do not know whether I am his child or not.

Then I learn another thing by the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, and that is, I know that I am in Christ; that, of course, is perfect acceptance. "At that day"—i.e., when the Comforter is come, for they could not know it until then— "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you," John 14.

People say, you cannot know; but the Lord says, "Ye shall know." Who am I to believe? "Ye in me, and I in you." Well, then, I know I am in Christ, and that is perfect acceptance. You must condemn Christ in glory, if you condemn the believer, for He is in Christ. The Spirit is given to us that we may know Christ is in the Father," and ye in me, and I in you."

"But if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin: but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

I get perfect acceptance, and, with it, the character of responsibility; we are the epistle of Christ.

It does not say, ye are to be, but ye ate the epistle of Christ; and the world ought to read Christ in you, as they might read the ten commandments on the two tables of stone.

Mark, it is not responsibility as to our acceptance; we are in Christ; but if that is true, the other side is also true. "Walk worthy," therefore, "of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."

And again, in Colossians, where he speaks in the most definite way as to our acceptance, “giving thanks unto the Father, which, hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” he prays that they “might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” He takes the Lord there as the One in whom it all is.

There is another character of responsibility in Ephesians: “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”

Now God, the Lord, and the Spirit are thus to be the measure of what suits us in this world.

Another thing: “He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.” There is no need of taking us on the side of conscience: “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” There I find what constitutes the Christian; the foundation is in Christ; the body of the Christian “is the temple of the Holy Ghost,… which ye have of God”; and so, “after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” Having been washed from my sins by the blood of Christ, the Holy Ghost makes my body His temple. That is the Christian position consequent upon redemption; it is the Christian place, and thus I have to walk as Christ walked.

Forty days after His resurrection, the Lord ascended, and then He sent the Holy Ghost down here to dwell in those who believe, “whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

We know that He does dwell in us because we cry, “Abba, Father.”

We look to Christ, and we know we are in Him; but the presence of the Holy Ghost is what characterises the Christian, not, of course, in his inconsistencies, but as a Christian.

If your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and you are bought with a price, how, then, can you go and sin?

The believer is left here in this world as the epistle of Christ, and the life of Jesus is to be manifested in him. This is his responsibility.

He knows his place; he cries, “Abba, Father”; the love of God is shed abroad in his heart; and he knows his relationship with God. He is in Christ, who is sitting at the right hand of God, while the Holy Ghost dwells in Him as His temple.

But if children, we are also heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

Christ being in me, my business now is to shew out Christ down here, and it is my privilege to suffer with Him. Having the Spirit of Christ in me, I cannot pass through a world of degradation, and sin, and misery without feeling in some real measure what is the scene through which I am passing, and what is its opposition as well as its character. Thus, having received the Holy Ghost, the Christian passes through the world as not being of it, and as having his conversation (i.e., living associations) in heaven.

Christ “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world,” and so I am called to pass through this world; supposing Christ had been

crucified last night, well the question is, am I going on with the world that crucified Him, or am I going on with Him?

Again; I must have the Holy Ghost to know that I am accepted with joy. I cannot look up and say, “Even so, come,” unless I know that my redemption is settled; and then I find that Christ is all, and in all; He is everything to us as Object, and He is in all as the power of life and joy.

Having washed me from my sins in His own blood, He has become everything to my soul.

I cannot find a thing in Christ the value of which has not been spent upon me.

Let me remark one thing here, and that is, that we know whom we love if we do not love Him enough. If anyone says, “I love my mother, and I think I love her enough,” I say, “You wretch, you do not love her at all.” But if a child says, “Oh, I do not half love my mother, for all her care, and painstaking, and labour for me,” I say, that child does love its mother.

So it is with the Lord and us; and we long therefore to see Him. This characterises the Christian position; the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven, and we know that we are sons; He dwells with us consequent upon accomplished redemption; Christ has thus become precious to us, and the second thing, therefore, that characterises the Christian is, that he is waiting for Christ; I say this advisedly.

Look at the Christian in the Christian place; not merely he has knowledge that characterises him; but he is waiting for Christ to return. The Thessalonians were

converted to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. Nothing can be simpler or plainer. All the various thoughts and feelings of Christians are connected with His coming again. Take the end of each chapter in 1 Thessalonians.

The first chapter connects His return with conversion;

The second, with Paul's ministry;

The third, with holiness which will be manifested at His coming;

The fourth, with the death of the Christian.

The Lord shall come, and the dead shall be raised first, and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them; and then the apostle adds, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words"; but go and tell that to many a Christian now, and he will think you out of your mind!

I cannot go into all these points; but I just take one, "To wait for his Son from heaven." Not merely shall I be happy in heaven, but the Lord says, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." It is striking how it changes a person's feelings, whether it is, as people talk, that I am going to heaven, or that Christ is coming for me. Going to heaven is never spoken of in Scripture. The nearest approach to it is in the case of the dying thief: "With me in paradise." Going to be with Christ is what you do find. "Absent from the body,… present with the Lord" is blessedly true for us; but that is not quite the same thought. Not that the going to heaven is not true, but where there is only this before the soul, it shuts out the thought of Christ's coming for us.

If I die, I go to be with Him; but if I do not die, then He comes and takes me to be with Him.

And therefore, the calling of the church, the hope, the object, the thing before us—and this is what a man lives by—is the Lord's return, for that which characterises a man is what he is going after.

What was the calling of the ten virgins? To go out and meet the Bridegroom. But what about die dear good men who died a hundred years ago? They fell asleep like the virgins. And what awoke the virgins? At midnight the cry came, and they all arose and trimmed their lamps; that cry woke them all up.

And herein is the test of everyone's state: Supposing the Lord should come to-night, am I ready to meet Him? I do not know when He will come; but it says, "in such an hour as ye think not."

Are our hearts, our thoughts, and our affections in good order? Are our lights burning? Are we confessing Him before men? Are we like men that wait for their Lord? For to such He comes and knocks, and opens to them immediately. That is the character we are to have.

Talking about prophecy is all very easy and interesting in its place, but when a soul has got salvation, then there are two subjects in Scripture; the government of this world, and the sovereignty of grace which takes poor sinners and sets them in Christ. Prophecy refers to the government of this world, and the Jews are the centre of that; but as for the Christian, I find that he is predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. When will that be? If I die first, I shall go to be with

Christ, and that is blessed; but it is not what Scripture calls conformity to His image. When will that take place?

“We know” —a word that Scripture is fond of, for the Holy Ghost is come— “we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” That is when I shall be conformed to His image; and so I am going to be really like Him!

Meanwhile, we are to be like Him in spirit, and in view of that we must realise that “our conversation is in heaven.”

We have, then, this blessed truth, that Christ is coming again to take us up to be with Himself, that where He is, there we may be also.

Again, we find that when the Lord was caught up, the disciples were looking up into heaven, and they were told that “this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

Time will not allow me to multiply passages; but I see the calling of the Christian is to be waiting for Christ to come: “Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord.” And I only ask you, if you were waiting for Christ, would you care to heap up money to meet Christ with?

I add a word or two about the details of it; the Lord here speaks in a double way of His return to shew how fully He would develop it.

Firstly, those are blessed who wait for Christ to come. We belong already to heaven and to what is eternal, although we do not know when Christ will come and take us there. Are our hearts taken out of this world, as out of a place from which He has redeemed us, so that

we are watching for Him to come? The word of His patience is so called because He is expecting; and, if He is, of course we are. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; though of this, the world is willingly ignorant.

Secondly, those are blessed who are found watching. What characterises the Blessed One, does also characterise those who are waiting for Him; they are watching to open for Him instantly He returns.

Then follows the statement of the blessedness of those who are so watching.

When the Lord cometh, “Verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” He spreads the table for them in heaven, and then He sets them down at it. He spreads it with the best things of heaven; and not only so, but He comes Himself and ministers to them. But until I do come, He says, you must have your loins girded, and your lights burning; presently I shall have it all My own way, and then I will have you to sit down to meat, and I will serve you Myself! What a thought that gives us of the love of Christ! Of course, it is only a figure, to shew us He will never cease to minister the fullest blessedness to His own.

The Father has given all things into His hands; and so He takes a towel, girds Himself, and comes, and washes His disciples’ feet; just as if He said to them, I want to have you with Me; and while you are down here on the way, you must be clean enough for the place where I am going. So, again, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” That is for now.

When their hearts are no longer watching for Christ because they are with Him, He will make them sit down in blessedness, and He Himself will minister to them.

Here is, indeed, the reward of labour; and a wonderful place it is that we shall have in the kingdom as the "heirs of God, and the joint-heirs with Christ." When He takes the power and reigns, we shall reign with Him. But as to our intrinsic blessedness, the Lord girds Himself and makes us to sit down to meat, and then comes Himself to serve us!

When the Lord is speaking of watching and waiting for Him, He appeals to our affections, to encourage us to wait; and when He comes, He will make us enjoy the blessedness of heaven. He is not going to rule alone over the works of His hands; we are joint-heirs with Him. He is the firstborn among many brethren.

Then comes a word of warning upon which I must not enlarge. "But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming," this is pretty much the position of the professing church; not that men say, He will not come, but they do not look for Him as a present thing. And so they "begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken"; i.e., they go on ruling and governing the world, and enjoying it, too. Then "the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." It is one in the place of a servant, who says, "My Lord delayeth," and then his Lord comes when he does not expect Him.

It is the judgment of the professing church.

You thus get the broad fact, that where the Lord's coming is deliberately put off in the heart, such an one will have his portion appointed with the unbelievers.

In watching for Christ, the heart's affections are drawn out to Him; that is the great thing; and then, He will set us down, and come forth to serve us.

Meanwhile, there is service for us here; but still His heart's delight is to serve us, and never will Christ be satisfied until He has us in the same glory with Himself.

He is now sitting on His Father's throne, waiting, but soon He will come and receive all true believers unto Himself, that where He is, there they may be also.

At first, Christians were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven; then they went to sleep and lost the expectation; that which woke them up was the cry of the Bridegroom.

And now comes the question for us: Are we waiting, and are we watching for Christ?

I do not believe this question has any relation to time. The government of the world, interesting enough in its place, has nothing to do with it.

There is no event between me and heaven. Plenty of events there are, but they belong to this world, and we do not. And the practical question for us is as to how far are our hearts up to this?

The world has rejected Christ; but He will return, and we shall then come with Him; but the proper portion of the Christian is for Christ to take him to be with Himself.

We who are believers, through grace, we do not half believe in the interest Christ personally takes in each one of us.

We have to go through the world, but can we say that we are watching for Christ?

Do our hearts answer to the love that Christ has to us now?

Are we answering to that love by waiting and watching for Him, because He is going to have us in the glory with Himself?

May the Lord give us to be as men that wait for their Lord: “Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching!”

Lecture 2

Luke 12:35-48

This world is in a state of ruin, the result of man having distrusted God and sinned and of his being driven out of Paradise. No one can shut out the fact that the evil is here. Outward things prove it. What is the magistrate for if there is no evil to stop? There it is, and God has dealt with it. He called out Abraham, He gave a law, He sent prophets, and He sent His Son. Yet the world has gone totally wrong. There has been great development in it, no doubt, such as telegraphs and railroads, arts and sciences, and so on, but all that is just what Cain set out to do because he was away from God. People will tell you, there is no harm in it. Why no, of course, there is not. The harm is in the use we make of such things. The trees in the Garden of Eden were good enough in themselves, but they were not intended for Adam to hide himself from God behind them. If I strike a man dead, the harm is not in my strength in itself, but in the use I am making of it. What is wrong in music? The sounds are beautiful, just look around in this great City and see the purpose music is serving at public houses, etc., etc.

Adam sinned against God, and Cain sinned against his brother, and then he builds a city in order to make himself as comfortable as he can without God. Workers in brass and iron and music are found therein. And the difficulty now is that Christians do not understand that they are to be witnesses of grace in a world that will only last for a time and then it will be given over to judgment.

People talk of the progress of the world! Well, I do not deny it, but what will that be to you when you are dead? For the next generation? And where will you be when the next generation comes? All sorts of conveniences have been made, but then are people morally nearer to God by these things? The moment they are used to make the need of reconciliation to God less important to people's souls, they are simply Cain's works. There may be hundreds of things yet to be found out, but can anybody say that my soul is in a better state before God because of telegraphs and other inventions? But directly my soul learns that I have got to do with God for ever, I have a sense of what I am.

The truth is that God has brought light into this world, which tells me everything that concerns me for eternity, whilst it leaves other things where they are. And in the Christ of God I find that which gives me a relationship that shall last for ever. Thus God has dealt with this world as with a world that has departed from Him, and yet He has dealt with it in perfect grace.

And Christ coming into this world has become a servant for the believer. He says, "I am among you as he that serveth," that is to say, to glorify God and to save us. As taking up our cause, He has set Himself to carry this out, and to be, eternally, the minister of blessing to us according to God. Alone with God He has done all that which was needed, for He has been "made sin." God cannot allow sin, and so Christ gave Himself for our sins that instead of putting me away for my sins He might put my sins away for me.

The effect of this is that Christ has become everything to us who believe, and our hearts are taken out of this

world altogether. Christ is sitting at the right hand of God and faith follows Him there in Spirit, so that now we do not belong any more to this world. Quite true, we have to go through the wilderness, but it is with the consciousness of belonging to Christ outside of it.

Well then, Christ has redeemed us from this present evil world, and the more we see the world making progress, the more we need to learn that Christianity consists in our being Christ's and not the world's. The world that I am in, but not of, is the world that has rejected and crucified the Son of God. The Christian is to be gracious in the world as Christ was, but his heart is with Christ. How blessedly this works! It brings hearts down that have had too much of this world and it lifts hearts up that have much of sorrow and trial. "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: but the rich, in that he is made low." Christ fixes our hearts upon Himself, outside of this world.

And we are to be as men that wait for their Lord. The meaning of "lights burning" is, that we have a distinct definite profession so that men should know what we are. "Your loins … girded," is the practical application of the power of the word. Christ looks for the distinct and full confession of Himself in word and deed, and also that your hearts should be all right and in order. Loins girded and lights burning should characterise Christians in the world. Truth in the heart and a good confession of Christ. It is an astonishing fact that nobody with a false religion is ashamed of it. A Mohammedan will say his prayers while he is making a bargain with you. And yet how many a true Christian is ashamed of Christ! But the Lord wants us to be as men that wait for their Lord. Are our hearts really waiting for God's Son from heaven? I

do not talk of understanding the prophecies—very blessed in their place—but the Morning Star is what belongs to us, a heavenly Christ who has given His life for us. As, then, we are found looking to be with and like Christ for ever, this helps us to go through this world. The character attaching to the Christian is, then, that of watching. It is not understanding prophecy, but it is attachment to Christ as having got the promise that He is coming so that we are waiting for Him. Such have found Christ precious to them, and they say, “Oh, that He would come!” Are we Christians, then, as men that wait for their Lord? If the Lord were to come to-night, would He be able to say of each one of us, “there is a blessed servant”? Remember He is waiting more truly than we are. Christ has become our servant—love likes to serve, and selfishness likes to be served—and He never gives up His service. In this wicked world we must keep our loins girt, whilst so watching, but when He comes He will gird Himself and make us sit down. Not merely shall we have the best in heaven, but we shall have Christ Himself to minister to us.

He adds another thing. “Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” Here we have the service of Christians. We have had the state, now it is the service; we have just to fill up the little niche He has put us into. So, accordingly, the promise here is different: “He will make him ruler over all that he hath.” This is not the best of heaven ministered by Christ to us, but it is the kingdom; “you must come and reign with me.” The perfect love of Christ is not merely satisfied with ministering to our happiness, but all that is His own He makes ours.

Now what has brought in the evil around us? Just this, “My lord delayeth his coming.” If we were really waiting for Christ, would we be heaping up money and property here? Would we be really glad if Christ came to-night, I mean as to the state of our hearts? Ah! the shaking that will next come will be the shaking of the things that can be shaken, so that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. The Lord give us to have our loins girded and our lights burning, and ourselves to be as men waiting for their Lord!

The Lord give us to know Him in His love as manifested down here in the efficacy of His work on the cross, and then, whilst waiting for Him, to have our hearts looking up to Him and longing to be like Him!

Jottings

An inward quickening is never treated as salvation in Scripture. Salvation is not, in a strict sense, the Holy Ghost's work, but Christ's work. Nor does Scripture ever confound salvation with eternal life. In the case of Israel, you distinguish at once their escape from judgment by the blood upon the doorpost, from their salvation by a Saviour-God at the Red Sea.

Ques. How would you distinguish between individuals now, say, in the case of two who both declare their faith in Christ? Are you to say one is saved, and the other not?

I do not know that it would be my place to say anything about them; though, with all love to both, I might yet see that which would indicate their respective positions. For instance, one of them might kneel in prayer, and so speak to God as Father, that I should know he had the Spirit of adoption; but I might find the other in similar circumstances crying out, "Lord, have mercy on me!"

Regeneration is a word used with little apprehension of its meaning. It occurs but twice: in Matthew 19:28, where it indicates the new condition of things on the earth; and then in Titus 3:5, where "the washing of regeneration" refers, I believe, to a change of state or condition, not to life at all.

You may often see a quickened soul delighting in holiness, but dreading to be damned, because he fears he has not holiness enough.

But if a soul be saved in the New Testament use of the word—I mean really saved, not merely quickened—then,

unless God give up such a one for chastisement, I believe he never gets into real uncertainty again.

Ques. What is meant by, “hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins,” 2 Pet. 1:9?

There, it is a question of practice; if my child is dressed to go with me to pay a visit, but runs out into the mud, “Oh,” I say, “you have forgotten that you were dressed to go with me.”

But let me say, I would far rather see a person in deep distress, than hear anyone saying confidently, “I am saved,” who is at the same time taking things too easily.

Ques. What is meant by salvation being brought to Zacchaeus?

Why, Christ was in the house. People have mistaken this scene altogether; they fancy that Zacchaeus was shewing the Lord what the effect of the word was upon himself. I believe he was just telling the Lord what his life had been up till then, sayings as it were, ‘This is what I am, will not that do?’ Christ says in reply, “This day is salvation come to this house.”

Reading On

The Lord’s Second Coming

The coming of the Lord is connected itself with the whole life and ways of the Christian, and we will now look a little into this.

I turn to it not simply to bring proof of His coming, but to see the way in which it is connected with all the thoughts and with all the feelings of the Christian’s life. Read the close of 1 Thessalonians 1.

The more we search into the scriptural history of Christianity, the more we shall see it is a totally new thing introduced into the earth. The coming of the Lord had been prophesied of, as we know, but that is a very different thing. The Son of God having come, everything is put upon an entirely new footing.

Thus, God never abode with Adam; He placed man in the garden of Eden, but He did not dwell there. It was no question of righteousness or of holiness. Adam was neither righteous nor holy, but he was innocent—a very different thing. He gained the knowledge of good and evil by eating the forbidden fruit. Then he was turned out of Paradise, and the world continued under probation, during even the time of Christ’s life, up to the cross, to see whether the first man could be recovered or not, and only proving that he could not, that no means at God’s disposal could recall man back to Him.

But the while, when God came and revealed Himself more directly in Israel, and set up something in the world, then there came out these two great facts, viz.,

that God did not come out to man, and man could not go in to God.

The veil was there, and God was behind the veil, and it was death to man to go near Him.

That was a solemn thing. If man kept God's law, he got a blessing, but still God did not come out to him. Once a year the high priest went in; the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest. And so we find that God did not come out, but declared Himself in thunderings and lightnings to alarm consciences at Sinai.

He sent the people a law, but He never came out to them Himself, and carefully shewed that man could not go to Him. Man had got away from God, and could not go in to God.

The very thing we have in Christianity is exactly the opposite. After it had been proved that man, as man, was irrecoverable, then God did His own work, and the vail of the temple was rent in twain, so that consequently we have now boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. God did come out in Christ, and Man, in Christ, has gone into the glory of God.

This is a total change in the footing and relationship of man with God.

Of course, when this is all declared, man is doubly guilty if he rejects it. It is no promise of something that should be, but it is the fact God has come out to man in grace, and Man has gone into the glory of God in righteousness.

This is altogether a totally new thing.

And this is where the Christian stands.

There is no going back to the tree of life in the garden, no attempting to meet responsibility, but it is the grace of God that bringeth salvation—a totally different thing.

While God came into the world as man (in Christ, I mean), He was totally alone; “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.”

It may be current teaching, that He was connecting Himself with man, that is, in humanity as man is, but it is utterly false. “Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” It was morally the end of the world. And now that God’s work of redemption has been accomplished, a Man is sitting down in His glory.

This is a totally new thing.

Until Christ was here, an obedient Man on earth, there had never been a man to whom heaven could be opened; but then it was; and the Holy Ghost as a dove came down, and God the Father owned Christ as Son; and then He stood entirely alone in this world. It was in grace, but still it was alone, until at the cross redemption was accomplished; and then He could say, “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”

The “old man” was rejected; and now, having accomplished His own work by Christ alone, God can have the vail rent, and heaven opened, and the Holy Ghost sent down upon those who believed.

It had been the Holy Ghost working in the creation. I believe in the immediate agency of God in everything in the world. Then Christ said, “If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God.” All that is true; but it was consequent

upon the accomplishment of redemption that the Holy Ghost came at Pentecost. And this is Christianity. The Spirit was working in the world until then; but when Christ had perfectly accomplished redemption and Man was sitting on the right hand of God in righteousness, then the Holy Ghost could come down, and dwell in those who believe. And thus the living associations of the believer are all in heaven; “our conversation is in heaven.”

Instead of God not coming out, He has come out; and instead of man not being allowed to go in, he has gone in. And the Holy Ghost is given to us that we may realise these things.

Redemption is accomplished, and, in spirit, we go in. We have the certainty that if we die before the Lord comes, we shall go to be with Him; that is all settled; but the purpose of God is that we should be conformed to the image of His Son in glory. We shall get that when He comes, and never till then. That is what is always set before us. Even as to our present walk in holiness, we are identified with Christ, but there is no perfection for the Christian at all but being in the same glory as the Son of God.

Our passage through this world is no part of God’s purpose; it is part of God’s way, but His purpose is simply to put us in Christ, and for us to be perfectly like Christ in the glory which He has as Man. Of course, He cannot communicate Godhead, though we are made partakers of the divine nature; but we are to be like Him in the glory into which He has entered.

This is the purpose of God.

So, in His way. He does lead us through the wilderness, with senses exercised to discern between good and evil.

If you look for a moment at Exodus 3, and also chapters 6 and 15, you will see there is no hint of the wilderness at all. It is from Egypt into Canaan at once. God takes us out of the flesh, and puts us in Christ in heaven. These things as to Israel are written for our admonition.

The wilderness formed no part of God's purposes for Israel. And so the Lord takes the poor thief straight to Paradise; he never had any wilderness at all. Habitually we do go, more or less, through the wilderness, but in Colossians 1, what is true of the thief is true of all Christians—not that we are without discipline or exercise; but it is, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light"—made us meet—fit—all the Colossians, i.e., all Christians, though no doubt they may be, and they are, in different states of spirituality and the like. We ought to grow every day; but we are all meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, that is, we are fit for it. I dwell on this, because people say they are justified and are redeemed, but they are not fit.

"Partakers" is never connected with growth, I mean, never dependent on it. It is, "Who … hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

We are not yet there, as to our bodies, of course, but I have redemption, I am reconciled, I am in Christ.

And then He says, I have a great deal to do with you; you are My child, My heir, and I have made you fit to be with Me; but there is a great deal to teach you. You are to be the epistle of Christ in this world as you go

through it. And that is another thing. Then we come to the ways of God.

We are made partakers of the Holy Ghost after believing, and we are called upon to walk in the Spirit as we live in the Spirit.

All these things are ordained before the world unto our glory; not without Christ, but in Christ; and Christ is now sitting at the right hand of God till His enemies are made His footstool.

“By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” The word “for ever” is not the common word that is used for eternity, though that thought is there; but the word means “uninterruptedly”; so that there is no one moment that I am not in Christ, perfected before God.

It is speaking of our standing and condition before God by His one offering, i.e., it is continued for ever without interruption. And so there is no more conscience of sins.

There is no more testing verse than that, as to whether we realise what redemption is; I mean, as to our having “no more conscience of sins.”

If I go into God’s presence through the rent vail, I cannot do so without finding a living Christ there sitting on God’s right hand, a perpetual living witness; He who bore our sins is now living there, after He has put them all away.

I have the consciousness of sin within me, but not of sins. So often people see at the cross the way of forgiveness; but if you put them in God’s presence before the judgment-seat of Christ, they are not at ease

and rest of heart. Then how are they made the righteousness of God?

What is wanted is, the true personal knowledge and consciousness of faith that we are accepted in the Beloved. It belongs to all believers, though they may not yet have got hold of it clearly.

After the day of Pentecost you never find a person owned as a Christian that is not certain of his salvation. Such an one may be deeply exercised, but he is not owned as in the Christian state according to God. There is no such thing in the New Testament. Yet people are content to go dragging on in a low condition on the earth without the certainty of their salvation.

At the time of the Reformation they went a little too far in saying that justifying faith was the certainty of a person's own salvation, and that if anybody was not sure, he was not justified at all. It went too far, because it was faith about a known state; and it was condemned in the Council of Trent as the vain confidence of heretics. It was something about self, and not about Christ. What is wanted, is not knowledge only; a person may have everything in his head, but unless his heart and conscience are clear, he cannot be solidly looking for Christ.

The apostle puts it all together, clearly enough, in Titus 2. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." It is the grace that has appeared, "teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

This gives us, in three words, the whole Christian character; soberly, i.e., self-restraint in everything; righteously, i.e., as towards other people; godly, i.e., as towards God. Then follows, “looking for that blessed hope.” You must have salvation first, before you can really get the second, the blessed hope.

Well, I wanted to give the groundwork in that way Christ is sitting down because He has finished His work; and the Holy Ghost is come down that we may know it.

There are two things which we may well learn to distinguish; the having a settled consciousness of the affections of those with whom we have to do; and the brightness of hope which brings activity into the soul.

I get both in Christianity.

I know the Father loves me, as He loves the Lord Jesus; John 17. I dwell in that favour which is better than life. I stand in God’s own righteousness accepted in the Beloved. This gives my place in the settled affections of those with whom I have to do. This gives me rest of heart.

And then I get the hope that leads me out in activity, for I am waiting for Christ to come and take me.

The soul is settled in its relationship with the Father, and we know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; and then comes that which gives the energy and activity for running the race that is set before us—we are going to be perfectly like Christ when He comes and takes us to be with Himself.

These give the thread of the whole practical life of the Christian.

“Justified by faith, we have peace with God,” perfect peace according to the value of Christ’s blood, and of God’s own nature in righteousness and holiness; and then we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

When you come to the wilderness, there you have hope in the midst of wilderness exercises. Redemption has brought you into the wilderness, not into Canaan; still you belong to Canaan, although you are not yet in the prepared place of glory. For that you must wait until Christ comes.

The apostle might reproach us as he did the Hebrews: “Ye have need that one teach you again”; while the Thessalonians had been taught but a month or so, and knew a good deal more about the battle than most of us, for they had cast away their idols.

The Son of God had come and had been rejected, and now we are in the world that has rejected Him, a world that seeth Him no more, and out of which the Thessalonians had been brought. But, with Christ in their hearts, they were waiting for God’s Son from heaven. That is what you do not generally find now, but they were converted to that; not to that only, but to that. Now it is made a bit of particular knowledge for Christians; but according to Scripture our conversion is with that in view.

At the end of the next chapter, you will see something further: “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”

All Paul’s ministerial delights were connected with this. Not until then would his heart be satisfied, as to this,

because not till then would they get what Christ came to give them.

This might be special in a sense with Paul, but it is a real thing for us, too.

So the Lord Himself will then “see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” When? Not now, but when He has them all with Himself and like Himself in glory.

In the next chapter, the Lord’s coming is connected with holiness: “The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”

Where are we to see this? Down here? Not at all, but at the Lord’s coming.

So that conversion, Paul’s ministry, and holiness are each and all connected and identified with the Lord’s return. This was to run like a thread through the whole framework of Christian thoughts and feelings. It teaches us how to walk, in looking for the glory. Responsibility is referred to Christ’s appearing, not to the rapture.

Our calling is to glory with Christ, we are predestinated to be conformed to His image, and that is the time when Christ will see of the fruit of the travail of His soul; that is to be the measure of everything; there will be progress till then, and attainment in the sense of progress, but not yet full attainment. There must, of course, be the spirit of holiness here, because we are Christians. If we are looking for full attainment to be reached in this world, we shall come short of scriptural

holiness; for we are to be conformed to the image of God's Son.

As to our conscience and our acceptance, "As he is, so are we in this world." But what lies before us is perfect conformity to Christ.

Turn to Ephesians 5, and there you find, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,"—that is the present thing He is doing— "that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." The washing now, refers to the "glorious" presently; the washing in time is according to the presenting in glory.

"With open [unveiled] face, beholding … the glory of the Lord" —no vail over His glory now—we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory," that is, into His likeness up there.

Take another passage: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," 1 John 3. Now are we the sons of God —that is settled— "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him [in Christ] purifieth himself, even as he is pure." I know I am going to be like Christ, and if I have this hope, I purify myself now, as He is pure.

This is my standard of purifying as I go through the wilderness.

Paul had not two goals, one half-way, and the other coming on. With him it is, "I count not myself to have

apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This side of that prize he knew no rest. That which Paul was running after was to be with Christ in glory. But that was not attained until he got there.

That for which we wait comes out distinctly in the end of the chapter: our body shall be changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body.

So with the Lord on the mount; the three disciples see Moses and Elias in the same glory as Christ.

Meanwhile, He has gone to prepare a place for us, and He says that He will come again and receive us unto Himself.

When it is a question of those who have fallen asleep in Christ, you see another thing. The Thessalonians had got hold of the idea so fully, and were so looking for Christ's coming, that if a person fell asleep, they thought he would not be there to meet Christ at His coming; and that was a grand mistake. Paul would not have them to be ignorant about it; he comforts them with this, that God would bring such with Jesus.

If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, such also that die will rise again; and when the Lord comes in glory, God will bring them with Him.

And so, whether it is death, or holiness, or ministry, or conversion, all is connected with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you look at James, where he is comforting the oppressed people, he says, “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.”

It is not merely that the Lord would come, but also the present expectation of His coming; they were not to grudge one against another, for, “behold, the judge standeth before the door.”

In another passage, the Lord classes the servant who puts off His coming — he does not deny it, mind — with the hypocrites.

It is this that keeps our souls in the consciousness that we do not belong to this world.

But, in Matthew 25, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom; this shews to what they had been particularly called. But “while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.”

The expectation of the Bridegroom’s coming, that is, of Christ’s coming, was lost. All went to sleep, those with oil in their vessels as well as the rest. And they trimmed not their lamps, for people do not want lamps to sleep by. But at midnight the cry was made, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.” Their original calling was brought to fight again by the Spirit of God, and then they begin to trim their lamps, and to see if they have really got oil in them, and so on.

It is not a matter of spiritual judgment, whether or not we are to look for the Lord; but it is linked up with all that characterises the Christian, instead of being just a bit of knowledge to be specially attained.

The Holy Ghost has put us into our relationships now, the purpose of God being that we should be conformed to the image of His Son. Meanwhile, we are to be as men that wait for their Lord, that when He comes and knocks, we may open to Him immediately. Are we watching for Christ?

Now that the world has rejected Him, it is not merely that we are sinners, there is more. Man was a sinner, and God turned him out of Paradise; and since then the world has been destroyed by a flood. It had been tested and tried, and last of all God sent His Son, but the world would not have Him. God Himself in the Person of His Son came into the world in grace, and the world turned Him out.

When you come to the world and its government, there are two things to be seen—prophecies, some partly accomplished, and others not; and there is also the sovereign grace that has taken sinners—God-haters in that sense—and put them in the same glory as God's own Son. That is the One who has loved us, and given Himself for us, and who has promised to come and take us to be with Himself.

Ques. Would it form part of the preaching of an evangelist to speak of the coming of Christ?

Yes. It may be in connection with the "appearing" to a poor world that is careless.

Ques. People think you mean the end of the world?

Perhaps so; but at the end of the world, Christ does not come at all. When the world comes to an end, at the judgment of the wicked dead, Christ sits on the great white throne, and the world flees from before His face.

It is quite right to preach the Lord's coming clearly. The common doctrine of a general resurrection and judgment-seat upsets justification by faith; that is its effect upon souls, though, of course, grace is stronger than theories.

If my fate is to be settled at the day of judgment, and I cannot tell till then what it will be, and if we are to appear there all together to have this settled, how can I have present peace with God?

The resurrection of the saints is like Christ's resurrection— out from amongst the dead. When the Lord told the disciples not to speak of what they had seen until He was risen from among the dead, they began discussing what that meant. Martha, too, says, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." But "from among" was a new thing to them.

Death could not hold Christ, because He was the Son of God; but Christ's resurrection "up from among" the dead, of what is this a testimony? Of God's perfect acceptance of Christ and His work, and so of ours in Christ. He is the first-fruits; and afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.

But they are raised in glory; how then are you going to judge people who are in glory? It is true we shall all give account of ourselves, but we shall give it when we are already in glory, perfectly like the Judge, conformed to the image of God's Son.

I do not know anything that has done more mischief to souls—I do not speak of heresies—than this notion of a general resurrection, and of all going together to be judged, in the common sense of it, because it leaves everything unsettled till the day of judgment.

Ques. It is very contrary to what is generally taught and understood?

That may be; but faith looks through to the end; and if this world is a dark world to me, and there is a candle at the other end, I see the candle. What I may have to go through to get to it is another thing. Still, it is there.

Ques. What about, “His wife hath made herself ready”?

The time was come, and she was in glory, and so that is when she comes out with Him. It is connected with her responsibility—hath made herself ready. Responsibility is always connected with, the desert passage, never with heaven.

I am in Christ, that is a fact. I could not say, if I were in Dublin, I would do so-and-so, for I am here; but to say, if I were in London would be all right, because I am not there. And. by the Holy Ghost I know that I am in Christ: “I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”

There is no “if” at all. But when I come to go through the wilderness, then I get “ifs.” It is God’s way, but not His purpose, to bring us, through redemption, into all the circumstances of the wilderness and its exercises. So in Colossians, it is, “If ye continue.” If the Christian does not continue, he will not be there; that may prove that he has no real faith, but that is another question. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.” There we have a promise. “Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” What would be the good of telling them that in heaven where there is no danger? But here, there is danger, and so with the danger I get the promise that God will keep me. It is when I am redeemed that I am brought into this place of

constant dependence. In itself, the fact of salvation has nothing to do with dependence. Christ has finished the work of salvation, and God has accepted it.

But I have a positive promise from God that I shall be kept by His power. Why kept? Because if He did not keep me, I should tumble in the wilderness; so I am in need of constant dependence, and of the infallible faithfulness of God along the entire road. And this you will find running all through Scripture. “God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no,” Deut. 8.

Their clothes did not wax old; nothing failed them; the faithfulness of God was there for everything. So the priesthood of Christ comes in, and there is grace to help in time of need. That we find in Hebrews, but not exactly communion with Christ, nor the Father’s name. Neither is He a Priest for sins, except in a special sense on the great day of atonement (chap. 2:17); it is always for help.

It all brings out the incessant, loving care of God.

There is an immense amount for us to learn. It is a great thing to learn that He counts the very hairs of our heads.

Advocacy is when we fail, and is for the restoration of communion.

On the cross He was the offering priest as well as the Victim.

Ques. Is He not high priest for our sins now?

No, and for the simplest possible reason that He has already put them all away.

Reading On The Fifth Book of Psalms

Psalms 107-150

This is a kind of supplementary book which unfolds to us the ways and dealings of God when Israel is brought back.

It begins by recounting the vicissitudes of their return, and their being sunk down again, after having got into the land; but coupled with this, there is the testimony that God's mercy endureth for ever. This really began with the ark being brought to Zion by David. Ichabod had been written on Israel when the ark was taken captive, but when David brought it back, he set the people to sing, "His mercy endureth for ever"; that is to say, God's sovereign grace was above all the failure on man's part. And this characterises the last book of the Psalms. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south." In the first three verses of Psalm 107, mercy has risen up over judgment. And the same ground is taken in Psalm 108. After being brought back to the land, they are still in trouble, hungry, etc., and, in verse 39, they are again minished and brought low. We find the same thing in Isaiah 18; in the midst of judgments Israel is brought back, and then the beasts winter and the fowls summer upon them. Still, they have got back, and they sing and give thanks.

Ques. Do you mean before antichrist's era?

Well, yes. Look at Isaiah 18: “Woe to the land shadowing with wings,” etc., which sends ambassadors to bring them back; the inhabitants of the earth are called upon to give attention, and then, in verse 5, “Afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning-hooks, and take away and cut down the branches.” There was a sprouting out to fill the land with fruit, but all is cut down. “In that time shall the present be brought,” etc. (v. 7). Though they are brought back to the land, their troubles are not finally over.

Ques. Do you think the fifth book of Psalms refers to the whole period from the time of their coming into the land?

Yes; but with this special testimony, that “His mercy endureth for ever.”

They are settled in the land, but they find oppressors are there, too.

Psalm 109 speaks of Christ, and of Judas also, the son of perdition, with the full power of evil and of the antichristian period; and then, in Psalm no, the secret of it all is, that Christ is exalted, for Jehovah has said to Him, “Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” In Psalm 108, God claims the land as His own, saying, “I will divide Shechem and mete out the valley of Succoth.” And Psalm in praises Jehovah for this.

That for which Israel is waiting, is made plain in verse 6 of Psalm in: “He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.”

Psalm 112 gives the character of those who are to be blessed— the righteous.

Going back to Psalm 108, we see the state of things in which God is asserting His rights; then, in Psalm 109, we find the man of perdition, and the moral elements of the last days. In Psalm no, Christ is exalted i.e., prophetically; and in Psalm in, we have the works of the Lord. In Psalm 112, as already said, it is the character of the man that gets the blessing, and then, in Psalm 113, Jehovah is to be exalted. After man has altogether failed, He comes in, in power, and He makes a "barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children."

In Psalm 114, Jehovah is exalted.

In Psalm 115, praise is given to the name of Jehovah, in contrast with idols, for the blessing of Israel.

In Psalm 116, he cries, and in the extreme of his distress he is heard, for his affliction has only driven him to Jehovah.

Ques. Is this Christ personally?

No; though He did so. And now he will come and pay his vows (v. 18).

Psalm 117 contains a summons to the nations to come and praise Jehovah; the "truth of the Lord" is seen in His faithfulness to Israel in spite of their failures. Then, once again, in Psalm 118, we have, "His mercy endureth for ever." This is remarkable, for this Psalm celebrates the whole of God's dealings; first, in verses 10-12, the power of man is seen as altogether hostile, and that is overcome; then, in verse 13, there is the adversary, but the Lord helps him, and becomes his salvation. Verse 18 gives another aspect; it is the chastening of Jehovah,

though not as giving him over unto death. All men are against him; then there is the adversary, and Jehovah chastens him; and next, we have a reference to Christ, “The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner”; in verse 25, we have what the little children said, “Hosanna,” etc.; and then follows what the Lord quoted when He said that they should not see Him again till they were ready to say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

It is thus a kind of summary, mercy being the foundation, whilst, if adversaries oppress, the Lord helps. The adversary may thrust sore at him, but the Lord helps him. It is, really, the chastening of the Lord.

Ques. What is the day in verse 24?

The millennial day, the true sabbath of Israel, that has come; and so the night is past.

Ques. Does verse 18 refer exclusively to Israel?

It refers to all Israel. The Lord does not come in here, though He took part in it. “The stone” is, of course, Christ, but I was referring to the chastening which comes upon Israel.

Psalm 119 speaks of the writing of the law on their hearts: “I have gone astray,” and so on. Many words are used, but it is every way the law, and it will be under the new covenant. In the Hebrew, each verse of each section begins with the letter it is under. That is the artistic structure of this Psalm. A portion of the Lamentations of Jeremiah is similarly arranged.

Now we come to the Songs of Degrees. They describe the process through which the nation of Israel passes in going back to the land until they reach the full blessing

of unity. They begin thus: “In my distress I cried unto the Lord”; and they end with, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” Having reached this point, then we have, “Ye … which by night stand in the house of the Lord.”

It may be either a procession toward the temple, or not, but the meaning is clear; beginning with the cry of distress, there is progress leading up to the full blessing of the Lord in His temple. Psalm 134 is the last of these Songs of Degrees.

Ques. Why do we get one such as Psalm 130?

Because they have to go through that experience when they are back in the land.

Psalm 132 is most striking; it is David and all his afflictions; he makes known his requests, and in each case, the answer surpasses the request.

“Arise, O Lord, into thy rest,” is answered by, “This is my rest for ever.”

“Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness,” is answered by, “I will also clothe her priests with salvation.”

“Let thy saints shout for joy,” is answered by, “Her saints shall shout aloud for joy.”

“Turn not away the face of thine anointed,” by, “I will make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.”

There is also this difference, that whereas, in Numbers 10:35, Moses says, “Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee, flee before

thee," here, it is, "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou and the ark of thy strength." And when the ark rested, Moses says, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel"; but here, it is "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it."

Psalm 135 continues with praise to Jehovah and a reference to Exodus 3 and Deuteronomy 32. In the former passage, it is the Name He takes to stand by Israel for ever, and in the latter, He gives a prophecy shewing that their spot is not the spot of His children (v. 5); and then, after He has traced all their sorrows, He repents Himself for His servants (v. 36).

He rehearses thus their history, and then, in verse 13, we read: "Thy Name, O Lord, endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations." So that, in spite of their wickedness, God carries out the original promise in fulfilment of these two passages.

Psalm 136, consequently, takes up every one of these things, adding each time, "His mercy endureth for ever." Psalm 137 introduces Babylon, which we have not had at all before this. The captivity of Babylon lasts on really to the time of the Beast. The Babylonish captivity in itself was complete, although it lingered on in the three other Beasts. The return of the Remnant is doubtless a figure of the deliverance of the nation in the last days.

Ques. Why is Edom connected with Babylon?

We learn this from the prophecy of Obadiah, where the character of Edom was one of perpetual hatred and hostility to Israel.

So the character of the Roman Beast comes out at the end. Babylon goes on also to the end. Here, it is the

captivity of Israel when not owned of God. When they are delivered, Babylon has to be destroyed in another sense, because it is corrupt religionism.

In Psalm 138, in spite of this corrupt religion, for he is still taking up Babylon in spirit, he praises Jehovah before the gods. And notice this, too, that “in the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.”

In the presence of these false gods, that is, of the power of the devil, we find here two great principles: the word of God, and crying to God. Just as in Hebrews; it is the word that searches the thoughts and intents of the heart; and then we have the priesthood of Christ. So, too, in the end of Luke 10, Mary chooses that good part, and then, in the beginning of chapter 11, we have prayer; these two elements are found there: “sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”

In Psalm 139, the Spirit of God is going very far for Israel, and it searches out the flesh, too. Although Israel will be restored in flesh, yet the Spirit of God searches out the flesh, and looks also at creation as God’s handiwork. God searches everything, and with that, the Psalmist owns, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made”; he sees he is God’s handiwork, and then he can ask to be searched out. It is thus a very instructive Psalm for us. “Whither shall I flee from thy presence?” etc. I cannot get out of God’s hand, and I cannot stand before His presence; then comes this: “Search me, … try me.” It is real grace looking at us. Of course, it is natural creation that the Psalm is speaking of, because the new creation was not then revealed.

Ques. Is there any direct allusion to the church in verse 16: “Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written,” etc.?

It is not a direct allusion to it. He is speaking of creation — his mother’s womb. It is curious how, in the Old Testament, the earth is dealt with as the mother’s womb. Job does so when he says, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither.” It seems like nonsense at first sight; but it is just looking at us as framed of dust and going back to it, a mother’s womb being, in a kind of way, the instrument of it.

Man comes out of the dust, and at death he goes back to dust.

Ques. What are God’s thoughts, in verse 17?

God’s purposes towards Israel. His thoughts towards us, are the heavenly places.

In Psalm 140, he finds himself in the presence of the evil man, and looks for deliverance.

All this refers to the Remnant, and so it does throughout the Psalms, with, here and there, some positive prophecy about Christ.

In Psalm 141, he is looking for deliverance, and to be kept, heart and lips, and that his prayer may come before God. But he is still in great distress: “Our bones are scattered at the grave’s mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.” And then he cries to the Lord. He has gone through all, and brings them back practically until they get delivered.

There is a special character belonging to Psalm 142: “I cried unto the Lord with my voice.” Not only was his

heart groaning, but he expresses himself openly to God. There is in his supplication a contention with Jehovah, “I cried unto thee, Jehovah; I said, Thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.”

In Psalm 143, he is still in full distress, crying and praying to be delivered from his enemies.

It is very striking, the way in which the power of evil is rampant all through. It is so with us, in a certain sense. When God giveth songs to His people, this supposes evil to be in power. And the Psalms suppose the time of antichrist. Not until the Lord actually comes will the Beast and antichrist be destroyed. In these last Psalms, it is more the general condition. The Man of sin comes before the Assyrian, although they are both found together. But the Assyrian will be destroyed after the Man of sin. By that time, the Lord will have come and destroyed the Beast, and also the false Prophet or the Man of sin; and when all this power of sin has gone, then the Assyrian comes up. Western Europe and Russia will be found fighting without owning the Lord in it, and they will both be destroyed like sheaves in the floor; Micah 4:12.

See also Isaiah 35 and 63. The Lord then takes possession of His throne at Jerusalem, and the Assyrian, when he comes up for the last time, will find the Lord there, and will be destroyed.

In Daniel 11:45, it should read: “Between the sea and the mountain of holy beauty” he pitches his camp, i.e., between the Mediterranean Sea and Jerusalem. The king of the North is the Assyrian. If Gog and Magog refer to the nations to be left for the millennium, they come up over all the earth.

Ques. Is there anything in the Old Testament as to the destruction of antichrist?

Yes; we read in Isaiah 30:33, “For the king also it is prepared,” for that is how it should be read.

Ques. What is the “grounded staff”?

The staff, or rod, is the decreed rod of God which passes upon the Assyrian, and it is almost at the same time that “the king” falls.

In Psalm 144, we have the question, “Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!” It is curious that we find this appeal in Scripture, three times in three different ways.

In Job 7, it is: “What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?” This is uttered in a complaining, naughty spirit: Why does the Lord take such notice of me, and make such a trouble about me? Why does He not depart from me, or let me alone till I swallow down my spittle? Why should the Lord think so much of me, and not cut me off?

Then, in Psalm 8, “What is man,” that God is going to make His own Son a man, and set Him over every thing?

And here, in Psalm 144, it is, “What is man,” that God should be so careful over this wicked people?

Psalm 145 forecasts, partially and prophetically, the millennium, and also the intercourse that will take place between Christ and His people in the millennium. Verse 7 truly celebrates Jehovah.

Psalms 146-150 give the great “Hallel.” All is still connected with Israel, “the children of Zion” to whom is

given a two-edged sword with which to execute judgment upon the peoples.

There is a tradition that they sang this hymn at the Passover. We find, too, the execution of vengeance, for these Psalms do not carry us through the millennium. The whole state of the people is taken up, from the quickening of the Remnant to the manifestation of the Messiah.

It is deplorable, the putting of Christians on the ground of the Psalms. Of course, there are things in them that suit us, as, for instance, trusting in the Lord, which is always right; but that which distinctively characterises the Psalms does not suit Christians; such as, “a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints.”

Ques. How far are we to look in the Psalms for Christ’s personal experiences?

They are found in Psalms 22 and 69, and, in a certain sense, in Psalm 102, though this latter is more poetical; and we find also in the Psalms certain things in which His heart associates itself, and which He Himself makes use of, as, for instance, He that “hath lifted up his heel against me”; and so also, “Thou shalt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption.”

There is a mistranslation in Psalm 16:2, where I have no doubt the right reading is: “Thou [my soul] hast said to Jehovah, Thou art the Lord: my goodness [extendeth] not to thee;—to the saints that are on the earth, and to the excellent [thou hast said], In them is all my delight.”

Ques. Might we assume that where in a Psalm an expression clearly refers to Christ, all the Psalm does so?

No; that would never be a safe assumption.

Strictly speaking, a hymn has always a person directly for its object. Of course, there are many beautiful hymns, or odes, or songs, that we could not sing in worship. Direct addresses of praise are the highest kind of language; but we may sing of blessing, as well as of the Blesser; though the highest kind of song, is that to the Blesser. It is self-will and human judgment, to reject everything but direct praise. The soul joys in salvation, as well as in God. “Lord Jesus! when I think of Thee,” strikes a higher note than, “O Lord, how blest our journey,” though both are right.

Only in Psalms 22 and 69 do we find Christ’s experience in Gethsemane. There is no deliverance in Psalm 88, although, at one time, it was the only passage throughout the Bible that gave me comfort, for it shewed me one like myself pretty well in despair, and yet a saint it was who wrote it, so that perhaps after all I might be a saint. It ends with, “Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.”

Ques. What is the force of Psalm 89:38, “But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed”?

It refers to David, and to the cutting off of David’s race, which would, however, be set up again in Christ. It has reference, not to atonement, but to the Lord as Messiah. God had promised David a house, and He had broken down David’s house.

Ques. What is the meaning of, “Mine iniquities … are more than the hairs of mine head,” in Psalm 40:12?

It is Christ taking the iniquities of the house of Israel upon Himself, though it is equally true for us.

In Psalm 69, it is Christ throughout, entering fully into the sorrows of His people.

In all prophecies, we have to distinguish between that which serves the prophet as a peg upon which to hang prophecy, and that which goes in spirit beyond the immediate prophecy. For instance, in Jeremiah 30:9, and 33:21, we have mention of David, the meaning of which is “beloved,” and there, it clearly refers to Christ.

Reading On Philippians 3

This chapter forms a kind of parenthesis, an important one, too, and full of matter, as Paul's parentheses always are. Redemption puts Christians upon a wonderfully new footing. It takes them out of man's place as such altogether, though they are still down here, and it puts them before God in a new condition and state as the result of that redemption. True, they await the adoption, the redemption of the body; they groan, being burdened as long as they are here; but the more we look into it, the more we shall see that the cross is the passage out of one state into another, as well as the putting away of sins. I speak, of course, of Christians.

We have been brought to God according to the efficacy of God's working, connected with our being quickened, and with the full character of our being risen with Christ. It is a new state as well as a new life, for we have passed the Red Sea.

The expression, "Worship God in the spirit," has led me to this. As in John 4, "Ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." All human standing with God is gone. Jerusalem was a standing with God, but man could never make anything of it; yet it was there, though to no purpose as regards the state man was in. Its very character was manifest in that the veil was there, and man could not see God. But redemption rends the veil and puts man right into God's presence, so that now, through the cross, we have passed into the light that is on God's side of the cross; and there we worship in spirit.

Circumcision leads to this. As in Colossians, we are buried and risen again, putting off the body of the flesh (not, the sins of), through death; this is true circumcision. We are the circumcision, if we have really put off our place, that is, the old man. All is gone.

He says “concision,” treating the Jewish thing with contempt. We have no confidence in the flesh; he does not say, wickedness, but flesh, and that which he here calls “flesh” is religious flesh, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, etc. He will not call it circumcision. This is a great thing to get hold of. In Corinthians, it goes a great deal further, for besides the new creature, we have there a new creation, which means that the old thing has been dealt with; now all is of God. Of course, we are of God, but this is as belonging to the new creation; He has created us again in Christ Jesus.

We find, then, these two things: a new nature (and creature, too, in that sense), and a wholly new scene to which we belong now. It is not this world, but a new creation; Corinthians includes all this.

Christ had a place in the old creation, that is to say, He came into it in grace, but, when there, men would not have Him. Had He been received, He would have been, so to speak, the keystone of the arch of an impossible bridge. But now that He has risen, He has become the centre of the new creation. Just as Adam became the head of a race after he sinned, so Christ has become Head of a race after He has risen. The new creation is founded on Christ’s death.

The result for us is that of our complete acceptance before God upon this new ground, standing, and state;

and then comes the question of the practical effect of this upon us.

“All things of God”! Well then, God has, of course, no fault to find with me. But then again, if I am of God, I have nothing more to do with this world. Every Christian would own that he must have a new life; but I do not think it is always realised by us that Christ has died to this creation, and that He has begun another one.

Not merely am I renewed in mind with a new nature; but I have passed through the Red Sea, and I do not belong to Egypt at all. Our bodies do, of course, left here as they are, but I am speaking now of our place in Christ.

This is why the apostle declaims against the enemies of the cross of Christ, those who mind earthly things, because the cross of Christ has passed its sentence upon everything on earth. The world is crucified to me, and I to it.

If I had obtained righteousness under the old system, it would have been of man, but of course I could not thus obtain it. Under that system the law was a perfect rule for man.

But Christ having wrought the work that has glorified God, if in Him we had not a place in the new creation, God would not be righteous, for then Christ would not reap the fruit of the travail of His soul. Under law, man could only give man’s righteousness, but now it is God’s righteousness by faith, and, if by faith, it is not in myself, though afterwards there will be no doubt the fruits of righteousness.

Righteousness of God is revealed; it is an object which is before me, and I believe in it. This righteousness has

been displayed to faith in the setting of Christ at God's right hand, where it is now publicly testified, and from whence we have the administration of it; and thus our Lord speaks "of righteousness, because I go to my Father." Clearly, therefore, it is outside of man, for it is Christ's work thus actually owned by God. Then the Holy Ghost comes down and says, 'True, that all are sinners, but all is settled.' Therefore, the apostle does not here talk about 'having my sins,' but, setting aside the old system, he speaks of "not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law."

He had done with the question of his own righteousness, and with the whole thing upon which this rested. Outwardly "blameless" he might have been, but now he is in another place altogether through the work accomplished on the cross. And Christ, of God, is made unto us, wisdom and righteousness, etc.

Thus we learn that the question of our standing with God is entirely settled. If Christ is made righteousness of God to us, 'well then,' I say, 'all is settled for me now according to God's own mind.'

And this links us with what is heavenly, because Christ is there. He has deserved the glory as man. Righteousness is connected with the finished work of Christ, and this brings in life, and then we go practically from life to righteousness. Looked at as "in Christ," we begin from His work, and we go on to life. Christ accomplished the work before He became the Head of a new race.

By obtaining life, I learn next my place in this righteousness of God; I am sanctified unto the blood of sprinkling.

When I am quickened, I am brought into the value of a work already done. But if a person is looking back or within to see if he is quickened, he will never find peace. When brought to that estimate of the flesh, whereby he sees the whole system as rotten, and condemned, and done with ("now is the judgment of this world"), then he no longer looks at it with reference to his standing with God. With such a one it is now all Christ. Then there is no cloud upon the light of God's countenance, because it is God's satisfaction with His work.

It makes it most distinct when I see Adam as head of his race, after he had sinned, and Christ as Head of a new race after He had accomplished His work. The question of life and responsibility, and of the incompatibility between the two has been settled at the cross. Arminianism and Calvinism, i.e., the tree of grace and the tree of man's responsibility, are both found in Paradise, nor can we reconcile these two things in man, except it be in Christ.

The law took up this same question, and made responsibility to be the ground of life: "This do, and thou shalt live"; there again we have life and responsibility put together, but responsibility comes first as testing man.

Well, Christ then comes and charges Himself with both the responsibility and the failure, and He settles the whole question so that life now comes first.

It would have been all right, in one sense, had Adam eaten of the tree of life, but this was not to be.

But, by taking us out of the whole former condition, Christ becomes our life.

Redemption has taken us out of the place in which we were responsible, I speak now as to our standing before God. By redemption, this question has been settled perfectly and for ever.

Every intelligent creature, such as angels and all else, is, of course, responsible as set in that position. So when we have to say to God through Christ, we are in a place of responsibility to glorify God according to the perfect law of liberty. We have to show out this life of Jesus in this mortal body, because we have got the life. Condemnation is for sinners who are in a lost state. If a man is judged, he is judged for his works; but, besides this, he is in a lost state.

It all goes together, though, as a matter of fact, man is lost to begin with. “By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” Redemption takes me out of that state; I am delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. And this blessing we have in our poor bodies here; burdened and groaning we may be truly; but we have been brought to the full and thorough conviction that the old man is an evil thing, and that we have been redeemed out of it. Still, we need to have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

An angel delights to serve like Christ, not as perfectly, of course, but it is his nature so to do; and as regards the new man abstractedly, we delight also to do His will. Along with this, there may be with us a great deal of darkness, a will that has to be broken; there is much for us to learn, and much to humble us in ourselves. And oh! how very soon this shews itself, if we are not watchful.

Nothing but the sense of the presence of God can keep us in self-judgment; we may be ever so sincere, but self is not judged except in the presence of God.

We may not be always conscious of it, whilst seeking to do the right thing; but let something turn up, and we find flesh is still alive!

But when the presence of God is realised, the practical state of the soul is totally different; there is then a sense of dependence, and of lowliness, and of nothingness which we only learn in God's presence.

A matter comes before a man in his service as a Christian, and he sets about to judge it; he seeks to do this thoroughly according to God's mind; but self gets set in motion, and then it is detected whether he has been with God about it.

Ques. I suppose you would say that a Jew never was in God's presence?

Not as a principle, and therefore the Jew never could judge himself; one could never find in him, for instance, a consciousness of the two natures; conscience of sins truly, and we read that "I was shapen in iniquity," for without a sense of this, in some degree or other, there never could have been any saints at all. But if quickened, they walked on the earth with piety in their lives, and they had blessed revelations of God on the earth.

So Abraham talks with God, and God comes down to his tent door, and sits at table with him, but it is to him as on the earth; so in the cloud at the door of the tabernacle, God talks with Moses, but that is not taking Abraham and Moses up into heavenly places.

I have no doubt they looked forward in hope, but there was no dwelling of God with man until redemption had been brought in, not even in figure. God never dwelt with Adam; neither did He dwell with Abraham, nor with Moses; after He had brought Israel out of Egypt, then He speaks of dwelling among them, and we see in this the fruits of redemption, though in an earthly way, of course.

So now He redeems us, and then dwells with us.

Ques. Except as He sanctified the seventh day, one never finds even holiness in Genesis?

No.

Ques. But surely Abraham is in heaven?

Oh, yes; I believe Abraham to be in heaven, of course, but, in speaking of the revelations and instructions of God, we do not find God dwelling with man until redemption comes in.

Ques. There seems to be a difficulty with some as to the character of God's dwelling now in the Church as a whole; they think it is limited to those who are members of the body of Christ. Can you help such?

It is quite true as to the individual, but God does dwell in the Church. As for mere professors being there, it would be a denial of the apostasy to limit His dwelling to the body of Christ. Strictly speaking, God does not dwell in the body; the body is looked at as united to Christ on high, and each individual believer, as having the Holy Ghost, is in the body of Christ. We are members of Christ's body. That is as down here, on the earth; but then there is another thing: "Builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." But suppose false

brethren creep in, as in Jude, no one could say that the Holy Ghost had ceased to dwell in the assembly because false ones had come in.

I do not speak of the Holy Ghost dwelling in any particular local assembly at all.

The moment I speak of Christians as members of the body of Christ, I speak of them individually, and I have lost the idea of “house.”

Ques. But at the first, was it not the same?

Yes; it was set up all right at the first, but it had not then become like a “great house.” Though, remember, the great house in 2 Timothy is only a comparison.

But when false brethren were brought in unawares, the Holy Ghost did not leave in consequence; nor does He go, until the time of judgment comes.

The Shekinah was in the temple until the time of the captivity at Babylon, but not afterwards.

We see how the prophet Ezekiel saw them weeping for Tammuz; then, worse still, he saw them worshipping the sun; through the hole dug in the wall he saw the images portrayed, and he found things getting only worse and worse.

Could God spare such a nation? So He goes up with the cherubim and leaves the nation altogether. Now, God has not done that, as yet, with the Church. The Church has departed from Him, but He has not executed judgment upon it, and therefore blessing still continues under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

But towards the close of Paul’s ministry, the present state was fast developing. I was struck, lately, in

noticing how all the catholic epistles, as they are called, speak of the evil as already come in.

And where evil is, God must come to judge it. Even the epistle to the Hebrews is no exception. But what struck me, was the universality of this in the catholic epistles.

Suppose we had only received instructions for a good state of the Church, we should not know what to do nowadays. It is just the not seeing the provision that has been made which leads, of course, to the confusion of the present time.

But God is working, I trust, amid the present state of distraction in the Church. Yet at such a time it is, that all sorts of false things are set up, sometimes by man's wit, and sometimes by Satan. And honest souls are trying to satisfy themselves with utter worldliness; consciences are troubled about it, and saying we must have a higher life, and so on, and very earnest souls some of these are.

Ques. Would you object to speak of the present place of profession as the house of God?

It is not called the house of God in 2 Timothy, yet that is its place of responsibility, whatever may be its place of profession; responsibility rests upon it, because of the presence of the Holy Ghost. It is contemplated as God's building, in 1 Corinthians; but, although built in part of wood, hay, and stubble, the building still belongs to God. Just as I may say, that is my house, though I may have a bad bricklayer working upon it among the rest.

Ques. Is it not doctrine that is there spoken of?

Yes, in 1 Corinthians it is, but then people brought it in. It has nothing to do with our works.

When the profession is cast off, the apostasy will go further. This is the true character of apostasy. The principle of it is already at work, though it will not come to its head until the true Church has gone. The mystery of iniquity began to work in Paul's time, and it is still working, and will do so until Christ comes.

As long as people thought the pope was antichrist, they called Romanism the apostasy.

Ques. "As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists"?

Yes, "antichrists," i.e., the spirit of the thing is already there, but it has not yet come fully out.

The professing Church not being yet apostate, anybody who cuts himself off from the Church is apostate, properly speaking, for it is now a thing that can be apostatised from.

Ques. In what light do you regard Swedenborgianism?

Well, it is not Christianity at all; it is difficult to speak of such a thing. God will judge about it.

Ques. What as to Mormonism?

I suppose they called themselves Christians once. Their doctrine is this, that, supposing the people are married for all eternity, and have children all through eternity, and supposing the world that they are in gets too full, they, by faith, create another world, and he who so creates, is the god of the world, he creates; and he packs off part of his children there; and so they believe that the One whom we call God and Father, is One who has created this world, and packed us off into it.

It is somewhat difficult to call that apostasy, though there may be individuals among them who were once professing to be Christians, but who have apostatised. What I have just said, I have from some of their own writings in my possession.

Professing to call Jesus, Lord, is the great thing that characterises Christianity.

Ques. What is, “partakers of the Holy Ghost”?

It refers to the Holy Ghost now present in power, without having anything to do with being born again.

Ques. What of Bishop Colenso?

Well, is he not denying the testimony of the Word of God? And that is bare infidelity.

Individuals may be apostate at any time. As long as the Church remains, there is a professing thing on the earth that is not apostate. Laodicea is therefore called by the name church, though it will be afterwards spued out of His mouth.

In Philippians, we get more the individual running: “This one thing I do.”

Ques. What would be, “being made conformable unto his death”?

The apostle was looking to be killed; he carried, in spirit, the sentence of death in himself.

Ques. Does it, then, refer to martyrdom?

Yes. “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus” was, with the aposde, the taking up the “sentence”; but in the next verse, “delivered unto death,” it was God doing this with him. We have the two

things in Corinthians; he was “bearing about,” and then, he was “delivered unto death”; this latter is because we cannot always be trusted to do the thing honestly.

The apostle really was, as much as any one, always holding himself dead; but the being delivered unto death, was God dealing with him for his good, but he required God’s hand to hold him fast.

Ques. How far can Christians now take that up?

Everybody must answer for his own conscience. I do not know who could say that absolutely: “always,” is a very awkward word. If one does not hold that he is dead to the world, he is not really on Christian ground at all. It is a difficult thing to say, ‘my flesh never budges,’ but I speak of the Christian principle of life. Paul says, “Death worketh in us, but life in you.” ‘I am so completely dead, that Paul never appears to you Corinthians, but only Christ; death works in me, but life, Christ’s life, in you.’ Wonderful practical state Paul was in!

Take again this epistle. Sin, as to experience, is never once mentioned in it; but we have the experience of a man walking in the power of the Spirit of God, and with salvation, too, always before him, running the race towards the prize; even justification was before him, as he says, “that I may… be found in him.” At the end of the race he will find everything. Yet he could not have been running the race if Christ had not laid hold on him. Salvation, here, is final deliverance in glory. It is this that puts down perfection, for he had seen Christ in glory, and knew that he should be like Him. I would not thank you for your perfection, if you are looking to be as Adam was in the garden of Eden. I am looking to be like Christ. As one said in France, ‘They are looking to be

perfects, but we look to be pluperfects.' Perfection is seen in this: Christ had laid hold on Paul, and he had set out running to reach Christ actually in glory. It is the calling above, not on high, that is, up in the heavenly glory; and he contrasts this with the path of death in minding earthly things. It is by having the heart set on the end, that the realisation of it is found on the way. Like a light at the far end of a dark passage, every step you take towards the light brings you both nearer to it, and also into more of its power, and the lighter it becomes.

It is often asked, if, "conformable unto his death," is present or future; the question is a mistake, for Paul was looking on to the end, and he was characterised by it. It is wonderful to see how the aposde realised this. He says, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do [not did] count them," etc.

When at first we tasted the blessing of salvation and redemption in our hearts, what was the world to us? It was all nothing; just trees, and fields, and roads, that was all.

We are apt to get back gradually into natural associations; but it was not so with Paul. He was maintained in the effect that the first revelation of Christ had produced upon his soul. Really, when we are first converted, the world is like a parcel of gewgaws, not cared for by us at all. Men are but big children. A child likes its little carriage, to draw about with a doll in it; and a lady likes a carriage drawn about with herself inside, dressed up like a doll. We know how present things do affect the mind, but it shews how quickly the mind gets off its object. We need power so that Christ

may dwell in the inner man. And then there is the practical gaining of strength day by day. The fact that the world is judged, though believed in by us, yet often it is not practically judged in our lives; but, through grace, this gradually becomes true to us in detail.

When a certain breaking down of self takes place in a man's life, it produces a total change in him, but afterwards he has to learn it all in detail.

There is a complete change. He has accepted death really, by faith, and so he says, "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"; but then he has to watch against details and judge them; and if they start up again, then he must deal with them still more severely.

Of course, all this is after the eye of faith has been directed to the cross of Christ. It is a great mercy when, at starting, the Christian makes, by grace, a clean cut with the world. If my heart is not full of Christ, outward things will produce their impression. If I am not full of Him, 'Oh,' I shall think, 'what a beautiful picture!' That shews there is a vacant space left in my heart for such a thing to come in. The world is like Samson's hair, the roots of which, in a certain sense, still remain. Or else, it is like the twigs of willow in the ground, which will sooner or later begin to grow again. If we are firm, the world will become, of course, only more adverse; it will not tolerate, nor even bear with decided Christianity. A Christian, who gets into the world, is not happy anywhere, for there is nothing in the world that can satisfy him, and then, when he gets among his fellow-Christians, his conscience reproves him. He does not grow, nor does he get the enjoyment of the things that are in the word of God, and which are really his own.

A clean cut with the world is very often distinct from having the sentence of death written in ourselves.

Suppose anyone, before finding peace, goes through excessive exercises, so that the world becomes, so to speak, torn into shreds, directly such a one gets peace, the whole thing is settled. But now, when a full gospel is preached, and conviction brought in, a soul has oftentimes to go through the death of the flesh afterwards. Sometimes a person gets forgiveness and peace before he learns the killing power of the law. If he keeps close to Christ, he will find out what the flesh is; but in one way or the other he has to learn, just as much as if he had never been forgiven, that in himself, that is, in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing. In keeping close to God, he apprehends with God what he is. But if he does not do so, he will have to learn it with the devil. Saul was in such a state, that for three days he neither ate nor drank. I do not doubt it was with him deep exercise of soul; but there is, of course, no prescription as to time.

Romans 3 gives us forgiveness as to our sins; then afterwards, in chapter 7, we find out that in ourselves dwelleth no good thing. There I arrive, experimentally, at the root of self, and then it becomes a question not of forgiveness, but of deliverance. I do not believe we are really delivered from its power, until we have judged the flesh as a perfectly bad thing.

Nowadays, a great deal of current Christianity is characterised by knowing Christ after the flesh.

I remember when I was converted, all the Christians I met, were like people outside, and trusting they would

be right when they got in, instead of being already inside.

But now that full forgiveness is preached, it often happens that people know forgiveness, and yet they have not learnt themselves.

Doubdess Paul had not fully attained, but one thing he did, and in that we see the energy of Christian life in him.

Ques. “As many as be perfect.” Who are they?

Those who understand both redemption and this resurrection. I may be forgiven as a child of Adam, and I am so, but now I am a child of God. “Perfect,” as he here calls it, is a Christian dead and risen; one who is not only quickened, but who knows that the blood of Christ is the only foundation for justifying him from his sins, and further, that as dead and risen with Christ, he has got out of the old place into the new one. I have seen Christ risen, and I am going to be like Him, and that is all I now know. That is what the apostle calls “perfect.” It is the same in 1 Corinthians: “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect”; and so, too, in Ephesians 4: “Unto a perfect man.” You cannot talk of the body coming up to the stature of the head, but, individually, it is true. At the last, undoubtedly, all Christians will come to that state.

Ques. He says, “that I may know him”?

Just so; so I can say I have everlasting life, and yet it says the end is everlasting life. It is the same with other truths.

In verse 10, it is much the same as we have in John,” Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet

appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." He does not say of such an one, that he is as pure as Christ is pure, but that he purifies himself according to that standard. He looks on to the future, and then applies it to the present state.

It is a great thing to say that I desire to be made conformable to His death, and that in everything I am running in that spirit. But how can that be said except martyrdom is before me?

It is a great deal easier for me to give up the world than to be content when the world gives me up; when we find the world lets us go with, 'Oh, he is turned saint, let him go'— that is a great deal harder to bear. Of course, if martyrdom confronted us, every Christian would rather be killed than give up Christ; but still, this is, little by little, the daily experience of the perfect Christian. It is astonishing to see where Paul really was. There is another passage in 2 Corinthians: "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause."

If you are not with God for yourself, you will have self there for you. It may not be from want of sincerity or devotedness (it may, of course, issue in that), but if you are not with God a great deal, you have left your sweet retreat, and you are not safe. I speak not of salvation, but as to your present state of soul. There is an immense amount of temptation connected with our service, and there are, too, perilous times with it all.

Ques. With what do you connect the "forgetting those things which are behind"?

With this, “Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.” If I were running in a race, I should not stop to see how I was getting on, or somebody else would soon out-distance me. There will be time enough to reckon up victories when I have reached the goal.

Sometimes persons are busy reckoning up their experiences; but to such I would say, ‘Go and get new ones.’ When the eye of faith is opened to see these revelations of God, it makes us conscious how little we are. What a scene of glory and of moral perfectness we find as we look at Christ, or even at the apostle! “The life which I now live in the flesh,” he says, “I live by the faith of the Son of God.” There was a great consciousness of this with the apostle, and though in his letter to the Galatians there was very little expression of his heart, yet it comes out there also. Much as he loved these Galatians, he does not salute one of them, and he closes with simply this::< From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks [i.e., brands] of the Lord Jesus.” Nor does he even sign his name to the epistle.

Ques. What were the “beggarly elements” that he speaks of in chapter 4:9?

They were Judaism, though the Galatians were not Jews; but that is what they were getting back to, i.e., to live in the flesh. And so, in early times, there was a constant effort to use and to improve the world. St. Augustine actually says that the drunkenness that marked their feasts might at least be sanctified by its being observed to saints, and not to devils. The “Lupercalia” were feasts at the time of the shortest day, in honour of the new

energy of the sun, about to be put forth in the spring. Indeed they are observed to this day in the East Indies; all heathen observed them; so they put Christ's birth there and sanctified the time, and that is Christmas. It was done by Gregory, first in Africa, and then elsewhere. Augustine himself went to preach against getting tipsy in honour of the saints, and they nearly killed him. The forty days of Lent were not settled until the fifth century; Jerome gives the account of it. Paulinus could not get the Christians to be sober; and so he tried by means of pictures, fine arts, and the like to set them free from their drunkenness; that is what they call the primitive Church!

Ques. What about Good Friday?

That depends on the sun and moon, and they are very authentic. The full moon of the month Abib can be very well known, and then Pentecost is fixed seven weeks after. To find Christ's birth, you can only begin with Zacharias in the order of the priests in the course of Abia, and if you can reckon that through, it would put Christ's birth at a totally different time of the year. Anniversaries are part of human nature.

We have one more point to notice here; Christ is coming to change our vile bodies; not "vile," morally, for it is not an abusive term, but one which means really, "body of humiliation."

Lecture On Colossians 1

It is a wonderful thing, and becomes still more wonderful to us, the more we know and think of the way in which we are associated with the Son of God; we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, i.e., of Him who is the beginning of the creation of God. We are “in him.”

When He says, He is one with the Father, then He adds, “Ye in me, and I in you.” The more we dwell upon this, the more wonderful it is. All is of grace that, in the ages to come, God might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us by Christ Jesus. This is the way the angels, the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, will learn the exceeding riches of God’s grace. They will see the poor thief, and the woman in the city that was a sinner, and us also, in the same place with God’s Son. And more, God has brought us into the present intimacy of it. By giving us the Holy Ghost, and by giving us life in Christ, He has brought us into the closest intimacy with Himself in this relationship. The more we rest in it, the more wonderful it is. “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”

Think of the Son of God saying to us, “that is your place”! It ought to be peaceful joy to us, as that which is simply a settled thing in our souls. And the one who is dwelling in it, and is at home in it, is just the one who will feel and know how wonderful it is. We cannot understand the kind of place it is, if we are not dwelling in it; but when we do get inside, we begin to be conscious of what it is.

God has shewn us that the flesh with all its fruits has been put away completely at the cross; so that, in raising up the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who stood in the place of death for us, and in setting Him in glory, and in giving us the Holy Ghost, we learn that sin and all that is of man has been put away. When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. It is blessed to think that by His work on the cross, He has cleared away everything that once stood between us and God. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” Thus, as I have often said, there should not lurk a single suspicion in our minds. Looked at as sinners, we are forgiven; as defiled, we are cleansed; as guilty, we are justified. He wants to have us where we can enjoy His life, and therefore we must not be left to be afraid of judgment. God has brought us in Christ to Himself, that is where He has set us; and He has given us the consciousness of this by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. This is, as having Christ and life. It is not possessive in full; in that sense, we have nothing but the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and therefore everything else is to faith. This makes the riddle of the Christian. We have everything in Christ—glory, eternal life, forgiveness, justification; and Christ in us is the hope of glory.

That is the reason the apostle says, “We have been saved in hope.” The work is complete, and we are quickened so as to have part in it; but we have nothing yet as regards possession, save the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and the present hope of being absent from the body, present with the Lord.

The twofold effect of having the Holy Ghost is that, as regards our place and title, we are accepted in the Beloved; but, as regards our home, we are wandering very far from it in this world.

God gives us the consciousness of being in Christ so that our hearts rest in His love; and we have nothing to desire as to what God has already given us. He has given us His own Son, and in His love He has put us in Christ, the very best place that can possibly be conceived; in that respect, He has left us nothing to desire.

But God has also placed us on this earth, both to be exercised and tried, and to learn His faithfulness and grace. Consequently, in this chapter, we find the way in which growth and the supply of strength are spoken of, as well as the total separation of these from the question of our meetness for heaven. We may speak of title to heaven, but Scripture never speaks of there being any need for the Christian to be made meet for heaven. There is, and there ought to be, growth; and God will chasten us if we go wrong; these ways and dealings of God with us are carefully disconnected from meetness for heaven. And wherever this is not practically known (I do not mean as to mere words), or wherever there is a lack of clearness as to this in our souls, it hinders peace, because the fulness of divine love is not seen, nor our association with the glory; and accordingly the standard of walk is lowered. Instead of being occupied with Christ’s heart, we are occupied with our own heart’s state. For a person to be thus occupied with himself, is the greatest mischief in the world.

Sometimes, we have to be occupied with ourselves; there are failures which we must judge, and we have to see to it that not only there should be no evil allowed, but that there is growth; still, if we are much occupied with self, self takes the place that Christ ought to have; therein is the mischief. A person will come and tell me a long story of what is in his heart, and of course a great lot of evil, but if I ask him what is in God's heart, he cannot tell me a word.

Do you think that a good state? Certainly, we shall get into scrapes if we do not judge ourselves, but, if I am close with God, and in communion with Him, the judgment of self is a simple thing, though requisite. If, however, I am away from Him, prying into my own heart, and into all that is there— why, the evil is still there, unjudged.

This chapter sets before us an amazingly high standard: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuflFering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (vv. 10-12). It is when we get into "the light" that we can talk of meetness, and of giving thanks to the Father. And then it is, that we can look for growth, and for a walk worthy of the Lord, for we have learnt that we are completely associated with Him "which hath made us meet," etc.

Do you think the thief was "meet" to go into Paradise? What made him meet? He went there, but surely he did

not go unmeet? He went there, because Christ was there. We have to get clear and distinct about this in our souls. “Ye are complete in him”; this is where He has put us; and then the apostle goes through the various things a Jew might reckon, circumcised or not, a philosopher or not, and so on; but the believer has everything in Christ. It is very beautiful to see in chapter 2 that “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (v. 9); all the fulness of the Godhead is in a Man, i.e., in Him bodily; and we are complete in Him.

All the fulness has been brought close to us down here in Christ, but if we look up and see Christ there, we see that we, too, are complete in Christ before God. A wonderful place indeed this is; sovereign grace alone could think of such a thing for us; and the more we know the place thus given, the more wonderful it becomes to us.

If we want to know God the Father, where are we to learn Him? “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” Have our hearts ever looked at Christ as an object, and said, while looking, “I have nothing more to seek”? Just think, what it is to look at the Lord, with the power of the Spirit of God, and to see in that poor despised Man, One who was God walking on the earth, so that, when one sat down by His side and told Him his sin, he was telling it to God! Is that the thought we have about the Lord Jesus Christ? And He is the same now. God has come to us in Christ, and says, as it were, “Do you not know me?” In a certain sense, Jesus was just like a man, and yet, in another sense, He was not in the least like a man. Not one single motive that governs man ever governed Him; the blessed manifestation of a divine

path with a Man in it was seen in Him. This was a perfectly new thing in the world.

And He made those who were with Him burn in their hearts, while they walked with Him, not only by the outward miracles that He performed, but also by His ways and His words. On the other hand, we can look up to God and say, we “are complete in him.” I have committed sins and the like, but I say, I am not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; I am in Christ, and I know it, as He said Himself, “At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” And thus I find that my place is in Christ before God, and that I am myself before Him, and, further, that God is glorified by that which has brought me there. “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.”

It is now that we can give “thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” True, we have not yet got the inheritance, and we have to learn our weakness and failure, and the like; but this casts no cloud upon our hearts as to what our place is before God in Christ. “He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing [that is, for the glory] is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.” And are we to suppose that God has wrought us badly? Do we not think God has done His work well? To be sure He has.

What peace this gives to the soul! This is the reason we can say, “giving thanks unto the Father,” etc.

But the moment it is a question of our meetness, let anyone look into his own heart and ask, “Is that meet for God?” And when does he expect to be meet? I do not doubt that such a one desires holiness, but it is a

mistake to look within in order to reach holiness, even as a present thing.

There is no mistake in my saying that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, otherwise I do not know God at all, but the question is, how am I to get this holiness?

God chastens us, not exactly that we may be holy, but that we may become partakers of His holiness.

Having shewn us the ground upon which we are set, viz., is that we are complete in Christ, and are made meet for the inheritance, and that we have been brought into heart-association, by faith, with all this, the apostle turns next to the question of our walk.

We must walk worthy of the Lord to whom we have been brought—proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

God has given us a place in His own Son, and He has given His Son a place in our hearts, the hope of glory; He who is the heir of glory has a place in our hearts, and that is true even as to us Gentiles, who had no title to anything; and so we have to walk worthy of Him because we are thus associated with Him.

How completely does it shew us that it is all of grace! Take the case of the Jew who was looking for Messiah to set up the glory in a carnal way. That is not at all our case, for we are Gentiles; the difference is this, that the Gentiles had no promises, but the Jews had, and they had forfeited them, and now they are thrown entirely upon mercy, as we see in Romans 15. “Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.” He takes

up these two points. People talk of promise to Adam, but there was no promise to Adam. God made a statement upon which Adam could rest, but that was not a promise made to Adam. A promise to Adam would have been a promise to man in his sin. There was also judgment pronounced on the serpent: “It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

There was a promise to the seed of the woman. But the second Man, and not the first man, is the seed of the woman. Christ is pointed out as the One to whom all the promises were made. Meanwhile, Abraham and the Jews got them. The Jews took them under the law, i.e., conditionally, and thus they lost them. God will yet accomplish His promises, in spite of all; but the Jews had to be cast aside. And what of the Gentiles? What had they got? Nothing! Nothing!! It is true there still remained Christ, but mark the case of the poor Syrophenician woman. She was one of the very people under the curse of a city of which the Lord had said, if the mighty works He had done there had been done elsewhere, they had repented long ago. Its very name stood thus for hardness of heart.

Well, our Lord goes out of Israel, and this woman comes and speaks to Him of her want.

“Let the children first be filled,” i.e., the Jews. “Yet,” says she, “the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” ‘I am only a poor Canaanite, with the curse upon me, and I am entitled to nothing else but that.’ But there is goodness in God even for such. Could Christ say there is not? Impossible, for it would not have been true. “O, woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” And her daughter was healed. The

result of blessing not being promised, is to bring out the way in which God is above all sin. There is blessedness in God brought in to meet the want and wretchedness of sinners.

The moment I see this, I find grace is above it all. Christ having made propitiation, this grace now reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. God has come in, and has risen above dispensation in order to reveal Himself in grace, and to have souls redeemed, cleansed, justified, and brought back to confidence in Himself. And thus we can say that we know God, as a Jew under law and promise never could have known Him, and just because we have no right to blessing and that we have no right to anything, and yet we have been brought to God. And here, the apostle adds, “Christ in you” is, not the crown of glory, but, “the hope of glory.”

This was altogether a new thing, that Christ should be among Gentiles; it was bringing in, not the glory, but the hope of the glory that was to come, and also of the heavenly glory.

By this complete grace shewn thus to sinners, we learn what God is in Himself, both in love and also in righteousness. These act together in our favour; and they give us that which grace in righteousness is entitled to give us, and also that to which we are now entitled, i.e., “the hope of glory”; “we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Then the double character of the work of the Holy Ghost is seen, in that the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts, for the Holy Ghost is there, and He is likewise the earnest of the inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. The

glory is our portion, and we are therefore strangers and pilgrims here, “until the redemption.” As regards our relationship with God, that is all settled; we have died with Christ, we are risen with Christ, and we are thus viewed while we are still on this earth.

There is this difference between Ephesians and Colossians: in the Colossians, we are looked at all through as upon earth, with the hope of the inheritance; while in the Ephesians, we are seen as sitting in the heavenly places, not with, but in Christ.

Now, having shewn us our place in Christ, Colossians puts us upon earth, and tells us what is our path here; it is not a question of our being made meet, but of the path of those who are made meet.

Let us turn again to this verse: “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” “Worthy of the Lord,” is the measure given of what we are to be. It is not walking worthily of a man who has a high opinion of himself. We should never be found doing anything worthy of a man, but only what is worthy of the Lord. “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”

That is it. “Ye are … the epistle of Christ”; mind, He does not say, we ought to be this, but that ye are it. We cannot honestly say that we are the epistle of Christ, if we are going crooked and astray, but that is what we ought to be practically. And note, that it is “unto all pleasing,” so that there never should be a thing in us that is not pleasing to Christ. God has put us by grace into this place, and now let us walk accordingly. If I have a child who does things which are dishonourable, this is, of course, thrown back upon the father, and the father

will feel it. “Being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” This is blessed! And it is all in connection with God. We know God. Let us bring Him, then, into connection with everything. “Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power.” There, we get our strength.

“His glorious power” is the measure of this might. But do we really believe these things? Do we believe it to be truth that concerns us?

Take now verse 9, of which I have said nothing; “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” How often we say some of these words, and yet, what have we been seeking in the wilderness? Is it not just our own comfort? No wonder, then, that we do not know what God’s will is. Where is there a right path in this world apart from His will?

I do not know of one; and I am bold to say there cannot be one. Suppose a child who has left his father’s house; well, he never can be right until he has got back. He may not be a thief; he may be in South America, where he may have a very good character; but he ought to have a very bad conscience, and never can he have a right one, until he goes back to his father.

In the world as such, there is no path for us, but the moment we have Christ, then there is a path; it is to go and walk after Him.

We may be but poor followers of Him, still, He has left us an example, that we should follow His steps. “Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.” If only our hearts are in the way,

following Christ, we shall be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual understanding.

And mark the wisdom of the Lord in this. Suppose I got a director who directs me aright; it is no credit to me at all. There is no wisdom or spiritual understanding in us, but God has taken care to provide for us in His own way. But, says someone, I do not see the Lord's mind clearly. Well, then, I ask, "Is your whole body not full of light? Then it is clear that your eye is not single." Whenever I find that I do not see clearly what to do, there is something that prevents my eye from being single.

Yet the thing the apostle looked for is, that we might be filled with the knowledge of His will. This has nothing to do with "meetness," but it has a great deal to do with the state of our souls. Well, there is wisdom and there is strength for us.

And further. Are we now to seek for brilliant effects and manifestations of power?

Indeed we are not, but we are to be strengthened unto "all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."

What a come-down that is for us! It is no easy thing to be patient. Never for one minute to have our own will! Is that dreadful? But ought we not to be doing God's will? Did Christ ever do His own will? He came to do His Father's will, and He never thought of doing anything else. And why do we ever think of doing anything else? Because we like our own wills best! We have poor foolish hearts, where we find constantly our will is at work. If I send out my child with a message, and he wants to get a run too, why that is a law of liberty to him. But do we see that sort of thing in Christ? Was it not unspeakable patience? Paul says, "the signs of an apostle were

wrought among you in all patience “; and within, there was joyfulness. Mark that! We see this in Christ. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we, too, must learn that this world is not a place of rest, but one of trial. Paul asks, “who is afflicted, and I am not?” Suffering, truly, has many forms and sources. But remember that our Lord says, “That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”

What is the effect upon us of all the siftings and the sufferings? Do they make our hearts say, why, we are going to see Christ as He is? How this brightens our hope, and we can thus glory in tribulation, “knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” We are going to be with Christ, and to see Christ, and so I can endure all things for the elects’ sake, that they may be saved.

And what is so dear to us is, not the putting on of outward joy whilst there is a canker at the root; in all that we are passing through, there are sorrows, no doubt; but down at the bottom of our hearts there is joyfulness, and at the end of all, is Christ Himself. We have Him now as the spring of joy in our hearts; and we shall have Him when we are in His presence for evermore.

There is still one thing to which I would refer, and this brings us back to the point where we are found in fact with God: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”

It is a total taking of us out of the place in which we were. This involves not merely that we are born again, or the communication of life, or the precious blood of Christ that cleanseth us from all sin (which is the foundation of everything for us all), but that we have a new nature and we are born of God. There is more here than the blood which has put away our sins; He “hath delivered” us.

Thus not only are we cleansed, but, where that is true of us, we have been delivered from the whole standing and condition in which we were, and we have been translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. This is the only place where it is called the kingdom of His Son, and it is to contrast it with the power of Satan. This is of great importance for the liberty and joy of our souls. We were once slaves of Satan, in Egypt, and now we have been taken right out of it. So, in Romans 7, it is asked, not, who shall cleanse me, but, “who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” And now it is not merely that the blood is there, and that the judge cannot touch us, but it is an entire deliverance.

No doubt the full effect of the blood is to take us out of the place we were in, and to set us in another. The One who has shed His blood, has there wrought that which effects another thing, viz., the complete deliverance from the power of darkness, and the translation into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

There is another element in this, which helps us to understand what I have been saying as to trial, and as to the complete joyfulness which we have in Christ at the same time. The apostle proceeds to show that Christ, having created everything, is to have everything. All

things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. The One who is divine is the One who upholds everything.

Then, again, “He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.” Death is below, down below the lowest creation, and Christ went down below it all. The One who has died has gone down to where the creature had got by sin, and His doing so was altogether in grace. He tasted death as none other ever did. The more He knew what holiness was, the more He knew what it was to be made sin. The more He knew what love was, the more He knew what it was to bear wrath.

And now He has been raised up from the dead, and is the Head of the body, the First-begotten from the dead. And He brings us into the closest association with Himself. He went down into death for us, and He takes us up to where He now is. God raises us up in Him and with Him. And so, too, all the fulness is dwelling now in Him; chap. 2:9.

What do we then find? Once, we were alienated, enemies in mind by wicked works; yet now hath He reconciled us; and we, i.e., the saints of God, are now the body of Christ. All things are going to be reconciled in earth and in heaven; but we are already reconciled, in the midst of an unreconciled creation. God does not leave us as part of this unreconciled creation; it groans, truly, and we groan, too, but we are reconciled to God. So now we see why there is the patience and longsuffering, and the joyfulness, too. Very unsuited these two things may seem in themselves, though the place we are in is very suited to glorify God. Reconciled

is a strong, full word; it means that everything is brought into God's presence as God would have it. And we are reconciled.

I add one more word: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard."

Here we have just what we always do find in Scripture; when the saints are looked at as in Christ, all is a settled thing for them; but when, as here in Colossians, the saints are looked at as passing through this world, we find the "ifs" and the exhortations (and God forbid that we should weaken one word of Scripture) addressed uniformly to them, saying: "Well now, you mustier to heaven," and, "you have to judge things," and the like. But if we are looked at in heaven, we are "complete in him." Nor is there any question about His faithfulness in helping us through the journey.

Knowing we are in Christ, our souls can cry, "Abba, Father," for we are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

And whilst passing through the wilderness, what do we learn? "If the manna fails us a day," we ask, "what are we to feed upon?" or "how are we to get clothes?" God took care of the very nap of their coats, and the manna never did fail. God must sift and exercise us, and pull us to pieces here, but we have the promise, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." What is the good of telling us that, if there is no danger of our being plucked out? We learn therefore the patient faithfulness of God in every place.

I would not weaken these words one bit. Why, Christ ever lives to make intercession for us! We are getting grace from Him every moment; but this is not a question of our being made meet at all. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”; when we fail, the foundation is not touched, but we need to be restored, so that we are kept, where we ought to be, in dependence upon God. We want to be settled as to our place in Christ, so that our hearts may be happy and joyful; and we want to be dependent, too; and as we go through the wilderness, we learn that if He were to leave us one single minute—but He will not do that— we have no resources of our own at all.

Well, these things are put together for us in this epistle. The saints are reconciled to God, but they are still journeying down here, with the hope of the glory before them, knowing that they are made meet for it; and now they have to walk worthy of the Lord, and to trust the blessed, gracious, faithfulness of him who “shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Look at how two things are put together: “to present you holy and unblameable and unreprovable in his sight,” and, “if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled.” In the Corinthians, where they were going on badly, Paul writes, “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

But as to our acceptance, we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and we are found giving thanks to the Father.

The Lord give us to walk worthy of the Lord who has shewn to us such blessed grace!

Lecture On Hebrews 2

A wonderful inquiry is this which is quoted from Psalm 8, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” —an inquiry founded on the nothingness of man in himself, but bringing out, as God’s answer to it, all His counsels in Christ. “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” Such is his littleness. And then the answer comes, not according to what man is, but according to the counsels of God, in which we find Christ is the Man in whom the wisdom of God is to be displayed. I speak not merely of the display of power—creation shews us that—but also of the display of all those qualities in God in which His nature comes out; and these are more than His attributes.

Divine power can assert itself, and the thing is done; very wonderful it is, of course; but we find here a great deal more than that. Christ is the One in whom angels have to learn what God is, in His ways and in His counsels, for the simple reason that He who is the Word of God has become a Man, in keeping with those counsels, so that He who created angels has taken up the cause, not of angels, but of man.

Necessarily, then, all the ways and all the qualities of God (I use this word to distinguish from mere attributes, such as power and the like), His holiness, His love, His righteousness, all these things have come out in man, because they are associated with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this that gives man such a wonderful position, quite unlike that of angels. Glorious creatures they are, preserved unfallen by the power of God, and which shews His ways, in that respect, His power to do so, and

the like; but men have been taken up, when sinners, in order to display the glory of God in them, and that is another thing altogether. The things that are in the highest degree a revelation of the character of God do not come out in connection with angels; no doubt angels in a certain sense need mercy, for no creature can stand by itself without being sustained by the Creator; that is quite true, and I am sure we all know this. But angels do not need redemption. So that as regards grace, mercy, love, redemption, and the unfolding of righteousness where it is called in question, all that comes out in man, as Paul says, in carrying this out, “We are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men.”

Man was made in the image of God. This is never said of angels. But we get special testimony as regards the responsibility of man as a fallen creature; and then, after he had fallen, we find grace and power coming in and connecting him with the Creator Himself, so that He is not ashamed to call them brethren. That is brought out so wonderfully by this question, “What is man?” It is a testimony to man’s lowliness, looking at man as he is in himself, “crushed,” as Job says, “before the moth”; but the moment I reach the thoughts of God as to man, I see God setting him over the works of His hand, and crowning him with glory and honour. That has put man into a wonderful place.

Angels excel men in glory, and strength, and so on, but they are not said to be made in the image of God, and there never was, till Adam, a being set up to be the centre of an immense system that was to turn around himself; but that system is now a fallen one, and everyone is seeking to be a centre for himself.

The whole system is, therefore, fallen under the bondage of corruption; but man, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, will yet be the centre of everything that God has created. He has put under Him all the works of His hands. Yet, when He said, “all things,” it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him. God alone is the one exception to this statement, which exception proves that all else is put under Him.

In the Person of Christ, Man is Lord of all. There we see the Lordship of Christ is over everything; it is not only dominion, but it is dominion in a Redeemer, i.e., in the One who keeps it safe, the One who descended first into the lower parts of the earth, to death and the grave, but who descended that He might ascend up far above all heavens, so that He might fill all things. He will fill all things in the power of the redemption He has wrought. He gathers together in One, i.e., in Himself, all things which are in heaven, and which are on earth. All things were created by Him, and for Him, but while He is actually Head, He will not take them until He takes them as Man; and then, what is further revealed is, that we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, just as He says in John 17, “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.” There we come in, though, of course, he is the Firstborn amongst the many brethren. He brings us in every respect into the relationship in which He stands Himself as Man. Being Son Himself, He makes us sons; and this place He has taken that it might be made ours. So He tells us, “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God.”

Then let us remember another thing which is so wonderful, viz., it is by redemption. How could He take sinners, and put them in such a place with Himself? He could not do this to sinners, as such; so He came down to where the sinners were, and He put Himself—sinless, of course—into their place.

Therein I learn where I was: “If one died for all, then were all dead.” God “hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin … “He came down to the place of death and judgment, passing through all the toil and difficulty of this world, as we do, but perfect in it all, that He might take our hearts up to where He is, giving us a title by redemption, and a condition by grace, in which we can be associated with Him as the Firstborn among many brethren.

It is not merely the fact that we are saved—that is true—but He has associated Himself with us down here, in order that, by the love that He has brought into our hearts, He might lead us into the very place where He has gone, making the Father’s love known to us, for “Thou … hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” Not only have we a place in glory, in consequence, but Christ has come for the very purpose of associating us with Himself, in heart, in spirit, in love, and in mind, so that He should not be ashamed to call us brethren. But He might well have been ashamed, if He had taken us as we were. We see thus the various characters of the way through which God has brought Him. He Himself could say, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” Besides the putting away of our sins, He was in Himself a sweet savour to God.

In this chapter, God gives us the reasons for which Christ had to pass through this place of sorrow, so that we might have this blessing with Him. It became God, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. All is founded upon this great, original truth, that Christ Himself, i.e., the Wisdom of Proverbs 8, was rejoicing in the habitable parts of God's earth, and His delights were with the sons of men. There we see Christ as the Wisdom of God, and as God's delight before all eternity: "I," i.e., Christ, "was daily his delight rejoicing always before him." There, too, we see the link formed in counsel with the eternal object of the Father's delight.

Where did His delight go out? To the habitable parts of His earth before ever they were made. "I was by him, as one brought up with him"; and there His heart went out to the sons of men.

Then Christ became a man; and that is the source and foundation of everything to us. He took up the seed of Abraham, i.e., those who are the heirs of faith. And then we find that the divine purpose and plan is to gather together in One the things which are in heaven and on earth, and to put them under the hand of Christ as Man.

In the previous chapter, the ground given for this is, that He is Son; in Colossians 1 it is, that He created them; and in Psalm 8, and in Ephesians and 1 Corinthians, it is, that all things are put under Him, according to God's counsels and plan; that is to say, as Son; as Creator; and according to God's counsels. "Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak," but "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." That is the purpose and intention of God. But

then there comes in another thing, “We see not yet all things put under him.” One half of Psalm 8 is already fulfilled, for He is crowned with glory and honour. But the “all things” are not yet put under His feet; He is still waiting for His joint-heirs. Now is the time of the gathering, by the gospel, the joint-heirs, ere He takes His power, and reigns. As Paul says, “I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.” There was a distinct set of promises belonging to this earth, and you get that in Psalm 2, where God sets His King in Zion, and says, “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” That is the “world to come,” but it is not the higher position of Him who is to have the “world to come.” And therefore in that connection we read of Christ’s rejection, “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed.” This is the very passage Peter quotes in Acts. But, being rejected, Christ takes another place, and that is upon His Father’s throne, where He now is; He is not yet seated upon His own throne, but, as He says, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

He sits as Man at the right hand of God, but not yet upon His own throne, which He does not take until the joint-heirs are ready. Then Psalm 8 comes in, “Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth

through the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth."

Nathanael owned Him, Son of God, and King of Israel, but our Lord replied to him, "Thou shalt see greater things than these Henceforth" (so it should read), "ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man," i.e., My title in Israel is a small thing, but you shall see Psalm 8 fulfilled.

Rejected as the King of Zion, He was cast out by the world in order that God's righteousness might be accomplished; He was then answered, according to the virtue and value of what He had done, by God's setting Him at His own right hand; and so He says, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." That time has not come yet, and therefore we must suffer with Him, because His enemies are not made His footstool. The world is all around us, and Satan is not yet bound; everything that God set up as good has been spoiled; and so it will be until Satan is bound. So that you see, Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, not having taken His own throne, but yet with title over everything, both as Creator and also in redemption, having first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth. I repeat, He has title over all things, but, with His enemies still in power, He has not yet taken possession of them; but He Himself will rise up, more dreadful than ever, and all then will be put down.

Now this is where people are so deceiving themselves, and even Christians, too; they are seeking to improve man and the world. Why, when Christ was in the world He could not improve it! But Christians are attempting to do so, and that shews the folly of even real Christians,

that when Christ has been rejected by the world, they will try and make it all right! Now it is only the time for gathering out of this world those who are to be Christ's companions.

Of course, in one sense, light does improve the world; men are ashamed to do in the light what they do in the darkness; but that is all, they are themselves the same, no better. Now we see that this Blessed Man, of whom Adam was in this respect a figure, is going to be the centre of all things, though not yet. Made a little lower than the angels, and for the suffering of death, He is now crowned with glory and honour. And the next point is, the way in which He is bringing others into full association with Himself.

The glory is all His, but He does not take His place at the right hand of God, as Man, until He had accomplished redemption, tasted death, and gone down to the lowest place and condition to which man can descend; I speak now of sufferings, rather than atonement, though that also is in this chapter. He tastes death, and goes down to that in which the curse was expressed upon the first man, and a great deal more besides. But here it is the great and blessed testimony to the way in which He has taken man in His own Person up into glory. He came into the world, and left it to go to the Father, not, however, by the aid of twelve legions of angels; but by going through as Man where we were, on His way as Man to glory. I speak of the road He took. He tasted death. I find the great general fact, that He who created everything, and who is now sitting at the right hand of God, did not take such a place, until He had gone down to the lowest place—down to death—and I am not now speaking of atonement.

We have, then, the fact of the death of Jesus, and of the life of Jesus spent where hatred and death reigned.

And observe, that Christ came to redeem us and bring us to God, to destroy Satan's power, and to glorify God; and further, He came to be able to sympathise with the trials, and the difficulties, and the sorrows that our hearts meet with while trying to walk rightly here below.

These are the four great purposes of His sufferings—the glory of God—the propitiation for sin—the overcoming the power of Satan—and the entering into all our sorrows. This last is what He now does as Priest; He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. It became God, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. The moment this Blessed One had undertaken our cause, He was perfect Himself, He came from God, and went to God, and still He was the Son of man who is in heaven; but He had come to obey, to save us, and to bring us there also, and if that were the case, then He must take the consequences. So it became God to deal with Him, according to this place He had taken.

The majesty and the righteousness of God must be maintained, and none but Christ could have vindicated these.

There never could otherwise have been security for God's glory. It became God to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings, "perfect" that is, perfected in the full result of glory; if He would bring sons to glory, He must bring Christ into the state of a glorified Man. In Himself, He was the perfect One; He was always in the bosom of the Father, and all that He did was the Father's delight; so that, if I may

reverentially use the expression, the Father could not be silent, but opens the heavens, and says, “This is my beloved Son.”

Now, in Hebrews, it is a question of the majesty of God, and so you never get “Father.” God’s glory had to be maintained. And if Christ takes up these sinners, He must bear the consequences of taking them up.

Before He could clear us from our sins, He must deal with God about them; He must die and be “made sin” for us.

His own blessed grace led Him, but through the Eternal Spirit, to offer Himself without spot to God. It is not spoken of here, as clearing us, but as being called for by God’s glory. And the more we look at the cross, the more we shall see that God could not have been glorified, as to us, any other way. If God had cut off all men as sinners, there would have been no love in that, but the moment Christ gives Himself up for the glory of God, there you get the perfect dealing with sin in righteousness, and the perfect dealing with the sinner in love. In that sacrifice for sin, infinite love and infinite righteousness were displayed. Of course, all that was there displayed, was in God’s nature; so that there is nothing like the cross. No man, in what he is in himself, could ever be found in the glory with Christ. But at the cross we find expressed all that God is, every character of His, and Christ giving Himself up in perfect love to His Father, and in perfect love to us, and in perfect obedience to God. He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but He is made perfect through sufferings. He goes through the effect and consequence of having taken up our case, so that He could say, “Now

is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." He has now the place of a glorified Man, for God has straightway glorified Him, and He will be displayed in glory when He comes again. Only faith sees this. The world will be judged when He comes again, but faith sees this now, before it is displayed. As Christ glorified God perfectly on the cross, so He is gone as Man into the glory of God.

It became God to deal with Him in this way; and what a thought it gives of the depth of the place among sinners that Christ has been in, that there He was making good the glory of God! It was among sinners, yet He was the sinless One.

"It became him … in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." And there you get the association of these people with Himself. "He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one." This is in resurrection, not simply the fact of incarnation; they are all of one after death, for He was heard from the horns of the unicorns.

After having accomplished redemption, He declares God's name. He says, "tell my brethren," not in a vague way, but He now expressly calls them "brethren." He had not done this before; and He speaks of "My Father, and your Father," this name being only fully declared after redemption was accomplished.

There they are, made all of one with Him! We have it here in poor earthen vessels, but it is so. Those who are made one, are all set as one with Him before God. They are Christ's brethren, associated entirely and for ever with Himself; they, the redeemed, and He the Redeemer; we, the recipients, and He the exerciser of the grace.

Quite true; but that is what is done. “All of one.” The more you look at it, the more striking you will see it to be. All through the life of Christ, He does not once say, “My God.” He lived in the perfect relationship in which He was, and says, “My Father”; but on the cross, when drinking the cup of wrath, He says, “My God.” That was His perfectness; it was not the expression of His full relationship, but it was the expression of infinite suffering of infinite claim. When all was accomplished, so that we could be brought in, then He uses both names; and all our blessing rests on these two names of God. If we look to God as He is, we can delight in that name, for we are made partakers of His holiness. We are made the righteousness of God in Christ, and as such, of course, we are suited to God; while we have also the blessed relationship of sons, and say, He is our Father.

So we read of “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Of course Christ is a Man, and so God is His God; and because He is God’s Son, God is His Father. Grace has brought us perfectly to God, and that is the blessedness which has been wrought for us. Our whole place before God is perfectly settled. I do not say that we may not have trembling faith in our hearts, but the place is settled, “My God, and your God.” We have not yet got the full results of it all, but we have the grace that gives us the consciousness of our place.

This may be seen in three ways. If we take John, Christ is in us, and we in Him; chap. 17. If we take Paul, we are members of Christ’s body; but if we take the question of our coming to God, which Hebrews treats of, then we can go into the holiest. I do not call that priesthood, but it is the place where we go through redemption. And it is important to understand that, because it is often used

as if priesthood was to bring us there, and therefore persons go to the priest. Surely He will hear them in His mercy, though they go wrongly. But it is not right; we are there already, accepted in the Beloved. “By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” But is that all? It is not all the truth. Did not Christ live upon earth? Was He not perfect upon earth? Are you not living upon earth? Are you perfect upon earth? That is another story. It is not all the truth to say, I am in Christ before God; it is the foundation of all, but it is not all the truth as to what is passing in our hearts.

Have you not difficulties? Do you not find that you give way sometimes through want of faith? And that is not suited to heaven. The more you belong to heaven, the more unsuited it is. And God deals with that. It is a tremendous mistake to think that because I have a place in heaven in Christ, God is not concerned in my path down here.

In this respect, I am present in the body, and absent from the Lord; and so God deals with me in this condition. He brings practical death upon all that is in us, upon the flesh, I mean; and not only when there is failure (that is met rather in 1 John 2), but we have the blessed sympathy of Christ with us in our weakness here, in all that through which we are passing, and where we need the help which He obtains for us. We are before a throne of grace, there in righteousness truly, for grace is reigning through righteousness; but what is the confidence we have? “That, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”

We are talking to God, and we are getting answers and supplies from God. That is not a state of perfection, but of imperfection.

Sure, if there was not perfection in Christ for us, and for our own, we could not go on. But mark what chapter 4 unfolds to us in verses 14-16: “Seeing then that we have a great high priest … let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace … and find grace,” etc., etc.

We have, there, a standing witness of righteousness and of propitiation. This is because Christ is there, and He is both. Then, in 1 John 2, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father,” etc. Christ is our righteousness, and so all is settled; if it were not, we should have sins imputed to us, but we stand in Him as our righteousness before God, and He is there according to the value of His propitiation; then, if we fail, He takes up our cause there, and grace comes to deal with our hearts and spirits, to restore us, without our righteousness ever being touched. It is because our righteousness never can be touched that we can go on. This is not our highest place, which we have as members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones; in one word, as being “in Christ”; but it is the highest character of His grace now to help us when we are in weakness, and in infirmity. If God commended His love towards us, it is when we were sinners, and as we learn this, we joy in God; He loved us when there was nothing in us to love. The grand testimony to absolute divine love is that God loved sinners. Well, it is the same way as to the gracious-ness of God. The grace of Christ is not, after all, our highest place; but it is the highest place of Christ. It makes us little and Christ great. To be put into Christ makes us great.

To find Christ going the same path as myself, so that He may understand every feeling I have, makes His grace great; and that is so precious.

This brings us to the next point; and that is, Christ suffered that He might sympathise. It was part of His perfection that He was ever dependent upon His Father, “I will put my trust in him.” In this way it was that He went through the whole scene. Before going to appoint the twelve disciples, He prayed all night, and so He acted all along the path of opposition and insult that He trod. I know therefore that I have not One who cannot be touched with the feeling of my innrmities, so that in the midst of my innrmities, as Paul says, I can glory that Christ’s power may rest on me. You remember what Christ says to him there; He had sent Paul a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, but now He says, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” He answers him, deals with him, understands him, and that is all he wanted.

With Paul, it was thus the humble weak place of the believer; but there was the constant and touching exercise of Christ’s grace towards him.

A third reason why He took this place of humiliation and suffering (not exactly a part of His priesthood, though the priest took it), was, that through death He might annul the power of Satan.

First. It “became” God to lead Christ through this pathway of suffering with regard to God’s own glory.

Second. Christ was there putting his trust in God, while going through it, and so is now able to sympathise.

Third. He destroys Satan’s power.

Then, in verses 16, 17, 18 of chapter 2, we come to the more proper and immediate exercise of priesthood. “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham,” etc. The children were first partakers of flesh and blood, and were in trial and difficulty (it does not say sin, though they might sin). Then He calls them His brethren, and He sings in the midst of the church.

Think what that is! Not, you may sing now that I have accomplished redemption, true though that is, but, I will sing. Christ leads our praises. He has so associated us with Himself now, that He takes up all our thoughts and feelings. Praise for redemption it is, and also every thought and feeling which I can express to God. For Christ is a man. He knows what it is to bear God’s wrath, as none of us will ever know. That is over; it is gone for Him on the cross, and it is gone for us by reason of His having borne it. And then He declares the Father’s name to His brethren, and leads their praises.

It is from down here that the praises, founded on redemption and atonement, go up to God; but the expression of every thought and feeling that can be in our hearts, as exercised down here, goes up likewise in praise.

All that which enters into this, Christ has gone through; and now He sings in the midst of the church; this is a figurative expression, but it is true that He is the Person who leads every feeling and thought of exercised persons, because He has gone through it all Himself, and He leads the praises up to God.

When it comes to the accomplishment of the way, it is the same thing: “In that he himself hath suffered being

tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." It is not here a question of our perfectness or of our acceptance before God, but that the heart of the Lord understands and enters into every trial and difficulty we have.

Just as if He might ask us, "Do you think I have not been tempted, and that I have not gone through sorrow?" He could say, "Now is my soul troubled and what shall I say?" there was with Him the constant passing through this world with all that is in it. And there He is on high, but understanding every one of the exercises through which we pass as belonging to God. He belonged to God, and as such was made perfect through sufferings; and if we belong to God according to His acceptance, we must pass through suflferings. It is in that respect that He helps and succours them that are tempted.

Our weakness and our dependence, and the trials and exercises which we go through here, find an echo in Christ's heart, and they become thus a link between our hearts and His.

It is not a question of righteousness, but of what belongs to the righteous, that is the difference; nor is it a question of sin, but of having our whole hearts down here brought into the tune and tone of Christ's feelings, the One who went through it here, that He might lead our hearts into the channel of His own heart.

Fourth. He is a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. To make reconciliation. This was not strictly a priestly act; it was not going between God and the people at all; it was the high priest who did it on the day of atonement, but it was for himself as well as for the

people. In different ways Christ fulfils all the shadows. He was Victim as well as high priest. But Christ could not take up on earth the ordinary exercises of His priesthood, for if He were on earth, He should not be a priest; but the people must have a ground on which they could stand in such a place. Before beginning His ordinary exercises as high priest, Christ made propitiation, and there He stood as representative of the people. He was both Victim and also the priest who confessed the sins. We find in this the blessed truth of the perfectness of the work of atonement, and of the full confession of the sin. We get Christ owning all our sins upon the cross. He was the Victim and the Scapegoat who carried them all away, and the high priest who confessed them. He charges Himself with them all, and then deals with them in atonement; that act is the basis of all the rest, and now He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.

Then we see that He suffered being tempted; that is not atonement. It was part of His trial, and it enables Him to succour them that are tempted. And, I repeat, it is not that we go to Christ as priest; God does not, of course, make anyone an offender for a word if the heart is right; but Christ goes to God for us, and we go to God by Him.

The Spirit of God groans in us. We have an Advocate, which is the same word as Comforter. The Holy Ghost, as dwelling in us, occupies Himself in divine sympathies, with all our sorrows, whilst Christ takes them up for us in the presence of God; and the effect is that blessing comes down to our souls by the Holy Ghost. In this connection, it says, He is able to save to the uttermost, i.e., unto the end. He is talking, in all this, about our going through the wilderness. You do not find union

spoken of here in the wilderness, but exercises and trials. Christ enters into all this, and we get grace to help in time of need. His death has perfected us for God; His life carries us on with God until we reach Him. Christ ever lives for that. We have the blessed consciousness of our weakness, and quite right, too; but with the weakness, we learn to look to One, and to lean on One who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Do you believe that this is Christ's heart now? I do not believe that this has its proper place with us until we have righteousness; and it is a mistake to suppose that we get righteousness by the priest. Christ is there; and believing in Him, we are made the righteousness of God in Him.

This leaves us free, in perfect acceptance with God in Christ, to learn all that He is for us by the way.

God is thinking of us, too, in His own heart; and we have a Man sitting at His right hand touched with the feeling of our infirmities, One who takes every sorrow, every weakness, and every difficulty as an occasion of ministering grace to us, bringing us thus into the presence of His faithful love. It is not merely righteousness; it is a Christ that I can trust. And I admit, and I would press it too, it is not our highest place; but it is blessed, perfect, precious grace that I learn. My weakness makes me learn what the grace and tenderness of Christ are. By Him, I am perfect before God, but while I am absent from Him, I never lose the exercises of His heart for me before God, to secure for me grace and strength. This carries our souls to Him. I would have you feel that it is a low place, but it is true. You are weak and infirm, there may be a thorn in the flesh, but it is to put you in the place where the grace of

Christ can meet you, and where His strength can be made perfect in weakness.

It is a great thing to learn the constant exercise of grace, as it is our highest duty to shew the life of Christ; but the daily exercise of Christ's grace is that which obtains grace for us to help in time of need.

The time of need is the time of grace,

The Lord give us to know it in power!

Lecture On Hebrews 9:19-28

There are two very distinct parts in this passage to the value of the sacrifice of Christ.

The one is its aspect towards God, and the other is its aspect towards us as sinners.

There is the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and then, He hath borne the sins of many. We find these two aspects running all through Scripture. Take the figure of the Old Testament. In Leviticus 16, on the day of atonement the blood was carried in and put on the mercy-seat; this was the first goat, or, “the Lord’s lot”; sins were then confessed on the head of the scapegoat by the high priest as representing the people, and afterwards these sins were carried away into a land not inhabited. This second goat dealt with actual sins and transgressions; but the former goat, or the Lord’s lot, although in favour of sinners, surely had its direct aspect towards God.

Another element there is here, on which, however, I do not stay, viz., that Christ Himself has gone in, and is always there; that is, as is always the case in Hebrews, the truth is carried much further than the figure, for Christ is constantly in the presence of God for us. Not only has He done one work with regard to our standing before God, but He appears also in the presence of God for us.

There is a further element in the passage which has also its value and place, and that is, the “blood of the covenant” (v. 20). Not that there is any covenant made with us, but, as respects our relationship with God, it

gives the fullest contrast between the first and second covenants. We get the blessings of the second covenant, though not exactly under it.

The great truth is, that we are in a state of sin before God. Everything is defiled where the creature has reached, everything even of heaven; I do not mean, of course, where God dwells in unapproachable light; but the created heavens regarded as part of the whole creation; and the angels also as well as the heavens.

Not that the heavens are guilty, but they are defiled; and therefore it is, that Christ has gone up “far above all heavens.” All that to which the creature has had to say, is defiled. If we look at God as dwelling, in a certain sense, in His creation, He sees the whole of it defiled; not indeed where He is in His own being and nature in unapproachable light; but there where He is in connection with His creatures, there, is defilement, and that does not do for God, for “Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever.”

It is in respect of this, that the great truth of the putting away of sin out of God’s sight is made known to us; and then comes another thing: we are guilty, and our sins must also be put away. We have sinned. This is our place and condition, in the midst of the defiled creation. The whole evil must, therefore, be put out of God’s sight, and this has taken place by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a purification for both, and Christianity teaches it in its own way: “Forthwith came there out blood and water.” “This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.” Practical purifying is typified by water; and also, even under the law, “almost all things are …

purged with blood." And not merely have we the renewing of our minds (which is another thing entirely), renewed in the knowledge of God, "in knowledge after the image of him that created him," but as there was sin in God's sight with which, of course, God has had to deal, so now all the dealings of God go upon that ground. No matter what the kind of dealing is, it is based upon the existence of sin. It must be so, because sin is here.

I am not speaking now of believers who stand in grace, nor of God's righteousness which has come in; but I am looking at the ways and dealings of God, in judgment or in mercy, in atonement or in condemnation; all is in view of sin, because sin is here. We have surely thousands of mercies in regard to temporal things, but we have to look at things as men in the presence of God. In God's moral dealings with men, He must deal with respect to sin, because sin is here, or the dealings would not be true. It is of all importance that our hearts should get into the consciousness of this. We must either say that the world is fit, or else that it is unfit, for God.

If it is fit for God, what kind of God have we got?

With corruption, murder, violence, oppression, horrible wickedness, wretchedness all around us, can we say that the world is fit for God? No person with a conscience, but will own it is not fit for God. Put it fairly before him, and he will own it. He might perhaps fly out against God, because of its state, or, that he should ever be punished for it, but he will never say that the world is fit for God as it is. And again, our hearts are not fit for God; that is a serious thing. No doubt a few leaves of a poisonous plant are not like a tree covered with fruit;

and we may not grasp the whole value of this. As regards what was manifested, the Lord could look at it, but the whole condition of man is apart from God. At the first, we read that, “So he drove out the man”; and since then, every man has added his own sins, making up his own guilt.

We find, then, these two things: the state of the world before God, everything suffering from it and groaning together; and, in speaking of direct application to the conscience, our hearts also are away from God, and we never can be really in the truth with God until we own that. We may have many beautiful ideas in our heads, but to be with God, we must first take our place as sinners, just because we are such. There is not one of us, no matter who it is, but has done things his conscience condemns. And “if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.” Of course, a holy God must condemn us. That is where we find ourselves (I am not now speaking of the believer’s place in Christ), and the word of God fully unfolds all this, and presses it upon us. Nor shall we mend our position by deceiving ourselves, or by hiding ourselves from God, as Adam did in the garden, or by hiding God from ourselves. Not hiding absolutely, of course, for the sense of God will break in upon us sometimes, when anything unusual happens. A terrible disease rouses man to a consciousness of his position, and his conscience then sets to work at once. Bring cholera into the place, and at once you will have people religious. It expresses the sense that men have to do with God.

One there was who could say about a certain sin, that “the man that hath done this thing shall surely die”; and

he gets answer from the prophet, “Thou art the man,” though he had not the least conscience of it. There is no truth for us till we get before God in the consciousness of our state of sin, and also, that we have sinned, i.e., that the tree has borne its fruit. It is not merely a generality, but it is intensely individual; I have to do with God, and I must be before Him according to all I have said and done.

I may seek to excuse myself; but there I am, and that is the truth. As is often said in the proverb, ‘He that excuses himself, accuses himself.’ “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat”; thus spake Adam. “Thou knowest the people that they are set on mischief,” so said Aaron; but that was no good reason for his giving way to them, and making a golden calf.

All this is instead of saying with Jeremiah, “I have sinned, and it is no profit to me.” Now, God deals with man on that ground. But the question is: How?

God must deal with us as sinners, for the simplest of reasons, namely, that we are sinners. But how? That is another question.

Let us not deceive ourselves by fancying that the thought of right and wrong remained with man from the time when he was innocent. He did then know that he had to say to God, that is true; but he obtained the knowledge of good and evil by eating the forbidden fruit. In a certain sense, it is a mercy he did, if he ate at all. But a bad conscience is a terrible companion; and, if not purged, it is an everlasting bad companion. It says, “The man is become as one of us,” not, that man has retained this from his former state after his fall. Conscience is

there, then, but it is when man is under sin, and though it is a mercy now to have conscience, yet it is a terrible thing, too, because it is either hardened by depravity, or else it is present to distress. Better to have a bad conscience than a hard one, but one or the other we must have. Now having a conscience, there is a sense in man, when not reckless in sin, that he ought to be righteous; and so he sets about to get righteousness.

Quite right is he in thinking he ought to have it, though he will fail to get it. He may take the law for his guide; but what God did in the law of Moses was, to give, not the image of heavenly things actually, but only the shadow of them. Looked at apart from its ceremonials, the law, as a moral law, was marked by two things; it came to man fallen from God, i.e., after the promise and when God was testing man in this way, to give a perfect rule of righteousness to man as he was, if he was to have human righteousness. He was not to covet, not to lust, not to lie, etc. Besides containing a complete epitome of national rules for Israel, the law told man first, what he ought not to do, and second, how he ought to feel towards God and towards his neighbour. Now man takes the outside of the law, not the real kernel of it; and so he tries to make out righteousness which, says he, 'I must have, or else, in the day of judgment, I shall fail.' He is so far right in taking the law as a rule, though he will not succeed.

Along with that, there is in man the constant tendency to make out a righteousness for himself, for he knows he needs it. If you will try to make out righteousness for yourself, well, here is the rule: "This do, and thou shalt live."

Man—Israel—had thus the law; but with it, God gave that which was the pattern of things in the heavens; not the very image, but the shadow of them.

And then we have the whole system of the tabernacle, and of the ordinances which referred to sin, etc.

It is true that the giving of the law was followed by the immediate breaking of it; but, to begin with, we have a moral rule, and then, in the tabernacle, the development of God's ways and purposes towards the sinner.

Although it was but a figure, a shadow, it contained another element which comes out in Hebrews, and that is, that until the work of redemption was wrought by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, there must be a separation between God and man. Under the law, there were hopes seen afar off by men of faith, and, of course, such were saved, but as to their then present condition, they "searched." Peter tells of those who wrote, "What, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you." These things had not then come, but though they had believed on them as coming, there was no present access to God. When a man failed and sinned through ignorance, there was a provision made, figure of Christ's sacrifice, which restored him to present communion with God by providing a relative purifying before God. This kept up the notion that sin must be put away, and it maintained intercourse with God, so far as God had revealed Himself; but along with that, there was this testimony, that man cannot draw near to God.

There was always the holding out the hope of the brighter and better things that were to come; but the vail was still there.

The more we read the Old and New Testaments, the more we shall see that of old there was on the part of God the gracious condescension of communication with man, but always with this," The Holy Ghost this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest," i.e., that man could not draw near to God. The more we take notice of the difference between then, and now, the more striking does it appear.

There are two passages often quoted, as applicable to us, which bring out this difference; both of them have just the opposite force to that for which they are quoted. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," and there the quotation is stopped, as if the things were so glorious and so great, that our hearts could not know about them; but the Apostle adds, "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." This shews that we can know them now.

Then again, in the same chapter, we read, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?" Nobody, of course. But the former part is used to shew that we cannot now know God's mind; whereas it continues, "But we have the mind of Christ." Both of these are quotations from Isaiah, but with distinct additions, shewing the exact contrast between the condition into which we are brought by grace and the condition in which those were under law. There were wonderful thoughts in the Psalms, and gleaming through

the prophets, but with it all there was still the testimony that man could not draw near to God. It was to us, Christians, that they ministered these things. We are not yet in the glory, of course, and therefore he says, “to whom they have been reported” not brought. We are still in this poor world which is under the bondage of corruption, though the work has been accomplished by which the vail has been rent and the foundation of the glory laid. And whilst waiting for the redemption of the body, we have distinct entrance into the holiest, boldness by the blood of Jesus. The vail is rent from top to bottom, i.e., the introduction of an entirely different thing.

When we have to do with responsibility, whether without law as Gentiles, or under law as Jews (indeed we all have, practically, to do with law, unless we are lawless, because it is the measure of man’s responsibility as man), and when, at the same time, we do not know grace, then we go to the law, which is very useful to convict us of sin; but then, that which answers to the law, in the heart that has failed to keep it, is the day of judgment to come.

The day of judgment takes up man on his responsibility and deals with him according to the light he has had. All have failed, and the day of judgment is, therefore, not a question of mercy nor a time of discrimination between those who are saved and those who are not (it shews that out publicly, of course); but it is now that discrimination takes place; it is now that “he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,” and that “he that believeth not is condemned already.” So, the very moment the conscience is reached, it cries out, “Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall

no man living be justified." And directly we have the testimony of the law, as in Romans 3 to the Jews, the conclusion is clear: "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." Their very understanding is darkened, that is, morally (I am speaking, not of science, but as regards God), and their will is all wrong; "they are all gone out of the way." In a terrible way, all are thrown together into a lump, and none is profitable; that is what the apostle has to say of men in their responsibility. That is where he sets us. all. And that is where conscience sets each of us when the light of God enters. That is also where God sees each of us to be.

The testimony takes up the thoughts and intents of each heart, whether as a heathen, or as having heard of Christ from my youth up, and so it puts me, in my conscience, where God sees me in the light.

In truth, there I am. I may not altogether understand it, but there I am; and then I find I am striving for a time to make out my own righteousness. That is how law acts as a principle.

I am under obligation to meet God's requirements. I do not say I shall succeed, but the position is true, and the day of judgment meets it; as long as there is a trace of that in men's minds they never can get peace, for they are thinking of that day, and the testimony is perfectly clear: "There is none righteous, no, not one."

Nor has God left us in the dark as to what is the result of the judgment. If He were sitting upon the great white throne, He could not say it plainer than He does now. If a person says, "I am not afraid to come before God," it would only be a proof that he has not seen God at all. It

may be such an one has been preserved, through providential mercy, from outward violence, open immorality, and all that kind of thing; but he has been always thinking of himself; Christ has had no place in his thoughts and heart. Paul could say, “touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless”; but the moment the law said, “thou shalt not lust,” he was killed at once; “sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.” Is God to allow lusts? Suppose we had lusts in heaven; what kind of heaven would that be? Lusts take us after things contrary to God. And quite true it is, that if we have not God in joy above us to delight in, we must go and satisfy ourselves by living on what is below us. Poor it is surely, but so it is. The fact is, that we have got away from God; and directly I am away from Him, I must find my pleasures and satisfactions on the earth. I may seek to keep up merriment and the like, but my pleasure will be in man. It was so from the outset. Cain built a city, and called it by his son’s name, Enoch; this was the expression of his own personal importance, just as men do now with their properties; and then we find artificers in brass and iron, musical instruments, and so on, in order to make everything pleasant here for man without God.

Not that there is harm in sounds, but there is in the use made of them. And so with everything else.

When Adam hid himself behind the trees of the garden, that did not make the trees wrong. If I give a man a blow and kill him, there is no harm in the strength itself which God has given me; it is in the use I make of my strength. It is in the heart of every man that has not got God to make use of these things so as to do without God; that is the evil.

And in another way, when the conscience of a man is awakened, he may take up with outward things, and try to make a righteousness with them.

There are both Sadducees and Pharisees in the world wherever there is profession. On the one hand, Sadducees, going right on into open infidelity; and, on the other hand, people tithing mint, and anise, and cummin, but all the while they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. The Lord tore open their sepulchres and laid them bare; that is what He must do. He will acknowledge, in its proper place, everything that is gracious and amiable in the natural character as such; just as in the case of the young man in Mark 10: "Jesus beholding him loved him."

Running to Christ, he said, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" But Christ stops him, saying, "There is none good but One." You are altogether out of the way; but, "if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," Matt. 19. Well, he says, I have kept them. Jesus said unto him, "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor." And then he went away sorrowful.

The Lord loved him, for he was a lovely character; but his heart was as much away from God, as anybody's else is. The Lord did not deny what his character was, but He probed his heart to the bottom, and out came just what the heart always is.

Well, this has to be met in both respects; that is to say, God's glory has been dishonoured, defiled, trampled upon, and His heart offended by having it before His eye; and then there is the positive guilt of the sinner.

Now the gospel meets both these things. It owns them most fully; and it establishes also the authority of the law, the curse of which Christ bore. At the same time the gospel takes up man on entirely new ground. It admits to be all quite true what we have just been saying, but then, in view of that, man is lost. Take the law and apply it to his conduct, and it condemns it. If we have to meet God on our own responsibility, then we are lost. Does a man deny this? Does he say that sin is not sin before God? Or that it is no matter? Or that we are not guilty? No, he will not do so. Very well, then, you must come before God in the day of judgment and answer for it, and then you are completely lost. If we have to answer for ourselves, we must bear the consequences; and when the law gets into our souls, we find this out. Then we see we have sinned; and of what good is a judge, if he does not condemn one who has sinned?

But I am the man. I own it. I have done so-and-so. There I am; and the moment, therefore, I take up my responsibility, I see I am condemned already, or else I weaken the holiness of God.

It is no longer a question as to how a man may grow better, so as to be able to meet God at some future time. Are you going to get better to meet Him? Then it is clear that you have never met Him yet—you are without God.

Do you hope to be in a state to meet Him hereafter?

Ah! when the word of God meets the soul, it brings the soul into God’s presence at that very moment; then what presses upon it is, not the question as to whether I am going to get better tomorrow, but what am I to-day? Nor can there be peace in my soul till I come to that point. I never find peace till I come in my rags to God, like the

prodigal who came to his father, just as he came out of the far country; I mean, as to his condition, not as to his will. The prodigal was not fit for his father's home for a double reason: his state did not suit the master of the house (that is, God); and, what is more, he was really guilty, for he had been committing sin.

Now, in Hebrews 9, both these things are completely met. We are sinners, and if we answer for ourselves, we are condemned; but God has set about to work for Himself. For some thousands of years He left man under responsibility, without law and under law; and this had brought out distinctly —what He has to bring out in our hearts—that the carnal mind is enmity against God. Now when that is practically brought home to us, then God takes up, not what man has done, but what He Himself has done. The responsibility is there, but if God judge us according to our works, no flesh living should be justified. So God saves us, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His own work; and that makes all the difference. God has come in, in grace, not by our works, else grace is no more grace, or work is no more work. Either I am, as to my acceptance, going to God on the ground of what I have done, or, I am going on the ground of what God has done for me. Judgment answers to the one; glory and salvation answer to the other.

And that which is of great moral importance to note, and which comes before the question of our sins and guilt, is, that God's glory had been cast away. First, angels fell, then Satan triumphed and man casts off God. Violence, corruption, death came in. Satan is both the "prince" and the "god" of this world, so that when the Son of God came into it, Satan could bring the whole world against

Him. God had been utterly dishonoured. Christ comes and puts Himself into this place. Sin is under God's eye, and Christ is "made sin." Not only has He been made sin for us, but there is first of all the Lord's lot. Christ, the second Man, came, and while perfect in all His ways as a living Man, yet the condition of men as such was that of sin; if, therefore, He were to save man, He must put Himself in that place before God.

And this Christ did. He was "made sin." He stood there as a sin-offering for the glory of God in this respect; and that is the basis of all. The blood has been carried inside and presented to God. Of course, the testimony of the truth of Christ's mission is also presented to people, but that has nothing to do with presenting the blood to God's eye. It was testified to the people without, as is the case now in the gospel; but this blessed truth is of the first importance, viz., that the whole value of the sacrifice has been presented to God Himself.

Man failed, and fell under Satan. Christ was also tempted by Satan; but He met the entire opposition, and everything else, and that, too, when accompanied by God's wrath; He has passed through all in divine perfectness, and He has ended it all for ever.

Now this was, morally, the "end of the world" (v. 26), as the Lord had said, "Now is the judgment of this world." Man had been tried in every possible way; first, he had been set up in innocence and had sinned, so that he could no longer be with God in an earthly paradise; afterwards came judgment, such as the flood; then came law and prophets, and repeated warnings; and lastly, Christ came, for nothing more could be done; it was the end of the world. And now, if a man try to make out all

he can for himself, he will find himself at the end where he began, or worse; he has but proven to himself that he is a sinner.

Then must he not come into judgment, and be judged?

What, then, is to be done with him?

Now see. The end of the world was morally accomplished on Calvary at the cross. Death passed upon the blessed Son of God, when He, as man, and for us, put Himself under the judgment of God. Man had been already tried under every variety of condition in the ways of God, and it had resulted in total failure on his part; then Christ comes and puts Himself there where man was; and He did this on man's behalf and for the glory of God. The second Man, in circumstances far more trying than those in which we had been overcome, first of all with every inducement that Satan could offer to Him and by which He had deceived men, and afterwards with all the terribleness by which he would hinder Christ from carrying through the work of obedience, the second Man, I say, goes through all perfectly and successfully, and then, through the Eternal Spirit, He offers Himself without spot to God.

There was perfect obedience, and perfect love to His Father; He was made sin, and God dealt with Him in righteousness. We see in a Man, Christ, perfect devotedness to God, perfect devotedness to His Father; and then He goes and stands before God perfect in Himself. So that, whilst drinking the cup of wrath more deeply than we could ever drink it, He could ask, "Why hast thou forsaken me?"

He was there, so that God might be glorified in righteousness, glorified in His majesty, glorified in truth,

glorified in love, by Christ putting Himself in the place of sin, Himself sinless, and by His being tested and proved all His life through; He is “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” Not the sin?, as it is too often wrongly quoted, but “the sin”; if He had taken away the sins, what would there be left to judge man for? But with respect to all, God says, I am glorified. Christ hath appeared “once in the end of the world… to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” He annulled sin completely, in the sight of God, by perfect obedience in His own Person, taking the whole thing upon Him, and dying as “made sin” for us, so that God has not one word more to say; on the contrary, He can now accomplish the full result of active blessing in the immutable stability of the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. All things will be reconciled (not the things cast out under the earth, I do not speak of them now), in heaven and on earth, and a new heaven and a new earth will be brought in, founded upon the death of Christ, the One who is the delight of God for ever. Christ’s work must ever be God’s delight, because through that work God has been perfectly glorified in all that He is. And the point is, that there where Christ was “made sin,” there, has God been glorified.

Where was obedience proved? In the place where Christ was “made sin.”

Where was love proved? In that place where Christ was “made sin.”

Where was righteousness proved, and holiness, too? There where Christ was “made sin.”

It must have been so, because sin was there before God's eye; and if Christ had not accomplished this, nothing would have been done at all.

If, then, all is done, and so done, I can say to any sinner in the world: The blood is on the mercy seat, "Come." God has been glorified in Christ, as He Himself said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Will you come?

Inasmuch as God has been perfectly glorified, the testimony of the blood of Christ goes out now to the sinner, and says, 'Grace is free, grace reigns through righteousness'; while as to the full result of it, this will include "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

As regards ourselves, we know the work is done, and that, consequently, Man sits at the right hand of God. We have also the testimony of the Holy Ghost that so completely and so perfectly has this work of God been done by Christ on the cross, that man in Him has been already glorified by God. Not, of course, that we are there yet, but our "Forerunner" is entered. For His own work's sake, Christ is now glorified in answer to His words in John 17, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me." Now He sits at the right hand of God in glory. But He will come again to judge His enemies, as it is written, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

In the application of all this, I see that not merely God has been glorified, but also that my case has been met as a sinner. At the close of this chapter, we read, "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the

judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Sin has brought in both death and judgment. Death has actually come in, and judgment is before man. So that, in this passage, I see that not merely the great general basis and foundation has been laid in God's work on the cross (not on man's responsibility, for the eternal glory rests upon the finished work of the "second Man," and it can therefore never fail), but also that conscience has been dealt with. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"—that is where we are as sinners —"so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Death came in by sin, and judgment also comes by sin. Judgment applies to my works. But I find here that God having come in, not only has Christ glorified God, but He has also confessed, as it were, my sins, my evil works, upon the head of the scapegoat, and thus they are gone for ever.

So the whole question of sin has been completely met.

On the day of atonement, the high priest of old, as one of the people, and for them, confessed their sins; this took place every year. Was that a sign of their sins being put away? Surely not. Why was it done? Because their sins were there. Instead of indicating the removal of their sins, the repeated confession was rather the memorial of them.

But now, my sins are all gone, for Christ has sat down, and in respect of the removal of sins, He has nothing more to do whatever. Having finished that work, He has sat down in the glory.

I see that He has confessed all my sins upon His own head. I am not excusing anything, therefore, not even a single sin; if I sin after I am converted that, of course, is

a great deal worse, but as regards the work of Christ, there is no question in that about the moment in my life of my conversion, or of the sins I committed before or after conversion. To introduce that question would be to confound the time of the efficacy of the work in me with the actual value of the work itself. In that sense, there is no time with God. God knew all my sins from the beginning. And what is so blessed is, that if I look up to God in all His holiness, righteousness, majesty, glory, and love too, but specially righteousness, I see now that He has been perfectly glorified in every respect and detail that concerns me.

The work of Christ has met God's glory, and what is more, it has enhanced it. He could say, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Man is therefore now glorified in God's glory.

All is perfectly done, so that my soul can say, "As regards the sin of man, and the glory of God in reference to it, I see that by what a Man has done on the cross, God has been glorified."

I do not forget that there, God's own love has been most wonderfully displayed. But in respect of the very thing wherein such gross dishonour was done to God, Christ has met every claim of God, and has honoured Him perfectly.

And in that same scene, Satan was bringing every terror to bear upon Christ, and yet He only shewed out perfect love and obedience to God; all the perfectness was brought out in His being made sin, and in His drinking the cup. All is now finished, and Man is sitting at the right hand of God. Then what has become of my sins? He has borne them all.

If in my heart I have been brought to own myself a sinner, I see that Jesus “was once offered to bear the sins of many”; all is finished, settled, perfectly and for ever; there is no longer any possible question between my conscience and God. I do not now rest upon my works, for I own I was utterly lost by them; they brought me nothing but just condemnation as regards myself. This must ever be so in view of God’s glory and of my guilt; but in sovereign grace Christ has stepped in, and He has glorified God in the place I had got into, and He has borne all my personal sins—every one of them. The whole thing was settled before ever I knew of it or had been told of it, indeed before ever I was born.

And who was engaged in doing this work?

No one but Christ with God; that is the reason the work is an absolutely perfect one. It was wrought out totally and absolutely between the Son of God, offering Himself spotless, and God dealing with Him as a Victim. When therefore the Lord gave expression to what He was going through (His perfectness in submitting to it came first), we hear Him saying, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” There was no wavering in the perfectness that owned God as His God, and yet He asks, “Why hast thou forsaken me?”

He was the One who knew God infinitely and also what it was to be infinitely forsaken.

And in the perfectness of that work, there and thus accomplished, we had nothing to do.

This puts us in our true place. It makes the testimony to be that of sovereign grace in righteousness, so that the grace itself reigns through righteousness.

And what is the consequence? Why, that now it says, “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Every Christian looks for this in some shape or other.

As regards those who are looking, what do they look for? Is it to be judged? It cannot be so, because the first time He came, He put away all their sins; when, therefore, He comes again, it must be “without sin,” that is, apart from the question of sin. Always without sin as to His own Person, He will appear “without sin,” because the first time He came, He put it all away. It was then that He stood in the place of sin before God, for God’s glory and for our salvation. All is totally finished.

If men now reject Him, they will have, of course, that additional guilt, whilst their sins are not gone. But suppose I am brought to repentance, and that I am broken-hearted about my sins, then it is that I see Christ bearing them upon the cross, and I learn that all is settled; I can only then say, what a wretch I was to make the Saviour suffer so! But I look up to Christ, and I say, ‘The first time He came, it was in love and to give His life a ransom for many.’ He was the only One who could do it, and He has done it; all is now finished for God’s glory, so that the new heavens can rest upon such a basis.

And as regards my sins, all has been done also.

God’s glory rests upon this finished work. So much so, that when Christ comes again, it will be “without sin.” He has nothing more to do about sin (I am speaking now as to believers, but not in respect of their needing correction in their pathway here), for “by one offering

he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"; and therefore it is, "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation."

Am I, then, resting upon the absolute, complete, eternal efficacy of His sacrifice?

That sacrifice brings us to God in the light, as God is in the light; this is its effect. Nor does it leave us there as we are, for the gospel tells us that we have died, and the question is asked, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" I do not now enter into details, but I take up the broad ground of the gospel.

The vail has been rent, and we have not only boldness to enter in, but sin has been judged in the light of God, and so we judge it, too. God sees no longer any obstacle in the way. Balaam expressed it clearly enough. A wicked man he was, but God forced him to say to Balak just what God pleased, and Balaam could not help doing so, though, if he could, he would have done otherwise. And he said that which is true of God's people now. We find in this case, as always, that the accusations of Satan are put to silence before the testimony of Christ. If Joshua stand before the angel of the Lord, and Satan stand to resist him, then we find this: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan… is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" And Balaam made his announcements as from God.

It was at the close of the wilderness journey, and not in a scene of fresh thanksgiving as at the Red Sea; it was just at the time when Moses' own witness about them was,' Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you,' and, "I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck." But God testifies to the adversary, by Balaam, that "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath

he seen perverseness in Israel." As to the question of our acceptance, the blood of Christ gives the one perfect answer; God cannot see one bit of sin upon the believer. He will most assuredly not allow us to walk wrongly, but that is not the question here. It is God's work in the day of grace, meeting me in my need, and giving me a standing in Christ, because God has been so fully glorified as regards all that relates to me; therefore it is that I am now waiting for Christ to come and take me into the glory.

Let us see, then, that we are with Him whilst we are on the way to meet Him. There is no excuse for us in failing.

If we fail as Christians, we are always at fault; but as regards the great groundwork of our acceptance, this has been settled and established for ever. Since Christ has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, I do not need to modify my justification by my sanctification. And further, He ever appears before God for me. Having been brought to God, I have now a far deeper sense of sin than I ever could have in my natural conscience. I own how I have put His name in the dust, and how I do so still, though I call myself a Christian, though that is not what I am examining now. I am speaking more especially of this, that if I look at Christ's first and second comings, I see the most distinct difference. At His first coming, He bore my sins; I know it by the gospel, and by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven; and therefore I am now waiting for Him to come a second time without sin unto salvation.

If the Lord were to come to-day, would each one of us be able to say, 'Well, the time has come for Him to fetch me

to be with Himself'? Many may say that they are waiting His good time, but is the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ a thought of promise to our hearts? Is it a promise for the fulfilment of which we are looking? Or is it connected with an uncertain mixture of hope and fear as to judgment? If the latter, then I have not really laid hold of the value of His first coming. Are we able to look for Him according to His promise, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself"?

We lose so much of the value of His blessed work.

Have our hearts learned what it is to be before God, loved as Jesus is loved, righteous as Christ is righteous? He "of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." How can I fear if I have that?

Is that where our hearts are? Are we resting upon this work so that, as regards ourselves, we know that when He comes the second time, He has nothing to do for us with respect to sin, because the first time He came, He finished with sin when He bore it and was "made sin"? Jesus Christ the righteous is now our Advocate; and His advocacy is founded upon righteousness and propitiation; all believers can therefore still look up, and expect Him to come and change these vile bodies, and fashion them like unto His own glorious body, and, further, to receive them unto Himself. On the other hand, if we die, our bodies, "sown in corruption," will be "raised in incorruption"; "sown in dishonour," they will be "raised in glory." If Christ should come to-day, would it be for us like taking a person that was waiting for Him, or like taking one that was uncertain whether or not Christ would have him? But I know that I shall be

perfectly like Him when He comes, and, therefore, I am seeking to be as morally like Him now as ever I can be.

Reading On The Christian Position

As to the difference between the opening out of our position, in Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians, it may be well to note that, in Romans, we are dead with Christ; in Colossians, we are risen with Him; and in Ephesians, we are dead and risen with Him, and seated in the heavenlies in Him.

Ques. Why is there the introduction of circumcision in Colossians?

The immediate object is the setting aside of Judaism, for now that we have the true circumcision, we are viewed as complete in Him. Circumcision does not go beyond the putting off of the body of the flesh, either historically or in Colossians; it does not go beyond "putting off" (chap. 2:11). But though this is only negative, it is a big negative.

We do get something additional, and that is, what is put on; but, in itself, circumcision is not putting on. One must be in a new place before one can put on.

Israel had no one for them in Canaan, but we have Someone in the heavens. Until we are in Christ, and Christ in us, I do not believe we can be really circumcised, for I cannot reckon the body dead until I have got some other life. Life must come before death. That is the controversy we have with monks, and with the Irvingites; they said, death must come first; we said, life first. We cannot reckon ourselves dead to sin until we have another life in which to reckon ourselves. The apostle is insisting that we are complete in Christ—Christ complete before God, and we in Him.

All the fulness of the Godhead goes out to us, and we are complete in it before God, and we have nothing else to look for.

Ques. Does circumcision bring out a heavenly Christ as that which is characteristic in Colossians?

Yes; all that we must have—One who is the Head of all principality and power. Circumcision is brought in here because they were in danger of going back from their position.

Ques. Should it read, “in whom,” or, “wherein,” in chapter 2:3?

I think myself it should be wherein. In verse 12, “wherein” is in baptism.

Ques. Does Scripture ever say that we are risen in Him?

No, you could not say risen in Him, but with Him.

This is the only place where resurrection is connected with baptism. In Ephesians 2:5, 6, we are first of all quickened together with Christ, and then Jew and Gentile are raised up together. Generally speaking, baptism is death, but this passage in Colossians recognises risen with Him, but the object is, baptised to His death. And there we should remain if it were not for the faith of the operation of God. We have not ‘raised with Christ’ in Romans, either in baptism or out of it. We are looked at there as alive through, or rather, in Christ, but not alive with Christ.

Ques. Would you view the bread and wine in the same way as bringing before us not only Christ, but Christ as dead?

Yes; we are in Christ in heavenly places, and we partake of the Lord's supper in anticipation of the time when we shall all sit in glory with Him in our midst; it is as belonging to heaven, but if I ask, how did we get this place? there, we find the answer—the sufferings of Christ have brought us into it.

The great distinction is, that in Colossians it is life; in Ephesians, union and the Holy Ghost. In Colossians, we are risen with Christ, but not yet in heaven; the hope is laid up for us, and we are to set our affections there; but in Ephesians, we are viewed as sitting together in heavenly places in Christ, i.e., as gone to heaven!

Ques. In Ephesians 1:22, is it, or is it not, 'gave him to the church'?

It does not make much difference. He gave Him to the church, i.e., gave Him as Head to the body. That, at any rate, is the sense of it. It is the character in which He has been given. One cannot leave out the connection of Head with the church.

In Acts, we have the planting of the Church. This was the work of Peter and Paul, with a certain free ministry in between these two, such as that of Stephen, Philip, and Silas, etc.; and also of those who went everywhere preaching the word. The first apostles were at Jerusalem, taking up the Luke commission, for we have a distinct commission in each of the gospels.

In Matthew, they are sent out from Galilee, to disciple the Gentiles.

In Mark, they were to "preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized," etc.

In Luke, repentance and remission of sins were to be preached, beginning at Jerusalem.

In John, the Lord says, “As my Father has sent me, even so send I you … whose soever sins ye remit,” etc. And he breathes on them that they may receive the Holy Ghost. They are sent from Christ, in the power of the life in which He had been sent from the Father, to go to the world.

In the Acts, it is the Luke commission, and no other, carried out as far as it goes.

The testimony of Paul at Antioch in Pisidia in Acts 13 is just the same thing as Peter’s in chapter 2. Both proclaim the fundamental facts of the gospel. Paul begins with the Jews there, though it was not Jerusalem. The Matthew commission would not have done for them at Jerusalem. But the baptism they were baptized to was before Mark’s commission. Matthew says, “baptizing them,” that is, not the Jews but, “all nations” Luke’s commission extended to the nations as well, but beginning at Jerusalem.

Peter would not let Cornelius in, until God, so to say, had forced him. Acts 1 goes out to Samaria, Judea, and the ends of the earth.

The twelve begin at Jerusalem and go on to Samaria, but they would not let in the Gentiles until God compelled them to do so, after giving Peter a vision about it.

Ques. Is Matthew’s commission still future?

It will, I suppose, be carried out in the future.

Ques. Will the Church at Jerusalem be resumed at the last?

The blessing will begin at Jerusalem, and they will go out and tell the nations that the glory has appeared, according to Isaiah 66.

After Matthias had been chosen, and the Holy Ghost had come down, the first thing we find is opposition from without; the apostles are put in prison, etc., etc., but there is real triumph, and back they go to their own company.

Then a difficulty arises from within, the widows murmuring, but grace completely overcomes that; the power of the Holy Ghost meets the need.

Then something worse occurs—the fall of Ananias and Sapphira. This is overcome by judgment. Divine power is there to meet every evil that comes in. Not that there is no evil, but it is met completely, and that, too, in a gracious way.

But the church is now no longer in her Pentecostal character. Not that the power has ceased; there is still power enough now, if there is faith to use it. The coming in of power is according to what suits the need of the time.

Ques. It has been said that the closing verses of 1 Corinthians 5 cannot now be carried out, because there is not power to deliver to Satan?

That is confounding power with duty. When he says “Put away from among yourselves,” it is a question of duty, not one of power. What you speak of is the denial of responsibility. If you mingle it with the delivering to Satan, there you want power, and if you have not got it, you make yourself foolish. Of course, God is able, as ever, to work a miracle. But suppose God should confer

this power, say, on Romanists, or on the “Broad Church,” He would be putting a seal upon that state of things. And so, too, with Independents, or any others. It would be putting in some shape or other a [kind] of testimony upon that which was out of the way. As long as there was unity in the church, if there was a rush of people to power there, they would find Christ behind it.

Suppose it were given to brethren, it would be like saying, ‘you are right,’ ‘you are the church and no one else is.’ We may of course fail in ministry; but the moment there arises a need in the church, faith may surely count upon Christ for supply.

Ques. When you put out anyone, where do you put him to?

You do not put him anywhere but “out.” Say, it is out of this room, well, we put him out of the room, I do not know where to, we do not put him anywhere but out. Paul told the Corinthians that they ought to have prayed that such an one might be taken from them, that God would remove him; they ought, at any rate, to have felt that it was intolerable to have him in. I might suppose a case where we had to deal with one where there was not any Scripture for putting out, and yet it was felt that such an one was doing mischief. “Cut off which trouble you,” is not a question of discipline, but the putting such out of the way would be so. In connection with the deacons appointed, I should say that power met everything at the time. What was going on did not shew the activities of grace as they had been seen heretofore; those appointed were acting more officially than from the simple power of grace.

Ques. Many argue that in the state of decline in which we are now found, that is an example for us to put up with what we can; how would you meet this?

It is all a question of what the thing is. Take the case of deacons. Suppose you have a large gathering, and there is difficulty in distributing; I see no objection to certain ones taking the charge of it. But I could not say so of elders, because there are no apostles to appoint them. But, in such a case as I have supposed, I see no difficulty for two or three, at the wish of the others, to undertake this service.

Abstractedly, I see no difficulty. But the moment we find an elder among the churches formed by Paul, it is he and Barnabas that choose and ordain elders for them; Paul and Barnabas did it. There is the authority descending from Christ to the apostles, and again from the apostles. It might prove a failure, and no doubt it did.

Deacon (diakonos) is but a servant. Phoebe was one, and perhaps she swept the room where they met; I cannot tell what she did. “Diakonos” is not a slave.

Speaking of the seven, it says, “whom we may appoint over this business.” All the names are those of Hellenist (Greek-speaking) Jews; grace was still working, though it was a proof of failure, too.

Well, that continues; Peter then goes throughout all quarters (Acts 9:32), and Antioch now comes in.

These deacons purchased to themselves a good degree; one of them, Philip, goes out, and we have a free ministry in exercise.

The Lord raises up these men.

With Paul, who has a direct, definite, apostolic calling, another characteristic is seen.

Then, over the matter of Stephen, a persecution breaks out, and all were scattered abroad, the apostles excepted.

Our Lord said to His disciples, that when they were persecuted in one city, they were to flee to another; but the apostles stayed at Jerusalem, carrying on the Jerusalem church as a centre. Those scattered went everywhere preaching the word. God uses persecution as a means of spreading the truth, and that is the first thing that carries it to the Gentiles at large. Some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene. The apostles might have expected the Lord up to the time that Stephen was killed, but henceforth Christ must sit down and wait, because both He and the Holy Ghost had been rejected.

Ques. Have you any thought as to there being a lapse of time between chapters 2 and 3 of the Acts?

No, nothing that I know of. There must have been some lapse of time, for their numbers had multiplied.

The prayer of Christ, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,” stopped for the time being the effect of the cross as regards the condemnation of Israel. Ministry went on, founded upon the coming of the Holy Ghost, and Peter calls them to save themselves from this untoward generation (chap. 2:40), and he adds, “I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers,” chap. 3:17. He puts the nation upon their responsibility. It shewed that the man who owed ten thousand talents had been previously forgiven.

In rejecting Christ, they got into the debt; it was suspended in a sense—will you repent? But they would not repent, and they became resisters of the Holy Ghost come down. They were thus breakers of the law, killers of the prophets, killers of Christ, and resisters of the Holy Ghost. Stephen sees Christ standing on the right hand of God, not having yet sat down there, and the Jews take then the full character of adversaries, so that Christ must sit down until His enemies be made His footstool. When that time comes, He will rise up. Meanwhile, the offer to the nation has been closed.

Thereupon the disciples were all scattered from Jerusalem, which ceased to be any longer a church centre; but the apostles stayed on, and the ministry of the gospel went out. Next we see Peter bringing in the first Gentile, that the unity of the church may still be seen. It was after Paul had been called, that Peter brings the first Gentile in; and then Paul is sent out to the Gentiles.

Paul has a distinct mission. He gets, so to speak, his credential letters which are peculiar: “Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.” Paul was not really a man on the earth at all, for his calling had delivered him from both Jew and Gentile, and he belonged to Christ in glory; he did not know Christ after the flesh; but still, after calling Paul, the Lord took care to have Cornelius brought in by Peter, so that there should be no division. And Peter refers to this in Acts 15:7, 8.

Cornelius is called in in the general unity. Paul first goes up to Jerusalem, and disputes in the synagogues, and then he goes off to Tarsus. He is set aside for the time

being, in order to learn that God does not want him, but that he wants God.

Then the work begins at Antioch, and Barnabas goes down there, and he and Paul set to work together with a Gentile church. A new ministry commences which had its practical credentials in Paul at Damascus, a man who had been smashed to pieces and delivered from the people and from the Gentiles, and then was sent to Gentiles; a man who now belonged to heaven.

But this ministry was connected with the body of Christ, for He says, '"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" All these people are Myself.' The church was thus connected with a glorified Christ in heaven, and with a Jerusalem centre on earth. The danger of division was averted in Acts 15. Antioch had begun quite separately by the ministry of Paul and Barnabas. The Jews then come down, and they say, "You must be circumcised," etc., etc., and so the question is raised. Meanwhile Paul and Barnabas go out to preach, and we find elders are first appointed in chapter 14.

Ques. Is there any proof that our Lord did not sit down?

He is seen standing in chapter 7, and when He sits down, He sits down "until."

At Paul's conversion, the glory was revealed without anything being said to him of Christ's position.

Ques. What is the force of, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"?

He saw Him on the way to Damascus.

Ques. He surely saw the Lord personally, and not in heaven?

Just so, and therefore it had nothing to do with His position in heaven. The Lord was in no place then at all but Paul's eye and vision.

Paul saw Him afterwards in a trance in the temple, but these visions prove nothing as to the place He is holding in the dispensations of God.

Some went down from Jerusalem to Antioch with a Judaising scheme. A fresh start altogether had begun at Antioch where we have the mission of Paul sent forth by the Holy Ghost, in contrast with the mere free ministry such as Stephen's, and there was thus no longer any gathering to Jerusalem.

The great thing that then came out was, that looked at as a centre on earth, the Jerusalem church was gone, i.e., gone from the time of Stephen's death.

The Jerusalem church was not, however, given up because of Peter's opening the door to the Gentiles. Peter had followed Christ right up to the cloud—the glory; and as far as he was an eye-witness, he could say, 'The Man that you have rejected is the Man that God has exalted.' But Paul begins with a glorified Christ, and so takes another step forward; delivered from both Jews and Gentile, he knows only a glorified Christ, and saints united with this glorified Man. Paul starts on this ground, and the Holy Ghost, quite independently of Jerusalem, sends him out in keeping with his own special commission.

A fresh difficulty arises in chapter 15.

These Judaisers are not sent, but they go down and require circumcision; God did not, however, allow Antioch, nor the mission to Antioch, to settle that

question. Supposing they had done so, it would not have been settled at Jerusalem, and there would then have been division. So after much disputation, Paul has a revelation that he should go up, with others, to the apostles, with the result that Jerusalem gives up her title to enforce Judaism. A very gracious dealing of the Lord.

Ques. Was the apostles' ministry founded on Luke's commission?

Yes. But free ministry was not founded on any particular commission.

The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch, and this was, I think, by men, not by the Holy Ghost. Peter recognises the name. A Christian is a person connected with Christ. They never could have given them that name at Jerusalem from the name Messiah. Christ is a Greek word.

As to the history of the Acts, we now drop Peter (except in prison), and all the rest is, you may say, the history of Paul and his labours until he gets into prison.

They make Antioch to be three years after Paul's conversion at Damascus, and then, "fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem."

That which was enjoined in Acts 15 had nothing to do with the law. Before the law, blood had been forbidden to Noah; as to the other matters, these were (1) faithfulness to God, and (2) faithfulness to man or woman as regards the marriage bond that God had created. Blood, idolatry, and fornication.

It was not a question of the law, but of God's title; that is to say, life belonged to God, and man was not to corrupt himself as a creature. And God secured unity so far,

though there always remained the difficulty with the Judaisers.

Ques. The question is sometimes raised, as to whether there is any warrant for a kind of synod of elders?

Well, in the first place, I do not suppose a synod would be bold enough to say, “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us.” I have no idea of this representing all the churches and so acting; it was head of the Jewish system.

Ques. Do you suppose the apostles and elders were alone?

We read of none but apostles and elders; but the letter is addressed from all (verses 6 and 23). The people had been disputing ever so long before the apostles said anything. Peter and Paul were wise to let them expend themselves first.

Ques. How did it seem good to the Holy Ghost?

The apostles had authority and could say so; “the Spirit of truth … shall testify,” and so “ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.” It was thus through the Holy Ghost they bore their witness. The Holy Ghost is sent down to bear witness of what Christ is in heaven, and the apostles bore witness of what He was on earth.

“It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us.” I do not think this was their assembly, but what was done before. The letter was written in the name of the church, but the decree was in the name of the apostles and elders, and God bore them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost.

In James’ citation (and he is quoting from the Septuagint), the point is, “all the Gentiles upon whom

my name is called"; they were therefore not to trouble the Gentiles. As for "the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down," this has nothing to do with his object in quoting the passage.

Paul's ministry continues until we come to the elders at Miletus (chap. 20); and there, in a certain sense, he gives up his ministry though he might still preach. And he commends the elders to God, etc.

Ques. Can you link verse 21 with verse 28, putting verses 22-27 in a parenthesis, so as to connect the name of Jesus with the words, "His own blood"?

Well, I am satisfied God has purchased the church with the blood of One who belonged specially to Himself. If you take the 'editors,' you do not get "God" in that sentence at all. Athanasius condemned altogether the expression,' blood of God.' My own conviction is that the 'editors' are right. In order to avoid the 'blood of God,' some have put in KurioSy the Lord, there.

Ques. Paul preached the "kingdom of God" everywhere, though he does not here enter into the full doctrine of it?

That is so. God is setting up a kingdom. The Church generally has lost the idea of the kingdom of God; people talk about 'being saved,' and say very little about the kingdom of God. We find an important testimony here, namely, that the loss of the apostles would leave an opening, in a way that did not exist before, for perverse men and wolves to enter in (a ground for watchfulness!) who would not spare the flock. There, is what the giving up of apostolic ministry leads to. In applying to the Jews the prophecy of Isaiah 6, the

apostle Paul really closes up the ministry of the gospel to them.

The gospel goes into prison, and the Jews have their judgment sealed on them. The earthly thing had been merged in Paul's ministry, in which we see a special power raising him up with a special commission. But this ends in prison at Rome.

It is curious to notice that the church at Rome was founded, with Paul in prison and not in free apostolic ministry; and to me it is a very solemn thing to see where it all ends. I hope the Lord is keeping the present testimony unto His coming, and that because it is, in a sense, a testimony to failure—that the Church is in ruins; for then there will be no pretension to power, no apostles, no elders. The Lord has blown upon pretending to constitute anything, yet He is just as faithful as ever to minister to the need of the Church. It is for us to be faithful in the condition in which we are, but in accordance with that condition. There are two reasons for desiring the Lord to come; an affectionate desire for Himself, and seeing the state of things is so far from His glory, that He would come and put things right in a heavenly way. And yet it is just the time for us to be strong. I believe we have as much to lean on as Paul had, though we have not the same things to do. It is a time, I believe, of very great blessing if we are but content to follow Scripture with a single eye; but people get muddled up with the crooked ways going on around them.

I have sometimes seen upon a mountain that there is but one path which is simple and right; and a comfort indeed it is to know it, though there are ever so many

crooked ones going over the heath. That is just where we are now. If a person has the right path, he does not need to inquire about the fifty wrong ones. “Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.” If I look on, I see Christ, and then all is easy, and with my eyes on Him, I go straight.

A broad path means a broad conscience, not a broad heart.

We have a narrow path, but it is a known path, and a straight one.

Reading On Ephesians 3

It is striking how the gospel of Paul and the doctrine of the Church run into one another. They are distinguished somewhat more in Colossians, where Paul speaks of himself as a minister of the Church as well as of the gospel, i.e., he was a teacher of it, and not merely, as with many others, a teacher in it. Here, they both run together; so we read “that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body,” and the gospel Paul preached was to bring this about.

What makes this so immensely important is, that is involves sovereign grace. For, as regards his state, it did not matter much whether a man were Jew or Gentile; in reality, both Jew and Gentile were far off; but the Jew had promises which God, of course, could not fail to fulfil, and Christ was therefore “a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers,” and also, “that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy;” Rom. 15:8, 9. The Jews came thus under pure mercy because they had rejected Christ; still, God is faithful, and promises were there to be fulfilled.

We read, too, that “if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed,” Gal. 3:29. In Ephesians 2:3, all are viewed alike, while in verse 12 the contrast is fully expressed.

I do not overlook the difference between near and far off, for those near had the promises, and the root and fatness of the olive tree.

Ques. Can you give us an outline of Paul’s gospel?

The great principle of it is the sovereign grace I have referred to; it treats man not only as dead in sins, as in Ephesians, but also it brings out that man, looked at as alive, is at hopeless enmity to God. Of course, morally speaking, he is dead, but looked at as active, there is in him positive enmity to goodness.

This was proved by the law, though not then brought out; for the law was presented to men to keep, but "the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." And this is not all, for before Paul began his ministry another element came out, viz., that in this world of sinners and law-breakers God was in Christ, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Here, then, we have an additional thing altogether.

Sinners they were in full, and positive transgressors, too, but though God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, men would not have Him: "Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." There had been thus a full revelation of the Father in grace in the Son; "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did," etc., and they had hated Him.

After this came the apostles, and in Peter's ministry there was this additional element, viz., that Christ's intercession ("Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do") had spared the Jews. A certain respite was given them; but in stoning Stephen they sent, to use the Lord's figure, a message after the Lord to say that "we will not have this man to reign over us." Instead of repenting, they put Stephen to death and stopped the apostles' mouths; and here for the first time we find Saul, holding the clothes of those who were killing Stephen. The distinct expression of their enmity, as well

as the whole energy of it, was brought out in the clearest way in Saul of Tarsus.

And while he is doing his best at this, and in the highest degree, he is stopped and made an apostle.

Sovereign grace comes in. This is why he calls himself the chief of sinners; not that he was at all immoral, but he was the highest expression of the enmity of man's heart against God.

Then God comes and says, 'As you have no righteousness of your own for me, I will give my righteousness to you.'

That which gives such peculiar character to Paul's gospel is that, being sovereign grace, it is good for Gentile as well as for Jew, no matter which; indeed, in one sense, the Jews were the worst, but still it is good for both. And further, Paul was converted by the glory; though he knew Christ had been humbled, he did not know Him in His humiliation. He knew the glory before he knew it was Jesus who was glorified.

The other apostles never saw Jesus behind the cloud; Paul only knew Him behind the cloud.

A third point is, that the Christians who were being persecuted, the Lord calls, "Me." In germ, therefore, we have here the church.

This gives a special character to Paul's ministry, and these things shew the elements of it. Of course, the subject of it was still Christ, and Christ's death. There could not be two gospels; but I am speaking of the special character of Paul's gospel. And notice, in this connection, that the Holy Ghost came down upon the twelve when they were already called. Paul's direct mission was, that he was sent forth by the Holy Ghost,

and he owned no connection with the twelve, no apostolic succession; his mission was “not of men, neither by man.”

Ques. Will you explain a little more fully what Paul’s gospel is?

It is the gospel of sovereign grace when men are dead and enemies; this is what he preaches, and it is to every creature under heaven, because it rises above all dispensations, and with which it has nothing to do. But with the twelve, the message was, “unto you [Jews] first,” etc. True, the Jews would not have it, but it was so presented to them—the One whom you crucified, God has glorified.

Paul comes and says, all are enemies of God, whether Jew or Gentile, and in this state of enmity God has sent this testimony of Christ to all alike. It has nothing to do with promise. It is God’s righteousness apart from law, being witnessed both by the law and by the prophets. All the apostles had testified that Christ was coming again, and this, of course, Paul fully recognises.

Ques. Is there any other gospel to be preached now?

Well, I may begin at the other end, and say, ‘You have crucified Christ; not with your own hands, of course, but you have preferred vanity and the world, which comes to the same thing.’ It may be quite right to take up that side of the question.

Ques. Do we find anything in the preaching of the twelve as to the unity of the body?

In addressing Jie Jews, the testimony of the twelve is, you have killed Jesus, and now that He is at the right hand of God, what are you going to do?

Ques. But was there any difference subsequent to Stephen, and prior to Paul?

Peter says, they that were not a people are now the people of God. Of course, as to the foundation, there could be no difference; but with Paul the form the gospel takes is that it treats man as totally reprobate. It comes from the glory, and it is this which gives it its character. Paul begins with Christ in the place where the whole work of redemption is finished: here are persons dead in sins, and here is glory for such. Glory revealing grace, that is his starting point.

Ques. Ought evangelists to begin with the glory?

Ah! I do not say that. In 2 Corinthians 5, “God was— not is—in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” Paul says that, and we are ambassadors, as Christ had to die and go away. Paul goes more thoroughly and deeply into things. There was not merely a record of offences, but also positive enmity against God. And all were dead. Now there is revealed not only the righteousness of God by faith, but also the wrath of God from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Here is God come out in His nature, and I say, that will not do for me, I cannot have that. It brings out in a distinct way the absolute contradiction of God’s nature and man’s nature, whether it be that of the Jew or the Gentile.

The utter contrast between what man is and what God is has been thus brought out, and then we find sovereign grace in God rising above all that man is. There was no good whatsoever in Saul when he was made an apostle; on the contrary, there was in him the worst possible disposition that could be found in this world. The strongest expression of enmity against God was found in

him when God met him in pure grace. And then God says to him, ‘Go, and tell people of it.’ It was true also of Peter, as to his nature, but here in Paul we see how this is brought out.

Ques. But Paul had a good conscience?

Yes, indeed; but that, in other words, is only self-righteousness, for when I get into God’s presence I have a bad conscience; a good conscience in such a case means a hard one. If a man is listening to his conscience, he does not see with his own conscience what he is. If he has done nothing to trouble his natural conscience, he goes on unconscious of what he is; but the mind of the flesh is enmity against God.

Ques. But did not Paul say, “I did it ignorantly”?

Yes; it was not done with deliberate will to be wrong.

It is a great point to get distinctly hold of this, that God is not looking for good in man. Paul brings this out. So when the Lord said, “A sower went forth to sow,” He brought the seed with Him. He knew morally that the Jews were rejecting Him, and so He says, ‘I am come to bring the blessing.’ But until He was actually rejected, Christ could speak of coming to look for fruit in His vineyard, though He found only wild grapes. When a person is converted, and sees he ought to do differently, even if” he does not see more than this, the tendency of his heart will be to try and get this kind of righteousness, if he has it not, rather than to believe in righteousness from God. When therefore the young man came to Christ and asked, “What good thing shall I do,” etc., the Lord says, ‘You are all wrong, “there is none good but … God.”’ He puts then the commandments to him, because the young man had asked, not how he

should be saved, but how could he obtain eternal life. So at once Jesus meets him with this: “There is none good but one, that is, God.”

Another immense truth now comes out, viz., that God is no longer dealing with the question of our responsibility. If I were to keep the law like an angel, it would never give me title to the glory of the Son of God. This is a matter of God’s counsel. The question of our responsibility has been met by Christ for us perfectly on the cross, but there was beside this the laying of the ground for the accomplishment of God’s counsels, and for the putting us into the glory with the Son of God. So that it is now a righteous thing for us to be in glory. That is the reason we find in Paul’s writings the truth of the Church, and of the rapture, and all these things.

On the cross, Christ went down to the lowest place, and there He ended everything for God. And there man was proved to be ruined and lost. Suppose someone had spent all his money and had no property, I could not talk to him as to how he is to meet his responsibilities. He could not do anything. It must therefore become a matter for me to see how I can do something for him and set him up again. Now God had this counsel, that He would put us in the same place with His Son. And thus is revealed in Paul’s ministry the glory of the counsels of God.

All this has nothing to do with responsibility. There was, of course, the question of our responsibility. But Christ has cleared this all away for us; and so in the Epistle to the Ephesians we have the side of the counsels of God in Christ, “in whom we have redemption through his blood”; and therefore the character here taken by the

apostle is, that “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 Christ.” This does not refer to a promised Messiah yet to come, but that to Paul it had been given “to make all men see what is the fellowship [dispensation] of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,” etc. “Fellowship” is a wrong word in this verse, fellowship is our part in it; the administration of the mystery was Paul’s.

It was the mind of God to give us this place in Christ before ever the world existed; the responsible Adam came in afterwards.

Counsels do not raise the question of righteousness, although when these come to be accomplished, they must be so compatibly with righteousness.

The question of righteousness (first raised in Paradise) was brought to an issue by the law requiring this from man, and then by goodness when Christ came into the world. It was raised on the question of man’s responsibility under the law— “this do, and thou shalt live” —and yet again, when Christ came into the world to see if mar could be restored by goodness. But man killed Christ, and then it was all over with man. And herein is seen God’s wonderful wisdom, because that which has brought out the evil of the thing in its height, has also brought out God’s righteousness.

Now, if we submit to His righteousness, all is clear for us; we are made fit not merely for life and happiness, but also for glory, for Christ is there.

I agree with those who say there is a negative work (a common word, if not quite the best), a righteousness in

putting away sin, and a positive work, as a distinct thing.

Supposing I owe money, or I have debts, and they are paid, well, all that is cleared away. Romans 3 goes so far; for there, righteousness goes no farther than forgiveness. Negative it is, in one sense, for it imputes nothing, Christ having borne all. But then there is another thing; what is our place in the work of Christ? That is where the difference comes in.

Persons go back to the law; why, what is that but setting me up again as alive in the flesh? That was the case once, but I am no longer a child of Adam. I have died to that in Christ. Well then, what place have I now? I have passed the Rubicon of death, and I have entered with Christ into the heavens, and I have now a righteousness according to God, founded not on the responsibility of man, but upon the work accomplished by Christ.

On the ground of responsibility I was dead and lost; but now, before God, I have nothing of that character at all. Christ has borne all for me; He has made atonement for my sins, and has died to sin, and so I am out of my old place. But that which has brought me out of it now associates me with Christ in glory, no longer with Adam under law. I have passed through death and resurrection with Him, and I have now His place.

Ques. Does justification include both?

Yes; it is the whole thing. I am associated with Christ after death, that is to say, I cannot have a place with Christ before I have died; otherwise it would be to associate the Holy Son of God with sinful man. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.”

Evangelical doctrine stops very often at the negative side, or else it connects me with Christ keeping the law during life, and that is to make me alive again in Adam. This teaching arises from not judging what sin is, and doubtless many dear saints, often from simple ignorance, do not really know what sin is. And thus one find them in a state corresponding to that of which Romans 7 speaks.

It is, no doubt, the state of one converted, but who cannot get peace; and indeed such an one never ought to get peace while remaining there. But what is so beautiful in God's way with us, is, that the very principle and measure of holiness come in directly I learn I am dead. I have left the whole ground of law and nature, and I am dead to sin.

Ques. How can you live on, if you are dead?

It is quite true that we have still sin working in us as an enemy, but we are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." This is really the truth as regards our new state. And the moment the believer sees Christ in glory, he sees the whole result attained. And in Christ in glory I learn what this righteousness entitles me to. Christ could turn to His Father, and in all righteousness, say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." So that now He sits there as the testimony to the effect produced, i.e., to where this righteousness brings man; all this is for us, and thus "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Ques. How does the Church shew the manifold wisdom of God?

God's wisdom had been shewn in this creation when, as they looked on at it, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." God shews also

His wisdom in His ways of providence, and again, in His government of His earthly people; but now we find a totally new thing in the wisdom of God, namely, that there are those united to His Son in glory; the whole question of sin has been so entirely settled, that God can now bring us into the very same glory which Christ has taken as Man. This is something totally new. Suppose I had gone and talked to a Jew about his Messiah having members of His body, he would have looked at me and wondered what I meant. There are plenty of truths in the Old Testament about Him, but nothing at all as to other people being members of His body, and yet that is what is brought out here in Ephesians.

In Psalm 8, there is still more. “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” etc. This Son of man is to have everything in heaven and earth brought under His rule. The very One who created everything is the One who is to have everything put under Him.

As soon as Christ died and morally closed the old creation, He became in glory the Head of the new creation; only He is now waiting until He has gathered His joint-heirs.

God began with the first Adam, and when that was finished with, then He brought in Christ.

In a certain sense, the whole creation was subordinate to the counsels of God as regards the church.

All things were created by Christ, and for Christ, and therefore the moment He takes His place as a Man, He must have the first place, as the beginning bf the creation of God, the Firstborn of all creation; the reason of this being, that He created them all, and therefore, if He takes a place among them, He must be the First.

It is this that Paul is used to bring out, the rest is in Peter's teaching. Stephen summed everything up when he said to the Jews, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and the murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." They had broken the law, killed the prophets, killed the Just One (Christ), and resisted the Holy Ghost. All was over.

Then, in his looking up to heaven, we see the turning point of the whole thing. At the killing of Stephen, Saul was at the height of his enmity; but grace comes in and takes up this man at the very moment of the highest expression of his enmity against Christ. This enmity was true of all, from Abel downwards, but Saul was the first person in whom it came out in that absolute way.

And then comes the turning point! "Why persecutest thou me?" Angels can see a unity which it is very hard to see with man's eyes, but we believe in it. It is true to angels: "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." That is one part of the truth, that the church is that by which angels see this manifold wisdom of God. The angels are the highest beings in the old creation, but we are identified with Christ in the new creation.

God shewed His sustaining power in the old creation, but a new thing comes out here as to which angels have nothing to say, and that is, the work of redemption and the association of those who had been sinners with God's own Son.

Ques. To what does Paul refer when he says, “As I wrote afore”?

I suppose it is to the early part of the epistle. It is quite possible Paul may have written fifty letters, but this is the one that God intended for us. So in 2 Corinthians, he refers to the first epistle. There may have been very much else written, not inspired of God for all ages.

In verse 5, Paul refers to the mystery which never had been made known, and could not be known, until after the coming of the Holy Ghost. The prophets there spoken of are exclusively the prophets of the New Testament. There may, of course, have been a prophet who was not an apostle. Luke and Mark were not apostles. It is a question whether the James who wrote the epistle was, or was not, an apostle. Paul does not recognise the twelve as being apostles at all until after the day of Pentecost. He knows no one as alive in the flesh, not even Christ after the flesh. In chapter 4, he speaks of Christ having ascended, and then says, “He gave some, apostles “; Paul does not own them as such before, though, of course, they were living then.

It is an immensely important truth that man as born of Adam is gone, morally gone, looked at as before God. It is a thing I have to learn. I was responsible to try and do right; I get into Romans 7 and I hope God will help me; but I find I do wrong still. God allows this in order to bring us to the discovery which Israel had to make at the Red Sea, “Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.” But we are wonderfully slow to learn! If I look at anything in myself, how can I talk of that being with Christ in glory? But I have in process to learn to distinguish between things.

When I look at the church in this epistle, I look at it as united to Christ in heaven.

Ques. What is the difference between this and the heavenly city in Revelation 21—both are viewed as buildings?

The heavenly city in the Revelation is a figure. It is John's teaching there, not Paul's. We do not find the Father in the Revelation. The heavenly city is a seat of government, a metropolis, as it is called. The titles found in the Revelation are Old Testament titles of God. The heavenly city is the saints brought into final glory, i.e., into ultimate result.

In the Old Testament and right up to the death of Christ, we have the responsibility of man, and God's direct government among the Jews, which we have not yet touched upon, and a great deal else besides; but the moment Christ was rejected, that put an end to everything. The throne of God on earth had been removed at the time of the captivity to Babylon; there was no longer any Shechinah, or Urim and Thummim, or glory. God then gave government to Nebuchadnezzar. A remnant from the two tribes was still preserved, because another thing had yet to come out.

Both the Jewish nation and the house of David had been set aside; and then Christ comes, and He is totally rejected.

Direct government on the earth has thus entirely ceased, and the church has been brought in as the scene of sovereign grace given absolutely to sinners, and bestowing on man the place that God has been pleased to give him. This is a heavenly place, and one that has nothing at all to do with the government of the earth.

One knows the muddle people have got into as to this, but the truth abides. But in the Revelation we get back to earthly government. In the historical part of the book we have the last half-week of Daniel. Messiah has been cut off, and there remains a half-week that is not fulfilled at all, and then the government of the heavenly saints comes in. The seventy weeks were cut short by the cutting off of the Messiah. But if the Jews had not cut off their Messiah, they would not come in in pure mercy, as we see in Romans n.

The church exists now as a totally distinct thing until government shall return to the earth. Then the church will reappear in the Revelation as the seat of government, because we are associated with Christ, and only in that aspect are we called the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

All that is written in the Revelation as to church ground proper, is found in three verses at the beginning and in three verses at the end of the book, i.e., before the prophecy, and after it is finished.

The church is the expression of the sovereign grace of God. Without the ministry of Paul, we should never have understood from whence the heavenly city of the Revelation comes. The only word would be the word of Christ, "Upon this rock I will build my church," and that is what we find here in Ephesians, when Paul says, "Whereof I was made a minister." The other apostles were not employed to teach the truth of the Church. When ministering at Jerusalem, they witnessed that the Christ, who ought to have governed here, had been transplanted to heaven, and of course the church was also transplanted there in Him.

Peter teaches that “God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ”; i.e., this crucified Man has been transported up there by God. The One they had rejected, God had accepted, and Peter was set to teach this. Then Paul appears on the scene.

We never find the word ‘church,’ in the way of truth, except in Paul’s writings—the mere local thing we may. But if men are to learn the truth, I do not need to talk to them of government in the millennium; I must seek to get at man as one who has to say to God Himself for himself. “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven”; that is not governing man on the earth. As to the revelation and teaching of this, God is revealed, for there is no longer any vail; and you are unveiled too; you are nothing but sin, and you are in God’s sight as lost, and wrath is revealed! What are you going to do? Do! You have done too much! And God puts that all away in the death of His Son. Another thing to notice is, that the church had no existence until after the cross. No hint of it is to be found in the Old Testament; it was hidden in God. The middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was kept up until it was broken down by Christ’s death. The Jewish saints of old were bound to keep it up, so the Jew could not eat with the Gentile. They were quite right at that time to maintain such a thing, until the church had been set up upon earth. Then again, you do not see that any individual member of the church was in heaven before this. But the church was formed on earth by the Holy Ghost sent down.

Ques. Some have thought that saints who died before Pentecost are brought into the church in heaven?

Well, God's word does not say so, and I believe God's word, not man's. Why, it would be affirming that our best blessings are given after death, and that a change in our position takes place after death!

No, if one looks at the church with Scripture, one must own that it began at Pentecost.

It has been, I know, the fashion to put all saints together in the church; this is because the true idea of the church has been lost, and only the question of salvation thought of, but salvation is not all the truth.

The middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile has been broken down, and the church is now God's object; this proves that the church must be taken away before God can again own an earthly people, for in the church there is neither Jew nor Gentile. The "new man "is clearly that which has been made consequent upon the cross of Christ, and so also Christ said, "I will build."

If men take up with the totally unscriptural idea of a special church privilege bestowed on saints after they are dead, the effect of this is to lower the church to the level of Judaism.

It is through the Spirit that the church is the habitation of God, but then the Holy Ghost did not come until the day of Pentecost. Quite true, of course, that long before this, the Spirit wrought (and so did God also), but He had not yet come. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." His presence formed the disciples into unity.

Such suppositions are not found in the Word of God, it is just man "intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind."

Ques. What is meant by the things which are in heaven being gathered together in Christ, in Ephesians 1?

This is future. It refers to the full accomplishment of the intentions of God. All things are to be put under Christ as man, both which are in the heavens and which are on earth. If one makes any difference at all, then, in a certain sense, the church is the only thing not included in that unity. Like Eve to Adam, she was not the lord, nor was she what he was lord of. After the fall, and as the effect of the fall, she was put under him: “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” Her position was that of helpmeet—his like. Christ is already crowned with glory and honour, having been made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death; but all things have not been put under His feet, for He is not yet sitting upon His own throne. Actually, He is on His Father’s throne, on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

But to put saints in heaven into the church, without any revelation of it made to them whilst upon earth, is to raise another serious difficulty, namely, that the faith of the saints now has nothing to do with their blessings hereafter. It is quite clear that, previous to Pentecost, the church had not been made known to the saints of old, so that whilst upon the earth, their faith could have had no kind of connection with the blessing they would have in heaven (if such a supposition were correct), for God had hid in Himself the mystery of the church, and consequently they were in total darkness as to it.

Ques. With what, then, was their faith connected?

They were looking for Christ, and for the promises of God.

All else is revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures, except the truths of the church and of the present priesthood of Christ. They speak of Christ's death, resurrection, ascension, and of the promise of the Spirit to individuals, and also of the Melchisedec priesthood, but not of the church, nor of Christ's priesthood in heaven. Psalm no is Christ's priesthood on earth. But now He has gone through the heavens into the holiest; Melchisedec has nothing to do with going into the holiest.

"The Most High" is the millennial name of God, and this name He has with Melchisedec (Gen. 14). And in Psalm no, we read that "the Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion," that is when Christ takes His Melchisedec character; and then, in verse 5 it says, "Adonai" (not Jehovah) "at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath." Christ's priesthood is after the order of Melchisedec, and He is a priest who lives for ever; but now He has gone into the holiest, just as of old Aaron went in.

The "as," in verse 5 (Eph. 3), is not a comparison, but a fact, for this mystery, up till then, had been hidden in God. It is the same in Colossians, "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations," etc., and so again at the close of Romans, "kept secret since the world began."

Ques. Abraham looked for a city?

Quite so, and it was a heavenly city that he looked for; in the land of Canaan he had not even as much upon which to set the soles of his feet.

Most people have no idea of the church; with them, there is nothing beyond salvation. The true Christian

condition is, that “by one offering he [Christ] hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” We have to do with God, without any vail upon us, and for that we must be as white as snow.

Assurance of salvation is a question of Christ’s work. I have no thought that, in myself, I am anything else but a sinner. But I sin, if I doubt that He has made a perfect atonement. I affirm distinctly that there is no such thing recognised in the New Testament as that a Christian should doubt his salvation. The idea of an unsaved Christian is something unknown to the New Testament.

There is plenty of priesthood for infirmities, weakness, and so on; but God has taken me up, and dealt with me, as at the Red Sea of old, and put all, all, away. We “have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.” I was myself in such a condition for some six or seven years after I was converted, but that has only served to convince me that this is not a Christian place at all. And the reason of my assurance is, that while Christ is within, the Holy Ghost has come down. His coming proves that Christ’s work is accepted. It is no good anyone telling me that I cannot know; indeed, it is a mischievous work, for it makes people easy, when awakened; because if an awakened soul were to feel he ought to know, such an one would not rest until he did know.

Ques. What is the meaning of, “that they may lay hold on eternal life,” 1 Tim. 6:19?

When God has saved us, He will keep us, but we have to go through the wilderness, where we have a great deal to learn, with the question of services also, and of rewards even, and of much more besides; people mix up

all these things with the question of acceptance. But as to the crown before me, that is not a question of my being saved, but of my encouragement. And therefore I need all these exhortations and guides along the road.

It may happen to me, like Peter, that I have need of a fall, in order to learn what I am (a very sad thing, if I do), but that does not touch the question of eternal life.

My child has life as distinct when he is a day old as when he is twenty years of age. But when I speak about righteousness, then Christ is my righteousness, and it would be blasphemy to think of anything imperfect about that. As in Christ, I am Christ's own perfectness before God, and if so, then Christ is in me.

From this flows the responsibility of the Christian. Has there been seen in me to-day anything of Christ? Christ is in the presence of God for me, and I am in the world for Christ, and I am to take good care that it is not something else that I exhibit. "Keep yourselves in the love of God," this is what I have to do. "Work out your own salvation," this is the very thing I have to do. There is also my responsibility to walk in the Spirit. As a matter of fact, I am sitting in Christ (but not yet with Him) in the heavenly places; and yet I am running onwards to reach there. "Much more in my absence," is, that now you have lost Paul, work it all out for yourselves.

There are in Scripture two simple positions for a Christian; the one is, my acceptance in Christ. In myself, I am a lost sinner, and a man that is lost is not on probation; I have given myself up as on that ground, and the only part I have in what saves me, is my sins, and the enmity that killed Christ.

So that puts “I” out, as to acceptance.

Christ has done it all, and thus I am accepted in the Beloved, while as yet I have not an atom of the glory to which I am entitled. And now I must run for the prize. “Well, then,” says the devil, ‘I will be at you.’ And it becomes then a question, not of righteousness, but as to whether I shall get through to the goal.

Anxiety as to this is met by constant dependence, and by constant confidence. By dependence, for I can do nothing without Christ. If in any measure I have lost sight of Christ, it is all wrong; on the other hand, I have this certainty: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” I am kept by the power of God through faith, but then this shows that I need to be kept, and it proves the danger, too.

Not that the issue is in doubt, because God is in it, but I am kept in constant dependence, that is just the very thing in which Adam failed.

When sanctified, I am sanctified “unto obedience.”

Strange it is, that because I am told to hold fast my confidence, some should tell me that I ought not to have any to hold!

Ques. What about, “Lest … I myself should be a castaway”?

I have been looking at this word recently. It is adokimos, and is used, not for those who do not strive lawfully, but for those who have not qualified themselves to enter the race, and whose names are not on the list. And Paul says he keeps under his body, lest he should be adokimos.

Reading On 1 Timothy 1 and 2

The apostle Paul is here telling Timothy how to preach the gospel. Compare the language of the commission in Luke 24:46-48, with Acts 1:8 and chap. 2:36-38. In carrying out the commission— “repent and be baptised” —Peter told the Jews that they had crucified Christ, and they were brought to repentance, pricked to the heart; and we have Paul, in his preaching at Antioch, taking the same kind of ground, “I will give you the sure mercies of David,” and, “Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins,” Acts 13. It was in the main the same kind of thing.

Ques. To what does verse 41 refer, “Behold ye despisers,” etc.?

It was a warning to the Jews, then and there, lest they should perish. We find very much the same thing in Acts 26, “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light,” “and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.” That is what Paul was telling them to do; so that, whether Jews or Gentiles, it would be turning them from the power of Satan unto God. The thing he was bringing before them was repentance. In the beginning of Romans it is the same thing to the Gentiles, though perhaps more vague. Peter also preached Jesus and the resurrection, and called upon them all to repent. That was his gospel message.

Ques. But there were men of intelligence there?

Yes, of course; many of them were philosophers, and Paul had to go down very low with them because they

were very Stupid. Still, it is, “the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance,” Rom. 2:4.

Then, from chapter 5:12, he takes up the other point, namely, our being dead with Christ. This is not forgiveness, and hardly justification, though it involves justification.

What one seeks in preaching is, that the preacher, with his mind as the centre of all, should adapt himself to the condition of those to whom he speaks. And we need to be aware of the danger of losing the sense either of the value of forgiveness to the sinner, or else that of dying to sin in ourselves. I know that revivalist preachers will not listen to this, but they must go on and get conversions, and save souls. And it looks very fine on their part, but it will not do.

Again, one often finds those who get an apprehension of dying with Christ become unfitted in measure for preaching the gospel to the sinner, because they are so occupied with the truth that fits themselves.

Ques. You would not call that “gospel,” would you?

Yes, I should, for I do not believe people ever have settled peace until they have that; we do not know the gospel fully, until we are made the righteousness of God in Christ. But the theologians, when they have the forgiveness of sins, go back to the fulfilling of the law, and that they call, “going on”!

Ques. Where do you put repentance?

Well, it is to be preached in Christ’s name, and we must bring in Christ as the ground of it—that is really grace. Repentance is the intelligent judgment that, under grace, we pass upon all that we have done, and upon all

that we are. It is not mere sorrow for sin, for when they were pricked to the heart, Peter set them to repent. It must be, of course, a judgment passed upon ourselves in the knowledge of what God is, or else it would evidently be incomplete. It must involve, too, that the claims of God are considered. The peculiar character of much of the gospel preaching nowadays, is, that it presents God as a kind of debtor to the world to save it, and that He must try and get people to pay Him the compliment of believing on Him. Repentance says, 'I am lost, and unless I repent, and believe, I shall be lost entirely.'

Ques. Did the prodigal repent, when he "came to himself"?

Yes, so far. Repentance is more than a change of mind; it is a change of mind, but it is also the judgment of what has gone before which a change of mind leads us to.

Ques. It is a man seeing God as a God of mercy, instead of his being merely terrified by his sins?

Yes, and repentance is to be preached in Christ's name. A repentance that simply says, 'I have done this, and I shall be damned for it,' is just a legal repentance—what Romanists call attrition, not contrition. I preach Christ, but I call upon men to repent.

Ques. Do you separate repentance and faith?

Some try to do so, and they put repentance before faith; they say we must first have repentance before God, which is absurd upon the face of it; for if a person does not believe my message, there can be no repentance on the ground of it. When Peter said, "Ye … killed the Prince of life," they believed him, and then he added, "Repent."

Ques. Would you say it is faith in God's righteous character that brings repentance?

And faith in His mercy, too, or else I shall only see that I am going to hell.

Ques. Is, "go, call thy husband," repentance?

Well,, in a sense, in a practical way, it may be.

Preaching begins with the Person of Christ. It is "the gospel of God … concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Then Paul says that he is not ashamed of the gospel, because the righteousness of God is therein revealed. I should be very sorry to weaken the full place of repentance, for you will never build up a soul, if you have not smashed him. The jailor at Philippi had been brought to repentance, in measure, and was trembling about his sins. You may say that, in one sense, no one can believe fully until he has repented, or repent until he has believed. There must be conviction of sin before forgiveness is received; nor will a sinner ever have conviction of sin until there is something for him to judge sin by, and that is what he believes. It may be through the judgments or the law, but then he must believe that. There is a certain sense of goodness in God that attracts, else there is no repentance; it may be very feeble, but there must be something to attract. Mere fear does not go far enough. Ask the first person you meet, for nobody would like to be damned, that is clear. Even when Peter says, "depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," he goes straight up to the Lord.

Ques. What of Judas, and his repentance?

In his case it was remorse, not repentance.

But in 2 Corinthians 7:10, there is a second word used, and different altogether; it should read: “Repentance to salvation, never to be regretted.”4 Suppose I had killed Christ yesterday, and I find out that He was the Messiah, I say, ‘It is all over with me; He came to bring peace, and I have rejected it all.’ But then comes the message, “He died to save you,” and I ask, ‘Is that possible?’ And there I find an object for my faith.

Ques. Might there be the first faith, and yet the soul be lost?

No, no; though as yet it does not know it is saved.

If I have rejected Christ all my life, my belief now in His Person makes me think I am lost—that is true, of course.

Ques. Then do you make a difference in faith?

Well, there is what is called head-faith, as we see in John 2:23, 24. It was no work there of God’s Spirit. When the Spirit of God brings in a consciousness, as with Nicodemus, then the soul begins to want something more. Wherever the Spirit of God works, there is a want. It may be that joy and gladness are in the heart, but there is a want. But where there is mere terror for sin, there need be no felt want in the soul. And notice, no matter how high the doctrine or the gospel of the glory you preach, if there is a work of God in the soul, you will get back to the point of the soul’s want. If your preaching reaches the soul at all, it will produce this, ‘I am a poor sinner.’ You will, I know, get a general sort of answer from people that they believe, but then you must try and get at their consciences, and prove to them that they do not really believe. Let us see your faith by your works. The Lord must guide as to how you are to do that.

In 1 Timothy 1:18, the apostle is alluding to the beginning of the chapter (v. 5).5 Ques. Is there any difference between Paul being an apostle “by the commandment of God,” as here, and, “by the will of God,” as in Ephesians and Colossians?

Well, that he was sent and commanded to go is somewhat more positive; it is the injunction of God.

Ques. What are the “prophecies” (v. 18)?

Timothy had been pointed out by them, just as Paul and Barnabas had been in Acts 13 by, “Separate me.” We have no particular account of it. He was well spoken of, and commended by all the brethren.

As to gift, we are now cast upon simple faith. There was a real difference, no doubt, between the position of both Paul and Timothy, and that of simple gifts in the Church. Paul had been up to the third heaven and had received definite authority, but it is a privilege for us to walk by faith without such a commission. There is apostolic commission in Acts, distinctly, but now it is rather what may be called a free ministry.

Ques. “That thou by them mightest war a good warfare.” What is that?

By the prophecies; a consciousness that God had called a man out would give him great courage, but it may be additional honour put on us to work without it. Yet, in itself, this would give great strength. Such an one would, of course, still require the strength of God every moment. Faith may give a man the same place now.

Ques. Would you say that one who had given up profession of faith, had made shipwreck of faith?

No, that would be apostasy. The not keeping a good conscience had led some into shipwreck.

Ques. Would wrong doctrine be heresy?

Holding other doctrine would be heresy, if it led to separation, and it might or might not be apostasy besides.

Backsliding is losing a good conscience.

The effect of backsliding is shipwreck of faith.

Giving up profession of faith is apostasy.

Paul delivers to Satan, and there I get specific power. It is not merely that God may put a man into Satan's hands, He may do that any day, but here it is a person doing so by authority.

Ques. Was it an act of church discipline?

No. Paul was neither a church, nor the church; but what he did, he did as an apostle, not as a mere individual. In the case of 1 Corinthians 5, he acted with the church, but here, without the church. This is quite distinct from, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." It is moral discipline, delivering to Satan for the person's own good.

Ques. Could a man do it now?

If he shews me it done, I will believe it. It may, however, happen any day, at the hand of God, or by bodily affliction, loss of goods, loss of children, etc.

Ques. Would you include mental distress?

That would rather be "fiery darts," I judge.

Ques. Had not Job mental distress?

Well, some, but it was rather as the practical effect of his other sufferings. Yet he was still looking at the goodness of God, and he spake more rightly than did his friends. External suffering drank up his spirit. I do not know that Satan could have given him spiritual terror. It is wonderful just to see the human heart as a kind of battle ground between God and Satan.

Paul now tells us, in chapter 2, of order in the church, but exhortation comes first; and in that respect, it is remarkable that he first goes outside the church for the object of their supplications, “for kings,” etc., though such were persecutors, and whom they might think reprobates. But, he says, God “will have all men to be saved,” etc., and therefore, in our church-thoughts, we must take in “all men,” persecuting kings, and people most likely to be omitted.

Ques. Are we to understand that the church, down here, is to have a bearing on the world?

Yes, in the way of grace; the church is the very thing that condemns the world, yet it introduces grace co the world. It proves the world lost, and then sends salvation to it.

In this passage, we have gospel in contrast with law. Law took up Jews, and they thought they should have nothing but Jews. No, says Paul, you must have everybody. As a citizen of heaven, he can care for the world. People often pray for the Ring or Queen, and so on, but it is wider than that. We pray that the saints in the world “may lead a quiet and peaceable life”; so that I should pray as much, say, for Napoleon as for Queen Victoria. It puts the saints in a supplicatory place rather

than in a priestly one; that is to say, it is not pleading for persons in relationship with God.

Ques. Does it include the thought of the saints praying for the gospel all over the world?

Well, yes, and in that respect it is important, because whilst being occupied with the church, there is the danger of our getting off the larger-hearted place. There is this aspect here, namely, the casting away of the Jews, and the reconciling of the world. During the law, man was under God's eye in a little sphere of responsibility; but all that is over, and now it is the accepted time, and day of salvation.

Ques. "Who will have all men to be saved"?

Yes. It is God's mind and willingness, not His counsel. It is thelo, not boulomai.

When the churches had rest, they were edified and multiplied (Acts 9:31), and so we pray "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life," etc. Yet we have to watch lest anxiety about the church should hinder our going out to the world. The difficulty is to maintain the two-fold testimony. A third thing there is which we only find in the last epistles, and that is, a church in this great big Christendom. The system is never to repent. God "gave her space to repent of her fornication j and she repented not," (Rev. 2:21), though individuals may get clear of it. In Sardis, we have a kind of beginning again, but there they are treated as the world in a certain sense. In Laodicea, they are given up. There is no repentance apart from grace, nor can there ever be. "They repented not to give him glory," Rev. 16:9. That was like the repentance of Judas who went and hanged himself. Unrepentant sinners will shew the character of

blasphemy rather than of sorrow for having lost something. In Judas, it was not repentance towards God. I may say of some conduct of mine, 'What a fool I have been,' but that is not repentance. I have lost, say, £1,000, and I say, 'I might as well have given it to somebody, or thrown it in the street.' That is not repentance. In Esau, there was sorrow, but no repentance. "He found no place for repentance." He sought the blessing, not repentance. He wept for the blessing, "Bless me, even me also."

Ques. What is the difference between supplications and prayers?

Supplication is more earnest than prayer. Paul goes from the most earnest crying down below, right up to the giving of thanks.

Ques. What did Paul's ministry include?

Paul's ministry was to all the thing (see Col. 1:23-25).6 Gentile blessing was before God's mind, but it had not come out before this; and now, the responsibility question for all flows from the cross, so it was to be testified in due time, "a ransom for all." This we find over and over again; it is the very character of the gospel that Paul brings out. Peter's message has a transitional character, for he was the companion of Christ down here. Paul did not know Christ after the flesh, though he had known Him as the Messiah of promise; he saw man gone in judgment before God, and God coming out with a wholly new thing. The salvation in Christ with eternal life was in Christ before the world existed, and when the history of the first man was finished, then the second Man came out. Peter follows

Christ up to the cloud, and he does not go beyond the Lamb offered.

Ques. How far does it go, a “ransom for all”?

To ally of course. He was not an apolutrosis, nor antilutrosis, but antilutron. If it had been the former, you would get all the people saved. It is merely an adequate price paid, so that God can now send out a testimony to all the world. “The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29) is a great deal wider. There, I believe, the new heavens and the new earth come in. But here, it is an available price, so to speak. Whatever God is now doing, sin is the occasion of it, whether judgment, or mercies, or salvation, or discipline, or patience, or anything else. Time will come when there will be no sin at all, and that is the point of ho airon: “who taketh away,” etc. It will then be all accomplished, but it is now applied to us. “Preached to every creature,” etc. (Col. 1:23) is just founded on this.

Ques. How could you use that now?

I should say, ‘the blood is on the mercy-seat—come!!’ It is never said that He bare the sins of the world.

Ques. He bought a field, as well as treasure in it?

Yes, but there it includes all creation. We find the same thought in the passage, “should taste death for every man,” as in the one, “which taketh away,” etc. This goes beyond everyone; it is really for everything, though we see not yet all things put under Him.

Ques. In Leviticus 16, atonement is made for things as well as persons?

Yes; the most wonderful thing to me, in that connection, is that, not in chapter 16, but in chapter 8, the

tabernacle and vessels were all anointed with oil, and not merely was blood upon them; that is to say, the Holy Ghost takes His place in all creation. Though not guilty, the creation is defiled, and it is to be reconciled. Satan goes into the heavens now as the accuser of the brethren.

Christ is now Mediator between God and man. I do not think I could use “mediator” beyond men. He did not take up angels, that is, their cause, but He took up the seed of Abraham. He will reconcile all things in heaven and earth. At the present time, all is in confusion. An angel receives a command to answer Daniel’s prayer and has to stay three weeks on the way. It was under God’s hand, of course, but there it is, and in that respect all is in confusion.

Ques. What is a mediator?

One between two. The law was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator, because Moses was a go-between, i.e., as between the people and God.

Ques. Do those reconciled need a Mediator?

Yes, for intercession; but not for redemption, because that is accomplished.

Ques. What is the force of “God is one,” in Galatians 3:20?

Well, I believe it is this, Paul is proving that, under the law, the state of man is hopeless and unsustainable, whereas with promise it was not so. There were the two cases, a promise made, not in Christ, but to Christ—to the seed. “To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” That is to say, we

have a promise of God to Christ the Seed; and if God made a promise to a person simply, it rests on God's fidelity that it should be accomplished. But when I get a Mediator, it does not rest simply on the promise, or on one, but on the fidelity of the Mediator also, that is to say, on both. With Israel, it rested on both parties; one failed, and it was of no good.

Ques. What is advocacy?

Advocacy is a particular part of mediation.

A mediator looks at a broken relationship; advocacy, at an established relationship. We find a Mediator in Hebrews, and there He is with God. We have to do with God in His own nature and character as such.

Ques. Does not the thought of mediator put the mediator between the individual and God, which is not the case with priesthood?

Yes. It is true that in Christ we are brought into the presence of God, but the idea of a priest now is, that we are walking on the earth and God is in heaven. We have boldness to go in, through the blood of Christ, and we have also a great priest over the house of God. In John's epistles, we have the relationship with the Father and Son; in Hebrews, it is man walking on the earth, but through redemption. In Romans and Ephesians, it is a question of a man in Christ, with no thought of a mediator at all. There I am, directly before God in Christ, accepted in the Beloved. But it is equally true that I am a poor creature here on the earth; and in a sense I am away when Christ exercises His intercession; and that is also the characteristic of Hebrews, where we never find the Church except in a millennial reference. As in the breast-plate, Christ sustains His people on His

heart in love, the Urim and Thummim, their judgment, being in the centre of it. He bears our judgment on His heart according to the light and perfections of God Himself. It is not judgment as estimate. I should associate judgment with the Urim and Thummim; our directions for guidance are according to the light and perfection in which we stand before God. Ephesians addresses us as those who are to be imitators of God. Colossians shows the life of Christ is in us. Philippians gives the walk of the saints in th« Spirit; and we have there, too, the present conflict as seen in the life of Paul. In Ephesians, we have no time, excepting that we are not yet with Christ, which, of course, we cannot help.

4 See New Translation in loco.

5 See note in New Translation in loco.

6 See also note in New Translation in loco.

Reading On 2 Timothy 1 and 2

It is very striking to see how Paul goes back and down to natural associations, and also the way in which he does so; he departs here from the fulness of the doctrine usual to him, and becomes both private and personal; “whom I serve from my forefathers,” “thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice” —both Jewesses; he is occupied more with personal relationships than with dispensational thoughts. His service, he says, is with a pure conscience, just as when he was smitten on the face; Acts 23:1, 2. And we find here Timothy’s gift was by the putting on of Paul’s hands.

Quei. Do you confine that gift to teaching?

I do not know that it was, it might be ruling, too.

The seventh verse is important in these last days, when evil has so come in, and is rampant; when it would cavil and make the ruin of the church the occasion of self-will. In judging of things, there is a wisdom that will allow no air bubbles about divine things, but which judges by reality. There is nothing more insisted upon by the apostle than that, in the midst of religious failure, we are never to lose courage, “in nothing terrified by your adversaries,” Phil. 1:28. Here, it is, that we are not to have “the spirit of fear,” nor to be ashamed. Peter tells Christian women not to be “afraid with any amazement.”

There is a distinct power of Satan in this world, but where he is met with confidence, he is a beaten enemy. God has given to us a spirit of power, not of fear.

A steady firmness should therefore mark us, for we know we have got hold of the truth and of the will of

God, as to our position and path, while others are beating about uncertainly.

There is something analogous between Timothy and Jeremiah. Failure in the church has brought about the loss of power. God would not have withdrawn it. Suppose power had been given only by the laying on of the apostles' hands, when the apostles were gone, how then? But the point here is that when the power of evil is come in, that is just the time that Paul expects courage and not flinching; chap. 2:1. The evil was rising" up, not merely from without, but from within the church, and everything was falling into a state of decay; but the close of the epistle shews how that, as regards Paul himself, the Lord stood with him.

Elijah's day was a time of special darkness, nevertheless there was the Lord's special power. This is particularly applicable to the present moment. Latter times have since come in, and all that would exercise our faith the Lord has allowed to come in and do so.

Ques. Would you say that 2 Timothy gives us the particular resources of God to meet the uncommon difficulties that have arisen?

Yes. 1 Timothy gives the order of the Church; but here, we learn what to do when all is in disorder.

Ques. What is the difference between that which we find here, and the "fear and trembling "the apostle speaks of in Philippians 2:12?

That is what we have still to do as regards trusting in ourselves. A person who goes through trial with God, with fear and trembling as to self, will come out of it with power, as did our blessed Lord Himself in

Gethsemane, and when He came out of the trial He was as quiet as could be. The great secret is to have the whole weight of a sorrow borne on your spirit before and with God, and then when the actual thing comes, it is over. You do go through it, in that case, but its pressing effect on the heart is gone. Our Lord said, “the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” and in spirit and heart He went through it in Gethsemane.

Ques. What is “the testimony of our Lord” (v. 8)?

Just the gospel for which Paul was in prison. His imprisonment was connected with the testimony to the Gentiles because of the jealousy of the Jews who said, “away with such a fellow from the earth!”

Ques. Why does he say, “I serve from my forefathers”?

It is as when a person is thrown back upon the elements of faith; there is a great deal carried on just now in the energy of the work, but which lasts only for a time, and then one has to go through things with a character of faith that reaches to the foundation of it all. That is what people mean when they say, ‘you want one truth to die by.’ You come back to that which is the basis of everything—the blood of Christ.

There is a great deal which one uses as the sword of the Spirit in carrying on a warfare, but it is a distinct thing when one has to come back to certain great leading truths.

Ques. Could the apostle be accused of neglecting what was properly Jewish and of God?

Not fairly so. Here, to Timothy, it was a personal reference. Paul was sorely wounded by the way in which

some had turned away from him. The testimony of our Lord may include something more than the proclamation of the gospel, but it is that chiefly.

Ques. Does not Paul turn back to what is eternal as well as dispensational?

Yes.

Ques. Is there not in the first epistle a substratum of truth which remains when dispensational order is broken up?

We get there not so much truths that link souls with God, but the common ordering of the house of God. In the second epistle it is more human, what is wise amongst men rather than what is orderly. Timothy and Corinthians are different, though in Corinthians there is a coming down to human order. Even if the power of God was there with a tongue, the individual was not to speak if there were no one present to interpret, and that is a matter of human suitableness. In a sense, both Corinthians and Timothy are on human ground. So two or three were allowed to speak, and not more, though they were inspired.

It is not like a flood-tide of power carrying on the testimony to others; but when it is ebb-tide, the apostle exhorts those who stand in the ebb-tide to carry on all the same. We have personal piety here, and firmness and steadfastness. And in these last days people are thrown upon personal faith, much more so than ever they were. In verse 8, both the Lord's name and His servant's were in reproach, and here Paul brings in "the power of God." It was the same with Elijah in his extremity. Nobody was taken up to heaven in the palmy days of Solomon! Paul was a builder, and it was for him a

strange thing to see the tide ebb, much more so than it was to John. Paul had built the church, yet, wise master-builder as he was, it was crumbling already.

Ques. Would there be anything of this in the letters to the seven churches?

Yes, in principle. Already at the start, things had been suffered to come in so that we might have, later on, inspired directions to know what to do. But the epistles to the seven churches are much more comprehensive. Here, in Timothy, we have the moral state, and how to hold on to certain principles; but there, in those epistles, we have the whole scene portrayed. In the normal state of things the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved; but here, He says, as it were, 'you cannot tell such at all, but I know them that are mine.' And we have the man of God perfect, and we learn how he is able to carry on by individual faithfulness, when there is nothing to sustain him in the corporate thing all around.

We find, therefore, in this epistle thorough instruction for these times—truth for the times indeed. There are truths for eternity, of course, which are more blessed in themselves, yet, just now, these are necessary.

Christianity was not of the world at all; when it was first brought out, God set everything on a totally different ground. Certain counsels and thoughts of God there were for the giving eternal life and glory through His own Son to those who should believe in Him, which existed before ever the earth was. All that was God's counsel; and He hath now saved us and called us, not according to our responsibility, but according to His own mercy; chap. 1:9. Well, here we have a system set up in

God’s mind before ever the world was, called eternal life in Titus 1:2 and chap. 3:7; and again, in Ephesians 1, we have, “chosen … in him before the foundation of the world.” It is not merely a question of the election of the individual, but that there was a grand plan and purpose which God had in His mind, and Christ comes to do His will, and accomplish that purpose, as I may say. But before Christ appears on the scene, the first man is set up, and there we have creation and responsibility, not purpose; it is on that ground that the first man stands.

Well, the first man fails and goes on in failure; then we get the law, and that, of course, is responsibility, too. The prophets call back to it and then Christ comes in connection with the question of responsibility, and as soon as this is solved by Him, the history of responsible man is finished. Then God’s work of atonement is wrought, and His purpose, which had been hidden from ages and generations, comes out in the second Man. Christianity is what ^as before the world, and was hidden during the ages that rolled on their course, and in which the first man remained upon a footing altogether different from that of Christianity, for we find the church belongs not to this world, but to the heavens, and consequently hers is a heavenly calling.

Responsibility is unfolded in the history of the first man, and that responsibility closes in the cross, where it is proved that God can get no good out of man at all; each one of us has to learn this lesson. I learn that I am a sinner, that I cannot keep the law of God, and that I do not care for Christ. Looking at the ways and dealings of God, the probation of man, as man, was over at the cross, and since then God treats him as lost. A lost man is no longer under probation; he has been under it, but

that is now a thing settled and past. God is now gathering together in one all things in Christ, and He begins with the church.

It is an exceedingly important thing to see that the responsibility of the creature, the authority of God, and the judgment of God in righteousness are all maintained. These questions had been raised in the garden of Eden. Promise came in afterwards to Abraham, promise without any condition at all. In the garden we have Adam and the two trees of life and responsibility; then the law takes up responsibility, and puts life after the accomplishment of it.

These two trees or principles can never be taken up and reconciled until we come to Christ. They are brought together again in Christ, and then we find that He has stood for us in circumstances of failed responsibility, and further that He has brought in life. Divine counsels can now come out which were there before the world existed.

Just see what has come out in the gospel of the glory! (chap. 1:9, 10). We now are in a new position of responsibility, for saints have to act up to the position they are in.

Whilst the law never went beyond the duty of man, the Christian's path goes on the ground of the likeness of God: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children." All these truths coming out was, so to speak, like the flowing tide with the apostles. "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

Well now, instead of this, we see here that Paul has to get back to Timothy's grandmother Lois; the tide was

going the other way. He was greatly pressed in spirit, no doubt, but still he says it will not do to give way. It may be there was even anxiety in his mind about Timothy himself, anyway he thought good to exhort him.

And this position is one which we have fairly to look in the face. God has brought out afresh this truth of the glory of the church, and simple minds see it to be so. One who recently came to a reading meeting from across the water, after listening a while, said,' I see what it is plainly enough, Paul's testimony has been completely lost, and brought out again.'

First, I see Christ on the cross working redemption, next, on the Father's throne giving the Holy Ghost, and, lastly, as coming again. The result of the first, viz., justification by faith, was recovered at the Reformation; but Christ's sitting at the right hand of God and sending the Holy Ghost was then totally ignored; and the Lord's coming was wholly rejected as Jewish.

These two last truths it is that God has now brought out; that while Christ is sitting on the Father's throne, the Holy Ghost is down here, and is gathering out a people in connection with Christ, and to whom the Lord will come again and receive to Himself.

Meanwhile, our place is something like Nehemiah's; we have to carry the trowel in one hand and the sword in the other. We must have unfeigned faith, and we must have positive power, too; no truth is enough without its power, though, of course, these are connected.

One is often grieved that Christians around us do not get hold of that which God is bringing out; on the other hand, it is Satan's effort to hinder them, and to raise a cloud of dust and prejudice against it.

It is ours to endure now, knowing that that is the way of the tide. But then I believe it is a very blessed time, if in simplicity we keep our minds from being involved in a labyrinth of perplexity. There cannot be intelligent service unless we have before our eyes the truth of God about the church. In Ephesians, God's counsels are unfolded; but here, it is the enduring of all things for the elect's sake. Christ did the same; He endured all things, for the elect's sake.

The two thoughts are found distinctly here; the counsels of God as characterising the position, and then, the enduring right through to the end. Therefore there must be more and more of individual faith, "unfeigned faith." The One whom he had believed remained always as an object before Paul. And he was suffering because he was carrying this out. Nevertheless, he knew whom he had believed. 'I have laid up all my happiness in Christ and He will keep it; it is all safe, and, when the day comes, I shall get it all; though everything is going against me here, Christ has my all in His safe keeping.' We see Paul enduring to the end, and not giving up the testimony in any way. He is not speaking of what Christ has committed to him, but of what he has committed to Christ. The truth he had received of the Lord, that he did commit to faithful men. This is to individuals in contrast to what was committed at first to the church. It is not, however, a question here of ordained men, nor is it that of office. "The sound words, which thou hast heard of me" were certain grand truths, including the mystery and the rapture, which he was to maintain and keep—a sort of outline of truth.

Ques. What does tradition mean?

Tradition simply means, a thing taught or communicated; it is tradition if you and I are merely talking now, we read of the “traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” It was all tradition; and the way in which one or two scriptures are quoted on this point is only dishonest. To us the test of tradition is the written word. But tradition may be delivered from mouth to mouth, or by letter. As to mere words, ‘Trinity’ is a word not found in Scripture, although it is an expression of a truth found therein.

Ques. Would you speak of the Spirit as a Person?

I speak of His personality because in Scripture I have a Being that comes and goes, is sent, speaks, and hears, and so I say, He is a Person. And I would insist upon certain statements of truth, commonly accepted, that present truth in the way the saints of God admit. But if I find a person quarrelling much over the words, I rather suspect it is because he does not like the thing itself..God is not the truth. He always tells the truth; but the truth is something that is told of another. Christ is the truth, for He is the One who tells others of God.

Things were in a terrible state, for all in Asia had turned away from Paul; he was glad to have one single person, Onesiphorus, that would own him; things had got down very low, and this at Ephesus where there had been so much blessing! Yet the apostle tells us that “the foundation of God standeth sure.”

Ques. How did they turn away from Paul?

Why, they were ashamed of him; not only had they given up the truth that Paul specially taught, but they had also given him up, which might be more. Some were even ashamed of Paul’s chain.

But it is very striking how he was cast back on elementary truth, indeed it must always be so.

“Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace,” etc. (chap. 2: i).

Ques. What is the force of, “entangleth himself”?

Well, if one has the energy of faith for it, sufficient to do both, one might make tents as well.

Ques. What does verse 6 mean?

The husbandman must labour before he gets the fruits; so with the soldier, or the athlete, or the husbandman, all must suffer first. One must be without encumbrance, one must strive lawfully, and one must work first. In verse 8, we have the two foundation elements, i.e., the Seed of promise, and the One who has met death, and has been raised up.

Ques. What is “my gospel”?

Just what Paul had been teaching. Judgment was part of his gospel; he connected it with the glad tidings, “in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel,” Rom. 2:16.

Ques. What is the difference between “my gospel” and “my doctrine”?

There is a great deal of teaching that is not exactly gospel, though the gospel is included in the teaching. See 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Certain things there were that Paul taught in common with Peter, but in other things this was not so. I believe that God has brought out the truth we are contending for, but along with it there is the testimony of Paul that the professing church of God on the earth is a total failure. It has gone back to

Judaising system, and is dragging people back to it as well. If you examine any writings, outside of the Scriptures, you will not only find the truth of the church lost, but also that the truths of redemption, and justification by faith are totally gone. I do not think you will find in any of the writings of the so-called Fathers, from Polycarp and Ignatius downwards, these two truths maintained. While there is faith in the Person of the Christ, and truths by which the thing is applied to men, yet you will not find redemption and justification in any one of the Fathers. They never had sound faith as to.the reconciliation of souls to God by faith in Christ's blood—not one of them.

Ques. Do you think that during that time individual souls had peace with God?

Oh, yes; they were attached to the Person of Christ in an unintelligent way, and they suffered martyrdom for His sake. Justin Martyr denies the full personal divinity of Christ. Presently they got praying for the saints after they were dead. Origen held that all souls existed before, and that the fall of man was just his coming down into a body, and he was the most learned Father of the Church. Clement, too, did not hold the divinity of Christ. It was the Platonic philosophy that corrupted the doctrine. Origen was the teacher of a school of doctrine. Hermas says the Holy Ghost was God's Son, and took counsel with God what he should do, and he did more than God set him to do, and therefore God gave him a great reward. It was lately ascertained that Hermas was the brother of Pius I, and not an apostolic Father at all.

Ques. What about their praying to saints?

That came in late; the first thing was, they prayed for them. The archbishop of Lyons wrote Pope Innocent to know how it was the mass was so changed. If you get Gregory's Sacramentaria, you will find prayers for the saints in them. Christ was the only one they did not pray for; they prayed even for the Virgin Mary.

The archbishop's letter was written in or about the eighth or ninth century. The word of God was, of course, entirely given up, save as they sometimes appealed to it, when they got into conflict. Epiphanius in the fourth century says you cannot pray for Christ because He is in glory.

The sense of the Holy Ghost being here was very soon lost. What they found of the privileges of the body of Christ they applied to the external professing body, and decided that even if heretics were baptised they got the Holy Ghost. All very dismal work! Paul writes: "If we have died together with him, we shall also live together." I do not doubt the actual thing was before his eyes. "If we deny him," etc. Here we have no ecclesiastical doctrine at all. I believe that if a man does deny Christ, Christ will deny that man. I do not mean like Peter, but one who persistently denies Christ.

Ques. How could saying the resurrection was past, overthrow the faith of some?

That is what we learn from verse 18. When people object to 2 John 10, n, they are trying their best to excuse evil or to let it in. It was the vigilant eye of the apostle that detected that the faith of some was overthrown. Annihilation seems plausible, because God is merciful, but I find personal atonement is thereby gone, and I set my face against it like a flint. I find also this, that I must

be purged from the vessels to dishonour. Do you profess Christ? Then you must depart from iniquity.

In verse 19, we have the Lord's certainty in divine knowledge, and our own responsibility. In verse 22, we get an additional thing which was not in the beginning of the gospel at all, viz., "out of a pure heart." There is nothing of that in the Acts, a man was not examined at all then. Calling on the name of the Lord is the distinction of a Christian.

Ques. How far would this refer to a person judging the system he may be in?

Well, if he has not a bad conscience about what he is in, he cannot judge it. I remember in France, someone coming to break bread one Lord's Day morning, because he wanted, he said, to prove that he could break bread with the worst kind of Christians that he knew. He was refused, as it was rightly thought that he was not acting upon the principle of godliness.

Ques. What is a "pure heart"?

One that has nothing consciously in it that is inconsistent with Christ. Remember, though, that Paul says: "I am conscious of nothing in myself; but I am not justified by this."7 You cannot take the consciousness of the individual as a rule and measure for the church.

7 See New Translation in loco.

Reading On 2 Timothy 3

Paul first speaks of the fact that Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures (v. 15); and then he says of every Scripture that it is inspired of God (v. 16). It is an important word, 'Scripture.' Prophecies may have died and passed away, as in the case of Agabus, who prophesied a famine coming; there may have been plenty of such prophecies, which were only temporary communications; but the fact of its being written is what gives Scripture its importance. So Peter speaks of "no prophecy of the scripture" as coming by the will of man.

Ques. Why do people not like its being the word of God?

Because they do not believe it; they say the word of God is in it, but they will not allow that it is itself the word of God. The expression used here, is, "divinely inspired." Of course, there is Scripture now which did not yet exist when Paul was writing to Timothy.

Ques. What does Peter mean by "private interpretation"?

That "no prophecy of scripture" has within itself its own interpretation.

Ques. What authority is there for rejecting the Apocrypha?

Every kind. One positive reason is, that it never was in Hebrew at all; and as to outward testimony, it never was classed with the Scriptures by the Jews. But to have the real knowledge of the Scripture authority, you must have divine teaching. The division the Jews made of the Scriptures, was into, the law, the prophets, and the

psalms. Josephus tells us there were prophets after the time of Artaxerxes (i.e., Malachi's time), but they were not of the same authority as those who went before. That, of course, is not a divine way of knowing about it. It is said that the Song of Sirach was translated into Hebrew, but it was not. The best way to determine about such books is to look into them. Take Maccabees, and you will find something to this effect: "I have done my best to make an epitome of the five books of such a man, for it is very tedious to have too much to read, and if I have done it well, then it is worthy of the matter," and so on. Think of saying that is inspired!

Quei. What of the suppressed gospels?

They are not suppressed.

Ques. Why do you reject them?

You have only to read them. As to outward testimony, too, it is distinct enough. That there were but four is clear; the fathers say that as there were but four rivers in Paradise, so there are but four gospels, naming them —Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Ques. Was Matthew written in Hebrew?

There is a rumour of a Hebrew version of Matthew's gospel, but it is all a nonsensical story. Lucas or Lucius, a known inventor of fables, tells you that Christ when a child, on one occasion, changed His companions into ducks, etc., etc. Look at Tobit, and his dog; it is absurd I Bel and the dragon may be true, but it has nothing to do with inspiration. There is no real difficulty as to the Apocrypha for a person who is really in earnest. In the preface to the Vulgate, Jerome, referring to the Apocrypha, says that these books cannot be inspired,

and that, though not inspired, the Church only reads them for the benefit of manners.

But the real knowledge of inspiration comes from the operation of God. I believe Scripture proves itself; it is spiritually discerned.

We have the Lord's positive sanction to the Old Testament in Luke 24:44, when He speaks of the law, the prophets, and the psalms.

Ques. What is, "furnished"?

It is the idea of being complete so that there is no articulation wanting. The word that is used is a strong one.

Ques. Does it refer to any particular place the man of God is to hold?

No, it makes him fit for a place. This Scripture is one that shews the all-sufficiency of the word. External testimony is important to confound adversaries; but while it may prove the folly of man, it never can give faith.

Ques. What are," prophetic scriptures," in Romans 16:26?

The epistles more especially. The only thing that gives faith is the power of the Spirit of God.

Ques. What endorses the New Testament books?

External evidence gives many quotations, and so on. There never were any other books than the list we have, that were considered to be 'canon,' so-called, though some of these, as 2 Peter, have been set aside. The Revelation was fully received at first, and came to be doubted in the Church about the second or third

century. So with Hebrews; it was not left out until the third century, and then only because it opposed certain innovations. Again, there came injunctions not to read anything but these inspired writings, for Clement's epistle used to be read, and so on, though not inspired. Eusebius gives us a complete list, and declares that none other was to be received as sound. The two epistles of John, being small, appear to have been much less copied, and it was late before they were received. There are translations of them in the first century, as in the Syriac Peschito which has them. They were translated a very few years after John's time.

There were false epistles as well as false gospels. One, to Laodicea, is a set of Paul's writings put together; but nobody who reads them can believe in them. Clement's is a very nice letter to try and get the Corinthians not to turn off their elders, just the sort of letter that you or I might have written in that kind of way. He writes in the name of the church at Rome, and he does not set up to be inspired. There is no difficulty about it really; but only divine power can give real discernment.

In 1 Corinthians 2 we have three things: (1) "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God"; (2) "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Paul got them by the Holy Ghost; then he gave them out by the Holy Ghost; (3) the natural man does not receive them, but the spiritual man does do so. We find here an authoritative statement of the way in which these things were given, taught, and received; and they are in the word of God which carries its own evidence with it. A person has only to read the

things which pretend to be inspired, and he will soon find out the difference. In the New Testament, the Holy Ghost is more human in his operations than in the Old Testament. In the latter, it is, “Thus saith the Lord”; whilst in the New Testament, the Holy Ghost comes down into the midst of all their actions, and utilises everything, even to a care for the body, or for the cloke left at Troas, or for wine for the stomach’s sake, or, again, for Onesiphorus’ house; and in Romans 8, the Holy Ghost feels the consciousness of the saints, as down here, with “groanings that cannot be uttered.”

Even in Old Testament times there were different characters of inspiration. “If there be a prophet… the Lord… will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, … with him will I speak mouth to mouth,” etc. (Num. 12:6-8). But while there is this difference in character, there arises no question as to authority. The Jews did make a difference, for they had the Mosaic degree, and the prophetic degree, and the “Bath Col,” or daughter of the voice—the writings or Kethubim.

In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God came down and spoke in the circumstances in which an individual was who might not be aware that what he was speaking was an absolute prophecy. Instead of it being their own mind they expressed, the prophets did not always know what it meant. This is clearly seen in the Psalms, and also in 1 Peter 1:11, 12. “Thus saith the Lord,” may look to be a higher thing than other scriptures that are without it, but it is not so.

A reference to a Hebrew Bible will show at once what is included in the three above-mentioned divisions; and the

Lord gives His sanction to them in the main.8 Ques. Is there anything special in the order of the books of the New Testament?

Many editions of the New Testament give another order, but I believe we have it in as good order as need be. We may notice that Galatians comes in pretty far on, though but an elementary epistle.

Ques. What of the order of the Psalms?

I believe that is divine; but it can be only known by spiritual apprehension.

In the epistles to churches, we have the foundation and building up as it ought to be. Timothy is, in measure, the same; but in the catholic epistles, as they are called, we find that, speaking generally, the church is already looked at as gone down.

The first epistles written were the two to the Thessalonians, then 1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans. The last-named, and Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians were written when Paul was a prisoner; Galatians is uncertain, but late. John's gospel was, I suppose, last. Matthew's gospel may have been first, but as to that, it is human testimony, not internal. 2 Timothy must have been late. Corinthians and Galatians have a moral order; one being for correction of walk, and the other for doctrine.

There is another point to notice in 2 Timothy 3, "From a child thou hast known," etc.; there we find individual personal acquaintance with the contents of the Scriptures. And Timothy knows, too, from whom he had learned them. In these days the individual thing is

important, I mean, the direct authority of the word of God over the conscience.

It is a question whether the word of God has directly an adequate authority for each of our souls.

We own the word of God, of course, but its direct authority over us is more, and this has now come to be a specially important truth, leaving aside for the moment the question of derivative instruction. Not that one individual may not teach another rightly, but the divine word takes more hold of us than we think. True, a person may get into the habit of hearing and learning Scripture to the blunting of his mind and conscience, but where the Spirit of God works, that gets sharpened up again. Looked at as an instrument, writings are higher than words. Suppose I was a prophet, and I said, 'this house will tumble down tonight,' that would have its own meaning by itself. But God had a plan and mind before creation, which has been since revealed in the word by the Spirit of God. A spiritual mind perceives this, and it becomes effectual in those who believe. The completeness of the word of God, when known, settles for faith the canon of Scripture.

Ques. Would you say that the canon of the New Testament Scripture was authenticated by the church?

I admit the fact, but not the authority, otherwise I should be making the church the authority for the New Testament.

Ques. Then is it the Spirit in us that settles what is Scripture?

Well, in a sense it is; that is to say, the Spirit brings home the witness into our souls.

Quei. What do you put above the word?

Nothing.

Ques. What settles it?

It is effectual in them that believe. The mere protestant ground is that of the right of private judgment. I once said to a priest, 'If I took a knife and gave you an awful gash in your arm, how would you know it was a knife?' Change "knife" into Maccabees, or, Matthew's gospel!

The question, in itself, as to how we are to know we have the Scriptures, is simply infidel ground. I ask, 'How do we know the sun shines?' And if a man says, 'I do not know,' well then, I reply, you are blind. The blind man may say, 'That is all very well, but how can I help it?' Yet, for all that, he is blind.

Man's will rejects the word of God, but that same word judges him, I do not. How did the woman of Samaria know Christ was a prophet? Why, she felt it in her own soul. "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." That is how I know its power, because it has power over me, reaching first my conscience.

Ques. What is the difference between the soul and conscience?

The soul is the part of man that has to say to God.

The external evidence of the Scriptures would be ground enough for faith; but when I come to spiritually understand them, I find then another character of evidence. As I go on, I see such and such things. To Stephen, heaven was opened, and then he sees Jesus,

the Son of man, as an object. There is a kind of evidence which supposes we have a spiritual mind to begin with. And the word begins with conscience; and that is all right.

To return to our illustration, the difficulty would be, to prove it was a knife to one who had not been cut by it. If anyone accepts the internal evidence, I am so far glad, because the coals are there, and the spark has only to be put to them. A roused conscience may shew enmity; as when the Jews gnashed on Stephen with their teeth, but they were convicted in their conscience at the same time. “The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

Ques. How are you to convict a Socinian? How can you?

Well, I cannot do so. But if such a one remains a Socinian, I can say he will be lost. Of course, no man can give faith to another.

Ques. Do you alter “at,” into “by,” in 2 Timothy 4:1?

Yes; “I testify before God and Christ Jesus, who is about to judge living and dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom, proclaim the word,” etc. Compare with this Deuteronomy 4:26 in the Septuagint. We have had the furnishing of the man of God, and now we have his active engagement. Service is connected with the future, and so he is charged by His appearing, etc.

Ques. What a thought it is for us, that the professing Church all around is so insensible to the coming of Christ!?

Yes; as to that, I do think the general state is awful. As regards dissenters, there is no professing body so out of the way as to the things of God as they are. Clearly, they

have been teaching rationalism at Stepney. Though I used to be a churchman, I had a respect for dissenters because they were persecuted; but when once they were relieved from that cross—which always was respectable—they became more worldly, and now, in so much have they the upper hand. At the present time, the alliance between Liberals, Infidels, and Catholics is very suggestive, but I always expected it. The Chairman of the Congregational Union recently gave a discourse which was simply rationalism, saying, you must go on with the times, and that it is an exploded folly taking the Scripture as the word of God; that we have some fifty or sixty books put together, written by fallible men, full of mistakes and errors, though containing the word of God. The Laodicean state of things is, I think, coming in fast.

Ques. How is increase of power to be obtained?

We must go to the source. I do not expect much power to be obtained in any external way. I have never had an instant's doubt that the path of brethren was of God in testimony, and if everybody was to leave it, all I should say would be, that one is conscious for oneself of being a very poor hand at it. There is plenty of failure with us too. But the chararter of Christ's strength is, that it is made perfect in weakness; we must be weak, if we are to be made strong by Him.

Ques. Are we not in a position like that of Nehemiah?

Well, yes; only, I think Nehemiah was a poor kind of man; Daniel is a better illustration. There was a great deal more in Ezra than in Nehemiah. Nehemiah was continually saying, "Think upon me, my God," for this or for that.

Ques. Was Mordecai right in taking the place he did?

I suppose so; it was exalting the Jews in this world.

The Lord has, I think, allowed revivalism to gather out souls, and that in a hurry; but not that He sanctions revivalism.

The last time I was in Dublin, poor W—— was speaking against the coming of the Lord.

It is a good thing to look death in the face, but that does not interfere with the hope of our Lord's immediate return.

Ques. Is worldliness a sign or source of weakness among us?

Both; for these things act and re-act. The expectation of the Lord's return would not prevent me going on with the ordinary business of life. If I am really expecting my Lord, I shall earnestly desire to be found doing my duty at the moment of His return.

8 Note.—"The Law," includes the five books of Moses; under "the Prophets," are Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings —the "former prophets"; and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai Zechariah, Malachi—the "later prophets."

Under the "Psalms," the Kethubim or Hagiographa ("holy writings"), are the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles.

Readings On 1 Peter

Reading 1

In chapter I, Peter is laying the foundation, but the subject proper to his epistle does not begin until chapter 2:11: “Dearly beloved, I beseech you,” etc. In both epistles he lays the foundation of redemption, and then he proceeds to unfold the principles of the government of God under which the Jews had been placed. Take, for instance, the passage, “he that will love life, and see good days,” or again, “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers,” that is not redemption for heavenly glory. As far as I have seen, the first epistle is divine government in favour of saints, telling them they will suffer, and so on; and the second epistle is that the same government in respect of the wicked. In chapter i, he speaks first of redemption, and later on, of how judgment begins at the house of God. And it is very instructive as to the order of the revelations and dealings of God. The epistle is addressed to the Jews scattered throughout Pontus, etc. “Sojourners of the dispersion” it really is.

Ques. “Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles?”

Yes, that is the same. They are converted Jews, Christians, though scattered.

Ques. Was this after the destruction of Jerusalem?

No, before. According to common chronology, Peter was put to death before Jerusalem was destroyed.

Ques. As these saints form part of the church, why are they so addressed?

Peter never says anything about the church as the body, but only as the house; Paul alone speaks of it as the body of Christ, for this was his special ministry. Peter does address them as in their new standing, but it is as individuals in accomplished redemption, not as in the one body united to Christ.

Ques. Does he not speak at the close of the epistle of "the church that is at Babylon"?

I doubt it; "elected" is in the feminine, and there is no word given for "church" at all; many have thought it refers to Peter's wife. Only Paul touches the subject of the body of Christ, and so he alone speaks of the rapture. In John's gospel there is, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself," but nothing more. As regards the house, we find this in the second chapter.

Ques. Does it, then, refer to those who had been scattered at the martyrdom of Stephen?

No; I do not know when they were scattered, but they were scattered throughout the world.

Ques. If it is to the scattered Jewish saints, where does the line come in between them and others; it says, "elect"?

They were Christian Jews, converted, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father; it took in any quickened soul among the dispersion.

Ques. Then James writes on a larger scale?

Yes. He addresses "the twelve tribes," and he speaks about anyone coming unto their 'synagogue'; it is

addressed to a national body, though he singles out those who are believers.

Ques, And he says “twelve tribes,” though ten of them were in captivity?

Yes, that is the language of faith. So, too, with Paul: “Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.” And Elijah also, at Mount Carmei, takes twelve stones.

Ques. How could the apostle say, “instantly”?

Well, it was so, though they were doing it very ignorantly and badly, just as Paul himself had been doing when he was Saul.

Ques. Were all really honest Jews doing so?

Yes; they might be doing it in a bigotted way, still, they were serving. Just as there may be a church nearby, kept open day and night; it is kept open whatever else may be there beside the truth itself. Peter was specially the minister of the circumcision.

Ques. If we want the whole instruction of Paul and Peter, we should have to read Galatians as well as Peter?

Yes, but I think Colossians is all to the Gentiles. Paul says to them, “Christ in you” i.e., in you Gentiles. The cross had really ended Judaism though it was continuing still, “Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law”; they were still offering sacrifices, etc., and we see Paul was going on to do as much. What is striking is, that in James we never have a word about redemption; grace we do find there, “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.”

Ques. James is very puzzling, it is so difficult to make it fit rn?

Well, it does fit in pretty close to the conscience if we will only let it. It does not allow will in man at all, only patience. Its general character is practical righteousness, the total destruction of self-will in the Christian, and the renouncing of the world.

Ques. How is that arrived at apart from the cross?

He takes them up where they avowedly are, and he says, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations,” and so on.

Ques. Does James, then, take the cross for granted?

Yes, but we find in his epistle the grace that quickens us. And it is occupied with the question of the putting down of the working of will in every shape.

Ques. Will there be a period at the end when the epistles of Peter will become more applicable?

I dare say it may be so. In James we have positive grace, but it is all the judgment of a man’s heart. Peter goes further, for he takes up the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. “Jesus Christ” applies to both these things.

Ques. Is it the obedience of Jesus Christ instead of the law?

No; I take it that the obedience of Jesus Christ is not merely that there is a rule given, but rather is it, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” There was in Him a whole life which had no spring of action except the will of God, and if there was no will of God, He did nothing. At the beginning the Lord says, as it were, to Satan,’ I am come

to live by the word of God.' He could, of course, have turned the stones into bread, but He had not the will of God for doing this, and so He did nothing.

Ques. And we can have that only by virtue of the new nature?

There are two characters of it, obedience such as Christ's, and confiding dependence, or dependent confidence, if you like. "Through sanctification of the Spirit" means that the Holy Ghost has wrought in us to set us apart for these two things.

Ques. Does it refer to election?

Yes. We are elect to these two things, but we are brought into them through "sanctification of the Spirit."

Ques. Is it a personal calling?

No; it is, that the Holy Ghost has come and taken man out of the flesh altogether, and put him into this place. And these two things are become, if you please, his life and his death. It is now a different kind of obedience from that of an obedient child; my child wants to run out, and I say to him, 'sit down and do your lesson.' Well, he does so, and that is very pleasant and right. But Christ never obeyed in that way, He never wanted stopping; He says, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

Ques. In 2 Thessalonians 2, "sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" are put together?

It is pretty much the same thing.

Ques. Is it not practical sanctification?

Well, it is, only we must be set apart first. The Holy Ghost comes and sets us apart to God; He sets us apart,

out of the flesh, to obedience. It is not so much the fact of the new life, as it is that the word has wrought in me, “Being born again… by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

Ques. In Hebrews, we have the thought of being sanctified by the blood of the covenant.

That is another aspect of sanctification. But here, the Spirit is the One who brings it into actual operation.

Ques. “By the which will we are sanctified”?

There we have that which sets us apart judicially; but the direct action of God at all times is by the Holy Ghost. So we are born of the Spirit; there is new life communicated, the Holy Ghost giving us a divine mind, bringing that into us, so that our thoughts and feelings are all changed.

Ques. Would it be right to say that we are sanctified by the Spirit in the purpose of God?

I do not know what you mean by the Spirit of God in purpose. It is God’s purpose to set us apart by the Spirit. God’s purpose is in His own mind; and God gave His Son that through redemption we might be set apart to Him. But all that was whilst we were still sinners. Then the Holy Ghost comes and operates in us, and He sets us actually apart. Sanctification of the Spirit is an actual operation in us. All the operations of God are by the Spirit. We are born of the Spirit, born of the Father in one sense, and the Son quickens whom He will. And the Holy Ghost still goes on, for He takes the word and makes the child grow.

Ques. Why is it here, “sprinkling,” and not shedding?

Sprinkling is the application of it.

Ques. Is this in opposition to what we had under law?

Well, yes; there was a certain sanctification of Israel to God, but not by the Holy Ghost, and they had the blood of sprinkling in a way, but we are sanctified to the sprinkling of Christ's blood, not to that of the blood of bulls and goats.

Ques. Why does obedience come first?

Because the actual thing to which we are sanctified is the obedience of Christ, but if we are to be before God, it must be by His blood; the sprinkling of blood is for cleansing, and the obedience is His life.

Ques. Would this refer to the sprinkling of blood upon the mercy-seat, or upon the person?

It is general, but persons are more in view here, because the blood, having been put upon the mercy-seat, has made God approachable. It was the Lord's lot without which we could not have this.

Ques. Does not John use a fuller word when he says, "washed"?

He does.

If God had not been glorified as to the question of sin, which is specifically the Lord's lot, we could not have had the sprinkling. The two goats make one Christ. But here, it is the general idea of sprinkled blood; sometimes the blood was sprinkled upon the person, sometimes on the altar to God, but then the individual got the benefit of it.

Ques. When the blood was sprinkled upon all the people, was it not to hold them good under the penalty of death?

That was the legal character of it there, but that is not for us.

Ques. Is this the new covenant here?

No, it is just what it says; we are set apart to obey, and to all the value of Christ's blood; it is a great thing not to bring into a verse what is not in it. Other verses and other truths there are, and we may get clearer light by putting them together, but it is an amazing help to keep clearly before one what a verse gives. There is nothing about the covenant here; the apostle is addressing a set of people, elect, chosen, and set apart unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Sanctification by blood, in Hebrews, refers to Jews, strictly speaking, though we come under it as being in the fatness of the olive tree.

Ques. A person could not walk practically in the path of obedience without the sprinkling of the blood?

Oh! no; we should not be set apart to God at all without it. It is in contrast with Judaism, where, as a matter of fact, they were brought through the Red Sea and so separated from Egypt. Here, it is the Holy Ghost who does it, and it is thus a real thing in the soul. In Hebrews, we do not find the sanctification of the Spirit, though holiness is spoken of; they are sanctified by blood, and they are warned not to fall away; where there was faith, they had, of course, the actual value of it all, and where it is individual, it says, "Perfected for ever." It is a great thing to take our verse absolutely and simply; here am I, set apart to have no other will but God's; obedience consists in not having a will of my own, and that is the law of liberty. Just as if I told my child to go off and play in the street, he would be obedient in going

off, but he would be doing just what he liked to do. Here, God says, ‘I am bringing you out of a sinful world, where the carnal mind is enmity against Me, and I set you apart to Myself, to do My will in the world and nothing else.’ And then comes the second blessed thing, namely, the value of Christ’s blood.

Ques. In what sense does James speak of the “royal law”?

It is an excellent one; there are three, the law of Moses, the royal law, and the law of liberty.

Ques. Would not the royal law be the law of the kingdom?

No, and yet it would be that of the kingdom, but that is not the reason why he calls it so.

Ques. Is the law of liberty only in connection with the new creation?

Of course not, for the carnal mind is only enmity and disobedience.

“Blessed be the God and Father” (v. 3) is an expression we often find, and Christ is looked at as Son and as Man — “My Father and your Father … my God and your God.” Then it adds, “Of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Lord is another title: “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” And “hath begotten us again unto a lively hope.” We were in this state of sin and death, and Christ came and took us out of it, so that now we have a lively hope, and therein we find the key to His government toward us. “Reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” “Revealed,” that is not taking up with

theories, but a positive thing from God; the inheritance is kept there for us, whilst we are kept down here by the power of God through faith. God's power keeps us, but it is by keeping our faith, unto a salvation ready to be revealed.

Ques. Is, then, the salvation spoken of here, the full accomplishment of all?

Yes.

Ques. "Ready to be revealed," is this the glory?

Yes; it is the full description of the status of a Christian—and he is kept by the power of God through faith. Peter is showing the way of the government of God; there is nothing about advancement in this world.

Ques. You would not be satisfied to leave a believer in this state now, would you?

But I should like him to have all this.

Ques. In "the day dawn" of the second epistle, there is more?

Yes, there is; but Paul was living in the full light of it; here, it is only dawning. Hebrews is very much upon the same ground as Peter, one passage in the epistle describes the whole millennial blessedness from top to bottom, but we do not find "union."

Ques. We get company?

Yes, but 'fellows' is not union.

Ques. We do not reach as high as priesthood in Peter?

That is not Peter's point.

Ques. But we get "brethren" in Hebrews?

If Paul speaks of the Father and of Christ, then he can speak of firstborn among many brethren, but it is individual still. John, too, is always individual, and yet he carries us quite as high, dwelling in God, and God in us, but that is not union with Christ. When we come to union with Christ, we find God raising Christ as man from among the dead, and putting Him at His right hand, and He takes us and puts us into Him there. In Ephesians 1, Christ as Head is looked at as the Man whom God has raised.

Ques. Does Peter answer to wilderness experience?

In measure he does, but "ready to be revealed "is a different thing. Paul's revelation in Colossians is more like Peter, and so it is not the rapture, but, "Then shall ye also appear with him in glory"; "called in one body" and "not holding the Head" we have, but even that is not developed.

Ques. Would not Peter here have reference to the Jewish hope by contrast?

Yes, it is the contrast with having Canaan, and all that on earth.

Ques. Then it is not the new birth in verse 3?

Yes, it is; what else is it?

Ques. I understood it to be in contrast with the Jewish hope on earth?

Just so, so it is; here, the inheritance is in heaven; but the difference between this and Ephesians is, that in the latter we are seen sitting in the heavenlies in Christ, i.e., in Christ in glory.

Ques. How could that be a royal priesthood?

Ques. Is it not the highest official dignity here?

Well, yes, as to official dignity, but we are sons.

Ques. Does Peter see that the saints will be in the excellent glory as in the transfiguration?

Well, I suppose he does, he speaks of “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled,” and so on. The one thing we have not in his epistle, is, union with Christ by the Holy Ghost.

Ques. Would you say that we have eternal life in Peter?

It is not developed in Peter. Nor is there a hint about God’s love in Peter, though we find the things that flow from it. God has wrought this, and God has given that, and God keeps us safe and so on, but we never have what we find in Paul and John, “God so loved the world.” It is a governed world in view, and also a people for whom redemption has been wrought, the perfect standing of a Christian with an inheritance in heaven and the Holy Ghost come down from heaven.

Ques. Why is that in Peter?

Because that is what God employed him to teach.

Peter presents the facts of our redemption and actual standing, but we do not find Peter saying, “Ye are dead”; he does say, “He that hath suffered in the flesh.” Paul speaks of “dead to sin,” and he goes right to the root; Peter says, “dead to sins,” but that is another thing, it is practice, not root. The moment we are in Christ, we are in a totally new place, where man, looked at as born of Adam, is done with. But Peter gives the whole statement of our relationship to God as redeemed and quickened, and as walking down here with a hope up there. And government then comes in—we are kept by God’s power

through faith. The rapture is not mentioned, for this is an act of grace, not an act of government. But 2 Peter 1:19, is a most interesting passage, for we have this dark world—Satan's darkness—and this light of God to shew us how all here is going rapidly on to judgment. In Ephesians, we find the most violent contrast conceivable. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour," and then, "Fornication, and all uncleanness,… let it not be once named among you." From speaking of our being imitators of God Himself, Paul drops suddenly down to speak of all that is vile in a man.

In verses 6 and 7, it is government again, but towards us as walking down here, redeemed, and having this inheritance above. In verse 7, the fruits of these dealings in government with us are yet to come out. It is not with Peter the taking up a poor sinner and putting him in the glory with Christ, for that is not his line.

Ques. What is the salvation of soul?

It is, I think, in contrast with the deliverance that Israel had, soul salvation contrasted with temporal deliverance. Then, in verses 10 and 11, comes an orderly statement. The prophets of old spake both of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glories which were to follow; but we stand now between sufferings finished, and glories yet to come. The prophets were foretelling these things; but they had not yet come, and so they searched to see what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, and as they studied thus their own testimonies, it was revealed to them that not

unto themselves, but unto us did they minister such things; this is very striking, for so far were they from telling forth the expectations of their own minds, that they had to study their own prophecies to understand them, if possible. But now the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven reports these things to us, things which are yet to be brought unto us, but are reported now.

Ques. Is “the grace that is to be brought unto you,” the same as “the grace that should come unto you”?

Yes. It does not state that we have got it, but the glory is reported, and that by the Holy Ghost sent down. Until Pentecost, the Holy Ghost was not, i.e., had not come; but that which distinguishes Christianity is, that the Holy Ghost has come down here. Just as of old, Christ, looked at as coming down here, was not. All this does not go on into Paul’s statement, nor into John’s. Peter’s is complete and perfect in itself.

Ques. Christianity and “this salvation” are not the same?

No, we have soul salvation and eternal life, and Christianity makes us wait for them. It is a report now. We are changed, but we have not a single thing excepting life and the Holy Ghost. Of the things that belong to us as being alive, we have nothing but the earnest of the inheritance.

Ques. We have the new nature?

Yes, that is eternal life, and yet, even as to that, in the full purpose of God, the end is everlasting life. God has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, He has called us to His own kingdom and glory, but we are not there yet. We are waiting for that. The grace of God has appeared teaching us to wait for the glory; it is all

revealed, and we have the life that enjoys it as a revelation, but we have not yet come into the estate.

Ques. Then verses 6-9 are a parenthesis?

Yes; only that when the revelation comes by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, other things are brought in. As the Lord says to Nicodemus, “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?” It was necessary even for the Jews to be born again for their earthly things.

Ques. Is the “last time” a Christian term?

Well, we get, “in the last days.” “The world to come” was a Jewish term.

Ques. Is it like John’s “last time”?

Well, there we find antichrist; the day of the Lord and the days immediately preceding it are the last time.9 Messiah is come, and He is not come; Elias is come and he is not come, and we never see clearly a statement of this kind until we see that. Messiah shall be cut off, and shall have nothing. As yet, He has none of the things that belong to Him.

The moment the Son was here, the Father’s name was revealed though they did not understand it. And as soon as the Holy Ghost came down we have the Spirit of adoption, and Christ’s place where we are heirs; but all this did not form part of Jewish promises, any more than the church did.

The whole state in Peter is different, without going to Paul, because the vail is rent. Present relationship with God is made perfectly clear, by redemption, and the new nature, and the Holy Ghost, too, and that is an immense thing. In this very chapter we read, “Who by him do

believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory." Do we mean to say that God gave His Son for us? Then there is perfect love in the heart of God; I believe in God by Christ, and I say, 'Out of the depth of His own heart God would have me with Himself,' and this He has shewn by rending the vail from top to bottom. Certain privileges were not thereby revealed, but, as brought to God, my soul's relationship with Him is revealed. "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end." So we are calling upon the Father as children during the time of our sojourning here, and this is our place of relationship with God during all this present time (vv. 13-17). This is practically where we are.

Ques. "In fear"?

Fear is a very good thing, "Happy is the man that feareth alway," "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Of course, it has nothing to do here with final judgment, Peter does not think of that with fear. But though we are calling on the Father, and His name has been revealed, and the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven, and the Father is keeping His children, still it is as a holy Father, so let us mind what we are about.

Ques. "Judgeth according to every man's work," is this a present thing?

Quite so; otherwise, "the Father judgeth no man." He then goes to the foundation of it all, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things."

Ques. Why does he bring in silver and gold?

It is the general character of the infinite price with which we have been redeemed, contrasted with poor corruptible things such as silver and gold.

Ques. People sometimes ask how we know it is the last time?

We find it from Scripture, as we have seen in John. The Jews understood the term very well. Jude speaks of the corruption of the Church, brought in by false brethren, and John, of their going out from us in apostasy. The two characters of the last days are (1) turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and (2) apostasy or giving it up. This is all going on openly to-day; but then, it crept in. Though the last days are spoken of, and perilous times also, yet the Lord allowed the evil to come out in germ at that time, so that we should have the word of God about it all. Enoch prophesied about them.

Ques. If it were the last time then, does it not shew that time is not now marked?

The moment Christ was rejected, all was closed, except the present time of mercy. As Christians, we do not belong to this world at all.

Reading 2

Ques. In verse 21, “Who by him do believe in God,” is Christ looked at as the medium through whom we know God?

I suppose so.

Ques. Then we have two things, God is the One who has raised up Christ, and Christ is Lord?

Yes.

Ques. Is He looked at as made Lord?

Yes; but this statement is more general, and the effect is that our faith and hope are in God. I know God through Christ, and this gives a distinct aspect of God altogether. It means that I can trust in God in everything, for I know that God has come in on my behalf. I know the love of God in giving Christ, and I know that all my sins are gone, and that God Himself is my Saviour. He is not here in the character of Judge, nor is it faith in Christ before God; but it is faith in God Himself who has raised Christ from the dead, so that it takes in everything between myself and God, and alters His whole character from that of Judge. I may believe in God as a righteous Judge, and so He is, but that will not save me, though there must be that for salvation.

Ques. Abraham believed God?

Yes, that was believing what God said, and we find various forms of that.

Ques. Does the hope connect itself with Christ's glory on high?

Well, not quite so much that; there is the Jewish expression "hope," but hope is often used as confidence, as, "In him shall the Gentiles trust," i.e., hope, and also in, "Hope thou in God." Hope is used as counting on a person; but He will give us glory, too; here, it is the general thought, namely, that we reckon on Him. Believing on Him, and believing in Him are different. 'I believe in God,' is a different thing. Believing on God shews the object and the confidence, that is to say, God is the object of the faith.

Ques. Is not this the Red Sea?

Yes, it raises Christ from the dead.

Ques. There is no knowing God any other way?

Well, only as Creator. I do not know God at all, save as I know Him in Christ.

Ques. When it says, “That know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,” is that all one class?

I do not know that.

Ques. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,” that is knowing God, is it not?

It is God the Father, not merely God. The other names of God do not give eternal life, but the Father sent the Son that we might live through Him, and that gives eternal life.

We have, then, first, the revelation in Christ, and secondly, the “obeying the truth through the Spirit.” This sanctifies the soul. “Unto unfeigned love of the brethren.” It is wonderful how the purifying of the soul and love go together. We may get hold of truth, but in man’s hand it is always imperfectly so, and badly put together; but “obeying the truth through the Spirit” is quite another thing. Selfishness is at the bottom of sin; the opposite of selfishness is love, and we are purified from the selfishness of sin by divine love. Here, it is love of the brethren, and the love, too, which brings in holiness. We find the same thing in I Thessalonians 3:12, “The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God.” Love and holiness

are here brought together. A wonderful power has thus come in in Christianity! The apostle adds, “At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” It is not to establish our hearts here, but he is looking at it in all its fulness when Christ comes. It is the power of the hope, too, for he “that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” And therefore, in John 17, it is, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth,” and also, “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” This takes us up into the other world.

Ques. “Even as we do toward you,” would not that qualify it?

That is the pattern of it, but it is “one toward another,” and “toward all.” We never find it stated that Christ loved the world, or that God loved the church, because this latter refers to the relationship of Christ and the church, His body and His bride. When it speaks of “love as brethren,” it is again the love of relationship.

Ques. Why “unfeigned”?

We do not want feigned love to the brethren, do we? It is just the opposite of that, it is real, not ‘putting it on,’ as men say. We have here the converse of that which is in Thessalonians. It is the bringing in of divine life, and of the Holy Ghost who is the spring that is in my heart. So it speaks, not about inconsistencies, but of love and of what is God’s nature. A wonderful thing it is for us to look at Christ in our pathway down here, and then, in that sense, we could not know any man after the flesh. God is looking for purity and love here. As self is dead, consideration for others reigns in the heart according to God. And the recollectedness of God’s presence is the

great secret of this. I was struck some time back in seeing that, when the apostle describes in 1 Corinthians 13 what love is, it is all subjective; not one atom of activity do we find in it, but it bears, endures, hopes, and so on, and that is all.

Ques. You would not say love is always subjective?

No; but it is so in 1 Corinthians 13.

Ques. Is “kind,” subjective?

Yes; I go and meet you, and you may look very glum at me, but I am kind from a sense of love towards you, what is that but subjective?

Ques. That chapter has sometimes been a kind of disappointment to me, for one finds there what love is not, rather than what it is?

You go and live it out, and see if other people will be disappointed!

Activity, of course, is all right too. God gives to us in the blessedness of His nature, He makes us enjoy Himself; but besides that, He gives us a share in the activities of His love. “See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.” He will have these two things together—love and purity, and “fervently” too.

These instructions are drawn from the very depths of God’s nature, and thus we have God and grace instead of self. Suppose I am giving way to bad feeling towards someone, well, the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. I ask myself how should I feel if I met that person at the door of heaven just going in. Would it not be nice to meet people here as we shall meet them there? Only, when we have to meet opponents, we must take care that it does not connect

itself with anything of feeling as regards the individual. Look at Christ in an agony in Gethsemane. He asked His disciples to tarry, while He went further, but when He comes to them again, He finds them sleeping, yet He only says, “What, could ye not watch with me one hour?” And He goes back again into His agony; this was His way with them when He was thinking of meeting God in judgment.

Quel. Is it not, “See that ye … love,” in verse 22?

No, that it is not; it is, “Love one another with a pure heart fervently.” “Seeing ye have purified,” etc., is the principle of it, let us then have the practice in all its extent! He is looking for fervent love with a pure heart, seeing that we have been brought into this relationship. God is light, and God is love, and having come down in light and love, He wants this divine nature, which has taken root in us, to come out.

Ques. How can “increase and abound” be brought about?

By our keeping nearer to God.

I have often thought that it requires great grace to see a little grace. If we go out in love, it will find some response. At one place, they complained that all was so dreadfully cold, and I could only say, why do you not go out in love and warm the rest?

“Born again,” is divine life, for this connection of purity and love is by the Holy Ghost; it is divine love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

Ques. Is “born again” the same thing here as in John 3?

It is the same truth, but rather more specific in the passage in John which insists on its being altogether

new (anothen), and so makes it more emphatic. Here, it is connected with the word, in John, with the Spirit. In John, too, we have the positive communications of the new life; in Peter, it is the practical effect and working, not the source. It is similar in 1 Peter 4:1, “He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin,” whilst with Paul it is, “he that is dead”; it is the same truth, only the one gives the principle, and the other, the outward practical carrying out of it. As to the Jews, they must be born again.

Ques. “I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh,” does that mean that they will not have a bad heart?

Oh! no.

Ques. Does not the word “born” imply more?

We are born of the Spirit and we receive a new life, but this brings in divine thoughts, so that we are cleansed.

Ques. Then sin remains in them, in Ezekiel 36?

Yes, and so it does in us now. It is a great thing that the word lives, it comes from God in the power of the Holy Ghost, but then it brings in the things it tells about. In John 8:25, the Lord tells the Jews who He is. In the Authorised Version, it reads, “Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning,” but the real force of this is, ‘In principle altogether that which I also say to you,’ i.e., His word expressed Himself.

And not only does the word live, but it judges also what is in us because it is true.

Ques. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature”?

That is another idea; such an one is a new creation, and belongs to an entirely different state of things.

Ques. Is it the same in Galatians 6?

Yes, but it is there more applied to the individual. It is the thing so many will not have. Dr. Bonar openly ridicules the idea of two natures, but “that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.” Methodists always take wrong ground, having no thought of being born again at all, and this has run very much through the whole body of the Evangelical world.

Ques. What is the difference between “new birth,” and “new creation”?

New creation takes in everything, new birth is our having a nature that is fit for it. If we take it in its full sense, new creation leaves nothing else.

Ques. I am the same man after I am born again?

I do not doubt you are, but you will find some difficulty in saying what the “I” now is. I have a life from Adam that is never mended one atom; but I have also a new life from Christ, which is a totally new thing: “He that hath the Son hath life.” Adam had not that life, but I have the life of the second Adam.

Ques. Had not the Old Testament saints eternal life?

That is another question, and we will not hunt the two hares at a time. Adam innocent had not that life one bit more than Adam guilty. “That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.” God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life, but Adam was not born of the Spirit. This is a new thing. “That eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” That is the Christ who has

become my life through the operation of the word; a totally new thing it is, and one which does change the man.

As to the. Old Testament saints, eternal life formed no part of the Old Testament revelation, even supposing that the Old Testament saints had it. Light and incorruptibility have been brought to light by the gospel. Not that they have been brought to existence, but they have been “brought to light.” And when He in whom life is, came down and died and rose again, then a totally new thing was brought out. Eternal life is twice found in the Old Testament, but in both the passages it is prophetic of the millennium. And therefore, in the Old Testament, we never get conflict between flesh and Spirit. We find, ‘conceived in sin,’ in Psalm 51, but there is no thought of flesh lusting against the Spirit. “I am crucified with Christ:” says the apostle, “nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,” and there we find a contradiction twice over, and somebody else put in instead of” I.” So again in Romans 7, “What I hate, that do I,” and, “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me,” though in the previous verse he had just said that he did do it! All that the Psalmist can say is, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” He takes the ground that if God wash him, he will be whiter than snow. In that passage, it is not a question of washing with the blood of Christ, and what I insist upon is, do not put into a passage what you cannot get out of it. The Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, i.e., those who are dead in sins are quickened, it is not the simple fact of receiving a new life; it is not the way

Scripture speaks, to say, ‘here is a living man, and I quicken him.’

Ques. ‘Quickens’ refers to both soul and body?

Yes, “quicken your mortal bodies.” When we speak about quickening, it is always that of one dead. But “quickened us together with Christ” involves a great deal more. Christ was lying in death, where we were lying, and then was raised, and God has quickened us together with Him, but that is a great deal more than life. A man is changed, but the flesh is never changed. In the history of the flesh, I find it both an outlaw and under law, but it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; again, I find the flesh, with Christ presented to it, and man crucified Him; next, with the Holy Ghost come, and I find this, “ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye,” and then I see what the flesh was in Paul after he had been caught up to the third heaven and Satan tried to puff him up about it. Dealing with the old nature formed no part of the Old Testament dispensation, though saints were quickened or born again; as regards eternal life, they ought to have this found out, and the Pharisees, as we know, had done so. When the young man came to Christ and asked, “What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” the Lord, in answer to him, takes up the law upon its own footing, and says, in effect, “this do, and thou shalt live.”

Ques. When it says, in John 20:8, “that other disciple … saw, and believed,” what was it he believed?

That Christ was risen, only, he believed what he saw, but he had no knowledge of the Scriptures that Christ must rise (v. 9); so he saw, and he believed that He had risen.

They did not know this by faith in the word of God, but they believed when they saw.

Ques. Mary had more faith than any of them?

Yes.

Ques. Does 1 Peter give us the new place?

No, it only gives us it in hope.

Ques. Some say the seed here is the divine life?

So it is, but it is by the word of God which is the seed of life; in verse 23, we are looked at as born again, but it is instrumentally by this word. This.shews us the character and source of the thing, but the instrument is the word, and so the word of God is the seed. It “liveth and abideth for ever.” It is a great thing to see that clearly in the word. “He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” The word is the revelation of what is in God, in His nature and character, His love, His ways, in short all that He communicates. And this is what God uses to quicken. In verse 23, “for ever,” is left out by the editors.

Ques. Is there any difference between logos and rhema?

Logos is the deeper word, and the rhema is the giving of it out. Logos is that which is known in the mind and known by expressing it. I cannot think without having a thought, and logos is used for that and the expression of it, but rhema is the mere utterance, and is that which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Ques. Then what of the expression, “the word of the Lord”?

The word of the Lord is, I suppose, that which is in mediatorial communication, that is all. It. is a great thing to see that character in the word, for if here, in

this book, I have not an inspired word, the inspiration of God's mind, I have not got it at all.

Ques. Is the Bible the rhema?

It is the rhema written down. And the Lord gives importance to it when He says, "If ye believe not his [Moses'] writings, how shall ye believe my words? "

Ques. Then is it Christ here?

It is not Christ here, but it is Christ written down. In Hebrews 4, we see the two thrown into one. And, again," Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live"; so it is God's own mind, of course. In the midst of a world away from God, and which has rejected both God and Christ, there is one thing we have that is of God and from God, and that is the word of God, and that is all. God Himself is here, of course, but the word is the only thing that is of Him. And when everything else has passed away, God's word will remain until it is shewn that everything it said is true.

Ques. "The word of God is living and operative," what is the force of "living" there?

That is the very thing, it is divine; it is not merely a word that I give out, and it passes, but a word that comes out from God which abides, and never changes, and never can change. It comes down into my heart, and shews me everything that is in it. In these days, it is a great thing for saints to carry with them the conviction that the word of God is the word of God, and that not only it can never be broken, but it endures for ever. It is, and it ever will be, the truth; many of the things spoken of old have passed, and many others may pass, but the word of God

will be the truth hereafter, just as much then as it is now. As for this world, and infidels and their reasonings, there will not be one atom of them left! Man's "breath goeth forth," and "his thoughts perish."

Then, in chapter 2:2, we have another thing, and that is, growing by the word. It is the only thing here with is positively of God. Of course, in one sense, the creation is of God; that will, however, be all burnt up, but that which is of God nourishes. There is a sense, too, in which we are all new-born babes; it is the new life in simplicity and purity that desires the sincere milk of the word, so that whenever I come to the word to get nourishment, I come to it as a new-born babe.

Ques. When he says, "desire," is not that exhortation?

Yes, of course it is.

Ques, What is growing up to salvation?

Peter looks at salvation as ready to be revealed.

Ques. Why, here, "if so be"?

It supposes one has tasted, or else one will not desire. The knowledge of the graciousness of Christ makes us desire to get more and more of it.

In verses 4 and 5, we have the house that Christ builds. It is in contrast with 1 Corinthians 3, where the house is built on the ground of man's responsibility, "according to the grace of God which is given unto me," etc. Man is there viewed as in responsibility building the house. But in Matthew 16, the Lord says, "I will build my church"; that is still going on, and it is not yet built. Here, in Peter, it is not the responsibility of man, but living stones built together. In Ephesians 2 it says, "Groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord," groweth, i.e., it is growing yet.

Matthew 16 answers more to Ephesians 2:21, verse 22 being a matter of fact; the one, “groweth unto an holy temple,” the other, is a “habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Ques. “Judgment must begin at the house of God,” is that the broad view of it?

Yes. It is the confounding of these two things together which has brought in all the pretensions of Popery and High Churchism.

Ques. Is it ever said of the house of God that it is a body?

A house is not a body, the two ideas are totally different. It is Christ’s body and God’s house. In Hebrews 3, it is, “Christ as Son over his [God’s] house,” I believe that the “own” in the Authorised Version ought not to be there. A person may be ill the house, and not in the body; wood, hay and stubble will be burnt up, but no member of the body will ever be. People often ask if Christ is precious, but die terms, “elect, precious,” give us His characfer, not our estimate of Him, and they are connected with the chief corner stone.

Ques. “Whereunto also they were appointed”?

So they were; the Jews were appointed to stumble at Christ, that was to be their judgment, but they were not appointed to be disobedient. Judas was not appointed to be a sinner, but, being a sinner, he was appointed to be a betrayer of Christ.

Ques. “The unjust unto the day of judgment”?

That is in this world; there is a day of judgment that comes upon them here in this world.

Ques. “Before of old ordained to this condemnation”?

That is not condemnation as people commonly think; it is to this condemnation. The stone of stumbling was such to the house of Israel.

You see we are all lost to start with; not that I believe in what is called reprobation, I do not, but God brings about His own way. Israel was appointed to stumble, as I have just said, and prophecy had declared that they would do this when Christ came, and then they stumbled upon Him; it was the form that their wickedness took in the purposes of God.

In Romans 9 we have, first, the sovereignty of God, and if He chooses to make vessels for destruction, nobody can say “no” to Him; you cannot help it. Then, in verses 22 and 23, he takes up the ground, “What if God,” etc., that is another thing. But when he comes to the good side, God prepares them, when he is on the bad side, God endured the vessels fitted to destruction.

Ques. Does “fitted” mean that they fitted themselves?

He found them fitted, you must not bring in what is not there. He finds things fitted for destruction, and He exercises endurance.

Romans 9 is simply absolute sovereignty; people talk about national election there, which is the very thing the apostle is denying. You are the children of Abraham, are you? Very well, then, says the apostle, if you plead that, you must let in the Ishmaelites, for they were of Abraham. But they were slaves! That ground is gone. Then take Esau and Jacob— “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” Then come to Israel, but if God had not been merciful, all of them would have been cut off

except Moses' own children. God is, then, sovereign and so He can let in the Gentiles as well. It is a smashing argument to the Jews, for they had broken the law, and they could not deny it. Ah! says the Jew, but I have got the unconditional promises, and so I have a right to have them. And the apostle takes up that principle and shews that, in rejecting Christ, they had rejected the promises, too. And then he deals with the question of national election. When I was young, you might have found an infidel or two, but now, one may almost say, people are appointed to infidelity; though they were as bad then as now, one way or another.

Ques. Infidelity is often according to the increase of light?

Yes, very often it is, and the increase of light is often according to the infidelity.

Ques. The infidelity now is like that in our Lord's time?

Yes, the Pharisees are the Puseyites, and one may find as well Nicodemuses and Josephs, or even Nathaniels.

Then, in verses 5 and 9, we have two kinds of priesthood, "holy," and now "royal." The "holy" is a kind of Aaronic priesthood, the "royal," more Melchisedec.

Ques. Does the Aaronic secure the going in and out, and finding pasture?

Going in and out, is liberty. One "fold" is a piece of wickedness in translating, to keep up an established church; it should be "one flock." We find three things there: eternal life, never perish, and saved; going in and out; and, finding pasture. Salvation, liberty, and God's sheep finding. No longer shut up in a fold, they are under the care of the good Shepherd who keeps them

safe. So it takes first the image of the Aaronic priesthood. We are the epistles of Christ in our life, and words, and everything.

Ques. What is “the offering up of the Gentiles” in Romans 15:16?

I take it to be an allusion to the oifering up of the Levites in Numbers 8:11.

Ques. Why, “acceptable… by Jesus Christ” (v. 5)?

They could not be so without Him, I cannot carry anything up to God except in Christ’s name.

Ques. Is there any analogy between these two priesthoods and Romans 12 and Ephesians 5, the offering our bodies?

We have to offer our bodies, but he is not here speaking of that so much as of praises, and thanksgiving, and adoration. It is the same character as in Hebrews 13, and that is more Aaronic. To shew forth the praises is somewhat Melchisedec. It refers to Exodus 19, “a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation,” and it puts these despised believers in the place formerly given to the nation of Israel who will have this place again, by and by.

Ques. How do you apply the wine of Melchisedec?

Melchisedec comes out with the blessing, up and down, and not with intercession, properly speaking, at all. In Hebrews, Paul takes Melchisedec as the mark which was to mark out Christ, but another priesthood there was that offered sacrifices, and so on, viz., that of Aaron.

Ques. Why “out of darkness”?

Darkness is always ignorance of God, and light is the knowledge of God.

Ques. Is such priesthood still going on?

Yes; and we have all the value of Christ's name and acceptance.

Ques. Some brethren think priesthood is advocacy, and presenting our worship?

Some of the brethren are very nice, but I do not think they gain much by such a notion. It is never said that Christ presents our worship, but that in the midst of the assembly He sings praises. Advocacy is a definite thing; priesthood in Hebrews is for grace to help in time of need. But this notion of Christ presenting our worship, as though we could not go in, does not give us the full character of Christian worship at all. It is "the Father seeketh," etc. Scripture does not speak of a priest with a Father. Christ is priest over the house of God, and so we draw near. We know He is there, and so we draw near with boldness. But that is not Father. Worship of the Father is peculiar for the Christian, but there is a tendency to bring worship down merely to Hebrews (there is no Father in Hebrews). "The Father himself loveth you" —one cannot bring in a priest here. In John, we have the obligation and necessity, and it is always Father; so our fellowship is with the Father, and that is the necessity of His nature.

Ques. Is not Hebrews 2:12, a present thing?

Yes.

9 Note.— "It is the last time" (John 2:18): "Not exactly the last days, but the season which had the final

character that belonged to the dealings of God with this world.”

(See “Synopsis” in loco.)

Readings On The Seven Churches -- Revelation 2 and 3

Reading 1

The first thing to notice is, that the seven churches are “the things which are.”

John had seen Christ standing in the midst of the golden candlesticks; chap. 1. Then “the things which are” follow (chapters 2 and 3); from chapter 4 and onwards, we have “the things which shall be hereafter,” or after these.

There is the divine character of Christ, and also the ecclesiastical character of Christ. He is seen here in judgment, not in blessing flowing down in gifts and so on. He forms His own judgment of the state of the churches, and He gives promises to overcomers. He is judging their state, with His garment flowing down to the feet, not tucked up to serve.

Another thing to note in connection with this, is, that we have not any directions given by the Spirit of God to guide the church as to what it is to do, save as listening to the judgment of Christ about the church; but that is not direction to the church. We have the express judgment of Christ about the church: “I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick,” etc.

Ques. What is “seven”?

“Seven” gives the history of all, at distinct periods; it is a general history from the first decay until the final judgment, and the Lord’s estimate of this.

We do not find particular directions given as to what people are to do inside the church, but we have His estimate of what the church is doing, and the state of the external profession.

He is a Judge; a divine Person walking on the earth as a Judge and His feet burning with fire. He is saying, you are this, and you are that, and you are the other, but He gives no instructions as to how the church is to act within her borders. Quite true, I may draw some conclusions from it all.

The character of the book is prophetic, not evangelical; we find therein prophetic statements, not exactly New Testament instructions.

Some have said there is no direction to do this or that, but we do get the description of Rome, as a condition to be avoided by the saints of God. The external thing is the professing church, with Jezebel; but by “within,” I mean that which comes under the express instruction of the Spirit of God in the place in which the Lord is dealing with it. The assembly is the idea here, and this assembly is the body, and it is also the house; but when God formed the assembly, then, instead of the synagogue being the scene of excommunication and judgment, the church comes in: “If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” This holds good irrespectively of the ruin.

Those owned as Christians in the assembly, the assembly has to judge, but them that are without, God judges.

Ruin has nothing to do with duty, except as it may incapacitate me, as a matter of fact, from carrying it out. No failure alters the character of responsibility, though the Lord may in mercy say, He will be satisfied, if we will

but act up to what we have got. But no direction of Scripture becomes invalid by reason of the state of ruin. The directions touching “tongues” are applicable as much as ever, only we cannot apply them.

As for “putting out,” if there is “yourselves,” you can “put out from among yourselves.”

The moment it is a matter of obedience which can be done, then it must be done. The commandment has not lost its authority.

It was the grand question with the Irvingites; they held that power must come in before obedience. And they said further, that evil must be left alone until the Lord comes back again. I say, no, I must obey always.

We have Christ, then, judging in the midst of the professing church. It may be as well to see a little what the “angels” are. Though the epistles were written to the angels, we have the certainty that the Spirit is speaking to the churches, so that the angel is the vessel of communication.

We find in the body of the epistles, “the rest in Thyatira,” “cast some of you,” giving the certainty that the assemblies as such are addressed, and I have no doubt that the angel stands as the mystic representative of the church. It might have been one man or half a dozen godly men found amongst them.

The epistles are addressed to those in responsibility among them, whoever they might be. Of course, all are really responsible, and if they failed in it, the candlestick, not the angel, would be taken out of its place; this makes it clear that the church is responsible. In those days it might have been an official elder, but if

so, we have the strongest proof that it was not in that way he was the angel, or he would have been called “elder.”

Ques. Why is the symbol of “stars” used here?

They carry the thought of subordinate authority. People get floundering about from not taking the abstract meaning of symbols; they take the symbol of a white horse, and say it must be Christ, but it is no such thing; or they think the sun must be Christ, but further on in the book we find the sun is scorching people. Christ holds these stars, i.e., these authorities, in His right hand, the hand of power.

Sometimes I have thought the “angels” might have come to John in Patmos as messengers, and that John took them up as a kind of representatives of the churches.

In the first three churches are found the characteristics of Christ that John had already seen. In these, too, the responsibility of the church is viewed in connection with its original position, but not afterwards. When we come to Thyatira, this original position had been already lost.

There are two grounds of judgment: (1) the not maintaining what God had set up at the first, and (2) unfaithfulness as to the hope of meeting the Lord at the end.

The first fault specified is, “Thou hast left thy first love,” and so on, in the first three churches. Christ is walking in the midst, and various things are referred to accordingly. Afterwards, none of His original characters is found; but He is still holding His place in the church, and He does not give up His authority. Popery pretends to His place now.

Ques. Why is the title of “Son of God” found in Thyatira?

Because Thyatira has been totally unfaithful, and He is going to cut it off. And so, too, the kingdom is here substituted for the church, the question of “power over the nations “being introduced. That which marks Popery is “Jezebel.” Idolatry had been taught before this, but it has now become the state of the church.

Ques. Is not Sardis the result of the operation of the Spirit of God at the Reformation?

Well, yes; when man departs from what God has given, this latter then becomes just what man makes out of it; we never find God judging His own work. Sardis had a name to live, and was dead; that was not the operation of God. First love was God’s work, but they had left that, and then formality came in. In the Thessalonians, we find three things, the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope; work, patience, and labour followed faith, hope, and love. Here, however, though everything was going on outwardly, the spring of power had been lost. Much there was that was excellent, but there was the beginning of decay. The Lord might work, and did work, but still, if the church did not return to its first love, God would cut it off. The church is therefore put upon the responsibility of reformation.

Very solemn this! Man in responsibility ought to answer to what God has given him in a certain way. What a failure it is!

In Ephesus, we have the general character of Christ; the two things which constitute this being the seven stars, i.e., authority in His right hand, and His walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks.

The promise to the overcomer is that he should eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. The first Adam-place being lost, he gets the second Adam-place. The church, however corrupt, never loses its responsibility, therefore these are held to be candlesticks still. Rome will be judged as a church, even though it is what it is. Though so much commendation is found here, yet the candlestick is to go.

Ques. Was the Reformation, then, a restoration?

No. There was the setting up of individual salvation and of the authority of the word of God, but the true height of the church was lost. It was corrupted before, and it was lost then, but the Reformation did recover individual salvation and justification by faith, truths which had been totally set aside. In Sardis, there were the things that remained, and there are even now the things that "remain."

Ques. Will Rome absorb the different denominations after the true church has been taken up?

I do not know that it will do so.

Ques. How do you regard the woman riding the beast?

Well, the beast is not everything; the woman—Rome—may govern the kings of the Roman empire, that is all.

Ques. Would you say that Babylon is confined to Rome?

She has her daughters; strictly speaking, it is Rome, she is mother of them all.

Ques. Is there not an effort now to unite the three great professing churches?

Yes, but that does not say they will succeed. Rome still sits as a queen, and her power is growing. You may level

up or level down, she will have her way in either case. True, the Lord is allowing infidelity to arise, and this, in measure, is a check to Rome's power. Protestantism has ceased to be a power, and so now it is infidelity that exercises any check, for if we had Romanism unchecked, we should not be allowed to sit here. The Bible has wrought all around us, just where God meant it to work.

As for Italy, since the Austrians have been driven out, the Bible is less cared for than it was before. Before this event took place, it was reckoned that there were some fifteen thousand people earnestly reading the Bible, though I do not say these were all converted; but now they have got their way, they do not trouble themselves at all about it. There is not half the interest in the Scriptures that there was when Italy was oppressed. We commonly find more faithfulness where there is persecution.

In Ephesus, the "deeds of the Nicolaitanes" are spoken of, i.e., departure from moral integrity.

Ques. Who were they?

Those who professed a doctrine that allowed them to do wrong—Antinomians—but here, it is their deeds. "Nicolaitanes" is their historical name.

Notice, too, that the overcomer comes after the calling to hear, i.e., the church is addressed before the individual is warned to overcome; but after Thyatira, the overcomer is first separated out from the church, and then comes, "he that hath an ear, let him hear."

Reading 2

In each of the seven churches, the character attached to Christ has reference to the condition of the church, as

shewn in its being warned, or else by threat of judgment, or by promise.

In Smyrna, some would be put to death, so Christ is there presented as, “The first, and the last, which was dead, and is alive.”

In the first chapter, the characters of Christ are very instructive. Let us look a little at them.

“As a flame of fire,” is, the piercingness of divine judgment. “The voice of many waters,” denotes majesty. “His feet like unto fine brass,” implies firmness of judgment as regards responsibility. The Son of man is the Ancient of days. In Daniel 7, He is brought to the Ancient of days, but directly after, it is the Ancient of days who comes. Righteousness is about His loins. “Eyes… as a flame of fire” are connected with judgment, as fire ever is. All this shews us who and what He is.

Then, “out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword,” i.e., the word in judgment. “And he had in his right hand seven stars “—subordinate authority. “His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength” —supreme sovereign authority and glory.

“Fear not; I am the first and the last,” that is divine.

“I am he that liveth and was dead,” that is human.

“I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [hades] and of death.” He holds now that power in His hand.

He brings to bear upon the church these attributes of divine and human glory, for He is dealing with the state of the saints.

In living a life of sight, it is wonderful how little is seen of reality. I have been often struck in reading the histories of the gospels with facts apparently underneath, “There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed “or enrolled. It was the first census ever made, a most important thing, for it was the empire bringing men under a power never known before; through it, the whole political world was set in commotion, and all was overruled to bring Christ to Bethlehem. Again, when the thief had his legs broken, that sabbath day was a high day; and they broke his legs so as not to have a dead person on the cross that day. Little did they think they were sending him off to heaven! But they wanted simply to get rid of anything that might interfere with their ceremonial.

What is most important is that which lies behind and is unseen. The Lord “withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.” We see this again in Job. The Chaldeans were going to have a razzia, but it was all taking place under God, through the devil’s hands; and it has served for instruction to the saints ever since.

When we come to details, there is, I think, a double judgment of God indicated. We find, first, the judgment of God as to responsibility where we are, and then, the judgment of God as to what can approach Him where He is, and as He is. Both are His judgments, but it is just the difference between the brass and the gold. The brazen altar was judgment as regards the responsibility of man where he was; he had to bring a sin-offering, and meet God according to his responsibility and failure in it. But the cherubim on the mercy-seat were all of gold, and that was approaching God according to what He

was in Himself. “His feet like unto fine brass,” that is the firmness of His judgment as regards human responsibility. Just as the sinner comes to the brazen altar where the question of his previous responsibility is met, but he is not really clear and settled in his soul until he has passed right within the vail. We cannot have the full value of righteousness unless we have to do with the gold, that is to say, unless we can walk in the light as God is in the light. I cannot now have merely my responsibility as a man met, I must go further than this.

Well, the Lord takes a gracious character in Smyrna, because there was a process of tribulation going on. He is “the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive”; therefore, though some of them might be put to death, He was both before it all, and after it all; and He Himself had died and was alive again, so that the whole thing was met. The tribulation was needed, allowed, and sent; but He was above it all, for having gone through this, He could be with them in it. There would not have been such chastening if it had not been needed, though no fault was found with them.

Stephen was taken away because of a declined state of the Church, though it is, of course, a privilege to suffer with and for Christ. When the Church does decline, persecution becomes an instrument in God’s hand, and it overtakes others who may not be the prominent defaulters. “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.” How remarkable the Lord saying, “The devil shall cast some of you into prison”! And what then? You must be faithful unto death.

Ques. What is meant by saying “they are Jews”?

They are the concision, not the circumcision. They were the pretended successional religion, and this God did not want.

Ques. Not really Jews?

Oh! they may have been Jews, but Christ does not own them. The object is to shew up successional religion in contrast with spirituality.

Ques. What were the means employed by Satan?

At Philippi, it was the ruling power, or the jailer would not have put them into prison; it may have been that popular violence demanded it. Those called Jews here, are not assumed to be inside.

Ques. Do the “ten days” mean ten years?

No; still, I should think it was a specific time; the devil could do no more than the Lord allowed him; it is like saying, ‘I have measured how long it shall last.’ And the promise here, “he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death,” meets this state of things, as it always does in each particular temptation of the Church. Take the case of Ephesus, with its promise, general to all really; and then the last church, where to those who hold good and do not fail the promise is, that they shall sit with Him upon His throne; so every Christian will be on His throne.

Ques. Are we to understand that every saved person is an overcomer?

I suppose so, “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” There may be specified things to overcome. But few only are overcomers in the separation here indicated.

Ques. What we have been going through in Timothy would shew the place of the true overcomer, would it not?

Yes, as to the present day. Remember, the devil is still here, until the Lord takes to Himself His great power and reigns. It is all right, though it is not all explicable.

In Pergamos, we find seduction coming in. The sharp sword with two edges is the word applied to judge; and He warns them that He will come to execute it, if they do not take care. “I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is”; that is to say, the professing church is in the world. “And thou holdest fast my name,” etc.; but even so, there are, “them that hold the doctrine of Balaam.”

Satan’s seat was there; he had been a roaring lion, but now, as a serpent, Satan was trying to mix up the Church with the world. And this is spiritual fornication.

Holding, too, the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes; that proves the state was bad. Previous to this, it was a question of the “deeds,” now it is of the “doctrine.” We have here superstition, idolatry, and fornication; Satan was seeking to seduce the saints of God. But in Thyatira, Jezebel is the mother of corruptions, and thenceforth there is no hope.

Ques. What would answer to Balaam now?

Drawing the saints of God into the world, and corrupting them, and teaching error for reward. See Jude as to this.

Balaam was an extraordinary character; he had the revelation of the name Jehovah, and he was connected with Satan’s power. He says, “I could not go beyond the commandment of Jehovah, my God,” and yet he sought

for enchantments. See Numbers 23:4, 16; chap. 24:1. Balaam was using the name and authority of Jehovah, and taking the guidance of the devil. And this is what the professing church is doing. When Balaam cannot curse Israel, he tempts them to fornication; and then he gets them to worship Baal. The whole of it is Satan's power in Popery. When one gets into Papal countries, one finds plenty of winking Madonnas, and such things, which it is impossible to account for.

Not that the full corruption was there as yet, but it was coming in as plain as could be in many ways. Later on, heathen practices were Christianised, the tombs of the martyrs took the place of that of Hercules. They used holy water at the idols' temples; the practice was then transferred, and the Christians sprinkled themselves. It is a curious thing that as soon as the council at Ephesus decided that Mary was the mother of God, the heathens came in en masse. In Switzerland alone, seven great temples became Christian at once. The great body of worshippers came in; instead of having the mother of the gods, it was the mother of God, that was all. Nobody denies it. When they came over to convert England, directed by Pope Gregory to do so, they were not to pull down the temples, but only to change their use, and to change also their feasts in the same way. This was in the seventh century. It was all done deliberately and systematically. And then they worked miracles at these places. If one goes into a church dedicated to Mary, one will find a holy well, and a bush covered with bits of rag —votive offerings—just as it used to be to Esculapius. A great deal of it is ignorance, but Satan is in it.

Ques. Satan?

Do you think that if I go to the mother of God and worship her, it is not of Satan? I do not believe that mesmerism is all imposture. Nor do I limit spiritual fornication to Popery; the religious world is in it in measure.

In chapter 17, the woman has a golden cup with which people get intoxicated. Ritualism is this, in principle, but without the Pope.

Ques. Do you expect miraculous power to be largely put forth?

On the devil's side, I do, especially after the church is gone; there will be "signs and lying wonders."

The same words are used in 2 Thessalonians 2:9 as to antichrist as are used by Peter in Acts 2:22, to shew that Jesus was a man approved of God; these three words are: "miracles and wonders and signs." Another thing that makes it the more striking is, that what Elijah did to prove Jehovah was God of Israel, is done also in Revelation 13, where antichrist, the second beast, makes fire come down out of heaven. Satan will do the same, in a lying way, of course. Mesmerism is more connected with infidelity.

When Satan is cast down from heaven, he gives up his anti-priestly character, and then there is only left to him to be anti-king and anti-prophet. This second beast merges then into the false prophet. And he has two horns like a lamb.

Ques. Why do you call Satan anti-priest?

This is his character as the accuser of the brethren.

When cast out, he resuscitates the first beast.

There are two almighty powers of God—justice and mercy. Of these two, the Romanists put justice into Christ's hands, and mercy into Mary's. (See Liguori's "Glories of Mary.") I believe it is this which stopped Pusey; he says he cannot get over this, and I believe it is because he loves Christ that he cannot. The whole Romanist theory is, that Mary is the mediator of mercy.

Ques. What is the "hidden manna"?

I suppose Christ. In Canaan they were to preserve a pot of manna, but it was not in the ark when this was put in the temple. The discipline that prepared people for the wilderness was not wanted there. If I have the consciousness of Christ's approbation, I have in a sense the white stone now. There is something specific in the personal approbation, besides the name not known to others. I shall get hidden manna in heaven, but not on earth. The Israelites were to keep a pot of manna, that they might afterwards know what they had been fed upon in the wilderness. We find something distinctive here, which is lost in Thyatira; there, the nominal church has become the birthplace of corruption; it is open wickedness, not merely seduction, and therefore "overcoming" now is put before the promise, not after it; the promise thus separating off the overcomer. God has given her space to repent, and she has not repented, and from that time onwards there has been no return. The character that Christ takes here is not ecclesiastical at all. He is Son of God over God's house, no matter what Jezebel is doing. "These things saith the Son of God." The moment I come to Rome, properly speaking, I find that the ground of separation from her is connected with Christ's Person, rather than with the place in which He holds this character. His eyes are still as a flame of

fire. And here we have the overcomer, the kingdom, and the heavenly hope. Indeed, in the promise, the whole millennial state is substituted for the professing church, and with this is the instruction to “hold fast till I come.”

The woman Jezebel was an idolatry within. The only way of overcoming is by separation. This epistle takes us to the close of the Church’s history, and to the coming of the Lord. Popery goes on to the end, while in Thyatira, we have the promise of heavenly blessing.

Ques. What of the Greek church?

There can be no doubt, I think, that the seven churches present a rapid but most perspicuous sketch of the course of Western Christendom. I do not believe the Greek church enters into the account. It does not come before God’s mind here at all. Still, it may be part of great Christendom, and it is, practically, the same as Thyatira, but as a secondary thing.10 Ques. Does it appear that the saints then derived any comfort from these exhortations as understanding them?

I do not know but that they might have done so.

Ques. What is the meaning of verse 24?

As to “the depths of Satan,” it was actual at the time. He is seeking to make them judge the flesh, and He would allow no burden to be put upon them other than that of being faithful to what they were. If we look at Popery as going down to the end, it would be a word for us to-day. We have its character now.

The time to repent has been given, and the Church, therefore, will never recover from Popery, which remains until the Lord comes in judgment. Not long since the Pope said to the Ritualists, ‘Gentlemen, you

are like the bells of the churches; you call the people in, but you never come in yourselves.'

Ques. Is "till I come," the rapture?

I suppose so; only He is looking at it more as a general thing. Thyatira has not repented, and therefore the second principle comes in, and that is judgment.

Ques. What is the meaning of "that which ye have"?

That is the truth. It is evident that the kingdom, the ruling with a rod of iron, and the morning star are regarded by Christ as that for which they were waiting, the kingdom taking thus the place of the church.

Peter says, you have a lamp, and you do well to take heed to its light, until the day dawn and the morning star arise in your hearts. Prophecy treated of the government of the world, and how it would end, and they would do well to take heed to judgments, until they had a better motive, and that was Christ's coming; the prophecies remaining good, all the same. It is all very well to look at prophecy, but the morning star in the heart is a better thing for us before the kingdom comes. But besides substituting the kingdom for the church, we get heavenly things. In Psalm 2, the Son of God is looked at as born into the world; but Christ is seen here, over God's house, and this is a great deal more, for He is lifted thus above a mere official place.

In the three previous churches, Christ had been seen in connection with the saints, but here He is seen above the church, and with eyes of fire; He holds the character in which He judges the church. I do not think there is any real difference between the morning star in this passage and in chapter 22. The truth here is specially

applicable to the dark ages, though Popery still continues.

Now we come to Protestantism. What is said to the churches applies at all times: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

Except for the fact that Christ has the seven stars, we have nothing now of His original characters, as given in chapter 1. The authority of Christ is maintained as regards Protestantism.

Ques. Does that refer particularly to ministry?

No, not as far as I see; it refers more to the responsibility of those who stand before Christ. The seven spirits of God are the same as in chapters 4 and 5, and they have eyes always. In Zechariah 3, we have the seven eyes upon one stone; it is one stone laid there because the Lord is in Jerusalem when the millennium begins.

The seven eyes give us the variously characterised action of the Spirit in the government of the world. All the characters are millennial, not ecclesiastical, and they are connected with Christ’s coming.

We need to have a real faith in Christ as He is revealed in Scripture.

What is so solemn in Sardis is, that they are going to be treated like the world, not exactly with awful judgments like Thyatira, but just as we read in 1 Thessalonians 5, “That day “will overtake the world as a thief. So Christ will come on them as a thief, and treat them as the world. There is in Sardis the form without the power, though not the corruption that is found in Thyatira.

Ques. Are the few in Sardis looked at as walking in separation?

Nothing is looked at here as in separation, for Christ is judging the state of the church, and this has nothing to do with the individual merely as such. Nor in that which is punishment to the church from Christ's hand, is there any direction as to what / am to do. I have no individual direction in the seven churches, except to listen. I may, of course, draw consequences.

The thing people so frequently insist on, is to be allowed to go on with evil, and I have sometimes said, Well, then, go on with Laodicea, and be spued out of His mouth. I believe that what chiefly characterises Ritualism, is the effort to go back to Thyatira.

"I have not found thy works perfect before God"; this is a striking expression, for it shews that God never goes back from His full and original claim. His claim never falls below what He has put a person into.

Ques. Is the "book of life" the same here as elsewhere?

Everywhere it is one and the same book of life, and therefore it is supposed here that they have life, but if God has written the name in it before the foundation of the world, it will not be blotted out.

It is a most remarkable thing that nobody is ever ashamed of a false religion, while even the truest Christian is in danger of being ashamed of his.

When we come to Philadelphia, the character of Christ is that of the holy and the true, but there is nothing here of the characteristics of Christ as seen in the first chapter. It is altogether outside of what is ecclesiastical.

Ques. Why is the key of David brought in here?

It all refers to the Lord's coming; but in Laodicea, He takes the whole character of substitute for the church; that is to say, the witness is gone, and He presents Himself as the witness instead of the church. It is Christ Himself at the end of the dispensation. So He opens, and no man shuts. One cannot have truth in the inward parts without the truth of God.

Ques. Is Philadelphia, then, the revival of evangelical truth?

It is more. Protestantism was that, but it has dropped down into the mere abstract notion of private judgment; and, as opposed to-this, the Catholics have been clever enough to put up church authority, but neither of these is to be found in the word of God. A man has no right of private judgment. If God has spoken, I have no right of judgment; I have nothing to do with private judgment, but to sit at Christ's feet like Mary, and to obey. There is no threat here; it is simply, "Behold, I come quickly."

In these three churches we have the Lord's coming.

Ques. Are there not saints now with a little strength, like Philadelphia, and who are walking outside the established order of things?

Well, that is true, but I have nothing here of established order.

Wherever is found pretension to traditional religion in contrast with the word of God, there is the synagogue of Satan. The point here, is not so much what is inside or outside, but Christ personally as revealed in the word, and, further, that not having much strength, we are holding His word, and not denying His Name.

When He takes the key of David, He will have authority over everything. In Shebna, we have, typically, the setting aside of antichrist; and in Hilkiah, the key of David given to Christ. And when He comes, all the human security of the antichristian power will be put down.

10 See “Letters of J.N.D.”, Vol. 3, pages 3-1.

Readings on Numbers

Reading 1

Passing by the numbering of the people and the redemption of the firstborn, we might begin with the laws and appointments of chapter 5; they were to keep the camp holy—put out the leper, and so on— "that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell." God's dwelling with them was on the ground of redemption, and He never dwelt with man until redemption was accomplished; but now the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. God had never dwelt with Abraham, but as soon as redemption was accomplished, He said, "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God," Exod. 29:45.

Ques. Was not God in the pillar of cloud before the tabernacle was set up?

Yes, but this was after redemption. And it is the same now, only that it is the Holy Ghost indwelling us, the habitation of God through the Spirit which God still insists shall be kept holy. He met Moses between the cherubim; but here it is, "I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory." And the different ordinances and sacrifices offered were founded upon the truth that God was there. An immense thing this was, but now it is a fact by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

Ques. In chapter 7:89, Moses "heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat that was upon the ark of testimony"?

Ques. But Moses went within the vail?

Yes, but he took off his own vail from his face when he went in. Aaron was only forbidden to enter after his sons had offered strange fire, otherwise he would I suppose, have gone in too. “The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest”; but now we have “boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” And we have a high Priest, and we draw near. Great principles there are connected with this that we have to weigh. We are now told to go outside the camp; literally, this was then Jerusalem, but we have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. That was all suited to man on earth and as such was ordered by God, but it was the figure of the heavenly thing. God knew the moment when He was going to execute judgment upon the whole system, and so He tells these Hebrews to go outside the camp. They proposed to have the altar, but rejected the Christians, the sect of the Nazarenes. So it is written for us; we have the true altar now, for Christ rejected suffered outside; the altar is therefore there, and we must go forth to Him.

Ques. Has Moses’ action in Exodus 33 any bearing on this?

I have no doubt it has. Only his action took place before the tabernacle was set up. He took his tent and pitched it afar off, outside the camp. That was something special to Moses, as it says, “With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold,” Num. 12. That was when the cloudy pillar descended, and God talked with Moses outside the camp. There, too, we find Joshua again. Joshua departed not out of the tabernacle of the congregation; Moses also kept there, saving when

he went into the camp to carry God's messages. As yet, the tabernacle had not been made, but when Moses gets outside the camp, he gives to the tent this name.

Ques. Was it Moses' own tent?

Yes, I suppose so, or a tent. Coming down from the mountain with directions for the tabernacle, he found the golden calf there and he smashed the tables of the law; then he went up and obtained mercy for the people. But he also took the tent and pitched it outside the camp.

Ques. Why were sacrifices burnt outside the camp?

In two cases this was so, they were treated as an unclean thing; but the fat of these was burnt upon the brazen altar. It was an additional element in the sacrifice.

When they had made the camp unclean with their idolatry, Moses could not take the law of God down to that state of things; he could not put such a law alongside the calf, and, as he did not know what to do, he smashed the tables beneath the mount, so that as a written law it never reached man at all. Then Moses goes up and obtains the mercy of God. Christ went outside Jerusalem, though it was the holy city.

Ques. Till Christ was rejected, was the camp still recognised?

Certainly, but it was passing away, judgment was coming upon it, and so he tells them to go out of it. In John 1, Christ, the real temple, is seen as rejected, yet until He was actually rejected in full, He calls the temple His Father's house.

Ques. Then the sin-offering burnt outside was in separation?

Not exactly; when it was for the whole congregation or for the priest, then the blood was brought into the holiest, and the animal was burnt outside as unclean.

Ques. What, in Christendom, answers now to the camp?

Wherever I find the world united to the Church or to religion, that is the camp. Persons who have brought in false doctrine are the vessels to dishonour, and we have books called “The Christian World,” and so on, but one cannot take it all in in a lump. In Jeremiah 15, we have the separating the precious from the vile. There we see Jeremiah in constant exercise of heart before God and man; in verse 15, he calls for vengeance, saying, “Revenge me of my persecutors, … for thy sake I have suffered rebuke.” But then he adds, “Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart,” whilst in verse 17 he does not rejoice, but is filled with indignation. He is representing Jerusalem before God, and God says to him, “If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.” The first returning is in the way of testimony, then, if Jerusalem comes back, you will have the blessing. You must not, however, fight the evil—“return not thou unto them” —but let them return unto thee. “And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord.” There is the principle for us. God’s word, with all the blessed things that are in it, becomes

the joy and rejoicing of the heart. We must take God's word, and separate the precious from the vile, and then we become as God's mouth.

Ques. What is the reproach in Hebrews 13:13?

Christ's reproach, that He is an outcast, a rejected Lord. Hanged as a malefactor, He was in the fullest reproach, and in more than reproach; and we go there to Him. It is easy to condemn those who do so and then say, God will never leave His people, despite the evil—I believe all that, too—but if we are to be as His mouth, we must in practice separate the precious from the vile.

Ques. And gather the good into vessels?

That is the same thing. And if we are to be as His mouth, we shall have to be "a fenced brasen wall."

Ques. What is being God's mouth?

All Jeremiah's words, as a prophet, were absolutely God's words; that is being as God's mouth.

Ques. What is the "fenced brasen wall?"

A strong thing that cannot be broken.

Ques. The "taking forth the precious from the vile" is practically separating between them?

Yes. It is easier to speak about evil. The Edomites could say, 'Down with it' because it was God's city; and on the other hand, priests were saying, "The temple of the Lord, are these." The professing church takes the one side, even Papists own the Holy Ghost and that Christ died for sinners; but Edomites, i.e., infidels, seek to pull down everything. In view of all that, I could not sit with the mockers, and rejoice; that would not do. Papists hold more truth than most Protestants, yet I cannot go with

them; I cannot walk with either. Other things there are, too; take, say, the Establishment, with the world and the Church mixed up all together, a great system with a profession to be one body, which the world recognises, and which takes in unconverted people avowedly; there I do not find separation of the precious from the vile; but dross, if it is dross, I reject as such. I have to make the difference and lay hold of whatever is precious, and this I accept and own. I have no doubt we are in the last days, and our business is with the precious. But then we have that which is of great moment: “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name.” The word of God becomes that which is eaten and digested into the soul, and which gives me the consciousness so far of what is precious and of what is vile. If we turn to 2 Timothy 3, we shall find the same thing. There it is not crying tfut against the evil. We are now in these last days, and verses 2-5 are true all around us; so the instruction given to us is, “From such turn away.” Paul then speaks of the mischief they do, and he tells us that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” He further appeals to Timothy to continue in the things he has learned and has been assured of, knowing from whom he had learned them (we now have them from Paul, or Peter, or from God); and adds, that from a child he had known the holy Scriptures which were given by inspiration of God, and were profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God might be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. That is to say, that when the state of the church in a general sense has

become thus, having the form of godliness but denying the power of it, I am to turn away from it. And what am I to turn to? Why, says the apostle, you have the Scriptures, God's word! Thus it was with Jeremiah; he was testifying against Jerusalem, and he found the words of God. And again, in Philadelphia, I find that which Christ approves, "Thou… hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Holiness and truth are what God will always own, but all over the country people are now turning infidel. Only to-day I have received a letter from America, where things are ten times worse than they were a very short time back. It is from Boston where things are growing to such a pitch that a prominent minister there, speaking from the pulpit, gave up as uninspired all the word of God, save the four gospels. He said, too, that when a man dies, he does not know what becomes of him; it is like a man going down the street and turning round the corner out of sight. Ward Beecher gave out that he does not believe in eternal punishment, and all over that country they are discussing whether there is a hell or not.

Ques. It is the rapid progress of all this that is so extraordinary?

It is indeed. Take the case of men of science discussing creation, calling it evolution, of protoplasms or anything else; it is all alike unbelief. The younger ministers of this country are pretty much the same. And it is no good not looking at the evil in the face. The Free Church of Scotland has gone from its ground, and is, practically, an infidel body, though there are individual exceptions still to be found in it. A short time since, a deacon of an Independent Church asked, in view of all this, 'What are we to do?' and he was told that he had better hold his

tongue; others felt the same, only they were not bold enough to say so. Another has said, 'When it says, "Thus saith the Lord," I say nothing about that, but die rest in Scripture is only a credible History.' But I ask, have you a credible history of the creation, written by the morning stars, or someone to tell us about it, or have you a credible history of the flood? Oh, say they, the gospels differ; but if any man has a spiritual understanding, he sees that in the different gospels God is giving in each one of them the moral bearing of a certain view of Christ. Men only see in them Matthew, Mark, or Luke, but they never see a trace of God. Of course, Matthew is a credible historian, but they leave God out. Look at 1 Corinthians 2 and you will see the absurdity of it all; suppose you take up heavenly things, well, what are they? Nobody has been there to tell me; "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" But God has revealed these things unto us by His Spirit. And we have received, not the spirit which is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God. The things themselves have been received by the Spirit's own revelation of them. They are communicated to us by words taught of the Spirit, and then they are received in our minds by the power of the Holy Ghost. Yet people say Paul's statements are revelations from God, but that Paul only gave them to us the best way he could! 'It is no such thing,' says Paul, 'I give you what I have received, a revelation, and that in words which I have been taught for the purpose.' And the next thing is, those who hear these words from the Spirit, by Paul, do not understand one atom about them except by the Spirit.

Ques. Does, the “words… which the Holy Ghost teacheth,” apply to all Scripture?

Of course it does.

Ques. How far do you admit the human element?

Fully, in every possible way. I admit the human in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is the beauty and blessedness of Him.

Ques. But was there anything not divine in Him as Man?

Nothing.

Ques. What are the “things” to which Paul refers?

The things which God had ordained before the world unto our glory. The Holy Ghost has come down, putting Himself in human circumstances, and saying, these things were ordained for our glory, and it is, “us,” “us,” “us,” all through. In the Old Testament it was not so, when they searched it; there is that difference in character between the Old Testament and the New. And very wonderful it is, that the Holy Ghost has taken His place in the midst of the saints, to unfold to them what He has caused to be written, and I bless God for it.

Ques. Can you explain how Paul got these words?

No, I cannot, and what is more, if I could, I do not think I could make you understand it. But the word is the “lively oracles.”

Ques. Is the “unto us,” confined to the apostles?

Yes. People say that they believe in inspiration, and that Shakespeare was inspired. But did he get a revelation? You cannot receive things from heaven unless they are revealed. Every Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

But others say that we must go back to the beginning and see what the Fathers say; but are the Fathers the beginning? I own I must have what is from the beginning; this is what I want, but I cannot be content with anything lower down.

Ques. Does the passage in 2 Timothy 3:16 refer to a known body of writers?

No, it is “every scripture,” that is to say, everything that comes under that title. We find the devil speaking, and that, of course, is not inspired, but the writer who gave it was inspired to give it.

Ques. The only question that remains is, how are we to know what is inspired?

“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” I was brought up to know the Scriptures, and I am very thankful that it was so.

Ques. And is there now nothing further to be revealed?

No; we have to try whatever comes by this word. If people do not believe, it is because they are not of My sheep.

Ques. What of the apocryphal gospels?

Only read them, and then pretend that a man is brought into any difficulty by them! I put it on you to read them, and ask any company of intelligent people about them.

Ques. Is it not remarkable that they should have passed current at the time?

Well, no, for the professing church never had the truth of God; one cannot even find justification by faith in any

of the old Fathers, so Milner says. There was no teaching among them of Christ's work, as in Romans, Hebrews, and so on. And their morality was just as bad. I hardly think I have ever found in the Fathers the right sense of a single passage of Scripture. Remember, too, that human education is not faith and will never give faith. What is needed to have real faith is the Spirit of God opening the eyes and turning people from the power of Satan unto God. One may present the truth, but if God does not change the will, it produces anger. Man's mind is always atheist when it is sifted out. So where the mind is working for itself, it is necessarily atheistical, for my mind cannot go beyond my mind, or else it is not my mind; but if God cannot go beyond my mind, then it is not God. The Lord brought this out in John 4. The woman did not understand a single word about the water, and she says, "Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." But when Jesus says, "Go, call thy husband," etc., she replies, "Sir, I perceive that thou are a prophet." She did not say that He had told her rightly, but the word of God carried with it the authority of God in her soul. So when the word of God reaches the conscience, it puts me in my place, and it also puts God in His right place towards me. Ques. Why is the conscience never infidel? It cannot be, because it knows right and wrong and refers to God. When man lost God as he did in the garden, then he got a conscience. The mass of infidelity is hypocrisy; if you go and tell a man all that he ever did, he will not stand it.

Ques. How do you account for the traces of another hand in the Pentateuch? Another hand! I do not care if there are fifty hands.

Ques. How were all the books put together into one book? It is said Ezra did it, and that the grand synagogue did it, but that on the face of it is merely an addition. Recollect that we have the Lord, and the aposdes, too, sanctioning all that they had, as it was, and all that we now have. I remember a man—a nice man, too—who had declared against inspiration; speaking of the New Testament, he said that while he refused to take that up, yet he owned that an honest man cannot deny that the apostles quoted the Old Testament, but then they were all wrong together. Well then, I said, it is a question whether the apostles knew better what Christianity is, or you. Christ says, Moses wrote of Me, and you say no. And again, the more they attempt, as they are doing in some quarters, to decry the apostles as mere fishermen of Gahlee, the more they elevate the word. I think God allowed the earliest Fathers to drop down morally (and perhaps at once), and also not to know the difference between the apostles themselves and those who were next to them. Ques. What of the Apocrypha?

This does not profess to be by the Holy Ghost, but only to be according to the writer's capacity.

Ques. Do you confine 1 Corinthians 2:12 to the apostles?

That is the revelation. But now I receive the Spirit, and so now I realise these things by the Spirit; this is the way of their communication. The other point, in verse 14, is also true, viz., that it is by the Spirit we apprehend them. If a person were to come and tell me that something heavenly had been revealed to him by the Spirit, I should not believe him, but I should ask where is it in Scripture?

In Numbers 5, we have the Spirit's jealousy to test whether or no there was any evil there. Then follows in chapter 6 the question of Nazariteship, i.e., entire separation to God. God must have the camp holy, and if any question affecting this was raised, there was the way of detecting it.

Ques. Does not chapter 6 show what Israel ought to have been as a Nazarite to God?

Yes, and it gives also the blessing at the end. Christ alone was the true Nazarite, but that ought to be true of all of us in one sense.

Ques. In chapter 8, verses 2 and 3, there is a remarkable expression, "over against"?

Ques. You once said you thought it meant, to light up the face of the candlestick, to illuminate it?

Very likely it does.

Ques. Were the lamps burning night and day?

By night, as may be seen from Exodus 30:7, 8.

Then, next, the Levites were given to the priests. And those who kept the Passover had to be circumcised. And the cloud was upon the tabernacle by day, and there was to be no starting to journey unless the cloud removed; i.e., divine guidance.

In chapter 10, we have the order of march for the whole camp; but at the close of the chapter the ark removes from that order and goes first; that is, the Lord steps out of His place to lead them. In Psalm 132, there is a similar change; in verse 5, David seeks a habitation for God; in verse 13, God answers by choosing Zion. In verse 8, David says, "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou,

and the ark of thy strength"; in verse 14, God answers, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it."

David | God

Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; And let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed. | I will also clothe her priests with salvation: And her saints shall shout aloud for joy. There will I make the horn of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

And in the Psalm, there are no more enemies left, they are all clothed with shame.

The answers surpass the prayers.

Ques. Is it only in a general way that this guidance of the cloud can be applied now?

But saints are guided as they wait on God. Remember, it was a pillar of a cloud, not a cloud and a pillar. Then the people complained and murmured, though God led them so.

Ques. But in chapter 10 we have the blowing of trumpets?

Yes, that was the testimony of God in the camp.

Ques. "If ye go to war … ye shall be remembered." It does not say they were to fight?

No, but blowing the trumpets is the testimony before God beforehand; it was a question of God being with them all through. We find the same thing in the Revelation where "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (chap. 12:11); the testimony was in their hands.

Then we have the sad history of the various forms of unbelief in their going through the wilderness. And in chapter 19, the red heifer, which is the only institution of a sacrifice in the book of Numbers, though others are offered. Infidels say this 19th chapter has got into its wrong place, but it would be of no use at all in Leviticus.

Ques. To what does 1 Corinthians 10:10 refer?

To Numbers 11:1, but not to verse 33. Wonderful man that Moses was, still he shews he was a man.

Ques. Why did they complain about the manna?

Christ there had lost His value, it was only dry food; they wanted something of the world, something Egyptian.

Ques. All the food of Egypt was on the ground or under its surface, but the food of Canaan is up in the air, grapes, figs, pomegranates, etc., in the first heavens?

I see; the great thing is that they had the food, but whether the figure in that difference was meant, is another thing. Christ is the bread come down from heaven which we can have and enjoy. It is not the corn of the land here, but the supply for the wilderness.

Ques. What is the change of its colour and taste from Exodus?

Different descriptions of it, that is all.

Ques. Which was best, the “honey” or the “fresh oil”?

Are you tired of Christ, i.e., of nothing but Christ?

Ques. But they could not get anything else in the wilderness?

Not unless, as Moses says, they killed all the cattle; they could get nothing from the ground. And Moses got tested, too. The burden of this wilful, wayward people through the wilderness was an immense one for Moses, and he loses, though God does not in form rebuke him.

In answer to his complaint (chap. 11:11-15), God tells him to bring seventy of the elders, and He adds, “I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.” Moses loses something of the importance of his place; God does not say, I will give them of My Spirit, but, “I will take of the spirit that is upon thee, and will put it upon them,” which really was a strong rebuke.

Ques. But in the intercourse of Moses with God, do we not see the same nearness of communion as in Abraham?

Yes; he was a most blessed man, but even so he could not go into the land.

Ques. What was the dew upon which the manna fell a figure of?

I do not know. Up to Sinai, as we have seen, God had proved His divine glory by giving them all they wanted without a reproach, but here He visits them with His displeasure. And even Moses’ faith is feeble, and he asks whether they were to kill all the flocks and the herds? And yet beautiful grace is shewn in Moses when two of them did not come up, but abode in the camp. “Enviest thou for my sake?” he says; “Would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets!”

Ques. Why were the people so visited, when God gave them their wish?

They ought to have said, ‘The Lord could have given us quails in a minute, what fools we have been,’ but instead of that, they set upon the quails to devour them. There was no sign, that I see, of self-judgment, for they flew upon the quails instead of humbling themselves about their murmurings when they saw them.

Ques. What about the names here?

All the names have a meaning.

Ques. What of this Ethiopian woman whom Moses had married?

They were glad of an excuse to blame Moses; it took place, I suppose, at the time he was driven out of Egypt. It would most likely be a different woman from Zipporah, because she would be a Cushite, and not an Ethiopian.

Ques. Was it right on Moses’ part?

It might not have been very spiritual, but there was no law then.

Ques. What is the lesson to be learned from chapter 12?

There is this, I believe, to be learned in it: the professing church has set up to believe that it is that which God owns, and so it does not like Christ to be King when He comes again. They revolt against the Royalty of Christ, and want to set up the prophet and the priest which as a present thing we have.

Reading 2

We will just notice the general division of the book. First, there is the numbering and arranging of the people; then, beginning with chapter 5, the holiness of God, the Nazarite, and the Levite; next, the preparing of the camp to go on with God; whilst in chapter 19 there is provision for failure by the way.

Ques. Should every Israelite have been a Nazarite?

I do not say that; taken as a whole, they were to be a people for God. But we ought to be all Nazarites.

Ques. What is the difference between one who is a Nazarite from birth, and one who is such by vow?

A Nazarite from birth had a special calling, like Samson, in which, however, he failed, like others, whereas some have vows at will.

Ques. What is the vow?

The giving up of self to God. We have been bought at a price, and we are not our own; some may have a deeper sense of this, or they may have a special calling, as Paul, but still it is the case with every Christian. In the full unfailing sense of it, Christ was the only true Nazarite, and we have to walk as He walked; that is the great thing one has to look for among Christians.

Ques. What was the meaning for the Israelite of the vow being over?

He might drink wine then—the joy of this world. All the days of his separation he was not to drink any wine, i.e., mere human joy; nor might he touch a dead body, which was a sign of sin. If a man happened to die by him, all the past time was lost.

Ques. What was Paul's vow?

I do not know.

Ques. Can you always apply the actual circumstances of Israel to us?

The principle in them you can, but that is all. Paul did not let his hair grow and that is the opposite of a Nazarite. It was when the vow was over that the head was shorn.

Ques. Would a vow be at all in connection with their condition, but as under law, so that there was nothing permanent in it?

Not that I know of.

Ques. Is there not an amount of human power in making a vow?

Yes; so accordingly there is now no vow, but it is, "Swear not at all."

Ques. We often hear of persons making a vow?

Yes, but it is all wrong for a Christian.

Ques. But if he purposes in his heart?

Just so; but then it is, if the Lord will.

Ques. He might deny himself certain things for a purpose?

Yes, but I should not like to make a vow to do it. It is, if the Lord will, we will go into such a city, and buy and sell, and get gain.

Ques. Paul kept under his body?

Yes, but that was a constant thing, not a particular thing.

Ques. Did an Israelite ever accomplish it?

I do not know; some may have done so as a mere outward thing. Only do not confound the type with the thing typified.

Ques. But a man under law fails altogether?

Yes, when he finds the law is spiritual, though externally he may say, “All these things have I kept from my youth up.” But when the Lord talks to the young ruler about his money, he goes away sorrowful. It is separation in heart to God that answers to it now.

Ques. How do you explain Paul’s words, “Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless”?

That he was not a thief or murderer; but the moment the law came and said, “Thou shalt not lust,” it was all over with him. The duties were there, whether towards God or towards man, only the law did not deal with sin in the flesh.

Ques. Would he have brought the sacrifice proper for every transgression?

No; I suppose he never broke the law in an outward sense. So with the young man, the Lord did not tell him that he had not kept the law. But when Paul took the principle of it, “Thou shalt not covet,” i.e., not lust, it was all up with him because he was a man and did lust. To bring an offering would not be “blameless,” it would be meeting the blame.

Ques. But that did not meet the whole thing in the ten commandments?

I beg your pardon, it did meet the whole thing until he came to the inward thing.

Ques. Zacharias was spoken of in the same way?

Yes, and his wife Elizabeth, too. Remember, sacrifices only met the outward relationship of man with God for the time being.

Ques. Does Nazariteship specially refer to saints now, like the Lord says, “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom”?

Yes, that is its full character in its application to us, only we are a living sacrifice.

Ques. Do you see anything special in the priestly action introduced at the end of chapter 6?

If the sacrifice was offered to God, you must have a priest.

Ques. But I mean the last verses?

Well, that is the converse of it.

The Nazarite offered himself to God, and God put His name upon Israel, only it was as separated to God that He did so. God said, “And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.”

Ques. What did the apostle mean by “the Israel of God”?

It is in Galatians where they were bringing the saints under the law every way, but he so speaks of those whom he owned as consecrated to God.

J.B.S. I think I find the apostle refusing a great many thing besides on the ground of self-denial.

Explain then; what were they? He would not be a stumbling block to others.

J.B.S. I think a Nazarite is more self-denial.

But a Nazarite was consecrated to God.

J.B.S. But the greatest moral victory in a man walking here is self-denial. I do not mean any monkish spirit, but like as Paul says, “I keep under my body.”

But the Nazarite in Numbers had not an object as a Christian has?

J.B.S. But the object brings in self-denial.

Self is the principle of sin, for it is self that shuts out God. But I am not my own; if I am my own, I am going to hell. So self denial is the principle of godliness, only it is founded on the grace that has brought us out of ruin. Selfishness began with Eve. All the scene was just enjoying God’s mercies in her place, and then self came in. But now man is separated from God, he is his own god; Eve did not trust God to make her happy, but she set to work to try to make herself happy. There is only one power for us, and that is Christ, and now Christ is all to me.

Ques. What is the meaning of “Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy”?

Take it simply as it stands. I enjoyed my breakfast this morning, and I thanked God for it. A person may say he enjoys his food because he is hungry, that is eating like a pig eats; but if you thank God for it, it is another thing for then you enjoy it as given of God.

Ques. What is the connection of the next verse, “That they do good, that they be rich in good works”?

Well, he goes on to speak of other things, but it means that instead of trusting man, and self, and riches, I trust in the living God, from whom I receive everything; and it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer, instead of

being eaten in a merely natural way from want; it is enjoyed with God.

Ques. And it is enjoyed in poverty as well as in riches?

Yes, only there is less temptation in poverty than in riches.

Ques. Does, “He shall be called a Nazarene,” in Matthew 2:23, refer to where our Lord was brought up, or to His Nazariteship?

There are two words, “Nazarene” and “Nazarite.” Nazarene refers to where He was brought up; there is no connection between the two, only they are a little mixed up in the English.

Ques. Was His Nazariteship broken through being made sin for us?

So far as He was concerned, there never was a time when He was so separated to God as when He was made sin: “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life.” He was a Nazarite from life as well as from wine.

Ques. Did Jehovah put His name upon them there, on the ground of their separation to Himself?

Yes, in a way; that is to say, taking the Nazarite as Israel in a certain sense.

Ques. Is there any parallel between this and Deuteronomy 26, “I have not eaten thereof in my mourning”?

Yes, in principle there is. The Lord had separated the people like ourselves; God separates us to Himself, but having the new man and the Holy Ghost, I separate myself to Him. We see that in Romans 6. They had been

slaves and are now set free. That is God's work. And to whom, then, are you going to give yourselves? Is it to sin, or is it to God? It was the priest's rod, not Moses' rod, that was henceforth to carry them through. There is all the difference between "the" rod and "thy" rod.

Ques. Why the sacrifices at the end of the Nazarite's vow?

Without sacrifices Nazariteship would be nothing at all; there can be no blessing without the sacrifice of Christ, so they had to be added to this consecration. The consecration was acceptable in virtue of the value of that which the sacrifices represented; they both went together.

Ques. Is there anything to learn from the "basket" that held the bread?

In Deuteronomy 26, we find the basket of the first-fruits of the land; it takes them all, I suppose.

In chapter 13, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men," etc., and in Deuteronomy 1:22, Moses says, "Ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us," etc. And Moses adds, "The saying pleased me well." The Lord sanctioned it, but still it was the working of unbelief. Instead of going on simply in faith, how often do we raise a cloud of questions in order to get a human estimate of a thing only to find out at last that the walls are up to heaven. Instead of doing the thing to be done, we are looking at all the questions and difficulties that can be raised. And thus it ended in their not going into the land at all.

Ques. Is not the tribe of Levi outside all this?

Yes.

Ques. And were they not involved in despising the land?

I do not know that. But it was by the commandment of the Lord that Moses sent the spies. Despising the pleasant land was when they wanted to go back into Egypt. However, they had the grapes of Eshcol, and the witness of the spies, but this gave the very things for unbelief to work upon. “They are stronger than we,” say the spies, but really their strength was departed from them. The cities were walled, and they saw the giants too, but when finally they reached Canaan, the walls were just as high, and the children of Anak were still there; not one of the difficulties of unbelief had been removed. Only, when they go forward with God, difficulty is no difficulty. But the moment this account came before them, the people got uneasy, the report cowed them. “The land … eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants … and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.” Now in all this I find two things: it is an evil report of the land—there is nothing good in it—and then, God is quite left out, for had they thought of God, the question would have been this: Is God a grasshopper or not? Only Caleb says, “We are well able to overcome it,” and then, in chapter 14, Joshua and Caleb say, “If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us.” The spies had said at first that it was a land that surely “floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.” But in spite of this good report the moment they bring in a “nevertheless,” their faith fails and then they lose sight of everything.

Ques. God did not rebuke them for sending the spies?

No; but it was unbelief in the shape of human wisdom. And the point of the spies' answer was, "We be not able to go up against the people" —the grapes were sour (verse 31). They looked at the difficulties and then all was bad, though they had the grapes on their shoulders. Further, the whole congregation lifted up their voice, and cried, until they fairly turned for Egypt. It was now a positive giving up of the whole thing. Moses and Aaron rent their clothes, and it took Joshua and Caleb to bring in the Lord: "The people of the land … are bread for us," and "the Lord is with us: fear them not." That was real faith; but all the congregation bade stone them with stones—they would not listen to the testimony.

Ques. Was not this the despising of the pleasant land according to Psalm 106?

Well it was, though there is another case of it, too.

Ques. Is this the "gospel" in the beginning of Hebrews 4?

In principle it is.

Ques. People may go so far with you in truth until they come to the heavenly truth, and then they go back?

Yes; the truth that tests faith is always the truth that unbelief deals with. If a truth has become accredited, well. Or as at the Reformation, they glorified in justification by faith because it was against Rome. But if one speaks of ministry by the Spirit, and of the coming of the Lord, souls hesitate and refuse. I see this in Scripture, "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me." The Jews boasted of having the true

God, but the truth that the Father had sent the Son had come in and was testing them, and they would not have that, but stoned them that held it. People accept the Lord's coming as a doctrine that He will appear, but not as coming at any moment to take up the church. The rapture and the church are identified in Scripture, but the coming of the Lord is in the Old Testament, as well as in the New. Even in the Apostles' Creed we find the mere fact that the Lord will come to judge the quick and the dead. I remember when brethren were very much exercised about the truth of the rapture, some thinking it upset, "They that are Christ's at his coming." But what always comforts me is that the Lord takes care to wake up in time all the virgins, whether they have refused the rapture much or long. It is a truth that will sift Christians amazingly.

Ques. How large a company is, "They that are Christ's at his coming"?

They that are Christ's, but I do not know how many that will be.

Ques. There is no doubt as to the Old Testament saints being among them?

No, I have no doubt; and the elders in heaven would take them all in. Until the modern evangelical doctrine of an invisible church, nobody ever thought of the Old Testament saints being the church, or of the church as the same thing as Judaism.

Ques. Will all professors be aroused?

We are no judge of people. I believe many who call themselves Christians will turn out to be infidels. Mixture enough there is on every side; you will never do

the Lord's work without finding the devil working against it.

Ephesians 2 makes it impossible to mingle Jewish saints of the Old Testament with the church. The middle wall of partition separated them off, but now in Christ it is broken down. The Jew as such was bound not to accept the foundation of the church, i.e., he had to keep up the middle wall of partition and not let the Gentile in; but the principle of Christianity is that there is neither Jew nor Gentile, "for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." If the doctrine that Paul preached had been preached, say, in Hezekiah's time, it would have broken down Judaism altogether. The mixture that exists to-day is really the refusal of the truth of the church; it practically denies that there is any.

Ques. But do not such put the O.T. saints into the church after they have gone to heaven?

But that is monstrous, for it is telling me that what the Lord does here is not what He does there. And to say that God is going to give them a new place in heaven, without a single syllable of it in Scripture, is of man, not of God.

Ques. What is the city Abraham looked for?

We are the city, the New Jerusalem. If the church, the body of Christ, is in the Old Testament, then, on that shewing, it is a body without a head; but it is clear enough from Ephesians 1 that Christ, as raised from the dead, is given to be Head over all things to the church which is His body. And by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body; but the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. So whether we take Christ as Head or the Holy Ghost as the power, we have

neither the one nor the other with the Old Testament saints.

Ques. If when Israel reached Kadesh-barnea, they had gone on in faith into the land, they would not have had any Jordan to cross. Is there not another point for us in connection with that?

It brings out much deeper truth; never would they go up that mountain again, and they all perished in the wilderness. The nation has to go round, and this brings out a fresh truth for us, namely, that we must cross the Jordan. And when the Jews themselves get their true blessing ultimately, it will also be founded on death and resurrection.

Ques. Did the Egyptians cross Jordan in Genesis 50?

It does not say so. They went to Atad, and Joseph went on to Canaan. “Beyond Jordan,” can only be understood according as we take the standpoint of the writer. Verse 13 would shew, I think, that Jacob’s sons carried him and buried him in Machpelah. That was not Atad, nor did all the people of verse 9 go over. In verse 10, “beyond Jordan” would mean to the east of it, so that the sons of Jacob went over, but not the Egyptians. In Numbers 14, the place Moses takes before the Lord is truly beautiful. “The Egyptians shall hear it,” and the nations will say, “Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.”

Ques. Would you connect Psalm 90 with this?

That Psalm applies to the last days; it opens Book 4, which is looking especially for the Lord’s return. The next Psalm takes up the names of Jehovah, God of Israel,

recognising the most High, and so they get the blessing of Abraham from the Almighty.

Ques. What do we learn from verse 22 of Numbers 13: “Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt”?

Well, I do not know that I have ever got anything from it; it is, I suppose, just an incidental notice. I suppose Zoan was one of the places near which Israel was.

Ques. Hebron and the richest grapes figure the perfection of grace in the heavenlies. Zoan, where God’s wonders were wrought, but not bowed to by the wisdom of this world’s princes (Psa. 78:12 and 43), is the place of Pharaoh’s counsellors, and they become fools (Isa. 19:11, 13). But Hebron was set up the perfection of time before the world’s counsellors had a place at all?

I dare say. The Lord says, in Numbers 14:20, “I have pardoned according to thy word”; and He further tells Moses that those men shall not see the land, though all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. That will be the completion of everything. Three times is this “filling” mentioned: here in this passage, in Isaiah 11:9, and in Habakkuk 2:14; and each time it is connected with judgment.

Ques. In Psalm 72:19, it is, “Let the whole earth be filled with his glory”?

Yes, “let,” that is the desire, not the fact.

Ques. But is it judgment in Habakkuk?

Yes. “The people shall labour in the very fire,” and so on, and the earth shall be “filled,” not with grace but, “with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,” etc.

Ques. In Isaiah 40:5, we read, “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together”?

Yes, and that will be in judgment in the future day. Isaiah 6 refers to the same thing.

Ques. Is it not millennial glory?

Yes, but the glory of the Lord does not appear until He executes judgment. Very beautiful is it to see Moses hide himself thus behind the glory of the Lord. And notice that administered forgiveness is not redemption forgiveness. It is so even now in the church of God: “If he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James 5:15); and Paul says to the Corinthians, “To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also.” Absolute redemption forgiveness was never known historically in the church of God. The standing of the soul with God never had historical existence in the professing church, and now we find it dreaded more than anything.

Ques. If one who has been “put away” is received again, is that the forgiveness you mean?

That is one form of it.

Ques. Is it that in Acts 2:38?

I think that there it is more what they were baptised to. An important thing it is in its place, but redemption forgiveness is the thing wanted. One finds constantly, in people’s souls, the thought that all their sins are put away up to the time of their conversion; but since? Ah! you will find they have really lost all. There is the difficulty as to what is to be done with the gap that has slipped down since. Ask any evangelical Christian if he understands that “the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.”

Ques. “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee,” is that administered forgiveness?

I suppose so.

Ques. But such forgiveness did not meet the case in Numbers 14?

Yes, it did.

Ques. But their carcases fell in the wilderness?

Just so, ultimately, but they were forgiven for the time being and they were allowed to go on. Present government also is very distinct from everlasting salvation. In Popery, they forgive the siris if they have not committed any, and when they have, they cannot. The trouble arises from looking at the Spirit’s work in me, which has given me the consciousness of the sins I have committed. But when I look at the work of Christ, at the cross all my sins were future. People say it is a dangerous doctrine; but all I know is, that if it is not true, I shall be damned. It is confusing the Spirit’s work in me with the work of Christ for me. But when full Popery came in, then they got absolution by the priest all cut and dried for a man. They bring in absolution because they have no knowledge of redemption. But now, knowing redemption, I learn to hate the sins more and more—all right. Evangelicals resprinkle with the blood of Christ; and I ask them, where do you get your doctrine in Scripture? It is not found there. In Hebrews 10:14, the real force of “for ever” is, “in immutable continuity.” We never find in Scripture that” we must offend,” but, “we do offend.”

Ques. In Galatians, the flesh lusteth against the Spirit?

Yes, but it is “that ye may not do the things that ye would,” i.e., the flesh labours to hinder.

Ques. Would you say more about “no more conscience of sins”?

Once purged, I go to God, and I cannot have the idea of His imputing my sins to me, for He has imputed them all to Christ. And that is the only right Christian state.

Ques. But might I not have that, and yet have an idea that something is not forgiven?

No. The constant Christian condition is this, while I hate myself for what I do that is wrong, and God in government may judge it too, yet, in going to God, I can never have sins on my mind as something to be imputed to me.

Ques. But you could not say your sins were all forgiven at the cross?

Certainly not, not one of them; no sins are ever forgiven before they are committed. But if, when away from God, I go to God, the Christ who bore my sins is there, and I cannot have the thought of God’s imputing them to me while that Christ is sitting at His right hand, i.e., the One who, after having purged my sins, has sat down there.

Ques. But suppose I am out of communion?

That has nothing to do with imputation. You are first cleared as to imputation, and communion follows. Born of God, you have a holy nature, but you can have no proper state and feelings until you know you have everlasting forgiveness. If I still have an idea that sin can be imputed to me, I must connect it with my acceptance. There is all the difference between

righteousness before God, and holiness in my ways. Righteousness takes up the question of the judicial character of God, and all was met at the cross; but if it is a question of holiness, I now hate sin for sin's own sake. I cannot get on that ground, if the question of righteousness is not settled. But that once settled, then I say, 'Look, I have gone and found my pleasure in the very thing that made Christ's agony on the cross.' And then communion is stopped. The iniquity of my sin is rather the crookedness and departure from God on my part. But I have the sense of no imputation; and now that I am saved I hate sin, as regards unholiness. If we are manifested to God now, there will be nothing to come out at the judgment seat.

There is a beautiful point in Numbers 15:1, 2. After the conduct of the people in chapter 14, the Lord says to Moses, as a matter of course, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations." God is not stopped, but looks forward still to the completion of the whole thing, because His purpose in grace is certain to be fulfilled.

Ques. What is "the gainsaying of Core"?

They resisted the authority of Moses, and pretended to the priesthood when they were only Levites. Then the rod, Aaron's rod, leads through the wilderness and nothing else does.

Ques. Numbers 19 is more a sense of defilement than of fear of judgment?

Quite so, it is cleansing, not forgiveness. They were to kill the heifer, and sprinkle its blood seven times directly before the door of the tabernacle, of the congregation; because, I suppose, all the people were concerned in it.

When Moses went in, it was to God inside, but the people would be gathered at the door.

Ques. Is not the red heifer, atonement?

It is a sacrifice for sin, but there is no re-application of blood by it at all.

Ques. Was there only one heifer killed?

If the ashes were all spent, they might kill another, but I do not know.

Then all was burnt together, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. But sin is an unclean thing, and he that gathered the ashes, and the priest, and he that burnt all, each one of them was unclean; it was a question of cleanness and uncleanness. And then comes a case the avoiding of which was almost impossible, namely, the touching of the dead body of a man.

Ques. Why was it a heifer and not a bullock?

It was not of the complete character of the great day of atonement. And there is no altar here, and that clears the thought of standing being in question. It was Eleazar too, not Aaron.

Ques. Why a “grave”?

A grave implies anything dead.

Then comes the double cleansing on the third day, and on the seventh day.

Ques. What is the open vessel?

One that could be reached.

Ques. What does it mean now?

It shews that everything that came within the breath of sin was unclean.

Ques. What is the difference between this, and touching an unclean animal in Leviticus 6?

It is much the same in principle, but this is on the journey, and so it is found in Numbers.

Ques. There is re-sprinkling here?

Yes, but of what?

Ques. Ashes?

And what did the ashes show but that the thing was all consumed when Christ died, and that there is no repetition of His death, or re-sprinkling with blood.

Ques. But you could not say that God had any complacency in the agony of Christ?

No, I should not. God had no pleasure in His being agonised, but He took pleasure in the effect of it; “It pleased the Lord to bruise him,” and I should understand a person using such language, if he used it with a good intention. That dreadful agony of Christ met all that God was. There is no objection, therefore, to the thought of God finding complacency in Christ all that time; the Lord smelled a sweet savour in the sacrifice itself.

Ques. Why was it Eleazar, and not Aaron who acted here?

Had it been Aaron, it would have shewed that some link between the whole people and God had been lost, and that was not true; the nation stood as it was, but individual communion alone was touched.

Ques. It brings out the deepest view of [individual] sin in the Old Testament?

Yes, I think so.

When one is denied, then one that is clean takes the water and sprinkles upon him; it is the power of the Spirit of God and the word, bringing home to him what it had been to Christ to be consumed as Victim because of sin, but the sin had been consumed in Christ's work, so that no question of imputation arises.

Ques. Is the water, then, the written word?

There must be the full effect of the power of the Spirit of God by the word, which is certainly the use of running, i.e., living water. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." The Lord is speaking here, not of guilt, but of the contrast between unclean and clean.

Then there are two things: First, I must have that view of sin which God has of it and which I could not get but by the death of Christ, and the power of the Spirit of God it is that makes good to me, by that death, what sin is in the presence of such grace; and secondly, I get absolute clearness as to its having been put away out of God's sight so that I am in communion with Him. First, I have the sense in my conscience of what sin is in God's sight as manifested in the cross: it "became him … in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" — that is what became God according to His nature. The cross has taken away my guilt, though that is not the thing here; but through the ashes of the death of Christ being brought home to my conscience and heart, I lay hold of that which makes me feel what a horrible thing sin is;

but then I see, too, the other side of the question, and that is that all was burnt up in Christ's cross, and I am brought back into communion. This is a thoroughly deep work. A person is thus brought under the efficacy of the great day of atonement, that he may have communion with God. Sin is hateful to God, and he who touches it is unclean.

Ques. Would there, then, be a consciousness of this in dealing with cases of discipline?

Yes, where the word came home in the power of the Spirit of God.

Ques. Is it the same as John 13?

As to Christ's connection with it, I think it is.

Ques. You do not, then, allow pleading for that which is unavoidable?

When you come practically to deal with it, I do not know such a thing as unavoidable sin, though at any given moment, through my carelessness, sin may have become unavoidable.

Ques. But what about people in contact with business and all that?

I know nothing weaker than myself, and I know nothing stronger than the grace of God.

Ques. Is it possible for us to be in this world at all without being defiled?

Certainly, but if you ask me whether we are or no, that is another thing. "In many things we offend all."

Ques. But the whole world is defiled?

He will keep you in the secret of His presence from the strife of tongues.

Ques. In Romans 7 sin is a necessity, but in Romans 8 it is no necessity, because of the law of the Spirit of life?

Quite so.

Ques. Has the third day anything to do with a long delay?

No, I do not think so. I should not stop immediate confession, though there might be an acknowledgment of the outward fact, without a proper sense of its character.

Ques. Then such an one must know that he is defiled three days before he is sprinkled?

Yes. The Lord did not charge Peter with having denied Him, but He probed his self-confidence by asking him whether he loved Him more than did the other disciples.

Ques. Would “faithful… to forgive” be the third day, and “to cleanse” be the seventh day?

No, it is cleansing here, and no question of forgiving at all.

Ques. How would anyone know that he has touched the dead thing?

That is the work of the Spirit of God, and there is danger that there may be no adequate sense of what makes impure.

Ques. The man would have a sense of the redemption and sufferings of Christ on the third day?

Yes.

Ques. Has not all this a dispensational bearing on Israel in the future?

I do not doubt it has, because it is in the death of Christ that they have brought their great sin upon them. When they look on Him whom they have pierced, that will be the seventh day.

Ques. Does verse 13 have any application to an assembly of saints?

If one goes there unclean, he does defile the communion. It is most important for us all that we should measure what sin is in view of the cross.

Ques. But when we come together, do we not sometimes get washed by one another, without our knowing the circumstances?

That may happen, for God can apply the word, but that is not washing one another's feet, for that is active individual service. But, in John 13, the Lord is sitting with the disciples as their companion in the world, and there, knowing that the glory was His and that He was going to it, in the perfect holiness of His nature He says to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." I am going away, but I am not going to give you up, I must have you with me where I go, and dirty feet will not do for heaven.

Ques. Is that a present thing?

Of course it is. There will be no washing up there; we shall not have dirty feet in heaven, nor shall we want a conscience in heaven. On the other hand, if I do not get my feet washed down here, I shall soon be a nuisance and fall into some mischief or other.

Ques. There is no laver in heaven?

In Revelation 15, it is a sea of glass, but mingled with fire, for those who stand on it have gone through the tribulation to get there.

Readings On Joshua

Reading 1

There is a difference between Numbers and Joshua. Numbers is, in its principle, the testing of man down here in the wilderness; we are viewed typically as redeemed Christians, but still in the wilderness, and tested. Joshua is, in figure, divine energy getting rid of Satan; while at the same time everything depended upon the state in which Israel was. It is not, in itself, the testing of man's state, though that did get tested, too. If they were not in a faithful state they did not obtain the victory.

But the point in Joshua was not their testing; that was the business of the desert. In Joshua, having passed over Jordan, Israel is the Lord's host connected with Canaan, i.e., with the heavenly places.

To shew the distinction, look at Deuteronomy 8 for the character of the wilderness: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the

Lord thy Gou chasteneth thee" (vv. 1-5). And again, "Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end" (vv. 15, 16). All that was a process going on on God's part with the people, but in Joshua it was a conflict engaged with the enemies of God, only, of course, we must remember that, collaterally, it did try the people also.

Ques. Would you say that the wilderness was the special test of having life, or not?

No, not that; but it tested the state of those who had life.

Ques. Whether there was life or not?

Well, if there was not life, they would tumble down.

Ques. But I mean with reference to their carcases falling in the wilderness. Any person who makes a profession and has not life would fall there?

That would be tested, of course, but that is not all that is tested. When we have life, the whole state of the soul is tested; whereas, in Joshua, it is neither the one nor the other, but it is fighting the Lord's battles.

Observe, too, that this first chapter is a preface to the book proper.

Ques. But the people get into trouble in the land?

Just so; if I am not in a spiritual state, I can neither work well nor fight well.

Ques. I am not clear; would you say that the wilderness is the test whether we have life, or not?

No, though that might come out there.

Notice that the wilderness was no part of God's purpose at all; Canaan was, and the very object of God's purpose was to bring the people into the land of Canaan. Quite true, enemies were there, and that so far tested the faithfulness of the people when they reached the land; but in the wilderness God tested the faithfulness of the people; while in Canaan they are God's host, they are looked at as dead and risen again and in the heavenly places. In Colossians, we are not yet out of the wilderness; in Ephesians, we are in Canaan. But it is a great thing to see that the wilderness forms no part of God's purpose at all. Of course, God knew what He was going to do, but in the wilderness we have the ways of God, not His purpose. His purpose was first of all redemption, but this redemption was complete when they had passed the Red Sea. The whole thing was then settled: "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed."

There was also the judgment of the Egyptians at the Red Sea. The Lord could thus take the poor thief straight to Paradise without any wilderness at all. In Colossians 1 it is, "Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." But then, in the wilderness, redeemed, there is a great deal to correct and learn, even if there is life. We are brought there, and we depend there upon God for manna, and for water, and for everything, and our hearts go through all these experiences notwithstanding we are already redeemed.

Look at chapters 3, 6 and 15 of Exodus, and you will see that there is no wilderness at all in God's purpose. "The Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Periz-zites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites."

That was God's purpose, that was what He had come down for; there is here no hint of the wilderness. It is the same in chapter 6, "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for an heritage; I am the Lord" (vv. 6-8). That is out of Egypt into the land of Canaan, and no thought of the wilderness. That was God's purpose, and He tells them He is going to do as He had said.

In chapter 15 faith takes up all this, like a soul often does now when redeemed and full of joy, but not knowing what lies before it; "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take

hold on the inhabitants of Palestina.11 Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed," and so on. There is no wilderness at all.

The Lord shews us the completeness of redemption in taking the thief beside Him on the cross and carrying Him straight to Paradise, fit to be Christ's companion; for that, the work was all complete in him as well as for him. And he owns Christ when the disciples ran away.

Ques. If the Red Sea be redemption complete, what is there further at Jordan?

There is a difference, but the Red Sea and Jordan coalesce; the first is the passage out, the second is the passage in.

Ques. In Hebrews 11 there is no wilderness?

I beg your pardon, we have nothing else in Hebrews.

Ques. In chapter 11?

Oh yes; it is the life of faith there, and so the narrative cannot notice the wilderness.

Ques. Could a soul now be sheltered by the blood without having passed the Red Sea?

Yes, but it will not know its deliverance. You are taking us back into Egypt; but in Egypt the blood is as upon the mercy-seat.

In contrast, the character of the book of Joshua is that they are typically dead and risen with Christ and are led into Canaan. The Red Sea, instead of shutting them in, delivered them; but the Jordan overflowed all its banks, and yet let them in.

Ques. Then does Joshua describe Colossians, i.e., as dead and risen with Christ?

Yes, but there is much more in Joshua, for there is combat with spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places, and that is Ephesians.

Ques. “Moses my servant is dead,” what is that?

In Joshua, they start from that point; all that which connected itself with the flesh was done with, though it might still be detected; the wilderness, and Moses, and all that was done with.

Ques. Does that include the law also?

Yes; dead to it, mind that.

Ques. Then, Moses being dead, Colossians takes up the people entering the land?

Only we do not find the conflict there, that is in Ephesians. The difference is that, as a figure, Joshua is Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost, carrying on the warfare for God; it is for us, no doubt, but still for God, as the Lord’s host. Joshua is specifically that, always Christ in the power of the Spirit; but in Colossians, save “love in the Spirit,” we never get the Spirit at all. Colossians gives us life in itself; it is spiritual life, divine life. And only that once do we find the word “Spirit” used in the epistle.

Ques. The Spirit would be power in anticipation?

Yes, that is what it is. They might have power in the wilderness, but here it is the positive warfare that took possession of the place. And they were acting for God; no doubt for themselves also, but still it was for God. They sat down and did eat of the old corn of the land,

and there was no more manna. It was no longer typically Christ suited to what we are down here; the manna was that, and the water was that, but here, in Joshua, it is God's power in us, Christ's power with us fighting the Lord's battles. In Colossians, we are risen but not sitting in the heavenly places; it is a risen man in the wilderness. In Romans, it is a man alive down here with the life of Christ.

Ques. In this chapter they are on the wilderness side of the Jordan?

Ques. But Moses is dead, and Joshua takes it up?

It is only preface here, and we have the Lord telling him the way he will go when he crosses Jordan. But in Colossians we are not viewed as across Jordan, nor yet as settled in the land—that would be Ephesians. Colossians is peculiar in that way, it is a risen man in this world.

Ques. But what about the manna?

There is no more manna. If I am across Jordan, I do not want to be so fed. In this world I do; say, in business, I have to be obliging and kind, and I want Christ as grace suited to this world. But if I am risen with Christ, I do not belong to this world at all, though I may be in it. So in Romans, it is a Christian dead to the law, but living in this world; in Ephesians, he sits in the heavenly places, not in this world at all as to his standing and spirit; but in Colossians, he is risen though not yet gone to heaven. So it says, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." What a man's mind is set on, that he is whatever he may be.

In Joshua 5 we have three characters of food, namely, the passover, the manna, and the old corn.

Ques. Do we not now feed on these three characters of food in John 6?

That does not take us up to heaven though. We do not find the old corn of the land in John's gospel, but we have Christ come down from heaven. It is incarnation, and flesh and blood, and death.

Ques. "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" Is not that heavenly?

No, that is only going up.

The character of John's gospel all through is the revelation of the Father down here, not the taking of us up there. There is not the forgiveness of sins in his gospel, except administratively in the hands of the apostles.

The position of Colossians is very instructive; it seems strange because the Christian is there viewed as a risen man not gone up to heaven, a thing which in itself will never take place; but my being still here, it raises this question: Where is my heart? How far am I living a risen life down here while I am in the body?

Ques. Does Gilgal answer to Colossians?

Colossians is, as it were, the passage from the one place into another. "Mortify therefore," is the effect of Gilgal, life being in exercise. Colossians will not allow any life in a Christian down here. If dead, set your affections on things above; it is a kind of anomaly that way. We have not Christ as manna in Colossians. One has, of course, to take up all the parts of it to get the entire thought of the epistle. And to learn the whole truth about ourselves, we

must also know the different portions of the different epistles. The divers aspects in which we may be viewed are to be found in these various books in Scripture, and that is the reason why we have them. And then, poor feeble creatures though we are, we have to take them up and put them all together. But it is God's mercy and condescension to us to let us have them.

Ques. Does not "dead and risen" in Colossians include Gilgal?

If I may so speak, Colossians just passes over Jordan and stops there without seating us down in heavenly places. We may just get to Gilgal in it, but that is status, not place. It is not the fact of our taking possession of Canaan, but more what is preliminary to setting about to do so.

Ques. Joshua is clearly Ephesians?

In Joshua it is not, 'I have led you into the wilderness and I am going to see what kind of people you are,' but it is typically the heavenly places, and "every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon, that have I given unto you." This is a very important principle. All the land as far as to the Euphrates had been given to them, but wherever they tried to put down the sole of their foot, there was a Canaanite. That is Satan hindering us, and that is where the true Joshua work comes in. I am going to realise the spiritual power of Christ now so as to take possession of the things that God has given me in His testimony. Go and put your foot on any one of them, and there stands Satan to hinder you!

Ques. But it was theirs?

Of course it was.

Ques. And they were themselves tested?

Yes, but that is only what I have called a collateral consequence. There is perfect security in the Lord's power, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life"; that is being "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man," and then no man is able to stand before me. Immediately after Achan had sinned, Joshua was found lying upon his face and the Lord saying to him, "The children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you." There was in result this testing as to whether they could go on. But then we have another thing, "Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them." This is God's purpose, and He is going to carry out His purpose, but He tells us to be strong and of a good courage. Divine power is ours, but faith must lay hold of it.

Ques. Can chapter 7:10 have any reference to the state of gatherings?

I have nothing about gatherings here.

Ques. But when sin comes in?

Well, God cannot be with what is evil. And if strength was not there, God was not there, but evil in some shape or other.

Another thing we find in chapter 1:7, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant

commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest." Strength and courage were to be shewn, coupled with obedience, for it is in obedience that strength is shewn; and thus, in obeying, they would beat their enemies. The Lord's power would be there, but their strength was to be shewn in obedience. Now the world is all against us, and says, 'you are fools for your pains,' that is to say, if we are consistent in simple obedience to the word, and we do not follow the plain good sense of the world! There is no wisdom like faith; it is not fanatical imagination, but taking God's word as the true light upon our path. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Anything that is not according to God's mind will not do, for God cannot go with that which He disapproves of. There may be tenderness and compassion still, but disobedience and evil will not be allowed. Again, in verse 9, we read, "Have not I commanded thee?" Practically, that is an immense thing for strength; if I have the certainty of God's will, if I can say, 'Has not He commanded me?' then I have no hesitation. "Be strong and of a good courage" is what the apostle says to Timothy when things were going to the bad.

Ques. The 'law' takes in more than the moral code?

Yes, everything that God commands. That which God commanded they had, of course, to obey, no matter what

it might be, such as, for instance, when they were told not to eat the passover if they were not circumcised.

Ques. The book of the law, was that “Moses”?

Yes; they had not yet the “Psalms,” nor the “Prophets.”

Ques. Is “do wisely,” in the margin, the right reading instead of “good success” (v. 8)?

Well, to do it wisely was the way to success. That is the force of the expression. The word means that you must follow up the good road; it involves success.

Ques. Should it not rather be, “prudently”?

Yes, prudently, wisely, but if I do a thing wisely that would carry success. It is intelligently.

Ques. Then is the law viewed as complete with no thought of anything to be added to it hereafter?

Yes, quite so.

In verse 13, the command of Moses is again mentioned; the authority of the word is everything to us in this day when men are asserting their own judgment. If this word is not by inspiration, what is it by? And if they have not authority in it, what have they got at all?

Who gave us the history of the creation? How do we know what passed between God and Adam in the garden? The attempt to account for the creation, or the deluge, or anything else, in any other way than by inspiration is simply nonsense. I can quite understand man’s heart believing nothing, but it is simply folly. With all that has been objected to the Old Testament, we have the Lord and the apostles quoting it as divine.

Ques. What is the special force of repeating this command to the Reubenites?

Only that Joshua was now about to start to carry it out.

Ques. Whom do these Reubenites represent?

I believe they are those who have God's will, Christians, but who have not entered into the perfection of Christian privileges, they are not what the apostle calls "perfect." "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

It is only those who are across Jordan that could be spoken of as "perfect." And remember this, when a Christian will not cross Jordan to take up the place that Christ has, as risen and passed into the heavenlies, such an one falls all the more readily and the sooner into the hands of enemies; such was the case with these two and a half tribes. Their place is worldly Christianity on this side of death and resurrection. The sure mercies of David in the millennium are secured and will be made good only by death and resurrection. Where Christians take up Christianity without resurrection, it breaks down with them.

Ques. But were they not all in the promised land?

Yes, but they were not all past Jordan. It is a very definite thing, and it is written down for us; if a Christian is not across Jordan, he is still connected with the world's power. And so it was with these tribes, they were the first to be carried away.

Ques. Is there anything to be learnt from our Lord's going into the land of the Gadarenes?

Not so much in connection with the two and a half tribes, but He is there with the poor of the flock in the

midst of Israel who were rushing down to destruction like the swine, in a figure, though again the poor demoniac is rescued and sent back to his friends to be a witness. But the Christ who had delivered him, the world would not have, and came and sent Him away.

Ques. But the east of Jordan was not Canaan?

No; it was Moab, and Edom, and Og the king of Bashan. No doubt Jordan was a very distinct line of boundary, but the land east of it had been promised to Israel. Yet, except in Solomon's time, they never possessed the land right up to the Euphrates. However, their settling there without crossing Jordan has nothing to do with us, except that if we have not accepted death and resurrection, we are not Christians "full grown," i.e., "perfect," and this is of immense moment. In God's sight, there is a Man raised and sitting in heaven, and that is the basis of Christianity.

Ques. Does Joshua typify the Lord Himself?

Yes; the Lord and the power of the Spirit. Joshua had been a fighter with the Amalekites even before the people were under the law, he then led in a fighting capacity. It is of all moment that we should get clear hold of what we have been saying, for it is a great question now as to whether Christianity is merely that which has come down into this world in goodness, or whether Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us out of this present evil world. Is Christianity based upon a glorified Christ, or is it merely a provision for sinful man down here? I believe that wherever a Christian has not a glorified Christ as the starting point of his Christianity, and so is what Paul calls "full grown," such an one will be saved so as by fire, if at all, from the

infidelity which is coming in. Of course, I believe God will take care of His own, that is another thing. At their very start, these two and a half tribes had to set up an altar in Canaan, and there was a great hubbub about it, though it was only to be a witness that they belonged to Canaan; but it was the very expression of what they felt themselves, namely, that there was a danger lest they might be looked upon as outside of it.

Ques. What was the fighting in Exodus 17?

This took place before the law. All the way from the Red Sea to Sinai, it was the wilderness of grace, not properly the wilderness of testing, and in figure it goes right on to the millennium, where Moses and Aaron and the elders are found feasting with Jethro, i.e., with the Gentiles. It is really the whole history of grace to the millennium. In chapters 16, 17 and 18, the manna is given, that is, Christ come down from heaven; then the sabbath, i.e., God's rest is found; next, in Rephidim, the water comes from God; then, too, Amalek is conquered; and lastly, Jews and Gentiles are found eating together, and the government is all ordered through Jethro; yes, and Moses' wife—the bride—is brought back, too.

Ques. When the Lord brings all Israel back in the future, will not Jordan be the boundary of the land?

I do not know that they will have possession as far as to the Euphrates, that is, to their eastern border.

Ques. But in Ezekiel they are all across the Jordan though the ordering of the tribes is different?

They may have the land outside, only outside is not their fixed place of rest.

Ques. Ought the two and half tribes to have returned even when God had given the people rest?

Well, the district had been given to them, though at first Moses was extremely indignant, and they undertook to send their armed men over Jordan. Just so now, these people, who do not know a risen Christ, have still to fight infidelity and all else.

Ques. Does it not teach us the danger of asking for anything that we ourselves like?

Of course it does, and God may permit the thing to us as well as to them, and He often does, and it turns out a sorrow.

Ques. About one-third only of their effective strength went over, according to chapter 4:12, 13?12 It was all that was needed, I suppose.

Ques. What of the people's threat, "Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death," chap. 1:18? Were they going beyond God's word in saying that?

Possibly so; but what was required was absolute obedience and submission to Joshua, so it was just a question of faithfulness.

Ques. But coming from such a people?

Well, if people do not go right, they are generally very strong in their professions. One often finds that the same will that will not take up God's promises in faith, goes beyond what God says, in a carnal way of energy, or some other point.

Ques. But it is well to see that here, at any rate, the people uphold Joshua's hands. And then, in verse 9, it is, "Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed"?

We find just the same thing in Philippians: "In nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." Here comes, say, Satan, with all his power, but if the Lord is with me, it does not trouble me. And so far Israel was right. So with a Christian, in so far as he does not go with wickedness, he is right, but if he is with the world, he will not have the secret of the Lord with him.

Ques. In this connection, would you shut out Romans?

In Romans, we have Jordan as far as death, but not as far as resurrection. Neither in this chapter have we Jordan, it is only, "Ye shall pass over this Jordan."

Ques. But many there are who, as to their state and experience, are still in Egypt?

That may be; but that is a kind of inconsistent state. In Romans, we do get death, the "old man is crucified with him." But it does not go on to say that we are risen with Him. Again, we read, "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead," but it does not say "raised." So that our realisation goes as far as being dead with Him in Romans, but it is not carried on to our being risen with Him. Now this touches the whole character of Christianity; because a man who is in a muddle in his mind is, in his sense of his standing, still connected with the first man, and that is not Christianity at all. Christ has died for us, and a man may have the forgiveness of sins though still connected with the first man, but Christianity gives us another distinct thing,

and that is, it puts us up in heaven in the second Man, the last Adam. Christ sitting in the heavenly places is the true starting point of Christianity.

In Colossians, we have, “Set your affection on things above”; in Ephesians, I am sitting there myself, and so the exhortation is, “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.” But Reubenites are content to take Christianity as something that has come down and brought blessing into this world where they live, and this does not take them out of this world.

Ques. Do the two and a half tribes fall short of the great truth of the death of Christ?

Of the great point of it, yes. But in Philippians, if a person believes in Christ dying for his sins, we are to go on with him, “Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” That is not, however, the “perfect” thing. Many have forgiveness in this world, who do not see deliverance in Christ’s death and resurrection; a most blessed thing forgiveness is, but in their own minds such are still in Egypt.

Ques. Afterwards, these Reubenites do not fail to go on with their brethren?

Just so; and then they return to their families and possessions. As we have already said, a worldly Christian is troubled and horrified with infidelity just as much as those who are living in the heavenly places. They only fought with the others, but they never took up any of the land west of Jordan as their own portion. Their resting place and their homes were on the east of Jordan.

Ques. What would you say was the clear difference between the rest the two and a half tribes had, and the rest the others had?

The last-mentioned had their comfort and rest inside Jordan, but the two and a half tribes, outside Jordan.

Ques. But God gave it them?

Yes, surely.

Ques. But they did not lay hold of God's purpose?

No, they did not. Moses tells them: "Ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men," Num. 32:14.

Ques. Then was it faith falling short of the divine purpose?

Yes, or rather, unbelief.

It is a very serious thing which we are engaged with every day; only let brethren take care that they do not rest on this side of Jordan.

Ques. But if one knows he is crucified with Christ, is he not then over the Jordan?

But in that way, the figure of Jordan is only partially applied. And really we do not know the thing fully until we have got to the right side.

Ques. But a person must be miserable if he does not know it?

Yes, more or less. And he must cross the Jordan to be able to estimate what crossing the Jordan is.

Ques. Cannot you have Gilgal until you have crossed over?

No, you cannot.

Ques. What would keep people on the wrong side of Jordan?

Not having their affections on things above.

Ques. In the division of the land in Ezekiel is there no mention of Jordan?

To tell the honest truth, I do not know much about Ezekiel myself; the best thing is to look at it. In Ezekiel 47:18, it is just named, “And from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea.” The east sea is the Dead Sea.

Ques. Might not the east sea be something still further off, say, the Persian Gulf?

No. The east sea is the Dead Sea. What was north of the east sea was not Israel proper at all, except, perhaps, in the general sense of prophecy, that the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, and so on.

In Daniel 11:45, there is an inaccurate rendering. It should read there, “And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the mountain of holy beauty.”

Ques. In the measures in Ezekiel 45 the word “reeds” is in italics; is there anything to shew that it should be reeds?

He was to take a reed and measure, “cubits” would never do here. In chapter 47:3, it is a line in the man’s hand.

Ques. Does Joshua at all shew what will be the state of the Jews when they are restored?

The sure mercies of David are founded upon resurrection. God has accepted the work of Christ, and resurrection is the proof of it. There will be both earthly and heavenly results from this, for God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on the earth; we have the heavenly, and they will have the earthly; but in the millennium they will have nothing to do with crossing the Jordan.

Ques. Do the two and a half tribes typify those who are sheltered by blood in Egypt, but who do not know the Red Sea in power?

The Red Sea and Jordan coalesce, though they may be spoken of and considered separately. It is in between these that the "ifs" come in. Across the Red Sea, they are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. They are delivered from the power of darkness, and then we find, "And you … hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith," Col. 1:21, 22 The reconciliation is a present thing; the apostle first takes up the thought of God, that is to say, in His mind the saints are made meet or fit; but when he comes to the actual experimental state in their mind, then he says, "if."

So, top, in the epistle to the Hebrews. Wherever a man is falling away, or going into sin, it is all over with him; and this not merely in chapter 6, but elsewhere in the epistle; it is always positive.

Ques. Were the Colossians, then, inclined to give up?

They were in some danger of it.

Ques. In Israel's future, where does Rahab come in?

These chapters give us a kind of picture of the great principles of God. The sparing of a remnant is seen here.

There is power settling everything; then the walls of Jericho fall down; then at Ai God shews He will not go on with sin. The blowing of the horns just looked like so much folly, but God's power was manifested there. Only, at Ai, instead of consulting the Lord who would have told them His mind, they say, "Let not all the people go up … for they are but few"; so they send about two or three thousand only, and they are all beaten. Man's strength is no good even against a little bit of a city; if it is not the Lord's strength, it is no good at all. It only took a little maid to say to Peter, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" and that upset him altogether. When they go again to Ai, they set an ambush that nobody saw, and presently Joshua holds out his spear, and the ambush comes out, and the city is taken; but it gives them a great deal of trouble; Joshua has to bring all Israel with him, for they must all go together in practical recognition of their having failed altogether.

Ques. Will you say more about Rahab?

Rahab, the believer, is safe in the judgment, and out of the judgment; her house alone does not tumble down, though it was on the wall. "There shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left." The Lord knows how to make the difference. Another point there is to notice which is very instructive for everyday toil, and that is that though the inhabitants of'the land were a great deal the strongest, and Rahab knew that, yet despite their chariots of iron, their strength was departed from them, the counsellors of

Zoan were become foolish. Rahab says, “I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you … as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you,” etc. There was genuine faith with her.

Ques. Ought it to be ‘trumpets of jubilee’ or ‘rams’ horns’ in chapter 6?

I do not know.

Ques. You have put “blast-trumpets”13 in the German translation?

Have I? I forget.

Ques. In the Hebrew, the word “horn” is only found in verse 5, and nowhere is it said “rams”?

But if it were a brass horn, it would make no difference to the walls tumbling down.

Ques. What answers to the trumpet?

No particular thing in us that I know of. But all goes on the ground of confidence in the Lord before there is any display of strength.

Ques. Would you say more about Gilgal?

The reproach of Egypt was not rolled away until they had got to Gilgal. Before this, it was man looked at as belonging to this world, though redeemed; he was in the desert, and the reproach of Egypt was not gone. But when they have passed the Jordan, they take possession; in a certain sense they have the earnest of it all before they begin to fight. At Gilgal, too, they have got into what is heavenly, and they are eating the old corn of the

land. Now we ought to know what that is, and also that no matter in what form we may have to meet evil, infidelity or anything else, their defence is departed from them. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; as for the defences of the enemy, they will fall into ruin.

In Ephesians 2, we are put into the heavenly places, and in chapter 6 we find the armour for our warfare. It is a striking thing to make a man sit down in heaven, and then put armour upon him, for that is where he wants it. If you were to put this armour upon him in the desert, you would put it on him against God, but it is wanted in the heavenlies against spiritual wickedness.

Ques. What is the “armour of light” in Romans 13?

It is the same thing. In Romans, it is armour that belongs to the light; because there they have been brought into the light, and that shews us our danger.

Ques. Is 1 Thessalonians 5 the same?

It is all the same thing; I mean that the armour is the same. Sometimes people talk about the breastplate of righteousness in Ephesians 6 as divine righteousness, but I do not want that for armour. Divine righteousness is a question of my standing with God; but if I have to fight evil, I want practical righteousness, or Satan will get hold of me readily.

There is intelligence in Rahab; she can tell the spies how to behave themselves, to go to the mountain, and hide three days, and so on.

Ques. What about her falsehood?

We find plenty of that sort of thing in the Old Testament. Not that I defend the falsehood, I do not, though many

do. Truth had not then come out. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. So in Colossians, we have the injunction, “Lie not one to another,” and the ground for this is, “Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.” No such thing was true or known in the Old Testament. Again, in the same way in Ephesians, we have, “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour,” and the ground given for this is, “For we are members one of another”; that too was not true in the Old Testament. Lying is one of the three characters of sin; but the full light had not shone forth in Rahab’s time. And in the law it is not truth that is enjoined, but “false witness against” which is forbidden. Still, it is wrong enough now, though you will find many a Christian thinking it right to do so.

Ques. Was there not special beauty in Rahab’s recognition of God in chapter 2:11?

Yes. Her faith was faith in Jehovah, but it was shewn in recognising His people. Both Paul and James speak of it. And her faith was honoured, too— “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not.” We see in her case how God will defend His own. Her faith also it was that gave strength to Israel: “And they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.”

All this is preface and preparatory; now we come to the process. In the third chapter, it is not only “the Lord your God,” but also “the Lord of all the earth.” As such it was that He took them over the Jordan, though, of course, He was specially the God of Israel.

Ques. Is not this a type of the return of Israel hereafter?

Then, it was a provisional rest dependent upon their obedience, but it foreshadowed their full deliverance in the future. We have also the declaration that these are figures and types that belong to us.

Ques. Then Jordan overflowing all its banks figures the surging power of the nations?

Yes, though it is equally true that death, when Christ entered into it, displayed all its power.

The Ark here is Christ Himself who went into the Jordan in all its energy—the fullest judgment. And here it is more emphatically true of Him than in any other application of it.

Ques. Why “harvest”?

Bringing them into the land was giving them rest. Still it was rest dependent upon their responsibility, and therefore it failed. The only one who did not fail was Christ. But everything was made and given to man in the place of responsibility, that is to say, where man was set. Take Adam, Noah, the law, Canaan, priesthood, royalty, David and Solomon, or Nebuchadnezzar afterwards, and now the church; each one has been put on the ground of responsibility, and each one has failed, and each one of these things has since been taken up in the second Man, the last Adam.

Ques. How does the action of the priests, in carrying the Ark, come in here?

Nobody could carry the Ark but priests (Levites), and in doing it they are identified with Christ in spirit and in heart. Yet there was to be “a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure; come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go:

for ye have not passed this way heretofore." There could be no passing the Jordan unless the Ark went first into it, because death is the judgment for sin; it is that in Christ, and then it is salvation to us; but the Ark goes first and does the whole thing, i.e., Christ really dries up the whole way across, and that makes Jordan entrance into Canaan, instead of shutting the people out of it. It is a blessed thing to see that we have passed the Jordan, that our place in Christ is beyond all—beyond sin, beyond death, beyond the devil's power, beyond judgment, and in a way, beyond the world of which Satan is the prince.

Christ has passed through and beyond all, and we in Him, though of course we have our bodies yet; Christ has gone, sinless, into all, most blessedly; He was made sin, and came into the judgment: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" and, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness."

This was death indeed! But now He is out of it, having passed beyond all. And His place is made ours. (Our bodies not there, of course, I need not say.) This is an immense thing, and it is what the apostle means by "perfect." There was a failing man, who fell into sin, and Satan's power, and death. But Christ came down in grace, and He went into all; now, having passed through all, He is risen, and He is our life; we are in Him and He is in us; and we shall be with Him for ever. This is what souls need to get hold of.

Ques. It includes forgiveness?

The first thing is forgiveness for what we have done in our old state; but there is more. It is an immense thing for a poor sinner to say, 'I am past sin, and past death,

and past judgment, and past Satan's power.' Yet this is our standing, however much we may have to be tried in the wilderness. And the sense of such a standing is the first thing necessary to get conduct suited to it.

Ques. But may not preaching truth like this lead to carelessness?

Well, an awakening from God takes place, and then they say you have been preaching grace too much! This is an entire mistake. It is only by bringing out the power of what does practically change us that we get the change. And another thing, it is not only that what I am I live, but also that I must have an object. If I am a risen man, I have nothing in this world at all; we have to go through it, but we have no portion in it at all, for our portion is altogether and entirely in the heavenly places. And so it says, "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" I am not alive in the world, in Colossians, but by faith I am risen with Christ; then let us seek the things which are above where Christ sitteth. If we know deliverance from the things of this world which have power over the flesh, we have also an object, for "they that are after the Spirit [do mind] the things of the Spirit." That is what will meet all the errors that are current. It is not Christ joined to man in the state man is in, for Christ came to deliver him out of that state. Then people say, that is perfection in the flesh. God forbid: if I could have that, I would not. On the contrary, that which produces in me the desired practice here is the Christ who is not here. I am connected with the Christ who is not here, in order to be delivered from the influence of the things that are here. So that I would not in the least weaken the truth and testimony of the place we are

brought into. The first thing is the forgiveness of sins. I would not weaken that in the least, but our objects are given us in Canaan, and that is what is taken up in Philippians: “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” I need no calling down here at all. “Be followers together of me… for our conversation [living associations] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour … who shall change our vile body,” etc. Thus we have an object. Remember, holiness is an objective thing, as well as a new nature, “Christ is all, and in all.” He is in all, and that is as new life; but He is all, and that is as object.

Thus we see that Jordan brings us at once to Gilgal. There was no circumcision in the wilderness—none at all. In the wilderness we do not find that our hearts get weaned and that we are dead; nor can there be any Gilgal for us until we have crossed the Jordan.

And if we want this accomplished in souls, it will not do to lower the tone of our message; in our preaching, we must keep up the standing at its full height, and we must lift up the Object, too, in order to deliver hearts out of this world.

Ques. What if many will not have this, and will not go with you?

They will go on with you pretty much until you seek to take them up to heaven.

In Scripture, there is no such thought as that of the union of Christ with men, be it Christian or worldling, but we find that believers are united to a Christ in glory, otherwise it would be bringing down the new thing which is to replace the old, it would be lowering it to the old. The corn of wheat must die, or else it abideth alone,

only through death can it bear fruit; and it was to deliver us out of this present evil world that Christ gave Himself.

The world is a judged world, but those who are united to Christ are with Him in heavenly places. We belong, then, to Christ in heaven, and so we must walk like Him down here. The danger is of getting hold of the truth of this position in Christ, and the world still being gone on with.

There are things all around us which come in in an ensnaring way. They do not come and say, 'I am the devil, will you have me?' If we see the danger of the world creeping in amongst those where these truths are held, it is important then to give them an object in heaven. Sometimes they may want a good rap on their consciences, that will be a question for spiritual wisdom; but where we see the danger, we must present to them an object in heaven. It is of moment to remember that, as a matter of fact, we are living in the world, and only faith it is that lifts us up out of it.

Ques. It is not so much,' this is wrong,' and 'that is right,' as, 'this is not Christ,' and 'that is Christ'?

Yes; it is put simply enough for us, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." When one comes to the ordinary run of everyday life, such as buying and selling, etc., if a Christian be honest, and cannot buy and sell in the name of the Lord Jesus, he will not do it at all; that is, where there is any conscience.

God has called us to His own kingdom and glory, and if I lose the thought of that, I lose my standard. But if a Christian is growing careless, we may perhaps have to use a hammer to get at his conscience.

I do not believe we can be worldly if we are keeping God's glory before us as our own portion. And further, there is positive progress in knowing more and more of Christ; while he "that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." But if I lose that hope, I have lost my spring. Paul says, "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God"; there he is, cleared out from the law, and he has God to live to.

We must have an object before us. Again, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" —there we have the life; "And the life which I now hve in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" —there we have the Object, the Son of God. All the influence of His love comes in.

This is a great thing, but sometimes it makes one's heart groan to see the lack of this amongst Christians; and then worldliness gets more and more hold of them.

It is not merely a question of open sin that everybody can judge, but it is a slippery thing.

A straw shews which way the wind blows; they used to put up texts on the walls, and at first they were in black and white, but now they have all kinds of beautiful things, and so on. We ought to be careful about such things. Though only a personal matter, I name it to shew what I mean: I had slipped in Canada and broken my spectacles, and someone kindly gave me a gold pair of glasses. I took them and thought no more about them, for one does not look a gift horse in the mouth, as the saying is. But in Barbadoe the brethren meet in rather a dark place, and I used my glasses there. Well, the other day, I got a letter from dear S—— telling me he had

spoken to a brother about the rings on his fingers—as they are apt to wear them, for they are naturally full of vanity—and at once he answered, ‘Oh, they are not a bit worse than Mr. Darby’s spectacles.’ Got another pair since! This is very practical truth. There is a young woman, say, in a family, and her parents insist on her wearing a certain kind of dress, but others see it, and to them it becomes a snare. All this, however, is not like an open kind of sin that everybody can judge. “Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”

Ques. Why does it say “the priests the Levites”?

Ques. Are not the priests identified with the Ark?

Nobody but priests could touch the Ark. The Levites carried it, but priests only had to first cover it up for them to carry. For us, of course, the Ark is Christ.

Ques. Are there not four occasions on which the Ark was carried by the priests; first, here at Jordan; second, at the taking of Jericho; third, at the reading of the law at Mount Ebal; and fourth, when the Ark was carried into Solomon’s temple; the Ark typifying Christ, with whom the people pass the Jordan; by whom the stronghold of the enemy falls; in whose name they take formal possession of the land; and lastly, when He enters into His millennial rest?

Having met the whole power of the enemy, Christ has annulled it. He had met it at the Red Sea, at the beginning; but now it is its whole power in the overflowed banks, and so He has delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Joshua says, “Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail

drive out from before you [your enemies]. Behold, the ark of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan." The fulness of Satan's power being thus annulled, it is for us now to "resist the devil, and he will flee from you," not, and you shall overcome him. Power against us, Satan has none, if we are walking in the power of Christ.

Ques. What is the force to us of this title, "Lord of all the earth"?

It is more to Israel; in Genesis 2, "Jehovah" is used, though it is the name of God to Israel. He was not a mere national God, though He was indeed their God. He was the Lord of all the earth, and He will shew that out too; He is the Sovereign God. Two things there are, namely, God's government of this world of which Israel is the centre; and then the Sovereign grace which puts poor sinners in the same place as the Son of God, and that is the Lord of all the earth. After all, He who is the God of the Jews, is God over all, blessed for evermore. A national deity was a common enough thing, and so was the ascribing to it of things that were done. Jephthah says, "Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess?"

In Ephesians, God is the God of all, and Father to us.

Ques. Of whom is Rahab the distinct type?

Any poor sinner saved by faith, only it is a Gentile.

Ques. I suppose "Jehovah" in the Old Testament is Christ?

Yes. In Isaiah 6, the prophet says, "Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord [Jehovah] of Hosts," and in John 12:41, after quoting Isaiah's words, we read, "These

things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him"; the quotation is applied to Christ, shewing thus that He is the One whose glory Isaiah saw. Again, in Hebrews 12, it says, "Whose voice then shook the earth," but that is the One that "speaketh from heaven." And the name "Jesus" is "Jehovah-Saviour" contracted.

Ques. It says, the "living God"?

Yes, and a great thing, too, to believe in a living God, it is the very thing infidelity will not have. Every person believes in general laws, like the law of gravity and so on, but resurrection clearly is no general law. That death should produce life—one cannot get a cause and a consequence out of that! And God has founded salvation on that which is contrary to all general laws.

Ques. Is Joshua 3 Christ's death for us?

It is His death, but ours also with Him, and more besides.

Ques. There is no water there?

No. Christ destroys the power of death. And that is clearly seen the moment the priests' feet touch the water.

Ques. All Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me?

Yes, but that is atoning; here we have not so much that thought, it is not atoning work. The death and resurrection of Christ are quite distinct from His dying and meeting God in judgment. Death and resurrection give me God's deliverance and power as Saviour. If I only take the blood-shedding of Christ, I find in this the first thing I want, but there is very much more than that in His death. The different parts of this history in Israel make one whole, it all runs together. There is the blood

of the passover in Egypt—forgiveness; the Red Sea gives us redemption; and at the Jordan, we are risen with Christ, and going into the heavenly places. In God's mind it is all one thing. In Romans, we have the blood meeting God's eye; in Colossians, a redeemed people; in Ephesians, we are sitting in the heavenly places; in Galatians we find all three.

Ques. Would it be right to say that our nature is atoned for, or that Christ died for it?

Well, you must not let your mind work on that exactly. The burnt-offering, which was not for any actual sin committed, had blood shed in it, and atonement is there.

Reading 2

We just touched on chapter 4 without saying anything of the stones taken out of Jordan.

Ques. Some remark was made about the priests' feet being necessarily dipped in first?

They had to go into the place of death; and the moment Christ touched the power of death, it was broken. The priests continued to stand in the midst of Jordan while the people passed over, but the power of death was at once broken, the waters were cut off.

Ques. Why priests, and not Levites?

Well, it was not exactly priestly service, though it was what priests had to do.

The exercise of Christ's priesthood in heaven is a distinct thing. Dying for us is one thing, but now He is there for us, poor feeble creatures that we are on earth. Both priest and victim, He made propitiation, and died; that is what He had to do as priest, but that was not,

properly speaking, priestly service. In the sacrifices of old, the priest did not kill the victim, his service began with taking the blood after the animal had been killed.

Ques. Would the carrying of the Ark by the Levites in the wilderness be more direct service to God?

Yes, just so. But as to death, Jordan is Christ's death and our death with Him. God pronounces us dead with Christ, and then by faith we reckon ourselves dead; we have always to bear about in the body the dying of Jesus, and in that way death worketh in us. Only, it is impossible for death to work in me until I begin by reckoning myself dead.

Ques. Monks try to arrive at it without being dead?

Yes, and that makes all the difference. A very real thing it is that goes on when death works in us. And by death we are justified from sin, too. If a man is lying down on the floor dead, you cannot charge him with having lusts, or a wicked will, or a bad nature; he is dead. So God condemned sin in the flesh, for He is a holy God. But what am I to do seeing I have the flesh in me? It was condemned in the cross, and I find the condemnation gone, and death come. Christ had no sin, yet as made sin for us, the condemnation is past in His death.

Ques. But many a person has passed through the seventh chapter of Romans who has not passed Jordan?

I do not think so. A good many people have the truth in their minds who have not passed the Jordan.

Jordan in itself is not experience, but 2 Corinthians 4 is experience. In Colossians 3, it is, "Ye are dead," and if dead, I am dead to everything; then as result, one cannot press it too much, "Reckon ye also yourselves to

be dead." In Colossians, not only are our sins forgiven through Christ dying for us (which is the first thing we want as guilty), but when a man can say, "I am crucified with Christ," as in Galatians, then he is over Jordan. Ye are dead—mortify therefore. 'Mortify' is power; 'death' is weakness. And it is, "mortify … your members" —not, a living thing. When I apprehend what God says about me, that I am crucified with Christ, that is Jordan. Then follows the carrying about the dying of Jesus.

Next comes Gilgal. Again and again they went back to Gilgal. When that place was lost practically, as in Judges, then the angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bochim. But in Joshua they always went back to Gilgal.

Ques. Is 2 Corinthians 4 going back to Gilgal?

It is so practically. We go back to Gilgal in order to be able to fight. We must take our place there for ourselves with God; we shall not go on well in our work and service, if we do not learn more and more of ourselves with God. We shall not have God with us in it, except as we are with Him.

Ques. What is going back to Gilgal?

Carrying out with God our own circumcision of heart. It is at Gilgal, too, that the reproach of Egypt is rolled away.

Ques. Does not many a Christian try to reach Gilgal who has not passed over Jordan?

That is the monkish idea again.

In Colossians 2 we read, "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh ('of the sins'

should not be there) by the circumcision of Christ." Now there we have Gilgal and Jordan a little identified; but it is important to see that we are dead to the world, as well as dead to sin; for if a man is dead, he is dead to everything.

Ques. You said that they went back to Gilgal in order to be able to fight for God; why did they go back there after fighting for God?

Because they had to fight again. Their being successful in fighting was not the same thing as knowing themselves before God. The only way to maintain ourselves pure is to get before God, for self will crop up. In order to work rightly, we must get back before God, and learn that we are nothing. Self intrudes itself into gospel work as much as into anything else. Says one, 'we have had fifty conversions.' Oh, I say, you have had them, have you!

Ques. Were the forty thousand in chapter 4 circumcised?

I suppose so.

Ques. Do you connect Gilgal with the sword of Goliath that David had?

Well, yes, I do; that is to say, when he had it.

Ques. "I am crucified with Christ," is that not the Red Sea as well as Jordan?

Well, it is Jordan, but in a certain sense the Red Sea and Jordan are the same thing. Only, remember, there was no Ark in Egypt. At the Red Sea, it was death 'for,' not 'with.' The two coalesce; but the Red Sea was going out, while Jordan was going in, there being no wilderness in the purpose of God. If I am only across the Red Sea, I have not yet reached the rest in Canaan which is the

purpose of God for me; but when I am in Canaan, then I am seen in my new standing altogether.

Ques. In Rahab's case, she says that the dread of God's people had fallen upon the inhabitants of the land as soon as they heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea (chap. 2:9, 10); and then, again, their heart had melted when they heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Jordan; chap. 5:1?

Ques. And there was the leisurely way they went, with the distance between the people and the Ark?

Yes. No one but Christ could pass through death in all its power. He alone could do so, and dry it all up for us: "Thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

Ques. They were called upon to sink themselves too?

Yes, and unless we are very practically set apart to God, we can know nothing really about Jordan or anything else.

Ques. How are souls to be induced to pass through Jordan?

I do not think they ever do until they have got sick of themselves, and are glad to get rid of themselves.

Ques. Some say they go straight into the land?

That was Pearsali Smith's doctrine; he wanted to jump right over Romans 7 into Romans 8. I do not believe we can ever do that.

Ques. Was it not the good report of the land that drew them over?

Yes, it was so in the starting; but the question was as to how were they to get across the Jordan when they found its waters overflowing all the banks. That is what people find out with their bad tempers or anything else; they cannot get rid of it though they wish it an hundred miles off.

Ques. When the Queen of Sheba, who had nothing but the good things of this world, got to Solomon, she lost sight of them entirely?

Just so; if a man is running a race in earnest with a most beautiful cloak on, he will soon throw it off. Or if he has a belt round him full of gold, and must swim a river, he will throw it off first, otherwise it will drown him. But the way to get into positive liberty is to say, “I am crucified with Christ”; well, then, Christ does not care for gold or fine garments, or for anything else, they are not of any good to Him. “Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,” that is to say, I died with Him and I am risen with Him, and then, He liveth in me; and to sum it all up we find, not Christ is all in all but “Christ is all, and in all.” Christ is all objectively, and He is in all in living power.

Ques. Is not Joshua 4 the same thing as 2 Corinthians 4?

Very much so. There are the stones in the Jordan and the stones on the bank in Canaan. In Christ, I was once in Jordan, and that is all Jordan is worth in itself, but then, after all, I must carry it with me into Canaan, and bear about the dying of Jesus.

Ques. What is the meaning of Joshua setting up these stones?

He is always a figure of Christ leading us in the power of the Spirit, and these memorial-stones are a means of God to keep alive the truth in our souls.

Ques. Have the twelve stones in Jordan a deeper signification than those in Gilgal?

I think so; Gilgal is more the application of them. But even in heaven I do not lose sight of the fact of Christ having been in death; and here too, if I am going right, I never lose sight of the fact that He was down in the depths of death for me; so I bring it up with me, and carry it in my walk. And it is on the Canaan side I have this memorial that I went into death in order to reach there.

Ques. The power of death comes back again when the waters return?

Yes, and they become death for us now. The door is closed behind us.

Christ's death has closed all connection between us and the world, and this is amazingly important. Christ came into the world amongst men as the last possibility of hope as to God having anything to say to men; it was the last thing God had left, to try if He could re-awaken any response in man's heart towards Himself. Could He bring man's heart back to Himself? No, He could not. And God's work began where man's possibility ended. Christ was rejected and died, and now, in resurrection, He has left all other things on the other side of the water. It is really on the other side of the Red Sea, for we still have to go through the wilderness as a fact.

Ques. "Ye do shew the Lord's death till he come," what is this?

The celebration of that which our faith ought always to hold firm.

Ques. In verse 10, the priests stood still until everything was finished, does that give us any individual thought?

It is merely the passing of all Israel, the taking of them all into the new Canaan place. In figure, all the tribes were dead and risen, and a man out of each of the twelve tribes took a stone. While the Red Sea and Jordan coalesce, they are not the same; if they were only redemption, merely redemption, then I should be a person down here and in the world still. But the actual, practical, effect of crossing the Red Sea is to get into the wilderness—a trackless desert; if I cannot have a way in this world, I can have a way through it.

Ques. Did you say there was no "we" at the Red Sea?

No "with," because there was no Ark; it was a scene wholly between God and Christ.

Ques. Is, then, the Red Sea death as a fact in Christ?

Yes. But when they came out of the Red Sea, it was resurrection; on the cross Christ was totally alone.

Ques. From where, then, do we start on our wilderness journey?

Not from Canaan.

In Romans, there is no person risen with Christ. One there is alive from the dead, but no other is risen with Christ. When I come to "risen with Christ," I have God quickening a dead Man and me with Him, and then setting Him at His right hand. In Colossians, He has quickened us together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses; but in coming down to my place in death,

Christ has put all my sins away—the whole thing is clear. God has been glorified, and He takes both Christ and believers, and puts us together up there. Though not union itself, it is the next step to it. In Romans there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, but such, though alive, are not there said to be risen with Christ. Now, are we alive in this world? Then I ask, what are we going to do? Yield ourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead. And the wilderness then comes to prove such. True, we have tasted the grapes of Eshcol, but we are going through the world; when we are really in Canaan, grapes will be our portion.

Ques. If there was no Ark at the Red Sea, where, then, do we find the death of Christ there?

God's rod it was that smote the waters. He has delivered us by the death and resurrection of Christ, and not merely by the blood meeting His righteous claims—"When I see the blood, I will pass over you"—for they were still in Egypt, and there was no deliverance for them until they had crossed the Red Sea. But when they had crossed the sea, they were clearly no longer slaves, but fully redeemed out of their house of bondage. At the Red Sea, the great thing for us is that Christ was alone and we were not with Him. God was acting for the people at the Red Sea. It was the rod, i.e., judgment.

Ques. Do you say that Romans does not go further than giving life and justification?

I do; we are there looked at as men down here, actually alive in the world, and we are called upon to yield ourselves up to God.

Ques Does not Romans 6:3 take in Jordan?

No, because there we are not risen with Christ. So when Canaan is referred to in Exodus 15, it is, “Thou shalt bring them in.” The power of death, but as broken, is seen at Jordan, and there is baptism at the Red Sea, but not at Jordan. Notice also that in Romans 6 we are not baptised to our own death, but to Christ’s death. And so at the Red Sea, it is Christ’s death, not our death and resurrection with Him. Quite true it is that, in one aspect of the Red Sea, the whole thing is finished; for we find there the judgment of the wicked, the work of redemption, and the fact that we are brought to God—“brought you to myself”—and I do not know how anybody can go further than that. If I look at redemption, the whole thing is finished, but when I come to the experimental side of things, then I find something else, namely, Christ’s death and coming up in resurrection. But even then I have not “with.” So in Romans 5, “we also joy in God” as well as “have peace with God”; it is perfect present favour, and we “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” But then, from the middle of Romans 5, comes another question which has to do with experience, not with forgiveness, nor with redemption and the like. It is now a question of the state and condition I am in, not that of judgment and redemption. And then I begin to talk about “I.” I can, I cannot. And it is no longer, ‘I have been redeemed,’ but, ‘I have died along with Christ.’

Ques. Would you not say that in Romans 6 we get into Jordan, but that we do not get out?

Well, in a sense, but that is a bad place to be in.

Ques. Does Romans 6:8, take us beyond death?

Yes.

Ques. Does not “reckon “carry us to Jordan?

No, not exactly. In Romans, the Christian is looked at as living in this world, only dead to sin—the evil nature judged, but the place not changed.

Ques. How far does Romans 8: i, go?

As far as “in Christ.” But it is all negative there. We have been brought to God, and there is no condemnation at all, neither as regards the nature nor in respect of the guilt.

Ques. Is it not, then, a new state, “in Christ”?

It is in Christ, but the effect of this is death to the old state.

Ques. And Christ is our life?

Not looked at as beyond death, that would be resurrection. It is identification with Christ as to life, but not as to place. We have been brought out of Egypt and we are in the wilderness, a dry and thirsty land where no water is; that is where the Red Sea brings us. Accordingly we find there the manna, i.e., Christ suited to our being in this world looked at as a wilderness, and water also.

Ques. Is, then, Romans 8 entirely in the wilderness?

Yes, but it makes us look up. And while we are walking in this world, we want the Spirit of Christ. The possession of the Spirit is significant of the Christian position. In Romans 8 the Spirit is contrasted with the flesh.

Ques. If the Red Sea is only Christ’s death and resurrection for us, not with us, would that make the world a wilderness to us?

Yes; the Holy Ghost dwells in us, and we are strangers in the world, delivered from the condition we were once in. At the Passover God was Judge; at the Red Sea, a Deliverer. And we are delivered without as yet being brought into our proper place, whilst the world becomes a desert to us. That which constitutes the Christian condition is the presence of the Holy Ghost. A Christian is known in virtue of his having the Holy Ghost. There may have been a previous work of grace in his soul, but he is not a Christian in proper Christian standing until he has received the Spirit. It is Christ in us, as distinguished from holiness of character. The prodigal was very sincere, but though he had repented, he was not fit to go into the house, he had not the best robe, he did not know his father, for he had not yet met his father. Salvation is a real thing, and it is only truly known by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. People are often told to examine themselves to see whether they have it, but set a man to examine and see if he has eyes, he will never see them until he dies and has none. That is not Christian condition. Before the prodigal met his father, he was examining himself and saying, “make me as one of thy hired servants,” and then when he did meet his father, he could not say so at all.

Ques. What is the difference between the terms, “old man,” and “flesh”?

None, save that the one is old man, and the other is flesh. In Romans, the responsible man is seen in a new state; I quite admit that we find there the deliverance of the Red Sea, and also that we are brought to God which in that respect goes even further than Joshua.

Ques. What are the enemies dead?

It was the judgment of God upon all that was against the people; all that was gone for ever. But when we come to the actual condition of the people, then it is another thing. In the redemption at the Red Sea we see, in figure, the absolute place in which we are before God, viz., as fit before Him as ever we shall be in heaven. This does not give us exactly the whole of Romans, because the latter part of the epistle is experience. Jordan is a matter of fact, not of experience, although we have to learn it in our experience.

Ques. But have we not to grow?

Yes, but that is a distinct thing, it is not meetness. Hence the importance of seeing God's work clear and distinct. Jordan really has nothing to do with redemption, it has to do with my passing through a certain thing into heaven, or what is heavenly. We have also in Romans the certainty of God being for us, and of our being kept by Him. Yet it does not say, "whom he justified," then He also sanctified, but, "glorified." And then the apostle turns back, and says, "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" In Exodus 15 we are brought to God; all is changed, but it is in order to our being with God, without raising the question as to whether we are in the world or not. And I do not weaken my place with God by bringing out, 'I must' this or that, before I clearly get where I am. It is quite right to insist upon practice, and upon experience too; but what we want to lay hold of, as against the whole religious world, is that we are with God according to the power of redemption without any question of our being in the desert or anything else in the world. And if we

apprehend this clearly, we shall not fail to find that we are in the desert. We have, first, our redemption, an absolute redemption, but besides, God bringing us to Himself, and God going to bring us into a place which He has prepared for a habitation, and He dwelling in the midst. Then another thing, when I reach Canaan, I find the people of the land, instead of trembling, ready to fight with chariots of iron. First, we must be clear in our souls that God has redeemed us, and brought us to Himself, and that there we are. And then we have a great deal to learn, and judge, and find out about ourselves; but He has redeemed us first; up to that point all our experiences were Egyptian, like those of the prodigal, as we were saying, before he met his father. And very useful these experiences are, too.

Ques. What did you say the holy habitation was?

God Himself.

Ques. Then is it an individual thing and not a place?

That is the very point. It is not Israel which is the habitation, but Thou hast brought us to Thy holy habitation. God has brought us to Himself, in this passage, not brought Himself to us. And as a consequence we have now to learn ourselves; God humbles us, and proves us, and so on, but all the while He takes care of the very nap of our coats. Well, if we have the consciousness that not only we are redeemed this way, but also that, as over Jordan, we are risen with Christ, then we are ready to be enlisted on God's behalf. Then, too, we find the other side of God's blessedness. Now it is, 'I have brought you into a certain place, not only to Myself.' But as soon as we are across the Red Sea, the whole experience in grace comes in—manna,

the water at Rephidim, and conflict: manna came first, when they murmured and then got quails, too. God glorified Himself in thus giving them everything without reproach. But later on, twenty-five thousand from amongst the people died for asking for them. Moses, too, was shut out of the land.

Ques. When you speak of wilderness experiences, do you mean that God was proving them, and that they also were proving God?

Yes; in a certain sense both these things were true.

But from Sinai onwards, the character of God's dealings was different. God did not deal with them in government until they reached Sinai. After Sinai, God humbled them, and proved them, to know what was in their hearts. Before Sinai, He dealt with them according to His grace, not according to their responsibility.

In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul says that we shall all be manifested to God; but far from being uneasy about that, rather he says, I am always living as if the judgment-seat were there, i.e., for himself; whilst as for sinners, he adds, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." In a general sense, if we were all manifested to God, we should need no chastening. There might perhaps be some chastening for the purpose of shewing us something special, but I speak generally.

It is important for us to see what Scripture is at, and to learn to distinguish between our being brought to God by redemption, and our experiences, whether it be those of the desert or those of Canaan.

Ques. Are there, then, no experiences until after deliverance is known?

There were experiences before the Red Sea; they were thankful to hear that God had visited them, and they started, and then followed, “Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.”

Ques. Is that Psalm 46?

The Psalms are all experience, but that particular one gives us the deliverance of the last days, and there the power of evil is found in another shape.

Ques. Then redemption takes us out of our former position, but leaves our condition as it was?

It may or it may not be so.

Ques. “Keep yourselves in the love of God,” is that redemption?

No, though I may learn it in redemption.

Ques. Will you say a word about Amalek?

It is the power of Satan in their enemies. God swore He would have war with Amalek, and it would soon be finished if that were all, but it is in men, and so it is from generation to generation.

Ques. Why are the stones set up in Gilgal?

It is the death of Christ, but as associated with our new circumstances.

Ques. Is Amalek, Satan or the flesh?

Satan.

Ques. Why did the priests stand in the bed of the river all the time?

The power of Christ never ceases until all the people have passed Jordan.

Ques. Do you exclude the idea of the flesh from Amalek?

Well, I should.

Ques. What is Jericho?

It is the place where the curse was, and a sample, too, of Jehovah's power which set aside the whole power of the enemy by simply blowing rams' horns.

Ques. What of the wedge of gold, and the Babylonish garment?

That was merely the people gratifying their lust with the things of the world; and it was disobedience, too. In the desert there was no circumcision, for one must be in Canaan before one can circumcise.

Ques. Had they neglected it in Egypt?

No, they did circumcise there. Nor were they purged from their idols in Egypt. But we are told pretty much, in figure, what ought to be, very little of what was. If it is history, it is in the wilderness with no circumcision, and idolatry.

Ques. Ought they to have been circumcised?

I suppose so, but without talking about redemption, which is a distinct thing, they had not really given up Egypt. If I say I am dead, still God tests, and in a certain sense I am still looked at as in the world.

In the beginning of Hebrews n we find the two things distinct. Abel with his more excellent sacrifice, i.e., Christ, and the power of life in Enoch, and then Noah, warned of God, condemning the world. That was only the condemnation, not the carrying of it out, but the world condemned is a distinct thing. We have better

things, but I only note the fact that this condemning the world is brought in here.

Ques. Was not Enoch out of the world?

No, it was not yet condemned. It is a great thing to take Christ's death, and to see in it the condemnation of the world. But though Christ's death has lifted us up out of it, He does not draw the Gentiles until He is out of the world. There was redemption in His death, and death to sin to all that was in it, but the condemnation of the world is another point.

The reproach of Egypt is not rolled away until we come to the circumcision of Christ.

Ques. It seems to be rather a reproach of the wilderness journey that they were circumcised in Egypt, and yet not in the wilderness?

But all this we get as figure. The testing of the state of the soul is neither redemption, nor is it the having done with the world—Egypt.

Ques. Would not circumcision have been out of place in the wilderness, for they should have gone straight into the land?

Well, no, I suppose it ought to have been observed. But when they were circumcised, then the manna ceased as it did not apply to that state. But if I am in Canaan it is another thing, for there I am connected with a heavenly Christ. Canaan and the wilderness are the two parts of Christian life.

Ques. Does manna ever cease for us?

Practically, yes. Here on earth I have, say, trouble in my family, and I ought to think about it; it is insensibihty on

my part if I do not, but that is down here, not in heavenly places. Thank God, He does think of us here in this world of sorrow, and trouble, and all manner of things that arise. I am thrown into circumstances that test my faith. But, in principle, Christ has gone through it all; He was tempted like as we are, except sin, and so I want Him now. But if I get into the third heavens, I do not want there a God that comforteth them that are cast down. There is a very distinct difference between our enjoying Christ where He is, and Christ comforting us down here. If a man marries, he shall have trouble in the flesh, though it is quite right for a man to marry. Still, we learn that Christ is suited to our need, and we prove the comfort of His love in the time of trouble; in such circumstances Christ is manna. As saints, we go through both experiences at the present time, though not at the same moment. If I have a sick wife, I ought to feel for her, such things are sure to come in; but suppose that this same sick wife and I enjoy together heavenly things in the heavenly places in Christ, then it is like having our feet together in Canaan; but there is also the testing and the trying for us in the desert, and we find a Christ that is able to succour us, and to feed our souls with grace sufficient made perfect in our weakness.

Ques. Is manna a humbled Christ?

Not exactly; it is Christ come down into my circumstances, and humbled therefore only in a certain way.

Ques. Why are the relationships belonging to this world brought out in Ephesians?

God always owns the relationships that He set up at the first; sin has ruined them and brought in trouble and

sorrow, but in the beginning God made them male and female, and therefore they are all carefully maintained. We find these two things, first, what God set up in nature (and now also its ruin), and secondly, that man in Christ has gone into heaven; and He has sent down the Holy Ghost to associate us with Himself in heaven where earthly things have no place; but still God never disowns what He set up at the beginning. If a man has the Holy Ghost as Paul had, he says, I know no man after the flesh, but God still owns the other side. Of course, there are many exercises, but that which God set up in nature, He maintains in the fullest way. “Without natural affection,” is a sign of the last days.

Ques. “Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,” does not that apply in the wilderness?

Yes, to everything.

Ques. “Henceforth know we no man after the flesh,” what does that mean?

Just the fact. I do not meet a Christian merely in natural circumstances and associations, but as in the Spirit.

Reading 3

Ques. Is this aspect of the Lord with the sword drawn a continuous one?

Yes, in Canaan.

Ques. Is He, then, always looked at as carrying on the warfare?

Yes, and if we have not Him, as well as God’s armour, we shall not stand. Mark, the fighting is only when we get into Canaan, though the Amalekites are the same in principle.

Ques. At the restoration of the twelve tribes, will there be found any among them not true to the Lord?

No, “Thy people also shall be all righteous.” There will be this difference, that the two tribes will be brought into the land as a whole, but in the case of the ten tribes, the rebels among them shall not enter the land.

Ques. Then whatever there may be of rebellion in the millennium, it will not be from the ten tribes?

No, it will not, i.e., not from among those brought in, but it might be from among those born afterwards. Those who are spared, the third part, who pass through the fire, will be all righteous. There will be rebellion by the Jews, because they have rejected Christ, and will be under antichrist; but the ten tribes had nothing to do with Christ, nor will they have anything to do with antichrist.

Ques. But during the millennium, the whole twelve tribes will be as one people, and it is said of them, “Thy people also shall be all righteous,” Isaiah 60:21? Is this true of the ten tribes?

It may be so, for the rebels from among them will have been purged out. In Isaiah, we find the two grounds of God’s controversy with them, and their rejection. In chapters 40-48 there is the idolatry question, and then, from that on to the end of chapter 57, it is the rejection of Christ with a testimony of blessing at the end. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked,” ends the section as to Christ. Chapter 60, where the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and so on, seems to be more general; the chapter relates to Jerusalem. I suppose that here, and in Ezekiel 20, Jerusalem is taken as a centre, and then it includes all the land.

Ques. Why is it said, “this day,” in Joshua 5:9?

Because He had said, circumcise them this day.

Ques. Circumcision as a rule was on the eighth day, and now in the land, they have got into their eighth day and there seems power with that, and then they go on?

Yes.

Ques. Is the general thought of Canaan that of the heavenly places?

Yes, I have no doubt of it.

Ques. Does the “reproach” refer to the bondage?

It is the whole thing, the bondage of the flesh—the body of the flesh. Satan is the head of the world, the essence of which is the flesh.

Ques. And circumcision is the putting off the body of the flesh?

Yes, in Colossians.

Ques. What is the difference between our circumcision in Christ, and Israel’s future circumcision in the land?

I do not think they will be circumcised in our way at all; though they will get the fruit of Christ’s resurrection, it will not be in a dead and risen way, but as alive here on the earth.

Ques. The sure mercies of David, is that Israel’s hope founded on resurrection?

A dead David can give them nothing; it is really Christ.

Ques. Does not the apostle give us the moral power of circumcision in the end of Romans 2?

Yes, it is not outward in the flesh.

Ques. “Putting off of the body of the flesh,” is that for us, or by us?

It is for us in one sense, but it is realised by faith. You must ask J.B.S.

What do you say to that, J.B.S.?

J.B.S. It cannot be realised at all until you have got a heavenly footing.

Ques. Is not circumcision in Romans more what is for us, because it is in heart and spirit?

Yes. I was thinking of the “putting off” in Colossians.

Ques. “Without hands”?

Yes, it is not the mere Jewish thing. Colossians brings in faith, too, “faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” In Colossians it is, I think, more as to standing. Colossians shews two distinct things, a living man that has died, and a dead man that is raised—not a living man that is raised. The fact is of course seen in Christ. But resurrection, or rather, quickening, is not connected with dying and rising, the quickened person is the person who was dead; but in the other case, he has to die to the whole condition and rise again, or else he would be out and out dead; and that carries a great deal with it. But that is the fact as to Scripture. But I wanted to know, J.B.S., what you were saying about being past Jordan?

J.B.S. A soul that has passed Romans 7 cannot happily go out to the world, and yet there is no notion of being done with the world. In Romans 6, it is only sin and sins, it is not a question of the world at all.

That is perfectly true. Romans 6 only deals subjectively with state, but there being no resurrection there, I have not got into the new concern at all.

J.B.S. If a man gets into the new thing, it is much more difficult for him to give up prospects than possessions.

Because possessions never satisfy?

J.B.S. Plenty have boldness to enter in, in Hebrews, but they have not closed the door on the world.

Romans 6 deals only with myself, for I believe Romans means to keep us down here in this world, not to have our hearts in it, but still down here. It does look at us as "in Christ," but there that has nothing to do with heaven. All we find in Romans by being in Christ is, "no condemnation."

Ques. Then the thought of being in Christ, is not Christ in heaven, but only in Christ as in headship of a new race?

Yes.

J.B.S. A person will often say, 'I stick only to Christ,' but it is not Christ in heaven that they have.

Colossians does not, I think, take us into heaven, except in hope, only that we have life there, and our life is hid with Christ in God. The moment we are in heavenly places, the question is raised as to 'for' or 'against,' and it is a drawn sword; it may be very trying and painful, but directly we come up to a certain point, there arises opposition, 'you must not touch that ground.' It is, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? "Directly we come to a rejected Christ, it is "with" or, "against."

Ques. The failure of Moses to circumcise his child before going into Pharaoh's presence—what would that shew?

That I cannot go and deal with the deliverance of God's people out of the world, if I have not accepted death for myself to start with. It was before the law, and not by it, that they had circumcision, and where there is the promise of grace and blessing, this we can only receive through death and circumcision.

Ques. We must be there and know where we are, otherwise there can be no conflict with the people that are there?

I believe that we may get flesh tested usefully, and we learn it by experience, though that is not reckoning ourselves dead. But when we have passed over and reached the heavenly places, that is to say, when we are sitting there in Christ, as in Ephesians, then, and then only, do we get the armour. It is a totally distinct thing; it is not the Red Sea, nor the wilderness, nor anything of that kind, though in one sense we are always in the latter, but, looked at as a distinction of condition, we are past it. It is not a man dying who was once alive in sin, "in the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them"; but it is, "when we were dead in sins." Ephesians begins with a Christ raised out from among the dead and not known upon earth at all, and that is why the apostle says that he does not know Christ after the flesh, even though he had known Him thus. We have the full purpose of God in Ephesians, but when we come to fact, there is only one fact, and that is that Christ, when dead, was raised and set at God's right hand. We do not find in Ephesians a living Christ in the world. Death annulled the whole previous existence and I do not say, I must die

to all this, but, dead, I have been quickened. And as to my place, I have a place in heaven where the devil cannot come, though as a general thought it is the very place where the devil is, and in that governmental heavenly place, there he is, and so I have to put on my armour and fight. But to quicken a dead man is a distinct thing from making a living man die. Colossians may shew us that aspect of Christ during the forty days before His ascension, though it gives more—the life hid with Christ in God. It gives us, "risen with him," and Christ is our life, but death has closed the world. In Himself, Christ was always a heavenly Person, but He was out of heaven and death had come in, and if I try to go back, I cannot go beyond death. Romans carefully avoids resurrection; it says, "We shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." And "alive," also, we have there. This is important for us, for as a matter of fact we are not looked at as risen in Romans: I reckon myself dead, but not risen.

Ques. Does not Colossians, then, enter into the land at all?

No. We do not find even the rapture in Colossians; "your life is hid," and "ye are dead," that is settled; and we do not belong to this world. I am not going to have my heart developed here, on the contrary, my hope is laid up there; and when Christ shall appear, I shall have the glory. I may have eaten the specimen grapes of Eshcol, and pomegranates, and found them very good, but if we are risen with Christ, it does not say, 'ye have entered in,' but, "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth," for there is the Head. And it argues, "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments [principles] of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye

subject to ordinances." That is Puseyism and all such things as people in the flesh bowing their heads like bulrushes, etc.

Ques. Is that the reason we have not the devil in Colossians?

Nor have we the Holy Ghost. But our affections are to be set there in heaven; our connections are all there, and our life is there, though we have not yet entered in ourselves.

Ques. Romans 6 seems to carry us to another place?

It is subjective only as to what we are. We do find there, "crucified with him," and that I am to reckon myself to be dead, and alive to God, but not the new place.

Ques. "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him," 2 Tim. 2:11?

That is Paul's specific doctrine; it is Romans, and in measure Colossians, but not Ephesians. Romans gives us the fundamental condition of a soul with God— 'I am saved absolutely' —but not a trace of the mystery.

Ques. And I cannot live as I like?

No, not if you are dead. In 2 Timothy it is, "live with him" and "reign with him," but there is no entrance into heaven.

Ques. What is "the power of his resurrection" in Philippians?

There it is, first, "that I may be found in him," i.e., I want to know my righteousness with God, and next, that I may act and walk through this world in the power of resurrection which makes death and all things else nothing to me.

Ques. What is, “we are the circumcision”?

Dead to sin, morally.

Ques. Does the drawn sword mean the word of God?

Well, it is by the word, but the point here is that the moment we reach the heavenly places we must fight.

Ques. “Mortify therefore,” is that Gilgal?

Yes.

Ques. Could anyone get to Gilgal without being in the land?

No.

Ques. If a Christian is walking badly, you would not say to him, “put off”?

No, we never find in Scripture, ‘you must put off,’ or ‘you must die to sin,’ though I have to live as a risen man down here. Let us not confuse “mortify” with the “sword drawn.” When we draw the sword, we take Ephesian ground, and we must not put Ephesians in between Colossians 2 and 3. Mortify! Do I mortify anything in heaven? No; in Colossians we are on earth, not in heaven, and we mortify “members” on earth.

Ques. But is not Joshua 5 to prepare us to come out in chapter 6?

Quite so.

And then we wrestle, not like Joshua, with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers in the heavenly places; there only is it that we get into this kind of warfare. In Colossians, I have to mortify my members as the fullest development of divine life.

Ques. But if I am not mortifying my members down here, can I, practically, fight in the heavenly places?

No, you will not be in a condition to fight.

Ques. Must a soul go through the different steps in Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians?

Yes, I believe so, but in Ephesians I learn better than ever what Romans is.

Ques. The difficulty is that Gilgal is in the land?

Though we do not get the Holy Ghost in Colossians, and we cannot do anything without having the Holy Ghost, yet that is not what is unfolded in this epistle. We learn more by putting things together as Scripture gives them than by any arranging of them ourselves, for we are such poor finite creatures. Only we cannot put all truths together. Are you in the heavenlies or on earth? You say, ‘in heavenly places, and sitting there’; then I ask, why have you got such a dreadful cold in your head? People do not have colds in heavenly places. Christians are viewed both as in the heavenlies and on earth, but we cannot look at them in both places at the same instant. Our faith is tested and exercised as to how far we are living there, when we are not there. In Ephesians, we have the whole thing complete, as it is in God’s counsels.

Ques. Can one be over Jordan without being in heavenly places?

You mean, are we in Colossians or in Ephesians, but that is putting things together which Scripture keeps distinct.

Ques. Why have we the warnings against sin in Ephesians?

Because nothing is so opposite to sin as sitting in the heavenly places. Absolute contrast is what characterises Ephesians, the strongest possible contrasts will be found there. It is not so in Colossians, because there we have life and that life largely developed, and the Holy Ghost not alluded to. Ephesians opens with God's sovereignty, God's counsels, and it has nothing to do with the world. Suppose God came and chose us out of London now, it would be just as absolute sovereignty as if it were before the world was. But it is "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love," that is God's nature; and we are in His presence with His nature so that we should enjoy Him perfectly. Moreover, He must have sons there; He would have, not holy servants merely, but sons. That is what Ghrist was, holy, blameless; and He was a Son, and that is just what God counsels for us. Let us then take care that the flesh, which is still in us, does not shew itself. But in Colossians it is not that; there we are "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," but in Ephesians, the new man after God "is created in righteousness and true holiness." In Colossians, we are not brought into the heavenly places completely, but it is in knowledge. Union, in a certain sense, is assumed in Colossians. I am not a Christian at all if I have not the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost acts in me to make me know the perfectness of what Christ has done.

And then we have to contend with Satan's power in that which God has given to us, and so the sword comes in. As to the warfare, it is given more in detail in Ephesians. It is not lusts merely that Ephesians touches upon; when it comes to lusts, if we have not Christ we are captive in Egypt. But in Ephesians Paul first shews where we are

according to God's purpose, and then, as a supplementary thing, he speaks of Christ's love to the Church which He will present to Himself in glorv and of the warfare we must wage until we get to that place.

Ques. Does the prayer in chapter i refer to our standing, and that of chapter 3 more to our state?

The first prayer is to God, and the second is to the Father. Just as we have, "holy and without blame" before God, and, "predestinated as unto the adoption" as with the Father. But the prayer in chapter 1 is not that they should obtain anything, but that, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know and realise the hope of God's calling as an object before them. Then the other part of the prayer is that they might know the same power that had raised Christ from among the dead, and so on. In chapter 3 we have, not exactly God's mind, but Paul's dispensation of it, and he prays, not that they may see the things, but that, as a fact, they may be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, and also that they may realise His presence until they are actually sitting with Him. Until then, Christ is the centre who fills all things. And as He dwells in my heart, I realise that I too am in the centre of it all. The apostle prays that we may know the breadth, and length, and depth, and height. But besides that, we are at home in it all as we know His love that passeth knowledge. In the first prayer, Christ is seen raised up as Man; in the second, He is dwelling in our hearts by faith; then again, He is seen as filling all in all — "He … ascended… that he might fill all things" —but He dwells in us; and He is looking that this may be realised by us. But if we get into these heavenly places, we must have a sword.

Ques. Is “the Lord’s host” Israel?

Yes, Israel, not angels.

Ques. “Loose thy shoe from off thy foot”?

That is another important principle. God is as holy in warfare as He is in redemption. His holiness was proved on the cross: “It became him, … in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings”; it became God to do so. And He is just as holy in the warfare. Joshua has here to take off his shoe just as Moses had to do at the bush. We do have the Lord with us, but to have Him we must be holy.

Ques. Is the Angel, then, Jehovah?

Always.

Ques. Is this the fulfilment of God’s promise in Exodus 23?

Yes, only it is fuller still.

Ques. What answers now to the Captain of the Lord’s host?

Christ in the power of the Spirit. It is not like Moses, a kingly governor under the law. Christ has gone down below the creature, i.e., into death and the grave, and He has gone up far above all things. And then He gives. All our gifts come from His taking such a place. Ministry is founded on Christ having overcome Satan, and Christ filling all things. These two things are the foundations of ministry. He led captivity captive, and He gave gifts. The power of evil has been beaten, and the whole scene is filled with the glory of Christ. This makes ministry such a wonderful thing. Christ has destroyed Satan’s power at the cross, and He has given gifts to those He has

delivered out of his captivity. He has given to us to overcome him, too. Having gone into the lower parts of the earth, and having been carried far above all heavens, He fills all things, and He gives gifts. We see thus that everything in our service must be suitable to the holiness of God or it will be bad service.

Ques. You would not confine conflict to ministry?

No; giving a cup of cold water is ministry. In this country, we know very little of conflict in an outward way; though it is found in families, if not in open persecution.

Ques. Would you say that the dispensation of the present time is that of the power of the Spirit of God?

Yes, that is what it is.

That which characterises our condition down here is that Satan is here, but the presence of the Holy Ghost makes me the servant, not exactly of the Holy Ghost, but of Christ, and the distribution of the gifts makes anyone a servant of Christ in that particular gift. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost came to witness that in consequence of redemption man in Christ has gone into the glory of God. Nowadays, men look for religious liberty, but in the time of the Acts they were thankful to suffer shame for His name's sake. The world is always stronger on its own ground than Christians are; when Moses killed the Egyptian, he ran away from Pharaoh.

Ques. A great deal of this conflict is carried on now on our knees, is it not?

I believe it is. Prayer is before the ministry of the word. And before ever they went into conflict, they ate the old corn of the land.

Ques. Has this anything to do with preaching the gospel?

When I meet sinners, I find man is upon a different ground altogether; and brethren have to watch about this, for they are apt to bring in heavenly things to people who need to know that they are guilty sinners. But if I deal with a sinner, I deal with him on that ground alone, i.e., as a responsible man; and I ask him, has not your conscience condemned you for that? Do you love your neighbour as yourself? Were you as sorry when your neighbour lost his fortune, as when you lost your own? The evangelist, as such, has nothing to do with heavenly places; an evangelist is blessed just as he deals with a man plainly on the ground of his responsibility—you have killed the Prince of Life. But in Joshua I have a man on totally different ground. Still, in either case, whether teaching or evangelising, the word of God is the power.

Ques. But now people know so much of the word of God, it is familiar to them?

Yes, there are plenty of hindrances. I remember a brother speaking to a fellow-traveller, who answered him, 'Oh, I am quite sure that the pure in heart will see God.' Well, he replied, do you think you are pure enough in heart to see God? 'Oh, you are beginning to be personal,' said he.

The tendency of the heavenly things, when we are full of them, is to take our minds away from the desperate necessities of sinners. All the preachings in Scripture are uncommonly personal. We must, of course, preach the grace that saves. But when we are in Ephesians I say good-bye to evangelising. If I were to go to heathen, I

could tell them that God's Son has come into this world, and He has died, and He has been raised again; but if I were to say that in any of the so-called churches, they would reply, 'We all believe that, and have done so a long while since,' for all around us there is a popular knowledge of the facts of the gospel. But I preach to people that they are guilty, and not that they are lost. 'Lost,' is immensely important in teaching, but if we go and preach that, a man may say, 'lost! then there is an end of it.' When I look at the prodigal, and at his conduct in leaving his father's house, going away, doing his own will, and getting into such wretchedness and ruin—all is wrong, but there is nothing in that about his being dead in trespasses and sins. The jailer had the conviction that he needed to be saved; he knew that he was lost, in that sense, for God had dealt with his conscience. If I were to say to men, 'you are poor lost sinners,' they would know I meant that they will never be right with God if they do not repent, and so on.

Ques. Would you preach to a sinner that he is lost on account of his guilt, rather than for his nature?

Yes, just so. It is useful to shew sinners the root, if we put it straight before them, but not by saying, 'you have no power and you cannot come.' When I was converted, the quarrel about Calvinism was pretty strong, but I said to myself, 'How came I to be brought out, and all my companions left where they were?'

Ques, Where should the evangelist lead the sinner?

I should say he should lead him to God. It is true I am a member of Christ's body, but if I preach as an evangelist, I act in my gift, and I do not talk to a sinner about the one body; I look for the state of the soul I am

speaking to; if he is converted but wants peace, I speak of that, and God gives wisdom in that way. If we only act in dependence, a person will be brought to those who will bring the thing home to him. At first there was a plain centre to take souls to, but now it is not so. But if all were in order, one could not separate the two things.

Ques. Could a sinner be convicted of guilt apart from the actual word?

No, though that depends a little on what you mean by the word.

Ques. Could one be convicted by means of a dream?

Yes, he could. Probably a third of the poor people of England are converted through dreams. God in His mercy has spread a kind of general knowledge about heaven, and about hell, and about Christ, and this He uses in His own way; but a man is not converted by anything that is not of God, and all that we have of God is in the word. And the things that are in the word we must have, or it is not of God at all. Only, if people lean on their dreams they never get on. A man in Yorkshire went to a wake to play skittles and drink and all that kind of thing; and he said to himself, 'I am going to hell, and all the people here are going to hell as fast as ever they can.' His wife came to look for him, and he went off with her, and for a whole fortnight he was in perfect misery, but afterwards he said, 'I went to God, and God sent me to Christ, and I got quite happy.' The clergyman came and asked him why he went about to hear all sorts of people, telling him he ought to listen only to a regularly ordained man. 'Well,' said he, 'that is just what I have done; I went to Christ, and is not He a regularly ordained man?' One left the church not long ago who

told me he was converted by preaching one of his own sermons in a dream.

Well now, God's power was the whole thing; they might blow the ram's horns, but the walls fell down of God and Rahab was saved. Then a curse was put upon that which God had rejected and judged, and Jericho was not to be rebuilt. It was simply divine power which knocked all down. This is an immense principle.

Next, Achan takes of the accursed thing, and inasmuch as the Angel of His presence was as holy in warfare as in redemption, if they did anything inconsistent with that, the Lord would not go out with them. The mischief was that success had given them confidence, and this is always a snare; they say, Ai is a little city, it is not worth while for all of us to go up, a few is enough. And they are beaten.

Ques. What does the going round Jericho signify, as regards the character of testimony for the present day?

It is merely testimony, and that God will act; they do not touch anything, but the blowing of the trumpets brings God in, and He does the work. Now we have God's power, but if there is anything unsuited to God, He will not go out with us. After such a failure, there was, as there always is, a great deal more trouble than ever. All the people have to go up, an ambush has to be laid, and it is a regular business to overcome Ai.

If we use means and depend on them, we are not trusting God's power.

Ques. Why did Joshua stretch out his hand?

Ques. And the hands of Moses were held up in Exodus 17?

All that we may see is man's activity, but the real work is carried on by God. Down in the plain, Moses had to say to Israel, "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you," but, on the other hand, Balaam says of them, speaking for God, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel."

Ques. Do we learn anything from Joshua's hand not getting weary as Moses' did?

It may be that Aaron and Hur, i.e., intercession and purity, kept God in blessing; Joshua represented the Lord Himself, there was therefore no failure, he kept his hand outstretched in God's power.

Ques. Where are we to draw the line in the use of means?

Where the Lord draws it. I went about for years with P.H., and he printed handbills, but I never did. I would rather have five people in earnest than five hundred gathered out of curiosity. God may gather people either way, for He is sovereign. If we have five people, and look to the Lord and trust Him, these may all be evangelists next week. I dread getting merely into human means. And I do not want fanaticism either, because then you might say, 'hold your tongue entirely, and the Lord can do what He pleases.'

Ques. If brethren have a place in a town, would you take another room to get people?

Some people like to be out and I like to be in. Leave liberty in these things; for myself, I like to identify the work with the meeting. I would rather have it connected with the centre; there is such a thing as a sound mind in

judgment under God, but that is a very different thing from using weapons of warfare that are carnal. If Christ is our object, God will guide us.

Well, Ai is a very solemn lesson for us, and we have to learn it with God, so as to get back to the point where we started wrong. Remember, there is no difference between little and great with God. He takes care of a sparrow that falls, and He will burn up the earth. The question is as to what is right in His sight. So, at Ai, it was not merely a matter of power, but of judging evil. And where evil is not judged God will not use power. Joshua was terrified with the adversaries, but the Lord's answer to him was very simple, "Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?"

Ques. Ought not Joshua to have been conscious that Achan had sinned?

They could not have told perhaps that it was Achan, but if they had consulted God, He might have refused to answer, just as with Saul when in His own way He made them find out that Jonathan had tasted the honey. So if an assembly is spiritual, they will be conscious of anything that is grieving to the Spirit. And if they are not, this will not be the case, for they are then morally at the level of the sin committed. But if spiritually minded, they will be sensible of something wrong, and they will be looking to the Lord to bring the thing out.

Ques. Then does individual sin involve the whole assembly?

Where it is such that the assembly ought to take notice of it. But I believe things are more difficult to trace now because of the confusion. Still, where there is fidelity, there is power. If we hear that twenty-five Christians are

put on the top of a rock to be dashed down, and only one of them gives way, but the remaining twenty-four are dashed down, we shall get the blessing of it; there cannot be power in any one place without its telling on those in other places.

Ques. Suppose the case of an assembly where not positive sin but weakness is manifested, and not going on with God, what is to be done?

Pastoral care must come in, and they must humble themselves before God.

Ques. Is it right to confine humiliation to a few gathered together?

If it is only they who have it in their hearts.

Ques. Rather than involve the whole assembly?

Some may not feel the condition, but others do; though it is very happy if all in the assembly can.

Ques. But should they not all ask for light on the matter?

If they all agree, let them ask, but if they cannot agree, they cannot all ask.

Ques. How far should an assembly be humbled about evil in a person who has left it?

Until he has left, they are more or less concerned in it, and we ought to feel as Christ feels about evil.

Ques. But if a person has deliberately gone out, having done something very bad, what should the assembly do?

They should say so; he has gone out under a charge of sin, and he cannot come back until he gets leave to come back.

Ques. But if it is a known flagrant sin?

Very well, if a man commit forgery, and he goes out and says to the world, I have left those people, his flagrant sin being known, the assembly can say, he is gone away from us until he is permitted to come back.

Ques. Ought they not formally to put him away?

It says, “Put away from among yourselves,” but if you say he has gone, he is not among yourselves. You can say sometimes that a person has withdrawn and cannot come back. The action of the assembly cannot take place after he has gone. I should say, he has left under such a charge and cannot come back until it is cleared up. Remember, ‘putting out’ is a judicial thing. And there is another thing, I turn away from certain persons.

Ques. If you act and put any out, you bind on them their sins, but if they left, and you close the door, is that binding their sins upon them?

So far it is.

Ques. If one leave, and it is found that he held bad doctrine, is the assembly involved in that doctrine?

If he held it while inside, they are concerned in it.

Ques. Ought the assembly to act in such a case and take any step about it?

Yes.

Ques. But there is difference between actual public withdrawal, and a person saying, ‘I will not break bread with you’?

Well, you must try and ascertain the true state of the case.

Ques. But it is most important to make the act of breaking bread the public expression of fellowship?

Yes, it is. But if one be absent, I must see if it be carelessness, or if it be deliberate; if it be that continued, he must be put out.

Ques. But there is no thought in Scripture of anyone withdrawing?

Yes there is, there is apostasy.

Ques. But would real love to the brethren allow [this]?

If I love the children for the Father's sake, I do not go with them in things they may do against the Father.

Ques. When sin has come in anywhere, how far does responsibility rest on others around to help an assembly?

If they seek it, the Lord will shew how, the circumstances vary so greatly.

Ques. If you felt that the meeting had really gone wrong, could you stay in it?

I would never leave an assembly as such, unless I could say when I had left, that it was not God's assembly14 at all. But Paul stayed away, from Corinth, though he never actually broke with Corinth.

Ques. But he sent Timothy?

Yes, with a letter to recall them to obedience.

Ques. Suppose I go to a fresh place where there is a meeting, and as soon as I get there, I begin to do mischief and to use my gift for the purpose of gathering people to my ministry; and then, when I am asked to meet others, I refuse; what is to be done?

The great thing is to arouse the conscience of an assembly, and not to settle things for them. I could say to such an one, ‘you are causing divisions, and I shall give you the cold shoulder,’ as they say, and I should go on myself with those who are going on rightly.

Ques. And if he leave the meeting?

That is another thing, as we have seen already. But let patience have her perfect work, and that is very hard work sometimes. ‘Unanimity’ and ‘voices,’ I know nothing about. ‘Unanimity’ is merely a human judgment.

Ques. Suppose one had gone along with the man at Corinth?

Paul would have dealt with him as with the man in his wickedness. Only, when cases are not clear, you must wait on the Lord.

Ques. What is the Scripture for barring the door?

“Put away from among yourselves”; only, if he has gone out, you cannot put out one who is out, but the one Scripture applies to the two cases.

Then comes Gibeon; here it was a sin which remained among them. Israel took of their victuals; that was a human estimate of the thing.

Ques. Would this be one of the wiles of the devil?

Yes, it might seem a very nice thing to get a great and powerful city to help them, but it was using human means.

Ques. But the Gibeonites were wise in their way?

Yes; “the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”

11 Note.—This should read, Philistia. See New Translation in loco.

12 Compare Numbers 26:7, 18, and 34.

13 See New Translation in loco.

14 Note.—That is to say, not a gathering of saints walking in the light of the Church, and that God can therefore own as such. See as to this, “Letters of J.N.D.” Vol. 3, page 49.

Lecture On 1 John 5:1-13

The first verses of this chapter have a special character and that is, the testing and searching out what the true love of the brethren is, and then the apostle goes on to the great basis of Christian walk as set out in certain testimony which we shall presently see. As we are aware, in this epistle, the love of the brethren is that which characterises the Christian. It is one of two things, the other being obedience to Christ's words and commandments—the spirit of obedience and the spirit of love to the brethren. In speaking of loving the brethren, he shews us who these are, they are "born of God," and such we love. Dependence on God, obedience, and love are the characteristics of divine love. Variously developed in us they surely are, but we find them all in perfection in Christ. "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." There we have dependence. This has a double character. You have a strength that you cannot do without even though you are not dependent; and besides this, there is confidence in the strength provided. The Blessed Lord having made Himself a servant, we find in Him both dependence and obedience; and also love which was in Him the principle of activity. In us, it is mixed with imperfection, but it is the same thing in itself. This epistle treats especially of these two traits, namely, obedience to the commandments and love of the brethren. They manifest divine life in us, and they are always inseparable, because love to the brethren must have, after all, its eye upon God. It was so with Christ in everything. He gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God. He did

love us, but it was to God, and God was the object of His service; and therefore, when going to the cross, He says, “That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.” There we see the principle of love and of obedience. These two are inseparable. So you have those who are dear to Christ, but along with that the path of obedience, or it is not the path of real love. Love that is not obedient is never divine love. I cannot have divine love in my heart and not refer to God. When Christ came as a man, He never went out of the place of obedience. So with us; where they are true, these two things are inseparable, and if they are not true, they are not it at all. Just as a man has a body and a soul, but the moment they are separated, neither is a man.

Then the apostle gives us the mark of the brethren, “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God,” and he adds, “Every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.” Love to the brethren is characteristic. I ought to love every poor sinner, but love to the brethren flows from a specific relationship, which shews the value of what Christ loves. It is not here the activity of evangelising grace, but that which is distinctive in that a certain set of people are loved for the sake of another to whom they are dear, whatever their own individual character may be; and therefore it cannot be outside obedience. “This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” Who are they? All God’s children, “whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ,” etc. Then you get a counter check, and in this way, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.” It is not loving

a certain set of people we may know, but loving the children of God as such, because I keep His commandments; I know I love the brethren because I love God. Both sides are checked in this way, and very important it is. Practically, I may find one is more agreeable than another, and I have more fellowship of heart with one than with another, and so on, and there is nothing wrong in this, if there is more suitability the one to the other; but still I love all, even though the more abundantly I love, the less I be loved, and that is because of the character of the love. The characteristic of God's love is that, in its strength, its purpose, its activity, and its energy, all is dependent upon the love that loves, not upon the object loved. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The great, immense, proving, revealing act of the love of God is, that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. There is often a difference of communion between the soul and God, but still the love is characterised by this, that it does not flow from the object loved, but from the heart of Him who loves. With my heart and mind thinking of God and looking to God, whatever belongs to Him is dear to me just because it is of God. "Every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." If I am extremely attached to a person, I love his children, and not merely because his children are pleasant. But if I love others as God's children, it is proved and shewn to be love to them as such, because we are obedient to God Himself; but it is not the love of God to His children if it is not marked by the spirit of obedience. The two things are inseparable. I love the children because they are God's children, and if I love God I keep His commandments. This is just the spirit of the Christian, that Christ being precious to him,

love to the brethren and the path of obedience are always before him, and therefore also he is really pleasing himself.

Well, then, he next turns to where difficulties are found. “His commandments are not grievous.” To the natural man they are exceedingly grievous, for “the carnal mind … is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can he.” The only thought that the flesh has about these commandments is that it must never have anything its own way. Whether child or old man, each one of us likes his own will. Doing my own will is not obedience. But love to God makes His will the motive of my conduct. When we speak of Christ’s obedience as the pattern of ours, as to its spring, it is not in that way that the law deals with man. There is a certain character of obedience in all of us which is submission to another’s will when we do not like it. You see a child, who wants to run out and play, sit down at his father’s bidding to do his lessons; very nice it is to see such obedience, but Christ never obeyed in that way. He never had a will one way, and then gave it up to do His Father’s in another way. And the “new man” lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. It delights in obedience, and therefore, in the epistle of James, God’s will is called the perfect law of liberty, because if I tell my child to run our and play, instead of sitting down to his lessons, it is obedience surely to do so, but it is also what his nature delights to do. The new nature is perfectly obedient, and finds its delight in that it obeys. In Christ, it was, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” In us, we can trust God enough to wait for God to act; the new nature has not

such an idea of its own importance that it sets about to act for itself before it has got a will from God.

In the case of the Lord Jesus, in John 11, they sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick,” but He abode two days still in the same place without stirring. He had not a word from His Father to move. God was letting Lazarus die that He might shew the power of resurrection over death. “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God.” “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.” Presently, nothing will stop Him. “The Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?” But that was no hindrance. We find the true principle of Christian obedience which makes it a perfect law of liberty (and yet it is obedience) because the new man delights in it. Quite true, of course, that a great deal of breaking down has to come in, because of our actual state; whenever self works, it must be judged and broken down, for the true spring and motive of our conduct must be that God has a will. It is a terrible thing whenever the flesh is not so broken down as to have no will. Flesh does not like that. Flesh will reason, ‘Am I never to do anything to please myself, what a God you have got?’ Ah! that betrays where the heart is. But it is perfectly natural to the heart, and therefore His commandments are grievous to the flesh. The way obedience is made a delight and a blessing to us is, “His commandments are not grievous, for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.” It is what is in the world that makes it difficult, but “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” It is subjective, for it is a life in us; but it is also objective, for Christ is its object. That is where the heart of the Christian is set.

The new man born of God cannot live on itself, it must have some object. As the apostle says in Galatians 2: “I am crucified with Christ,” there is the end of the old man for faith; “nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” That is what he lived for, and upon, too. And that is what Christian life is, but the way by which it lives is by an object which is not in the world at all, it is Christ.

Then, mark the blessed confidence and the joy which are in it. Is there compulsion? No. “Who loved me, and gave himself for me.” The apostle finds the most blessed motive possible—Christ loved me and gave Himself for me. Not only has He redeemed me from sin for glory, but He has won my heart, redeemed me out of self into love to Himself. There I find the motive and spring. Therefore the victory that overcomes the world is faith; not looking upon the things that are seen, but having the sentence of death upon myself, “that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.” Power is there. The moment this is the case, the power of present things is gone. I am living (I speak as to the principle of it) by this Christ Himself, who has loved us, shed His blood for us, and given Himself for us. There I get the object that fills my heart with singleness of eye, and takes away every motive that would turn my heart in another direction. True, we have a great deal to learn, and hindrances there are, but this is, in chief, the principle.

We have always to overcome, but when the heart is fixed on Christ, it is not like a victory between two that are fighting, but, as Paul says, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:

for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung," etc. Well, if it is all dross and dung, it is no such great sacrifice or victory; but that supposes the heart to be filled with Christ, and then it is all easy. The new man is just as much alive when I have eternal life as when I get to heaven. I know it is only gradually that self is detected, lurking in a thousand places in the heart. But a Christian who has gone through the world with Christ wonders how people can be occupied with a kind of conflict which is nevertheless very real to a person in the thick of it. It is true that Satan always tries to hinder the energy of a life he cannot destroy, but the eye of faith rests on an Object that is not the world, but the Son of God. So, "who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" This blessed truth I have, that He came and won a place for me in heaven, and all the rest is dross and dung.

Now, therefore, 'I press forward,' that is all my life. I am not perfect in it, but that is what I am doing. I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. It is not, you must give up this and you must give up that, simply as a commandment, but it is, 'there is Christ for you'; 'there is the One who is sufficient for my delight, and I give Him, My Son, for your delight, the One who has given Himself for you and saved you.' And there, through grace, our hearts rest in Him. Well, then, He says, you must run on and get this, practically I mean; and therefore it is not, you must give up, but it is deliverance from the things the old man cares for; the power of Christ becomes an object to the new man which the soul runs after undistractedly and undividedly,

and thus it is delivered. When the mind is in that state, it is not a sacrifice, but a deliverance.

Having, in this way, put the Christian in his place, the apostle then lays the groundwork for it all. It is well, however, to have this quite clear. Man naturally is a slave, but what is so characteristic of Christianity is that it gives us an object as well as salvation; this the law did not do, it told us what we ought to do as men, but it never gave us an object or life, and it could not give power, because it was weak through the flesh. It tells me to love God, and if I ask, 'Why?'—not a word! Of course, this is only what we ought to do. The law is the perfect rule of what man ought to be (I do not now speak of a Christian), but it does not give me life, or strength, or an object, however useful it is in its place to convict me. It is the measure of responsibility for man, but it is neither the expression nor the power of grace. But the moment grace comes in, it is no longer a question of what I ought to be, but of what God is pleased to do; He has put me like His Son in His own house. This is all grace.

Then He leaves us in the pathway here below in order to have our senses exercised to discern between good and evil. And the Object that He has given us the while, is the One who is sufficient for the Father's heart.

Next, in this chapter, he takes up two things, namely, cleansing and life. "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." In the water and blood, I have, not a witness, but a state produced, and then I have the Spirit bearing witness. In the first, it is the needed condition to which the water and blood apply.

The witness of the Spirit has a double character, it comes and tells me all that I am by the revelation of Christ. Christ is the truth, and when the Spirit of God bears testimony to the truth, He brings Christ to me and shows thus not only what I am, but also what all men are —haters of God and full of lusts. This is the effect of His testimony. He gives us the fulness of truth, and we shall see how deep this truth really goes as to our state, too, and how that it has no limit. There is one question that comes first, and that is, supposing heaven is revealed and Christ is the object of faith, how can we be fit? We must be made fit to be in the light as God is in the light. The moment the light comes in and the conscience is reached by it, for it is no good otherwise, just as when the daughters of Jerusalem beat their breasts, Christ, turning to them, said, “Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves,” for you are all going to be judged.

Very useful is the law to convict, but it is too late, for man, the being to whom it applies, is already lost, and Christ came to save the lost. If a man has lost every farthing, and you give him a rule to shew him how to employ his money, ‘Why, says he, you mock me, I have no money.’ Your rule may be useful to convict him of the fact. Now all Christians will say, in terms, that man is lost, and yet they will speak of him as under probation. In one sense the Christian, when under grace, is in probation, but man, as such, has been tested and probation is over. Even one of old could say, “Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” That is all settled. “By works of law no flesh shall be justified.” “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.” That does not mean bad works, but such that are on that principle, for

they have not kept the law. But God being fully revealed, the question now is as to whether I can walk in the light as God is in the light; it is not whether I have walked by the law rightly, but am I in a state to stand before Him? And I know I am not. The day of judgment is anticipated in the conscience, and I "cannot answer him one of a thousand." Job owns that God loves righteousness, but "if I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." That is to say, if I fancy I am right, He shall plunge me in the ditch—shew me what I am—and I shall come out of it, so that my own clothes shall abhor me; Job 9.

I must, then, be made fit for God according to what He is in nature and holiness. The soul feels that God is perfectly holy, and I am not. That is what we need, and that is what we have found in Christ. He came not by water only. We have the word of God—the revelation—and by it we are begotten, though that is not exactly its character here, true as it is; we are "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created" him, and again, "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." We have thus the thought of the mind and the perceptions being completely purged by the application of the word; the spirit and principle of the thing applied to the conscience, the affections, and the heart; and the judgment of good and evil formed according to the revelation of what God is in Christ, not according to natural conscience or to the law. Where did the water come from? Out of His dead side. That is to say, that in this respect I see, not cleansing at all, but the absolute death of the old man, and that there must be a new creature. There never has been anything fit for

God, in any shape or in any way, in the old man. I may reckon it dead, but it is always and simply in opposition to the Spirit of God. The two are contrary the one to the other. But the blessed word of truth comes to me in the quickening power of God, and it brings this cleansing water to my soul and conscience, and with such a revelation of God in Christ as to make me know what the flesh truly is.

This character of cleansing we find in Ephesians: “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” “To himself!” And fit for Himself!! The word brings down to us the nature and character, the glory and purity, and the blessedness, too, of the place it comes from. If I may so speak, Christ has in a way humanised it; but man would not have it, and just because it was such, they refused it, and Him too; they spat in His face and crucified Him. So now God comes in, in power and grace, so as not to leave one atom of flesh in His presence; we find many other details besides, but this has taken place, and the moment I see this, I am entitled to say, “I am dead.”

The water which cleanses is that which brings the whole truth of God to my soul, and judges all that I am, but at the same time, it is that which, in the power of God’s Spirit, puts me in the presence of God, as after God created in righteousness and true holiness. That is the water. There could be no living connection with Christ for man in the flesh; He must be a dead Christ before the water could come out which purifies, so that the purpose of God might be accomplished. Quite true, there

was also the bearing of sins, but this is not all; we are cleansed, and our sins have been put away; but we must be set in God's presence according to His own character and intentions in love. It is not all the truth that Christ has met our responsibilities on the cross and that He has died for them. He has cleared me perfectly as regards my responsibility as a man. But what, then, is God to do with me? My being merely cleansed does not tell me what He is going to do with me. Since the world began man has been a guilty sinner, but before the world began die thought and intention of God was to put man in His own glory on the ground of Christ's finished work upon the cross. Not only has He cleansed my guilt, but He has glorified God by the work He has wrought, and this enables me even now to stand in God's presence. "Herein has love been perfected with us that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, that even as he is, we also are in this world," 1 John 4:17.

This is more than merely sin and guilt being put away. I have my conscience perfect, and I delight in holiness itself. It is true that Christ becomes more and more precious to us, as we grow up to Him who is the Head, but we must first know how we can stand before God. Jesus came by water and blood. Not only has He cleansed our hearts, but He has cleansed us for God's eye, and made our consciences perfect. This is what He has done, and therefore His precious blood which cleanseth from all sin has so cleansed us that God cannot see sin on us. God no longer sees what we have wrought, but what He Himself hath wrought. As of old it was said, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." That was at the end of the wilderness journey. Looking back at Massah,

Meribah, and Kibroth-hattaavah, we hear their repeated murmurings, and then we see Balaam at the top of the mountain, saying, “He hath not beheld, etc… Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!” Why, He has wrought according to His own exigencies in righteousness and holiness!

And so I stand before God according to the perfectness of Christ’s work, but I am cleansed according to the claims of God in the light, i.e., according as God is in the light. And then we have these three witnesses, and they agree in one: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. How do we get the Spirit? Can the Spirit come and help the old man, or take the spiritual part of man and lift it up? No. Christ must first be killed; there must be a total breach with man as he is before we can have the Spirit. It was a work carried out in grace, “for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” There, then, is the end of the story as regards the flesh. I am not now talking of sins. Having wrought that perfect work, Christ goes up into the presence of God, and the consequence is that the Spirit comes down. And of what is He the witness? Why, that the world will not have God at all, but has utterly rejected Christ, and that therefore the world shall see Him no more. “He will reprove the world … of righteousness, because I go to my Father.” This being so, Christ is now sitting at the right hand of God, and the Spirit of God has come down, the witness that the world shall see Christ no more, and that those who believe belong to Him in heaven. There can, therefore,

be no longer any bond between the world, as the world, and God. Having taken His place in heaven as Man in glory, Christ sends down the Holy Ghost that I may know my separation from the world, which is crucified to me and I to it, and also that I may know my place up there in Him. Spirit, water, and blood agree thus in witnessing that man is unclean and away from God.

But where do I learn the condemnation of man? In Christ's bearing the judgment. Where does the cleansing come? In Christ's dying for me. Where is the judgment of sin in the flesh? In Christ being made sin. On the other hand, Christ has given me title to a place before God according to what He has done; He gives the Holy Ghost who takes of the things of heaven and shews them to me and presents to me this blessed Object, Christ, so that I follow hard after Him. These three agree in testimony. While we are waiting for God's Son from heaven, the Holy Ghost comes, as the result of Christ's perfect work, and tells us that we are fit for a place with Christ in heaven, that we are of God, and that Christ is righteousness of God to us. This place in heaven He has won for us. "Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." These three witnesses agree in testimony as to what the flesh is, and also to the perfect work which has been wrought, and which cleanses, redeems, justifies, and unites us to Christ. Founded upon this work that Christ has wrought, we know that we have a place there where He is. This place is of sovereign grace, surely, and in virtue of the work by which God Himself has been glorified.

One word more. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." If I do believe, I have the blessed consciousness of all this, I have the power of the

thing in myself; as to the certainty of the ground of it, I have the witness in myself. But a person says, 'Oh, you cannot prove that.' I reply, 'I have it.' Suppose someone comes to prove to me that I do not live, I do not try to prove that I live, I do live. He who does not receive the witness makes God a liar. "Record," "witness," "testimony," are all one word in the original. We have been speaking of cleansing, and of the witness to it. I have the cleansing by water and blood, and I have the Spirit's witness, but that which I know I have is nothing less than Christ. God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Christ has life in Himself, and He that hath the Son hath life. It is not that he has Adam or a mended Adam, but he has a totally new thing. I have now Christ Himself as the life in which I live. It is never said that this life is in the Christian, though he has it, for he that hath the Son hath life, and it is nothing less than that which Christ is. It is Christ. I have cleansing, righteousness, and the Spirit as the seal of it all, the testimony is there; it is by these testimonies that I know I have Christ, and this is eternal life. The world has not got life; responsible they are to believe the testimony, but they have not life. And therefore one cannot expect them to understand the convictions of a Christian. One may try to shew them the folly of their reasonings about the truth and the record, if one is clever enough to do it, and if you are not, they will baffle you. But the Christian has met God in Christ, and Christ is his life. I know it apart from reasoning. And now He dwells in me. When the believer has it, he has the witness in himself, and he dare not think anything else but that the perfectness of that blood-shedding has cleansed him from all sin. As to faith, we have done with the old man, sin, and the world. Our only place is in Christ, and we are therefore just

waiting till He comes to receive us up into the glory, that where He is, there we may be also.

How far can our hearts go with this blessed truth, when He says that we have the witness in ourselves? Have our souls found deliverance from the world in the consciousness of our place before God in light, according to God's own work and God's own light? "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." We are of God. And Christ is the righteousness of God to us, and there we are. The Lord give us to apprehend more distinctly what Christ came to do, and also the consciousness of His way of doing it —testifying what man was without this—without God and hating God—but testifying also to this by loving us, and by giving Himself for us!