
THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF

Including
The Spirit of Truth
The Holy Scriptures

“Typewritten Notes” of addresses by

PERCY W. HEWARD

Republished by Stanley C. Bown. London, England

Reprint in December 2012 by

**Scriptural literature for Believers, Gottlieb-Daimler-Str.1,
74343 Sachsenheim, Germany**

Table of contents

Page	Title	Part
1	The Priesthood of the Lord Jesus	1
12	“Greater” Christ exalted	1
20	The Deity of the Lord Jesus set forth in the Earlier Scriptures	1
29	Christ in the Psalms	1
38	The last week of Christ's earthly life and the first in resurrection	1
53	Christ as the Shepherd	2
63	The Humanity of Christ	2
76	Various aspects of the Death of our Lord Jesus Christ	2
88	The Resurrection of our Beloved Lord	2
101	Jesus is the Christ the Son of God	2 / 3
112	The unveiling Messianic Prophecy	3
125	Christ's relation to the Law	3
136	The Prayers of Christ	3
144	The Riches of the Lord, and of His Redeemed	3
157	The Operations of the Holy Spirit	4
169	Some Aspects of the Holy Spirit's Work	4
181	The Holy Scriptures	5
195	Inspiration	5
206	God's Gracious provision for His People in the Handing Down of His Truth	5
217	The Interpretation of Scripture	5
229	An extract from: “Help and Guidance through God” Gracious hand in History	5

Part 1

**« THE THINGS
CONCERNING HIMSELF »**

Percy W. Heward

"THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF"

Part 1.

The writings of our brother Percy W. Heward are well-known and have been a blessing to many.

But for many years (from 1911 onwards) the notes of some of his addresses were available, under the title of "Typewritten Notes". These 220 addresses were loaned for a fortnight, on request. Most of them still exist, but some in poor condition.

It has been suggested to me more than once that this ministry from the past, would be a source of help now, and with this I agree, but the amount of work involved in publishing them, has always made me feel that the task was impossible.

However, just lately I have looked again at these parcels of 'typed addresses, and thought what a pity it is that they should be lying there, collecting dust and doing no good.

I have therefore, sorted the titles into subjects, and now offer, to begin with, five of our brother's addresses concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. Whether the Lord will enable to do more later I do not know.

But may these words spoken so many years ago (some indeed before I was born), by a brother whom the Lord has used among us to our great spiritual profit, be used again to the blessing of another generation, and be to God's glory.

S.C.Bown.

oOoOo

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE LORD JESUS

Outline:-

1. Parallels and contrasts with that of Aaron.
2. "After the order of Melchisedec"
3. The heavenly sanctuary.
4. Human counterfeits.
5. Believers and their priestly position.

6. Have I an Advocate with the Father? A personal question.

I want, dear friends to talk tonight about the Lord Jesus Christ as a Priest. We often think about Him as God. We often think about Him as Man; that wonderful Man Who always did what was right, Who said what was right, Who thought what was right, and never did or said, or thought, one thing that was wrong. We often think of the Lord Jesus Christ as the One Who died, Who died for sinners that He might take away their sins, that He might bear their sins in His own body on the tree. We often think of the Lord Jesus Christ as the One Who is our Lord, if we are those who have come to Him, the One Who is our Lord, and Who lives, always lives, lives for ever, and with Whom His people will be for ever, for He is soon coming back to take His people unto Himself. We love to think of the Coming back of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He Who came to die will come back, and His people will be caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air, and so will they be ever with the Lord. Then shall He come down on to this earth where men killed Him, and He will reign over men, - a King, and more than A king, - THE King, - the King Who will reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. We like to think of the Lord Jesus Christ in a number of ways; we like to think of our Lord Jesus Christ and a number of His Names. All His Names tell what He is, but He is beyond what we know of all His Names, He is such a wonderful Saviour, and it is our hearts' longing that not only may we talk about Him, but that like those on the road to Emmaus hundreds of years ago, we may feel while talking of Him that in some way He Himself draws near and talks with us. But this evening I want to speak about one special Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and one special work, a great work, a work which has a number of other works inside it, yet one special Name, and one special work. The Name is the Name Priest; the work is what one may call Priesthood, that is to say, doing the work of a Priest.

Our first point reminds us that there was a priest, Aaron. You remember how that when God brought up Israel out from Egypt and brought them into the wilderness, He said, Let them make Me a Holy Place, that I may live among them. You remember how that God asked for their gold and for their silver and their other things to be brought together that the tent, or tabernacle as it was called, might be built; And you remember at the same time that God said Aaron, Moses' brother was to be the priest, the one to go into that tent, and tabernacle, and to see to the killing of the sacrifices which died in the place of the sinners. Thus Aaron and his sons were made the priests. It is wonderful to see

God's love, for Aaron was the one who made the golden calf, yet God made Aaron His priest. Again, in Aaron's family Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire unto the Lord which He had not told them. They died, but there was Eleazar and Ithamar the two other sons of Aaron's family and so Aaron's two sons went on with his work afterwards, and then their sons went on with the same work afterwards. The family of Aaron was a family of priests. The whole of the larger family, or tribe, of Levi was specially picked out to do many things for God, but beyond all, the family of Aaron was the family to draw near to God, as a priestly family. Now in what way was the Lord Jesus Christ like Aaron the priest? And in what way was He not like Aaron the priest? First, in what way was the Lord Jesus Christ like Aaron? Rather, may we not say, In what ways, for in many ways Christ was a priest like Aaron! Aaron was one whom God picked out to be His priest, and the Lord Jesus is called the picked out One, the Chosen One, the Elect One. Aaron did not lift himself up to make himself a priest, and the Lord Jesus Christ was the One Who came down, Who made Himself low, so we cannot say He lifted Himself up, for He was the Humble One. But not only so, Aaron was the ONE High priest, and Christ is the One alone. Aaron, again, was the one on whom the oil was put, to anoint him, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the One Who is marked out not merely with oil, but by the work of the Holy Spirit, marked out to be that Great Only Priest, the Only One Who can go near unto God the Father, for it is only in Him that anyone else can dare to go near unto a Holy God. Again, Aaron was the high priest who went into the presence of God with the blood of that perfect animal which had died as a sacrifice. The Lord Jesus went into the presence of God with blood, not the blood of an animal, but His Own Blood, Which He had in love to poor lost sinners poured out, and thus He made a way, that way which is said to be a newly slain way, into the presence of God. A way by His blood into the Holiest of all, as Scripture puts it in the letter to the Hebrew Christians. Mark the words, "Having boldness to go into the way in of the Holiest, in the blood of Jesus". Yes, Christ like Aaron was a Priest Who had a sacrifice that died. And again, Aaron brought blessings to his family; and Christ - Oh what blessings He has brought to His family! Not that His family belong to Him merely in the same way as Aaron's sons belonged to him. They belong in a far, far closer way, for Aaron's sons were his by ordinary birth, but Christ's people are His by heavenly birth. They are so close unto Him they are said to be in Him, counted with Him, joined to Him, and never to be taken away from Him. If Eleazar was blessed because of Aaron, much more are Christ's people blessed because of Him, as Hebrews 2 beautifully

puts it, where the Lord Jesus Himself speaks, "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me". But if the Lord Jesus Christ was a Priest like Aaron in these ways, there are many ways in which He was not like Aaron, because He was ever so much greater than Aaron. Shall we think of a few contrasts? Ah, you say, I know one. He was God, and Aaron was a man. That is quite true, and, dear friends, if we are to think of the ways in which Christ was different from Aaron we shall find many things. But I want to-night rather to speak of the ways in which Christ AS A PRIEST was not like Aaron. The first point is that which we have been shown in Hebrews 7. You remember the words, the Holy Spirit says in verse 21, that those priests were made without an oath. God is pleased more than once to speak of His oath, that is to say not only His firm word, but also His firm word made manifest as doubly sure. Now as to Aaron we are not told there was an oath; but as to Melchisedec, another priest, we are told of an oath, and Christ is said to be like him. The word 'oath' comes to show how much more sure Christ's priesthood is than Aaron's. Again, Hebrews 7 tells us that those priests were not able to continue because they died. We read how Aaron went up a mountain and he died. We are told how Eleazar the son of Aaron died and was buried in a hill that belonged to Phinehas his son. Again we go on, and we find a high priest Eli, - he fell over to the ground and he died. All the priests of Aaron's family died. Notso Christ, He ever lives. He is a Priest Who is everlasting. These priests were not able to keep on their work, but He lives to keep on His work. Never will He be constrained to give it up, never will He be tired of the work that He took in hand. He ever lives. But perhaps someone will say, "What do you mean, Christ does not die? Why the great thing about which we hear is that He did die, and if He had not died He would not have been a Priest, for there would have been no sacrifice"? Let me make it clear that Christ AS A PRIEST He did not die. Christ was fulfilling more than one office at once. He was God, yet He was Man. He was Sacrifice, yet He was Priest. As Priest He did not die, for we read that HE OFFERED Himself without spot to God. As Sacrifice He died, as Priest He did not die. Do not misunderstand me. The Lord Jesus the glorious perfect ONE died, really died, died in the place of sinners for without the pouring out of blood there is no forgiveness of sins, but as to His priestly work there was no death. We do not look upon Him as a Priest when lying in the grave, I mean when His body was lying in the grave. The special thought there brought out is that He had died for sinners. We look upon Him as manifestly a Priest when He laid down His life, and yet more manifestly when He went up into heaven. He was the Same Lord Jesus when He walked this earth, and when He died and when He rose, but at one time one part of

His work is brought out and at another time another part of His work is more brought in front of us. And perhaps I shall make it clear if I put it a little differently and so instead of putting it that He as a Priest did not die, His priesthood did not die. You will follow what I mean by the words. "He as a Priest did not die". He died, but not as a Priest. Not showing forth His priesthood by dying, nor did His priesthood die; in fact His very dying led on to showing that Priesthood more than ever before, for then He was able to take into heaven itself that wonderful finished work, and before the throne, yes, and on the throne of God to be the One Whose work was done and so He could sit down as a Priest Who ever liveth to pray for those for whom He died. This One continueth ever. He goes on always. Aaron passes away, and Eleazar too, Christ goes on, He is better than Aaron. Further Aaron's priesthood counts from the book of Exodus; the priesthood of Melchisedec is in the book of Genesis, Genesis is before Exodus; Abraham was before Moses. The priest who came to Abraham was Melchisedec, and Christ is said to be a Priest like Melchisedec, - then He is counted before Abraham, and thus is greater than Aaron once more. May we not add, God has shown us in Hebrews 7, that Aaron was one who came from the family of Abraham. Abraham therefore can be said to have all his family counted with him, and that as he pays the tithes to Melchisedec he really says that the priesthood of Melchisedec is greater, and that Melchisedec is greater than Aaron, who was only one of Abraham's own family! The Lord Jesus belongs to the Melchisedec priesthood, as Psalm 110 puts it, "Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec".

Again, Aaron was a priest on earth, the Lord Jesus is still a Priest in heaven, and heaven is above earth. He is greater than Aaron. Yet more, Aaron always had Moses with him, and Moses was greater than Aaron. After Moses died, and Aaron died, there were two together, Joshua and Eleazar. Eleazar was not left alone, he had someone with him who was as great as himself. But the Lord Jesus Christ stands alone. I might express it this way, Joshua was a kind of king to Israel, I say 'a kind of king' for he was not a king, inasmuch as God did not want Israel then to have a king since He Himself was their King; but Joshua looked after the ruling of the people, and looked after the people going into the land, so that Joshua took the place of a king as far as God meant anybody to take it. Now Aaron and Eleazar were not kings even in that sense. But Melchisedec was. Melchisedec was a king, as well as a priest, and Christ is said to be a Priest not like Aaron but like to Melchisedec, a King-priest. Ah.

He is King more than Moses, a King more than Joshua, a King more than all others, for is He not called King of Kings, and Lord of Lords? Yet, further, Aaron's priesthood never took away sin, for in the offerings the priest stood daily offering oftentimes the SAME sacrifices which could never take away sins, but THIS ONE when He had made one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God. There were no seats in Moses' tabernacle, the priests always stood, their work was never done, but Christ having done His work went up into heaven, and He sat down to show His work was done, and sin was taken away; that the sin was blotted out. He had made one sacrifice for sins for ever, and now a great number of people whom no man can number are able to say that their sins are gone, and gone for ever, because He took their sins in His own body on the tree, and was wounded because of those sins. So we see that in every way Christ is better than Aaron. As it says in the chapter we have just read (Hebrews 7), the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God. - Many other things could we mention. Aaron had to offer FOR himself because he was a sinner. Christ offered Himself, because He was not a sinner. Aaron made mistakes because of which he died earlier than he would have died, had he been faithful. Christ made no mistakes. Why, dear friends, we could go on speaking about the wonderful ways in which Christ is better than Aaron, better than Moses, better than everyone, - we could go on speaking of this till the end of our meeting, but I want to come to our second point where we have the words from Psalm 110, "after the order of Melchisedec".

The word "Melchisedec" means a king of righteousness. God is so wonderful, He knows everything and can do everything as He pleases. When Melchisedec was named Melchisedec, God had a lesson to teach. It was not just a 'chance' that Melchisedec was called by that name. God was giving a picture of the Lord Jesus, for the Lord Jesus is the real Melchi - King, Zedek - of righteousness, the real King of Righteousness. Furthermore, we are told that Melchisedec was a king of (JERU)SALEM, and that is the first mention of Jerusalem in the Bible, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the One of Whom we read in connection with the heavenly Jerusalem, and the earthly Jerusalem alike, and Jerusalem means 'peace'. Yes, He, Who is the King of Righteousness has made peace by the blood of His cross. "After the order of Melchisedec", these words stand out in Psalm 110. You do not read in Genesis of a priest before Melchisedec, or a priest after Melchisedec. You do not read of Melchisedec offering sacrifices. You read of Mel-

chisedec just coming forward as the high priest of the Most High God and blessing Abraham, coming forward at the right time, and bringing Abraham those things which spoke of a sacrifice done. So the Lord Jesus, after the order of Melchisedec, is the precious Priest Who comes forward at the right time, and gives His people the blessings because of a sacrifice done. Melchisedec is not a priest to the king of Sodom, he is a priest to Abraham, and the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ is for His people, those who are brought near unto Him, after whom He looks with such wonderful care.

This leads us on to think of the heavenly Holy Place or Sanotuary. You remember how when God told Moses to make a tabernacle He said, "See that thou dost make it after (or according to) the pattern (or picture) which was shown to thee in the mount". So there was a PICTURE, or type, shown Moses in the mount. A picture of what? Of what Moses was to make? Yes, but more. A picture of something real in heaven. So we have a real tabernaole in heaven; then the picture on the mount; then the tabernacle Moses made on earth. Three things. Do not think it strange to speak of a heavenly tabernacle. Do we not read in the last Book of Scripture of that which shows there is a heavenly tabernacle? Does not the letter to the Hebrew Christians make it clear that there is a heavenly Holiest of all, a heavenly Tabernacle. Now if that be so, if the earthly was a picture of the heavenly, in what way was it a picture? Let us think of the earthly, first of all. A piece of ground is marked off from that which surrounds, a piece of ground not so very long, simply 100 cubits long, a cubit being about 18-21 inches. This piece of land is half as wide, - that is the court round about the Tabernacle. In the middle of it there are simply three things. First of all there is the tent, a building about 18 feet high, and three times as long. Apart from that there is one large box about 5 feet high, and about 8 feet long, and 8 feet broad, near the gate. In between that large box, with its brass or copper glory, and the tent there is simply the 'laver' as it is called, the place from which the priests wash when they go into God's tent. Thus we find a court, with the altar, the laver and the tent. What is there in heaven to do with those? Let us think, where was the sacrifice offered? In the tent? NEVER! It was always offered near the door of the court on that square covered with the copper, the altar, called the altar of burnt offering. But where did the Lord Jesus die? On earth, - then on earth is the court of the tabernacle. The court, I mean, of the heavenly tabernaole. For all these things were "pictures" of something else. I believe that the altar which stood the same length and the same

breadth, and would not fall over, was a picture of the perfect life of the Lord Jesus; for on top the sacrifice was put, and on top of Christ's life there was His death to finish it. It was from that altar of burnt offering that the smoke went up to God, to show God received the sacrifice. And so we have a picture of the life and death of the Lord Jesus. The laver too was in the court. There was no laver in the tabernacle. The laver speaks of washing, because there is dirt. No laver is needed in the tabernacle, there is no dirt within. Now I think we can see at once that the court is a picture of earth. The tent which is inside that courtyard is a picture of heaven. There is no sacrifice in heaven. There is no need of washing in heaven. There is cleanness within. The altar is a picture of the Lord Jesus dying. The laver is a picture of God's Truth, and shows God's people on earth feeling their need of washing. The tabernacle is a picture of that which is heavenly, and it has two rooms. Into one room no one must go except the High Priest, and he only once a year. Of what can that be a picture in heaven? For all these things that Moses made were pictures of much with respect to the heavenly tabernacle. The inner room with the throne in it, was surely a picture of God's throne in heaven. Only one could go there, the high priest. Thus we have a picture of the Lord Jesus going into the presence of God as the One Who had done the work that He came to do, and Who went back again to the glory where God was. But what about that first room? It was the room into which the priests went every day. The room where there was food, the room where there was the lampstand, the room where there was the incense going up before God, the incense being a picture of prayer. Surely here we have God's people, for they are not an earthly people, but a heavenly people! Are they not sitting in heavenly places in Christ, and are not their minds to be on things above? Here is God's people's room, and for those who are God's people, and who have died a picture of paradise, - God's garden, - where they quietly rest until the Lord Jesus Christ shall come back again. The Lord Jesus Christ, we know died upon earth, yet He went up into heaven. If you had been asked about Aaron's priesthood in the court, and one had said Aaron was the high priest and therefore went into the tabernacle, what would you have replied? He was a priest there but his special priestly work, presenting to God, was inside the Holiest of all. So with the Lord Jesus. He was not one of Aaron's priests on earth, for He belonged to the family of Judah, from which tribe no man gave any attendance at the altar. But though He was not one of Aaron's priests on earth, He offered Himself without spot to God. He died, not only as the Sacrifice, but as the One Who gave Himself up, and He

was, therefore, the priest. So we can understand the words of Hebrews 8.4. "If He were on earth He would not be a Priest seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law, who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things". There were earthly priests on earth when God's servant wrote this letter, and the apostle says, If Christ were on earth He could not, ordinarily, go into the temple, men would not let Him in, not into the room where the priests went. But where Scripture says, "If He were on earth He would not be a Priest", it does not say that when He was on earth He was not a Priest of a heavenly tabernacle. He was. He was the Priest of the heavenly tabernacle, Who on earth offered up gifts and made THE sacrifice to God in the 'court'. For we read in Hebrews 5 that He offered up something while on earth, then He was a Priest on earth, but not a Priest of Aaron's line, nor of Aaron's tabernacle or temple. He was a Priest Who offered up on earth prayers, which are pictured by the altar of incense, for He was with His Father and could speak of Himself as, the Son of man Who is in heaven, while on earth. Through His life, He offered up gifts, and when He died He offered up Himself, and then went into heaven, raised up from the dead, to show that His work was done, and His blood was welcome in heaven, the Great Sacrifice Who had died for sinners, Who had gladly given up Himself for those who were lost.

Our next point reminds us that people have made up their own imitations of the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus. In the days of Moses there were Korah, Dathan and Abiram, three men who set themselves against God, and Korah wanted to go to God his own way. He virtually said he could do without Aaron, he dared to go himself. Now at the present time there are a number of people like Korah, and the strange part about it is that those who are like Korah often say that other people are like Korah. Perhaps some of you have come across those who have said they are priests, and they have implied that if anyone has not received power from them, or from others like them, there is a likeness to Korah, but Korah's work was that he wanted to take the position of the ONE high priest, and every man who calls himself a priest on earth is carrying out in some measure the sin of Korah by attempting to take away the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ! We read in Hebrews 7 that the Lord Jesus has a Priesthood which is not passed ON TO ANOTHER. It is a priesthood He has Himself; He offered ONE Sacrifice, and no man can offer sacrifices for sins. Christ stands alone, and if anyone tries to come in between the sinner and the Saviour, that one is guilty of the sin of Korah. It is an awful sin to dare to go to God one's own way. It is an awful sin to stop those who

would go to God God's own way. It is an awful sin to try and alter God's own way to Himself by the precious blood and Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. So we are sadly reminded that man always had his wicked imitations.

But you say, how about the passage that speaks of God's people as a royal priesthood. Yes, dear friends, we praise God for that verse. 1 Peter 2 puts it clearly, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation", and again Revelation 1 says God's people have been made a kingdom of priests. But there^{is} speaking of those who are ALL priests, not simply of one class of men, saints are ALL priests in several ways. Let us think of them. They are all priests for they can all come near to God. They are all priests. (I mean all who are born again) for they are of the High Priest's family, - "Behold I and the children whom God hath given Me". They are all priests because in the words of Scripture they offer up SPIRITUAL sacrifices, and that 'spiritual' must not have the first three letters taken off. They offer up SPIRITUAL sacrifices which are welcome to God by Jesus Christ. That very term "spiritual sacrifices" shows they do not bring the offerings which are not spiritual, but they bring the fruit of their lips, the calves of their lips, as it is beautifully written in Hosea 14. All God's people are priests in this sense, not that they would take Christ's position, but because they are made His people and therefore the love that God has to Christ, He has to them, and they can come near and they are always welcome; for God will not love His beloved Son and then turn away from those who are in His beloved Son. Having loved He keeps on loving them with a love that cannot be counted up, a love that will not change, a love that draws them unto Himself, that they can come boldly unto the Throne of grace, for they are royal priests and there they obtain mercy, and there they find grace to help in time of need.

But, oh, dear friends, I want in closing, to ask a question, and I do want that each one should ask himself or herself this question: The question is on the paper in front of us, but I want it to be in the minds that are inside us, - "Have I an Advocate with the Father?" The word 'Advocate' means 'one called to'. Have I One Who has gone into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for me? I know, surely you know, that we are all sinners. If I have no one at God's right hand Who has met my sins, then I must feel afraid of God. If there is no one Who is up there in the glory to plead for me, I do not know how I can go on another day, for God Who is so great and so holy

will one day drive me away from His presence for ever, - unless I have Some One up there Who in God's law-court has answered for me, and answers still. If He loses His position I must lose mine, but if I have an Advocate with the Father, Who ever lives to plead for me because He took my punishment; if I have this, God will not bring up my sins again, which He has drowned in the depths of the sea. God will not bring back upon me the sins that are blotted out, or give me back the debt that is cancelled. If Christ has taken my place, and if He so lives to plead for me, then I can be at rest, I can be at peace, I know that my Redeemer liveth. There is not simply a chance about it, it is not only a may-be, I am SURE that I have passed out of death into life, and that God having loved will keep on loving, for His love is everlasting, and no one can stay His hand, or change His will. Beloved friends, I ask you in God's Name, not simply if you know something about the letter to the Hebrews, not simply if you agree with what has been said about the Lord Jesus being a Priest Who offered a perfect sacrifice, but I ask you, did He offer that for you, and is He now at the right hand of God for you? Perhaps you say, How can I tell? If you have been brought to feel your sins, if you have been brought to the deep trouble over sin that makes one at the end of oneself, if you have been brought to rest upon Him as Saviour, Who took YOUR place, then you may KNOW that He welcomed you, as much, yea more than you welcomed Him. When a sinner comes to the Saviour with longing desires, there are longing desires greater than his, - the Saviour's desires to the sinner. God's wonderful grace is always more reaching out than the sinner's reaching out toward God's grace. Indeed if we have gone to God because we have felt our need of Him, if we have, as it were, leaped forward toward Him, it was because we were brought to have that within us, by His grace, which His magnet power drew to Himself. The iron filings leap toward the magnet, it is not their leaping, and yet it is their leaping, but there is a power that cannot be seen. The leaping can be seen, but the power that draws cannot be seen, but it is the cause of the leaping, and if you and I are brought to feel our sins and our need of the Lord, it is His drawing grace, and He does not draw to send away again. He does not take in hand to drop out of His hand, He does not save to lose, He has paid too great a cost, and His love is too real to change that which is His wonderful everlasting plan. If you have been brought to feel your sins against a Holy God, and if you see that punishment for thousands of years would be too good for you, that you deserved to be punished for ever, if you have been brought to such a view of self, and then as a poor helpless sinner just to rest upon the Lord Jesus, then you have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous.

Not that you will want to go on sinning, for all things in your life now are of God Who brought you from one place to another, that you might belong to Him through Jesus Christ, Who has drawn you with His love, and given you a new life that you might have new wishes. But, Oh, dear friends, it is blessed as one goes through the world with its trials and with its difficulties, and as one feels one's own failures, it is blessed to say, not only was Christ a Priest for me in the past, but He is a Priest for me in the glory now. He ever lives to plead for those for whom He died, as the words of Isaiah 53 beautifully put it with a certain parallel, "He bare the sin of many, AND made intercession(a meeting place) for the transgressors". His wonderful finished work has led to a work that is going on, and because of that work that is going on, we, if believing in the Lord Jesus shall see Him, and be glorified with Him. The things of God are blessed indeed. All the things of earth are as nothing to be compared with them. May we, if saved by the Lord Jesus, live rejoicing in His fear, rejoicing in Him, but if we cannot say He is ours, oh that we may be troubled till at our wit's end, we are brought to rest on Him.

oOoOo

"GREATER"
CHRIST EXALTED

Outline:-

1. "A Greater than Solomon"
2. "A Greater than Jonah"
3. "One Greater than the temple"
4. "Greater than Abraham", John 8,53.
5. "Greater than Jacob", John 4,12.
6. "He That is less", Christ's wonderful humility.
7. A practical word, - "The servant is not greater than his Lord".

Scripture is full of parallels and contrasts. Parallels may be parallels only in one portion, contrasts in another portion. For example, when we have the kingdom of heaven likened to various things, there are undoubtedly in these parables certain contrasts, because types fall short, indeed everything of earth must fall short, to picture that which is in heaven. In the verses we are about to consider this is more definitely marked, for the very word "Greater than" implies not only a comparison, but a distinction. Every comparative has this

wrapped up in it. Oh, that as we meditate upon many of the words of the Lord Jesus which He spoke contrasting Himself with others, we may realize the tones of love and power with which He uttered those true and unfading words. It is deeply important to realize that no man would have so characterised himself, and so attracted attention to himself. Either the Lord Jesus is God humbled, or He is man wrongly exalted, - there is no alternative. Those of us who by grace realize the prophecies of Scripture and their gracious fulfilment, know that He was in truth the Mighty God, Who nevertheless became a Child born, and consequently would always speak as "the Son of man Who is IN heaven". It is interesting to notice in the Earlier Scriptures, and in other contexts we find the words "Greater than" - for example Jethro acknowledges there was none greater than the Lord, Israel were told they would occupy the land of a people greater than themselves, and we read of the glory of the latter house, of the temple, being greater than the glory of the former house. But it is in the Later Scriptures that our study is centred this afternoon, and we begin with the words "A Greater than Solomon". We have just read them in Matt. 12.42. The Queen of the south came up to Jerusalem from her distant Ethiopia that she might have her problems answered, and might satisfy her curiosity concerning the far-famed greatness of that far-famed king; but the nation of Israel (I mean the remnant of that nation to be found in Palestine when Christ walked up and down that land), the nation of Israel had no journey to go, He was in the midst, and yet they repented not, they believed not. The majority turned from Him. Well might the enthusiasm of the Gentile queen be contrasted with the callousness of the Jewish people. The context speaks of Solomon's wisdom, and Christ was "a greater than Solomon" in this respect. Elsewhere we read of Solomon's glory. The crimson anemone was beyond Solomon's glory, so the Lord Jesus said, and doubtless the words glance, although secondarily, back to the Song of Solomon where the crimson anemone is His own Name, or one of His many names. And Solomon's glory was not only less than all plants in nature, but infinitely less than the glory of Him Who though He was God, condescended to become man. Both in glory and in wisdom Christ was beyond Solomon, and this is marked out in the passage we have before us. Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs, he was wiser than all men, for he asked wisdom and God gave it to him. But Christ was the Wisdom of God, not only did He have wisdom, He was concentrated wisdom. "Christ Jesus Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption". Well may we realize His greatness in wisdom for "in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge". But this passage also brings before us Christ as KING. I have already hinted that

by referring to His glory. But the word 'glory' suggests a state, the word 'king' lays a stress on position. It is remarkable as we shall see, that Christ sets Himself forth as greater than prophet, priest, and king. We have taken the greater than Solomon first, but we might have, from another standpoint, taken it last, for He will COME BACK as the greater than Solomon, when, "of the increase of His government there shall be no end", for He shall reign and rule until the end of earth's history, and then He will still be exalted for ever and ever. It is precious to remember our beloved Lord as the great King. Earth's ruin is very marked, but the prospect of That Day is very real. "He That shall come will come and will not tarry". We look for the Saviour Who shall not only change this body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned anew like unto His body of glory, Who shall not only bring wondrous advantages, wondrous blessings to His tired and wearied people, but Who shall also make manifest that earth which has rebelled against Him must be placed in subjection to that mighty control. It is precious to think that the near return of our beloved Lord, will be as earth's King to set earth's ruin right.

The context before us likewise speaks of Christ as Greater than Jonah. Yet once more we have Gentiles repenting. The men of Nineveh were parallel with the queen of the south, and this passage thus becomes one to be compared with Luke 4, where we have the Gentile widow of Sarepta and the Gentile leper Naaman. As here, so there, Christ gives two examples, suggesting a witness. The number 'two' is very prominent. We know how parables are sometimes together in two's, for example, - the parable of the rag with the piece of cloth placed on it, is associated with that concerning the wine-skins. The parable of the leaven is linked on with that of the mustard seed. Scripture has many pairs. We cannot easily separate the treasure hid in the field and the pearl of great price, both of which were bought at extreme cost. Here then the Lord brings before us two classes, but both Gentiles. Nineveh, northern; the queen of the south (as her description implies) in the opposite direction. A man, or men, and a woman. Likewise is it in Luke 4, although there we have the widow woman and not the queen, - a great man of Syria, and not the ordinary people of Nineveh, who are here mainly brought before us, for we know that although the king rose from his throne in Nineveh, much of the repentance in that city was particularly associated with the common people. Thus the Lord would show the Jews their evil and adulterous condition, their despising of Him. The people of Nineveh had repented at the preaching of Jonah, but a greater than Jonah was there. Jonah the Galilean prophet, born at Gath-Hepher, so near to Nazareth

where Christ was brought up, - Jonah, the prophet who was caused, VIA a type of death and resurrection, to be a messenger to the Ninevites, was himself a prophecy of our beloved Lord, Who through death and resurrection is the Saviour of Gentiles as well as Jews. Jonah, before he passed through that type, was the minister of the circumcision. Likewise was it with our beloved Lord, though He was greater, not only in Deity, but also in His wondrous obedience. Jonah's life is sullied with sin and failure, but no defects mar the perfectness of the character of our beloved Lord. Truly the greater than Jonah was there, and yet they not only refused Him when He stood in their midst, the One they knew not, but after He was raised from the dead His citizens hated Him, and sent a message after Him saying, We will **not** have this man to reign over us. Thus is it ever. Men by nature despise the Lord. The great Prophet and the Great King is refused. You will notice the link between His prophetic position and His kingly dignity in this passage, for the Lord Jesus is not in this immediate context referring to His priestly work. His priestly work has been mentioned before - and despised - and it **comes** again very definitely in the next chapter when He turns aside from the nation to those, who doing the will of His Father, prove themselves begotten into a heavenly family.

And this **leads** us on to consider those striking words "Greater than the temple". If we turn back to the BEGINNING of Matthew 12 we read this statement, "Have ye not read in the law how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath and are blameless? But I say unto you, that in this place is One Greater than the temple". This, you will notice is before the other passages. The Lord Jesus referred to His priestly character **even as far back as** the ministry to Nicodemus. He had referred there to His sacrificial death. Here at the beginning of this discourse in Matt. 12, He speaks of One Greater **than** the temple. In experience, those of us who know Him by grace, know Him in the order that this chapter sets forth. First we learn of Him as the Priestly Sacrifice, then we understand Him as the Prophet to instruct us in the way of truth, and soon we **shall** know Him as earth's King, when together with Him His faithful people will reign. We should have expected that verse 6 would have read "But I say unto you that in this place is One Greater than the priests", for the priest's action is mentioned in verse 5, but the changed language implies that the temple was greater than the priests, and that He therefore, as Greater than the temple was far greater than the priests. The greatness of the temple is **again and again** emphasized. We recollect in Matt. 23, the Lord Jesus unmask the

hypocritical reasoning of those who opposed Him. "Woe unto you" says verse 16, "ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind, for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And whosoever shall swear by the altar it is nothing, but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is upon it be is guilty. Ye fools and blind, for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whosoever therefore shall swear by the altar sweareth by it and by all things thereon. And whosoever shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by Him That dwelleth therein". Here we have then brought before us that it was common among the Jews to speak of the greatness of the temple, and to emphasize that the temple was greater than many other things with which it was contrasted. The Lord Jesus, referring to this, reminds the people how illogical was Pharisaic casuistry. How easy it was for men to make up their theories and arrangements and yet to deny the true teaching of God. But the Lord Jesus was Greater than the great temple, Greater than the greatest building on earth, for when He spoke of the temple of His body, He spoke of that which was not like unto the temple of earth, to be taken down through sin, but that which was to be laid down in His wondrous sinless life for His sinning people whom He saves from their sins. It is precious to realize our beloved Lord as the glorious and great Priest, and as the One Greater than the temple in connection with the argument of Matt. 12. The ordinary persons of Israel dare not do their ordinary occupation on the sabbath day outside the temple, but those who were in the priestly family INSIDE the temple were treated entirely differently from others. If we are in the One Greater than the temple, we are entirely different from those who are not in Him, and our attitude and actions are to be entirely distinct, and to make manifest the wondrous grace and mercy which we have freely received. Never are we 'free' from this service: To be 'free' would be slavery. Greater than the temple! Oh how precious it is to realize the Lord Jesus Christ as the One Who sanctifies our gifts, for if the temple sanctified the gift that was within it, how much more does He Who is our Lord sanctify not only our gold, but all that is of us, and ourselves too.

In John's gospel we have the Lord Jesus brought before us as greater than the two patriarchs. In each case the question is asked tauntingly. "Art Thou Greater than our father Abraham?" is the thought that awhile occupies the mind of many of those of the nation of Israel in that 6th chapter; they say "Abraham is dead, the prophets are dead:

Whom maketh Thou Thyself?" The precious fact was, not that He made Himself great, but that He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant. Greater than Abraham? Undoubtedly, greater than Abraham in His antiquity; for though Abraham was the beginning of the Jews, He was THE BEGINNING. And in the beginning was the Word. Greater in His dignity, for Abraham was a creature, and Christ the Creator. Indeed in this connection we remember the precious argument in Hebrews 7 as to Melchisedec. Melchisedec meets Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and Abraham acknowledges Melchisedec, and receives Melchisedec's blessing, and without any contradiction the less is blessed of the greater. Melchisedec is greater than Abraham. Melchisedec is a type of Christ, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec". Yes, in every way "Greater". In ancient glory and in exaltation upon this earth, Christ transcends Abraham, and yet He was the Man of sorrows, Whose visage was so marred more than any man's, and when He walked this earth men saw no beauty that they should desire Him, but they turned from Him as if He seemed loathsome in their sight. They desired One Who would come and make manifest Himself as their Deliverer from the yoke of the Romans. They did not rejoice in One Whose face betokened a hatred of sin, and Who grieved for the affliction of Judah and Who wept over the despising cities. But if the Jews said "Art Thou greater than our father Abraham?" the semi-gentile Samaritan woman said "Art Thou Greater than our father Jacob?" The Samaritans laid a great stress upon Jacob, for Jacob's well was found in the centre of their district. Yes, the Lord Jesus was greater than Jacob. Jacob was a man, and a very faltering man. The Lord Jesus as God was perfect, and as a Man also was perfect. But that is not the thought in John 4. The point is, Art Thou Greater than our father Jacob in getting water? And as to this we can answer, Yes, verily. Jacob could but dig a well. I suppose only those who have lived in Eastern lands can enter into the value of a well. We are so used to having everything brought into our houses, so used to continual preservation from famine and drought, that we little realize the value of these continual gifts, and continual mercies of our unchanging God. But in that land when the rainfall is withheld, those who have depended upon it are indeed in despair, and how precious at such a time is not only a cistern unbroken, which will hold water, but an un-failing well. There are some wells which never seem to run dry in that land of Palestine, but others prove false. "Art Thou Greater than our father Jacob?" Jacob digged this well, Hast Thou digged a well? Jacob drank thereof himself, and his sons and his cattle. Ah, Greater twice over: He not only digged a well; but He Who came into this world

for poor guilty sinners IS the well, the Smitten Rock from which there are rivers of Living Water. Greater in that He needs not to drink of it Himself, He is the Supplier, and not the supplied. He is the One Who meets all needs, and has no needs to be met. Glorious is the dignity of our beloved Lord, greater than Jacob in EVERY way. But though the Lord is thus exalted in His dignity as well as in His Deity, we are continually reminded that He took upon Him the form of a servant. In such a context the words ring out with precious force "My Father is greater than I". He Who said these words was the Mighty God, yet He had humbled Himself, and as the perfect servant of the LORD, Who ever spoke abasing Himself, He set an example to His oft-times proud people; for if One Who had everything in Himself, and available for Himself gladly laid this aside and did not speak of Himself, how can we who have nothing and who are by nature nothing, yet have received everything, how can we do aught but praise Him from Whom the everything comes, and in Whom the everything is still found?

Again in this connection we remember the words of Luke 22, the Lord Jesus is gathered with His disciples at the "last-first" Supper, and the 27th verse reads "Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth. Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as He That serveth". Precious are these words. The Lord Jesus was not only speaking of the Father as greater than Himself, not only did He say that He was One Who was brought very low, but He contrasted Himself in this passage even with His disciples. He did not say that He was less than they were in the sense in which it would be blasphemy to suggest it. He was always their Lord. "Ye call Me Teacher and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am". When He girded Himself He was still Lord and Teacher. I am among you AS one that serveth. The "AS" is very suggestive. He provided the banquet. He was the Head of the table, Himself was typified in the banquet, Himself was the Serving One in the banquet. Christ was ALL at that first-last supper. Yet in the usual way, "Greater is he that sitteth at meat". Oh, into what greatness He has brought His people! Wondrous greatness! He was brought into the dust of death that they might go their way, and be lifted from the dust of death. He was brought to judgment that they might never come into judgment. He was brought to wrath, that they might be for ever free from wrath. How great are His people! "Made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus", "For now God hath highly exalted Him". The word 'exalted' implies His humiliation. "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name - the Name - which is above every name; that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in

heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father".

In THIS context we notice the words on our outline "He That is less". They come in Matt. 11. The Lord just declared that among all the family of men there hath not arisen one greater than John the Baptist. John the Baptist was indeed a wondrous servant of the Lord, whose faith held out amid bitter opposition and peculiar dangers, but the Lord Jesus adds, "He that is less in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he". Our English Version reads in verse 11 "He that is least", but actually it is "He that is less". I suppose that the primary thought is concerning the Lord Jesus. The secondary thought, - the general principle - is this: If you can find one that is less than John the Baptist, if you can find one that is humbler than John the Baptist, you have found one that is greater. In proportion to humility is the raising up. In proportion to the laying low is the exalting. How often we grasp at the things of earth and grasp at the honours that fade, and thus dash to the ground those that are lasting. How often we seek after certain things, and because we seek them we lose them. If we sought them not, but sought their contrasts we should receive them. God works by contrasts and those who humble themselves know His exalting hand. "Humble yourselves under the Mighty Hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time". But beyond the reference to a general principle, we think once more of Christ. He was the "Less One" in fullest degree, for if John was humble as a man, Christ's humility was without parallel, and therefore He was marked out as Greater than John. Not only is He greater in His Deity, but in His perfect obedience He deserves a reward for transcending that which is accomplished by any of His servants. If we for one moment put on one side the Deity of Christ, though we can never put it on one side, and think only of His humanity in the perfectness of THAT, He is the One to be highly exalted in that coming kingdom. If the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, what recompense shall there be to the absolutely righteous One Who never by one sin or failure interfered with that perfect communion which He had with the Father, and that perfect obedience which He had for the will of God? Christ is the Glorious One as Man, even as He is the glorious One as God.

And so, beloved friends, we come to a practical word that may, I trust, reach our hearts. We need to be humbled. We need to remember a "not greater than". "The servant is not greater than his

Lord", "The disciple is not greater than his Master". It is enough to be as the Lord. As He is, so are we in this world, with a perfect righteousness because it is His obedience acknowledged by the Father, and we are in union with Him, raised from the dead. As He walked, so should we walk. If they have despised and rejected Him, we should be rejected too. The disciple is not above his Lord. He that is sent is not greater than the Sender. Oh that we may realize more our responsibility, if born from above, to our gracious Lord. Our responsibility to Him, to show Whose we are and Whom we serve. Now while we are speaking of Him and His greatness, He is beyond all our speaking of Him. Now at the right hand of God He is thinking of us more than we are thinking of Him, and our Father is well-pleased that we are in measure exalting Him, but all our exaltation can add nothing unto that exaltation which is beyond all exaltation. There, at the right hand of God, He remembers us, and here on earth we should seek to remember and represent Him. "AS HE WALKED". Oh how solemn are these words. Walking is continuous, walking is progressive, walking is the evidence of life, walking is with an object, and if we walk as He walked we must have an object in view. Daily bearing the cross, with the goal(it may be) even of physical death, amid persecution, at the end. Ah! but beyond that end, a looking off, beyond that which earth can do in its worst cruelty, to the recompense of the reward. He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. The joy that was set before Him was a very real joy, and how His blood-bought people can rejoice that there is a joy set in front of them, the joy of seeing their Lord, "Whom having not seen they love, - in Whom though now they see Him not, but believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of their faith, even salvation of their souls". Oh, how wondrous, precious, and glorious is the prospect of the redeemed of the Lord! Oh that we might live in the light of this prospect! live in the light of that Day, - live as those who realize, in the Holy Spirit; the Lord's greatness, our own nothingness, and that we have everything in HIM, that we may represent HIM.

oOoOo

THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS
SET FORTH IN THE EARLIER SCRIPTURES

We are to ponder, beloved friends, the Godhead of the Lord Jesus, set forth in the Earlier Scriptures. By grace, I trust, we have NO doubt as to His Godhead. Our hearts experience the wondrous

fulness of blessing linked with the fact that He Who is our Saviour is over all, God blessed for ever. The Later Scriptures bear a CONTINUAL testimony. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was GOD. The Same was in the beginning with God, all things came into being through Him". Moreover, again and again we find attributes which can only belong to God, are His attributes. But this evening we are thinking of the EARLIER Scriptures. These earlier Scriptures are EQUALLY inspired with the Later. The child of God would never think of choosing between them, when there is a healthy condition of heart. He would not say, as a man said to me concerning the Earlier Scriptures, only last night in the open air, "History of the Jews". Nay, there is more than the history of the Jews, there is God's own testimony. We believe by grace in the equal authority of the Earlier and the Later Scriptures. We are sure that the whole is from God, and we rejoice in this FACT. If I may again just leave the subject for a moment, the HUMANITY of the Messiah is often set forth in the Earlier Scriptures. We read of that precious Saviour as the Seed of the woman in Genesis 3, and in type we have the setting forth of His real humanity in the tabernacle again and again. Perhaps it is well to notice in this connection the narrowing of prophecy. Genesis 3, the seed of the woman, Genesis 9 God shall dwell in the tents of Shem. To Abraham were the words spoken, "IN Isaac shall thy seed be called". Narrowing still within Abraham's family we have the renewal of the promise to Isaac, and then in Isaac's family not to Esau, but to Jacob and then in Jacob's family the narrowing of Judah; "for Shiloh will come", says the 49th chapter. The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah. He Who wields the Sceptre shall be from that tribe whence David sprang. Thus we have the narrowing to David's own family, as 2 Sam.7 makes clear. Thus prophecy continually narrows, but never contradicts, and everything points to that wondrously arranged time when God sent forth His Son, and the Lord Jesus was born the right year, and the right place, of the right family, that He might accomplish the right work, and that to endless ages His blood-bought people might rejoice in that of which He truly said, "It has been finished".

But this evening our subject is not the whole Person of the Lord Jesus, it is a smaller one, yet it is vast. The DEITY of the Lord Jesus set forth in the Earlier Scriptures. We may divide it up thus -

1. Deity set forth by Divine statements.
2. Deity implied, - And in that connection we must not only include words that imply, but typical language which suggests it, and where we have attributes of Messiah which are attributes of God.

alone; or descriptions of relationship to Messiah which would be out of place if Messiah were not God.

First then. Direct statements. I suppose beloved friends, we do well if we take the passages the Holy Spirit has Himself brought before us. Hebrews 1 again and again refers to the Earlier Scriptures to show that Christ is beyond angels, that Christ is over all, God blessed for ever. We have a reference to the words of Psalm 2, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee", and also to Psalm 102. Nor would we forget Psalm 45. Shall we turn to these? In Psalm 2 we read, "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, saying Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us". Later on we read, "I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son". Here we have as Acts 23 shows, a special reference to the resurrection, but the text implies that here is one beyond angels, for to which individual of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son? Here is therefore a suggestion of Deity that leads on to Psalm 45, where we have the definite words, verse 6, "Thy throne, O God is for ever and ever, the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness, therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above those who have a share with Thee". Psalm 102 first explains the humanity of the Lord Jesus, and then we have the striking words addressed to Him, in verse 25, "Of old hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure, yea all of them shall wax old like a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the Same and Thy years shall have no end". Here we have a passage which contains a definite declaration of the Deity of the Lord Jesus, and also an applying to Him of attributes which can only belong to God. Eternity is predicated of Him, creation is ascribed to Him. He is seen as the Ruler over all, in verse 28. Thus we have definite witness from the book of praises. Shall we turn to the prophets? We find in Isaiah 7.14, that the Child who was to be born is called Immanuel, God with us. In chapter 8.8 the term occurs again, O Immanuel, and in 8.10, God with us. This repetition shows that here we have a description of the proper Deity of the Lord Jesus. Nor can we forget Isaiah 9. "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the

Prince of peace". Thus the term "Mighty God" is central, and if we ask Who is the Mighty God, we look to chapter 10,21 "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob unto the Mighty God". The same book of Isaiah sets forth the Deity of Christ inferentially, but we will rather leave such passages, with the exception of those which the Holy Spirit quoted in Hebrews 1, till a little later. We therefore come next to Jeremiah 23 which has been read. There we read in the sixth verse, "This^{is} HIS NAME, whereby He shall be called The LORD Tsidkenu, the LORD our Righteousness". But can this Name, LORD, be given to one that is less than God? Let Isaiah 42 answer "I am THE LORD, that is My Name, and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images". Hence though we read of idols as gods, we never read of them as "LORD". Never does that Name come in the plural, never is it modified with a Hebrew suffix. It stands in solitary grandeur, and where the Holy Spirit gives something of the view of its fulness in Revelation 1, He goes contrary to all rules of ordinary grammar, where we read of grace(in verse 4) from Him Which is, and Which was, and Which is to come. After the word "from" we expect the word "Him" in English. It would sound strange to us to say, "From He That is", but that is actually what the Greek does; yea, more than that, the whole arrangement of grammar is broken to emphasize that God is the eternal, Unalterable One. THAT is the Name which is given to the Lord Jesus Christ, and which therefore asserts and emphasizes His true and real Deity. We might turn on in this connection to Zech. 13.7 "Awake O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man That is My Fellow, saith the LORD of hosts, Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones". I do not say this passage is quite so clear at once to one who rejects the Deity of the Lord Jesus. Its testimony to His humanity is definite. Its testimony to atonement is clear. He Who is the Holy One is yet smitten by the Holy One. This is only possible on the principle of bearing the sins of others. Anything else would be unrighteous. But surely there is more than this in the expression the MAN that is My fellow. "My Friend" the term may imply; but perhaps no word will fully describe its meaning. Here is One Who is marked out as distinct from every man. Distinct from angels, the glorious Lord Jesus Christ. Believers realize His Deity, the more so after Zechariah 12.10.

And this leads us on to other passages which imply the Deity of the Lord Jesus, clearly, if not so definitely on the surface. Genesis 1.1. "In the beginning God(plural) created(singular) the heavens and the earth". Plural, singular, remarkable bringing together.

The Hebrew has a dual form, but here we have the plural which may suggest the very number three. A Triune God created. So the "Let US make man" of the same chapter. Indeed EVERY reference to our Triune God implies the Deity of the Lord Jesus, for there is no one who can claim such a position if He be excluded. Further, we have brought before us a hint of His Deity in the remarkable words of Deut. 6, "Hear, O Israel the LORD, our God, (The word is plural) is One Lord". LORD(singular), God(plural) is One. The High Priests blessing contains a three-fold reference to the Lord. "The Lord bless thee and keep thee", and so forth. Then come the words, "They shall put My Name". My Name" as God says, is the Name of the Threefold LORD. Isaiah 6 is equally clear. There we read, "A Holy One, a Holy One, a Holy One, is the LORD of hosts". Not simply "A Holy One", but "a Holy One, a Holy One, a Holy One" yet only the One LORD of hosts. The latter part of the chapter illustrates this. "Whom shall I send, and who will go for US?" Moreover, the Deity of the Lord Jesus is implied by such passages as Prov. 8. There we have the attribute of eternity which we have already seen in Psalm 102. This One Who is the True Wisdom, and a Person, speaks about being possessed before God's works of old. "I was set up from everlasting" He says, "from the beginning, or ever the earth was". Here we have an allusion to His link with creation. Himself before all creation. In verse 30 we should read, "Then I became near Him, a steadfast Worker", a Worker in the work of creation. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the Spirit of His mouth. Yes, by the WORD of the Lord, for our Triune God spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast. Nor would we forget Micah 5. This brings before us perhaps a hint of His Deity. "But Thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me, that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from days of everlasting". The language is perhaps not quite so manifest in itself, but it is very definite with other Scriptures. There is the special thought of the teaching in Prov. 8, where we read "My delights were with the sons of men". His goings forth were continually in the Earlier Scriptures. Then it was the Lord Jesus Who visited Abraham. It was the Lord Jesus Who visited Manoah, and this at once leads us on to the further completing thought. If the One born in Bethlehem was the One marked for goings forth, whose delights were with the sons of men, we have a strong proof of Deity, for in Genesis 18, we have the LORD appearing unto Abraham in the plains of Mamre. Three men came to him. As to those three men we are told that two go on, for in verse 22 the men turned their faces and went toward Sodom, and in 19.1 they are

described as two angels reaching Sodom at even. Perhaps in our English version we lose the force of this; it is not simply 'two angels', but evidently signifies "THE two angels" - the two already mentioned. Abraham stood yet before the LORD, says 18.22, and Abraham prays unto Him. Then the One Who had delights with the sons of men was the LORD, but do we not read in Scripture that even Moses could not behold God's face and live? There must consequently have been a veiling of the essential glory of God, and this is clear if we realize that God the Father remained in His unapproachable Deity, but His beloved Son gave anticipatory partial unveiling with a measure of veiling, anticipatory of that time when He would take the veil of flesh upon Him, and become incarnate remaining on earth for over 30 years. Somewhat similar was the experience of Jacob. We find that Jacob at Peniel confessed He had seen God face to face. Indeed the One Who spoke to him and refused to give His Name said, "As a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed". It was Christ Who appeared to Jacob. We might just turn on to the passage already mentioned respecting Manoah. We find that This One declared His Name was hidden, His Name was the Wonderful Name, which we also read in Isaiah 9,6, Judges 13. 18. The angel of the Lord (verse 3) appearing as a man of God (verse 6). The angel of God (verse 9). The Angel of the Lord, in verse after verse. Verse 18 mentions the Name is Wonderful, and in the 22nd verse "We have seen GOD". This was true. There are several passages where we have This One, even "The Angel That redeemed" - marked off from all created angels. To Gideon there was the same visitation. The Angel appeared. He said, Go in this thy might, have not I sent thee? "The Lord looked upon him" is the description of the Angel there. Thus the incarnation is continually anticipated, and Micah 5 says, The One Whose goings forth were frequent was the One Who was born in Bethlehem, despised and rejected of men. Returning to Isaiah, in the 48th chapter, verse 16, we read, "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning, from the time that it was there am I, and now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent Me". This cannot be spoken of Isaiah. He was not the Ever-existing One. Then here we have the Lord Jesus Christ, and indeed in that verse we have the three Persons of our Triune God brought before us. Thus eternity is predicated of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Returning again to Jeremiah, we find brought before us This One Who is called, the Lord our righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ, and we have an unexpected stress upon this fact when we compare with chapter 33.16. There we have Jerusalem named after the Lord,

but it is not "This is HER name". The language is quite distinct. Our English version looks somewhat similar, but it is altered remarkably by the Holy Spirit, to show up as a kind of foil how different is the Deity of Him Who is brought before us in the 23rd chapter. True the bride is named AFTER the Bridegroom, but it is HIS Name, it is not her name. It is HIS Name before He shall be called by it. HIS Name, the Lord our Righteousness.

We might perhaps also notice the types, though types of Deity are not so common as types of humanity. However in the book of Exodus, and the book of Numbers, we have the Rock, suggesting the spiritual Rock, and that Rock was Christ. But the Rock is a Name of God. "He is the Rock" says Deut. 32. And "The Lord is my rock" is the message more than once in the Psalms, and so when the Lord came down and stood on a rock, and the rock was smitten, there was the thought that Messiah was the Fixed One, Messiah was the Mighty One, Messiah was the Glorious One, Messiah was the Honoured One, Messiah was God! You will notice in Isaiah, chapters 8 and 29, we have two passages which are brought together in 1 Peter 2. Isaiah 8.13,14 - "Sanctify the Lord of hosts, Himself, and let Him be your Fear, and let Him be your dread". And He shall be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling". Then Isaiah 28.16 "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a Stone, a Tried Stone, a Precious Corner Stone, and he that believeth on Him shall not make haste". This leads to a further point, "He that believeth on Him". "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord". But here the Stone is marked out as the One on Whom there should be believing. The Stone is plainly laid by God. It is Messiah, the Stone Which the builders rejected, Which becomes the Head of the corner. The Corner-Stone of Zech. 10. 4. So here there is the believing on That One, as Psalm 2.12, to which we have already looked, beautifully puts it, - "Blessed are all they that trust in Him". If He were a man, they would not be blessed for trusting in Him. There would be the reverse of a blessing. But This One is more than a man. In the words of Jeremiah 50.44, He is the Chosen One of Whom God asks the question, "Who is like Me?" He is the One Who is like God, for as the yet earlier Scripture, explains, My Name is in Him. But God will not give away His Name. This One is therefore the Lord of hosts Himself. The same verse in Jeremiah adds and "Who is that Shepherd?" "Give ear, O shepherd of Israel...Thou that dwellest between the cherubim". But, who is the Shepherd? Let Genesis

49. 24 answer, "By reason of the Name of the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel", The Shepherd is the Stone. Christ, we have seen, is the Stone, and we know that He is described as the Shepherd, Isaiah 40 illustrates this, and we read of the Shepherd smitten (Zech. 12.7). The Smitten Rock, and the Smitten Shepherd; and both Rock and Shepherd, in this connection with respect to Israel predicate Deity. Such precious instruction leads on to yet one further thought. If we recognize the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ EVERY Scripture fits in. We have passages which speak of our God coming, and not keepin silence, Psalm 50.3. We are told that Israel will say, as they behold Him, "This is our God, we have waited for Him; This is the Lord, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isa. 25.9). But if He were only a man, or if He were only a great and mighty creature, this would be a strange utterance. Ah, some will say (I do not mean among us), but some will say, "The true God comes, but also a man comes", Messiah. It is true that Scripture does speak of a Man reigning, - That Wonderful Man Who is the King and Who will reign in righteousness when princes rule in judgment; but He is the Son given, as well as the Child born, and if the government is upon His shoulders for He is a Man, He is the Mighty God as we have seen. If you therefore accept BOTH Scripture statements, that is, The Lord shall reign in Mount Zion before His ancients gloriously, and that David shall never want a man to reign, - if you accept both statements, and see that the Lord is the Son of David, everything is quite clear, and the Scriptures coincide and this is the indirect testimony which is so powerful. Nor would we forget in this connection Psalm 110. Here is One Who is Greater than David, albeit He is David's Son, - "The LORD said unto My Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet".

And so we may come, in closing, to the words of Zech. 12. There we have a striking testimony that the One Who is pierced is not merely a creature, but the Creator. For God Himself says, I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication for grace, and they shall look upon ME Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one that mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. Here we have the Lord speaking, yet He says that He has been PIERCED. God and Man alike. Thus all Scripture gives the same testimony, and no Scripture is against it. But, oh, beloved friends, that we may know more than the facts of the case, that we may not be mere arguers, but that we may

experience the wondrousness of the Lord's mercy, that He Who was the Mighty God, descended, became a Man, yea and died the death of the cross, that there might be a salvation for poor guilty sinners as we are. Measure the love of God by that wondrous giving up; measure the love of God by that wondrous atoning death of Him Who offered up Himself, Who was the Offerer and the Offering, Who had an eternal Spirit, but yet laid down His soul, and the body that was prepared for Him. Here is the marvellousness of God's love, in which our hearts and minds rejoice. A Divine Saviour has secured a wondrous salvation. It is not merely a great effort, else it might be frustrated, but He Who is the Mighty God has secured this, and therefore there is none higher to undo it. From eternity to eternity He is God, and from eternity we are His people chosen, and to eternity shall they be saved. God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent (Num. 23,19). Our beloved Lord Who took in hand to save sinners, Who made Himself, in heart and action (Jer. 30,21) a Surety on behalf of those who were utterly worthless, Who became Surety for strangers and smarted for them, - He has guaranteed that many sons shall be brought to glory, nor shall there fall one word of His, for with the word of a King there is power, (Eccl.4) and the Word of our God, Who is King of kings, stand for ever, that we, His blood-bought people may delight in this secured salvation, and declare to poor guilty sinners; not an attempt of man, nor the arrangement nor the scheme even of an angel, but that which is God's eternal purpose ordered in all things and sure! A covenant which shall not be varied, hich shall not be put on one side, but in which we may rejoice, because of the Blood of the new covenant. Oh, beloved friends, the subject is one not only for the mind, but for the heart, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, that we might praise Him Who is our Saviour, Who over all, God blessed for ever, (Rom.9.5) has actually raised us up, so that we are made to sit with Him in heavenly places, for we are in Christ Jesus, IF so be that we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, (1 Peter 2.3) IF so be that we have been brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light (1 Peter 2.9). But oh, let us not persuade ourselves that this is a fact unless we KNOW, by grace, that we ARE in Christ Jesus our Lord. Only if in mercy we are brought near, have we a right to rejoice in this wondrous unveiling. To claim relationship to Christ unless it exists is indeed a sinful act of utter foolishness, for it but adds sin to sin, and hurries on the proud religious, yet unsaved sinner to a heavier doom with the treasures of wrath upon him. But to be in Christ is blessed indeed! Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!

oOoOo

CHRIST IN THE PSALMS

Outline:-

1. The glory of Christ and His Central Position.
2. The appointed limitations of types.
3. Passages that plainly apply to Him.
4. Difficult contexts.
5. A solemn contrast, - Antichrist in the Psalms.
6. An affectionate warning and exhortation.

Our subject, dear friends, is headed "Christ in the Psalms". I hope that every subject, whatever it be headed, will have Christ as the Subject. The Subject of the subject, if I might so put it. The central part of all our meditations, sanctifying every portion of them. This evening we are limited particularly to one book, but that is a lengthy book, and a wondrously full book, for every Word of God is pure, and perfect. The subject is encouraging, instructive, humbling, but (need I add?) peculiarly solemn and dangerous, not in itself, but in the way it is likely to be handled, - but then we cannot get away from the fact that every subject is dangerous because we are apt to be led astray, but the HOLY SPIRIT is ^{not} merely a thing or a theory. If we have been gathered by the Lord, there is a confidence spiritually possible, spiritually desirable, and spiritually necessary, a confidence in the Lord, that He may control us, in increasing measure, that speakers and hearers alike may have subject minds, opened hearts, and longing desires that all Truth may be applied. Truth that is not applied is actually unlearned. Truth is that which God uses to draw His people away from evil and draw them unto Himself, and Satan knowing this seeks to mingle error with the truth, but the ear should try words even as our palate perceives food. Oh that we may have the hearing ear for the Lord and the ear that hears not the instruction which causeth to err. Christ is the absolutely glorious One, He is always Central. His glory is eternal, it embraces both eternities, for was He not Central when the Only Begotten Son in the bosom of the Father? Will He not be Central in that future Day, when God will bring the First Begotten again into the world and all the angels will worship Him, when He Himself shall be the Firstborn among many brethren, and shall reign in Mount Zion before His ancients gloriously? And now among His redeemed He is Central! The One Who was marked as Central upon the cross erected on Calvary, marked by men as if the worst of the three, That One was before the Father, a perfectly spotless One, and That One is now in the midst of disciplelike believers

as the Central One, - not as He was among Israel, for John said in that connection, "There standeth One in the midst of you Whom ye know not", but Christ in the midst of an assembly of saved ones is the One Who is known, realised, and recognized; for an assembly without Christ in the centre is only Laodicea. In accord with the fact that God has always been pleased to put His beloved Son in the position of exaltation, we find that He is the Centre of Scripture. Scripture not only illustrates this, indirectly; but very definitely, for how many prophecies point to Christ; How many varied types tell of Him, types in nature, tabernacle types, types in the history of Israel, all bring their contribution to His exaltation. If the sun shines, it speaks of the Sun of Righteousness, and the rain that waters the grass, tells of His wondrous workings. In the tabernacle, - curtains, altar, table, ark, mercy seat, sockets, all things - speak of Him. Priests, sacrifices, arrangements of every kind pointed to Him. In the coming out of Egypt, did manna descend? It pictured Him. Was a Rock smitten that waters might come out? This told of Him. Was a brazen serpent lifted on a pole? It meant something in connection with Him: Indeed Christ is so Central throughout types of Scripture that if anyone speaks of types it is well known, among believers who have any measure of instruction, that the thought is not types of the saints, or types of the wicked one, but types of Christ. Furthermore, there are typical characters, and their experiences and their histories are brought before us to give us suggestions concerning Himself. Isaac, the beloved one, offered, and raised up. Joseph, the hated one, brought to lowest depth, and then exalted to highest heights. David the shepherd king; Solomon, the prince of peace; and various other Scripture characters, are not only men who lived, but men whose lives were moulded or overruled by God to give hints of Him Who is so unutterably glorious. Indeed there are some expressions used of typical characters that are hardly to be interpreted primarily of them. We have a good illustration in connection with Joseph, and the chief butler and the chief baker: The chief butler said "Me he restored to my office, but him he hanged". Not that Joseph actually did those things, he declared them, but the Greater than Joseph, typified by Joseph is the One Who brings His people into the King's palace, not only declares it, but does it, and Who is also the One to Whom all judgment has been committed. I call your attention to that passage the more, because we shall find parts of the Psalms which cannot be explained of David, but must be taken primarily of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this connection, one further word of warning. Everything that is deep is apt to be put on one side, but if it is taken up, and there is delight

in it, Satan will seek to cause a fascination in finding out things that other people have not seen, and pride of knowledge of Truth, is perhaps more dangerous than pride of knowledge of error. Furthermore, fascination always leads to speculation. Speculation entwined with Truth may even bring Truth into disrepute. And, beloved friends, I feel we are responsible for God's Truth, of which we are trustees, not to wrap it up in our own theories, lest people on receiving Truth, imagine it has an unholy relationship because of the mark on the outside of the wrapping. Let us be very careful that we keep to the Truth, and if we are uncertain, it is often better to keep our uncertainties to ourselves, not with a reserve that is untruthful, not with a wish to hold back from private conversation with brethren who can help, but to avoid proclaiming our uncertainties as if they were fixed facts, and so misleading younger believers.

We come now to consider generally the appointed limitations of types. Limitations are necessary. Blessed be God they are also arranged so that there are limitations to the limitations. They are necessary, for a type without limitations would be a reality. A type must be imperfect that it may be perfect as a type. Imperfect with regard to the antitype, so that it may be a type of divine appointment and so perfect, in the Divine arrangement, in its right position. We all understand what this means. The law was holy and just and good, and right for the purpose for which it was given. But the law could not give life, it must be incomplete in that connection, otherwise it would cease to be law. We realize there are different spheres. The sphere of the type and the sphere of the antitype must be distinct, and there must be limitations in the type. Furthermore, apart from the necessary limitations in perfect types, typical characters are not only incomplete with the right incompleteness of types, but typical characters are incomplete because of their sins. There is a double incompleteness in a typical character, as every believer can at once see. David, though a man after God's Own heart was compelled to acknowledge that he had sinned, more than once, and all such types of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only fall short, with an appointed incompleteness, but fall short by a sinful contrast. Furthermore in connection with appointed limitations may I remind you that the Book of Psalms is a feeling Book. I do not mean sentimental. Sentiment is very dangerous, in the present day use of the word. In fact one might almost say, judging by PRESENT-DAY ENGLISH that feeling is excellent, but feelings are very dangerous. I am only now taking the present day employment of the words in common language. You will follow just what I mean. We are not to be led by our

feelings, and impulses and sentimentality. Spirituality is a deep thing, but on that very account, it does have an intense feeling, and the Book of Psalms is a feeling Book. Now no servant of God could have the fulness of feeling of our beloved Lord, hence it was necessary that the Psalmist should either write above his own experience, even as we read through Peter that the divine writers hardly realized what they were writing at times, it is necessary either that the Psalmist should write above his experience, or that his recorded experience should fall short of the experience of Christ. Therefore the Psalms that bring before us the psalmist's own feelings, more emphatically, have often only a secondary relation to our Lord. Those which rather bring before us the Lord Jesus Christ have only a secondary relation to His people. There is a measure of parallel, for we have been brought into that position of nearness to God, and the psalmist had something of the same blessedness, though he was dispensationally without the fulness that we have received. On this account there is a certain parallel between the feelings but inasmuch as God desired to give us a view of His beloved Son in the Psalms many portions go beyond human entering into them. Inasmuch as God did not want the Book to be simply a Book of prophecy, but a Book into which His people could enter, with feeling, and express their condition of soul, on THAT account God arranged that certain portions of the Psalms deal specially with His people. Sometimes there is the twofold interpretation. He was the reproached One, we are the reproached ones. As He walked, so should we walk; as He was rejected, so should we be rejected. It is not always easy to separate the two aspects. You will recollect how the woman of Tekoa, with her imagined history, on presenting it to the king, in one sentence spoke as if it was real. The next sentence dealt with the case of Absalom and then passed back to her own assumed family again, and you find it hard to sort out her statements. Now in a far more wondrous way because inspired and perfect, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the statements of the Psalms, and to see which refer to our beloved Lord, and which refer rather to His erring people. Yet if any of us have a gracious affection toward Him, I am sure that any knowledge we have of the Psalms would lead us to feel Christ is largely to be seen there, even as for example, in the Song of Solomon. It was said by one of the more earnest (perhaps I should say most earnest) of rather popular preachers of the last century, Mr. Spurgeon, that a certain commentator saw the Lord Jesus everywhere, and his words upon this are somewhat as follows, - "Seeing the Lord Jesus is a precious gift, although it must be confessed that this writer sees Him where He is sometimes not legitimately to be seen". I think that we realize that to see the Lord in Scripture IS a precious gift, and

though we must be careful lest we make a mistake, I think, though not desiring of two evils to chose the less, I think I would have more hope of the spiritual progress of one who made the mistake of seeing the Lord too often, than I would have hope of the spritual progress of one who saw Him too rarely.

We pass next to consider passages that plainly apply to the Lord. The Book of Psalms is a well-known book. I suppose everyone present has read it through. I was talking to an aged believer today, and he was telling me that in a country meeting where he believed there were about 90 to 100 professing believers present, the question was asked, How many have read the Bible though? - And not one could say, Yes. He himself had been preaching for many years and the question was put to him, and he could not say he had done so. But the question had its affect. Within six months he had the joy of realizing he had gone straight through his Father's word. But whatever other books are omitted in Scripture, I think nearly every believer has read the Book of Psalms through. I hope we may just ponder in our hearts whether we have been onesided in our study of Scripture. We cannot study any book too much, but we can study it too much proportionately. We need to have an allround knowledge of God's Truth. The Holy Spirit has laid a stress on quotations. Before coming out today I looked up a collection of about 258 quotations from the Earlier Scriptures and I counted through, and found 66 of them were from the Psalms, practically a quarter of them, and it was remarkable furthermore to find that a long way toward half of them were applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, in their quotation, and several of them two or three times over. We are on safe ground when we deal with that which the Holy Spirit saith. If we ask generally, Does such and such a Psalm apply to the Lord Jesus, I think the answer should be first that the Psalm cannot be viewed simply as one whole. It may have divisions. To take a very striking case, Psalm 50 brings before us the heavenly saints, then Israel, and lastly the wickedone and his followers. It is important therefore to know when we are dealing with a Psalm, what its divisions are. And secondarily if we are asked if a Psalm applies to Christ, our first thought may be, Has the Holy Spirit indicated by quoting thus from it? Perhaps we feel at times like the Ethiopian eunuch, "Of whom speaketh the prophet, of himself, or of some Other"? Then we may find the direct testimony of God, that David spoke with a view to Him. You know how Peter in Acts 2 distinctly shows that Psalm 16 WAS NOT TRUE OF DAVID, and therefore was direct prophecy. That is perhaps an extreme case but it brings before us how prominent Christ is in the Psalms. Not

only as an after-thought, not only as an application, but as the Intended One of the Holy Spirit. The following Psalms are definitely applied to the Lord Jesus in the later Scriptures. Some of them, as for example Psalm 2, are applied in different passages, and different verses are taken. You know how that verse 1 is used "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing", then again, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" is taken, and again "Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron" is found. Three verses are taken showing that the Psalm applies to the Lord Jesus. The following Psalms are said by the Holy Spirit to contain references to the Lord. Psalm 2, 8, 16, 22, 31, 35, 40, 41, 45, 68, 78, (probably 97), 102, 110, 118. Here then we have a goodly collection of Psalms that are definitely applied to the Lord Jesus, but beloved friends, we are perfectly sure that they are not given as the only ones. They are samples, if I might so put it. Very prominent ones, but not a complete list. Take for example Psalm 1. Who is the wondrous Man of that Psalm? Take Psalm 15, Who is the Obedient One there, marked by perfect obedience? Psalm 24, - Who is the One of clean hands and of a pure heart? Psalm 18, ? Who is the One rewarded according to His perfectness? Psalm 72, - Who is the King Who will reign in righteousness? Psalm 80 tells of the Man of God's right hand. Psalm 89 refers to the One on Whom help is laid, a Mighty One. Psalm 12 moreover MAY be taken to refer to the Lord, "The wicked flee on every side, when He, Who is the Loathed of the sons of men shall be exalted". That is not the common translation, but it has been viewed as a possible translation for a number of years, and I am inclined to think the Holy Spirit intends we should include these thoughts there. The One Who is the Loathed and outcast of the sons of men will be exalted, and the wicked will flee on every side when He shall be honoured. Then Psalm 34, speaking of the righteousness of the One Whose bones are not broken, surely refers to Christ. Psalm 116 says "Precious in the sight of the Lord, is THE death that belongs to His saints". What death? One death belongs to His saints, the death of the Lord Jesus. The emphatic THE is blotted out in our translation: - necessarily in a translation that does not have special printing for emphasis, and one feels the need for underlining words or printing them in capitals at times to bring out the Divine emphasis. But to return, dear friends, to direct quotation: we feel that if these passages are said by the Holy Spirit to apply to our beloved Lord, we are safe and right in so applying them. Indeed we may go a step further, it would be serious not to apply them so. We need to acknowledge God's wisdom. He has poked out certain passages, and it is for us to rejoice in the view they give of our beloved Lord. But there are difficulties in the contexts of not a few.

Shall we seek by grace to deal with some of these difficulties. At the outset may I remind you that our beloved Lord humbled Himself when He became a man, and so some exceptional passages may and do apply to Him. You will follow what I mean, if I pick out the 22nd. There Christ speaks of Himself as the One Who was in sore straits. The Psalm begins "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and it goes on "I am a worm and no man". Surely our hearts realize that WE could not have applied that Psalm to our Lord. We could not have used the language, but now that the Holy Spirit has shown us that He was the One Who cried "Why hast Thou forsaken Me", we bow our heads and worship, and acknowledge how He became wondrously humbled. I think that is the key to Psalm 102, which is definitely applied to the Lord. It brings before us the prayer of an Afflicted One, and the term "afflicted" is the same as the "Poor one", and the Poor and the Needy One of the Psalm often suggests Him Who became poor and needy, beyond all that we can understand. Toward the end of the Psalm we read, "He weakened My strength in the way, He shortened My days. I said, O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days, throughout all generations are Thy years. In old times didst Thou lay the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands". Now at first sight we wonder how to take this passage, but we realize there is a measure of dialogue in it, (as for example in Psalm 2). The Lord Jesus we know, was the One Who was indeed weakened, Who in the midst of His days, about half the seventy years, died, - not that He was taken away in the sense of being a failure. This passage I think closely parallels with Isaiah 49, concerning the One Who seemed to be spending His strength in vain, and for nought. In the middle of Ps. 102, 24, or if not at the beginning of the next verse, there is a sudden change. The Son has been addressing the Father, and the Father now addresses the Son, it may be the change should be in the middle of the verse. "Thy years are throughout all generations" being the answer to the beloved Son of God. How do we know this? From Hebrews 1, for Hebrews 1 tells us, "Thou didst lay the foundations of the earth" was addressed TO the Lord Jesus, and not to the Father. I mean, not to the Father primarily. It is quoted as a proof of the absolute Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. So here we have in Psalm 102, the humanity and Deity of the Lord Jesus entwined in one context. But though His wondrous humiliation explains some difficult passages, we must acknowledge there are some that cannot apply to Him. For example, the psalmist says, "I am old and greyheaded. I have been young, and now am I old", and expressions of that nature. Moreover he tells of the way in which grace brought him back after a period of wandering. "Blessed is the

man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long, for day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer" and the Psalm goes on to say, "I said, I will confess my sin". The Lord Jesus never had personal sin, and He never held aloof from the Father, hence He is twice out of that Psalm. He is often the contrasted One; and here we reach a most important point, and that is, every type and every parable contains as much by contrasts as by parallels. There are some parables which are actually contrasts. "Ye yourselves" says the Lord, "are to be like men who wait for their lord, when he - the eastern master - shall return from the wedding". You are to be like those who wait for the return FROM the wedding. The eastern slave watched for his drunken master to come back, in fear and trembling. We are to wait with the same intensity, but certainly not with the same trembling, and He Whom we love will come back, not having had a feast, but to welcome US INTO the feast, who. He will serve His people. The widow pleads with the unjust judge, and he answers, to spare himself trouble. The Lord's people called to be His bride, plead with the Righteous Father, and He answers them in love and grace. So we have a contrast throughout, and one of the most important things in the reading of Scripture is to distinguish. Beloved friends, God has never made our paths so easy that there will be no tests. When He put Adam in the garden of Eden, He put the tree of knowledge of good and evil near the tree of life. If Abraham tells a lie, it is not rebuked in the context. Indeed God declares of him soon that he is a prophet. (The sin is not explained to the Gentile king), and it is only a SUBSEQUENT context that makes clear, and we see sad effects of this sin afterwards. So it is with many things. We are never expected to read one Scripture alone. The Bible is not a Book to be understood by mere learning, but VIA spiritual communion, then there will be the distinguishing, but TRUTH ever becomes in a false light to those who are not in harmony with God. There are passages that speak of sin in the Messianic Psalms, for example Ps. 69. How are we to deal with that passage? One verse says "They hate Me without a cause". Three verses further on brings before us the bearing of reproach, and yet a verse between says, "O God, Thou knowest my foolishness, and my guiltiness, (or my guiltinesses) are not hid from Thee". How are we to explain this? It is perfectly possible for the Holy Spirit to pick out one verse as belonging to the Lord, and for the next verse not to apply to Him. Let me give an illustration that I am

sure you will clearly follow. In 2 Sam. 7, and 1 Chron. 17 we have a record of the words of God concerning Solomon, but in the 2 Sam. 7 account there is rather a stress on Solomon; in 1 Chron. 17 account, there is rather a stress on our beloved Lord. In the 2 Sam. 7 record we read, "I will be His Father and He shall be My Son", which plainly refers to Christ, but it adds, "If He commits iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men". Those added words cannot apply to Him Who was absolutely perfect, and they are OMITTED with Divine wisdom in Chronicles. The Holy Spirit expects that we should be in harmony with Himself when we go to the Scriptures. The Bible is never meant as a Book to be learnt ALONE. I am sure you would understand what I mean if I were to say that a human teacher would write a very different grammar of a language if he meant to take it as the outline in lectures he was giving, from that which he would write if he meant it for private students alone, and far off from him. Now the Scripture is not meant for private students alone, but for those who attend the teaching that God gives, and therefore the difficulties are only blessings, invitations to study and full of instruction. But though it is quite possible that one verse may refer to Christ and the next one not refer to Christ, we must not forget that in Hebrew the same word is used for sin and sin offering, and what may be true of David's sin is, blessedly true of Christ's sin-offering. David's guiltiness was known to the Lord. Christ's offering for guiltiness. Thus the Scripture twice over becomes forcible and expressive. Psalm 40 may be taken in the same way, where we have the bringing up out of the horrible pit and the miry clay. There we do not find the mention of sins in so many words, though most read into this early verse a description of a sinner and there is a measure of truth, but such an interpretation does not exhaust the passage. Nor does it seem the primary one, but undoubtedly verse 12 is rather difficult in that 40th Psalm. "Innumerable evils have compassed me about. Mine iniquities have taken hold of me", but THAT is the Psalm which says "I delight to do Thy will, Oh My God". You see how the Holy Spirit always brings the difficulty into a position that may help to solve it, because of its EXTREME nature. Just as Psalm 69, the verse BEFORE the mention of guilt contains the reference to a hating WITHOUT CAUSE, which could only be true of Christ; so here this difficult passage is very near the one which says "Thy law is in the midst of Me" which could ONLY be true of Christ in its fullness. The greater the difficulty, the less the difficulty, for it is fairly clear that One Who could say that He was hated without a cause could not have the personal guilt. It is fairly plain that One Who said "I come", instead of offerings "Thy law is in the midst of Me", ("in My very

bowels" as the word is in Divine expressiveness, the term 'heart' loses something of the force) - the One Who could thus speak could have no personal iniquities. Therefore the greatness of the difficulty, the intensity of the contrast only emphasizes that God cannot mean any failures on the part of our beloved Lord. We must either see a fresh section starting in the Psalm, or an allusion to our beloved Lord taking the sin of sinners on Him and becoming a sin-offering in their place. This language even occurs in the Later Scriptures, Him Who knew no sin God made to be SIN, OR A SIN OFFERING for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. I had hoped to have spoken of a solemn contrast, namely, Antichrist, who, with Satan is sometimes seen in the Psalms, the wicked one, not always clearly marked in our translation, for the word "wicked" that is used is sometimes plural. If only "wicked one" were put, we should see more definitely, but you can often find out without knowing Hebrew because of the "he" or the "his" of the context. If the next clause says "his" you know the rendering cannot be "wicked ones"; if it says "their", on the other hand, you will know the word is plural. Antichrist is the wicked one, the "man of the earth" of Psalm 10, and, as we see, Judas, the one son of perdition, in various Psalms, for example 41, 69 and 109, so we see the other son of perdition, who is indeed the man of blood, and the antitype of Saul, "the enemy" of whom Psalm 18 speaks.

Our last point is an affectionate warning and exhortation. I rather put this first than at the end - urging against mere speculation, and urging God's dear people not only to see Christ as the Central One in the Book, but to wait on their God continually that He may be the Central One of their lives.

oOoOo

THE LAST WEEK OF CHRIST'S EARTHLY LIFE
AND THE FIRST IN RESURRECTION.

Outline:-

1. Authority of the Gospels
2. The Blessings of Difficulties.
3. Events Leading up to the Crisis.
4. The Last Supper and the First.
5. That Night.

6. The Day and Time of Crucifixion.
7. How Long was our Lord Jesus in the grave?
8. The Events of the Resurrection Morning.
9. The Preciousness of God's Silence.

Our subject this evening, dear friends, is headed "The last week of Christ's earthly life and the first in Resurrection", and it is intended that we should have a preparatory study today, seeking God's guidance with a view to the removal of misconceptions and difficulties, that He may be glorified.

Our first point concerns the authority of the Gospels. By the gospels I mean those four precious narratives that bring before us the earthly life of our beloved Lord. These Gospels, I take it we recognize as equally authoritative, and as absolutely authoritative. It is not that Matthew and Mark and Luke and John each contributed what they knew, but that the Holy Spirit brought various things to the remembrance of those who had been present, and in some way directed the knowledge of those who had not been present, with a view to the record of just SUCH PORTIONS of the life of our beloved Lord as it was God's good pleasure to hand down to us, for our guidance and encouragement and reproof. The four Gospels are alike needed, alike precious, alike authoritative. There are no contradictions to be found, though there are seeming contradictions in great number. The seeming contradictions are often such as no MAN contriving to produce a narrative of his own would have caused. Difficulties and problems which are found throughout the four Gospels are even found within the covers of a SINGLE gospel, and thus plainly 'intentional' in God's wisdom, but no contradictions can be discovered. There is every evidence, to an unprejudiced disciple, from the very difficulties, that God is behind these four narratives; and so we pass to our second point.

"The blessings of Difficulties". First the blessings of difficulties in THEMSELVES, that is, they are very humbling, and it is well to be humbled, to learn that we know not everything as we ought to know, that our ignorance is very real, and God's wisdom very great. Again, the blessings are vast in connection with the accompaniments, because through difficulties we SEARCH where we should otherwise perhaps hold back from such earnest labour. We are thankful to our God for every difficulty in that it urges us to work more hard, and to expect blessings will accompany the comparing Scripture with Scripture. There are blessings, moreover, in the results, for when a

difficulty is solved, we find more deeply felt confidence in the God-breathed words. Furthermore, when we find a fulness of teaching that we might otherwise have overlooked, we expect yet more; and we shall not be disappointed. The difficulty leads to the pondering, the pondering to the unveiling, the unveiling to the praising and the results are thus to the glory of our God. Incidentally we may notice an evidential value in difficulties. If the writers had been under a collusion to produce books to agree, there would not be the difficulties which we find. Hence we have the striking evidence that these books are not produced by man, made to fit in with one another, but are God's own testimony, unlike all human biographies. Undoubtedly we shall meet certain passages that at first sight SEEM to contradict one another, but if we love the Lord we are surely learning that first sight is oftentimes defective, and, let us remember, the difficulties of seeming contradictions can be solved, if there is only one POSSIBLE interpretation. I would mention this because believers are oftentimes inclined to play into the hands of infidels by an almost cowardly manner. It is often cowardly to argue. We have the terra-firma of God's truth, and the mountain-top of fellowship with Him is often a sounder argument than descending to argue, because in connection with argument in words, the believer sometimes surrenders that which he cannot rightly surrender. I fear that is so in times innumerable - he surrenders the unique character of the Scripture, for all common arguments bring it down to a common level. This is an absurdity and an impossibility. In other words he sheaths his sword, and then offers to fight (See Matthew 4.) May I point out in this connection that if there is one POSSIBLE interpretation even the infidel can demand no more. We need not prove that a certain order of events is the right one. I think we shall find with respect to some of the actions of our beloved Lord on the resurrection morning, it is still difficult to know the exact order of events, but there is no contradiction, if there is one POSSIBLE arrangement of the narrative; and I am not sure that we are expected to be able to arrange it all, and say "This is the only possible order". I believe that God would have us, and this has already been suggested, confess our ignorance and feel our littleness, but if there is one possible interpretation, ALL the objections of men are laid low.

And now, dear friends, we come to our third point, the events leading up to the crisis, which, INDEED, was a crisis, for as the Lord Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out". You remember how that for over

thirty years He Who was the Lord of glory had sinlessly walked this earth, and for three years before He died in the place of guilty sinners, He had walked this earth as the MANIFEST Servant of the LORD, the One ever doing those things which pleased Him, characterised by obedience, obedience not merely as duty, but out of a heart of overflowing love. In Galilee, in Judea, aye and in Samaria too, He had witnessed and worked. Man had despised Him, though oftentimes the common people heard Him gladly. He had been marked out as the song of the drunkards. The Pharisees refused Him since He was the Light and showed up their darkness. But just before the period of His glorious death in the place of guilty sinners, there were certain events which led more rapidly up to the crisis, and showed that His hour was nearly come. You remember how each Gospel brings before us certain things as introductory to the rejection and suffering of our Lord Jesus. We know that all these things were appointed by the Father. We know that man's arrangement was only secondary, and part of an overruled purpose. Nevertheless it is interesting to notice the way in which history is brought before us to show how Satan works, and how men scheme. In all Gospels we have the wondrous entrance into Jerusalem, fulfilling part of Zechariah 9 and of Daniel 9 also, where the sixty nine sevens lead up to Messiah the PRINCE. Messiah the Prince enters riding upon a colt, and, having entered, He is yet rejected by the Pharisees. The people it is true, honour Him and speak of the prophet of Galilee, but He is refused in the temple area itself. The words sound forth, "Hearest Thou what these say?" And He left them and went out of the city into Bethany and He lodged there". Why Bethany? We find in John 11 that Bethany was the residence of Martha, Mary and Lazarus. A little before this last week our Lord had gone away beyond Jordan when men sought to take Him (John 10.39,40). but God in infinite wisdom arranged that Lazarus should fall sick, and so to Bethany the Lord Jesus went, having waited certain days, that the miracle might be more manifest, and that the appointed times and seasons might be reached. On arrival at Bethany He enquired, and not only enquired, but acted concerning Lazarus, and Lazarus was raised up, but soon after 'a council' against Him was called. The resurrection of Lazarus is clearly marked by John as the stepping stone to the death of the Lord Jesus, for we read "Much people of the Jews therefore knew that He was there, and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also whom He had raised from the dead; but the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death, because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus". Indeed the council of which we have been reading, the council which is in John 11, partic-

ularly contain those striking words of Caiaphas, where He prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and the words are added, - "From that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death". We do not know how long was the period between the raising of Lazarus and the Passover at which our beloved Lord died. John puts a brief time mark in between, - "Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but went thence into a country near the wilderness unto a city called Ephraim, and there continued with His disciples". Then we are quickly told about the coming up to Bethany six days before the Passover. John 11 is used by the Holy Spirit as the preface to John 12. The going to Bethany there, was some little time before, but it was the preface to His death; and the people had not forgotten the raising of Lazarus. Those who went up to Jerusalem at the three feasts had evidently not been up to Jerusalem since Lazarus had been raised, and, doubtless, many knew him, or had heard of him, and desired to see him, hence in John 12 we have the reference to the Lord's triumphal entry which as I have said, is found in the whole of the FOUR Gospels. Next we have brought before us that our beloved Lord in those days was in the TEMPLE teaching. He knew that His last week of earthly life upon this earth had arrived. "I was daily with you in the temple teaching". Luke brings this before us, where we read that our beloved Lord was at all times so zealous for His Father's business; and yet the chief priests and the scribes, and the chief of the people sought to destroy Him, and could not find what they might do for all the people were very attentive to hear Him. Chapter 20.1 adds "It came to pass in one of those days as He taught the people in the temple and preached the Gospel, the chief priests came upon Him with the elders, and said to Him, "Tell us by what authority Thou doest these things, and who is he that gave Thee this authority?" But, dear friends, we must take one other passage which will help to show how Satan worked. I have specially called attention to the ~~par~~ marching into Jerusalem, but will you notice in Matthew 26 at the end of that wondrous address which was still later, how the Lord Jesus remarked, "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified". Then suddenly the passage goes to Bethany. In verse 6, "Now when Jesus was in Bethany in the house of SIMON the leper". This, we know, is recorded in Matthew, Mark and John, and John's Gospel plainly associated Christ's presence in the house of Simon the leper very definitely with the raising of Lazarus as a stepping stone to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is remarkable that Judas Iscariot was the son of another Simon, and that in the house of the feast when, in gratitude to

the Lord, Mary took a pound of spikenard, doubtless remembering His work upon her brother Lazarus, - then it was that Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, led off others in complaint saying, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor"? That was, as John says, six days before the Passover, and the fact that we read first in Matthew 26.1,2. that it was then only two days before the Passover, makes very clear how the Holy Spirit goes back in Matthew to show how Mary's act of devotion led up to the crisis. Now perhaps we can gather together the different things which, from the human standpoint, led up to the putting to death of the Lord Jesus. First, His raising up of Lazarus embittered the Pharisees beyond all measure. Secondly, the loving care for Him which was manifested by Mary, in connection with that miracle, exasperated Judas, who wanted to have all the gifts entrusted to his care, that he might steal accordingly. Thirdly, the prophesied and apparently triumphantly entry of the Lord Jesus into Jerusalem annoyed the Pharisees for they saw the Galileans were apparently going AFTER Him, as they characterised it. Hence they determined they must act quickly, yet they desired not to act on the feast day, lest there should be an uproar among the crowds of people. Judas formed his plans several days before they were carried out. He formed his plans at one feast, he carried them out in connection with another, for we read how that Judas was present at the Passover feast, and so still with the Lord, and indeed the Lord gave unto Him some of that Passover feast, treating him still as a Jew, though he did not remain to share the Lord's Supper. Judas brings before us the power of sin growing and developing. The power of self-seeking, the danger of education and business ability in themselves, for doubtless this JUDEAN Jew ("Iscariot" - "man of Kerioth" probably) was more educated than some of the others, and as such it may be, carried the bag and superintended the finances of the fellowship.

Next we come to consider the fourth point "The last Supper and the First". By the last supper I mean that last Passover Supper, the last of a series which began in Egypt, for after the Lord of glory had died there were no passovers acceptable to God. It is true there will be a further passover, as the Lord Jesus Christ showed, and as the prophecies make clear, that there will be the feast in the first month, but at the present time Israel's passover is an imitation - solemn to us, - a solemnising mockery. There is no lamb, there is no realization of the teaching, there is nothing but an empty form. That last supper is brought before us in Luke's gospel very definitely. Shall we turn to the 22nd chapter? Says the first verse, "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh which is called the Passover, and the

chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him for they feared the people. Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot being of the number of the twelve, and he went his way and communed with the chief priests and the scribes how he might betray Him unto them. And they were glad and covenanted to give him money. And he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him unto them in the absence of the multitude. Then came the day of unleavened bread when the Passover must be killed". I suppose everything is perfectly clear. This was not an ordinary feast, it was the Passover. Verse 8 adds, "Go and prepare us the Passover", verse 11, "Where is the guestchamber where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples"? Verse 13, "They made ready the Passover". Verse 15 "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer". I would lay a stress upon this, because some have implied and even stated that the Lord Jesus may have used leavened bread at the Lord's Supper, and said there is no proof of a Passover first. "Might not that meal have been another"? - it has been said. The only seeming 'argument' which can be brought forward in this connection is John 18.28, "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment, and it was early, and they themselves went not into the judgment hall lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover". This appears at the first a difficulty, but need to realize that the Lord Jesus, Who made haste and delayed not, partook of the Passover quickly in the appointed time. Luke is clear, "The Passover MUST be killed". But the Jews who evidently had, and still have, different ways of reckoning, apparently so contrived it even as they have contrived with respect to certain Sabbath laws, that their leaders could put off the observance a little longer. Oh how sad is the contrast between the leaders of Israel, and the Precious Obedient Saviour! Of Him we particularly read "When the hour was come, He sat down with the twelve". That last supper is marked before us in the various Gospels as the stepping-stone to Judas' climax of guilt. The Lord said at the supper, "One of you shall betray Me", and Judas asks, "Rabbi, is it I?" The others say, "Lord, is it I"? Yet a little later they are engaged in a strife as to who should be the greatest. Indeed, though the Passover supper brings before us the Lord's people being led out from Judaism to Christ, it is very sad to see the failure of MEN, even on so solemn an occasion. Christ looked for those who could enter into His rejected position, in some measure of loving sympathy, and He found none. The behaviour at the last supper is indicative of MAN'S mistake, which always exalts himself and forgets Christ, and we are not

surprised it led up to the failure in the garden, crowned by the failure in the palace. As to the first supper, I mean the FIRST occurrence of the Lord's Supper, I need say very little. You know how the Lord Jesus selected a PORTION of the passover, and distinctly said "THIS do with a view to My memorial", suggesting at once a limitation, and a continuance, with a different object. At THIS first supper Judas was not present. The other eleven partook:- a number suggestive in that it is one beyond the ten which made a fellowship in the nation of Israel. Eleven partook from one cup as from one loaf, having in common that which typified Him Whose glory and work they did not fully realize. And so we have, beloved friends, brought before us that first supper, toward the end of which the Lord Jesus arranged for the journeying forth, and they went forth across Kedron to the Mount of Olives, and into Gethsamane's garden. Ere they had left that upper room, Peter had offered, evidently more than once, that he would die with the Lord. I say "evidently more than once" because of the passage in John's Gospel as well as that which we have in the other Gospels. We have plainly a different context there, though at the same supper. May I point out in passing that in John 13.2 we have the striking statement "Supper having become", not "supper finished". Then we have the passover, down to the sop of verse 27, and the going out of Judas. WHEN Judas has gone forth, the Lord Jesus at once said, "Now is the Son of man glorified". Before then He had taken the towel and girded Himself, with garments laid aside, but now He would manifest His glorifying, and He speaks to His disciples in a different way. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you...a new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another as I have loved you". Peter at least twice over promised to die with the Lord, but the Lord knew what would befall Him, He is the contrast with Judas in one sense, and yet a parallel in another, "Simon, Simon", says Luke 22, "Satan hath desired YOU that he may sift as wheat, but I have prayed for THEE, that thy faith fail not, and, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren". Here we have brought before us that Satan's object was to secure the whole twelve. He particularly desired Peter as well as Judas, but the Lord's plan and prayer were not defeated, the Lord's purpose was not altered. The first supper having been passed through, and the hymn having been sung, the going forth into the mount of Olives is before us, and there is a stress once more on the fact that IT WAS NIGHT. Several times are we reminded of this, "It was NIGHT when Judas went out" says John 13. "The Lord Jesus, in the NIGHT in which He was betrayed" says 1 Corinthians 11.23. Morally, as well as literally, it was night. We know how the Passover feast was associated with night in Exodus. Again the

Lord Jesus said, "Today, in this NIGHT, thou shalt deny Me". There is a stress throughout on the NIGHT. We would consider in passing, Gethsemane, where our beloved Lord spent part of that night, though it was disturbed by those who came from the high priest. We think of Gethsemane with respect to Satan, for there he came as in the wilderness to attack our beloved Lord, and thrice over the Lord gained the victory, as in the wilderness, though thrice over Peter failed, and there was soon his entering into temptation against which the Lord had warned, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation". Thus the hour of temptation for Christ became an hour of temptation for Peter. Again we think of Gethsemane with respect to the power of prayer. We see the intensity, and the conflict and agony of real prayer, and feel ashamed of our faulty contrasts with Him Who prayed most earnestly, ashamed of our faulty contrasts with that groaning which cannot be uttered, the groaning of the Holy Spirit whereof Romans 8 tells us.

Next we can consider the Day and Time of Crucifixion. We are dependent upon what Scripture says in this connection. We have to discover the day, first with respect to the feast, secondly with respect to the week. We have to discover the time, first with respect to the Jewish sacrifices, secondly with regard to the hour of the day. The day with respect to the types is fairly clear. God graciously arranged that though the Lord Jesus partook of the Passover at the right time, nevertheless the people's confusion and delay apparently made it possible that our beloved Lord was slain at the usual Passover killing time, that He was hanging upon the cross at the time when the nation of Israel were thinking of their paschal lamb. This is deeply important, for it brings before us two things. First, God's overruling of man's sin. Secondly, the intense iniquity of the Pharisees and priests, who at so solemn a time in their Jewish ritual could spend their hours in getting rid of Him Who ever did those things which pleased the Father. May I point out that the Jews at the present time always repeat their Passover service, and have it two succeeding nights. There seems a little anticipation of this, or rather an anticipation of the underlying cause of this, in the fact that the Jews seem to have kept their Passover a day after the Lord Jesus. Then, furthermore, we have to consider the day of the week. Wednesday has found its advocates, Thursday its defenders, Friday is the usually regarded day. I hope, before we leave today, to know something more of YOUR difficulties in that connection. The Lord enabling, they will be considered next week.

As to the HOUR of the day He was crucified, we read at the third hour in Mark, which was 9 o'clock in the morning, and there was darkness over all the land from the sixth hour, until the ninth hour, for three hours, and at the ninth hour(3 o'clock in the afternoon), the Lord Jesus cried with a loud voice, and then He died. Thus we have it brought before us that He was put on the cross at the time of the morning sacrifice and died at the period of the evening sacrifice. He was hanging on the cross six hours, - (the number 'six' being deeply important) and these six hours are divided into two threes, - the first three specially(not exclusively) bringing before us man's opposition, and Satan's opposition, and the last three - GOD'S WRATH. Thus with the three temptations in Gethsemane we have several 'threes' in connection with the death of the Lord Jesus. John's gospel, however, tells us that early in the morning was the sixth hour. At first there looks like a contrast, but it is not so, for Pilate led the Lord Jesus forth and sat down at the Judgment seat about six o'clock in the morning. This is ROMAN reckoning, hence that which was the first hour with the Jews would be regarded as the sixth hour in the day with the Romans. There is no contradiction. He died for Jew and Gentile, and both hours are appropriately mentioned in connection with His death.

We have now to consider how long our beloved Lord was in the grave. He Himself declares that as Jonah was three days and three nights, so would He be in the heart of the earth. But I need hardly say that the word 'day' and the word 'night' have alike to be interpreted in regard to Eastern meaning. Do not misunderstand me, the letters 'nux', night, mean nothing as bare letters. You cannot know a word except by usage. It is therefore important that we should come to this part of our study with prayerful determination to have no opinions of our own, simply to accept what God has revealed. Were it not for that Divinely made statement as to three days and three nights, I suppose we should have little hesitation in believing that our Lord Jesus was only in the grave a little beyond the one day and night of twenty four hours, for it seems fairly clear at first sight,(I will not say whether it is right or not) - it seems fairly clear at first sight in Matthew's Gospel that one day intervenes between the death and resurrection. Likewise in Luke's Gospel the women rest the Sabbath according to the commandment, and the first day of the week comes up next before us. John's Gospel is equally clear that the Sabbath was very near when the Lord Jesus died, for they would not allow His body to hang upon the cross during the Sabbath. I take it therefore that we have here a problem which will bring us to our knees, and which

the Lord will solve if it be His good pleasure and time, that we may learn more of Himself, and the fulness of His work. There is one of our problems for prayerful consideration next time. I will only add now that in Matthew 17.1 that which is said to be "After six days" is in Luke 9.28 said to be about eight days after; that in John 20 we read about the eighth day, concerning the following Lord's day I presume, and when various ones went to Pilate saying that the Lord Jesus declared that after three days He would rise again, they also said, "Command that the sepulchre be made sure UNTIL THE THIRD DAY". "AFTER three days", and "UNTIL the third day" in the same breath. A somewhat similar passage has been before us recently in the book of Esther. Moreover in the latter part of the Lord's Day on the journeying to Emmaus, we are clearly told in Luke 24 that it was the third day since various things there mentioned had happened. "After three days", signifies till after the beginning of the third day, so in a tenancy five minutes is a legal period for the whole. This clears up much for God's dear people.

The events of the resurrection morning will occupy us more fully on a subsequent occasion. I will only remind you once more that any possible interpretation is sufficient. It seems fairly clear that one Gospel speaks as though the disciples knew something, when another Gospel says they did not know anything. But that is only the conclusion of a superficial study. If we look through each Gospel by itself we shall find that the disciples were continually in suspense. Let us give the most striking illustration, or at least, one of the most striking illustrations in Luke 24. The two journeying to Emmaus have come to the eleven and those that are with them, and the words are sounding forth, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to SIMON", and as they speak Jesus stands in the midst, and at once they are terrified and affrighted (an amazing fact), they suppose they have seen a spirit. You remember in Acts we read that when Peter arrived at the door those who were praying to see him, were surprised to see him. On the resurrection morning there was confusion among the disciples, in the resurrection evening there was confusion. When one moment they believed, the next moment they doubted, and this is the key to some of the seeming contradictions. Moreover, in the resurrection day there was ample opportunity for several journeyings and running backwards and forwards in connection with the tomb close by. This will account for the fact that on one occasion Mary Magdalene is by herself, on another is accompanied by other women; that on one occasion Peter is with John, on another occasion by himself, and

on a third with the other gathered disciples. We need not to assume, but to accept, not to reason criticizingly yet ignorantly, but to be thankful for the preciousness of God's silence which not only makes us search, but makes us praise. This silence in the order of events makes us feel, - Oh how little can we dictate to God, - rather we dare not dictate at all - how He should give us His instruction. He knows what is best and we thank Him as dutiful children should. There is a further silence with regard to what happened in the interval between the first Lord's Day and the second Lord's Day. We know little of the arrangements during the forty days, ere our Lord more manifestly and definitely ascended. We know little of what happened during those days, but He was often assembled with His disciples and spake to them of the things concerning the kingdom of God. What we know is precious what we do not know is precious. God worked out, and works out His purpose and we thank Him, and are willing for Him to tell us what He shall tell us, and to be silent as to whatever He will keep from us.

Now dear friends, your suggestions, questions and difficulties

Q. The day of preparation would be before the Sabbath, would it not?

A. Yes, in the east, till the present day, Friday is called the "Parascave".

Q. That was the day on which the Lord was crucified?

A. Yes.

Q. What does it mean, "the end of the Sabbath" in Matt. 28 ?

A. I do not want this RECORD OF SUGGESTIONS to be viewed as anything more than 'suggestive'. We could translate "WITH A VIEW to the first day of the week". The word there used only occurs elsewhere in Luke 23. 54. In that day was the preparation and the Sabbath DREW ON. That word 'draw on' is the same as in Matt. 28, "As it began to dawn toward the first day of the week". It is really the word for 'lighting upon', evidently the Jews of old had the lighting up for their Sabbath as we see when we go round the streets of East London today, but DOES it mean in Matthew 28 that they had a further lighting up, a 'religious' act as they do now? That thought has been suggested. Or have we brought before us here the dawning toward the first day of the week on the Lord's Day morning itself? Here is one of the real difficulties. The word "The end of the Sabbath" means late in the Sabbath, OR late in the week, and there have been suggested certain reasons

for wondering whether it may not mean that on Saturday evening Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the sepulchre, though their plans were not fully carried out. There is a bare possibility that we could read the words with the 66th verse of the chapter before, "They went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch, BUT it was the end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week", that is, the time was fast going by, and the Pharisees were late. But this would at once suggest another problem, not only would it begin the 28th chapter rather abruptly, but it would seem to bring before us the idea that the first day of the week still began on Saturday evening, which though it was doubtless true BEFORE Christ's death, seems to us hardly an expression that we should anticipate JUST BEFORE His resurrection and after His death, inasmuch as that period though transitional was nevertheless getting very close to the new dispensation when the first day starts as we know from Acts 20 at midnight, (Roman time, the times of the Gentiles). It seems to me therefore that the words of Matthew 28. 1 can be best understood as designedly obscure to bring before us that there was an 'awkward' period of six hours; - to which week could you say it belonged? Do you follow the difficulty? The old week would close at 6 o'clock Saturday afternoon, the new week starts at 12 o'clock or midnight, and this may account for the fact that the word 'Sabbath' is here used in the plural, a name that is sometimes given to the week or the weeks. Have we here brought before us the end of the weeks, late in the weeks, that is to say the transition period which united the two weeks even as we have a transition period in connection with dispensations (see Hebrews 9.26 Greek). I hope to go further into this more fully another time, but I trust I have made the difficulty clear as a difficulty. We must ever own that there are some things in Scripture we cannot understand.

Q. What time did the morrow after the Sabbath commence among Israel?

A. Six o'clock, but nothing was arranged as an offering until the next morning, nothing specially.

Q. With regard to the difficulty of unleavened bread, Deuteronomy 16.4 definitely states that there should be no leaven in all their coats during that week. Even if the Jews in general were not carrying out that command, our Lord would not approve the existence of leaven during that week, would He?

A. No.

Q. This not only excludes it from their feasts but from their presence during the week, does it not?

A. Undoubtedly.

Q. It would be impossible for them to have leaven under any circumstances?

A. Morally impossible, and of course the first day of the week when the Lord made Himself known to the two going to Emmaus, it must have been unleavened bread again.

Q. And "as oft as ye eat this bread". Do you think 'this' as demonstrative means the particular kind of bread being directed?

A. I think it includes the thought, although includes ~~much~~ more

Q. In the ordinary way the bread might be mentioned?

A. Simply "broke bread" without any 'the' or 'this' at all. It is not an accident that the very word for 'bread' also means a loaf in Greek, "This bread" therefore indicating "this loaf". Israel were used to two loaves when leavened at Pentecost, but this one loaf was unleavened.

Q. Luke 22.21. The reference to Judas being at the table presents a little difficulty.

A. First of all you notice the word 'is' in italics. Then secondly when the servant of God says that he set the things in order, it does not mean that he never once deviated from historical arrangement to put a little clue or something in a special order for a special purpose. "To set forth in order" may contain the general thought of chronological arrangement, but it does not say everything is chronological. There are other 'orders' as well. People were making confused arrangements, and the Holy Spirit corrected through Luke.

Q. It is quite clear from another Gospel that after taking the sop he went out?

A. Yes.

Q. But Luke 22.21 is following after the Lord took bread, and it comes in with the word "But the hand of him that betrayeth Me".

A. It is unusual language I grant, but is not this what

we are learning throughout Scripture? God is pleased to give us unusual language to make us think. It is all arranged in a different way from what we should have arranged it.

Q. It says they are enquiring among themselves who should be the betrayer, and the Lord says to Judas "That which thou doest do quickly". Would that be after they had been enquiring, or when the Lord gave the sop?

A. When the Lord said His definite words no man knew what He meant, It is quite possible that the Lord said more than once that He would be betrayed, because you recollect how that we have it brought before us in Matthew 26, "They began every one of them to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?" and this passage puts the concern before the taking of the bread. That may be helpful in connection with Luke's Gospel. In Mark's Gospel we have it arranged thus. "They began to be sorrowful, and to say unto Him one by one". May it not therefore be that the Lord Jesus said it a second time, that Luke records a second time, "Behold the hand of him that betrayeth Me(is) with Me on the table", not necessarily at that time, but "has been with Me on the table" may be the thought, and then they begin to enquire among themselves, and a strife among THEM which should be the greatest. I merely suggest it, in accord with the general idea that one possible interpretation is enough to meet the difficulty. If you cannot receive one CERTAIN interpretation you can often get two blessings from two 'uncertain' interpretations. Uncertainty is often fuller of blessing than certainty, especially because we do not feel proud of it.

oOoOo

Part 2

**« THE THINGS
CONCERNING HIMSELF »**

Percy W. Heward

"THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF"

Part 2.

"CHRIST AS THE SHEPHERD"

Outline

1. The Earlier Scriptures. Gen. 49,24 etc.
2. The Shepherd among Israel, in the days of
His flesh. Zech. 11; John 10.
3. The Shepherd Who died. Zech.13.7;Heb.13.20.
4. "The Shepherd and Bishop of your souls"
1. Peter 2.25.
5. The Shepherd in That Day. Micah 5.4; see Rev.
2.27.

By many wonderful different names God is pleased to reveal something of His character, and in accord with this, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is God, though He became Man, is brought in front of us by a multitude of names and descriptive titles. Men are often untrue to their names. A Zedekiah was the reverse of righteous, ruling in iniquity, the last king of Judah at that time. Ahaz let go and held not fast the things of God. King after king fell short of high names; but Christ illustrates all, and every name may mean something to the experience of God's people. It is delightful when we are brought beyond the sphere of ordinary brain knowledge. It is interesting to notice how words, though mere sounds and letters in themselves, have meanings attached to them. In themselves letters have no meaning; - S-H-E-P-H-E-R-D has no more essential meaning than a collection of other sounds without any interpretation at all. You can put together twenty letters and obtain no thought, but 'Shepherd' by derivation, and by usage, has a precious meaning. These letters therefore, awaken a thought in your mind; but if I say L-X-B-D-C there is not such a thought. Yes, 'Shepherd' awakens a thought. In like manner certain words awaken a true affection in the heart. If I say B-R-D-S-Y you have no affection; but to many, even among those who are grown up, the utterance of the word 'Mother' or 'Father' has a meaning which is deeper than a BRAIN-meaning. In other words, we have not only a mental life

but an affection-life, and what we want is that the Names of the Lord Jesus may come into our affection life, and that "Shepherd" may not only be a term our brains understand, so that the thought of a shepherd comes in front of our mind, but that it may also be a word which our heart enjoys. Thus will the care of the shepherd appeal to our soul's experience at the same moment. Christ is described as the SHEPHERD, THROUGHOUT the Scriptures. I am convinced the earlier Scriptures are often overlooked. There are children of God who have not read them through. There are children of God who could quote ten verses from the New Testament for one from the old, yet the earliest church had no New Testament, but only the Old Testament. We need to lay a stress on the earlier Hebrew Scriptures. The people of Israel will tell us that we have our translations to emphasize the Lord Jesus Christ. I would yield to none on laying a stress on the value of the translation which God has given to us, but when it comes to a question of unveiling the Lord Jesus Christ in His merits, I am compelled to say that our version falls very, very far short of the Messianic evidences with which the Hebrew Scriptures are filled. A little prayerful knowledge of Hebrew will convince a believer that the Earlier Scriptures have the Lord Jesus in type and prophecy in numbers of passages which our translators have left out.

The term 'Shepherd' is before us primarily in Gen. 49 with respect to Christ, but there are types yet earlier. The first man called righteous was the shepherd, Abel; and we have in the family of Abraham the thought of Jacob as the shepherd, even as God afterwards was pleased to train Moses, and David too, among the sheep. This was not an accident, but with a view to CHRIST. Jacob's blessing of Joseph refers to the fruitful bough with branches over the wall, and then adds, "His bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong, by the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, by reason of the Name of the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel"; not, "From thence is the Shepherd", - the Shepherd did not spring from Joseph, - but "By reason of the Name of the Shepherd", - the SAME letters in the Hebrew. "By reason of the Name of the Shepherd". This, too, fits the balanced lines of the poetry. "By reason of the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, by reason of the Name of the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel". Here then we are reminded that the Shepherd was the Stone, and that the blessing of Joseph was linked with the Shepherd-Stone. It is rather remarkable that we have brought before us the Vine AND the

Shepherd. You will recollect how that in connection with Israel's feasts we have the stress on the vine with regard to the Passover, and the Shepherd comes before us, as we shall shortly see, with respect to the day of atonement, AND as to the Passover also. We thus have the vine and the shepherd together, and in Psalm 80 also the vine and the shepherd. This is rather remarkable, for in the parables of John's Gospel, which are distinguished from the earlier Gospels, we behold the vine and the shepherd; and Christ claims to be the True Vine and the Good Shepherd. Nor is it accidental that we have the Shepherd described as the Stone, - the Shepherd is the Stone of Israel. A wonderful Name! WE should not have linked the two thoughts, yet the Holy Spirit links them.

But before we pass to this, let us notice in Psalm 23, the Lord is again brought before us as the Shepherd, though here the allusion may include the Lord Jesus as the Shepherded One in the days of His flesh, as we see Him in Psalm 22. Yet Psalm 23 does not only refer to Him as the Shepherded One, but rather as the Shepherd on resurrection ground. He Who became the Lamb is also the Shepherd, and the believer can say "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want". This word describes somewhat more fully WHY the Name "Shepherd" is given to the Lord Jesus. It alludes to His possession of His people; His relationship to His people; His love for His people; His care concerning His people, and the dependence of His people upon Himself. The Shepherd is not a mere drover. The true Shepherd is contrasted with the western idea of a drover. We have brought before us a guardian of gracious, tender love. In Eccl. 12 the words that are powerful are from the masters of assemblies from one Shepherd. There are the under shepherds, the masters of assemblies, but the one Shepherd appoints these words. He cares for all His people, and in Jer. 50 we are asked Who He is. Anti-Christ comes up as a lion from the swelling of Jordan, but God causes him suddenly to run away, and the reason is explained - "Who is a Chosen Man that I may appoint over her? for Who is like Me? and Who will appoint Me the time? and Who is that Shepherd That will stand before Me?" The answer must be Christ. This Shepherd stands. Here is the unveiling of the Shepherd-King. He deals with the lion, at the right time, even as David smote the lion and the bear. Yet more definitely Psalm 80 comes before us, "Give ear O Shepherd of Israel Thou That leadest Joseph like a flock, Thou That dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up

Thy strength, and come and save us". You will recollect how that we are told in Num. 2.17 that the tabernacle set forward in the midst of Israel. Consequently as we find the third camp was the camp of Ephraim, it was appropriate to say "BEFORE Ephraim...stir up Thy strength". Hence the Shepherd of Israel is viewed as leading Joseph. The tabernacle was always central, whether in camp or in march, and "BEFORE Ephraim" is thus fitting. Ephraim and Manasseh were in the third rank; the camp of Joseph, therefore followed the tabernacle, PROPHEMICALLY with a view to this Jacob had spoken of the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel, with respect to Joseph. The Shepherd leading Joseph; but the allusion here is very remarkable, "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest...Thou that DWELLEST between the cherubim, shine forth". The Shepherd LEADS, the Shepherd DWELLS and SITS. What is the meaning of this precious unveiling of the Lord Jesus? "Thou That dwellest between the cherubim". "Every priest standeth daily ministering". This Man when He had offered one sacrifice SAT down. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou, Thou art a Priest for ever. And so in Zech. 6, the One Whose Name is the Branch is a priest upon His throne. He shall sit, the sitting Priest. Here then "Thou that sittest between the cherubim" is a wondrous reference to the Lord Jesus having accomplished His work. But He is called the Shepherd of Israel. Here is one of those veiled allusions which link Scripture with Scripture. If they were on the surface, they would not be half so striking. Let us ponder them. In Genesis 3 God causes the tabernacle at the door of the garden of Eden, cherubim, and a flaming sword which turns every way to keep the way of the tree of life. But the next view is given of Abel as a keeper of sheep. The first one marked out as righteous is the shepherd, and he is killed. True he falls short as a type, but there is a precious hint. The blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel, is before us. As soon as the way of the tree of life is to be 'kept' we have the death of a shepherd. We come along to Exodus, and we find the cherubim no longer outside, but having gone right inside, and instead of a sword between them there is blood. The sword has done its work, and so the Psalm says "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou That dwellest between the cherubim". The Shepherd dwells there, NOT the sword. So far you say a measure of helpful teaching; but can we go further? Undoubtedly. In Zechariah 13 another passage comes in, to make the mosaic more wonderful. "Awake, O SWORD, against My SHEPHERD, and against the Man that is My FRIEND, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd". So the sword of Genesis 3 meets the Shepherd; meeting it fully, He opens

the way into God's presence; and Hebrews 10 now says "A new and living way". He is the end of that way. Having offered one sacrifice He sits down. So we have the Shepherd of Israel; and Heb. 13 adds "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus that great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of the everlasting covenant". So in Hebrews we have the Shepherd sitting down between the cherubim. Instead of the sword being there, and the cherubim being OUTSIDE, and in front of, the way of life, they have become the INSIDE of the way of life WITHOUT the sword, but WITH the Shepherd instead. Instead of the way of life being the OTHER side of the sword, the way of life is now opened, and the Shepherd, instead of the sword, welcomes at the END of the way of the tree of life, and there is boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. No sword there, but a Shepherd Who has been raised from the dead, and He is now the Lamb That is in the midst of the throne. One of the most remarkable sentences in Scripture, to which we have become so used that it does not strike us as strange, is "The Lamb That is in the midst of the throne shall lead them". I heard that sentence from childhood, but I never felt its meaning till it dawned upon me it was an extraordinary thing for a Lamb to lead. I could understand a shepherd leading a lamb, but for a Lamb to lead was remarkable, and the sentence was MEANT to be extraordinary. But it is the Lamb in the midst of the throne. The Shepherd became the Lamb that He might die. As raised from the dead He is the Shepherd-Lamb. As the Lamb He reminds of the fact that He met the sword; as the Shepherd He sits on the throne. Abel's sacrifice and Abel combine together to give the type, just as Noah and the ark, and Isaac and the ram. Abel is the righteous one, Abel's sacrifice the one that dies for the sinner. Noah is the righteous one, the ark is the protection. Isaac is the willing one, the dearly beloved; the ram actually dies; Isaac is typically raised. The twofold types are necessary. The Lamb is the Shepherd. The Lamb in His death, the Shepherd in His resurrection, but still remaining the Lamb in the midst of the throne; so that the Lamb in the midst of the throne is the Shepherd on the throne, instead of the sword. The sword has now been sheathed. This was brought before the shepherd-king in striking type, in 2 Sam. 24 and 1 Chron. 21. Go and offer up a sacrifice in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. He must offer it there, in the THRESHING-floor of the Jebusite, - and the Jebusite means one trodden down. The Lord Jesus, the True Corn of wheat was threshed. Bread corn is bruised, and He became the One

trodden, as Gethsemane suggests. He met the sword, all in grace, and He will return to TREAD the winepress (Gethsemane meaning winepress), and He will tread down, as Isa. 63 shows, when He returns with the sword of Rev. 19 in His mouth. But He Himself met the sword when He came the first time. "And the Lord spoke unto the angel, and he put up the sword in his sheath", BECAUSE of grace and the sacrifice. The shepherd-king had the lesson brought before him. A king needs a throne, and God appointed to Israel a shepherd-king as the man after His own heart. Hence "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou That dwellest between the cherubim". The Shepherd-King is here SITTING as the One Who has met the sword.

But, you say what has this to do with the Stone? "From thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel". Our mind travels back, - "Make thee an ark". Why? To put it with the stones of righteous commandment. Those stones were pictures of law, and when an altar was made to picture the Obedient One, it was made of whole STONES on which the words of the law were written very plainly. Christ is the Stone as the Obedient One, and as the One Who will yet judge, - of Dan. 2. At once our mind connects the two passages. But let us remember also Exodus 17 "Take thy rod and smite the rock, and its waters will flow out". Awake, O sword, smite the shepherd. In Isaiah 53 He is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, smitten. For the transgression of My people was He smitten. The smitten Lamb, the smitten Shepherd, the smitten Rock, - Threepfoldness is remarkable. "By reason of the Name of the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel". He is the smitten Shepherd. He is the smitten Stone, the smitten Rock. "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou That LEADEST Joseph like a flock!". They drank of the rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ. As the smitten Shepherd He is the Leader; as the smitten Rock He is the One that followed; and all the blessings are wrapped up in the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit ever shows this.

Now I venture to suggest that these somewhat veiled allusions connecting together Genesis, Psalms, Hebrews, Zechariah and so forth, are beyond human originality. We can only see them but faintly. It is evidence that we have a Divine Book wherein are underlying allusions which are probably more numerous than the stars of heaven of which we only see parts. Christ is thus exalted.

We pass next to "The Shepherd among Israel, in the days of His flesh". Zechariah 11 alludes to Him. He is seen here in His love, yet, in large measure, rejected. The shepherds of verse 3

are very faulty. They claim to be possessors, and pity not the sheep; but there is One Who says, I will feed the flock of slaughter. He cuts off three Shepherds in one month, laying low it would seem, Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians with the power of His words. Their soul abhors Him; but now He goes a step further. He departs from the temple, and leaves them. He breaks His staff Beauty, and at this time thirty pieces of silver are given for His price, and the potter's field is bought to bury strangers. THE Shepherd is rejected. The foolish shepherd, the idol shepherd, Antichrist, is next brought before us. His arm is clean dried up, and his right eye utterly darkened. We see, therefore, the Lord Jesus, the True Shepherd, in the days of His flesh, and the poor of the flock, and these only wait upon Him and acknowledge Him. The majority reject Him. In accord with this we remember how in Matthew 9 when He saw the people as sheep having no shepherd, He was moved with compassion toward them; and in John 10 we have two striking parables. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber; but He that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep". Christ is not the door of the sheepFOLD. He enters in by the door. Therefore He comes to Israel when in the fold. "To Him the porter openeth". John the baptist welcomes Christ. "And the sheep hear His voice; and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out". John, as the friend of the Bridegroom, rejoices greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice. "And the sheep hear His voice, and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out". He came, therefore, to lead OUT from Judaism, not to reform Judaism, but to lead out. And when He hath cast out all His own, He goeth before them. When I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. He brings them out from Judaism that they may be a new position of the present dispensation. "And the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them; but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the Door(not of the sheepfold, but) of the sheep". The sheep have NOW been led OUT, i.e. the poor of the flock, The sheepFOLD is left, and Christ is now the spiritual Door of the spiritual sheep. There is NOT the fold of religion, but the sheep are in a new creation linked with Himself. "All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not

hear them. I am the Door, by Me if any man enter in". In the first parable He leadeth them out: in the second parable "He shall enter in". He leadeth out of Judaism to bring them into the new position. "On this Rock I will build My church". "He shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture". In the present dispensation the thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy, but we are not told he DOES steal and kill and destroy. "I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep". But He goes away, and the hireling is apparently in charge, in verse 12. "He that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep". The thief cometh to kill, but we are not told he does kill. The wolf comes and scatters. They shall be scattered. Christ prophecies the scattering of His sheep in the present time while the Good Shepherd is away. But in verse 14 the Good Shepherd KNOWS His sheep, even though away. Verse 16 "And other sheep I HAVE (Gentiles), which are not out from this fold (Judaism), them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one FLOCK (quite a different word, not the word 'fold'), and one Shepherd", - the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ. Thus the Shepherd came to the sheep FOLD of Judaism and brought out the sheep, the poor of the FLOCK, that there might be a new position of Jew and Gentile, one in Christ, because He gave His life for the sheep.

Ah, beloved friends, this has already been before us. The Shepherd Who died. He not only died because men rejected Him, but "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd". The sword HAD not been sheathed, but it had been, as it were, asleep. "Awake, O sword". The old dispensation is the dispensation of the sleeping sword. The passing by, or passing over, of transgressions, says Romans 3. The sword was sleeping, but the sword was there, and judgment must take place. The sword awakes. It is the sword of Divine vengeance. It awakes against the Shepherd. When God turned out Adam He did not destroy the tree of life, or its way, but "TO KEEP the way of the tree of life". For years I read that as if it meant, "to keep closed the way of the tree of life", but the Lord deigned to show me I had made a mistake. The sword was to keep the way of the tree of life as a way, to guarantee it should yet be an open road, and, therefore, the sword was to keep it as "a way", only not an open way UNTILL the appointed time. If there had been no sword, there would be no way. It was not to keep it closed, but to KEEP the way, to

GUARANTEE there should be the preserved way of the tree of life by wrath breaking on a Substitute, and, in the fulness of time, this did break. The sleeping sword awoke. It met the Shepherd. He died. The Great Shepherd of the sheep is brought from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant. Wrath is met for all who rest in Him, and they can sing for joy because the Shepherd died in their place.

Risen from the dead He is still the Shepherd. "After I am risen, I will go before you" - wonderful words. "The Shepherd and Bishop(or Overseer) of your souls". That was the Divine statement in a passage which alludes to Isaiah 53 where He is seen as the Sheep. The Sheep is the Shepherd. The Sheep in His death, the Shepherd in His resurrection. This is again and again before us in Scripture. Christ is Priest and Sacrifice. As Priest He offers, as Sacrifice He is offered. He is the Altar and the Burnt Offering. He is the Ark and the One Who builds the ark. He is exalted as the One Who DOES and the One Who suffers, Shepherd in His doing, Lamb in His suffering, and the Gospel of John emphasizes both aspects. "Behold the Lamb of God", "I am the Good Shepherd". Isaiah 53 is thus brought before us. He is led as a Lamb to the slaughter, "The Shepherd and Bishop of your souls". As such He is exalted. The Shepherd of your souls, that He may guide you, that He may possess you. A believer is not to be independent. We need shepherding, and we need the staff as well as the protecting rod. We sometimes go astray. "Ye were as sheep going astray". There was a time when I laid the primary stress on GOING ASTRAY, and ignored another part of the teaching. ALL is important. God brought me to see another stress, "Ye were AS SHEEP going astray". I MIGHT have been as a pig going astray, - as 2 Peter says, the sow that was washed, and the dog; but, thanks be unto God, "Ye were AS SHEEP going astray". Did the Shepherd forget? Nay. In the parable He goes after the sheep until He finds it. There are some of us who believe by ^{the} grace of God in sovereignty of living power in the salvation of poor lost sinners, - I trust MANY of us. It is not a bare chance when a soul is saved. "I lay down My Life for the sheep". "Other sheep I have", He says, before **they are** claimed, "which are not of this fold", before they were claimed He knew them and in wonderful love and in wonderful power He laid down His life for the sheep, not with a bare thought of chance. You were as SHEEP going astray. You were not forgotten then. You were not outside of His knowledge.

You were as SHEEP, even when going astray. He CLAIMED. All that the Father giveth He SHALL COME to Me, and him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out. It is a joy to thank God for a guaranteed salvation. And so those who are claimed by grace are brought to acknowledge the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, the One Who guides and directs. Independence is always out of place in a believer.

But our mind must go on to that Day. Micah 5.4 says, "He shall STAND and feed His flock", and Matt. 2.6 tells us that out of Bethlehem One would come Who would shepherd His people Israel; but the same word is used in Rev. 2.27; 12.5 and 19.15 for ruling with a rod of iron, - shepherding with a rod of iron. The Shepherd not only has His staff but His rod. He Who is the Shepherd has wrath on the lion and the bear. The lion runs away, we have seen this in Jeremiah. One of the most remarkable sidelights on that passage in Jeremiah is found in Isa. 31. We find the lion coming up from the thicket, and the prophet says, "For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them; so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and to the hill thereof". The lion comes up, and he will not run away from the voice of the shepherds, but in Isa. 30.30 the Lord shall cause HIS glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lightning down of HIS arm. The Lord God will come with a strong hand, His arm shall rule for Him. He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd, says Isaiah 40. So the Lord comes down, and the Shepherd makes the lion run away where the shepherds could not do so. The Lord comes down to fight for Mount Zion. As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem, defending also He will deliver it, and pausing over He will preserve it. Not passing over, but pausing over. It is the PASSOVER word. When I see the blood, not I will pass over you, - I will pause over you. It is not that God went BY the door, but that God STOOD over the door, - Pausing over He will preserve it. He spreads His wings of grace over it. Pausing over is, therefore, a passover word, for our joy in the fulness of the types. Here then we have the Shepherd as the Passover Lamb, Who comes, and the Lion runs away; and the passage goes on to say (verse 8) "Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man shall devour him, but he SHALL flee from the sword", evidently

therefore, there is a sword of Another, neither a mean man nor a mighty man; it is the sword of the mouth of One Who met the sword as the Shepherd, but Who now returns as the Shepherd with the sword of His mouth, to smite the earth with the rod of His mouth. This is explained in Revelation as "He shall SHEPHERD them with a rod of IRON". The link of the words is most remarkable, and every passage dovetails into the other, and thus brings before us that the Lord Jesus on returning will have His flock of Israel, and at the same time He will go against those who must be laid low. O, beloved friends, are we those in His flock, or shall we be those laid low. The coming of the Lord has the twofold aspect. Hence the striking words in the shepherd passage of Micah 5, - "The remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, and as a young lion among the flocks of sheep; THEN instead of being the downtrodden sheep, the Lord will become the Leader of His lion-like people. He Who was the LAMB is the LION of the tribe of Judah, and there will be the turning of the arrangements round. No longer "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves"; no longer, You are the sheep, and the lion will waste, but in that Day He will take the lion-position, and Revelation emphasizes He Who is the Lamb in the glory because of redemption is the Lion upon earth. At the present time believers are in the HEAVENLIES. They are outside the camp, rejected. The woman clothed with the sun is to be in the wilderness fleeing, persecuted, but THEN the Lamb in the glory will be the Lion on the earth, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. May our hearts ever look upward with faith's anticipation.

oOoOo

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

Outline:

1. Prophesied in many Scriptures e.g. "A body hast Thou prepared Me"
2. To be emphasized, as well as His true Deity.
3. His perfections in "the days of His flesh"; wondrous types.
4. Atonement and Reconciliation. "In the body of His flesh through death".

5. "His glorious body" (Phil. 3.20,21).

Beloved friends, it is delightful that our precious Lord is the Centre of Scripture. This Book is not only a book in our hands. It brings before us God's gracious teaching for our hearts, and the more we can learn of Christ, and the more we can know Christ, the more shall we be encouraged. Every blessing centers round Christ. Last week we were privileged to ponder His glorious Coming Again. Now we think of His humanity. We have often meditated on His Deity, and rightly so. He is over all, God Pleased for ever. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. We are grateful for the unveiling of His Deity, but we would never forget that the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and that He, Who was the One Mediator between God and men, was the Man Christ Jesus. It is precious to have a full-orbed view of Christ. His natures and attributes and works must all be viewed in their Scriptural blending and harmony and power. We cannot divide with dogmatic definitions. We cannot explain with HUMAN precision of language, but we go beyond this, and worship, acknowledging the Divine perfection of language, and seeking to enter into the fullness of the glory of Him Who is altogether glorious, and Who has been pleased to make His people members of Himself. The Humanity of Christ was prophesied in many Scriptures before He came down to this world, - both directly and indirectly. One of the best known passages is, "Mine ears hast Thou opened", explained by the Holy Spirit as "A body hast Thou prepared for Me". You will recollect further that in Psalm 16.11 we read, "My FLESH shall rest in hope", and David spoke with a view to Messiah. Likewise in Psalm 109.24, "My flesh faileth of fatness", and Psalm 102 refers to the physical frame of the Lord Jesus, even as the 69th. This suggestion of the Psalms at once brings to your mind other passages. For example, some think of Psalm 22, "They pierced My hands and My feet". These words imply Humanity. Others may take the 15th Psalm, and behold there the One Who walked this earth as an Obedient One: this, too, involves His Humanity. Yea, Psalm 1, describing the TRULY blessed One in the very opening of the book, has the same underlying thought. The Psalms are in one sense a further thought. The Psalms are in one sense a further 'Gospel-record'; they contain so much of the narrative of the Lord Jesus Christ. But He is not only found in the Psalms. He is brought before us in the law and the prophets; and brought before us in His

two natures. I am not now speaking of the Personal types. I think they, as Isaac, imply His Humanity. But there are other types. What shall we say about the altar of EARTH? Does not this set forth His Humanity? Indeed, every figure of humility in connection with One so glorious implies Humanity, and our mind is attracted to the hyssop, seen so delightfully in the cleansing of Lev. 14, nor can we overlook the shittim wood linked with the gold of glory, and, indeed, all the animal sacrifices themselves have the same suggestion. May we not say that every type of DEATH implies Humanity? This is so, whether it be a type in a sacrifice, or pictured by a smitten rock, for Christ in His Deity cannot be thus smitten. The One Who is described as God's Fellow in Zech. 13, was nevertheless the Shepherd Who was smitten, and Who came down to this world as the prophet declares, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, though at the same time, the Lord our Righteousness. He Who is God over all, is, nevertheless, the Perfect Servant. The "Righteous One Is Servant shall make a righteousness for the many", and the term 'servant' itself involves the thought of Humanity. Do you not at once see that prophecy is a FAR LARGER subject with respect to the Humanity of Christ than we are apt to acknowledge. We might divide up in some such way as this - (a) Direct prophecies, (b) Name of the Lord Jesus which imply His Humanity, (c) Personal types of the Lord Jesus that suggest this, (d) Material types that have the same hint, and (e) Actions which manifest Humanity. All these sections would provide us with Scriptures, exalting the Lord Jesus in His very humiliation, for He was perfect in His humiliation, that He might perfectly accomplish the work which He came to do. I believe we are all deeply interested in seeing the passages which bring before us Deity and Humanity TOGETHER, not only as John 1, but in the Earlier Scriptures. Take Ex. 3; there the angel of the Lord appears in the bush and declares that He is the Lord, that He is God, but goes on to give a prophecy of incarnation, for personally I can never lose the thought that in Ex. 3.15 it is incarnation which God brings before us. "I will become That Which I will become". That thought leads up to the Later Scriptures, "The Word BECAME flesh". The Holy Spirit has two ways of rendering 'to be' and 'to become' in the Greek, and He alludes to the Hebrew very definitely, and if that be so, He implies in John 1 that the real rendering of Exodus is not "I am That I am", but, "I will become THAT WHICH I will become". This seems the Holy Spirit's comment

in the Later Scriptures, on this passage. Observe further, that you have the blending of Humanity and Deity in Isa. 9, "For unto us a CHILD is born, unto us a SON is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God", or "I will raise UNTO DAVID a Righteous Branch" in Jer. 23, "and this is His Name...The Lord our Righteousness". There we have brought before us the One Who in Micah 7 is thus described - "Who is a God like unto Thee, That beareth iniquity?" Here is a great mystery. How can God bear iniquity? The key is found in Ex. 34.16, "The Lord merciful and gracious, BEARING iniquity", explained in Isa. 53, "He Himself bare the sin of many", He Who was God became Man, that He might bear the iniquity. We must not weaken the rendering by taking the derived thought that He FORGIVETH iniquity. He BARE the iniquity - as definitely in the one passage as in the other. I suppose many other thoughts will rise in some minds. One believer will say, "Do not forget Adam is a type of the real Humanity of the Lord Jesus, with Eve brought from His side through the deep sleep picturing His death". Another will suggest "Do not ignore the prophecy of Lev. 16, THE MAN shall do these things and live in them". Another will remember Deut. 8, "THE MAN shall not live by bread only; but upon everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord shall THE MAN live". Christ claimed this as a Messianic prophecy in Matt. 4.4 and Luke 4.4. Yet another will recollect that Psalm 8 is marked out by the Holy Spirit in Heb. 2, "Unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come...but one in a certain place testified, saying, What is Man?" Yet another will recollect the 22nd Psalm, "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren". "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same" is the Holy Spirit's own comment, and this we have placed before us in many varied Scriptures. The real humanity of the Lord Jesus is set forth in the sign of Isa. 7, "The virgin shall conceive and bear a Son", and the new thing of Jer. 31 - "A weak woman shall encompass a Mighty Man", in accord with Prov. 30, that which is too wonderful to be understood - "A Mighty Man in a virgin". All these expressions are delightful settings forth of the real Humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Presumably we have only fringed the subject. Thanks be unto God if we enjoy the fact that He became flesh, in order that we, beholding His glory, and seeing Jesus (Heb. 2.9) in the pages of Scripture, might yet be with Him WHERE He is, and that we might behold His glory for ever. How

much is given to those who have been made members of Himself, for He partook of flesh and blood that His people might become partakers with Him, and share, in that which is beyond language, but not beyond His grace.

I think you will agree with me, beloved friends; that all this is to be emphasized as well as His real Deity, because although Satan particularly attacks the Deity today, both Deity and Humanity are Scripturally IMPORTANT, since they are Scripturally revealed. The unimportant verse of Scripture is yet to be found, or rather it will never be found. EVERY word of God is pure, and perfect and of permanent power. It may be that sometimes we do not see the force of a word, and that parts of doctrine seem to us fundamental, and we say glibly, "These are fundamental truths", but it is far better to say, "Truth(not using the plural) is fundamental, and I am seeking to be built up upon, and by, the whole of the Truth". Oh how important to recognize that every part of truth is meant to be fundamental, for your path and practice, and for mine! Men of this age often distinguish between little sins and great sins. The Romanist speaks of mortal and venial sins. The Mohammedan has his great and small iniquities, and they are classified. The believer regards EVERY iniquity as tremendous - "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great", and he sees in the slightest turning aside a captivity as Rom. 7 sets forth. In like manner, all the things of God's truth are the "great things of His law". There is nothing small. Everything is precious. Everything is important. Everything is resultful. We have yet to find the ordinary thing which God has done. "He ONLY doeth wondrous things". If He does a small thing He does it in a large way, and thus puts a halo of glory around the tiniest detail.

Thus we emphasize the Humanity of Christ because it is in Scripture. We emphasize it because it is EMPHASIZED in Scripture. We emphasize it because it is necessary for our salvation. God has set forth that the way in which Christ took upon Himself the form of a servant was with a view to working out of a righteousness, that we VIA an atonement might become those who are the righteousness of God in Him, on resurrection ground, in living union with Himself. On behalf of us He lived, in place of us He died, and in Him we live on resurrection ground. THAT is the history of the work of grace, according to a covenant plan before the ages.

The Humanity of Christ moreover, must be the more jealously emphasized inasmuch as Satan has attacked it. There were those in the early Christendom (I avoid the term "early church"; we find the early church in Scripture in the Acts) - there were those in the early Christendom who spoke of a mere form or semblance of a body. They taught that there was an appearance, but not a reality. This was a grievous error. Others there were who practically identified the Deity and the Humanity. If Arianism made the Lord Jesus Christ to be only a creature, Sabellianism made Him to be only God, and ignored His humanity. Nor can we get away from the fact that though the general tendency is to deny the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, there have been those who have somewhat veiled His humanity, and some who have definitely attacked the Triune Godhead with an ignoring of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Swedenborgianism illustrates one of these sins, and even usual Christian hymnology is not without samples of it. It is so important we should not only emphasize the Deity of the Son, but the Deity of the Father, and the Deity of the Holy Spirit, yet not three Gods, but in mystery revealed, and accepted as revealed, and not explained with any human language - one God! How beautiful the fellowship of our Triune God in accord with the words "From the time that He was, there am I, and now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent Me". Baptism into the NAME, not Names, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We need to lay a stress further on the Humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ with regard to the future, for the spirit of antichrist is to deny Jesus Christ COMING in the flesh. In 1 John 4 we read plainly with regard to Jesus Christ having come in the flesh, but in 2 John 7 our version leaves out the three letters; deceivers are there viewed as denying Jesus Christ COMING in the flesh. I do not say that all attack the Humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ in the future, who are confused regarding His coming, but if any imagine a "spiritual" coming, so-called, they have a dangerous inclination toward further error, and were there not those who taught that Christ was a Man Who has now become raised to a higher spiritual level, so that He is now viewed as entitled to the term "God" - a development, and not a reinstatement? I refer to the deadly teaching of "Zion's Watchtower" (so-called). Hence it is important for us to acknowledge not only that He Who was eternally and essentially God, in the fullness of time took upon Him the form of a Servant, but that, having taken that form of a Servant, and finished His work of atonement, He is pleased to remain in His glorious manhood at the right hand

of the Father. Thus we have now a Mediator Who is not only God but Who is the Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2,5), and He will come back again in flesh, and when we see Him we shall be fashioned anew, if we are His blood-bought people, like unto His body of glory. Granted there is a spiritual body, but it is a BODY, and He said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see He have" in resurrection; and now He Who is gone up into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, has not laid aside His Humanity. It is blessed, therefore, to lay a stress upon that which Scripture emphasizes against all the deadly confusion which would sap our spiritual strength, even if it cannot secure our adherence to error - for evil which is around us is very painful! If the devil cannot make us embrace it, he will seek to make us argumentative against it, until, VIA argument, we lose much of our spirituality. If we are inclined to show a loving tendency toward error instead of a sternness of love, we shall be ensnared to bid rejoice to those who hold not the doctrine of Christ, whereas it is distinctly said, "Bid him not rejoice". Our English Version says "Neither bid him God speed", but the literal rendering is more forcible. We ought to wish that every errorist should be made miserable, "Bid him not rejoice". If on the other hand we are preserved from this sin, and have a holy hatred of evil, we have another tendency, i.e. while we find out with the Ephesian angel those who say they are apostles, and while we are unable to bear those who are evil, we may be occupied with attacking these sins and begin to leave our first love, in our sternness of denunciation. To be preserved from rock and whirlpool alike, and kept in the path of the Lord's will, requires a piloting of our vessel for which we have not the strength, but thanks be unto God we read of the full bearing along of the Holy Spirit, and if He controls the sails, as the word implies, we may be safely borne amidst all the rocks and whirlpools which would seem to give us at least a wound, if not a shipwreck.

We pass next to ponder the perfections of our beloved Lord in the days of His flesh. Himself, though wondrously humbled asserted these perfections. Of no other people could this be said. He is more than a prophet. We remember the statement "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" - a question of definite power; and again, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me". "In me, that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing" was

the CONTRASTED testimony of a very holy man. Our beloved Lord had nothing that responded to the attacks of the evil one. He was tempted in all points like as we are, "YET WITHOUT SIN". There was no attraction, even momentarily, toward evil. His was an inflexible perfection, an unbending delight in the will of the Father. The Holy Spirit thus sums up this character - "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners". Again, "He made Him to be sin for us WHO KNEW NO SIN". We need to lay a stress upon this, because there are those who would seek to tell us that the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh had wrong wishes. There are those who would tell us that though He did not actually yield to wrong desires, yet He conquered and controlled the flesh in Him. This aspect is, I think we all, by the grace of God, acknowledge - blasphemous. We recognize that He was without ANY evil wish, that from His birth there was perfection. Hence the Divine statement, "That Holy Thing Which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God". He Who was glorious was sent forth. God sent forth His Son born of a woman, born under the law, to become under the law, that He might redeem those that were under law. Thus we see the Lord Jesus Christ as the One Who from the beginning to the end made manifest that He was competent to be the accepted Sacrifice. The types illustrate this. They did not contain blemished animals healed, but those who were accepted were viewed as those in whom no blemish was beheld.

The silence of Scripture is striking. In like manner, leavened bread is beautifully DELIVERED FROM the working of leaven, yet this is not a type of Christ, but the unleavened. In other words, He was not One Who reached a perfection VIA victory, but Who was essentially righteous. It is true that He reached a goal VIA testing. "Though He were a Son(essentially), yet LEARNED He obedience(experimentally) through the things which He suffered, and being brought to the goal He became the Cause of everlasting salvation to those who obey Him". He was brought to the goal, but not to perfection through imperfection, rather to the completeness of a life by the appointed beginning of that life. The aspect is vastly different. Undoubtedly His obedience could not be complete till it was complete; yet it was not incomplete with failure, but incomplete because it still had appointed months and years to run. We are reminded too of the beautiful expression as to His priestly acceptability in the days of His flesh - "Who in the days of His

flesh, when He had offered up prayers and strong cryings to Him That was able to save Him from death". In the days of HIS FLESH He offered. The Aaronic priesthood was marked by sacrifices AND gifts. God has distinctly said that He would not accept in this order. Why not? Heb. 10 gives us the striking contrast, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not". OFFERING and sacrifice God wished. The one who needed a sacrifice BEFORE he could bring an offering, as Aaron, was plainly imperfect. But Christ brought offering before sacrifice, and as such was the gloriously welcomed Contrast with Cain. Cain brought an offering without a sacrifice; Abel came as a sinner should come. He brought a sacrifice of the firstlings of his flock, and God evidently acknowledged more fully, it would seem, the subsequent drawing near after the sacrifice. We read, "God testifying of his GIFTS". After the sacrifice he brought gifts. The Lord Jesus Christ brought gifts before the sacrifice, proving His contrasted perfection. That which Cain could not do - "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be lifted up!?" was a prophecy of Christ. "If thou doest well, a sin offering lieth at the open door!" was a declaration of the way of salvation. Our English version says, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" It is rather 'lifted up', alluding to the fact "Behold My Servant shall deal prudently...He shall be lifted up" in Isa. 52. I've thought she had obtained the Lord - "I have gotten the man, the Lord"; yet he was NOT the Lord, he was NOT the true Acquisition, but the Lord Jesus Christ WAS the One Who doing good was lifted up, whereas for Cain there was no hope except by the way of salvation which Abel realized. "If thou doest not well, a sin-offering lieth at the open door". Thus we have brought before us the one glorious Saviour Who was lifted up as having fully accomplished in life, in the days of His flesh, and VIA His death, the work which He came to do.

The next ^{re}ference to His flesh is very beautiful, with regard to His death. In Eph. 2 we read, "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity" and in Col. 1 "Reconciled in the body of His flesh", one delights to see the stress on His flesh, illustrating Heb. 2, He took "blood and flesh"; "The Word became flesh"; and Rom. 8 where we read of "God sending His own Son in the LIKENESS of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh"; thus setting forth very precious that it was not the likeness of ~~flesh~~ but the likeness of SINFUL flesh - the reality of flesh, but only the likeness of SINFUL flesh. Thus God condemned sin in

the flesh, namely in Christ's flesh. The Greek does not say "Condemned sin which was in the flesh", but "condemned in the flesh sin", condemned in Christ's flesh the sin of those who were sinners, - a contrasted aspect. The flesh had sinned, man had sinned, and He Who was God became Man that in the flesh He might deal with the sin, that substitution might be a fact and not a theory, that there might be no legal fiction but a legal reality; and the accomplishment of the Divinely appointed purpose, the redemption of a great number who no man can number. In accord with this we find that He was the Seed of David according to the flesh, though declared to be the Son of God with power, and as Rom. 9.5 puts it, "Of Whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, Who is over all God blessed for ever". Concerning men, we have the Divine statement, "What shall we say that Abraham our father as pertaining to the flesh hath found?" and further, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God", but He said "MY flesh is meat indeed, and MY blood is drink indeed". His flesh is marked off in contrast - the Perfect One. Israel knew not what it meant, and many said "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat"? But in the type of the Lord's Supper, He pictured His flesh by the Unfermented, or UN-leavened bread; and His blood as the contrast with the blood of sinners who are described as fermented in Isa. 63, "Who is this That cometh from Edom, with fermented garments (i.e. with dyed garments) from Bozrah?" The blood of SINNERS is likened to fermented wine, but His blood, to the blood of the grape, having no addition, no taint, no foreign substance, no corruption, no removal of its inherent perfection; that there might be the remembrance throughout, with respect to His Humanity and all His finished work of that which was illustrated when He was laid in the grave, "He Whom God raised up saw no corruption".

The perfection in the days of His flesh is further seen in His words, in His works, in His thoughts, and in His omissions. If He was teaching His disciples only humility in John 13 would He not have said, "Ye ought to wash My feet", as He told Simon that he had not given water for the feet? but not a hint of this came from His lips. "Ye ought to wash one another's feet", He was not alluding to a literal action of feet-washing, for did He not say to Simon Peter, "That which I do thou knowest not now"? Peter knew the literal, but he did not know the spiritual meaning, and the Lord Jesus Christ as to the spiritual meaning did not NEED to

be washed, for He was the perfect One, and is thus marked out in the precious type of another aspect, in the appointment of the priesthood. For you will recollect that Aaron was clothed and anointed before there was a sacrifice of Lev. 8.14. to set forth the Lord Jesus Christ as the Perfect One. True, He was baptized, (cf. Lev. 8.6), but this was in His case to show by type how He would VIA bearing of wrath, accomplish the Father's will, and fulfil all righteousness; it was not because He was professing sin. And He was the clothed One and He was the anointed One of the Holy Spirit before the appointed time when He died. But Aaron's sons were not anointed until AFTER the blood. The contrast is remarkable. Men were compelled to bear a testimony to His perfection in the days of His flesh. "Never man spake like this Man", "This Man hath done nothing amiss", "Leave thou nothing to do with that Just Person". Gloriously He shines out, in every page of the narrative, as the One Who in all that He did and did not, was fully acceptable to the Father, to fulfil the Divine statement, "He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God associated with His salvation". The award of righteousness was His, and it becomes His salvation, it is made to us an eternal benefit.

In the outline I put (primarily) Reconciliation "in the Body of His flesh through death". I am not sure if I completely worded this. Atonement needs emphasis, I simply used the word "Reconciliation", and this alludes to the effect; but let us realize that He secured for us reconciliation VIA ATONEMENT. He bore the WRATH of God that we might be reconciled. Atonement is not 'at-one-ment'. 'At-one-ment' is the effect of atonement. Atonement is the bearing of wrath. The proof of the working of atonement was forgiveness. The priest was to make an atonement, then the words sound forth, "It shall be forgiven him". Atonement is not forgiveness, but the BASIS of forgiveness. It is a legal work, "Through Him we have received the atonement" is an incorrect rendering - "We have received the reconciliation". But the atonement was presented BEFORE GOD in the full and just settlement of all the Divine claims. This leads our mind back to consider the perfection of the One Who was able to accomplish this. I spoke of the wondrous types of the perfection of the body of the Lord Jesus - the perfection of the life of the Lord Jesus. There are many others which might have been mentioned. The unhearn

stones of the altar, whereas we are likened to the hewn stones. On those unhewn stones, complete stones, was there not written the law? Again, Christ was pictured by the brazen serpent of strength, and set forth in the covered vessel of Numbers 19, which was not tainted by evil around. The manna, moreover, which came down from heaven, likewise set forth His perfect Humanity. All these things are suggestive. Indeed we never exhaust the fullness of the types. But, oh that each may lead us on in the power of the Holy Spirit to love and value the Anti-type more.

The days of our pilgrimage will soon be over. Either we shall depart to be with Christ which is far better, or our Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, and we, if found in Him, shall be caught up to meet our Lord in the air, to be for ever with the Lord. This mortal will then put on immortality, and this corruptible incorruption. The body of our humiliation will be fashioned anew like unto His body of glory. We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. We do not wish to be naked, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life, for He hath wrought us for this selfsame thing. And we shall be satisfied when we awake in His likeness. Now we see through a glass darkly, and know not 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. For if our life is hid with Christ in God, when Christ Who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. In that day therefore, His body will be manifested. He Who came as Man will come again as Man, come in flesh, that the Righteous One may be recompensed in the earth, to fulfil the Divine principle, that He Whom Israel said, Away with Him, and after Whom they sent the message, We will not have this Man to reign over us, may yet be exalted here, and Israel yet be caused to say, This is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us...we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation. Then He Who is the Branch of the Lord, will also be the Fruit of the earth, and will be comely for those who are escaped of Israel. He will then reign on the throne of David. The city where He died will be the city where He will rule—so great will be the change. Man's day will be altered, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that Day. No longer will He be weary and sit on the well, but He Who drinks of the water of the well, will lift up the head, and He will wound the head over much earth (Psalm 110). He Himself shall have dominion from sea to sea, and

from the river to the ends of the earth, and all nations shall bow down before Him, and serve Him. He came to die, but He WILL come to reign. "Have dominion" was the command in Genesis 1, and though the first Adam lost it, the second Man is the Lord from heaven, and unto a Man is put in subjection the world to come, of which we speak, the INHABITED world to come. Thanks be unto God He will have control and all shall be in subjection; earth shall not be a desolation, the thousand years will not be a thousand years of ruin, as some have vainly taught, but the inhabited world to come will be His, and men will go up to Jerusalem, not only representatives of the Lord, but many people and strong nations to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, Who will teach them of His ways. It will be a delightful change, then righteousness will be given unto the King's Son, and judgments, and a King shall reign in righteousness, and with Him princes rule in judgment, for, though the Lord alone shall be exalted in That Day, He has been pleased to bring many into fellowship with Himself, though He was anointed with the oil of gladness ABOVE His fellows. Yet they must share, and Abraham will receive Palestine, for it is written, "TO THEE AND TO THY SEED". David will be at Jerusalem, "Israel will seek David their king" when they own the Lord. David will be raised up to them. The apostles will sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and the Lord will not fail to recompense all His people in the earth, when the times and the seasons will be changed by Christ, antichrist having tried in vain to alter them. The Lord Jesus will then make manifest that all the waiting has not been without purpose. "Have dominion" says Gen. 1, and HE SHALL have dominion. The purpose of God must stand, and the creation delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. We that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened, but then the groaning creation shall be delivered; - the Lord not only in His Deity, but in His wondrous Deity and Humanity together, shall be glorified in the earth until; at the end of the thousand years, He will deliver up the kingdom, and there will be the bringing in of the eternal state, that God, in His Triune Majesty, may be eternally All in All, and that those who have rebelled may be for ever cast away from His presence, in the solemn "without" of Rev.22. And the purpose of grace will stand, that those who are HIS by sovereign grace, may be for ever brought near, as it is written that in the dispensation of the

fulness of times, there will be a heading up of all thus favoured in Christ. The things UNDER the earth will remain in judgment, but the extent of redemption, and its height are glorious indeed. This is the prospect, redemption is not a fallacy, salvation is not a contrivance, grace is not a bare scheme. God hath purposed, God will not fail. Before the times of the ages the plan was laid, and in the ages to come He will show to us the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus, to the end that our glory may sing praise unto Him and not be silent, and that even now in the days of our flesh, we make manifest that we have been brought out of death into life, and from darkness to light, that we may in the house of our pilgrimage, show forth the praises of Him Who hath called us, knowing that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and that we HAVE redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins - a wondrous reality - to the praise of the glory of God's grace, wherein He hath graced us in the Beloved.

oOoOo

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE DEATH OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST.

In relation to:

1. God the Father. Eph. 5.2.
2. Ourselves, if believers.
 - (a) When sinners 1 Peter 3.16.
 - (b) Since salvation 1 John 1.7; 2 Cor. 5.15.
3. Our sins. 1 John 2.2a; 1 Cor. 15.3.
4. Israel John 11.51.
5. The Lost world. Heb. 11.7; 1 John 2.2b.
6. The earth. Matt. 13.44.

Our subject this evening, dear friends, is "Various aspects of the death of the Lord Jesus". One feels at the outset how important it is that a subject like this should be considered prayerfully and spiritually by the Lord's people. It is not a matter for mere argument, it is not a matter for mere controversy, it is not a matter for mere mental information. If we are in Christ Jesus we want to know more of the preciousness of His finished work; if we are those who have passed out of death unto life, it is our privilege and joy, and should be our increasing priv-

ilege and joy to know more of the fulness of that work on which we rest, and by which we are saved.

There are many ways in which we might consider the death of the Lord Jesus. The syllabus that you have, particularly refers to its effects, and I thought that that was the special subject that you desired we should consider before the Lord. But we might also notice various aspects with regard to the cause. Sometimes Jewish men come up to us and say, "The Lord Jesus of Whom you speak did not lay down His life; He was killed", and we answer, often referring to Isaiah 53, "The LORD made to meet on Him the iniquity", but also "He made naked His soul for death", yet beyond that "He was LED as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers, is dumb".

We might furthermore have considered the various aspects of the death of the Lord Jesus with respect to its nature. I do not mean to speak scientifically as to what was the dying of the Lord Jesus. 'Tis not a matter for mere discussion as to how the physical death was produced. These things are too solemn for such a mode of study - unless indeed the hearts of those thus studying are in fullest subjection unto the Lord, and on their guard against Satan's misleadings, for Satan will always seek to drive us away from spiritual teaching to that which is mental, and then from that which is mental to that which is proud, or that which is not study at all. However, we realize that our beloved Lord, in connection with the nature of His death emphasized His SOUL as well as His BODY, and the Scriptures also refer to His SPIRIT. "Through an Eternal Spirit He offered Himself" - that was His Deity, He laid down His SOUL? says John 2, and again "The soul of the flesh is in the blood", Lev. 17.11; and yet more in Isaiah 53, "He made naked His SOUL for death". Thus He not merely took a physical death, not merely was that BODY which was 'prepared' for Him laid down, but He took the penalty of sin, as it is written, "The soul that sinneth it shall die". Wondrous was the nature of that death, wondrous beyond explanation, wondrous beyond full realization, but blessed be God grasped in some measure by a living faith.

And now we come to the syllabus that deals with the aspects of the Death of the Lord Jesus with respect to the effects.

First, in relation to God the Father. The death of the Lord Jesus was a declaration of the righteousness of God. A few thoughts here may be given as to two theories, and one true teaching, as to the atonement. Some will tell us that the death of the Lord Jesus was only a revelation of wondrous love; that it was an exemplary work. It was that, but but much more. Others hold what has been called the 'governmental' theory of the atonement - that God was pleased to make known His righteous anger against sin in general upon the Person of the Lord Jesus, and now can forgive (they tell us) in general because He has made manifest His holy displeasure against sin. The idea underlying that theory is that the law of God has been outraged, and that the law is vindicated if One Who is perfectly righteous is given up to show the holy hatred that God has toward sin. Now that theory contains a portion of true doctrine as far as it goes, but when any exhaust teaching as to the death of Christ therein they lose that which is the precious resting of a believer's faith. That God DID make manifest His righteousness then is evident, but not merely His righteousness in connection with government, not merely did He vindicate the law in general, but He vindicated the law in particular; that is to say, we believe by grace in the 'satisfaction' doctrine concerning the atonement, that the Lord Jesus not merely offered a general offering with a view to the general display of God's righteousness, but that there was a distinct manifestation of God's absolute righteousness in that the full penalty of the law for all who are brought to believe in Christ, the full penalty of the law was placed on the Son of God's love. It was not merely a haphazard event, it was not merely a declaration of general holiness, but of specific righteousness, that there must be a Divine equivalent, and God would spare not His own Son but gave HIM up that there might be a satisfactory work to meet the full demands of law; but not only did God make manifest His perfect righteousness, the atonement of the Lord Jesus reveals the love of God. "God so loved that He gave" says John 3.16. "SO" loved that He gave, for love will give, love is not mere sentiment.

Then there is a third thought as to God the Father in Eph. 5.2. We are told that our Lord Jesus offered Himself to God, and that when He did so He was presenting an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour. It is blessed to realize this, You know how that in the law of Moses, among the sacrifices the Burnt offering was first - that was wholly unto God. It is blessed to

realize that this aspect of the work of Christ is a reality, that He presented Himself to the Father, and that the Father was well-pleased to accept that work. It was a sweet-smelling savour before Him. I believe that this should be continually in the minds of the Lord's people, that all the sacrifices of old were precious to God because they were types of the Lord Jesus offered to Him. So I believe one of the precious fulnesses of the Lord's Supper is in connection with the thought that it is toward the Father, not as a sacrifice but as a reminder of a sacrifice, the word of God being thus written, "This do with a view to My memorial".

We now come to consider the Death of the Lord Jesus with reference to ourselves, if by the grace of God we have passed out of death into life, and are believers in the Lord Jesus. And we must first think of ourselves as we were before God laid hold of us. We were children of wrath even as others, with no merits and no glories, nothing but sin, nothing but corruption, nothing but evil. But the work of the Lord Jesus is declared in Romans 5 in these words, "Christ died for ungodly ones". The thought is this, that Christ died for us when we were sinners, enemies and ungodly. Viewing us as lost He shielded us from the Divine wrath, the sword of God being sheathed in Himself, for the sword ^{awoke} against Him that it might not awake against His redeemed. He stood in their place, and one of the names that is given to Him in this connection is "THE RANSOM", the word implying that He gave an EXACT EQUIVALENT to the Father for all who are brought out of a justly deserved judgment. But not only was the work of the Lord Jesus for us when we were sinners, to cover us from wrath, it was also to bring us to God. It not only changed our position with respect to law, it also changed our position with respect to the Father. We were afar off, but now in Christ we who were once far off, are made nigh IN the blood of Christ. And again in 1 Peter 3.18 we read "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Righteous One for unrighteous ones, that He might bring us to God". There is yet a further thought. The Lord Jesus Christ when He died for poor guilty sinners to redeem them, died in order that His righteousness might be made available. You recollect how that in Gen. 3 the coats of skin were not available until there had been the death of the sacrifice. Likewise was it with respect to the burnt offering of which the skin belonged to the priest. Now the righteousness that God gives to His people is His Own award to His beloved Son of Whom it is written in the Psalms, "He shall receive

the blessing from the Lord and righteousness", but that which is awarded to His beloved Son as an acknowledgement of the perfect work which He accomplished is made ours, not by a transfer as in the case of the coats of skin, for we were dead, and to cover dead people with righteousness would not be enough. Hence the precious words of 2 Cor. 5, "Him Who knew no sin God made to be sin (or a sin offering) for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God ~~IN HIM~~. The death made it possible to have that righteousness of God applied to cover us, the "Robe of Righteousness" of Isaiah 61.10.

But since we have been born again there is still an important aspect of the death of Christ. Since salvation we still need the blood. Not that we can lose salvation, or become in the sphere of wrath again, but we read in 1 John 1 that "if we walk in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin". It is not merely the province of the blood to cleanse. The present tense has the thought of a continuance and a conditional continuance. It is: ~~IF~~ we walk in the light that the blood cleanseth. It is not that if we walk in the light we are saved. Salvation is a free gift, but for the continual cleansing of the blood it is necessary that we walk in the light, otherwise we shall defile our garments, though we do not lose our acceptance in the Beloved. In this connection we recollect the words of Rev. 7 concerning those "Who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb". This does not mean that they have robes of their own works. Nay, those robes are Divinely given, and therefore have no spots in them, but we may get spots ~~ON~~ them, and those can only be removed by the application of the blood of the Lord Jesus,

In connection with believers(2) and their need of the blood of the Lord Jesus we recollect that Israel's priests, though they never required the same sacrifices as at the first, still had application of the blood afterwards when they sinned. "If a priest that is anointed do sin" is the striking introductory word concerning God 's gracious provision of a sin-offering.

Then we have a further thought in connection with the application of the blood of Christ in connection with the Lord's Supper, - not the literal blood, but a type of the blood, suggesting our need for the realization of what that blood means within

ourselves. Then further we notice that in Hebrews 13, the Lord's people are said to have "Come to Jesus the Mediator of the better covenant, and the blood of sprinkling", as though that is always to be a helpful thought to them. The blood of Christ is not merely to our salvation, but to our present encouragement, as it will be our glorious triumph when we join the ransomed throng, who never weary of speaking of the blood of the Lamb. The Book of Revelation makes two things very definitely emphatic - that in heaven they never weary of ascribing glory to the Lord, and never weary of thinking of the blood of the Lamb.

We next come to consider the work of the Lord Jesus with respect to our sins. He died not merely for us to cover us and to shield us, but He did for OUR SINS. Of course there is a distinct aspect here. He died for US to take us from our sins, He died for our SINS to take them away. He died in connection with our sins, bearing the penalty of them, not to save our sins but to DESTROY them and save us, that our sins might be drowned in the depths of the sea, that the full payment of the righteous law might be met by Himself. Hence we read that He was made sin or a sin-offering (the very word for sin-offering being elsewhere rendered 'sin') so exactly did He meet the full equivalent for those who are by grace "made the righteousness of God in Him". Isaiah 53, speaking of our sins, said, "The Lord made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all", and we read in 1 John 2.2 "He is the Propitiation". The word is a legal word. The word is a term that suggests wrath, and alludes to the day of atonement. "He is the Propitiation for our sins" - the Lord Jesus exactly met what our sins deserved. Two prepositions are used concerning His work for our sins. One, 'PERI' implying that He embraced them within His work to remove them entirely. The other 'HUPER' implying that His work was over them to cover them and blot them out, though they were as a thick cloud that blotted out the glory of God from our view.

In connection with this work of the Lord Jesus for our sins it is well to realize that it was not merely an indefinite work, but definite. "The Lord made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all". That is to say "He was wounded for OUR transgressions" when "He gave Himself a Ransom for MANY" and died for those that were given to Him. He knew exactly all their shortcomings and failures. It was not a general work, but a work of full conscious-

ness, and a perfect and Divine equivalent was wrought out, that our sins might be righteously removed and we ourselves might be righteously saved. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" fulfilling the sacrificial types which were always with reference to specific persons. And though sometimes, as to general sins that the people did not know, there was always the thought that God knew those sins and viewed them and hated them, and could not have them removed from His sight unless they were removed by transferred wrath.

And next we come to consider the aspect of the death of the Lord Jesus for the poor nation of Israel. Caiaphas being High Priest that eventful year when the Lord Jesus died, spake prophetically when he said that Christ should die for the whole nation, that they might not perish. The Holy Spirit explains it thus - that He died for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that the children of God who were scattered abroad might be gathered into one. The only nation for which Christ died as a nation is the nation of Israel. This is a special nation which is dealt with in Scripture as a nation. I do not mean that every Israelite will be saved, (Judas Iscariot is sufficient to prove otherwise). But that God will fulfil His promise that He pardons those whom He reserves. In other words, if God saved a large number now out of any nation He saves them as individuals, as children of God in the family; but when God saves Israel in the future He saves them as a nation. All who are spared, the third part brought through the fire, refined as silver and gold, will be saved as A NATION. So, "ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED" in regard to the unchanging promise of Him Whose gifts and calling are without repentance.

This salvation of the nation of Israel is I think brought before us in the types of the day of atonement. There was a bullock for the 'house' (the children of God); there was a goat for the nation. The bullock was offered first, the goat was offered second. Christ died that there might be the saved priestly family of which 1 Peter 2 speaks, and that there might also be the saved nation. You will notice in connection with the tabernacle that there is always a contrast with the tabernacle itself (a picture of the heavenly things) and the court with the brass, a picture of the earthly people. Moreover, Abraham had two cities*, the literal and the spiritual, and though the literal will have to be

*Should 'cities' read 'seeds'?

brought to a spiritual position when they are saved, they are nevertheless viewed as a nation in the flesh when they are brought to the Lord in a future day. In regard to this we find in Genesis 22 that the ram that died for Isaac died instead of the nation, and also died instead of the children of promise. There is thus the twofold aspect of the work of the Lord Jesus, which is also hinted I believe in 1 John 2, "He is the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world". For there will be an application of the work of the Lord Jesus when He comes back, not to every individual for He will come back in judgment, but to Israel as a nation, to whom nations will be joined in that day, as Zech. 8 puts it. But this will come in connection with our fifth point - the relationship of the death of the Lord Jesus to the lost world.

When He wrought out His finished work it was the same as with Noah. Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house by the which he condemned the world, that is to say he made manifest to the world their condemned position, and showed them their judgment, and their mocking at him only brought a severer judgment upon them. So with the work of our Lord Jesus with respect to a lost world; it only brings out more definitely the awful condition and the tremendous judgment that will fall on those who despise the Lord. By His work the Lord condemned the world. Do not misunderstand me - I believe that as a result of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ there are many advantages that we find now, in which men of the world share. God is holding back the pouring out of His judgments until His elect people be gathered together, and if I might so say the world is as it were the scaffolding until He has finished His building, and is affected by His going on with His gracious building, calling a people out from the world. But specifically there was no work of the Lord Jesus in His atoning death for those who are not brought to believe on Him. It was a DEFINITE TRANSACTION, not merely vague and indefinite. There are some Scriptures which at first sight seem to present a difficulty, but I think we may sum it up thus, that the Scriptures which present a difficulty may be explained in regard to the 'satisfaction' view of the death of our Lord Jesus, but that other Scriptures cannot be explained in connection with any other view. The indirect results of the death of the Lord Jesus are manifold and advantageous to men, but inasmuch as sinners when they stand before the great white throne will be judged according to their works,

the death of the Lord Jesus is not viewed in Scripture with special reference to those who deny Him and who war against Him. There is one however that I would mention, and that is that by His work as Son of man He has the right to judge, as John 5 puts it, and therefore in this sense He has authority over all flesh in connection with His purchase of everything that He might control it, but this is of course not the aspect with which we are now dealing, the BENEFICIAL aspect.

In this connection I should like to say a word or two further as to 1 John:2, for what I have said must sound somewhat hard though I cannot for one moment consider that our beloved Lord when He died, died for those who were then in hell, or that He died doing a vague work - therefore we are drawn to the conclusion that the words must not be taken in their literal meaning, but that He gave Himself a ransom for 'many' fully knowing all those who by sovereign grace would be brought to rest upon Himself, of whom He says that they were given to Him, and having been given to Him He took them in hand as the gift, and for that gift He died and for the gift He prayed. But having said this, which may at first sight appear strange, I should like to add that I feel sure that our beloved Lord will in all things, even numerically, have the pre-eminence, for not only are there the vast myriads who are taken away from this world in infancy, who cannot stand before the Great White throne where judgment is according to works, and there must be saved by that precious blood of the Lord Jesus, but also when He shall return and a nation shall be born at once from Israel, many nations will be joined to the Lord also. I have referred to 1 John 2.2 in this connection already, and I would emphasize it again. I do not think that Isaiah 53 primarily has reference to us in the present time in the use of the word 'many'. I know it does refer in a large degree but I do not think there is the primary, or shall I say I do not think that is the only allusion. In the early part of Isaiah 53 we have that which is future. If a Jew comes up to us and says, Isaiah 53 is future, we say we quite agree, but do we mean the work there is future? By no means. But Isaiah 53, it is clear, is not ON Christ's death, but a revelation of ISRAEL'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of Christ's death, and THAT is future, for it goes on to say, "We esteemed Him not, Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows". It is repentant Israel who will take up the strain of Isaiah 53. Then the words have a full force, "For the transgress-

ions of MY people was He stricken". And after that, AFTER THAT be it noticed, we have the change from the "OUR" to "their"; we have the change from "MY PEOPLE" to the "MANY". He poured out His soul unto death that He might bear the sin of MANY. The "MANY" are plainly alluded not only to those who are brought to be saved by grace now, but those who will be brought to acknowledge the Lord in that day toward which our eyes look when "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied". For when the Lord Jesus Christ shall return we know that there shall be righteous nations at Matt. 25 puts it - those who will be brought to accept Himself and to be with Himself in that wonderful kingdom when He shall have dominion from sea to sea; and from the river to the end of the earth.

We next come to consider the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in His death with respect to the earth. I do not mean the people of the EARTH which was given to man as a sphere of dominion, till man forfeited his dominion. We know how that when man sinned the earth was ruined, but the Lord Jesus came as THE Man, the Son of man, the Fulfiller of Psalm 8, to Whom all things are made subject as Heb. 2 shows us. And therefore when He came, in the words of the fifth parable of Matt. 13, He bought not simply the "treasure" of His people but the "field" with the treasure within it. But the field is the earth. And the Lord Jesus came to buy the earth that in it He might display His dominion, and display His blood-bought people. It is well to notice in connection with the Day of Atonement in Lev. 16 that we have an allusion to the sacrificial work concerning the tabernacle, and the camp of Israel was thus in measure included. Moreover, when Israel had sinned against God together with David in the numbering of the people, when atonement was forgotten and God's arrangements for atonement, you remember how there was not only a sacrifice but the purchase of the field, the field of Araunah the Jebusite. You remember moreover, that when our beloved Lord died, the pieces of silver which had been wrongly given were taken by the High Priests to buy the field to bury strangers in. There is a blessed contrast and an allusion in the work of the Lord Jesus, for when He died He died not simply to bring about a burial ground. He did not merely purchase that, though Abraham purchased a burial ground, but He purchased a field that His people might be raised to LIFE and be displayed with HIM.

We come next to consider the work of the Lord Jesus in

others relations. I believe that as to the ANIMAL KINGDOM there is a wondrous work, for the first Adam brought the animal kingdom into ruin. The creation was made subject to vanity, says Rom. 8, "not willingly but by reason of him who subjected it". "And the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now". Now Romans 8 declares that this creation shall be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, referring to the animal creation being blessed when the Lord Jesus shall come back, and in the words of Isa. 65.25 "The lion and the lamb shall be together". You remember how that not only in Eden were the animals types, but in the ark which is a wonderful picture of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, for inside that ark, the one ark, we have a gathered family underneath that which was called by the word "ATONEMENT", and that gathered family contained those of all the different races, typically, representatively, and the Lord Jesus has saved out of all nations. You know how that the type of Israel was there - SHEM. The type of those who are brought by grace to know the Lord now - JAPHETH. And also HAM, perhaps suggestive of those who will be brought to know the Lord in the future day from all nations, when in some of the far distant lands of the heathen the Lord will display His glorious grace. In this connection we find the ANIMALS were in the ark, and before the throne in Rev. 4 the living creatures have animal appearances as well as the faces of men. This is no mere accident. Moreover, the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as purchasing the earth must affect the VEGETABLE KINGDOM, and instead of the thorn and the briar there shall come up the myrtle and fir tree. The "thorns and briars" that came in through the first Adam's sins shall be removed through the last Adam's obedience unto death, and there shall be a revelation of the wondrous fulness of that work of Christ extending even beyond this sphere, for the light of the sun shall be sevenfold in that day, and the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun.

It is well just to consider in this connection the work of the Lord Jesus in respect to Satan. Of course you know, dear friends, that I do not mean that He made any atonement for Satan, for we are aware that Satan shall be punished in everlasting fire, whither those who choose his ways will also be sent in a tremendous judgment. I am rather referring to the fact that the Lord Jesus said when He died, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out". His death with respect to Satan was a conquest, for though the particular fighting with the

evil one was in Gethsemane, it would seem, where He was in a conflict, an agony, the word implying a conflict with powers, though that was the immediate conflict with the evil one, yet the Cross was the triumph. That which seemed the weakness of God was indeed the display of His glorious victory, "NOW is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out".

May I in this connection refer sorrowfully to the interpretation that some have taken that the death of the Lord Jesus offered something to Satan. To me it seems an awful thought, His work was offered to God. "But", it is said, "was not the death a purchasing?" "And had not the ungodly sold themselves to Satan?" These facts are true, but the inference is wrong. We might look at it like this. The Lord Jesus Christ died to pay the debt that sinners owed to God. Now man had had the tenancy of this world and had proved an utter failure as a tenant. When the Lord Jesus came He did not pay the purchasing price to the one whom the tenant had disloyally given the world, and given himself, but He came to pay the price to the rightful Owner, that He might have the tenancy and the persons who belonged to God in that thousand years' kingdom when He shall display in this world that which the first Adam OUGHT to have displayed in measure, but which he did not even display for two or three days.

And so, dear friends, at the end of our subject, or rather at the end of my part of it, we see the wondrous relations of the work of the Lord Jesus. What a fulness of righteousness and grace and wrath was there revealed! How blessed to know if we are among those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; how blessed to know that ourselves and our sins are alike covered because of His work. Ourselves covered with fragrance and acceptance before God, and our sins covered never again to rise in judgment, for they are sent away and blotted out and removed and will never come back. How blessed to realize that the Lord Jesus will yet see of the travail of His soul in a far more manifest way than He hitherto has seen. That in the Jerusalem where He died He will be exalted, the Exalted One, and that among the nation that cried "Crucify Him" He will be the honoured One, and that He Who was the "despised and rejected of men" shall yet come back as THE MAN to Whom all men must bow, and Who will have dominion as the glorious last Adam,

for Whose return His blood-bought people wait. For till He comes back the full fruition of His atonement has not taken place, not only with respect to earth, not only in respect to Israel, but with respect to ourselves. Then shall we be saved from the presence of sin. "Oh" you say, "If we fall asleep in Christ, that will take place". Then let me mention something else that will take place after, for those who have fallen asleep in Christ have not yet had the fruition of the atonement to the fullest extent. How about the poor frail body that is laid in the grave? Christ died that there might be the glorification of the body, that our body might somehow, having been sown, be raised in incorruption, that the "house which is from heaven" being joined to it, mortality might be swallowed up of life. It is a great mystery, this redemption of the body, but we should rejoice to realize that that fruition of the work of Christ is to take place for all His blood-bought ones, that they may be like Himself as well as IN Himself, in the day when He shall return.

.

oOoOo

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR BELOVED LORD

Outline:

1. The wondrous fact and our relation to it.
Is He our Lord?
2. Types of the resurrection.
3. Lessons as to the Day and Time. Note on our
position with regard to the sabbath.
4. The manifestations of Christ to witnesses chosen
5. The forty days. before.

Our subject, beloved friends, this evening, is the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank God for the wondrous FACT of the resurrection. It has ever been opposed, but it has been fully and finally demonstrated. The Scripture stands. I mean by 'finally' that all cavillers are truly silenced for God's own statements have a wondrous power, but it shall be finally demonstrated in another way when this Same Jesus shall so come in like manner

as He went into heaven, and when the ungodly world shall SEE the fact of the resurrection of our beloved Lord. It IS a wondrous fact that He was the Living One who became dead and then was raised up. Raised up because of our justification. He Who was laid in the grave, and Who rested that solemn sabbath, was raised up on the FIRST day of the week, the Introducer of a fresh dispensation, as well as the Completer of the Old Covenant. The wondrous FACT is indirectly testified by those who have opposed it. We find how the soldiers were persuaded by the Pharisees and priests to tell a lying tale and thereby, uttering that which was manifestly improbable, they became indirect witnesses to the FACT of that which they had not seen and which they withheld from their eyes, though manifested before their experience. But the question is, What is our relationship to this resurrection? Does it mean to us simply that the Lord Jesus came out of the grave, or does it mean to us that He, as OUR Lord, was raised up? I have just said He was raised because of our justification, is it so? If we are in Christ Jesus, then there is no doubt about this, and blessed indeed is the experience of a vital union with the Lord of glory Himself. If we are those who have felt our sins, and seen our Saviour, then we know that our Blessed Lord was raised again as our Head, as our Representative, to prove that the gates of Hades should not now retain at all, or even grasp, any of His people. To prove that all the redeemed shall be glorified and be in His likeness. Adam, the first, lost the likeness of God. The Last Adam causes us to be in HIS glory, and THAT is the likeness of God. We shall be like Him, the One Who is the Firstborn among many brethren, and at the same time the Shining Forth of the glory of the Father. The resurrection is thus a declaration of our eternal future, a manifestation of our security, because if Christ has been raised there is no doubt as to salvation. We are not dealing with myths and 'maybe's' but with facts and certainties. Now HAS Christ been raised from the dead, and become the Firstfruits of them that slept. Then our brethren and sisters who have fallen asleep in Christ will NOT perish, Christ has been raised. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so they which sleep through Jesus will God bring with Him". Therefore, not only do we see in the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus a demonstration of our eternal salvation, but also a demonstration of a bodily resurrection, for all the redeemed of God. A bodily resurrection in glory, as 1 Cor. 15 declares, for all the re-

deemed of God from the time of Abel up till in the future the last child of God who experiences death as an enemy shall be raised up. We know very well that this means to believers something more than a mere dogma. We have those whom we have loved in the Lord who have fallen asleep! and it means to us more than mere dogma concerning OURSELVES. We have continual reminders that our bodies are bodies of humiliation. We are not anxious to live forever in the flesh, as the flesh is constituted at the present time. We do not wish to go on in this world of sin to unending ages; we desire to be freed from the presence of sin, and to be freed from the painful accompaniments of sin. The resurrection of our Lord Jesus is the pledge of BOTH. It is the evidence that He has borne once and for ever the sins of all His elect, bearing them completely, so that they shall nevermore rise against any who are accepted in the Beloved, covered with an everlasting righteousness, they shall never be drowned in the depths of the sea of wrath. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus proves that God accepted Him for us, entirely, perfectly and completely, and that nothing can frustrate the purpose of eternal life. Oh, but is He our Lord in ANOTHER sense? "God hath made This Same Jesus Whom ye crucified both LORD and Christ", Lord in resurrection. "He died and rose and revived that He might be LORD", for the resurrection is the death-knell of fleshly indulgence. It tells us "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation" - that there is not simply a patching up of the flesh, or an improving of the flesh, but a NEW creation. If Christ has been raised for us then we cannot be put straight on the lines of the old covenant. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus. Then the flesh is judged, and, having been crucified, it is to be mortified. We are to live in resurrection-ground, and therein is the power to please God, by the application of the Holy Spirit, Who is the earnest of the inheritance. Therein we have the power of His resurrection to deal with the varied and almost innumerable complications which meet children of God in their daily pathway through this ruined world. The resurrection brings before us Christ as our Lord, our Sovereign Lord, to Whom we are to yield, gladly, cheerfully, and continually, a full and unmixed obedience. He has been raised, raised manifestly as the Saviour of sinners, raised manifestly as the Lord of saints.

We pass next to consider types of resurrection. Nature not only contains many cemeteries, but it contains pictures of

resurrection. While the earth remaineth, summer and winter will not cease, and while summer and winter do not cease we have pictures of resurrection. The plants that outwardly die in autumn often rise again in the spring. Trees that look dead and barren begin to sprout with a new life that comes up from them. Here is a faint type of resurrection. Still more definitely has God the Holy Spirit associated the corn of wheat with resurrection. It is sown, and sown in dishonour; that which we sow is bare grain, there is no great beauty about it. The bare grain dies. We do not see THAT sprout above the ground, but out from that bare grain there springs forth something to which God gives a body as it hath pleased Him; and everytime we eat bread we have a picture of resurrection, even as when we eat meat we have a reminder of atonement. Our meal table is full of sermons, and our every day life is simply an assemblage of parables. Beloved friends, we do need to have grace from God to see His teaching in all circumstances, and in all things of daily life, for the God of nature is the God of Scripture, and He has MADE nature to instruct us concerning that which is beyond nature. But there are many more types of resurrection. We especially think of those, secondly which are Levitical. In Passover there was a sheaf of corn waved before the Lord and waved the day after the Sabbath in Passover week, - the very day on which our exalted Saviour was raised from the dead. Here we have Himself pictured before us as raised from the dead. Moreover we think of the delivered leper in Lev. 14. For his cleansing he brought two birds alive and clean, and one was slain, and the other dipped in the blood of his fellow, and THEN caused to go free in the open field. The bird that died was clean, the bird that lived was clean, yet it lived not in freedom till it was dipped in the blood of its fellow. The two birds together picture Christ, delivered because of our offences, and raised again because of our justification. Thirdly we have a wondrous personal type of resurrection in the case of Isaac. His father binds him to that altar counting upon God Who is able to raise him from the dead. The cords are there, the knife is raised, the hand uplifted is about to strike down upon that prostrate form, but God, Who is never too late, times a repeated word which reaches Abraham's ears:- "Abraham, Abraham". He looks and beholds a ram caught in the thicket by its horns, and THAT is offered as a burnt offering in the stead of his son. The son is lifted up from the altar, raised from the dead in figure, as the Holy

Spirit elsewhere describes it. Christ was raised as Isaac, yet died as the ram. Two types are often needed to show forth the perfectness of His work.

Next we can consider "Lessons as to the day and time, and make a note on our position with regard to the sabbath". The day - I suppose no child of God present has any difficulty as to this: - the first day of the week. In every one of the four gospels we have NO first day of the week till Christ died and rose again, and then in EVERY Gospel we have the first day of the week. It is surely quite clear to every believer who is unprejudiced that not only did the type point out this day and this day only, but that the fulfilment of the type is emphasized in all four Gospels as being on this day. We cannot get away from it. I do not propose therefore to deal with regard to the Sabbath. The present dispensation began with the first day of the week. The Sabbath before is expressly passed over. The last Sabbath that was 'rightly' "rested" was before Christ's resurrection(Luke 23.56). There is no evidence of a sabbath being rightly kept afterwards. Indeed we are forbidden to keep sabbaths, in associated with the fulfilment of a covenant works. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. The seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God". Or, if we look back still further, the Sabbath has a creation relationship. It is not in connection with the NEW creation in heavenly places. Do not misunderstand me. I believe that when God resumes dealings with an earthly people and when He sets up a kingdom upon earth, Sabbath will be rightly kept again, because Sabbath belongs to an earthly people, for they are necessarily dealt with in a different way to those who are viewed in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The Sabbath we know is associated with certain positions. "Thou shalt do no work, thou, nor the stranger that is within thy GATES". We have no "gates" and we have no SABBATHS. We are on heavenly ground, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The Sabbath is not heavenly. There is no evidence of it being associated with heaven. God does not seem to have had what is called a Sabbath till He sanctified a special day with regard to the earth. It is earthly. Earthly even when with respect to God. We are not an earthly people. We would sin if we kept the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. The Lord's Day, the first day of the week, belongs to us. Now this is beyond the Sabbath, and a fresh beginning as well, Beyond the sabbath, for we have all the merits of the Lord Jesus in His obedience unto death reckoned to us, but we are also on resurrec-

tion ground in Him. There is something beyond the reckoning of merits. The eighth day is after the seventh day, and, furthermore, it is the first day of a fresh week. The Sabbath speaks of labour followed by rest. The first day speaks of rest followed by labour. We do not work to salvation but from salvation. Having been united with our beloved Lord we are enabled to serve Him, and we have six working days from THAT basis. I mean that we should complete our work from the standpoint of devotion to the Lord, but only on the basis of resurrection. No merits can be boasted. We shall never find that our obedience secures our salvation, for THAT has been secured. The first day of the week cuts at the root of all legalism, cuts at the root of all pride, cuts at the root of all Judais, cuts at the root of all blending of dispensations. We are in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The Only Sabbath we have as children of God is the seventh thousand years when the Lord Jesus comes on to the earth, and position in that day does depend on our obedience. We labour to enter into that rest. There remains a Sabbath keeping for the people of God (Heb. 4.9), that is to say, a Sabbath keeping which is associated with their obedience. But our heavenly treasures in Christ Jesus are independent of our obedience, for they depend on a greater work than ours. Millennial reward is undoubtedly conditional, but salvation is unconditional. The first day of the week speaks of an unconditional salvation, not an earthly position at all, but an eternal life, a finished work, and a new beginning of true activity FROM that finished work.

Now we have to consider that which is a little more difficult. What TIME of the day was Christ raised, and what were the events on that day? If we only had ONE Gospel we should not apparently have near so many difficulties. The four Gospels seem to cause the difficulties. But difficulties are always blessings in disguise. If we cannot fit things in, we may be fairly sure that the mistake is that the persons who are trying to do the fitting need the fitting in. The mistake is not in the things but in the persons. The Gospels are jottings. If we had the complete story we might understand more fully, but God has told us just as much as it is well for us to know. It is very difficult to construct the order of events on the first day of the week. I do not know whether you have tried to draw up a list of the order of events to do with Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, to do with Peter seeing the Lord and so forth. If you have tried I do not suppose you have felt

perfectly satisfied with your efforts. But it is a mercy if we are brought to be perfectly satisfied with the Scriptures, and to regard ourselves as learners, not teachers. We do not go to our Text Book to criticize it, but to be instructed by it through the gracious guidance of God the Holy Spirit. Will you just keep all the four Gospels in your mind, and turn to them just as you may need. I will give briefly the narrative from the four Gospels. Matthew's Gospel in the 28th chapter mentions that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the sepulchre. There was a great earthquake. The angel of the Lord descends. The keepers are shaking. The angel, the one angel here mentioned - answered and said unto the women, that is Mary Magdalene and the other women, Fear not ye, I know that ye seek Jesus, He is not here, He is risen from the dead. They were much surprised, they had fear and great joy, and ran to bring the disciples word, and as they ran, the Lord Himself met them and gave them further instructions, to go and tell His brethren that He was going into Galilee, and that they should see Him THERE. While they were going, some of the watch came into the city, and showed the high priests what had happened, and a lie was conceived, to try and put aside the great miracle which had been wrought. Then we are told how the eleven disciples went into Galilee, "into a mountain which Jesus has appointed them". They saw Him, they worshipped, but SOME "doubted", not some of the eleven, some others who were with them, evidently out of the five hundred who saw Him, probably on this occasion, for NON-MENTION IS NOT A DENIAL that others were present. If only we could be always clear on THAT point it would solve many problems to do with the resurrection day:- silence is NOT denial, silence is not contradiction, - it was then that the Lord Jesus said, "all authority was given unto Me in heaven and in earth", and He gave the instructions "Go and make disciples of all nations". You will notice this message was not only to the eleven disciples, but to others, for there were some who doubted. This is rather important in showing that Matt. 28.18,19 is not merely a command to apostles, it has a wider bearing.

Now let us turn to Mark's Gospel. "The sabbath having gone through", says chapter 16 - these words are definite, - "Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James (the other Mary) and Salome, (the mother, evidently, of James and John), had BOUGHT (not brought) sweet spices that they might come and anoint - (that is, evidently,

Saturday night), and very early on the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun". This is clear. It was very early in the morning. The sun having risen, as the word signifies, and then we are told that they were concerned about rolling away the stone, and they looked and saw the stone WAS rolled away, it was very great. They entered into the sepulchre and saw a young man sitting on the right side, who gave them instructions as to going, and telling the disciples and Peter, that He was going before them into Galilee, and they went away quickly - they trembled and were afraid, and said, nothing to anyone. Then, in the 9th verse, Scripture goes on, "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week". I might mention the word 'first' here is distinct from the word in verse 1. It is 'protee'(first), not 'mia'("one" literally). It suggests that when they were coming it was to them simple "mia sabbaton" but from Christ's standpoint it was the FIRST of a new beginning. There is a blessed contrast between the two. All the words are forcible. I have been very much encouraged in noticing the words that are used for the sepulchre. It is called the "mnemeicu" and the "mneema". You know that comes from the word "remember". The sepulchre was the remembering place, and they had the memorial. The Lord had previously in another connection said "We do with a view to My memorial". THEY connected the 'memorial' with a reminder of bare death, but the empty tomb became the memorial of resurrection. He had given them a much more precious memorial than they realized, and He changed the aspect of THEIR memorial. All the words are suggestive, as we connect them. But turning back to Mark 16, I might mention in passing how unwise the theory is that the Gospel ends in verse 8 "For they were afraid". Some have tried to make that the end of the gospel. I am sure we all feel it would be out of harmony with our Lord to let the Gospel finish off with saying "They said nothing, for they were afraid". We bless Him that the Scripture goes on to tell "They went forth, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following". It does not finish off merely with affrighted women, but with repentant and earnest men of God.

To resume:- The Lord Jesus having been raised early on the first day of the week (the word "Jesus" being in italics to associate it with that which has gone before, and to show this is not a fresh book, or even appendix), He appeared first to Mary

Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. She went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept, and they did not believe. Then He appeared to two others. They told it to the residue, but they did not believe them. Afterwards He appeared to the eleven, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart. Plainly here is a difficulty, for John's Gospel tells us that the Lord appeared to ten apostles on the first day of the week, and Thomas was not with them, but that Thomas was there a week later. It is condensed here, just as in Matthew you have no evidence of His appearing the evening of the first day of the week to the saints, but merely have a mention of a journey to Galilee. Omission is not contradiction, that is a canon of interpretation. Omission is not ignorance. Matthew does not say he was ignorant of these other revelations, but he was only pleased to pick out the visit to Galilee of the GENTILES, it was equally God's appointment that Mark should tell us specially of three or four revelations on the first day, and the week afterwards.

Luke's Gospel in the 23rd chapter, finishes with the resting on the Sabbath day according to the COMMANDMENT. The 24th begins "ON the first day of the week, very early in the morning". Those who came early in the morning were afterwards characterized in verse 22 by a word from the same root as the term used here for "very early", it implies that they were rising up with the sun (an encouragement to earnestness today) bringing the spices which they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away, they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. They were perplexed, and while they were afraid, two men stood by them in shining garments. They were instructed then that the words of the Lord Jesus had come true, that He had been RAISED. They returned from the sepulchre, told those things unto the eleven, and to ALL THE REST. Now we are told who they were, in verse 10, Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and OTHER women, who told these things unto the apostles, and their words seemed to them as idle tales. Then arose Peter and ran to the sepulchre; and stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. Then we are told about the visit to the two, on the journey to Emmaus.

Now Matthew's Gospel tells us that the Lord met the women on the journey back, Luke's Gospel tells us nothing of it. Omission is NOT contradiction. In John's Gospel we read that which illustrat-

es Mark 16. John 20 - "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early" and the Lord appears to Mary Magdalene first. But how do we account for this? She cometh when it was dark. There is no mention of others with her. She runs and comes to Simon Peter, and the other disciples, but apparently the women went on to the sepulchre before. Now if this were a human narrative, I know what we would naturally think, They were so much troubled they did not know the order in which the events happened, and they became confused. It is always easy to ASSUME that there is a mistake, the easiest thing possible. It is our wisdom, recognizing our ignorance, and knowing this is not a human narrative, to realize that whereas God is bringing before us that they were very confused, the record of it is not confused. Let me remind you how that on the night in which our beloved Lord was betrayed, NUMBERLESS things went through. How much transpired in that night! So is it here. How much transpired on that day! You have a mosaic of all the different records. You cannot see the Divine arrangement completely from one Gospel. If we make up our minds that a certain event only took place once, we shall be apt to introduce confusion when God shows it took place more than once. We know that there were two similar 'sermons', if I may so term them, one on the mount and one on the plain, not to be twisted into one.

We know that Christ cleared the temple three times, and not simply once, although most have tried to make out that it was twice and some but once. We know that this clearing was three times over. In like manner we know that there are certain passages which seem to imply that Peter denied his Lord more than three times, that there were more than three parts of the denial, although three distinct ones especially prophesied by the Lord Jesus. So it is here. The different narratives give us parts of the history of that eventful day. As far as we can draw up a certain narrative-view, it seems to have been something like this. The women having prepared on the Saturday night, as we should call it, started to go on the Lord's Day morning on their journey thither. Remember the sepulchre was NOT far from the city. On their journey thither we are told that Mary sees the stone taken away from the sepulchre. "We know not" 20.2, implies she was with others. We are not told she reached the sepulchre first. She sees the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Ch. 20.1, It was dark. There is no lengthy twilight in Palestine. She runs

away to where Peter is, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved. While she is running away, the others, somewhat alarmed and concerned, seem to have gone on their journey. Mary quickly returns, and then it seems that on coming up to the sepulchre an angel is seen. Afterwards other angels are seen. Afterwards other angels are seen. Is this surprising? By no means. We find various angels TOGETHER in Luke 2. to do with the birth of the Lord Jesus, is it strange that there should be angels together? It is not at all surprising that we find again and again various angels coming up before us, with regard to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. We have no need to make it out that the one appearing of one and the other appearing of two should have been exactly at the same time. They may have been a little time distinct. The disciples (using the word in its wider and precious fulness) were keeping on coming and going, between the sepulchre and their houses. They were quite disturbed that Lord's Day morning. Should not we have been, if we had lived then? Would our faith have been stronger? Everything prevented them from having settled minds, they were thinking of those wondrous events that had happened, those strange things, and now everything was mysterious. Is it surprising then dear friends, that we find them going and coming, going and coming, and that the angels are seen on different occasions, within the early hours of that Lord's Day morning? It was not that they had to go a journey of 20 miles, there was only a short journey in between where they were residing and the tomb where our beloved Lord had been buried. We know how near to the city that tomb was. We can understand therefore how that in a very few minutes they could have visited the tomb, and within an hour or two could have visited it again and again. It would therefore seem that the angels were seen, and the women commissioned by the angels to go on their journey to speak to the apostles. While they were going on their journey, another gospel tells us, namely, John's gospel, that Peter and John journeyed toward the sepulchre. The women were going away, having seen a vision of angels, and Peter and John, having been instructed by Mary, come to the sepulchre. John's gospel implies that Mary had gone back just before them, and I think that is fairly clear that Mary having run to give them word, went back quickly, and joined the women again and then journeyed away with the other women. But then having journeyed partly away with the other women, seems concerned, seemed to have returned again. Mary seems to have been the most enthusiastic of all keeping on journeying backwards and

forwards. Everything was mysterious to her, And when she returned (Peter and John having hurried quickly home), the Lord revealed Himself to her. After that she apparently journeyed on to the other women, hurried up and caught them. We know that she RAN first. Is it strange that we believe she RAN three or four times? evidently she was most energetic. So she ran after the other women and was ready to receive the fresh revelation of the Lord that we are told was given them in Matt. 28. She had joined them by that time, just about that time, it may be. Then we find that these go on and give the instruction that the Lord has given for the apostles, but there was such unwillingness to believe. "OH" you say, "How was this? Had not Peter and John gone to the sepulchre?" "And are we not told, that other disciples which came first to the sepulchre went in and saw and believed?" Yes, but the others did not see and did not believe. Indeed, Peter when he followed and went in to the sepulchre is not said to have believed. They were altogether dazed and ignorant. Peter apparently journeyed again to the sepulchre, as well as in that journey of John 20, and so we are told in connection with this that the Lord Who had risen appeared to Peter, appeared to Simon (Luke 24.34). In other words, one Gospel tells us PART of what had happened on the day, and another Gospel another part. There were SO MANY journeys to the tomb, which was 'natural', and some who started on one journey ran away and joined again in a party of concerned ones who were on the journey. It was a very natural thing to act thus when the tomb was so near. I dare say that we could write an account of our work in East London, in Jewish testimony, in which there would appear to be many contradictions. People would say, "Why here does one who writes the account say he was present, when he equally shows he was away from the others?" We keep on meeting one another, and then going forth in different ways. So it was on this occasion. Why should we ASSUME that there are contradictions? No, the Scripture is perfectly clear that they were very concerned, and kept on running about trying to find out, and all because they did not KNOW the Scriptures, that He should be raised from the dead.

As to the time of day, I might just point out that Mark, Luke and John are clear that it was the first day of the week, very EARLY, when the Lord was raised, about the time of the rising of the sun, or before. The only difficulty is Matthew's Gospel, where it says, "The end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward

the first day of the week came Mary Magdalene". There are several thoughts that suggest themselves. I mentioned last time that it was possible to take the words "The end of the Sabbath" at the end of the 22nd chapter, "So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch, but it was the end of the Sabbath", as if to suggest how they were breaking their own idea of the Sabbath, to remove the Lord Jesus from any position of glory before the nation. We know how Matthew has already spoken of the Sabbath to show this in 27.62. It was NO Sabbath to the chief priests and the Pharisees, therefore he calls it "the next day that followed the day of the preparation". The whole of the paragraph in Matt. 27 is to show how irreligious these boasting religionists were, but if we rather take the beginning of the chapter 28 in another way, what is signified by "the end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week"? May I remind you that the word for 'sabbath' and the word for 'week' are alike, and that we may therefore see in this strange wording - quite as strange as 27.62, - another illustration of the change of dispensations? We know very well that there was a certain period which cannot be counted with either week. We saw that last time. Is it therefore surprising that the Holy Spirit should detail the rising of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Lord's Day morning, with an expression which is striking, and out of the ordinary? "The end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week"? As it began to dawn, - then we should naturally say it must have been the Lord's Day morning. It would not have been the end of the Sabbath. "The end of the Sabbath" - then at first sight it could not have been the beginning to dawn. It is undoubtedly a Divine expression probably intended to bring before us a change of dispensation. The change of counting of time is deeply important.

I have already spoken of the manifestations of Christ, the resurrection morning, of its two witnesses chosen before. I would just remind you again that in 1 Cor. 15 we are told of those who were particularly the witnesses, and hence, only Christian BROTHERS are there mentioned. May I remind you further that the typical suggestiveness of the appearance to TEN on the first day at even, and to ELEVEN on the second first day? Ten is often the number of the saints in the present dispensation, eleven suggests Israel blessed as well, - the curtain in the tabernacle indicating this. Ten, to do with the tabernacle; eleven, to do with the tent.

The forty days need not detain us long. Our beloved Lord was seen of the disciples during a period of 40 days, in various forms, and at various times, but always speaking to them of the things concerning the KINGDOM of God. Oh, that our CONVERSATION might be in like manner! We think of the forty days in which He was tested. We think of the contrasted forty days under Mount Sinai. And then we notice these forty days - a wondrous preparation with a view to the present dispensation. They were left just ten days afterwards, days full of waiting quietly and patiently, and then when the Day of Pentecost was fully come there was poured forth the power of the Holy Spirit, as a further manifestation that Jesus, our beloved Lord, was GLOIFIED. Everyt'ing was Divinely appointed to fit in with the types of the Levitical law. There is no "rush" with God. There are no after-thoughts, there is no confusion. Oh that our hearts might praise Him for the perfect arrangement! and though in the record of events on the resurrection morning we see man's confusion, it only sets forth in greater relief that there was no confusion and no disorder with our God!

oOoOo

"JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD"

Before approaching our subject, dear friends, I would like to refer to the apparent omission of verse 7 in 1 John 5. One always dreads lest there should be a misunderstanding of anything as to God's words. How verse 7 is perfectly true doctrine, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are ~~the~~ God, yet that verse is not in the oldest manuscripts of the Scripture but was evidently put in the margin by an annotator, thinking that it was a beautiful parallel with the three witnesses on earth to say there were three witnesses in heaven.

As it is, therefore, a human comment, however beautiful be the teaching of it, we cannot put it on a level with the words of God, hence the omission. We do not wish for a moment to omit the teaching of it, we rejoice in it, we rejoice that from the beginning to the end of Scripture there is a stress on the triune nature of our glorious God. But this verse is merely a human addition in this place. Moreover, I am inclined to think that like all human additions it hinders the real argument being clearly seen. Verse 6 reads on to verse 8. In verse 6 we have

the water and the blood and the Spirit, and that goes on to verse 8 with a beautiful link. In verse 6 we behold the Lord Jesus Christ, going through baptism, and dying, and the Spirit witnessing. In verse 8 we have "There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, the water and the blood". Moreover, I am not sure that in this context it is quite accurate to speak of the Spirit bearing record in heaven. It seems that this context is dealing with the Spirit of God as having come down to earth to bear record, and that the interpolation of men in verse 7 professing and intending perhaps to honour the Holy Spirit really puts into the background His beautiful work of witnessing, to continue the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth.

One step further, - I am sure that the thought of witnessing in heaven is before us at all in this passage. Witnessing is usually a term that belongs to earth (and of course the word BEAR RECORD is the same as the word BEAR WITNESS). So we see how that man may put right doctrine in a wrong place, and so inadvertently cover up the fulness of the teaching of our gracious God. Nevertheless I would repeat, it is right doctrine that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are one God. That is perfectly true doctrine, and we rejoice to believe, but the verse must be omitted because it was evidently not in the original manuscripts but is the comment of a man.

Now we come to our subject for this evening:- Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. The title is a Scriptural title, and we look back to John 20.31. There we read that what was written in the Gospel was written that readers might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that believing they might have life through His Name. Here we have brought before us the object of this portion of Scripture, - and indeed every portion of Scripture in some way centres round the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. He said concerning Moses, "Moses wrote of Me", and again of the Scriptures generally, - THESE ARE THEY WHICH TESTIFY OF ME. And the later Scriptures of course are full of Himself. So that whether we speak of the earlier portion or that which is later, we may find, as He Himself did, in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. The Scripture without Christ would not be the Scriptures. He Who is central in the view of heaven in Revelation, He Who is central in the gathering of His redeemed, one

"IN THE MIDST", He is in the midst of the word of truth. I want just to take it this evening first of all as a personal exhortation and encouragement to believers secondly, as a witness concerning the way of Salvation to any who do not know the Lord, thirdly, as a testimony against Judaism, and fourthly, as a Divine attack on what I might just summarize as Gnosticism, an early creed against the Truth, which I hope to explain more fully.

1. Let us take this passage, this statement, this definition as it applies to those of us who know the Name of the Lord, with its comforting and instructive power. Definitions are not dry definitions to those who know the Lord - The Word was God; God is a Spirit; Jesus is the Christ; the Life was the Light. These definitions with which John's Gospel and the epistle abound, - these definitions are precious food to us. "GOD IS LOVE" is not only a text for our wall but a text in our heart; and "GOD IS LIGHT" is not only a statement of fact, but a realization. So is it with this definition, Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. This is full of encouragement to those of us who know and rejoice in His worthy Name. We are like Peter, flesh and blood did not reveal Christ unto him but the Father Who is in heaven. And like Peter, we reply, these words with a certain exultation - THOU ART THE CHRIST THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD. For this statement brings home to our hearts that the One Who walked this earth, despised and rejected of men, was the Anointed of God, Who had come as anointed Prophet to tell the Truth, as anointed Priest to make a sacrifice, and Who will return as Anointed King that He may have the glory which is His, and which we, by grace, shall share, with Him. Oh to be faithful in view of that Day.

JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD. We do not believe a mere man. Jesus is the Christ the SON of God. He is essentially God. We rejoice and should rejoice more, for when we praise most we are assured of our praiseLESS-ness. We delight and would delight more in the precious fact that underlies this statement, that the One Who came down to the depths of sacrifice and suffering was none other than the Lord of glory, the Son of God Himself. Our hearts feel that we have no need to be ashamed of such a Saviour, but we have need to be ashamed of those who need such a Saviour, even of ourselves. Our hearts feel that we

have in these words an assurance of a personal security. Our salvation does not depend on a mental doctrine, our eternal blessing is not holding to a mere 'thing'.

JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD. Precious were the prophets whom God sent to Israel, but when the people said that He was Jeremiah or one of the prophets, they missed the mark, and they lost the Divine teaching. He is the Christ the Son of God. The Prince of the prophets, and above the prophets, the Glorious Saviour, Who has so graciously saved us, with a condescension and might which have no parallel and can have no equal. But how important it is to go a step further, and to seek by grace to apply these words to any who may not know the Lord with the assurance of having passed out of death into life. JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD is the message that we have to give those in whose heart God has begun to work, we tell them facts, not theories, and facts concerning a Person, and not merely a system or a creed. Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. God has fulfilled His word. Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. Jesus was not merely an example Who walked this earth, but the Saviour Who came to this earth. Not merely a hero, but the Redeemer, not merely a great man, but the God-man. JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD. Thus there is a salvation that He has wrought, and His work is sufficient for all who feel their need of it, their need of Him. We do not invite to a prophet, great though that prophet may be, but to the Son of God, and if anyone feels something of a 'lostness' and something of a hopelessness there is music and a reminder of merit, even eternal and divine merit in these precious words JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD. Otherwise Scripture would be confusion, and we should have no ring of certainty in the Gospel we preach, but because JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD we have no uncertainty in the precious Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of our salvation. We are able to invite helpless sinners to One Who is fully competent to the work that He undertook, and He not merely undertook it, but carried it through, and he ever lives to plead its merits. But our wonderful Saviour is a Saviour Who is sufficient, and efficient, for all who feel their need and desire, by grace, to avail themselves of Him. Christ is the Foundation of the Gospel, the Background for the Gospel, the Gospel Himself.

(to be continued, if the Lord will)

Part 3

**« THE THINGS
CONCERNING HIMSELF »**

Percy W. Heward

"THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF"

Part 3.

"JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD"
(Continued)

We go a step further, apart from the general witness to the one who feels himself or herself lost, there is a peculiar witness to Judaism in this statement. I have no doubt that the Holy Spirit through John meant this peculiar witness when the Gospel of John was penned. There were many of Israel about, and the writer was an Israelite by birth himself, and many of them of Israel shrank from the idea that Messiah had come, they believed in a Messiah as some of Israel still do. They acknowledged, many of them, that the Messiah would be the Son of God, though denying this to-day, for Judaism has drifted further and further from the Truth, as every religion without the Lord abiding in it. Thus John as Paul his brother apostle went to these Hebrews to bring before them the evidences of the Messiahship of Christ, and the Gospel of John was written with that object, to show Christ as the Messiah, to show that the Lord Jesus was not merely a Saviour of Gentiles, but the promised Messiah of the earlier Scriptures.

You recollect how Paul went forth ministering the word, and in the synagogue dealt thus, - Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, first point; and risen from the dead, second point; and that this Jesus Whom I preach unto you is Christ, third point. A precious dividing of the subject in ministering to Israel. The first point to be proved is that the Messiah must needs suffer, - that can be proved from the sacrificial passages, and from portions as Isaiah 53. That He must rise again from the dead - Isaiah 53 and Psalm 16 demonstrate this. Then having proved the character of the Messiah the next point is to prove that there is Someone Who has come Who has fulfilled that character, here was Paul's third point.

The Gospel of John was written with the same object and with God's glory in that object, even that some by grace might see that "Jesus is the Christ the Son of God". That Jesus is the Messiah. In accord with this the whole of the

Gospel of John is framed. We find, for example, in the first chapter John denying that he was the Messiah, but pointing out Someone else. In John 2 we find the beginning of miracles that the Lord Jesus did, to manifest His glory. In John 3 we have a teacher of the Jews, even Nicodemus who came to acknowledge Christ as a Rabbi, but nothing more, and he went away apparently silenced, for we do not read that Nicodemus ever answered the Lord's word to him at the end. Later on in the book we find Nicodemus saying a word or two in defence of the Lord Jesus at the end of chapter 7, and, further, we find finally in John 19,39 Nicodemus coming to help in the burial of the Lord Jesus. You see how the Gospel traces the history of Nicodemus. He thinks Christ is a Rabbi first, he goes a step further, he says "Hear this Man, do not condemn Him unheard". Then he severs himself from the others of Israel, and associates himself with the rejected Lord Jesus. So we get a Jewish teacher being brought to acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah. You can almost trace Nicodemus' line of thought, and the way God dealt with Nicodemus through this Gospel. It is a faint outlined biography of Nicodemus to show how a Jewish teacher was brought to recognize that Jesus was the Messiah. Then we find the 4th chapter has the woman of Samaria who said "WIL KNOW THAT MESSIAH COMETH", The Lord Jesus demonstrated to her that He was Messiah. Then we find the miracle of John 5, and the subsequent miracles of John's gospel to demonstrate Christ's glory at Jerusalem particularly; for the man who had been lying 38 years, and the man born blind and Lazarus were all brought to these miracles at or near Jerusalem. We have Christ's demonstration at Jerusalem that He was the Messiah, so the Gospel of John was a Gospel tract for circulation among the Jews for evidence that Jesus was the Messiah(as the term CHRIST signifies), the Son of God(John 20, 31). And we may well use that Gospel in the same way still, as a witness to that poor nation of Israel concerning the precious Lord Jesus in Whom we believe.

But the book went further. There came about at the time John lived the beginning of a very subtle teaching. I have characterized it as Gnosticism, and said that this verse is a witness against Gnosticism. Gnosticism means knowledge, and there became at the time of John and for some considerable period afterwards a certain knowledge-party who claimed to have a monopoly of knowledge, although divided into various sects and divisions which all had a kinship one to the other. Paul alludes to them in the epistle to

the Colossians where he speaks of these who were intruding into various things, and who adopted a worshipping of angels.

Gnosticism briefly involved a belief in certain emanations, as men viewed them so that certain powers were supposed to emanate and come forth from God, which they called 'eons', - The word which is translated AGES. The Holy Spirit through Paul takes up this word in various epistles; see also the anonymous epistle to the Hebrews, which is the witness of the Holy Spirit, and may be Paul's ministry. Men spoke about these different eons and gave them names as 'life' and 'light'. Thus the Holy Spirit takes up the word with a contrast - THROUGH WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE EONS. God as it were takes the very words out of the mouth and uses it in a Divine and different way, emphasising that Christ is Greater than all creatures. He made the eons, the ages, which men misconstrued into semi-gods, - these were the fallen angels whom they worshipped. Nominally true angels, actually demoniacal angels. For every worship that is not the true worshipping of the Lord goes off to the worshipping of an evil angel. May I just illustrate this? Take heathenism, an idol is nothing in the world, yet the things that the nations sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God, says Paul. Thus though an idol is nothing, behind the idol there is a demon and the idol worship which is given to the lump of wood or stone in intention, is actually attracted to the demon who is behind that mere image, and who wants to draw worship to itself. Take spiritualism, so called, in which there is a professed dealing with those who are departed from this world. Scripture shows that it is a dealing with evil angels, and thus a worshipping of such. We find a reference to it even before the flood; in Genesis 6, where there was a link with evil angels, and Gnosticism was a worshipping of angels. As we have noted men said that one of these angels was LIFE and another was LIGHT. John takes up the words - IN HIM WAS LIFE AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT; they were names of One and He was greater than all creation.

Let no one, says the apostle, let no one lead you astray through philosophy, the love of wisdom. Many liked the idea of wisdom and a wisdom party. Again he says, "In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge", - another answer to this knowledge party, who boasted of their profound knowledge. In Christ are all these things. This party, of course, denied the atoning

death of the Lord Jesus Christ. But how could they deal with it? They wanted to accept certain parts of Scripture. How then could they get rid of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ? Ah, they said, Jesus was a man, upon that man after his baptism there came an eon, one of their favourite expressions, and that eon they regarded as Christ. Then they added that the eon left Him just before He died, so that it was only a man Jesus who died on the cross, nothing more than that, and they turned to the Scripture, which the evil heart can always pervert. They misused the expression "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" They imagined some eon had left that Man who was hanging on the cross. Thus they distinguished Jesus and Christ, and made Jesus man, and Christ Divine, the human heart always likes to pry into mysteries and to explain them in self's own way and to separate what God has joined.

You will not be surprised to hear that these same people separated God and the Creator of the world. They said in effect - The world contains a lot of evil, therefore the Creator of the world is different from the real God. He is only one in-between who has made it. They separated what God has formed. You will not be surprised next to hear that they also separated the older Scriptures and the later Scriptures; yes, what God had joined, they put apart, and so they separated that wonderful incomprehensible and glorious person of our beloved Lord, as Christian Science and Russellism sinfully divide Him today, for they contain revived Gnosticism. They had the colour of wisdom in the way in which they quoted some distorted fragments of Scripture glibly for what they affirmed. Now John felt the awful blasphemy of this teaching, and in answer to it he witnessed as we have here in the first epistle - THIS IS HE WHO CAME THROUGH WATER AND BLOOD, JESUS THE CHRIST. Not in the water only, but in the water and blood, and it is the Spirit That witnesseth, you see the force of that. This is He Who came through water. Jesus the Christ was the Christ before He passed through the water of baptism. THROUGH the water, and THROUGH the blood. Christ when He died, Jesus the Christ, not in the water only, (the water of baptism), but in the water and in the blood. He made an atoning work and it is the Spirit That witnesseth. Men said that the dove who came down to witness was Christ. No, says John, Christ was in the water being baptised, it is the Spirit That witnesseth. It was the Holy Spirit who came down on that wonderful perfect Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Then John added "And there are three that are keeping on bearing witness in the

earth". He did witness then, but He keeps on bearing witness to the unity of the person of Christ, and if there is any denial of that wondrous unity of the person of Christ, then the doctrine is a doctrine of demons, and of seducing spirits. It is not of the Spirit of God. There are three that keep on bearing the witness that Jesus is the Christ, for the water of baptism declares that a perfect Saviour has borne wrath for sinners. If Christ had not died for me under wrath, my baptism is mere child's play, merely a theatrical performance, but if He took wrath for me, my baptism is a type of a wondrous fact. The Spirit and the water still bear witness, and the blood still bears witness. What blood is bearing witness on earth? Is there material blood bearing witness on earth? No, but He said concerning the Cup of blessing which we bless, "This is My blood of the New Covenant". This still bears witness. The cup at the Lord's table bears witness to the unity of the person of Christ. If He was simply a man Jesus who died as an example, away with the Lord's table! but if He was One Who took wrath for me, then that blood poured out that is pictured in the fruit of the vine at the table of the Lord is a constant reminder to my heart that He was not merely a man, but the Christ of God, the Substitute for guilty sinners:- and so that baptism, and the fruit of the vine at the Lord's table keep on bearing witness; and 1 John 5 adds "These Three agree in one" or rather literally, - These Three are toward the unity, - undoubtedly toward the unity of the Lord's people, but that is not the chief thought - toward the unity of the Person of Christ. These Three, the Spirit and the Water and the Blood declare that Jesus is the Christ; here is the unity, not two Persons. The gnostics taught a duality, but these three are toward the unity, and set forth that Jesus is the Christ.

Perhaps someone says, But what is the value of all such teaching now? He may say or she may say, I have often read the epistle of John, and I never needed to know that to get food for my heart and soul. No, dear fellow saved one, of course not. God does not make your knowledge of false teaching a necessity before you can receive a blessing from His words. His words are food to every one of His people in every circumstance, and He has so arranged that the very controversial portions of Scripture are exceedingly devotional, and a controversy that is mere words is a poor thing before God. Well, one may say, What is the good of bringing up all these old blasphemous teachings? These old

blasphemous teachings have never been buried. At the present time we can find sect after sect which is re-introducing the teaching that separates Jesus and Christ, which makes out they are two distinct persons. You may not have come across the false teaching; if so, you can praise God for being spared from coming across some of the abominations of today, but that teaching has been found in much literature, and in much preaching; - to separate Jesus and Christ. And why? To take away from the atoning efficacy of His finished work. Anything will Satan do to take away that precious blood of the Lord Jesus which is such a sure resting place of His redeemed ones. It is amazing to think that any can be led astray for one moment with an open Bible to think that Jesus is distinct from the Christ. "Jesus is the Christ", is the utterance of the Gospel of John. "Jesus is the Christ" is the utterance of his epistles, "Jesus is the Christ" is the witness of the apostle, and throughout the whole of Scripture the same teaching and thus the Name comes in its fulness THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. And this just shows us how Scripture was written to meet every possible difficulty that may come across the path of a child of God. We shall encounter false teaching as well as false practice if we are the Lord's people, and to whom can we turn for instruction in this matter? We have the word of God to anticipate everything that is wrong and refute it. God's words are not only to guide us as to a few things, but as to everything. There is not a false teaching to be found today which is not dealt with in the word of God. Our eyes are blind in measure if we do not see the fulness, and the appropriateness of the word of God, applied by the Spirit.

If, as it is sadly probable, we shall come across those who deny this wondrous teaching, let us not listen to their plausible language, let us not be attracted by anything that they suggest or propose. As soon as a man denies the plain statement of Scripture concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, let us beware lest we be engulfed in doctrine that is against God. Let us be jealous for the person of Him whose Name we bear. There is even danger in curiosity, there is a danger in natural desire for something fresh; if we want something fresh, much of the word of God has been forgotten. We can find enough that is truly fresh there. Let us not be attracted to something which sounds plausible, but resting our faith on Divine statements, Divine definitions, Divine declarations, let us maintain the whole of the truth of God, which is at once His revelation and the

pledge of salvation, and our joyous confession.

JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF GOD! To sum up, here is the resting place for our faith at all times. God has kept His word, the Messiah has come, the Saviour of sinners was not a mere man but very God. Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, here is the witness that is to be given, without modification, to poor Israel. We are not to meet them on their level, but to tell them of God's way of salvation. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God - here is God's answer to "knowledge", falsely so-called; here is God's answer to those who would separate the Person of His beloved Son. We know that Christ became Man, and that^e was God, but we dare not ever seek to refine away the statements of Scripture to explain the union of these two natures. We know that He was God-Man, yet as to His humanity He was the Son of man Who IS in heaven, and, as to His Godhead, we read of the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. So wondrously entwined are the Godhead and the Humanity of Him Who is God blessed for ever, and the Man Christ Jesus, - so wondrously are they entwined in that wondrous personality, that we dread almost to speak of the two natures of our beloved Lord in a way of our own, lest we would sever or confuse. Rather must we keep to the language of Scripture, for His glories, His nature, His salvation, His everything, are beyond mere natural understanding, and are more a call to our praise than a call to our defining.

Oh that we might not at any time be taken off our guard to become mere reasoners. God's definitions are always devotional, and this portion of truth as the apostle adds, was set forth, that believing there might be life, and the joy of it. The more that truth is grasped in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, the more will spiritual life be enjoyed to the praise and the glory of Him Who has given such a wondrous salvation.

oOoOo

THE UNVEILING OF MESSIANIC PROPHECY

Outline:-

1. God's eternal purpose, Rev. 13.8.
2. The initial promise, Gen. 3.13, (The Seed of the woman: a Man: Human MISunderstandings).
3. Typical prophecies in Genesis.
4. The Seed of Abraham, see Gal. 3.16.
5. The Lion of tribe of Judah, Gen. 49. 10.
6. Typical prophecies in Exodus and Leviticus.
7. Balaam's Utterance.
8. The Prophet of Deut. 18.15-19.
9. Messiah the Son of David, 1 Chron. 17.13.
10. Messiah in the Prophets.
11. Messiah in the Psalms.
12. Israel at the time when our Lord Jesus Christ came.

"The Unveiling of Messianic prophecy". I am sure we shall prefer the word 'unveiling' to 'development', for 'development' has been misused by rationalists to suggest that God has IMPROVED IN His word, and it has been misused by Romanists to suggest a PROGRESS since God's word, but the 'UNVEILING' suggests God knew all from eternity, that there was nothing hidden from Him, that He was pleased at different times and in different ways to make known His teaching, His arrangements, His purpose, the purpose of the ages, to make it known to His people. Since Christ is the Centre of Scripture, the Alpha and the Omega of Scripture, if one might so put it, it is a most important subject which is now engaging our attention. We must be carried back in thought to the times before He came into this world as the One born at Bethlehem, when the old saints of God were privileged to be looking for His first advent, as we for the second, and we seem to notice the way in which God dealt with them and to grasp more fully our exceeding great and precious privileges now that there has been a fuller unfolding of that Scripture which is "not of its own unfolding".

The eternal purpose that there should be a Messiah, a suffering Messiah in the fulness of time - that eternal purpose is implied by Rev. 13 where we read of the "names written in the Lamb's book of life slain from the foundation of the world". I know that the primary thought there is 'WRITTEN' from the founda-

tion of the world, but the association of the term "FROM THE FOUNDATION" with ^{the} word "SLAIN" is not accidental. Indeed the fact that it was the "LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE" shows that Christ was viewed as the Lamb from eternity, as the One Who in the fulness of time would fulfil His covenant pledge and come forth to redeem those with whom His delights were. It is a blessed thing to realize that before one page of Scripture was written, there was, if we may term it, the "SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH", the heavenly pattern according to which the earthly was made, and in that heavenly pattern everything was arranged. There are no accidents, and no happenings with God. From one eternity He beholds another eternity, and all time is spread open before the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do. It is blessed to realize that though we learn slowly, God never learns, for He is acquainted with everything, and all that happens in connection with our salvation is but the working out of that which He has determined. In accord with this, we read in 2 Tim. 1.10 that "God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ".

And now we pass to consider the INITIAL PROMISE. God in His wonderful wisdom created Adam and also built up Eve, and God gave a certain law to Adam who was viewed as the covenant head of man. But as Moses shows us (6.7 in the margin) Adam broke the covenant and rebelled against the Lord. It is a mournful story. Though he was in honour he did not seem even to pass the night, as Psalm 49 suggests. Quickly and without being deceived, but WILFULLY, he followed his wife into the putting aside of the Lord's command. Now mark the wonderful mercy of God. Sin brought ruin into the world as sin ever must; God cannot break His word to please any man, but "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound". The sin was made the background for a display of mercy. There is no promise of the coming Saviour in Genesis 1; there is no sacrifice there, there is no promise of the coming Saviour in Gen. 2; there is a type of Him in both chapters - Adam as having dominion, and Adam as one from whom his bride was built and taken, so the TYPE of Christ, but there is no PROPHECY of Him directly in those two chapters, nor is there sacrifice, but as soon as we reach Gen. 3 and the fall of man at once there comes in both prophecy of Messiah and also a

sacrifice. "WHERE SIN ABOUNDED GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND". You recollect how that God came into the garden in the cool of the day, and first of all He asked Adam where he was, and then another question that concerned his hiding away: then, when Adam blamed Eve God asked her a question, and she blamed the serpent, and God told the serpent of a curse upon it, and then, striking to relate, the first promise of the Messiah is made in the utterance to the serpent. Not that it was any Messiah for the serpent, but one against whom the serpent would fight. And we find in the climax book of Scripture the victory of the Lord Jesus over that old serpent the devil.

The first passage in Gen. 3,15 "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel". Notice the statement "I will put". The verb used for placing is the verb "SHEES" and you know how the first word of Genesis is "BERISHEES" which means "IN THE BEGINNING", but if you split up the letters into two words you get "BORO SHEES", "BORO", "He created": "SHEES", "He placed". So we seen: to get the key to the book of Genesis in these two terms. If we apply them first of all to the creation, and then the arrangement after Satan's fall, BORO SHEES or if we think first of the creation of man, and then when he sinned the placing of enmity between the two seeds and the severance that God made, BORO SHEES where man failed and where man marred creation and where Satan had marred creation, God placed. God has not failed. The very word 'covenant' as you know, implies in the Greek a 'placing'. It is God's arrangement. So here, "I will PLACE enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed". Here is a TWO-FOLD enmity - "BETWEEN THEE AND THE WOMAN" and "BETWEEN THY SEED AND HER SEED". Thus we have the thought of the Lord's people as well as the Lord, and of the devil's people as well as the devil, and the complete opposition is marked out, only there is the contrast. "THY SEED" is, in the first case indicative of the children of the devil, but "HER SEED" is primarily the Saviour. The seed of the woman is the Lord, yet not only of the Lord, but of His people joined with Him - those who are in the system of truth - the "Jerusalem which is above is free which is the mother of us all". Adam called his wife 'Eve' because she was the mother of all living. A failure as a type, but so was Adam, yet there is spiritual suggestiveness. When one realizes the

striking teaching in the fact that "THESE" is first opposed to "THE WOMAN" and "THY SEED" to "HER SEED" the added words become doubly emphatic, "IT", not "SHE", shall bruise thy head; not "IT shall bruise thy SEED'S head", but "IT shall bruise THY head". You see here the cross relationship, "Between thee and the woman" "Between thy seed and her seed" first brings out antagonism between THESE two, but next the opposition is "Between thee(the devil PERSONALLY)", not simply the children of the devil, and the Lord Jesus Christ PERSONALLY: not the glorification of Eve but of the "SEED" of the woman.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The serpent - | 2.The woman. |
| 3. The serpent's seed - | 4.The Seed of the woman. |

Then 1 and 4 are linked; that Eve, and humanity, as such and all creatures, even when saved, may be set aside, and Christ exalted.

The first promise thus emphasizes Christ in contrast to the HUMAN CREATION; it emphasizes Christ in opposition to Romanism, emphasizes Christ against Judaism, for here the first unfolding of the Divine revelation is the seed of the woman, not the seed of Adam but the seed of the woman. The name is important. Christ is not called the seed of the man till we come to Abraham, who is viewed as a spiritual person. There is here the allusion to the fact worked out more fully in the Psalms, that Messiah would have a mother, but not a father, that He would therefore have an earthly body, but He would not have a sinful taint, that He would be the One Who would take upon Him the form of a servant, yet He would not be in the federal headship of Adam. He would not be One Who was born in sin. There would be the physical relationship and the LIKENESS of sinful flesh, but only the LIKENESS of sinful flesh, because He was "THAT HOLY TRINE" as to His body, to quote Luke 1.

The expression "BRUISE THY HEAD" is important for the word 'head' also means 'poison', and the serpent is linked with poison, but surely has the Lord dealt with the serpent and the serpent's poison. Moreover, as to "bruise thy head" we know how the word "ROSH" is linked with the final opposition of evil to the Lord, and you know moreover, how in Psalm 110 we read that our beloved Lord, when He comes in judgment, will judge among the nations, and that "He will wound the HEAD over much country".

Habakkuk 3 also speaks of a victory over one who is called the "HEAD". That "head" may not only refer to the serpent personally, but to the "head" who is linked with the serpent, even Antichrist, the contrast with Christ Who is the Head of the body the church. The term "BRUISE" is elsewhere rendered to 'cover', The idea of "CONCEALING" is suggested as well as "crushing". So will the Lord remove those who are linked with Satan, with an eternal severance. "THOU SHALT BRUISE HIS HEEL" is another striking statement. In Psalm 24, 6 we read "Those that seek thy face, O Jacob". It plainly means the Lord who is here called by the name of 'JACOB'. Now the word 'Jacob' is the word "HEEL". There is here the thought of the humanity of the Lord Jesus. "Thou shalt bruise His HEEL", that where-with He touched earth. His Deity remained, but yet He was willing in His infinite love to be wounded as to His heel, and thus to be apparently hindered in that mighty work which could never be really hindered and which will not merely attain a wondrous or temporary victory over some evil spirits and over some evil men, but will lead to the climax fruition of the work, when all evil shall be DRIVEN AWAY from the Lord. The new heavens and the new earth will have righteousness and righteoussness only, and all that is not of God shall have an everlasting destruction from His presence, existing, but existing under an unalterable doom in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.

Here then we see that the first promise implies that a man would come. It does not say much more, but it shows that the Messiah would not merely be God coming down, but that God would take upon Him the form of a servant. Eve misunderstood the terms in thinking that is must be applied at once. In ch. 4.1 she said "I have gotten a man" evidently thinking that Cain was the Messiah, the possession that she desired. The term "from the Lord" is either "WITH the Lord" or it may be the term "THE LORD" in apposition. It may be she thought that the man was the Lord, that he was the God-man, that Cain, who was the OPPOSITE of Messiah, was first regarded by Eve as the Messiah. She thought that the terms would be fulfilled at once, but soon her hopes were brought to the ground, and the second child was named Abel - VANITY.

We pass now to further and typical prophecies in Genesis. We find them in this very third chapter, for "Unto Adam and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin and He clothed them." He

provided the sacrifice even as in chapter 22 "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering". The sinner should provide the sacrifice - that was part of the Mosaic code, but the marvel of grace is that God has provided, in His wondrous infinite wisdom and love. Here then we have a type of the Lord Jesus Christ provided as the One to cover His peoples' sins and to cover THEM. One skin seems to be referred to here by the word used. The plural is undesirable - rather should we render SKIN. One robe of righteousness applied by the finished work of the Lord Jesus will cover His bride linked with Himself.

Then again we have the type of the Lord Jesus in the sacrifices of Abel, to which God has respect. We pass on, and we find an anticipation of the Messiah in the building of the ark by Noah and in the ark itself. We find, moreover, not only the promise of the Messiah in connection with the ram that died for Isaac, but in Isaac himself - the one who was willing to die, the only son whom his father loved. All the sacrifices of Genesis which are ever linked with altars are suggestive of the life being the basis for the death. All the sacrifices are types and prophecies of the coming Lord. Joseph is, in his turn, a wondrous prophecy, but we cannot stay to consider all these, except to admire the wealth of Scripture, and thank God that we can read the types in the light of the Antitype. But now just before passing to the passage that deals with the promise to Abraham may we notice Gen. 9,26,27, "And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem and Canaan shall be his servant. God will enlarge Japheth and He shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant". Here we have a promise after the flood. Is there a thought that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem? Surely that does not exhaust the words. "GOD shall dwell in the tents of Shem". The word 'dwell' is the very word 'tabernacle', "The TENTS of Shem". Surely this reference to tents cannot be overlooked, and the word "Shem" means "the name" and in the family of Shem, God made His Name to dwell. So we have the first promise in Gen. 3 denoting that a man would come, the second after the flood localises him to be one of the three great divisions into which the human race was divided. The promise to Abraham localises still further to the Abrahamic division of the family of Shem. Wherever God gives a promise to Abraham it seems linked with the Seed as well as with himself. In Gen. 12 we have the statement "I will make of thee a great nation and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and

thou shalt be a blessing, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed", but always after there seems the stress upon the seed. In Gen. 13 "THY SEED". In Gen. 15 "THY SEED". In Gen. 17 "THY SEED". As Gal. 3 puts it "To Abraham and to his seed were the promises made". "It said, To seed, not of many (seeds) but of one, that is CHRIST". The word SEED is singular, and though it may have a collective fulness referring to the redeemed, the primary relation is to the personal Saviour. "To thee and thy seed" means not only that Abraham shall be personally raised from the dead, but that the Lord Jesus shall "possess the land" where He was more than a stranger, even treated as a rejected crucified Outcast in His wonderful love for sinners.

Then you recollect how in the family of Abraham there is a narrowing. God said that Ishmael should have certain blessings, but that the covenant should not be with Ishmael. Mark the words "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed and thou shalt call his name Isaac, and I will establish My covenant with him, even an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him, and as for Ishmael I have heard thee; behold, I have blessed him. I will make him a great nation, but My COVENANT will I establish with ISAAC". Ishmael is outside the covenant; there is a narrowing again. We pass along to the family of Isaac - Esau and Jacob. But Jacob the man whose name means the 'heel' is the one with whom the covenant is made - narrowing once more. In each place we see the thought that they are not all blessed who are apparently blessed. The two's of Scripture are very striking. Cain rejected, Abel accepted. Cain persisted in his own way. Abel brought to acknowledge the Lord's way. Ishmael rebellious, Isaac blessed. Esau self-confident, self-seeking; Jacob humbled to be receiving the glorious position of the Lord. Thus God marks out His perfect plan, and thus God was leading up everything to Messiah, for the book of Genesis is a preparation for Messiah. That is why there is a special stress on the different ones who are the ancestors of the Messiah. We may just glance back in this connection to that fifth chapter of Genesis, to the first cemetery. Why are the particulars there given so briefly, and one picked out to be specially mentioned and his line carried on? Because those were the ancestors of Noah. Noah was perfect in his generations. There was no admixture with demonism in his family line which was a simple human line back to Adam. In the other races there had been an admixture with demons as Gen. 6 shows

but there is the line of the covenant, and though it be a line of death, still it is the line of promise. And so Gen. 5 with its cemetery leads on to Christ in His coming glory. And all these passages that speak of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are leading on to Christ, and then we reach Jacob's family; though there is a great stress on Joseph as a type of Christ, yet Judah takes the pre-eminence, for we find in chapter 40 another localising promise. Verse 8 "JUDAH, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy foot shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp, from the prey, my son, thou art gone up. He stooped down, he crouched as a lion, as an old lion, who shall rouse him up? A sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering (or expectation) of the peoples be". Notice the exact words. They imply not only that Messiah would come from Judah, but also ~~WHERE~~ He would come. The tribal sceptre should not depart from Judah: the national sceptre had gone long before the Lord arrived, but the tribal sceptre remained, and the lawgivers were of Judah's tribe in the days of the flesh of the Lord Jesus, but when He died the sceptre departed from Judah. That evil generation had not passed away before the sceptre was removed, and the wisdom of the Lord was manifested in carrying out threats as well as promises. Notice too the expression "LION", for here we have in the first book the anticipation of the last book - "The Lion of the tribe of Judah". The gathering of the peoples suggest not only one nation but the nations whose expectation will be toward Him, and who will yet be gathered toward Him as we are by grace.

The term 'SHILOH' may have a relation to 'peace' or it may rather signify "He to whom it belongs" as Jeremiah describes the Lord,

We pass now to the typical prophecies in Exodus and Leviticus. Here again we get fuller descriptions of the coming Messiah. The Passover lamb and the Corn of wheat that fell into the ground, and then was raised and held aloof before the Lord - these together pictured the Coming One. And the tabernacle arrangements were suggestive of the One Who should arrive in the fulness of time; whereas types rather bring out the sacrificial work of the Lord, the direct prophecies that we have considered lay stress upon His earthly relationship, and the climax of His work in connection with the kingdom. Of course, the atoning work

is part of the preparation for the kingdom, it is the basis, for He died to purchase the kingdom, but the kingdom has never been forgotten. It is the prospect from Gen. 1 where we have the dominion given to Adam, though that dominion was lost, as we find a little later, and Psalm 8 heads that up in Christ. The TYPICAL prophecies then rather emphasize the atoning work of the Lord Jesus, and of Him in the relationship we have suggestions in the High Priest of Israel as well, but some of the types like that of the Day of atonement look very definitely on to the Kingdom, when there shall be the application of the work of Messiah, not only to the FAMILY but to the NATION. Ere we pass on to Balaam's utterance may I remind you that Ex. 3 the "I AM THAT I AM" has also been rendered "I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE", and may allude to the coming Messiah, a prophecy of Himself. It has been suggested that even so unexpected a Divine commandment as that of Ex. 23.19 was prophetic of the coming Messiah.

We pass now to Numbers, and notice what Balaam, that strange seer, that mad prophet, said concerning the coming One. In the 24th chapter we have these words "I shall see Him but not nigh, I shall behold Him but not now. There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of Seth, and Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth in the city". As the first prophecy refers to Christ in connection with the "HEEL", the word "JACOB", so here there is the stress on His wondrous humiliation, and also on His wondrous glory.

We pass now to consider Deut. 18. Here we have the prophecy of the Prophet like unto Moses. Moses never regarded himself as the answer to Israel's prayer at Mount Sinai. Though he stood between the Lord and them at that time, he did not fully take the mediator's place. He says clearly, "The Lord (not HATH, but) WILL raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of thy brethren like unto me, unto HIM will ye hearken, according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly". Thus Moses puts himself aside as less important than One coming after, a most important fact to bring before Israel. Here we have the prophetic character of Messiah. Hitherto we have rather considered His priestly and kingly character, but here is

the prophecy of His coming as the One to reveal God and to unveil the law.

We pass on beyond the books of the law, and we reach that little appendix to Judges - the book of Ruth. What is its object? It is leading on to Messiah. The object of the book of Ruth is to show the genealogy of David. David is emphasized because of the coming Messiah. All Scripture is pointing up to Christ. First of all we have the promise of the seed of the woman, then we get the narrowing to Shem, then to Abraham's family, then to Isaac's, then to Jacob's, then to Judah's, then to the family of David, out from Judah. God was thus UNVEILING the prophecy as time went by. As He prepared His own among the nation of Israel, He unfolded more teaching unto them that they might look more expectantly for the coming One. Messiah, the Son of David, is brought before us from the book of Ruth onward. As soon as we advance to Samuel, in the second chapter, there is the promise of the Anointed One Who would be for ever. Saul was but a temporary monarch. Benjamin was set on one side. David was exalted. We might well expect this. Other tribes came into prominence a while but always Judah came into further prominence. Let me take you back in thought, dear friends, over this. I think it will be helpful to us by God's grace. Joseph comes into prominence in Genesis as we have seen, but it is only a while. It is remarkable how Joseph falls out, You find in Gen. 49 the statement "From thence is the Shepherd the Stone of Israel" in our English version, which looks like Messiah, the son of Joseph, and this is a Jewish tradition, but I think it should be rendered "By reason of the Name of the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel", showing that all the blessings are linked with the Lord Jesus. Then we have Moses and Aaron blessed abundantly, and we have God's grace to the tribe of Levi, but there is not the setting aside of Judah even there, for Aaron marries into the family of Judah. Then we have Caleb and Joshua coming into prominence. Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim, and Ephraim temporarily is emphasized again, the tribe of Joseph. But when the book of Joshua terminates and we approach the book of Judges, it starts thus - After the death of Joshua, Israel asked the Lord, Who shall go up? and the Lord said, Judah shall go up first; and you know how we are told of Caleb going up. Thus everything is preparing though there are temporary settings on one side, everything is preparing for the family of David, the family in which the Messiah should be born. The promise is given in 1 Chron. 17.13 concerning the Son of David, "He shall

build Me a house, and I will establish His throne for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be My son", "And I will not take away My mercy from him as I took it from him that was before thee, and I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom for ever, and his throne shall be established for evermore". The parallel passage in Samuel refers to Solomon and to his failures, but here Solomon is blotted out, and a "GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE". Solomon, a type of the Prince of Peace, but not THE Prince of Peace. CHRIST is the Centre of this passage, and afterwards, ever since this, Israel have rightly connected Him with the family of their greatly privileged king.

When we come to consider Messiah in the Prophets, we have a subject that is beyond us in a few moments. Isaiah 7 speaks of the virgin bearing a son, the passage alluding, I believe, to the last clause of Prov. 30.19, strangely perverted by Jewish and other interpreters. In Isa. 9. 6 we have the promise of One Who was a Child and Who should be called the MIGHTY GOD. In Isa. 11 we see that He is both SPROUT from the stem of Jesse, and the ROOT, that is, DEITY AND HUMANITY are emphasized, and His relationship to the woman, the Seed of the woman, a virgin. We pass on in that same prophet Isaiah and we find the deity mentioned where we are told "From the time that it was there am I, and now the Lord and His Spirit hath sent Me". We have the prophetic ministry shown in Isa. 61. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings". We have the sacrificial ministry in Isa. 53, where there is the Lamb of God Whom it pleased God to bruise, when there was laid on Him the iniquity of us all. How blind Israel seem, not to behold here a picture of our Lord, but how we should praise God if our eyes are opened, not only to see Him there, but to rest on Him now.

Jeremiah continues the same message. In ch. 23 he speaks of One Who is the Branch, the Man, and Who is also "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS". There is a striking prophecy in Jer. 30.21 "Their noble and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near and he shall approach unto Me, for who is this that hath engaged his heart to approach unto Me, saith the Lord". "ENGAGED HIS HEART". The word 'engaged' is the word 'of a surety', and you remember how there was the surety of Judah, and here the suretyship of the great One of the tribe of Judah, a suretyship that affects His heart, who was surety in His

heart to approach unto God as the Representative of His beloved people. We pass on beyond Jeremiah and find it illustrated that all the prophets aforetold the coming of the Lord. In Micah 5 we have the Judge smitten with the rod, and yet He is called "THE PEACE" - the One Who comes out of Bethlehem in His humanity, but whose "goings forth" have been "from of old" from days of everlasting, in His Deity. We pass on to Zechariah and there we find the Man Who is the Branch, yet not only so, the Man Who is the Priest upon His throne, and more than that, the Shepherd Who is God's Friend, against Whom the sword of judgment should awake, and He should bear wrath for those who deserved wrath - wrath breaking on Him in Divine righteousness.

We find a striking prophecy of the Lord in the last book of the earlier Scriptures, Malachi, prophesying the coming One and His forerunner, but the time would fail us to think of all. There is Daniel with his seventy sevens, with the break at the 69th, where the Messiah is "cut off". There is Haggai in connection with the glory of the latter house being greater than the glory of the former, when in that place God gave peace, even the One Who was the Peace. There is the passage of Isaiah 40 which is parallel with that of Mal. 3 concerning the Forerunner. Christ is continually found in the Prophets. They all direct attention to Him. As 1 Peter 1 sums it up "Concerning which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ Which was in them did testify when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow". And when we approach Messiah in the Psalms there is the same wealth of teaching. He is the blessed Man of Psalm 1 Who kept the whole law. He is the Messiah and the Son of Psalm 2. He is the Man of Psalm 8. He is the One Who died and was raised again in Psalm 16: the Forsaken One, as it were, of Psalm 22, and the Shepherd of Psalm 23. The obedient One of Psalm 15, the Jacob of Psalm 24, is the One over Whom the waves of Psalm 42 break, and He really went through the language of Psalm 88. He is the glorious Messiah of Psalm 89, and He is the One Who will be glorified in the kingdom, as so many of the psalms show. Particularly we think of Psalm 72. He is the rejected One of Psalm 69 and Psalm 109 - two psalms so easily remembered by their numbers. He is the One against Whom Judas rebelled, as Psalm 41 shows, and He is the Undefined One

Who fully kept the law, and with His whole heart sought the Father as Psalm 119 reveals to us. Christ is the CENTRE of the book of Psalms. Christ is the Centre of all Scripture. The more we know of Him the more we see Him from cover to cover of the precious Scriptures which are by grace ours.

Finally, when the Lord Jesus came, what was the condition of Israel? Were they looking for the Messiah? SOME of them, but only some, for Anna spoke to those who looked for redemption in Israel. We find in Luke 3.15 that when John was exercising his ministry, that all the people were in expectation and mused who John was. We recollect too the deputation that waited on John, as we are told in the first chapter of the fourth Gospel. They brought their question "Who art thou?" He confessed "I am not the Christ". They said to him, "Art thou Elias?" He said "I am not"; "Art thou that prophet?" "No"; "Who art thou?" "I am a voice"; "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ?" The Messiah was expected.

You know how that the answer of the leading men of Israel in Matt. 2 to Herod shows that they had some understanding of Messianic prophecy. He demanded of them where Christ should be born, and they said "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is written by the prophet..." Viewing all these things, we realize how sad was the rejection of the Lord Jesus, yet that sad rejection was only overruled by the grace that has reached to us outcast Gentiles. That sad rejection but made a foil for the fuller display of the wondrousness of that rich love. That sad rejection fulfilling the Scripture showed us the rooted hatred of the human heart, and the rooted iniquity, and emphasized that precious teaching on which I trust many of us rest - "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". If, by grace, our eyes have been opened to behold this precious Messiah in the earlier Scriptures and the fulfilment in the later, if He is the Alpha and the Omega of Scripture, how important it is that He should be the Alpha and Omega of our lives! - That we, having believed into Christ, should do all in the Name of Christ, until we shall be for ever with Him in the glory to which He invites His people.

oOoOo

CHRIST'S RELATION TO THE LAW

There are, beloved friends, many subjects in Scripture as to which a large number of God's dear people are of one mind, and of one mouth. There are other subjects as to which they are, in measure, of one mind, but when they express themselves they begin to misunderstand one another. There are some topics as to which they are largely of one mouth but they mean different things by the same words; and there are yet others as to which they are neither of one mind nor of one mouth; and all these differences should humble us before God, that with confession of sin, and application of the blood of Christ, with confidence in God and with realization of the work of His Holy Spirit, we may experience spiritual progress toward the unity for which our adorable Lord prayed. I suppose that when we approach the topic of Christ's relation to law we are on ground which has often been made a centre of combat rather than a basis of thanksgiving, and this is sadly resultful. As soon as any topic becomes a centre for combat, some dear children of God are afraid to venture near it. If the cry of heresy is raised some have a curiosity which draws them thither without spiritual-mindedness, and others have a dread lest they should be branded with the hateful name and hateful description of 'heretic'. And so the majority are afraid to venture into certain parts of God's truth, but no part of God's truth is really dangerous ground, though we all have to be careful lest we be misled to leave God's truth when we are professedly studying that Truth. That the Lord Jesus Christ Who was OVER ALL God blessed for ever became a real Man, and that as such He had a real body which was prepared for Him, and that He walked this earth as One Who hungered, Who was wearied, and Who was obedient throughout, and doing ever those things which pleased the Father, of Whom the Father said more than once "I am well pleased"; that this is so we MUST acknowledge. Not to recognize the wondrous humanity of the Lord Jesus would be a serious attack on the unveiling of Scripture. He Who was over all God Blessed for ever came in the flesh. "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us" but He was only in the likeness of SINFUL flesh. There was no taint of evil. There was no relationship to Adam's original sin. There was no response to the temptations of the wicked one. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me". Our glorious Lord when He became Man, became under the law. This is the testimony of Scripture. He Who was above law, Who was infinite

in every possible way was pleased to become UNDER THE LAW. It is a denial of Scripture to deny this. We cannot and would not go away from the Divine declaration, nor can we omit the added words "Made under the law to REDEEM THEM THAT WERE UNDER THE LAW that we might receive the adoption of sons"(Gal. 4.4,5). If He had not been under the law, could He have finished the work which was marked out in the prophetic Scriptures as His work? Is not redemption connected with the fact that God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law? In redemption we rejoice; and in all the Divinely appointed parts of the work of the Lord Jesus we find a resting place for spiritual faith. I have referred to the testimony of Phil. 2 that He was obedient unto death. Not only IN death but unto death. No disobedience marred that spotless life of the tested Lamb of God. He was without blemish and without spot. He fully kept the will of the Father, as Ps. 40 quoted in Heb. 10 has declared. Indeed in the wondrous testimony which He gave in Matt. 5 He said "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fill"(v.17). I would desire, beloved friends, to emphasize that the prophets and the psalms, together with the law, reveal that Christ would fully meet the Divine requirements. Do you tell me that it is but a general statement in the law, that it is only a general principle where we read, "Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man do he shall live in them"? Do you tell me that passage only brings before us a principle? The words may look so in our English version, but there is no 'if', and there is no indefiniteness of expression "A man" in the original. The Scripture reads "Which THE MAN WILL do and live in them". I venture to urge a definite stress on this prophecy of Lev. 18,5(cf. Ezek. 20.11). It is a prophecy OF CHRIST as definitely as those which bring Him before us as the Shepherd smitten for His people, and as the righteous One Who, having finished His life, made naked His soul for the death. Christ is before us in Lev. 18 as definitely as in Deut. 8,3 where we read "THE Man shall not live upon bread alone, but upon every thing that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" - the Man Christ Jesus. Twice over in Deut. 8,3 is there the stress upon "THE Man" as distinct from all other men. All other men did NOT live upon the words of God, but He did. This was His characteristic in the days of His flesh.

I said the prophets gave their parallel testimony. In

Isa. 42. 21 we read "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness sake, He will magnify the law and make a robe"(as we may render it). I recognize the expression "Make it honourable" as a possible rendering, but "make a robe" is included, and Isa. 53.11 is perverted by those who render "That He will bring the many to righteousness" - rather is it "He shall cause a righteousness for many". Our English Version adds "FOR He shall bear their iniquities", and not a few think this states that He causes the righteousness BECAUSE He bears, but there is no 'for' in the original. "He shall cause a righteousness, AND He shall bear" - cause it in His life, and bear their iniquities in His death.

The Psalms give the same testimony. Who is the wondrous INDIVIDUAL of Whom they speak? We have no doubt in Psalm 2. We have no doubt in Psalm 110. But what are we to say respecting Psalm 15? "Lord, Who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? HE THAT WALKETH UPRIGHTLY and worketh righteousness and speaketh the truth in His heart". The answer is not in the plural. Yet the answer is not "There is no man who will thus dwell". The answer is definite that there is one Person, even the One of Whom Psalm 24 says, "He That hath clean hands and a pure heart...He shall receive the blessing from the Lord and righteousness, from the God of His salvation". Cf. Ps. 22.21. Moreover the Father identified Himself with the salvation which His beloved Son wrought. What is the blessing from the Lord? "There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore". The Man Who hath done these things shall LIVE. "I am He that liveth and became dead, and behold I am alive!" "He was delivered because of our offences, and raised again BECAUSE OF our righteousness". We have seen the words "worketh righteousness", they call to mind Isa. 64.5. "Thou meetest Him That rejoiceth and worketh righteousness". Who is This? It is the One of Whom Psalm 45 tells us "He loved righteousness", and "is anointed with the oil of gladness above those who share with Him". There is more about Christ in the earlier Scriptures than we are apt to realize. I have just given you passages from the three sections to which our beloved Lord alludes. for in Luke 24 we read He said, "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, AND IN the prophets, AND IN the Psalms concerning Me. This remains till today the division of the Hebrew Scriptures in any Hebrew Bible. The whole of the Hebrew Scripture is full

of Christ, and to fulfil prophecy we must behold Him in the Gospels as the One under the law.

We approach next those precious narratives of some of His earthly life. What is His relationship to law at the beginning? He is marked out as the Holy One, and yet under the law. Eight days are accomplished, He is brought manifestly into the covenant of circumcision. His Name is called Jesus. Sacrifices are offered, but though in the language of Luke 2 there is a reference to purification, it is NOT HIS purification. He is distinctly said to be HOLY to the Lord, but the sacrifice is that which is marked out in the law of the Lord. Thus we have in His early life a stress upon this, and when He was a child of 12 years there was the journey to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. We approach the 30th year, and the time when He was manifested to Israel, or would have been manifested had not Israel gone away: - He was manifested to John who saw and bare record. John realized that Christ was then the Lamb of God, and as such had a perfect obedience. The whole principle of the sacrifices would bring out this thought. "Unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin and He clothed them". The skin was perfect, on the animal first, THEN was there death, AFTERWARDS the skin was covering the sinful flesh of Adam and Eve. Righteousness for the unrighteous. Obedience pictured by the animal skins made available by death; but the Antitype excels the type. We do not receive a mere transfer of the obedience of our Lord, but we become (and remain on resurrection ground) the righteousness of God in HIM (2 Cor. 5, 21). He, as the Obedient One, unlike the animals, MUST receive "life". He must be raised. This is the award, and if we are to have His obedience it cannot be by a bare transfer, but it must involve union with Him. There are some dear children of God who have been occupied disproportionately with the earthly obedience of the Lord Jesus. Others have been occupied disproportionately with living union on resurrection ground, and they have come to hard words with one another, whereas they both have a part of truth, and need grace to rejoice because of the sacrifice which links the two parts of truth in the whole of that life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus with its fullness of meaning to His blood-bought people.

But as I said, we approach in meditation that wondrous time when He was manifested. We listen, moreover, to His words

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fill". Does He say anything which would imply that He broke the law? Or does He take the appointed position under the law? Is He not the PERFECT "Servant" in accord with Isaiah's prophecy, and Phil. 2? We recollect His attention to the arrangements of Iszrael. Of the temple He said, "My Father's house". If He went to Nazareth, as His custom was He went into the synagogue. He, the true Israel of Isa. 49, the true Jacob of Ps. 24, fulfilled all the Divine arrangements. In one synagogue is a man with a withered hand, and the Lord says to those who are watching, "Is it LAWFUL to do good on the sabbath, or to do evil, to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace". He never suggests that He will break the sabbath. What He declares to be permissible and approved is to DO GOOD on the sabbath. He shows that THEY are the sabbath breakers. He does not take the position of breaking the sabbath, or of saying the sabbath is set aside during His life. He speaks with respect to the law of Moses definitely even in Matt. 23. "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do". He quickly adds, "Do not ye after their works", and refers to THEIR heavy burdens and THEIR traditions. But the law of Moses He acknowledges, nor does He ever speak against it.

We come to the last Passover. He speaks wondrously at that last supper just before the first supper; rather shall I say that the first supper extracted from the last supper, and to it He gave a new meaning and appointed in His limiting simplicity for those who were delivered from the yoke of the Jewish ceremonialism. But on this occasion with respect to that last Passover (until another dispensation) hear HOW He speaks. The Divine narrative has told us that the feast of unleavened bread drew near, and "Then came the day of unleavened bread when the Passover must be killed, and HE sent Peter and John saying, "GO and prepare us the Passover that we may eat. And they said unto Him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?" Arrangements are next made as to how they shall find out the appointed place. They are to say to the master of the house, "The Teacher saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber where I shall eat the passover with My disciples. And he shall show you a large upper room furnished, there make ready". They made ready the passover, and when the right hour was come, He sat down, and He said, "With desire I

have desired to eat this Passover with you". During the time together He takes an earlier Passover cup, before the third cup of blessing and, giving thanks He says, "Take this and divide it among yourselves, for I say unto you, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come". Now all this is deeply suggestive. The law of Moses NEVER said one must drink the fruit of the vine; it said there must be the Passover lamb, and Christ emphasized that He WOULD eat the Passover lamb. The fruit of the vine has a wonderful message. He was about to appoint this to His disciples, for when we reach the third cup, He gives THAT to His disciples, with a new meaning, and says, "THIS DO with a view to My remembrance". But even as to that which appears to have been the second cup He would not partake for a perfect reason. If it had been part of the law of Moses it is evident from the context He would have partaken. Thus was He obedient throughout His wondrous life.

As we approach His death. In that wondrous death He fulfils the Scriptures, even saying "I thirst", and "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And why is He hanged upon that tree? Gal. 3 gives the answer. He is made a curse to fulfil Deut. 21. But why a curse? "Christ hath redeemed us FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW". Do you say we are delivered entirely apart from law? I answer, Yes, so far as WE are concerned. But unless Christ had met EVERY demand of the law, we could not receive every blessing of grace. There is no judicial law to us, and no judgment against us. But there was law to Him, and there WAS judgment against Him. In His life He was under the law, in His death He met the curse of the law. The apostle shows in the epistles that OUR salvation is entirely apart from law, and the righteousness to us is without the works of the law. Undoubtedly! WHO gives it to us? God, the Sovereign Ruler gives to us that righteousness in absolute grace. In absolute mercy we are linked with His beloved Son. But to the Lord Jesus Christ there was strict justice, and His death, becoming a curse, under the curse of the law, is a witness that we establish the law by faith. Our faith resting upon HIM declares that law has been FULLY satisfied in all its positive and negative demands. It is deeply important to realize this.

I have suggested that the sacrifices show this same aspect. The value of a sacrifice was this, that it could bear

wrath because "righteous". The animals could only do this TYPICALLY, but they must do so, though they give only a skin to cover the BODY. The sacrifice COULD NOT be vicarious, unless it had "merit", or a picture thereof. Without a perfect skin there was no acceptance. The value of the true Sacrifice was this, that He could bear wrath for others, and give a perfect righteousness. The animal sacrifice, according to Hebrews, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh. OUR flesh is NOT purified. The body is dead because of sin. When Israel stand before God as men in the flesh in the millennial kingdom they will have animal sacrifices AS WELL for the purifying of the flesh. We do not worship in the flesh, but worship God in the spirit. Hence we have no animal sacrifices. The animal can only give a cover to the flesh, but our beloved Lord has borne wrath which an animal could not feel, and He has given a covering to the SOUL. He was able to die for us because He had an obedience to give us. How could the sacrifice be accepted unless there was an obedience to be given to those for whom the sacrifice died? What is the law's demand? Is it simply, Do this one action? Nay, it is a positive command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart". The blotting out of sin MUST BE the imputation of righteousness. Have you ever thought of this? If the command were simply, "Thou shalt not steal", or a negative command like human laws are, this would not apply; but if you blot out the sin against a POSITIVE law, "Thou shalt do this", there must be the DEPUTATION of a positive righteousness, else there is still a falling short, and the sin of falling short is still there. Do you not see, beloved friends, that if one could NEARLY fulfil that law there would be sin? Now there is to be the blotting out of the whole sin, then there must be the blotting out of every falling short from an absolute obedience. There must be the imputation of a POSITIVE obedience, and there IS, in Christ Jesus, on resurrection ground. Hence He must have fulfilled the WHOLE work. The apostle shows this in Romans 4. Quoting from Psalm 32, where we have, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity". He says, "To whom the Lord imputes righteousness". Not to impute iniquity is to impute righteousness, and that is the glory of the gospel.

Let us hear the testimony of men concerning the Lord Jesus. Nicodemus comes to Him and recognizes Him as a Teacher come from God. Do you think if the Lord Jesus was marked out as the law-breaker, as One who broke the sabbath, that Nicodemus

would have come thus? Surely not. Our beloved Lord could appeal to men, and say "Which of you convinceth Me of sin"? and they could not answer.

But now we approach another deeply important part of our subject. Objections have been made, objections were made by some cavillers in the olden times. (I do not mean that all who make them NOW are cavillers), objections that our blessed Lord broke the law. This has been brought forward as an argument for suggesting, for example, that He may have used leavened bread at the Lord's Supper. Thus you can see the subtlety of this error and its wide results, hindering believers' true perception of His work. To me this is a matter of the gravest importance. For if HE broke the law, HIS truthfulness is broken. If HE broke the law, His obedience is broken. If HE broke the law, our salvation is broken, for an untruthful Saviour could not save. HIS character is involved, and our glory with Him is involved as well. It is not a mere subject for speculation, but for earnest and prayerful consideration. I know it is possible to speak of Him in this connection in a way that seems to exalt Him. It may be said, Christ was over all God blessed for ever. He was Lord of the sabbath and could do as He pleased. Granted He had a right to do what He pleased. God limits Himself as One Who CANNOT lie. The Lord Jesus had power intrinsically to do whatever He pleased, but would He break the prophecies? Would He destroy the law which He came to fulfil? Would He deny Himself? It is written that God CANNOT deny Himself. This APPARENT exalting of the Lord Jesus as able to do anything is actually derogatory to His character. He is NOT able to dishonour His own Name. He is NOT ABLE TO BREAK His own truthfulness. He is NOT able to alter His own purpose of eternal love to those whom He came into the world to save, and WOULD save at all cost. The objections, that Christ broke the law, made in the days of His flesh, were very unsatisfactory. In John 5 a man is healed on the sabbath, and we read that "the man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus Who had made him whole, and therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus and sought to slay Him because He had done these things on the sabbath. But Jesus answered them 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work' Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him because He had not only broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God". Do we accept the charge of the Jews? Then we accept

that He MADE Himself equal with God. We know He was equal with God, and made Himself of no reputation. It is dangerous to argue from this passage. When the Lord Jesus refers to miracles on the sabbath He does not apologise for them, or suggest that His accomplishment of them is breaking the law. We have seen the testimony of Mark 3. May I remind you of Luke 13. The ruler of the synagogue objects to a miracle of healing. Christ answers "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? and OUGHT NOT this woman being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day"? Christ declares it is a RIGHTFUL thing to do. Again, in Luke 14, a certain man had the dropsy. "Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?(Is it permissible) And they held their peace. And He took and healed him, and let him go, and answered them saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? And they could not answer Him again to these things". In John 7 Christ refers to circumcision, and says that this took place on the sabbath, and He argues in this connection of the Divine arrangement, adding these words, If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision that the law of Moses SHOULD NOT BE BROKEN, are ye angry at Me because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment". To say that Christ broke the sabbath is to judge according to the appearance. In Matt. 12 where He speaks of David going into the house of God and eating the shewbread, He does not add that David was blameless. The argument is this, David broke a Divine appointment in an emergency, and you are not so concerned about that as you are when I break your appointment. When Christ speaks of the priests in the temple profaning or making ordinary, the sabbath, He adds, "They are blameless". Why? Because they had Divine authority for extra sacrifices on the sabbath. Thus Christ shows how the Jews misunderstood the sabbath law, and that He was perfectly right to heal, and His attitude was not breaking the Divine appointment. How about John 7? There we find that Christ goes up to the feast of tabernacles, but first of all He says "My time is not yet". Ah, but He goes up in the midst fulfilling the word "Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before Me".

But you say, We have not a RECORD that He kept Pentecost. Silence is not a denial. We are told as to His keeping of the Passover because of its typical fulfilment, His holding aloof from primary emphasis on Tabernacles was with SPIRITUAL MEANING ("Tabernacles" picturing "That Day"), and the silence as to Pentecost till we reach Acts 2 is equally suggestive. Again let it be emphasized, silence is not denial. In John 8 a woman is brought before the Lord Jesus, and after convicting those who brought her, He says Neither do I condemn thee. Does this mean He broke the law? The Pharisees had said, Moses commanded such to be stoned. Did He go against Moses? Let another Scripture answer, "Master, speak unto my brother that he divide the inheritance with me. Man Who made Me a Judge or a Divider over you?" Our adorable Lord came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and He came not to judge but to bring a message of mercy, and to die for guilty sinners. "I came not to judge the world" is His consistent testimony. He did not take the position of carrying out the law and its sentence. Hence His words "Neither DO I CONDEMN thee" were not an attack on the law, but appropriate from His obedience standpoint. In John 9 He was accused of breaking the law. He healed a man who was blind, and those who were so full of casuistry said "This Man is not of God" Why? "Because He doth not keep the sabbath". Others said, How can a Man That is a sinner do such signs? and there was a division among them". But we have seen it was right for Christ to heal, and the charge breaks down.

In Matt. 19 our beloved Lord alludes to part of the law, and says, "Moses gave it you for the hardness of your heart, but from the beginning it was not so". But He does not attack the law. He explains, yet recognizes its temporary arrangement, and He could well do this, for by His DEATH He was to bring in a new dispensation. The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth. Rom. 7 is clear. Death separated. There is the new dispensation for those linked with Christ on resurrection ground. They are not under the law. We are no longer to keep sabbaths, says Col. 2, and Christ often referred to the work which He would accomplish which would remove the Mosaic law, so that believers are no longer under it, but under grace and in a law to Christ Himself. But this does not mean He broke the arrangement while preparing for our acceptability in Him. That He might be able to die and bring us to a new position HE KEPT THE LAW. He ful-

filled the first covenant that we might glorify God in the new covenant. The testimony in Matt. 5 - 7 is clear. "It was said to them of old time...But I say unto you", - a clear witness. The Lord never weakens the law, He only shows a 'NARROWER' binding for those who would follow Him. He acknowledges the rights of LAW to punish, but that His people are not to be the executors of law. Hence He would never take a position in the politics or government of the country. If He had, He would have approved of carrying out the Mosaic law, which could not then be carried out because the Romans had authority. But He took the position of the Humble and Lowly One, meek and lowly in heart. Further, He says, The Law and the Prophets were till John, but mark the added words in Luke 16, Does He set aside the law and mean "I am not keeping it"? Nay, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fall". Then He refers to the husband and wife, and shows there cannot be a putting away, but must be a death. This is, I would suggest, the very passage to which Paul alludes in Romans 7. You cannot become free from law except by death, There is no other way of getting free from law, and thus our beloved Lord magnified law throughout.

May I add further that we have the vindication and manifestation of His keeping the law in His resurrection. "The Man Who hath done SHALL LIVE". He is raised up, He lives, as the One Who hath DONE, as the One Who has fulfilled, and that glorious resurrection of our beloved Lord is the PROOF that He has met every demand of law. Beloved friends, again I bring before you the solemn thought that Christ's position under law in life, and meeting the curse of law in death, is deeply important, for if He had been careless about the Divine arrangements. He would not have been the Truthful and Accepted Saviour. If, to take the one point which suggested this subject, He had altered the bread in Matt. 26, and used leavened bread, which He gave to His disciples, we should have no confidence in the other parts of His teaching. We should be in confusion as to that finished work. But thanks be unto God there is no suggestion that He altered it, and we can rest on His truthfulness, and on His wondrous atonement for His people. Thus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we realize that in Him, linked with Him, we shall NOT come under law's penalty, being now in a fresh relationship, for we are not under law, but UNDER GRACE, and in this sphere we would ever listen to His words,

"If ye love Me keep My commandments!"

oOoOo

THE PRAYERS OF CHRIST

We come now to consider the PRESENT prayers of our beloved Lord. HE IS praying for us. The 'New Testament' brings before us our beloved Lord's everyday intercession in a very manifest way. Shall we think first, however, of the way in which He made intercession for the transgressors when dying. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". Undoubtedly, His prayers were intercessory for us before we were saved, but they have not ceased since. Do you think John 17 gives a little inside picture of the intercession of the Lord, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory" Do you not think that John 17 is being illustrated in the glory? Does it not seem probable that the Lord gives us anticipations of various important things, for example, in John 17 an anticipation of that which followed resurrection, and in Rev. 2 and 3 an anticipation of the Judgment Seat of Christ, to show us the kind of judgment, the kind of testing, the kind of searching that will mark That Day when we shall stand before Him Whom our soul loveth. Christ is now interceding for all His people. Not a single one is forgotten, He has gone into heaven itself, there(as Heb. 9 words it) to appear in the presence of God for us. Shall we look at the passage? Heb. 9.24 - "For not into a Most Holy Place made with hands did Christ enter in, types(or a type, of the type) of the true, but into heaven itself, now to have been manifested to the face of God on our behalf". That presupposes His intercession. There are other passages which clearly pre-suppose it. "These things write I unto you" says 1 John 2, "that ye sin not, and if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous". You will notice the beautiful accuracy of the Scripture wording, "These things write I unto you, that ye may not have sinned", and if any one have sinned"(socrists). It is not if anyone keeps on sinning, we have an Advocate. The Lord's people are not to be marked by keeping on sinning. But, what is the Advocate? He represents us in the presence of God. He pleads for us, we have an Advocate toward the Father, While we talk of our Lord, He remembers and prays for us. You remember how Peter

said, "I am ready to do this and that", with energy (apparently), with zeal (apparently), and the Lord says, "I HAVE PRAYED". Why? I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not. Peter thought he would do everything for his Lord, but the Lord was doing everything for Peter, dying for him and praying for him, and thus Peter's pride was shut out. "I have prayed for thee" - is not this our beloved Lord's attitude still? The effect of His intercession is very blessed because through that our faith shall not fail. We little realize how much we depend on His intercession. There is no waste of advocacy, it is a real need. Christ's risen life is "identified" (as I might so put it) with His intercession. You know how in Rom. 5 we read, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life". By His earthly life? No. By His resurrection life? Yes. How? He is able, says Heb. 7 He is able to keep on saving unto the complete goal those that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Will you just turn to that passage in Heb. 7, it needs such heart emphasis. Verse 25 "Whence also to keep on saving into the complete goal He is able the ones coming through Him to God, always living with a view to making intercession over them". Always living with a view to this. Here is the object in front. He lives for us, even as He died for us. Living with a view to keeping on making intercession. We tire of our prayers, but He never tires of His prayers for us, to keep on making intercession for us. Christ is ascended with this object in front, and He will never falter.

Again we have the intercession of Christ brought out in Rom. 8. At the end of the chapter we have brought before us our Triune God on our behalf. "What" says verse 31, "shall we say to these things? if God be for us, who against us? He Who spared not His own Son but over us all gave Him aside, how shall He not even together with Him all things give in grace to us? Who shall call in question against elect ones of God? God the Justifier? Who is the condemner? Christ the One That died? But rather having been raised, Who is also on the right hand of God, Who also keeps on making intercession for us. Who shall separate from the love of Christ?" You see the stress. He is on the right hand of God with this object - to keep on making intercession. Who shall separate us from that love that keeps on making intercession? Who, or what, shall separate us from love which did not shrink from an act that

involved judgment, that involved agony, love that many waters could not quench, but love that is equally victorious amid the other test - continuance. There was a crisis of love when He died for us, there is a continual love when He lives for us, the twofold test finds this love perfect. He ever liveth with the object of keeping on making intercession. He is on the right hand of God that He may do this, and every Joshua may rejoice in filthy rags removed because of the application of atonement and the prevailing intercession of Him Who when on earth said "Father, I WILL". There are no uncertainties in the prayers of Christ in John 17. We find no wavering. He knows His people, He pleads for them. He desires their preservation now, and their presentation then, and speaks of both as absolutely unalterable. "Those that Thou gavest Me" and I have lost nothing, He said, for He spake in that connection. There are no 'ifs' with Christ's prayers, He is heard always, ever living to make intercession for His own blood-bought people. This is His present Priestly work. He does not need to make another sacrifice, it has been finished; but there are two works going on - prayer for us, and the work of the Spirit of God in us. Both shall be continued. Do we not read "He Who hath begun a good work in you shall perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ"? God is able to present us faultless before His own glorious throne. Our beloved Lord will present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or ANY SUCH THING. There are many SUCH THINGS now, but there shall not be any such thing then. It is well that our hearts should realize and rejoice in His intercession. A fact, it is also an encouragement, for if we believe in an interceding Christ with any true idea of what that means, we must believe in the final preservation of all the redeemed. If we believe in an Interceding Christ, we must feel a wonderful refreshing thought as to the power of true prayer. If He intercedes, shall not we pray? Christ is praying for us, let us draw near and pray in His Name.

You recollect in the book of Revelation, we have brought before us a view of the glory. In Rev. 8.2 we read And I saw the seven angels who in sight of God had taken a stand, and there were given to them seven trumpets and another angel came and stood on the altar of incense having a golden censer of frankincense, and there was given to him many kinds, or parts, of incense in order that he should give to the prayers of the saints, all on the gold-

en altar in sight of the throne, and there went up the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the angel in sight of God". Do we not think of the incense of that acceptable prayer, the saints' petitions mingled with it, or rather, just as in the tabernacle the incense was altogether emphasized, so here we find Christ's prayer emphasized as that which encircles and lifts up as well as goes up with the prayers of the saints. Incense did not drop down, and Christ's prayers do not fall to the ground. Our prayers are wrapped up in His and they are presented in His Name. Do we ask for growth in grace? He intercedes. Do we ask for spiritual reviving? He intercedes for the same on our behalf. Do we pray to be kept from wandering? He is not unmindful of our prayer, but is it on our behalf and in our name? Yea, on our behalf, but more than in our name, in HIS Name for us. Oh, how blessed to realize that our beloved Lord ever lives to make intercession, and that all our prayers are entwined with His (if they are right) and thus we may anticipate they will be answered, because He is never unanswered.

In this connection we find a stress upon the present position of our beloved Lord. To the one that overcomes, He says in Rev. 3, "I will give to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am sat down with My Father in His throne". Christ is sitting on the Father's throne. Oh how wonderfully near for intercession! The accuser may accuse day and night, but Christ sits on the throne. He does not stand there as a weak suppliant, but He sits there as One acknowledged in the glory. Thus there is a security and a certainty with regard to His prayers. I suppose there is nothing which will more cheer a tried believer than the realization that Christ is praying for him. We know the fact of His death, we know our sins are covered, blotted out and removed, but we have a terrible warfare, and though it is our privilege to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony, yet the warfare is fierce and our faith has many a strain, though it can never be broken. But amid it all we can look up and realize that at this very moment Christ is praying for us, that when troubles surround which seem ready to engulf us and when the power of the enemy seems to crowd in upon us through his myriads of demons, then it is that our hearts may rest upon an interceding Lord,

The words of Isc. 53 that we saw first may come before us

once more, "He was numbered with the transgressors and He bare the sin of many, and MADE A MEETING PLACE for the transgressors. The word "made intercession" is "made a meeting place". Believers were, by nature, transgressors. Christ's wonderful work in bearing their sins and making intercession for them has indeed brought about a meeting place, but now it is sadly true, if they wander at all, though they are not transgressors by character their actions bring them in measure into the position into which they were before they were saved. The more a believer wanders, the more he becomes like an unsaved one, and consequently he becomes like a transgressor, but the Lord makes a meeting-place. His wonderful intercession is that His dear people may be brought to the consciousness of nearness. A meeting-place, a fellowship. Truly He, the Daysman in His mediatorial work on Calvary, is still the Meeting Place. God said with regard to the Mercy Seat, There will I meet with you. The Mercy Seat betokens Christ risen and thus suggests Christ's interceding, and were it not for this intercession of our beloved Lord, oh how dark and distant our hope would oft-times become, but He lives to intercede and to bring us thereby into the enjoyment of that fellowship which is ours by blood-bought right, though we sometimes lose its enjoyment because of 'other' things(1 John 1.7).

oOoOo

LUKE 3. 21-22.

The Lord Jesus Christ appears to have come after, or rather at the end, of the baptism of many - not while the people were being baptized, but when they had been baptized. What was the reason? Baptism is not a goal, but a beginner. Ought they not to have remained and thus been ready to be led further? Apparently many of them had left John, not only with physical leaving, but failing to realize what baptism set forth. Hence, though John saw the wondrous view of Christ, few others were present, if any other. HE was to be manifested to Israel, but we are not told that crowds of Israel saw Him baptized. Somewhat interestingly in this connection we notice how the most remarkable baptism - that of the Lord Jesus which has been the most remarkable witness - was not particularly a public event at first. This has an important bearing. The great point for children of God is to honour their Lord's

will. Scripture does NOT now lay great stress on the baptisER as one appointed for some special 'office', nor the PLACE of the baptism, nor on the number who witness the baptism, but upon the one who is baptized being in a right condition, and on the baptism being in accord with the mind of God.

The Lord Jesus was baptized to set forth obedience, and was praying. The tense is changed. Baptism, an act; praying, a continuance. The words "Being baptized" in English would look like a similar tense, but it is rather "Having been baptized and keeping on praying". "The heavens were opened", and the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, descended - this was a fact. The WAY in which the Spirit of God came is remarkable. The coming in bodily form as a dove would remind us of the sacrificial aspect of the dove, a symbol of purity; would indicate, furthermore, the gentleness of the Lord Jesus, and still further would provide a contrast with God's gift from heaven to Elijah through the ravens. You will recollect that the Lord sent through the ravens to Elijah in the wilderness. The Spirit of God came as a dove upon Christ, Who was then "driven into the wilderness", where there was no food. The contrast is very remarkable. Again, there is another contrast, - Upon the disciples the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a flame. Nothing to burn up in Christ, much to burn up in them. Yet again, baptism in water was with a view to baptism in the Spirit. This was pictured. But Christ in His baptism also pictured His going under THE WATERS OF WRATH, and therefore as His going under the waters of wrath was the stepping stone to His sending of the Holy Spirit, as the end of the gospels and the beginning of Acts would show, here we have a beautiful picture of this. He was baptized under typical water. The Spirit of God descended to show that when He went under wrath, i.e. under the waters of judgment, His work would be complete, and the Spirit of God would descend upon those who rose to newness of life in Him, and who would thus become faithful servants.

There is another parallel with this passage in Matt. 17. We have on the mount of transfiguration the voice from heaven, even as here the words from heaven. The Lord Jesus went up into a high mountain and was there transfigured; Moses and Elijah were talking to Him, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and, behold a voice out of the cloud which said, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well-pleased". Observe that in Luke's gospel we read

that He was baptized, and prayed, and in the same gospel (Luke 9) we are told concerning the transfiguration "He went up into a mountain to PRAY, and AS HE PRAYED the fashion of His countenance was altered" - thus the words "from heaven" are in both places associated with PRAYER. Nor is this strange. When the Lord Jesus was praying in John 12, there came a voice from heaven, saying, "I have glorified and will glorify again". Thus we have a special stress on prayer. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter" is thus illustrated, and the type of the descent of the Holy Spirit is before us. But further linking with the transfiguration, do we not see the twofold testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ? His rising up from baptism reminds of, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee". The transfiguration pictures the coming day of the Lord. "Thou art My beloved Son". "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him". In that future day of the Lord, it will be, "Every soul which will not hear that prophet will be cut off from among His people". "Hear ye Him" will be the mark of the coming day.

Thus the two events were not only events in history, but were pictorial of the two dispensations. The present dispensation was associated with the Lord Jesus as the well-approved One in Whom the Father was well-pleased. The power of the Holy Spirit over a wilderness-life, the future dispensation will have the glory of God displayed in the kingdom-triumph of Christ. That the transfiguration pictures the kingdom is clear from Hebrews 2, "We see Jesus Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, THAT HE by the grace of God might taste death" - crowned before death. The crowning, therefore, was on the mount of transfiguration, pictorial of His coming crowning. His coming royal glory in this earth. In like manner, the baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit were pictorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and His work on the day of Pentecost. Hence we have the wonderful stress "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased".

Isaiah 42 affords another parallel, "The Lord is WELL-PLEASED for His righteousness' sake". God the Father is well pleased with the finished work of His beloved Son. The Spirit of God came down as the proof of that; and the present dispensation, in its blessedness of the new covenant, and the future dispensation is its further blessed application of the new covenant, are

alike built upon the fact "My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased". The well-pleasing work of the Lord Jesus is the ground of our acceptance. The well-pleasing work of the Lord Jesus is the basis of every blessing, now and then.

These words also give us a practical encouragement, Just as the typical sacrifices were pictorial of the work of Christ and suggestive of the devotion of the worshipper and what the worshipper wished to become - for when he offered a bullock he said, "I wish to become a faithful servant"; when he offered a sheep he said, "I wish to become pure", - so here, this pictures not only Christ's finished work, but what His people should be. Made sons of God in His well-beloved Son, we are to realize that the mark of a son of God, a child of God, is - "In whom I am well-pleased". If we walk in the Spirit we shall be those in whom the Father is WELL-PLEASED. The privilege of life after baptism is not to look back with satisfaction to the one act, but to realize that the believer's life AFTER baptism is to be seeking to please the Father. I do not mean that baptism SECURES this. The believer is not ready to be baptized TILL he wishes to be well-pleasing. Only as he rests upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus can he rightly be baptized, and only as he wishes to please God can he rightly be baptized. Baptism does not secure the blessing, but the Lord Jesus Christ was typically baptized BEFORE HE engaged in certain parts of His life-work, as if to suggest that baptism indicates we are willing to please the Lord in everything, to go where He wishes, to do what He wishes, to suffer what He wishes, to be what He wishes - in other words, baptism indicates in type what the believing soul experiences in regeneration, the crucifixion of the flesh, the burial of the flesh, the setting aside of the flesh, and the desire to live with a life well-pleasing unto the Father.

In the Lord Jesus Christ there was nothing that was grievous. John therefore, was surprised when He came to be baptized - "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me"? The Lord's answer is definite, "Thus it becometh us" - not to do what the others did, they were confessing their sins, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness". Christ's object was the opposite in some respects from that of others who came to be baptized, They confessed their sins, He pictured the fulfilling of all righteousness.

oOoOo

THE RICHES OF THE LORD, AND OF HIS REDEEMED

Outline:-

1. "He was rich".
2. "He became poor".
3. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the
Godhead.
4. "Out of His fullness have ALL we received".
5. "All are yours".
6. "In everything give thanks, and other
Inferences.

Our subject, this evening, beloved friends, is "The Riches of the Lord, and of His redeemed". A subject intensely devotional and intensely practical. We, are, as you know, when gathered around the Scriptures here, desirous of pondering together any subject from the word of truth which anyone may desire; but it is a joy that all the subjects are not exactly the same. I mean not exactly of the same nature. If some are more intensely microscopic of special words, others have a general relationship to wide principles. If some subjects are those about which there are sad differences of opinion, others are those about which there is unanimity of belief among many who love the Lord Jesus, at least a unanimity of belief in the head, but oh that truth may lay hold of our hearts and be expressed in our lives. May I illustrate what I mean? If the subject of the Deity of the Lord Jesus were brought up, we should all be of one mind that He was very God, but there is a vast difference between this head-belief, and the heart-realization that Christ is God, for the heart-realization brings us down to the dust in confession of our own listlessness when we think of Him Who was God, Who took upon Him the form of a servant, and we who were dead creatures dared to pride ourselves upon our abilities and our arrangements, or our 'anything', whereas we have nothing, and are nothing EXCEPT as we have received grace.

Need I say that our subject this evening must necessarily be linked with the Deity of our beloved Lord, of which we have just been speaking, for if we refer to His "riches" in the words of 2 Cor. 8,9 we testify that HE WAS RICH, essentially rich! You know the whole verse: it needs an emphasis in every believing life, - "For ye recognize, (or "recognize ye" - a command) the

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that because of you He became poor, being essentially rich, in order that ye, by the poverty of That One, might be fixedly rich". He was rich, essentially rich, as we read elsewhere (in Philemon 2) of Christ BEING in the form of God. For "In the beginning WAS the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". He was rich, rich as the One Who is over all, God blessed for ever, rich in that He was upholding all things by the word of His power, rich in that He was the acknowledged One of all angelic powers that had not fallen, rich in that He was the One in the bosom of the Father in a relationship and intercourse beyond all understanding, and beyond all language, except the language of Scripture. For, beloved friends, I feel you will agree with me, philosophising and reasoning are out of place when we think of the Person of the Lord Jesus, and His relationship with the Father. We rather bow our heads and worship. Here is a depth or rather a height of mystery. He was in the bosom of the Father in that wondrous unity and affection of our Triune God. Indeed, in whatever way we take this expression, we can say He was rich. There was NO poverty in Christ by nature; there was No poverty of ignorance, there was No poverty of weakness. The only thing that God cannot do is He cannot lie, or deny Himself, or go against the truth. But there was no poverty of defect, there was no poverty spiritually, for all perfections were found in Him Who was rich. I need hardly say that He had riches not only of glory, not only of knowledge, not only of power, but of love, because He loved His people with an everlasting love. The Lamb's book of life was not an afterthought, there was grace from eternity. Before the first Adam had fallen, God had planned a way of salvation, for we read of that which is before the foundation of the world, ordered in all things and sure. But though we might dwell more upon this richness, I do not want so to do just now, because we are about to speak of His becoming poor. But He never became poor in grace. He always retained His riches of love, His riches of grace. The riches that we consider first are those riches of majesty, and dignity which He was able to lay aside, and which He gladly laid aside for poor guilty sinners, and so, adoringly, we pass on to our second point.

"HE BECAME POOR". The words are brief, but each one is full. He became poor, - born not in a palace, not even in an inn, but as One almost outcast at overcrowded Bethlehem. He became poor and this was seen at His birth. There was no room for Him in the

inn. He became poor with respect to all earthly advantages, as men would esteem them. He had not where to lay His head. Not only was He born in surroundings of poverty, but when He manifested Himself to Israel, and went about doing good, still He remained the poor and needy One. Again and again the Psalms seem to refer to the Lord Jesus by that precious title. We read for example in the Messianic 109th Psalm the wondrous words that Judas (and those with him) remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy Man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. Our beloved Lord was the Poor and Needy One. Again and again such words come together in the Psalms. Again and again we are reminded that David, even as Moses, spoke concerning Him. Yea, there was never a time in our beloved Lord's life when He was surrounded by the comforts of earth as His own earthly possessions. He Who owned all gave up all so manifestly that we do not read of His possessions. He went about from place to place, owning nothing as it were. He illustrated the precepts which He gave to the disciples as to putting aside of gold and silver and earthly goods. This is shown yet again with regard to His mode of journeying. We do not read of His travelling upon a warrior horse, nor even upon the ass, except on one occasion to fulfil prophecy. At other times He walked, though this walking meant that He was wearied, and needed for example, to sit on Samaria's well, or to be taken "even as He was" in the ship. He became poor, poor as to earthly goods, and poor as to majesty outwardly. For, though His disciples saw Him in glory, as John puts it, - "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth", - though there was this glory made known to those whose eyes were opened, to others He Who was a Living Root out of a dry ground, before the Father, was "without form and comeliness"; and if His redeemed beheld in Him the blue and purple and fine twined linen of the interior of the Tabernacle, others could only see but the badger's skins, telling of His humiliation and strain and absence of earthly majesty and grandeur. It is indeed remarkable that our beloved Lord should thus become so absolutely poor that men who were subject to Him mocked Him, spat at Him, insulted Him, condemned Him. He, Who will judge, was then judged. Verily, He became poor. He, Who will tread His enemies beneath His feet, was then trodden. How striking, He became poor. He, Who will cast out, was then cast out. The simple words of 2 Cor. 8.9 give the key; He became poor. But if we consider this, not only with respect to the possession of riches, and the possession of majesty, but also in other ways, we can see

further illustrations of His poverty. Further illustrations? Yes. If He wrought a miracle, virtue went out of Him, and He felt it. There was a continual strain upon the Lord Jesus, as He took upon Him the likeness of sinful flesh, and was made in fashion like a man. He was pleased to become subject to infirmities; and all through that life in which He was never weary in service, there was a wearying strain. He became poor. We shrink from over-effort. We shrink from the giving up of our reserve strength. Our beloved Lord drew back from nothing. He became poor. The utter weakness that often is marked in His life is brought before us that we might see how deep was the depth of that poverty to which in His tender love and compassion He came down. He became so poor in this respect that even the Jews seemed to suggest He looked older than He was. He Who had spent but a little over 30 years upon this earth was addressed by them thus "Thou art not yet 50 years old". He looked like one who bore a strain, and he DID bear it, a strain beyond parallel. His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men, for He became poor. Oh how wondrously He meant those words which express feelings beyond our comprehension, "I am a worm and no man". Beloved friends, we know that is a Messianic Psalm for the Holy Spirit so applies it. "I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people. All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head". Surely, He became poor. And Psalm 32 is the comment upon this fact of intense love. But though He became poor, it was with an object, that we through His poverty might become rich, and therefore it was necessary that the poverty should become lower than that of the manger; that the poverty should become lower than that of His walking up and down on earth, having nowhere to lay His head, that the poverty should be greater than that of leaving Jerusalem, and going out to Bethany for the night; that His poverty should become the absolute poverty of taking a criminal's death, and more than that the absolute poverty of One Who bore wrath, from Whom God as it were, hid His face, so that He cried out in anguish "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?! To the fullest degree He became poor. He, Who was entitled to all things, gave up everything, not only in life, but in death, and there He was marked out as the absolutely poor One, without anything, as it were, crushed beneath a judgment no man could have supported, when He bare OUR sins in His own body on the tree, as we may truthfully say, if we have fled for refuge to lay hold on the one hope set before us. For though the life was precious, the life without the death would have been unavailing. It is the blood that maketh atone-

ment, and without pouring out of blood is no forgiveness. Therefore He became absolutely poor in an absoluteness beyond all parallel, that we through His poverty might be rich. Hence we read that God hath highly exalted him and gave Him the Name that is above every name. Not that God gave to Him a nature that He had not, for He was eternally and essentially God, and when He emptied Himself, Himself remained. He, the Emptier, was God, and though He emptied Himself of all glory, He could not empty Himself of personality. Throughout His life there was Godhead, though Godhead was veiled. Throughout His life there was that which was inexplicable, as He said to Nicodemus, "The Son of man WHO IS IN HEAVEN". Human language fails to grasp the wondrous blending of these two natures in Him, Who was at once the Child born, and the Mighty God. But though human language and human reasoning fail, faith realizes that whereas He became a Man, He was, in the words of His adoring disciple, "Lord and God". Happy are we if we can say "MY Lord and MY God".

And thus we rejoice that He was exalted, exalted in resurrection, for the resurrection made clear that the sacrifice of Calgary was accepted, that the work was finished, that the precious Redeemer had accomplished that which He came to do, and therefore, highly exalted, He was received back into that glory from which He had come, - in accord with His Own request "Glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had beside Thee before the world was". There was consequently a re-instating, not that a new life of Deity was added to Him, He WAS God. But He was reinstated, as the cry went out "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the KING OF GLORY shall come in", and the question sounds forth, "Who is this King of glory?" And to that the reply was given, "The Lord Strong and Mighty, the Lord Mighty in battle", for had He not met in conflict the powers of the evil one? He had not asked for twelve legions of angels, but it would seem that demoniacal power had sought to war against Him, with such awful ingenuity, and Satan had come, as Christ Himself declared, "The prince of this world cometh". But there was victory. His words of triumph were fulfilled, "NOW is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out". He completely accomplished that which was given Him to do, and then returned and heard that wondrous Divine utterance "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec", in accord with the Divine words "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy foot-

stool".

And so we realize now that in Christ at the right hand of God there dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, available for His people. I know that ere He became Man He was God; I know that when He walked this earth He spake of the temple of His body; for there was the fulness of the Godhead within, but that fulness of Godhead was not available for those who have fled unto Him, except via death and resurrection. "Except the Corn of Wheat has fallen into the ground and died it abideth alone, but if it hath died it bringeth forth much fruit". In such precious words the Lord Jesus enunciated the Truth, that there is no union with Himself except through resurrection. Incarnation could not save; it was a means to an end and goal even His death; there is only salvation VIA atonement. It is the blood that maketh an atonement, and we, if we are saved, are not saved upon any basis of incarnation without atonement, but upon that basis of atonement to which incarnation led. Joined with Him in resurrection we are made in the words of Ephesians 2 to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and therefore we do not look to human powers, we do not look to human learning, we do not look to human arrangements for the supply of our needs. In Christ is our salvation and not in men. In Christ is our salvation and not in self. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily", and as those words were addressed to the Colossian christians beseeching them to hold aloof from philosophy and vain deceit, so may the words ring in our ears this evening, calling upon us to hold aloof from philosophy and vain deceit, because in Christ is everything to meet the believers need. Let us remember that by nature we were nothing, for if any man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. In our flesh dwelleth no good thing. The flesh profiteth nothing, it is the Spirit that quickeneth. Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy God saved us, if indeed we are among the called of Jesus Christ. And therefore as those who were under sin, and under wrath by nature, and with a prospect of judgment, as those who rest upon the work of Another, even upon our precious Lord Jesus, let us remember that only out of His fulness can we receive a fullness. If we are those who were worthless we cannot have evolved a **godliness**. If we are those who were nothing we cannot have developed a spirituality. We needed and need Christ. We need Christ in connection with growth, even as we needed Christ

in salvation. The Spirit of God takes of the things of CHRIST, and never separates Himself from Christ, and if we have indeed been brought to the Lord Jesus Christ as our own precious Saviour, beloved friends, we DEPEND upon Christ for every day of our life, and every moment of every day. In Him there is a fulness that out from His fulness may we all receive, even as out from His fulness have all we received. We have received grace in that we are among the called of Jesus Christ, but we need MORE grace, and God giveth more grace. For however so many be the promises of God, in CHRIST is the yea, and in HIM the Amen to the glory of God by us. There is no running short of Divine supplies. There is no staying of this heavenly fulness. The widow was instructed to gather vessels and to pour out the oil, and not till the vessels failed was the oil stayed. So is it with Christ. He is sufficient fulness for all our emptiness. The important point is that we should have sufficient emptiness to receive His fulness. THAT is the need. The woman's faith was vast but not sufficient. If only she had expected more, she would have received more. We think of the king of Israel who smote thrice and STAYED and it was said, "Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times". Let us not limit our God. He has a fulness of riches for our fulness of poverty, I mean a real poverty that we have, a poverty unlike the poverty of our precious Lord, a poverty in that we are, by nature, utterly worthless and helpless. Only in Christ is our sufficiency and only from Christ is our salvation. Only as we realize more what is in Christ can we grow in a grace, and that growth in grace is ever in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Out of His fulness have all we received. There is no imperfection with the Lord. He does not ever draw back. He supplies, He gives that which is TRUE within, as well as TRUE without:- there is no mere profession of fulness - and so, beloved friends, the thought comes to one's mind in connection with this real fulness of our precious Lord. Do we avail ourselves of it? Out from the head every member of our body is nourished and kept, and out from Christ every saved one is nourished and kept. God may use joints and bands, and no believer will undervalue them, but the joints and bands whereby a saved one may help another saved one, these things are but subordinate. The fulness is in Christ, and the sufficiency is from Christ. Boasting is shut out, no glory belongs to man, everything belongs to Christ.

Hence the words of our fifth point. "All are yours" have a fulness ~~inasmuch~~ as Christ is in glory, ~~inasmuch~~ as Christ

possesses everything. All things are yours, beloved friends; if you are in Christ. You may be earth's despised one, you may hardly know where the supply of your physical needs for a few weeks ahead may be, and whence that supply may come, but IN CHRIST there is sufficient for every need, and all things are yours. This takes away from us as our sixth point, ALL GRUMBING. "In everything give thanks" should be a daily motto, not only on the wall, but on the heart of each one saved by grace. We have no reason for complaint, for those who deserve nothing can complain of nothing. If we have anything we have more than we deserve, and if we have everything we have everything more than we deserve. Aye, we have beyond things, we have a Person, and therefore in EVERYTHING we should give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us. Let trials come, they come to us by way of Christ. God doth not willingly afflict. There is a needs-be for every grief. Nothing happens by chance. Let problems come, affecting us physically, or financially, or in some other painful way, those problems are sent in a Father's wisdom. "He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things"? That passage not only implies that God will meet every need, as He has promised in Philippians 4.19 but it also suggests that everything that comes to us is grace. He will give to us in grace everything. This cheque of God's love, drawn on His limitless bank, does not mean simply that we can go to God and ask Him for this money, or for that physical health, "just as we like", but it means that He will give us everything good and suitable in grace; and therefore if we have a thorn in the flesh, like the apostle of old, we have also the words "My grace is sufficient for thee". There is thus more than a makeweight, there is a super-abundance of love, and every trial is most precious for it makes room for more grace. You follow what I mean. Look at your trial if you will as so many reverses, so many debts. Well, let the trial be a debt of a thousand pounds. God's grace will be a thousand and one pounds, and more. Thus every difficulty but makes a vacuum larger, that the Lord can and does fill. "Most gladly therefore," said the apostle, "will I glory in mine infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me". Sometimes we are too afraid of blessings. I mean we are afraid of the trials that make other blessings possible. Yea, the trials are themselves blessing as well. We desire not to be stripped, and therefore we fail to enjoy this power clothing us. We often

lose much because we will not lose enough, and give up most because we give up too little. We cling to things of earth, and lose the things of heaven. We snatch at that which is tinsel, and miss God's hundred-fold. Oh, that we might look at things from the right standpoint, and estimate them by the right standard. Then shall we in everything give thanks, as we go about our daily life. We shall not envy those who are prospering in this world. "Fret not thyself" was the ancient message, and "Fret not thyself" is today's message. In Psalm 73 Asaph was alarmed at the prosperity of the wicked, until he went into the sanctuary, and thither should the saint always go, and thence should the saint never return, for we can live best in the world as we live in the sanctuary, inasmuch as God has declared He will be a little sanctuary to us.

So, beloved friends, we have many inferences from the fulness of Christ. All our worrying is shut out, all our envy is shut out, all our pride is shut out, all our scheming is shut out; everything is shut out, except that which is to the praise of the glory of His grace. Now I feel I have come to the end of the address, but THAT is about all. I feel, speaking for myself, I have only reached but the BEGINNING of the experience. The subject that I have tried to bring before you expresses the attitude we should take. Beloved friends, I dare not say that my attitude has reached this fulness. Dare anyone present claim this realization of Christ in this wondrous completeness? I am sure of this that God's servant Paul favoured to enjoy privileges of communion beyond many, would, if he had been asked a question concerning his enjoyment of Christ, have answered in words like those of Phil. "Not that I have already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend, that for which I was apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth unto those which are in front, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be full grown, be thus minded, and if as to anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you". In such words did the apostle explain his Divine longings and his Divine feelings accounting all things but loss that he might know Christ. We have received life eternal that we might know God. We

know Him That is True in one sense, and glory in this knowledge beyond all other knowledge; but we need to grow in grace and knowledge. The Holy Spirit works in the individual believer to cause an appropriation of Christ. My appropriation of Christ is not my salvation, I mean in the sense of my further enjoyment of what He is. My salvation depends upon His work for me, and not on my appreciation of it. If I appreciated it but a little, salvation is still by grace. But Oh that we might appreciate it more, not to become more saved, but to enjoy more that salvation which is fully accomplished. It is not that we can add to grace by realizing grace, but that we can receive grace, not in vain, but to God's glory, as we live in the light of abounding grace. May the Holy Spirit take of the things of Christ and apply them in our experience, beloved friends, even this evening.

oOoOo

"NO ROOM"

In Luke 2 we have two words that came before me, and I long that we should feel their power. Concerning the Lord Jesus at the time of birth it is written "No room". We can well understand why this was so. The taxing arrangements had brought many to that district, - those who were linked with Bethlehem. Very possibly a feast time made it convenient, and TWO things were accomplished at once. Anyhow, there was no room for THEM, and the word 'room' is the word 'place'. There was no place in the inn. The inn was the very house (if I might so call it), where we should expect rest. The name given to it suggests an 'untying', 'unbinding of the sandals', 'unloosing of the girdle', - relief and rest. The place that ought to have provided relief had no room. OTHERS found their rest, but the Lord Jesus Christ is marked at the beginning as without room at the inn. In the midst of His life He had not where to lay His head; and He ended His earthly life, not lying on a bed, but stretched upon a cross. From beginning to end He is marked out as the One Who was a Stranger in the world He made. Oh beloved friends, how thus cuts at all idea of our self-pleasing and self-indulgence. One walks about this city just before a so-called Christmas, and gazes in passing at the flesh-pampering displays as if to invite gluttony and indulgence, and one thinks of the hollowness of a profession that it is in the name of Christ, the One Who for our sakes became poor that

we through His poverty might be rich, - the One Who emptied Himself, - the One Who laid aside His glory. The hollowness of the world's profession is a miserable travesty. "No room", "No place". But thanks be unto God, if there was no place at the inn, there was a place; and so we read the precious words "Lying in a manger" - a place for Him. The manger suggests the tame animals, and afterwards we find in the wilderness He was with the wild animals. The whole of His life shines out remarkably.

We read further, that when He grew up to do that ministry which He came to do, He went about from place to place. In Luke 10. 1 moreover, He chose others, and sent them to every place, as well as every city, whither He Himself would go. Always was He finding a fresh place. Men did not give Him places, but He chose places that He might declare the glorious message of the gospel. It was a true word which the dying thief said "This man did nothing out of place", for such is the literal meaning of 'nothing amiss'. Nothing was out of place. Everywhere He went at the right time. He went about doing good. Nothing was out of place. The time went on and last of all He was about to die, and the words ring out concerning the place of Gethsemane where He went, and the place of judgment where He was tried; and then they took Him to the place called Calvary, and in the place where He was crucified there was a garden. There was He laid in the tomb, and the angel could say, Behold the place where the Lord lay. Oh it is wondrous to see the stress on the word 'place' at the end of His life. A place to pray, a place to be judged, a place to be crucified, a place where He was crucified near to the city, and a place to be buried. The word rings out. He always found the right place to carry out His Father's will. If there was not a place for Him in the inn, there was a place for Him on the cross. The world had room for a cross. It had not room for a comfort for the Lord of glory. We say we are His followers. We little realize what this means. Christianity is not a comfortable, easy-going thing. We have not given up much for our Lord yet. We complain of our trials, we murmur over our difficulties. How small they all are compared with what our Lord gave up for us. Oh that we might enter into the fulness of His love and praise Him more; and He not only had the place of rejection, but He bore wrath. O beloved friends, think what this means. He bore wrath. Can you understand it? We little realize what it must have been to Him to bear wrath. The intensity of HIS love to the Father, for He was the One Who

had been in the bosom of the Father, Who was ever with the Father, the intensity of His love made the feeling of wrath inexpressibly terrible. Language fails. For a sinner to feel wrath is to feel anguish and a weight of wrath, but for One Who absolutely loved, and had been not only for myriads of years, but from eternity, with the Father, - for Him to bear the Father's wrath was inexpressible pain.

Just before He went to judgment, He said to His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many abiding places; if it were not so I would have told you, I go to prepare a PLACE for you. And if I go and prepare a PLACE for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself: that where I am, there ye may be also". A place for you! O beloved friends, it is a delightful thought, that though there was no place for Him, He does not say "I have no place for you". He came to His own things, and His own people received Him not. "I will come again and receive you". Man gave Him hatred for His love, but in wondrous love He loved His enemies, hating ones, to CHANGE them into friends. We said, No; but He said, Yes; and the "Yes" of His love conquered the "No" of our unbelief, and He won us with His work, and He wooed us with His grace. "I go to prepare a place for you". A place for you! - not in a manger, not only in a temporary inn, but "in My Father's house", a place for you! It is My Father's house, He says. The Son abideth ever, and He, the Son Who abideth ever, has a right to prepare a place in the house. "Prepare me also a lodging" says God's servant, "I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you". A lodging - I cannot stay very long. The Lord has not prepared us a lodging, "I go to prepare a place for you". I love to think of the change of words - "I go TO prepare", and "If I go AND prepare". There are many things you and I have gone TO do, and we have not gone AND done. We have stopped on the way. Christ says "I go TO". "And if I go AND prepare". He WOULD not be stopped on the way. He would carry out the work. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also". Just before this the Lord had alluded to Peter's denial. He had said that before the cock should finish crowing Peter would deny Him, and He foreknew that they would all forsake Him and flee, but - "I go to prepare a place for you", for you, the runaway disciples; yes for you the one who denies. I will not

deny you the blessing of grace! I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also. Peter alas, sat with the servants and warmed himself, the servants of the high priest, in the high priest's palace. He was in the wrong place, and warmed himself, and everything went wrong; and Another High Priest has a palace and He will not put Peter to sit with the servants. The Son makes him free. "I will come and receive YOU" - the you who denied Me or forsook Me. "I will come and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also". It is a wondrous thought of love, yet it never excuses one sin. There are different places in glory. In Luke 14 we read, Lo, it is done as Thou hast commanded, and yet there is place. Go out quickly and compel to come in, that My house may be filled. But the same chapter says, Do not take the highest place, lest another is bidden, and he that bid thee and him should say, Give this man place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest place. The lowest place. There are DIFFERENT places in the glory. "I go to prepare a place"; but where will our place be?

We must tell the world of coming wrath. We must emphasize the fact of coming wrath. We must bring before those in our very midst and our homes, the fact that those who despise God's mercy will meet misery, and those who know not His grace will bear His judgment. There is wrath. There is a doom, though there is a free message of salvation still, so free that our emptiness may be made a very encouragement, and the poor guilty sinner in this room tonight, stripped of the rags of self-righteousness, stripped of self-esteem, is welcome to a Saviour Who saves nothings, who saves the helpless and hopeless! Thus there is no place for wrath against such, but the place prepared in the glory becomes theirs, and the Holy Spirit emphasizes this One Way of salvation, that in the ages to come God might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

(Abridged)

Part 4

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

Percy W. Heward

"THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH"

THE OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Our subject this evening is concerning the operations of the Holy Spirit. It is well that we should sometimes speak of the Holy Spirit, not that we desire an undue proportion, for we know very well that the Holy Spirit, when guiding the ministry will take things of Christ, and emphasize Christ, and therefore an undue proportion of preaching ABOUT the Holy Spirit would not be in the power of the Holy Spirit. But it is well at least sometimes to think of that wondrous Person, and His wondrous workings. I say "Person", and it is well to remember that we are not thinking of a thing, not speaking of an influence, but of a Person, a living Person, a Divine Person, One Who is God, equal with the Father and the Lord Jesus, in the wondrous unity of the Name LORD, as we read of the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, the One Name. The Name of the Spirit, is, in its meaning, suggestive of His hidden nature, and of His wondrous working, for it is a similar word to that of 'air' or 'breath' and the Spirit of God is the Unseen One Who is working with vital power. Oh! that it might be so in our meeting this evening. The word for 'Spirit' is neuter in the Greek, and on that account some have been misled through the passages where the Spirit of God is called "IT". Let it be realized that Christ is called the Light, which is neuter, and that both feminine and neuter names are given to Him in the Scriptures, and one can see that the pronoun agreeing in the Greek must necessarily be sometimes feminine or neuter, hence the 'IT' of the Spirit, the Spirit ITself. But in English that hardly brings out the meaning, for the word "Spirit" is not neuter, that is, our grammar is quite distinct from that of Greek. Therefore it is preferable to render it "The Spirit HIMSELF". But the fact that the word "Spirit" is neuter makes it more remarkable that in certain passages of Scripture there is almost a going out of the way to emphasize that the Holy Spirit is a Person, for we have the pronoun put in the masculine though in close proximity, for the word for Spirit which is neuter. The word "ekeinos" - that one, is used seven times in the last address of the Lord Jesus. Take for example John 15.26,27 and John 16.13. Moreover the Holy Spirit is there called another Paraclete like the Lord

Jesus. How could such words have been spoken of a mere influence or thing? How could such words be spoken of a person who was not Divine? Moreover the Holy Spirit's personality is before us, in that which is declared concerning witnesses as Rom. 8, and 1 John 5, reveals. He can be grieved, as Eph. 4 shows us. That is the One against Whom men lie, as Acts 5 reveals. He had fellowship with the Father in the sending of the Lord Jesus, as Isaiah 48.16 shows.

With that little preface we pass to consider the operations of this wondrous Divine Person, feeling the need for reverence lest we should say anything concerning Him what will grieve Him, for though an ignorant sin is not so terrible as a wilful one, and though in mercy we have been preserved from blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, that sin which is a state of sin, and a continuance and delight in sin and choosing wilfully of sin, though we have been mercifully preserved from that, there is a danger lest we should misrepresent the Holy Spirit even when seeking to explain His wonderful and complex operations.

The work of the Spirit of God in other dispensations deserves prayerful thought. In Psalm 33 we see that the Spirit of God's Mouth was connected with the original creation, and in Gen. 1, when the earth became without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the next event was that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, "Let there be light". Doubtless there is true history and true parable in that wondrous statement for when man is ruined, the need is that first the Spirit of God should move on the face of the deep, a Personal Spirit of God; and the God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness should shine in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Thus we have the work of the Holy Spirit with respect to creation and restoration, then we have His work in the Scriptures in other dispensations, guiding the servants who wrote, for men of God spoke as they were BORNE ALONG by the Spirit of God, and we find that David distinctly claimed that the Spirit of God spoke by him. There was no mere thought inspiration, no mere general controlling inspiration, but a direct personal and verbal instruction causing the words spoken, and the words written to be the very words of the living

God, so that ALL Scripture, not merely as spoken, but as written - for that is what the word signifies - ALL Scripture is God-breathed. You cannot breathe thoughts, and as a rule you do not speak of written words being breathed, but God emphasizes that the original Scriptures were written word for word as He desired it, with no word changed, no word unnecessary, no word misplaced. Truly we may praise God for the work of the Holy Spirit in other dispensations in preparing for us the precious Hebrew Scriptures.

Then we have the work of the Spirit of God in dealing with individuals in the olden times. We remember that in Psalm 51 David, not only prophetically but personally said, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit away from me". There was truly a work of the Spirit of God in those who are called children with respect to God; - if they knew Him as Father there must have been a Divine work of the Spirit of God, and though they only saw through a glass darkly, even more that we only see through a glass darkly, though they were more in mystery than we are in mystery as to the things of God, yet nevertheless the Spirit of God was working in those olden times revealing to them more of their position as servants than of their position which we now see to be ours in Christ as sons of the living God.

It is remarkable that we read of the Holy Spirit coming upon certain ones in the book of Judges; the book of ruin. It is true we find it earlier in the Pentateuch, but especially, seven times, I believe, a similar expression is used in Judges. For the Spirit of God came upon, or clothed Himself with certain ones. It is remarkable, moreover, that this was not always a saving work. When we find the Spirit of God came on Saul, though temporarily. Nor was it always linked with a sanctifying experience for the Spirit of God came several times upon Samson who was a man of faith in measure, and yet a man of failure. These points are not unimportant. They bring before us the sovereignty of the Spirit of God, and His right to work where He pleases and as He pleases, that He is not merely limited to those in whose heart God is working, nor is He limited to those who are growing in grace. He can use a Balaam if it pleases Him, He can work miracles by whatsoever means He is pleased to employ that no flesh should glory in His presence. Moreover His work in the olden times prevents us from boasting. We are not to say, "Oh!

this is the dispensation in which the Spirit of God is manifest and He was not manifest before". We can say and say truthfully that there has been a fuller unveiling of the work of the Spirit of God and that at Pentecost there was a new unity created by the Holy Spirit, but we need to beware lest by any unguarded language we turn our privileges into boastings, and make our wondrous acceptance in Christ to be a background for looking down on saints in olden times, who perhaps knew more of the Lord than we are apt to think they knew, perhaps knew more of the Lord than we ourselves know, though I grant that in these days we OUGHT to know more than Abraham did, we ought to know more than what David and Isaiah did, for it was revealed to them that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now announced by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into, - which wondrous privileges should make us prayerful, but never are we called by God to be boastful.

We pass now to consider the convicting and quickening work of the Spirit of God. Convicting is a legal work. The Spirit is said in John 16, to convict, and we are told in 1 Peter 3 how that Christ in Spirit preached to those who have now become spirits in prison, and that He judged among them or convicted. You know the passage in Gen. 6 "My Spirit shall not always judge among men". Then was the convicting work of the Spirit of God though men were not convinced. There is now a general work of the Spirit of God through the word and through other means that He is pleased to employ, so that they are without excuse. But apart from this general convicting work there is the blessedly complete convicting work, - when the Spirit of God lays low a sinner, when the commandment is not merely a written word, but when it comes with living power. When the commandment came to Saul of Tarsus, then the Spirit of God as it were clothed Himself with the commandment, and made it an arrow which was sharp, that the one whom the Lord had marked out to be His, might be laid low, for the Lord said, "I kill and I make alive". "I wound and I heal". There must be a killing first, there must be a wounding first, there must be the broken-down man on the road to Jericho before the good Samaritan can pour in oil and wine. It is blessed thing if by grace we have received the convicting work of

the Spirit of God. But let us not think it is merely past. It is still His work to point out unto us failure, and to show us through the Scriptures when we sin against God. The Spirit of God causes believers to know when they grieve Him, and though there is not the withdrawing of a Divine work, nor the alteration of a Divine Power, there is, sometimes in the conscious realization of God's people, there is solemnly less COMMUNION of the Spirit of which 2 Cor. 13 verse 14 strikingly tells.

Linked with the convicting of the Spirit of God we might deal with the quickening of the Spirit of God. The Spirit quickeneth as He wills, for we read in John 3 that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and again in ch. 6.63, "It is the Spirit That quickeneth". If we can realize that men are incapable of improvement, that they are too far gone - I mean incapable to make them fit for God, if we realize this we shall understand the precious words "If any man be in Christ there is a new creation". Beloved friends, let us ask ourselves as before God if we have experienced this new creation? If there has not been a passing out of death into life, all our good wishes and good hopes and good intentions, and good realizations, are poor counterfeits, and only good in our own estimation. This creation which is a Divine operation, is linked with faith of the in-working of God, and is said in Eph. 2 to be in Christ Jesus, but it is by the work of the Spirit of God. The exact moment of quickening may not be known, - I had almost said, it cannot be known. We know when we enter into something of the joy of salvation, but who can tell when God begins a work? Who can tell that tiny, unseen, and almost unfelt beginning of a Divine work, in accord with a Triune purpose and to lead to an eternal security? As with natural birth there are mysteries, with spiritual birth there are great mysteries, and if the believer can in some measure realize the time of his new birth, it is not always manifest to others until a little time afterwards. Everything is covered with mystery that God may take all the glory away from man. It is sad on account of this that many have been misled, they have sought for results begotten of emotion, and have imagined that they have led thousands of souls to Christ, when perhaps the time in which some were brought manifestly to accept Him was a while after they were brought to know the Divine working, or at least to experience it almost unconsciously. I do not say

this to speak against the idea of bringing before those who are in measure impressed the importance of being among those who confess the Name of Christ. It is important, and there is a crisis when there is the believing consciously into the Name of the only begotten Son of God. A precious crisis, a glorious crisis, more marked in the experience of some than of others. I do not want to say a word against this, but what I do want to emphasize is the quiet background ministry of the children of God living lives near their Lord, which He can use as the means of quickening others so that they can be the instrument of the salvation of some who do not know the instrument that God employed. Those who in their quiet background ministry have not the applause of men, and who do not seem to make public 'efforts', can before God render that acceptable devoted service which He receives, which He uses, and which will be unto His glory. In the home, in daily duties, in tiny details one may even do more for the Lord than on the platform. The greatest hindrance to platform ministry is the failure of life of those who bear the Name of the Lord. The greatest obstacle to Gospel proclamation must ever be regarded as the inconsistency of nominal, aye, and of real christians. We do well to humble ourselves, not only as Daniel in the name of others, but as Daniel again in our own name, to humble ourselves before the Lord for we have failed to witness and failed to be the means in the Lord's hands when we ought to have walked more closely with Him. But whatever means God uses it is the work of the Spirit of God, to quicken. We may have the apparatus, we may have the preaching, we may have the godly living, but still we are dependent upon that wondrous Sovereignty. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth but of God that showeth mercy. Grace is not limited by human failure, grace is not helped by human success, grace is independent of us, but we cannot be independent of grace. It is remarkable that in John 3 where the Lord Jesus addressed Nicodemus, He does not declare if Nicodemus was born again or not. He said to him "Thou", "thou", "thou", but when He said "Ye must be born again", He put it in the plural. He did not say "Thou must be born again". This little silence should show unto us that we cannot tell the moment of birth, when God begins that which will be completed in the day of Jesus Christ.

We pass next to consider the work of the Spirit of God

crying "Abba, Father". "Because ye are sons" says Gal. 4, "God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, "Abba Father". I need not say that we cannot take the expression "God sent forth the Spirit of His Son" to mean simply "new birth". There we have plainly a reference to the personal Holy Spirit sent into the heart even as the Lord Jesus was sent into the world, as the context shows, "Sent into the heart". Not the awful hearts of unsaved ones to improve them, but into the hearts of those who HAVE been born again. Here it is we have a distinct work of the Spirit of God; - the work of the Spirit of God in quickening is to make us children. The work of the Spirit of God in connection with this sending forth is linked with sonship. Now the terms 'child' and 'son' are distinct in Scripture. They both suggest relationship, but the term 'son' has rather an emphasized dignity of those who are begotten again with a view to being God's very own people to all eternity, and being PLACED as sons. "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts". A work of the Spirit of God is further explained in this connection in Rom. 8. Ye have not received the spirit of servitude again to fear, but the Spirit of sonship in Whom we cry, Abba, Father. Not the Spirit of adoption, no one is ever adopted a child of God. The word 'adoption' is literally 'sonship' and it refers to a present relationship to the Father, in the heart, and a future standing before God, - the manifestation of the Spirit of God seems to be closely linked in Rom. 8 with the indwelling of the Spirit of God, which is the contrast to the indwelling of sin which is brought before us in Rom. 7, and because of that indwelling of the Spirit of God we are enabled to war a good warfare. Because of that indwelling of the Spirit of God we not only have the consciousness of expectation, but are enabled to please God, and go the way God desires us to go. David we have seen, already knew something of the work of the Spirit of God in him, and the Spirit of God even speaking in him. But David knew rather the Spirit of God as a spirit of servitude, we know the indwelling Spirit of sonship, and no dispensational failure can hinder a measure of the enjoyment of this, but personal failure can hinder it.

We pass next to consider the closely related witnessing of the Spirit of God. It is closely related with His convicting, and with His work in the heart, for He witnesses

before men as 1 John 5 says, "It is the Spirit That witnesseth because the Spirit is truth". The Lord Jesus three times over, in John 14.17; 15.26; 16.13 speaks of the Spirit of truth. That is to say the One Who bears the definite witness, and you remember that in that wondrous discourse of the Lord He explained that His people should also bear witness, that is to say bearing witness with that Spirit of Truth Who would testify. But there is a witness of the Spirit of God beyond His witness in the world, beyond His witness in the assembly, there is the witness of the Spirit of God in the heart. The Spirit Himself beareth witness together with our spirit. The two are distinct, but not contrary. The Spirit of God beareth witness with our spirit. That which has been begotten of Him beareth a witness with our spirit, because we are children of God. These words are striking. We need to ask ourselves whether by grace we enter into this co-witnessing of the Spirit of God BECAUSE we are children of God and THAT we are children of God, for there is the twofold thought. Associated therewith is the leading of the Spirit. We read in Rom. 8. 14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God". Not merely "They are children of God", but "Sons of God", a dignity is suggested. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God", not merely "were led", but "keeping on being led", those who are being guided by the Spirit of God, Who is called "The Guide" in Matt. 23.8, where the word "Christ" should be omitted. "Be ye not called Rabbi, for One is your Guide". We have reference to our Triune God, the Spirit, the Father, and the Son, in verses 8,9 and 10. Then in John 16.13 "He shall lead you into all truth" is "He shall lead you along the way". And again in Gal. 5.18 we have the leading of the Spirit. The term 'born of God' seems to contain, if not exclusively, a similar thought, and in Phil. 1.19 we have the supply of the Spirit, and the word is from the root of leading. We read of those who met together in The Name of the Lord, that they have been led together by the leading of the Spirit of God. "Where two or three have been led together by the leading of the Spirit of God, there am I in the midst". Led together by the leading of the Spirit of God. I know the expression "I am led to do this, or that" is peculiarly dangerous. When a believer has no Scripture for an action, he will frequently say "I was led to do it". It is the loop-hole of self-confidence, and as a rule, one finds that those who know

most of the leading of the Spirit of God speak least about it with reference to themselves, for if the Spirit of God even leaves Himself out in many Scriptures, He will surely guide those who are guided by Him to leave ~~everything~~ ^{nothing} out that would glorify themselves. If anyone is led by the Spirit of God, it is not probable he will be led to say he is led as a general rule. The actions and a manifest communion with the Lord should show that there is a dependence upon Him, so that others may take note that there has been no self-decision, but a guiding by God. So far everything seems clear in doctrine, but difficult ~~to~~ practice.

Now we approach that which is difficult in doctrine, and oh that the Lord may mercifully preserve us from mistakes, and glorify His Name in causing a realization of His will alone. What is the sealing of the Spirit of God? The idea of sealing is, as Rev. 7 shows, a claiming, but not only a claiming, a marking. If there be a seal on the body it will be a bodily mark, if there be a seal on the spirit there will be a spiritual mark, and therefore will not be a physical mark. This is important, and I believe we should realize another general principle. God has graciously arranged in days of ruin, a certain parallel with the wonderful powers that were manifest in days before the ruin, as, for example, when God permitted that Israel's temple should be destroyed. He was pleased to be a little sanctuary unto them wherever they were driven, and now that we have lost inspired songs and hymns, we may still have spiritual thankfulness in the expressions that please the Lord in spiritual hymns, that is to say there is the general principle that God grants in days of ruin a measure of that which He granted in days before the ruin came in. That ruin, we know we must acknowledge. We see not the signs which marked the days of Pentecost, there is not the unity of the redeemed upon earth that was visible during that period. The glory of the church in Acts has gone, and instead of that we have the Lord's people as scattered as Israel; as it were, without a temple, and those who are most in harmony with the Lord feel the ruin most. It is possible to overlook it and be galvanized by a human energising into a belief that things are not as bad as they are, but if we look around without wishing to see things better than they are, but simply wishing to see what God would show us, if we look around with an unbiassed desire to see God's teaching by circumstances, we shall I am

sure, feel that there is real ruin, but even as in the days of Haggai, the words may be still sounded, "My Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not". Yet all the manifest workings of the Spirit are not the same. As to the sealing of the Spirit, this, it would seem, was, both outward and inward. John 6.27 speaks of Christ as the One Who was sealed. In 2 Cor. 1.22, we read concerning the Lord's people that the Lord has sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit into our hearts. Now this is linked with the expression "Hath anointed us". Now the anointing suggests a manifest work of the Lord, and so does the sealing, unless there is the special thought of the inward claiming. What if there are both thoughts here? What if we have not the outward sealing, but still the inward sealing and the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, if we have not the gifts of the Spirit in manifestation as in the days of old? Take another passage. In Eph. 1.13 we find that the sealing of the Holy Spirit is again linked with the inheritance. "Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (namely the promise of the millennium and government). Who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory. I would not limit the term 'promise' to the millennial government, but that is an important thought that is usually overlooked. Now we can understand this passage. The Spirit sealed is the earnest, what was the inheritance? The kingdom. What are the anticipations of the kingdom? The spiritual gifts, for we read in Heb. 6 that they were the powers of the age to come. Then the sealing was, at least a part of it, manifest, even as the contrary and contradictory sealing of antichrist in Rev. 13, will be manifest. We cannot say we have this manifest sealing. We thank God for His inward claiming, for His inward working, but there is not the manifestation of the Spirit of God coming upon us as upon Samson of old, and upon the Lord's people on the day of Pentecost.

This leads us on to the subject of baptism in the Spirit. By different names this work and its results are described. We read in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, all the four gospels, that there would be a future baptism of the Spirit. Though each gospel contains very few things that all the other gospels contain, each gospel contains this, and at the beginning of Acts there is the same testimony. The Lord Jesus Christ said,

"Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you". Plainly therefore the coming upon of the Holy Spirit is distinct from the birth of the Spirit, is distinct from the indwelling of the Spirit, is distinct from that which is associated with the indwelling, is distinct from the sending of the Spirit into our hearts. The coming UPON was the baptizing IN the Spirit. Let us distinguish between the inward work and the outward work. The Spirit of God indwells because He has been sent into the heart. But the Spirit of God also came upon and baptized these disciples in Himself, or rather Christ baptized them in Him on the day of Pentecost. Another expression is used for this in Acts 2 towards the end. Peter said to those who were his friends in verse 38, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive, - not the birth of the Spirit, - but - the gift of the Holy Spirit. They needed the birth of the Spirit before they would be pricked in their heart, they needed the birth of the Spirit consciously before they were baptized, but the baptism of the Spirit, the gift of the Spirit was subsequent. And what is the next statement? "For the PROMISE is unto you and to your children", not the promise of baptism but the promise linked with the millennial government, as we have in Eph. 1, the Holy Spirit of promise, and Eph. 4,30 declares "Grieve not the Holy Spirit whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption", namely the redemption of the body. So we see the important thought that the Spirit of God came down to give a number of anticipations of the coming kingdom. One anticipation is in the conscious sonship of the Lord's people; and that still remains. Another anticipation was in connection with the unity into the one body which does not remain in its wonderful visibility, in its earthly executive aspect. God has not changed, but God's manifestations may have changed, even as God withdrew the temple of old, and chastened His people in all ages, that He might show it is an awful thing to sin against Him. I believe that, to this coming UPON of the Spirit of God John 20 alludes, where it is written, "Receive Holy Spirit", not "Receive the Holy Spirit AS A PERSON". The words are distinct. The article is even left out when there is the thought of the operations of the Holy Spirit, and Christ did not say "Receive THE Holy Spirit", but "Receive Holy Spirit". That was the baptizing power of the Holy Spirit which was anticipatorily manifested, or explained, in that upper

room where Christ was gathered with His people. Well, this baptism of the Holy Spirit was always with signs following as Mark 16 shows; and as Acts 2, Acts 8, Acts 10 and Acts 19 all reveal. There is no case of an invisible baptism of the Spirit of God. Baptism whether in water or in spirit always succeeds birth, it is never identified with it. The baptism in the Spirit was usually subsequent to water baptism, which is called in 1 Peter 3 "The request of a good conscience". Not "the ANSWER of a good conscience", but the REQUEST of a good conscience, for in water baptism believers ask for the manifestation that the Lord was pleased to give, and also ask for the coming resurrection glory. The two baptisms in water and in the spirit are mentioned in Heb. 6 "The doctrine of baptisms", for they had one doctrine. You remember how it was quite exceptional when on Cornelius the baptism of the Spirit of God came before the baptism in water. "Can any forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Spirit"? Mark the words "As well as we". Acts 11 explains it thus, "As I began to speak the Holy Spirit FELL on them", not "Came INTO them", but "FELL upon them", as it was at the beginning, that is as cloven tongues of fire, not giving life, but dealing with ministry and power as well with the unity of the redeemed. "Then remembered I the words of the Lord, how He said, "John indeed baptizeth with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit", Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as unto us". So we get the words, gift, baptise, coming upon, falling on, and receiving. All these words are important. Now, one can understand something of the loss in the present dispensation. The term 'baptism' implies a visible unity, the term 'body' implies a visible unity, but now we have not these on earth, let us be humble before God. God's quickening remains, God's indwelling by the Spirit of God remains, we still have the Spirit of sonship, but we HAVE NOT THIS UNITED POWER. Thanks be unto God, for still the Spirit of God is interceding as Rom. 8 puts it "with groanings which cannot be uttered" and while our beloved Lord, in glory, makes intercession for the transgressors, the Holy Spirit meets our needs in guiding us to pray and also in praying for us. Guiding us to pray, for Jude 20 speaks of praying in the Holy Spirit. Who can summarize the other operations of the work of the Spirit of God? His work now in connection with earth is very mysterious. In the future He will be connect-

ed with coming judgment and coming wrath. His work now as being the Spirit sent forth in Rev. 5 is striking. His work also in leading the Lord's people to say "Come, Lord Jesus" and His work in connection with the Triunity of our glorious God is also a subject that might prayerfully be considered some other time. one cannot go into the fulness of teaching of Revelation concerning the Spirit of God. Suffice it to notice that for the first time in Rev. 1 the greetings come from the Spirit. He had in measure withdrawn Himself as to the work of dispensational unity, though not in connection with His saving work. How important to express oneself in Scriptural language upon such a theme. Surely we pray unto the Lord that He will in mercy preserve us from misunderstanding one another, and cause a due confession of sin for what we have lost, and a right desiring of that which is possible, and a right thankfulness of that which saints received in times gone by, for we are linked with them and they with us. This will all be to the praise of the glory of God's grace, and we shall not have met in vain. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit will thus be with all those who by grace have been born of the Spirit.

oOoOo

SOME ASPECTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK
(John 14-16)

When our beloved Lord was about to leave this world, as to His physically manifested presence, He was pleased to encourage His people, and to reveal to them that which was expedient for them, and that which would "bring them together", as the word implies. He referred to the coming of the Holy Spirit to represent Him in their midst. I suppose that those of us who have tasted that the Lord is gracious are conscious that there are VARIOUS works of the Spirit of God, and that our appreciation of truth, and our joy of truth, are largely conditioned on a right view and a right enjoyment of the operation of the Spirit of God. In like manner it is evident that errors are frequently brought about by a misunderstanding of the work of the Spirit of God. The Lord Jesus made very clear in John 14-16 many portions of the manifold work of the

Spirit of God. For example in 14,16,17 He told them that Another Advocate would be sent to them, the Spirit of truth, and He added the words, He dwelleth with you and is in you. This was the Divine thought of an Advocate, One to dwell with and be in God's people. How we need to lay a stress upon such teaching. Salvation is not a mental effort to reach IT; and sanctification, too, is something more than a consciousness of IT. We know a Living Saviour in salvation, and a Living Indwelling Holy Spirit in the daily walk afterwards. Things, words, facts, - all these are not sufficient. Thanks be unto God for the reality of works accomplished long ago on our behalf. But we rejoice in a Living Lord Jesus Christ as the One whom we came, if resting on His precious blood. And we would rejoice in a Living Holy Spirit at the PRESENT time, and in the stress on the Holy Spirit as known by God's people. "Ye know Him". Here is a priceless thought. Ye KNOW. A personal knowledge of the Spirit of God. In verse 26 His operations are more fully explained. "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall TEACH you all things, and BRING all things to your REMEMBRANCE whatsoever I have said unto you". Observe two aspects:- He shall teach you, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you. This is deeply important. The work of the Spirit of God is here seen as a work of teaching, and that teaching is particularly linked with a bringing to remembrance of all things, - a bringing to remembrance of all things which Christ said. The Holy Spirit never contradicts Christ. Let us ponder Matt. 28. 19. A bringing to remembrance. I do think we need to have stress laid upon this. The Spirit of God did not come to bring about an INDEPENDENT WORK. We do not ignore His further guidance of the apostles in accord with John 16,12, but there is no setting aside of Christ's words. He came to bring to the remembrance what Christ had said. There are so many who bear the Name of the Name of the Lord Jesus who have forgotten this. They almost put on one side the words of the Lord Jesus in the days when He walked this earth, and they think that the work of the Holy Spirit is to supplant those words, and to abrogate temporarily those commandments. They hand over the Address on the Mount to others, and so forth. But the work of the Spirit of God is to bring to our remembrance the things which Christ said. The same stress we have seen at the end of Matthew's gospel - Go ye, make

disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have said unto you; and as John 15 puts it, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you". Relationship to the words of the Lord Jesus must be viewed as a very definite test for everything. "ALL things whatsoever I have said unto you". Thus we see the work of the Spirit of God. But if there are those who would bring the subsequent books of Scripture into contrast with the Gospels, and ignore the precious link, there are others who go still further in their attitude, and they almost seem to think that the work of the Spirit of God is to make believers personally independent of the Scriptures. This is deadly doctrine. The work of the Spirit of God is to bring to our remembrance what Christ has said. I know nothing more beautiful, from another standpoint also, than the relationship of the Father and the Son and of the Spirit. The Lord Jesus ever exalted the Father, and did ever those things that pleased the Father, The Spirit of God glorified Christ. Christ said, I can do nothing of Myself; and the Spirit of God is seen in the parable of Luke 14 where He goes forth in wondrous service to draw those who are to be brought unto the feast. A Marvellous view of a living affection is that of the love between the Persons of our Triune God, and the harmony of action.

Not only so. I believe we all realize our own weakness in remembering the truth. We often feel, "I wish I could ever think of a passage at the moment I need it, and be ready to answer the word that is suitable"; or "I wish when I have a difficulty I could know just which passage would suit my need". The work of the Spirit of God is to bring to our remembrance. This has a deeply important twofold thought. First of all it brings us to realize, beloved friends, the work of the Spirit of God on the MIND. We are to love the Lord with our mind. That is to be included in devotion to the Lord, as Luke 10.27 shows, and the Spirit of God works on the MIND to bring to your remembrance. This, beloved friends, is of the deepest importance. So many have brought the work of the Spirit of God largely into the sphere of the EMOTIONAL. But Christ lays stress on the work of the Spirit of God in connection with the right use of the mind. This is not unimportant. So many have disproportionately emphasized the Spirit of God in connection with their feel-

ings, until they have substituted feelings for the teaching of Scripture. They have said "I feel led to do this", or "I felt led by the Lord". And they have often gone diametrically AGAINST the Scriptures. They have trusted to feelings and imagined they were the leading of the Holy Spirit. I am not speaking of intentional sin: many children of God have been misled. Now the Spirit of God is not said in this passage to come and operate on our feelings. Christ's PARTICULAR stress in that He will bring to our remembrance the Truth, that He will deal with the believer by THE USE OF THE MIND TO THE GLORY OF GOD. We have said that those who are led by impulses and feelings often THINK they are led by the Spirit of God. But the mind is quite UNBALANCED. They will accept error quite as readily as truth, because they FEEL a certain indescribable emotion. We see this today in modern records of apparent revival. How often we have the feelings carrying men away that they accept all manner of error, and yet they think they are led by the Spirit of God, and oftentimes saved ones are quite at fault because they are expecting the Spirit of God to work largely on the lines of emotions. It is for THIS they are looking, and therefore the emotions are brought into undue prominence, and are placed ready for any mighty swayings. This gives the evil one a great opportunity. Prayerful testing is not present. Emotions are uppermost, and the first way that reaches them is regarded as probably from the Lord. There is a bias toward it, and if Satan is disguised as an angel of light, a proportion of truth will lull to sleep any thought of humble examination. But the Spirit of God has been revealed as particularly bringing to the REMEMBRANCE. So, when anyone says to you "Oh, I feel led, the Spirit of God has impressed this upon me", ask WHAT PART OF TRUTH He has brought to the remembrance that there may be the godly emotion on the line of that which He brings to remembrance. I would not say a word against godly emotion if it is first on the line of what the Spirit has brought to the remembrance from the testimony of the Truth. Emotion is precious when it is the handmaid of truth, but emotion is dangerous when it is apart from the power of the truth. Emotion must be wrapped up in truth, and then emotion is a power to the glory of God. Let the Spirit of God bring to the remembrance, and then let there be the godly emotion in setting forth that which is brought to the remembrance of the

words of Divine truth and power.

Not only so. By this precious statement we see how the Spirit of God in honouring the Scriptures lays a stress on our godly ACTIVITY. It is not that the Spirit of God gives us a fresh revelation. The normal thought is the Spirit of God will bring to your remembrance. Then there must be the KNOWLEDGE FIRST that there may be the bringing to remembrance. This is deeply important. How many dear children of God have rather thought the Spirit of God would relieve them from the strain of Bible study. But the Spirit of God is pleased to work on that which is accumulated in the mind through prayerful study. He is pleased to take that which is already in the mind. Now let us consider, beloved friends, that wonderful mind which God has given us. It is a precious gift. We rarely thank God enough for the mind. There are millions of things which you know. There are many things which if you said to me, I should at once recall them, though probably if you do not say them I should NEVER recall them to my mind throughout my earthly days. There are myriads of things which have happened in my experience, and yours, that unless someone recalls them, will probably remain for ever unrecalled, but the fact that you and I COULD recall them shows they are THERE. Now this has a deeply important bearing. We want to know how to act in emergencies. If we simply look to our own minds we shall NOT recall the right word of Scripture. I do not always know WHAT to recall to my mind that I may act in any important emergencies. In some things I have certain verses of Scripture ready to give an answer, but in other circumstances of life I do not know which verse to apply. I cannot read through the whole Bible to find the passage to act in a sudden difficulty. What I want is Someone who will bring to my remembrance the exactly suited verse which is there in the mind. But knowledge is not the only matter. There are many men who have a vast knowledge, but they are peculiarly deficient in being able to recollect just what they need. The Spirit of God will deal with our problem in this matter. But, beloved friends, the Spirit of God works on that which is THERE, in order to remind. If you say, I want the Spirit of God to lead me, then, beloved fellow believer, store your mind at once with the words of the TRUTH, that He may have something whereof to remind you. I grant that He can lead without, but the promise is, He will remind. Salvation is a

perfectly free gift, but THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH is not. It depends on much continued prayerful hard work. You must lovingly read through the whole Scripture. You must earnestly search through the whole Scripture. You must diligently learn verse after verse, with a joyous delight, if you would render to God that which the Holy Spirit is willing to use to remind you at the right moment of what you are to do, and what you are to say. He will remind you if you have the verse stored there. The Spirit of God will not break the promise. Here is a Divine arrangement. He cannot remind you of what is NOT in the mind. He CAN teach apart from what is in the mind. He CAN make you open the Scripture at the passage you had not noticed before. He CAN go beyond the promise, but He cannot REMIND of what is not in the mind. THAT is the promise. Never would we restrict HIM. But we honour Him by expecting Him to work among the redeemed, on the line of that which Christ has revealed.

We go further, and in the fifteenth chapter, and the 26th verse, the Advocate is seen as testifying of Christ, and the 27th verse adds, "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning". And thus we see the work of the Spirit of God is not only to remind, but also to lead God's dear people on the path of definite WITNESS. They are to own the truth, they are not to be ashamed of their rejected Lord. Acts 1 shows this as a principle, in another context, in whatever way we view it, 'tis precious true, we need the work of the Spirit of God for witness. The 16th chapter reminds us in the 7th verse that the Advocate comes to bring God's dear people TOGETHER. He convicts the world, but in verse 13, "Howbeit when He the Spirit of (the) Truth is come, He will guide YOU into all (the) truth, for He shall not speak from Himself, but whatsoever He shall have heard that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto YOU". "When He the Spirit of Truth is come He will guide you into all truth". The Lord Jesus Christ had many things to say, but the disciples were not then able to bear them. Here we do have the reference to the FURTHER unveiling of the testimony of CHRIST in the epistles (Cf. Acts 1.1). One delights to see the further unveiling is of the things of Christ. The arrangements were not fresh to Him. I HAVE many things, I HAVE many

things to say to you. The Lord Jesus Christ does not say, There are many things which belong to a future dispensation. He does not say, I view you on Jewish ground, and therefore these must be reserved for the epistles, and for Paul, to reveal as belonging to a fresh idea altogether. He says I HAVE them. It is not that I cannot reveal them at the present time, but you cannot bear them now. It is the disciples' inability to bear that He brings out. But when the Spirit of truth came, the Spirit of truth took of these things of Christ, and His work was, and is, to lead into all the truth. Now the word 'lead' is the word 'Lead along the way'. It is a deeply important thought. Christ is the Way (John 14.6), and the Holy Spirit leads along the way. He does not drag, He does not force, He does not push. He leads. The work of the Spirit of God to the world is convicting, but to the children of God it is specially leading. Leading implies not only a Leader, but one willing to be led. At the present time we hear much about the leading of the Spirit. But the remarkable thing is this, that the expression "The leading of the Spirit" is so often brought forward in connection with emotion, for which the words of truth can never be thus brought forward. In other words, the leading of the Spirit is an expression today, used as if this was a substitute for the testimony of the Scripture, and many think that if they cannot give a Scriptural reason, it is sufficient to say, I am led. The Holy Spirit through Paul witnessed against this. In 1 Cor. 14 he says "If anyone among you seemeth to be spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord". The leading of the Spirit is never against the commandments of the Lord. There were those at Corinth who said, We are led of the Spirit to speak, and they broke the Lord's arrangements, - as to the silence of sisters, for example. They broke the Lord's arrangement on other points of assembly witness, and then they said, We are led. The Spirit of God never contradicts Himself. His work is to lead into all truth. How do you account for the following fact? I only wish we pained our hearts over it more. There are many meetings in this land where there is a stress on the leading of the Spirit, but if anyone were to propose there should be a pondering of the subject of baptism, and believe's relationship to that, there would be the proposal to keep THAT subject out, for fear of differences of opinion coming up, and the meetings can only be main-

tained by excluding 'controversial matters' as baptism. Many say We must avoid controversy, we will have the leading of the Spirit. How do you account for such a view of the Lord's own commands? Does the Spirit of truth lead to the ignoring of the truth? Beloved friends, this is a terrible travesty of the Spirit of God's leading. It is a terrible denial of His graciously revealed method. The Spirit of truth leads along the path into all truth. Oh how many dear children of God have been troubled over this verse, and it was not meant to trouble them, it was meant to encourage them. Have you not had believers come to you and say, I cannot understand it. Here are those who bear the Name of the Lord Jesus and they differ, but it is written, The Spirit of God will lead into all truth! They have missed the point. It is not, He HAS led you into all truth. It is, He WILL lead you - the goal is all the truth, with a view to all the truth. He will lead you with this in view. For He shall speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak. That which the Spirit of God emphasizes, and His WAY of emphasizing, alike are to lead along the path into all the truth. Here then is a deeply solemn thought; may it be precious to our hearts, as well as grasped by our understandings. There are those who come forward, - we have met them - and they say, I have the Spirit of God, and He leads me, and so I have reached the truth. Then they will sometimes, as we have seen in a conversational meeting, emphasize dangerous error, and add, The Spirit of God has led me, and I have the truth. But those who are truly led by the Spirit of God Who does not glorify Himself, will be characterized by humility. Pride is never a mark of being led by the Spirit of God, and the work of the Spirit of God is ever leading along the path, and the goal is all the truth. The promise is not broken because believers learn slowly, but the promise is to encourage believers to wish to learn more quickly. The promise is not changed because children of God differ, but the promise is to lead children of God to be bowed on their knees until they differ less. The Spirit of God is One, and He will lead along the path till the promise of Christ, with the prayer of Christ in the next chapter, will alike be fulfilled in their richest fulness, in the day soon to come. But meanwhile, as Christ puts it, HE shall receive of Mine, and shall announce to you. This has an important bearing

on another aspect of the truth. The Spirit of God's work is to make the things of Christ LIVING to us. I have read a word and felt no power in it. I have heard a word, and have felt the meaning of the speaker. The tone, the manner, the accompaniments, have made the word live. If you and I cling to the aspect of Scripture reading ONE moment, and the Spirit of God leading ANOTHER moment, we are missing much of the thought. There is a wondrous blending. The Spirit of God REMINDS. That word is precious. But our preparation is not the only work we have. I said just now we must store our hearts with the words of truth. Blessed be God, we desire thus to do. But I do not mean, Get out your Bibles for a mental study, and hope the Spirit of God will give a blessing in applying the truth some days afterwards. We want to humble ourselves now, and to seek and expect the work of the Spirit of God days afterwards to apply the truth, but we also want the Spirit of God with us when we are searching and when we are studying, to make the truth living AT ONCE. It is not enough to be Bible students. The Spirit of God takes the words of truth and will give the tone to them, and will give the accent to them to make those words LIVE in impressive power. Oh, beloved friends, the work of the Spirit of God is NOT instead of the Scriptures. The work of the Spirit of God is to APPLY the Scriptures. There are those who emphasize the words without the Spirit; there are those who lay stress on the Spirit without the words. But if we would remember our Lord's testimony, it is the work of the Spirit of God to apply the words. If we have the words without the power of the Spirit we will have all the apparatus without the electric current. If we have the thought of the Spirit of God without the words, we have the electric current with no apparatus to receive it. If by grace we have the Spirit of God working in the words, there is the living power which comes into the prepared apparatus, that there may be the life, the delight, the power, the heat, and the fulness of blessing, that we may know what to do with the light God gives, that we may feel the heat of the loving power of the Lord, and enter into the meaning of strength to serve, as the Spirit of God applies the Scripture in living power. Oh for grace to know this unveiling of the work of the Spirit of God today.

oOoOo

NOTES ON JOHN 3.

The statement of the Lord Jesus is clear, in vers 3, "Unless anyone have been born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God", and in verse 5, "Unless anyone have been born out from water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God". That which hath been born of the flesh is flesh, and that which hath been born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, it is necessary that ye have been born from above. We observe therefore, that the preceding and succeeding contexts of verse 5 alike emphasize a spiritual birth, alike lay a stress on being born from above. Again we have in this very passage a reference to the personal wish of the Spirit of God, wrongly rendered in connection with the wind. The wind does not blow where it listeth, but the Spirit does breathe where He will. We have undoubtedly an allusion to the wind. The wind is a type of the work of the Spirit. Now if this is realized we can understand something of what is brought before us by the allusion to water. Here we have water and wind, both set forth in spiritual teaching....

Are there any passages which bring before us the parallel which Nicodemus should have understood? Are there passages in the Hebrew Scriptures which show us a reference to water and the Spirit? The first is the very first chapter of the Bible. "Darkness was upon the face of the deep and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters". Here is the opening reference to the Spirit and waters. I need hardly say what was the result. God said, Let there be light...and God said, Let there be a firmament, and God made the firmament, and God said, Let the waters be gathered together and let the dry land appear". There we have brought before us the dry land born out of the water in connection with the operation of the Spirit of God, which is marked throughout that passage. That in Gen. 1 we have a figure of salvation 2 Cor. 4.6 makes evident. We come next to Gen. 8. Here we have an allusion to the removal of the waters of the flood, "And God remembered Noah and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark, and God made a WIND to pass over the earth and the WATERS assuaged".

Here we have wind and water. Remember the word 'wind' is the word 'spirit' in the earlier Scriptures. Wind and water once more, and what is the result? The earth is brought forth, there is a bringing out from water and the work of the Spirit of God has changed everything. This is a figure, but it is a very previous figure.....

We now turn to another Psalm, and we find the 18th contains helpful language as to God's gracious deliverance from wrath, "He rose upon a cherub and did fly, yea He did fly upon the wings of the WIND...He sent out His arrows and scattered them...the channels of WATERS were seen...He sent from ABOVE". You recollect "born from above" in John 3, "He drew me out OF MANY WATERS", Here we have plainly the work of the Spirit of God lifting up by mighty power from above, and bringing out of waters. I do not say John 3 alludes to Psalm 18, but Psalm 18 pictures an experience in David's life which illustrates John 3.....

I trust, beloved friends, that sufficient has been said to show that the Lord was teaching Nicodemus that we in mercy need to learn more and more fully, that there is no entrance into the Kingdom of God for men in the condition of sinful flesh. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. There must be a bringing out from the wrong POSITION, a bringing out from the wrong CONDITION. The work of the Lord Jesus Christ deals with wrath upon us, and with our deadness within. If we were brought out of wrath but remained dead, we should still be in a helpless condition. Hence as the work of Christ has a twofold aspect, the work of the Spirit has a twofold aspect. He brings out from water, but He quickens. To lift us out from the earth and out from the ruin of the world would be of no avail unless there were the INworking of the Spirit of God. So we see the wondrous blending of thoughts, and Oh that we may desire not only to talk of the Spirit of God, but having realized this, to seek grace that we may enjoy more and more the love of the Spirit, for the Personal Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and it is possible to be guided by Him. He is not an influence, that WE guide, but He is a Person Who guides us. May we humbly rejoice to have this

direction, and so shall we follow on to know the Lord, for the mark of the Spirit of God is thus summed up "He shall glorify Me". As the servant in the parable of Luke 14, He comes forth to compel that every seat shall be filled, because that he operates on the lines of Christ's finished work. As the servant of Genesis 24, He is obtaining a bride for the One Who is the Son of promise, and He causes the members of that bride to unite with Him in the precious prayer, - "Come". Yes, the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and the individual believer should echo the longing, - EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS.

oOoOo

Part 5

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Percy W. Heward

"THE HOLY SCRIPTURES"

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

1. Names for Scriptures and references thereto.
2. The Holy Spirit's use of the Truth written.
3. Thoughts on the preservation of the Truth, with a few notes on the Canon; Rejected or Lost books; and Tradition.
4. "Truth" and the Bible.
5. Translation to the glory of God.

- - - -

We are pondering, beloved friends, the Holy Scriptures - a large subject. We can only fringe our subject. That is the case it seems, with all Scriptural topics. We begin with the names for Scripture, and the references thereto.

There are three names which are used. Our English word "The Bible" denotes either the book, or, more probably, the collection of little books which are bound together in the precious volume which we have. We find a stress in Scripture on the "Book of the Law" and so forth. But this name is not the usual name. The comprehensive name, as you know, is "The Writing", sometimes in the plural "The Writings", which we render "The Scriptures". More than one word is employed, there is the ordinary word "The Scriptures", and in 2 Timothy 3.15 the word is from the same root but a different ending, "The Sacred Letters", or the "Sacred Literature" if you will. Thus we have in front of us God's testimony as to "The Writing", a striking name, because it not only brings before us that this is the writing beyond all other writings, but that God has not been pleased to give us "tradition" as our centre. We look back to varied ancient religions, and we find a stress on handing down by word of mouth. We go to the Jews today, and they will tell us the oral law is quite as important as the written law. It was handed down, so they tell us, by word of mouth even long afterwards, and that remains authoritative to them. By the oral law they rule out the authority of the written law. They get rid of God's testimony. It is so important, therefore, that you and I should realize God's stress

on the written testimony. God caused it to be written that it might not only be His thoughts but His own words, to be handed down for the guidance of His people. For He does not wish that they should be in suspense. It is interesting to notice, that we have this stress on the words of the Lord. I am not sure that we have Scriptural warrant for calling the Bible "The Word of the Lord", in the same way as we often call it today. In Scripture itself the term the "Word of the Lord" seems to be used in a different way from the word "Scriptures". I quite recognise we have the words of the Lord, but the term "Word" seems to be employed in connection with the Holy Spirit's use of testimony to reach the heart. Hence I think I can enter into the thought that the Holy Spirit makes the Scriptures the "Word of the Lord" in our experience, when He causes them to sound, and we hear what the Spirit saith. But the term "word" seems to allude to the definite use of God's revelation, and not only to the fact of God's revelation. I think you will realize that in so speaking, I am not at all indicating that these are not the Words of the Lord; they are the Words of the Lord but the term "Word of the Lord" has the added thought, either in the case of the Prophet, or receiving the testimony, or in the case of the hearer, of having the application of the testimony; the application by a Living Person, the Spirit of God Himself.

We remember, moreover, the part-names which are used; "The Law of Moses", "The Prophets" and "The Psalms", says the Lord Jesus concerning the prophecies of Himself. The Law is the name given to the first five books, a word that denotes a pointing out from God, a marking of the right road. "The Prophets" were those who told beforehand, and told forth the direct testimony of God. The third section of the Hebrew Scriptures is called the "Psalms" from the name of the first book even as we put our initial for the whole name. Then it is interesting to notice the word "testimony" which is used. We remember how that the testimony was particularly connected with the ark and the commandments. But I think we shall see that it is used in a wider way. God has given His testimony in the 119th Psalm where we have various names given for God's words, - Commandments, Statutes, Precepts, Sayings, and Judgments, all of which have their force in connection with the Scriptures. As to the references thereto, what shall we say of these? In the New Testament how many are

the allusions, how many are the quotations dealing with the Old Testament, and the mode of the allusion is striking. "It hath been written", not only "it is written", but "it hath been written and remains written". Again "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith" not only "said" but "saith". "The Holy Ghost is a witness unto us". It is by such language that the inspired writer refers back to earlier inspired writings. Again other words are united "That the Scripture might be fulfilled", and an argument is based on a single word of Scripture. That is sufficient for an argument, just as, "an oath for confirmation is an end of all strife". The inspired writers viewed one tiny testimony from the earlier Scriptures as quite decisive. And we cannot get away from the fact that they used the language in a way which shows a reverence, and which encourages the deepest reverence today. Even where difficulties are concerned, they lay stress on the inspiration. He said "And to thy seed" not "to seeds as of many, but as of one". "To thy seed, which is Christ". Again, Hebrews contains an argument built up upon the order of words, not "sacrifice and offering" but "offering and sacrifice". The inspiration of the plural or the singular, the inspiration of the order of the words. How striking is this, - even going to the extent of saying, "First being by interpretation King of Righteousness after that King of Salem which is King of Peace". The order of the words even in a name, the one which is named and the interpretation of the name, these things are regarded as important. The name could have been left out, the reference could have been left out. The Holy Spirit emphasises that the whole language was divinely arranged. And, moreover, we have the inspiration as to what is recorded and as to what was arranged for recording. The tabernacle is described and then we read, "The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest was not made open", The Holy Ghost signifying by the type. Then again, "Melchisedec, by interpretation King of Salem". The passage goes on to say "without father, without mother" not literally, but by interpretation without father. Why? Because they are not mentioned on the pages of Scripture. The inspiration of omission. Now we have perhaps the strongest evidence of the use of Scripture we can have, the inspiration of the singular or the plural, the inspiration of omission, the inspiration of recorded type. What else can we have? Here we have all forms of a ground for a stress on verbal inspiration, for in all things

things if the inspiration be not verbal the argument breaks down. If the inspiration be only superintending inspiration the argument is faulty in every case. It is only powerful as we accept complete inspiration. Thus we have these continual references to the Scriptures, with the resting place of faith and the simple satisfaction wherever anything is in the Scriptures. "As also saith the law". So the apostle refers to Corinthians 14 "The Scripture cannot be broken" saith the Lord Jesus, a decisive matter. It was quite enough for Him. Who in reference to the attack of the enemy said "It hath been written". That was sufficient for the Lord Jesus Christ. "Ought not Christ to have suffered", "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets He made clear to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself". Moreover, the way in which the Lord Jesus referred to Moses is not only striking there, but when He was rejected He said "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life" and added "There is one that accuses you - even Moses, in whom ye trust. If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" The Lord linked the two together and He recorded with approval that when Abraham was approached as to some further difficulties the answer was "They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them. If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead". A greater stress on Moses could not be imagined. When we find that Christ's invariable weapon in the wilderness was the Word of God through Moses, that His resurrection witness began at Moses on both occasions, we have it especially brought before us, that He declared acceptance of His own words was linked with acceptance of Moses, and that His argument was that if Moses and the Prophets were not accepted no further evidence could reach or change a man. Here we have then, in the very warp and woof of the Scripture, a simplicity of confidence in the Scripture. It is important for us to recognise this "atmosphere" of the truth, because I am convinced normal characteristics and standpoint are impressive even beyond a few statements. In like manner the atmosphere of upbringing affects a person far more than he realizes and the atmosphere of our spiritual upbringing goes far beyond a few statements in a philosophical way. We need to be those who abide in the Scriptures and dwell in the reverential aspect of continually resting with the simplicity of

faith on the Lord of the Words and the Words of the Lord. We need to become so used to accepting the Scriptures, and so satisfied with everything they say, and so willing to apply with a readiness of faith's simplicity, that the power of a recorded testimony comes with continual and increasing freshness and force in our daily experience and progress. It is only as there is the atmosphere of the authority of Scripture recognised that we can hope to have the true understanding of that which God has caused to be written.

We come now to the thought of the preservation of the truth. This is an interesting topic. How has God preserved to us the words of Scripture? First we will speak of rejected or lost books; afterwards of "How has God preserved to us the Scriptures?" We need to recognise at the outset the writings were not for the most part by wealthy men. The believers were those who lost something for their Lord. Yet, whereas we find some of the famous books of antiquity are lost altogether, these epistles written by men who were far less famous in that day have been graciously preserved. It is an interesting thought; interesting in another way. Classical books which have been preserved, works of the famous writers of antiquity whose names have been handed down as writing volumes of excellence in their language; these writings depend on how many manuscripts? Contrast the few manuscripts of the great writers of secular antiquity, with the many manuscripts of Scripture. Even if their works have been preserved, they have only just been preserved. Here we have brought before us that there was a living application in the hearts of some old time saints, so that they wanted the Scriptures, and their following of them is very different from the intellectual interest which men had in the classical works of those days. The classical writers were copied, doubtless they were popular, men delighted to have them, and I suppose that comparatively many copies were made and sumptuous copies, and yet they are not preserved in the same way as the Scriptures are, because affections come into the matter of Scripture, and God used affection for the truth to hand us down the manuscripts. Thus He employed the love of His people and a concern of the people to be the means of bringing us down the manuscripts from ancient times. Furthermore, the manuscripts that we have are from various parts. You may say, what is that as a witness? 'Tis not only interesting with regard to the spread of the truth, but important

in another way, with regard to the evidence of accuracy. And further, there were the old quotations from the Scriptures in their ancient writings, and beyond this we have ancient translations going back as far as the second and third centuries. It is interesting to see this, because a man will sometimes come along and say, "Your gospels were not written until such and such a date". "Well" we can answer him, "it is very curious that translations of them were made before they were written, - very curious". And God has used the quotations of the translations to give collateral evidence, for we have the interesting fact of manuscripts, translations, quotations, and even of opponents' testimony - all handed down. Now to have all these falsified would be a tremendous miracle. If as some critics would affirm at our street corners, there has been a falsifying, they are demanding too much from our credulity. It often seems to me that those who oppose the truth ask too much credulity from us. They make strains upon faith which faith could not bear. It would be impossible to believe that all these things have been changed. There is not time to have changed them, there is not opportunity to have changed them. The different parts of translations, and so forth, in different lands made the problem greater. But yet I grant there are certain difficulties which come in; difficulties which sometimes frighten dear children of God. They are told for example, that there are many various readings, various readings in the ancient manuscripts, and how can we know what was the truth? I think this objection is somewhat similar to the objection which has been raised. We often meet it at the street corner "You are always altering your Bible, altering the translations; always altering it". Those who raise this objection seem to have no idea that if there is respect for the original, the altering of the translation is part of that very respect. They seem to think we are altering the Scriptures; instead of going back to a more accurate rendering of the Scriptures in intention. I grant man's efforts often fail, many translations are the reverse of beneficial. But the intention is, often, more fidelity to the original. And the same thought rises up with respect to manuscripts. What if there are many deviations in the manuscripts! Personally I cannot say I regret this fact. Let me put it frankly to you. It seems to me that God has been pleased to give a similarity in all His un-

veilings and that He has shown to us that whatever is committed to men, men fail to keep perfectly. Therefore I am not surprised that there are many humbling reminders in the fact that the manuscripts do vary, and that from these variations we are not only led to humility, but to more careful study, to see if we can find out what were the original words. The manuscript deviations, furthermore, seem helpful in another way, because these variations have limits. If there were no variations at all, there might be a suspicious collusion. Everything might be made to fit together and to work together by a scheming and one would say after all, "perhaps these manuscripts were all made from the same copy". But the very deviations which are found are just what we would expect if the Scriptures were widely circulated in a way that would prevent deviations beyond those which remain handed down - if you follow what I mean. Widespread circulation, and a large number of minor deviations will become one of the strongest witnesses that there are no deviations more than those which are handed down. The limits of the deviations afford one of the strongest testimonies that we have, by the widespread circulation and the widespread manner of the deviations which we have presented to us. Hence you tell me that there is one word in a hundred as to which you are not quite sure. I say "Well, I am very thankful you have given such a testimony to ninety words out of a hundred". There are some who think this deviation in manuscripts invalidates verbal inspiration. They say, "What is the test of verbal inspiration, if you are not sure of every word because the manuscripts vary?" Surely every child of God can see the difference between saying I am not sure of a single word, I am sure of ninety nine, and not sure about one. Surely there is a vast difference. And what are the deviations in some cases. Personally I find very little difference as to my faith, when the deviation is the spelling of a word. I will not say that all the deviations are as small as this matter. But suppose we had the word "honour" and "honor", there is a manuscript deviation to be recorded, but I do not think you will regard that as a great difference. Hence when people multiply a number of manuscript deviations, they are dealing with numbers, not with the character of those deviations. Granted that there are a certain few places as to which we cannot be sure what was the original Scripture - there are just a few verses. What do we do? Our simple position is this. We say there may be twenty verses, or there may be a word here and a

word there and a word somewhere else as to which we are not sure - was it in the original Scripture? We cannot say. Humbled, we build our faith on every other word, and leave the few words, as to which we do not know for certain. Let me put it in the concrete. I rejoice that baptism is the confession of faith, but I cannot be convinced that in Acts 8.37 the words to the eunuch concerning baptism are in the original manuscript. You will recollect the simple expression it contains which is interesting to us. "But Philip said, If thou believest with thine heart thou mayest, and the eunuch answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God". Personally I doubt if that was in the original manuscripts. I think it was a marginal note made by some who were interested, perhaps from what he heard, and the next writer copied it into the original text. Remember they were not printed books but written books. You mark your Bibles, may be. It was easy for marginal notes to be copied, and that took place on several occasions, but the number of manuscripts enable us to find out just where these deviations are. It is the same in 1 John 5. "There are three that bear witness in heaven", apparently is a marginal note, it is not in the oldest manuscripts and does not quite fit the context. "The three that bear witness on earth" is the thought of the original Scripture. There are just a few verses which are so found. But the number of manuscripts, let me just remind you, enables us to detect this error, and a thoughtful believer would say, if he finds one word as to which he cannot say if it is in the original manuscript, "I cannot build on this".

But it is no evidence against another word. I think you will realize that in copying manuscripts by hand it is marvellous we have this proportion as we have it. Let me give you a piece of dictation in this meeting room, and your manuscripts will not agree. Let me examine them all. You will not all make the same mistakes, and by your varied mistakes I shall find out what was the original word. Your very mistakes, being divergent, will help me to find out. This will give a sidelight upon the original manuscripts of the Scriptures.

We pass next to ponder very briefly the canon of Scripture. I think believers have a restfulness as to the canon of the Old Testament because it is preserved in the Hebrew

Scriptures down to this day. To the Israelites were committed the oracles of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ indicated the books which they possessed and incorporated when He referred in Luke 24 to the divisions of the Scriptures which remain to this very day. The Apochrypha was not incorporated in the Hebrew Scriptures; it was found linked with certain translations, but even then not authoritatively accepted as part of the Scripture many, many years after the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently if we say what were the Hebrew Scriptures to which Christ referred, the canon is settled as to the removal of the Apochrypha; to say nothing of the internal evidence, and the errors which rule themselves out. With respect to the later Scriptures we may find a measure of problem at least theoretically. We may take the general thought that God would graciously look after His own books and arrange what He wanted to be preserved of His Scriptures; that He will hear prayer and guide them. But we may take a parallel of reasoning that as He looked after in the olden time, surely He would not fail in the present dispensation. We may realize that books were promised, that inspiration was promised, and that books have their evident apostolic authorship, and that they claim to be the words of God. There remain a few books as to which some may have difficulties, though not doubts. For example, some of the shorter epistles were not so well known, not so frequently copied in the earlier centuries, hence they were not quoted by the earlier writers as being the inspired words of God. I refer for example, to the 2 Peter and Jude; and, as most of you know, the book of Revelation, with its testimony against Satan, has been far less copied than other books of Scripture. Whereas there are plenty of copies of the gospels there are few of the book of Revelation, far fewer. The objections that we have at the street corner are very poor, for example, that the canon was not settled till the time of a council, and that by a kind of human chance guesswork or casting of lots a decision was made. That theory may be put aside as belonging to the street corner only. But the believer does realise that when he is asked to give earlier references, for example as to the epistle of the 2 Peter, it is not so easy. The little books of that character were not so much circulated. The christians were not wealthy, they were not paying for large editions, they did not have printers in those days, there were real problems, and these little epistles were not circulated in

the same way. But we find that fairly early God granted testimony as to their origin, and then we have the further suggested evidence of the books that are handed down to us today. I think we rightly have them compared with other Scriptures. We wish prayerfully to see; Is there a oneness of accord between them? Is there no deviation? And there is a contrary kind of evidence; - Are other earlier books written by other writers, of a different character altogether. If we find the books handed down and incorporated in the New Testament have not only early witness as to their authorship, but for the most part a large number of manuscript evidences, and further, if we find a unity of witness, and cannot discover after intense prayerful study any deviation from the truth or deviation from one another among themselves, and, again, when we realise other writings of early centuries are on a different level altogether, so that one should feel pained by them, what is the only possible inference? We are compelled to realise God has fulfilled in the present dispensation that which He arranged in the old, and given to us the books as a united whole.

Some have a problem of 'lost' books. Personally I cannot say that I have any problem in this matter. I regard many inspired books as lost. People may say that is a strange statement to make, but is it at all, a difficulty when you acknowledge one fact; the Lord Jesus spake words of perfect wisdom without mistake. Yet all His words are not handed down. Therefore if His words have been lost, is it surprising that other words, spoken or written by the Holy Spirit's testimony, have been lost? Let me now insert inverted commas around the word "lost". Nothing is lost from God's standpoint. It is, however, not a question of being lost, but God has been pleased just to hand down that which He intended for our uses. They are lost to us because they are not handed down to us. That is the simplicity of the answer. Some dear children of God have thought that every book that was inspired must be handed down to us, or that there is a difficulty. I would ask, must every word that Christ spoke be handed down, or there is difficulty? The Scripture declares Christ's words could not be fully written. All the world would not contain the books which should have been written, and, beloved friends, if we were to have all the words of the Holy

Spirit handed down to us, we should never read our Bibles through. God has been pleased to give us that which is sufficient for our need and our condition. Can we not accept His wisdom?

Tradition is an interesting subject. The apostle speaks of the traditions that they receive from him; the things that were handed down. Now it is worthy of notice that the Holy Spirit approves of godly tradition handed down, and godly parents should have traditions in their home, and hand down the truth. There should be tradition, but tradition is not in itself a resting place. That is the important matter. Have you any objection to tradition? I have not. I have objection to many traditions, but not to tradition. I test all the traditions, and if any do not agree with the Scripture I object to them, and I do not object to the fact of tradition. I think there should be a good deal of tradition handed down, for one should seek to hand down that which he has received from other people. The point is, are they in accord with that which is written. If so, accept them; if not reject them. Our objection is when men come forward and bring traditions to overthrow the written words, or, without sufficient evidence, they bring forward their traditions. We have seen men who have traditions which overthrow the words of God, and they want us to accept these as authoritative. We reply - "You have brought before us some traditions which overthrow the words of God. Those traditions which you add to the words of God we are more than slow to accept, when you have already shown us the character of their companion traditions". You bring me a man who tells two lies, and if he gives me a third statement, I am not so prepared to accept it, whatever the statement. I know there are people who tell us in connection with the Scripture, the Scripture was not written to give science of other information, and therefore we cannot be surprised if there are difficulties on this point. Such a theory is totally out of place. In other words they want me to believe, that if, when I can test the Scriptures, I find it wrong, and when I cannot test it, I must accept it. But rather we have the encouraging thought that, whenever we test the Scripture we find it right. Human science falters before it, and thus we have the encouragement that God has given a book, which, though not given to teach science, never teaches anything against true science. Thus,

wherever men can test it they find it true, and where they cannot test it faith rests. Contrastedly with other earlier books and traditions, wherever we can test them we often find them wrong. One is so delighted with the Scripture distinction.

A word as to the church and the Bible. I put the word "church" in italics. Personally I cannot accept the statement - "the early church". I regard only one church as existing in the book of Acts. I should hesitate to speak of church history after Acts 28. I would speak of Christendom's history, but I doubt if we have Scripture warrant for calling it "church history" after Acts 28. However, we know the theory that Romanism would ever bring forward, the Church gave us our Bible. Does this give any authority to those who set it forth. Surely that would prove too much from their standpoint. Judaism gave us the Old Testament; therefore, will they accept Judaism? The remarkable fact is this; that to the Jews are committed the oracles of God which they handed down; a witness against themselves. And to Christendom was entrusted the later Scriptures which they handed down, a witness against themselves. The parallel is remarkable, and shows God's wondrous overruling, for the witness against all the developments of evil is contained in the same Scriptures that were handed down by those who were developing the evils prophesied. One cannot but praise God for His overruling.

Translation to the glory of God, presents a problem which I think should always awaken the prayers of God's people. I always hesitate to draw any dear believers back from loving confidence in the Bible they read. Give me the simple hearted old cottager who only spells out his English Bible slowly but who loves the Lord Who wrote it, and I should be very sorry to give him a learned argument on the defects of the translation; - more than sorry. But on the other hand, I must say I feel a keen regret when some with a certain amount of assertiveness come forward and argue over errors from a translation they use, and if one attempts to refer gently to the fact that the Holy Spirit gave the Scripture in Greek and Hebrew, they say, "We do not want you to go away from the Bible, stick to the Bible" and so forth. One does feel that those who come forward claiming to be teachers, emphasizing errors, and then refusing to

go back to the Hebrew and Greek, are putting themselves in a wrong position altogether. And though a plain witness must be given that no translation can ever fully render the Greek and the Hebrew Scriptures, we thank God for translations, yet must look beyond them to Him and His original words. In general, the use by the Holy Spirit of the Septuagint wherever it could be used, would show us that we should use the normal translation where we can, and alter it where it is unsatisfactory, the method that some of us have sought to adopt. Translation cannot claim to be the original words; it claims to represent as far as possible the words. A very easy thing it may seem at first, but not so easy if you try. For every word in every language has certain thoughts by derivation, and certain further thoughts by usage. For example, the word 'surgeon' originally was, working with the hand, but you would think it very strange if we were to speak about those who are engaged in a dock-yard that they are all surgeons, because the word has now by usage a different meaning. A lawyer has his "practice". The word "practice" in another context has quite a different meaning. Usage and context will decide. Not every language grows in exactly the same way as the language with which we are acquainted. Every language has its own mode of growth, and even in word for word translation there can only be circles that cut one another. You cannot often get a word in two languages with concentric circles. The circles cut one another. The words contain some of the same thoughts but only some. This is important, and suggests that there may be some remedy in the reverse process of translation. "Translate" more often the person into the book instead of the book into the language of the person. In other words, let the translating be of you. I do not mean only in Greek and Hebrew, though that may be very useful, but you and I must get into the very atmosphere of the Scriptures. And this is the reason why sometimes an old cottager knows a great deal more than the learned professor who is qualified in these two languages and other languages from the standpoint of the critic, but has never lived in the atmosphere of the Scriptures. In other words, the scholar is able to translate the words, he is a walking lexicon, but the saint is a believer who breathes the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit, and as such he has been translated. This is of deepest importance, because we should be translated into the Hebrew and the Greek Scriptures, in our experience of the words

of Truth. Let the translation be more and more on your side, that is, that you may get more and more back to the words, and the testimony the Holy Spirit gave. I could say much more about translation; it is a peculiarly interesting subject. The errors of translation, designed errors in some cases, unconscious errors in others; added words, these are all important subjects. Our translators in English have wisely told us where they added words by putting in italics. This is an unusual method of printing, but very wise. It helps us for example in the passage "broken down the middle wall of partition between us". "Between us" spoils the context. Many italics need to be removed to get back to the original, so that if the believer seeks to get into the atmosphere of Scripture and realizes that every translation may contain errors, I think he will find that for practical purposes the difficulties which I have alluded to are not so great as another difficulty. What I mean is this; if you were Greek by birth, if you knew all the language, if you had lived in the days of the apostles or there was no difficulty of manuscripts being handed down, remember this, that unless your heart were in harmony with the Lord, by the time the words reached you the effect of your heart and mind on the words would quite change their force - far more than errors in manuscripts can change them; far more than the errors of translation would change them. We know very well that two elements meeting together will often-times have the remarkable result that the first element is changed altogether in the double compound. A heart out of harmony with the Lord if it lived in the days of the apostles would have done more harm to the words than those who understand them far more after these many years. The primary thing is communion with God. Oh, beloved friends, however this education may be useful, microscopic study of manuscript may be useful, but the primary ends are spiritual, and the Holy Spirit is not dead, He is a witness to us. And if He indwells believers He is able to hand to them the written words with living power, and apply them to the people of God.

oOoOo

INSPIRATION

Outline:

1. The need of verbal inspiration.
2. What is NOT intended or implied.
3. The evidences of verbal inspiration.
4. Encouraging results.
5. Difficulties calmly considered.
6. "If any man speak...as the oracles of God".

Every subject concerning Scripture is important to a child of God. There is not one dull page in Scripture, unless the reader is dull. If the Scripture has the same origin as our own heart, then we may expect a holy fellowship between our new heart and the Scripture, an indescribable feeling of loss if the Scripture is neglected only for a while. Though all subjects connected with the Scripture are deeply important, and though one hesitates to glibly use the word "foundation truth" yet one does feel that much of the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures will be misunderstood unless we have a clear recognition at the beginning of the fact, nature, purpose and results of inspiration. The word 'inspiration' in English, a BREATHING IN and thus it fairly represents the Divine word in 2 Timothy 3 "All Scripture is God-breathed". There we have a claim, a claim, be it noticed, of verbal inspiration for it is impossible to breath THOUGHTS, WORDS are breathed, and therefore it is well that at the beginning of our subject we should know that we are seeking to find out the evidences of that which Scripture asserts is a fact. We are not on some idle speculation, we are not on some curious theory, a pastime, for speculative minds, but we are occupied with that which God Himself has revealed, and I hope, by grace, our hearts are in such a condition that we do not need PROOFS of verbal inspiration though we ENJOY evidences. We do not require to have these demonstrated to our minds, but we rejoice to have the manifestation of it made more real and DEAR to our hearts, and thus expressed in our lives.

But to return to our first point, the Need of Verbal Inspiration. I venture to say, that we must feel the more we study Scripture and the more we study our own lives, - we must feel, beloved friends, the NEED for verbal inspiration. It is a need for the glory of God. If God has revealed Himself at all, we

antipate that He will reveal Himself in a way that will not dishonour Himself. A human law can never be expressed merely in thoughts. Imagine an Act of Parliament put in thoughts, for one to put in his own words, and to apply accordingly. In human documents, even when carefully expressed, there are numerous loopholes of error, but where would be the end of error if there were only an inspiration of thought? But WHAT is "an inspiration of thought"? Can you tell me? Can anyone present describe a "thought inspiration", that is not a "word inspiration"? I venture to say that if it is not a word inspiration it is not a thought inspiration, for there is some defect in the thought. Further, very beautifully we read "All Scripture is God-breathed" - "All writing" - as written it had been definitely breathed. Here is the Divine claim that the inspiration was not of the men as men, not merely toward the men as prophets, but through the men as servants - and this a WRITTEN inspiration. Now I venture to say that the need for verbal inspiration is intensified by such a claim, because if there is not verbal inspiration the book makes an untrue claim, and it is no longer a good book but a deluding book. Therefore we come to the thought that there is a need for verbal inspiration, first, generally with respect to the glory of God, and secondly, when we see how impossible, even in a human sphere, it would be to have anything short of this where exactitude is required; thirdly, because thought inspiration, not word inspiration, fails even to be thought INSPIRATION. There is a defect at the root. Fourthly, the need because there is declared in the Scripture a verbal inspiration, and the book FALLS TO THE GROUND unless its claim can be substantiated. Perhaps you will allow me to put in one suggestion which is closely linked with some that we have already had, but yet it will appeal to each child of God present, "I NEED VERBAL INSPIRATION". It is well to have a big "I" when the word "need" is the next word. "I need verbal inspiration". Is there a child of God present who denies that? Let me repeat it. "I need verbal inspiration". I want to know what to believe. I want to know what to do. I do not see infallibility. I cannot find it in that which may be called a church or a system. I cannot find it in a consensus of ancient writers. I cannot find it in my own individual mind. I cannot find it in public opinion. I cannot find it through mere impulses. I NEED verbal inspiration. And if there is not verbal inspiration, if there is not a book

of exact guidance to which I can turn and on which I can rest unhesitatingly in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, I feel myself largely at sea, and my salvation is largely robbed of its fulness, I mean my present salvation. I feel in considerable and continual difficulty. I almost feel I am unkindly left to grope my way about if there is not verbal inspiration. Beloved friends, the need is a personal need, and we do well to bring in the personal note.

But let us be clear as to what is not intended or implied by verbal inspiration. We do not mean that the translation is inspired. Men have rendered the original languages with a large measure of care and zeal. God has answered prayer. The result is that the English child of God is privileged to see much that God has set forth, and he praises God for the same overruling of translations as experienced in his own personal life. But the translation is imperfect. Do not think I am wasting time in speaking thus, I know the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, but it is amazing when speaking of the Scripture to find some who are in a state of comparative human sanity make a remark of this nature - "You keep on revising your Bible" as if that were some argument against the Bible. There is nothing strange when an artist keeps on improving his painting. It is worth it, worth this effort from the human standpoint. But the child's undescribable attempt at painting is not worth revising. The translations that we have are useful, and if anyone starts translating again he will use many of the same words. There will always be a measure of revision. We praise God for the translation that we have, but we cannot rest on it, nor can we rest on anything of man or through man. For a like reason we do not assert the inspiration of any manuscript. I mean to say, as soon as men begin to copy, men make mistakes. They fail to copy. Human choice and human carelessness are more assertive than we think. There is no one present who would copy out the whole of the English Bible without a mistake and in the ancient days there were mistakes in all copies. The original alone was perfect. As soon as human element comes in, fallacy comes in. We assert the inspiration of that which was originally given. Further, we do not mean that every word in Scripture is a revelation. It is all inspiration, it is not all revelation. There are certain portions which are definite revelation. I do not mean simply the last book, which is

called a Revelation of Jesus Christ; a comprehensive title, for it does not simply mean that John saw Him in glory, but that He is coming back; - now He is our hidden Lord, but He is soon returning. What I mean is this - We should not know that we were members of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, but for Scripture. This was God's unveiling of the high and heavenly calling - which in its EARTHLY aspect has a measure of veiling, and a measure of holding back, but in its heavenly aspect and its prophetic aspect remains unchanged. But there are certain parts of the book of Proverbs which we should know without revelation. We know, for example, that the ants are small. We are acquainted with the fact that if anyone will not plow by reason of the cold, he will have a loss in harvest. There shall be a result. We know further that a he-goat is comely in going. There is no revelation in these facts, but there is a very precious inspiration which puts them where they are to be found. There is no revelation in some of the historical parts of Scripture, but there is inspiration, for we MIGHT have been told other things, and we might not have been told what is written. What we want is to confess God's wisdom in SELECTION. Some will tell us that certain parts of Scripture were written first elsewhere. We have extracts from the Chronicles of Israel's kingdom; I do not mean "The Book of Chronicles", but the state histories. Ah, someone will say, Were all these chronicles inspired? and if you answer, "Not all; it may be SOME were written by prophets", they will reply, "Then how is your Bible inspired which copies them?" BUT THE SELECTION IS INSPIRED. The CONNECTION in Scripture is inspired, and this we need to realize from the heart. While speaking this, we do well to call to mind that even the words of evil men are found in Scripture, found sometimes as an evidence that God can use a Balaam, or a Caiaphas, and can show what is in the sinful heart of a Pharisee, or whatsoever it may be. The very words of Satan come in Scripture. Those words were not inspired, but the RECORD of them is inspired, and we do well to thank God for every syllable which is put there. When our beloved Lord speaks, the words are twice inspired. In the epistles the words are twice inspired, inspired in what they state, and also inspired in that they are included. I had almost said, "Thrice inspired", but the first thought includes "perfect language". Satan's language is any-

thing but perfect, the language of wicked men is very much the reverse of perfect, but yet it is inspiration that has put everything found in the Scripture FOR US.

Further, by verbal inspiration we do not mean that every word of Scripture APPLIES to God's people in the present time in the same way as every other word. We do not assume that Psalm 150 tells us to praise the Lord in the high sounding cymbals. We do not believe that a two-edged literal sword is in the hand of the saints to execute the judgment written. This belongs to another dispensation. God has made this clear. Inspiration does not mean that every commandment is for us. Again and again I have had a Jew say to me, "You believe the Scriptures?" The answer is, "Yes". "Well", he says, "You read about the sabbath?" "Yes!". "Why don't you keep it? You do not believe the Scriptures". One seeks patiently to show him that the sabbath was given to ISRAEL, a sign between God and Israel, and that even a human master can give different arrangements to different servants at different times. But the lack of logic seems deeply implanted in the ruined mind and the Jew goes away very frequently satisfied that he has won the argument and proved his point. This, in one way, matters very little to us. Our reputation has long been buried; in baptism we confess this, - everything of the flesh, including reputation to which we cling longest, is put aside from the child of God. But it is painful to realize that the Jew goes away with the thought that we are Scripture breakers, because we discern things that differ.

We come next to the consideration of Divine evidences. I have already alluded, in point one, to the claim of inspiration. I know it is a very poor form of human reasoning to say "This man claims to speak the truth, therefore his claim must have some bearing on the evidence to whether it is the truth". But there are certain cases in which a man's claim is deeply important. Let a man come up to me who has a good character, who is a careful observer. Let him make certain statements concerning Australia, or where you will. I do not say, "This must be true because the man claims that he is speaking the truth, but the fact that one who has a good character makes a claim is not a small matter; it is worth consideration. Now in the Bible this ground work is

intensified so marvellously that we cannot equal it or find ought else comparable. Here is a Book with a marvellous character, a good character beyond all good characters, and this Book makes a claim, not once, not twice, but frequently, THAT IT IS FROM GOD. We are therefore drawn either to regard Scripture as what it professes to be, or as a misleading deceit, or as the dream of one who was misled, or a mixture of all these varieties of literature. Now such a dilemma is a very real one. The child of God cannot for one moment think that so marvellous a book is dangerous deceptions. His HEART and mind alike know otherwise; useful 'evidences' may be issued on paper, but evidences are appreciated far more fully when the heart is united. I suggest that to imply a book of such wondrous wisdom is labouring under a delusion, seems an appalling thought to a believer. Therefore he can only draw the inference that when we read "Thus saith the Lord", the Lord DID say thus. "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver purified in a furnace, words of earth, purified seven times. Every word of God is pure. Add not to His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar". Further, there are evidences of verbal inspiration from the nature of the language. Scripture contains many prophecies. Many have already been literally fulfilled. They have been fulfilled in such a way that we must confess their fulfilment is verbal. The prophecies concerning our beloved Lord Jesus were not fulfilled casually, they were not vague prophecies which might be made to mean anything. They were very definite, and they were fulfilled literally. Likewise is it with respect to prophecies regarding certain nations and certain cities. What then is the inference which our hearts must draw? Verbal inspiration is made clear by the way in which Scripture has been verbally fulfilled. Thought-inspiration, if such a thing were possible, would allow of certain variations in the fulfilment, but Scripture sometimes approaches, in a very remarkable way, the edge of a precipice. ONE WORD DIFFERENT and there would be a mistake, that different word never occurs. Here is an evidence of verbal inspiration. Scripture often goes very near the border line, if I might so put it, of being found out to be defective. A book might be written which would not have given you an opportunity to test it, but the history is so worded, and so arranged in Scripture, that when other histories are lost and confused, the critic comes forward and says, "Here is a mistake".

Then some cylinder is discovered and the evidence is reached that the critic's statement was untrue and that the year set forth was evidently nearer than he thought. Then another cylinder completes the evidence, Scripture stands. The mistake is in the man. The words of God approached very near to a mistake but never fell into it. I venture to say, this approaching near and this provision of tests is one of the most interesting illustrations of, and evidences for, verbal inspiration. I have already hinted that a child of God knows in his heart the POWER of the Scriptures, in like manner he knows and feels that there is a verbal inspiration, he knows that words are used of God as words of God distinctly to his soul, and he feels "Ah, I am so glad THAT word is there", and he does not say "Isaiah put it in", or "John thought it out", or "Paul lighted on the right expression", but he rejoices to believe "God the Holy Spirit put it there for me", and when one has an experience of grace, that is a DEEP experience, he can no more doubt verbal inspiration than he can doubt eternal salvation. The more he studies the Scripture the more he is amazed at the DEPTH of the book and the FULNESS of the book, and the ARRANGEMENT of the book, and he feels that to attribute the book to human authorship is about as wise as to attribute the making of a star to a man. The miracles of unbelief would be greater than the miracles of belief, yet the corrupt mind will embrace them and the infidel will eat any foolishness rather than acknowledge what God has revealed.

There are encouraging results from the belief in verbal inspiration. I have already alluded to the confidence a believer has when he handles that which he knows to be the word of the living God to himself. Confidence is delightful and God has not left His dear children as wanderers in a desert. True, earth is a desert, but we have a more sure word of prophecy whereunto we do well to take heed. Not only so, not only have we confidence as to personal faith, but we have ability to set forth the truth to others. How miserable it would be to preach from an uncertain book. We should be compelled to begin all our addresses with "I think". How could we go out in God's Name to perishing souls in danger of judgment and say "I think"? for beloved friends, if we draw the line AFTER verbal inspiration where shall we stop? How do we know that it is true Christ died for us? How do we know that is not a thought wrongly expressed? Where are we

to draw the line? If human wisdom can decide, then we are exalting human wisdom; and let me say in passing that verbal inspiration seems almost to me a belief parallel with the belief of an absolute grace-given salvation. The Jesuits opposed verbal inspiration and opposed God's electing grace, or shall I call it God's sovereign grace, omnipotent grace? A young man in the barracks at Hounslow said to me this afternoon, "What is grace?" I told him it was God's gift to those who deserved the opposite. He said that all received grace in baptism when they were infants, but do not always utilize it, they threw it away. I told him I had another belief as to grace, that it was an omnipotent power, that God's grace was not a mere weak thing, but wondrous and mighty. A few moments afterwards he said, "Do you believe verbal inspiration?" I told him that was our subject tonight, but the one who attacked the sovereignty of grace attacked verbal inspiration, and why is it? Those who attack the sovereignty of grace want to bring in a human makeweight and those who attack verbal inspiration want to bring in a human makeweight. Beloved friends, do we not believe with sorrow in the human minus? Grace is all a plus, and inspiration is all a PLUS. Leave a man to himself, he will never make anything that will weigh one fraction to help God's work. Inspiration was perfect and eternal salvation is perfect, and the words in the last utterance of David apply, for these things are "ordered in all things and sure".

But it is well ^{we} should by grace, calmly consider DIFFICULTIES, and I rejoice that any might be mentioned. I will only say, in passing, first, different readings of different manuscripts are no hindrance. If you bring a book with a misprint, I do not say, Here is a proof that the author put it wrong. It is no proof at all. The printer may have made a mistake. So with respect to inspiration - the copyist has often made a mistake, human powers always damage, but suppose we have many copies, as we have of the Scripture, what then? Will they all make the same mistake? No, so some of us can thank God for the various readings. Suppose we had one manuscript, as men have with respect to some of the classic poets. There would be no checking where the mistake came in. You tell me there are thousands of various readings, and instead of being alarmed I feel inclined to say "Thank God, here is one of the most useful

helps in the study of Scripture". Find all the various readings you can, and then when I look at some of the words and you cannot find various readings for them, or you can only find various readings that are on the surface erroneous, I answer, "There is plainly no doubt about those words". Some people will tell us various readings spoil inspiration. Let us reckon what this really means; as to one word in a hundred (shall we say) we are awhile, a little uncertain, we have a probability in nine cases out of ten even there, but assuming we are uncertain for one word out of a hundred, how much more sure, if possible, are we made for the 99 out of the 100? Does the one uncertainty make the 99 uncertain? Nay, it shows how certain they are. If there were an absolute agreement between manuscripts, what would be the natural inference drawn? Either that those manuscripts are not separate witnesses, and their value is nothing, or that man can copy perfectly. In each case, there would be loss of witness. In the latter case, we should lose the wonderful testimony to the failure of man, I suppose. beloved friends, these manuscript errors remind us of that which has been seen with respect to God's work in nature. God graciously created the heavens and the earth became without form and void, and God put it straight. But even since that putting straight, in six literal days, there have been many difficulties brought about through sin. Yet nature is very beautiful and we can see certain parts, large parts, of nature, in which we can say, Here is God's plan, here is God's arrangement, God's imprint is here. So with the Scriptures. God made perfect, and man has damaged a little, but we can still say, God's work. It was the same with respect to Adam - God made man upright, but he found out many inventions. But I am so thankful that the Scripture was not allowed to fall like man was allowed to fall. The nominal church has fallen like Adam fell, and the woman of Christendom corrupts the fine flour and alters the whole of doctrine, and this will be finished to a terrible climax. There will be an entire fall of doctrine. What a need therefore for a book. A tradition would not suffice. God gave the book that it might be a testimony - the first part of it against the boasting Jewish assembly, and the second part against the boasting Christian "church". The custodians of both parts of Scripture are convicted by the books they have kept, and God has vindicated Himself. Further, some will tell us that the Canaanites were to be exterminated; and ask "Can we attrib-

ute this command to a God of love, and is it in harmony with the later Scriptures?" We reply, Dispensations are different; that we acknowledge God's right to exterminate as He pleases: He can do this without man or through man. While Revelation 20 remains at the end of Scripture, the arguments against the destruction of the Canaanites are utterly out of place. The young man of this afternoon said to me that the Old Testament was largely made up of fables. I told him he was giving the lie to the Lord Jesus Christ Who accepted it. He would not agree to that. But, beloved friends, the two parts of Scripture stand or fall together, in every way. Never can you find sterner words than those uttered by Him, Who spoke so tenderly and gently to His blood-bought people. The different records in the gospels are sometimes urged, but let us remember, addition is not contradiction. One gospel tells more than another. Sometimes, however, two narratives of distinct events are twisted together by human harmonizers, and then someone else says, There is a mistake. There IS. The mistake is the harmonizer's. The narratives are distinct. In one gospel you will find apparently a repetition IN THE SAME GOSPEL; and one is thankful for this, affording a powerful example of the principle now before us.

1 Cor. 7 has been brought forward in which the apostle says, "I think I have the Spirit of God". Such a testimony IN THE CONTEXT emphasizes Divine wisdom. They are distinct views of the work of the Spirit of God. If Paul made it clear that he was telling his thought and not speaking by inspiration, we have a stronger evidence of his honesty, and knowledge of the difference when he gave God's witness. He professed to be speaking by inspiration, else he made it clear. I shall welcome your difficulties afterwards.

Finally, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. Ah, let this be even the characteristic of our conversation at the end of our gathering. Twice over we need to lay a stress on this. Let him speak AS the oracles of God, in language and in matter. Let him speak as the oracles of God in manner. We want more of this spiritual gravity, we want more of this spiritual power, because in harmony with God. I know that in the early church they spoke AS the Spirit gave them

utterance, and we have lost much, yet we have not lost the indwelling of the Spirit of God. Nor have we lost the Scriptures; God is not ruined and His words are ^{not} ruined, and therefore though we cannot give fresh revelations, let us speak AS the oracles of God, If a prophet like Daniel needed to study, much more we need to study, and God will own our use of the very words of Scripture. Let us not be afraid when men are against us, when they glibly remark that we only tell them what is in the book. It is an encouraging TESTIMONY. I hope we shall tell nothing else!

(A question as to human element) ? Answer: God uses different servants, Moses for five or six books, David for other books, in the later Scriptures we have a fisherman - Peter; a scholar - Paul. All these were brought up in different ways. The Holy Spirit inspired certain writers to write in Greek, others to write in Hebrew. These facts show us that inspiration is not bound by circumstances, or mere mechanism. Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they were not hypocrites. John expressed his feelings that he really felt, and Paul expressed his feelings that he really had, though the Holy Spirit guided his feelings and showed him how to express them. The expression "human element" is either to be understood as implying an element of fallen humanity intruding, or merely God's use of that which is of earth. We deny that fallen humanity intruded. God's use of that which is of earth was even marked in the bare fact of employing language at all. "The words of the Lord are pure words as silver purified in a furnace, (WORDS) OF EARTH purified seven times". Consequently, we have the metal and other differences between various children of God employed by God Himself, though the differences are not always so marked as many have thought; or shall I rather put it this way - even the same servants of God write at times in a very different way from what they themselves write at another time. God would thus make clear that He could use human instruments, but God would also make clear that He could use them as He pleased. The human element undoubtedly appears in Scripture even when our beloved Lord became flesh. The human element is marked out that thereby the Lord may cause us to feel that He took men of like passions with ourselves, and thus are we encouraged and helped and cheered on, that God may be glorified.

oOoOo

GOD'S GRACIOUS PROVISION FOR HIS PEOPLE IN THE
HANDING DOWN OF HIS TRUTH.

Our subject is a very precious one, and should awaken praise. It is entitled "God's gracious provision for His people in the handing down of His truth". Surely, beloved friends, we are I think, of one mind as to the precious fact that the Lord HAS tender mercies over all His works. He has manifested MARVELLOUS forbearance, and, moreover, He is good to all. He makes His sun to shine, He sendeth rain, He is the Preserver of all men, but there are also ADDED privileges to those that believe. He is Preserver of all - else surely this physical frame would soon be brought to death. How often the unsaved are preserved. We notice, too, the providential care of God for infants. Then there is the providential care over those who in drunken madness spend many days of their brief but wasted life. It is marvellous to notice how often an accident is averted in God's wise providence, but there is a special blessing to those who have faith(1 Tim. 4.10). God arranges everything for His people, He gives Egypt for their ransom and Ethiopia and Sheba for them. He will give men for them, and people for their life; so wondrously dear are God's people to Himself. We do well to have this impressed upon our hearts, we do well to rejoice in it. God has thought of us, He has never done anything else, He has never been contrary to thinking of us, He has never forgotten us. He loved us before we were created, He loved us although He foreknew how we would sin, and He has made wonderful provision for us, and has included in this provision the sacred Scriptures. Of necessity, this subject is part of a larger one, and the larger one brings before us God's control of everything in the whole universe, with a view to the glory of His Name and the blessing of His people and the salvation of souls. Not all inspired Scriptures have been KEPT to us. God's gracious provision for His people does not mean that He has preserved everything upon EARTH. He did not intend to do so. There are some who have made a great point of the fact that certain inspired Scriptures have been lost. They said "Do you mean to tell us that inspired books no longer exist?" We answer, This thought is no trouble to us, no difficulty. So far as WE are concerned,

today, these books no longer exist. God has a record of everything; we do not doubt His knowledge of every book that was written at any time. He has never forgotten one fact. It is impossible for God not to know beforehand, it is impossible for Him to forget afterwards. Unless He Himself puts a thing aside, it remains with Him, and, therefore, we cannot say in one sense that the books are "lost". They have not been kept for US. What should we have done if all the inspired words had been kept for us? We should have sat down all the day, and read them and had no other time. Those who make an objection to the thought of an inspired book being lost, forget that the Lord Jesus Christ walked this earth thirty years, and ALWAYS said perfect words. If it is a sad thing for a book to be lost, what about His words? If we possessed a book of ALL His words and ALL His works, fully explained, there would be no room for us in the world. The world itself could not contain the books which should be written, and therefore, beloved friends, we must understand that a large portion of God's working has NOT been kept for us. A large portion has been put on one side, so far as we are concerned. Nor is this extraordinary if we view the Divine arrangement from another standpoint. The food we eat this year benefits us next year, if the Lord spares us. Its immediate result is not seen. Many portions of Truth which God caused to be written hundreds of years ago, if they have not been preserved, influenced saints through whom we have been influenced, and we have the effect to this day. This leads us back to last week's subject. God has used myriads of things to have an influence upon us, even though these things themselves are no longer present to us. We cannot, therefore, speak of the books being lost, they have whatever results He appointed and He did NOT wish us to read all the books. We have illustrations of this, if I mistake not in the books of Kings and Chronicles. You read for example about the Volume of Iddo the seer. You are reminded there that there were certain writings of other prophets which were apparently inspired. The epistles certainly give us some of the apostle's messages but God has not kept everything. Though we are not told that the epistle which Paul mentions in the epistle to the Colossians was another epistle to that of the Ephesians there is nothing extraordinary for us to conceive that certain epistles of God's servant Paul were written, beyond the fourteen which we have. I can hardly think that dear man of God only wrote fourteen epistles in his life, or only wrote fourteen

letters which we^e inspired. Why, beloved friends, even we, if our heart's love is drawn out to others, write more than fourteen letters in a lifetime. Surely God's servant did much more than this, and though we do not know whether we can assume he spoke by inspiration at every meeting, yet many of his inspired addresses were a blessing then, but are not handed down. Can you find ^{one} complete address which has been handed down? Surely you do not say the address of Matthew 5,6 and 7 contains everything that Christ said on that occasion. There is no proof of this. You do not think that we have a complete record of what the Lord said in various parables. We have no proof that certain addresses handed down contain a complete account. It may be, or may not be. Many epistles seem to imply that we get but extracts. God's servant Paul sometimes preached at great length. We know that, and yet we have not such an address. Some of us would like, at least our natural inclination is to say we would like to have a complete report of an address perhaps an hour or two long of God's servant Paul. What a wondrous record it would be. But these things are not handed down. Just as God arranged in nature many things are lost, many of these beautiful flowers are never seen by human eyes, so many precious things as to written inspiration have not been preserved in Scripture. God has preserved whatever He chose to preserve and that is all. And so we approach the thought of the COMPLETENESS of Scripture. The Lord Jesus alluded to the Old Testament Scripture as complete - the law, the prophets and the psalms. He regarded the book as one whole. I suppose the completeness of Scripture is illustrated by its structure. And, moreover, do we not find there all that is needed? Have you ever reached a subject as to which you have found Scripture incomplete? The applications of God's truth in daily life illustrate the fact that God has given US a complete book. Oftentimes we should have found a longer book shorter. What I mean is this. Sometimes the omission of words gives a TWOFOLD application. Sometimes two "omitted" words enable us to have three or four suggestive thoughts. Scripture is not written with a completeness of human arrangement, but is perfectly complete from God's standpoint. Complete in providing literature of all kinds, and guidance in all circumstances.

The way in which the Old Testament and the New Testament alike and would alike prove that God has arranged a certain structure, and has given a completeness. But how did God guarantee what was His truth? This is an important question. I dare say we have all heard it at times. The foolish words of those who have grasped hold of unfounded traditions and have told us that no one knew what was Scripture till the fourth century, and that then certain books were said to have wrought certain miracles in the way in which they all came together, and the leaders of Christendom claimed thereby to know what was inspired and what was not. My own impression is that, by the grace of God, we have sufficient distrust of so-called "church councils" to feel that such an explanation of the canon of Scripture is without any warrant at all. Beloved friends, this tradition appears to be something like the Septuagint tradition. You have heard that empty story. Some say there were seventy men, each of them knowing seventy languages, and they all brought their Greek translation and then when these translations were compared, they were all the same, all entirely like one another. I need hardly say that this is a BARE tradition and totally incorrect. The Septuagint is by no means perfect: it was not produced in that manner, nor could there be found seventy men who each knew seventy languages. The idea is made up, and not at all appropriate. It has no warrant from Scripture or history, and no warrant to encourage our faith.

No beloved friends, it was not a church council the Lord marked out what was for His parts of Scripture are so arranged that they refer to one another. Paul quotes Luke's gospel, and quotes it as Scripture. Peter marks out that he was the writer of the two epistles and possibly implies that Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, thus claiming the inspiration of certain books. What I mean is this, if the authority of one book is set forth, the authority of other linked books is interlocked. There is an entwining. But in what way apart from this did God mark out His books? Not only did He arrange that different writings referred to other writings, but He was pleased at the outset to give certain apostles and prophets, who were inspired, and thus He was pleased to give men who were acquainted with inspired books and able to indicate. Afterwards He caused others to be trustees of these books. When we refer to different so-called church fathers and so-called councils, in this connection,

people think we are referring to tradition. Let me carefully distinguish two things. I suppose you agree with me we cannot accept our interpretation of Scripture from the Jews. But we find the Jews have been very exact and careful in handing down the Hebrew Scriptures even though the Hebrew Scriptures witness against themselves. Now I can accept, beloved friends, the testimony of Israel from the historical standpoint when I cannot accept their interpretation at all. It is so in the present dispensation. We cannot acknowledge the 'fathers' so-called, we cannot acknowledge THEIR AUTHORITY, but there were living men at the times of the apostles, and just a little later, and they were custodians of the books. Some of them had seen the apostles, others had seen those who had seen the apostles, and in days when books were far more valued since they were fewer, and had a certain definite history, it was well-known who wrote this book and how it was handed down. The books were jealously guarded. At the present time, if you obtain a book, it is easy to lose it, and you think "I can easily buy another". But in olden days books were not so easily available and the result was there was far more care for the books. All these old manuscripts were guarded, their history was known. A so-called church father could not write an inspired epistle to the Ephesians, but I am willing to accept the testimony of a reasonable man as to the historical facts with which he was acquainted. I would not acknowledge the interpretation of Scripture given by an average man of the world, but if certain ordinary reasonable and honourable men said they had brought me a certain letter which you had given them, I should not say "My friend, if you cannot interpret that letter, I do not believe you brought it" I should recognize they could carry it without understanding it. There is a vast difference between the two. The postman during this week may have brought you letters from different parts of the world. They bear the evidence that they have come from different parts of the world, and you have the facts brought before you, but the interpretation might be quite unknown to those who have handled them. Let us carefully distinguish between a witness of fact which can be ordinarily known by ordinary men, and a testimony to the interpretation of Scripture which requires the special guidance of the Holy Ghost and in addition a heart able to keep the precious faith (as 1 Cor. 2 makes clear).

Secondly, these books that were marked out among these professing the name of Christ as books written by the apostles, were kept by God in the gatherings of those days. Oftentimes objections are raised, why do not OTHER writers refer to Scripture? Why is there not fuller evidence? A most remarkable fact is linked with this - and as to the biography of the Lord Jesus Christ, for example. We bring forward the best circulated books of antiquity, which have more copies dating back hundreds of years further than any other books. I refer to the gospels. We bring them forward and say, Here are four evidences. The critic often first objects to them because they do not (in his opinion) "agree" together. But we bring them forward and say. Here are four testimonies. Then he changes his ground and says that they are all parts of ONE book. It is hopeless to deal with a man in that condition. If it suits him, he says they are all one, If it suits him, he says they are all different, and he casts away all your evidence, and says, "Now give me some more"; and if you produced more, he would still cast them away. The majority of people seem to think they are bearing strong witness against some of the wonderful facts in connection with the Lord Jesus when they say that other writers do not refer to Him. This is NOT true, but as to SOME events, no other writers refer to Him. Would you expect that they should refer to everything? Do you think that in those days there were hundreds of writers whose books have been handed down? Not at all. There are only, let me say, two or three historians who deal with that period, whose books have reached us, and among these very very few historians whose books have reached us, we DO have reference to the Lord Jesus. But we must remember He was miles away from where they were writing. If the critics could produce several contemporary historians who lived at Jerusalem, who did not refer to these things, they would have some force in their objection. But we must also remember our beloved Lord was despised and rejected of men. There are many facts of antiquity that have only recently been discovered. Some of the greatest monarchs of olden times have only just been discovered, so fully has past history been buried, and yet the foolish heart of the natural man objects to the strong evidence we can hand down referring to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To return, we have a number of books written by apostles themselves. But you say, "Surely one or two of the books are not

written by apostles". Granted. Luke claims perfect inspiration from above, and Paul especially refers to the writing of Luke as inspired Scripture and I venture to add that when we come to compare this book with other books of the same period, the internal evidence is a mighty witness. Compare Scripture with the works of professing christian writers of the second and third centuries and see the contrast.

But finally we must come back to the fact that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. Hence the strongest evidence of Christ and the truth of Scripture is the believing heart's recognition in the power of the Holy Spirit. A man will say to us, "Prove this to me". Everything depends on who the man is. The natural man receiveth NOT the things of the Spirit of God, and as some of us have said to certain ones who have opposed the Truth, "My friend, if we could prove it to you, we should disprove it, for itself says it cannot be proved to you"

God has given the plain testimony, the natural man receiveth not. But the heart of God's true people, realizes the truth of Scripture. Here is a marvellous fact. This complete book, written by many different men, with evidently different vocabularies, different standpoints, different educational abilities - a book of a uniquely complex character, provides no contradictions, provides nothing which has been proved false by subsequent history or well-founded scientific researches, and beyond this, the internal evidence applied in power by the Holy Spirit to the believing heart is an evidence which can never be turned aside. There is noperallol with this miracle. UNBELIEF would be too credulous. Faith is the true inference. But let me add that though the believer may be interested to see how the canon of Scripture, or the books which are now found in it, was formed, he may be interested to hear there were those who acknowledged by all as the writer of this epistle and so forth, but, beloved friends, this is NOT the primary thought to me, nor I think is it the primary thought with you. If God granted the books were anonymous, He could put in them an overpowering sense of their authority and inspiration, and He could work that we should be blessedly convinced.

Salvation is a definite work, and the acceptance of the truth is a definite work. You may make a man religious by outward

pressure, you can make a man accept certain historical facts by mental reasoning, but inasmuch as even a Paul sometimes made mistakes in his daily life, the proof of inspiration of the WRITINGS must be deeper than bare history. (Observe the CLAIMED inspiration. A bad man could not have written the Scriptures by himself, a good man would not have combined such a claim with unique truth, unless it were true. And the books are infinitely beyond the efforts of an "enthusiast" who "THOUGHT" he was inspired). It must be the EVIDENTIAL WORKING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: - and unless you tell me there are infallible apostles who have never made a mistake in their daily walk, you are compelled to go back to this final issue - God has convicted us, and as salvation is supernatural so Christian evidences are also supernatural. It is true that history corroborates but the primary evidence is supernatural, and it is this which draws believers away from spending too large a portion of their time upon the earthly dates and data. They realize that it is the Spirit Who quickeneth and the Spirit Who proves the truth to the heart of God's dear people. Many things may be said to throw down the objections of man, but although objections are thrown down, the natural heart is a natural heart still. God makes alive and God causes in the heart a harmony with that which He has caused to be written in the word of Truth.

It is interesting to notice furthermore, how God watched over manuscripts. The earliest manuscripts do not exist, nor is this strange. The apostles were not wealthy men, and they wrote as it would seem on common writing materials. But God has not been pleased to give a succession of miracles. His usual method is to give a miracle, and then entrust the miracle to the care of those who will fail in their keeping it. When the Lord raised Lazarus, He gave the others the work of loosing the limbs. When the Lord raised the little girl, He told the parents to supply food. After a miracle, the Lord usually gives a responsibility. So He gave miraculously the Scriptures, but the care of these was entrusted to man, and as in everything, man failed. There are many who will tell us that the fact there are various readings is an argument against Scripture. Now let us weigh us what this means. We have hundreds of manuscripts of Scripture. Some ancient writers of great fame have preserved one manuscript or two manuscripts. Many of the ancient

books, which were very famous in their days, have not been handed down, these fragments. Contrast the Scripture. Have you ever thought that when a book has only one manuscript handed down, there are no difficulties as to various readings? The whole problem is solved. Would you like the difficulty of Scripture to be solved in this way? Of course not, beloved friends. Have you ever realized that the difficulty of various readings is a great help. For one man wrote a manuscript in one town, another in another town and another in another town, and these books have all been handed down, and when you find in (shall we say) 59 words out of sixty they are "together", you say this is better than having one manuscript without anything to check it. Here is the evidence that the Scriptures circulated in all parts of the world were the same. There was no opportunity for the falsifying of Scripture. The books were too widely circulated. Ordinary falsifying is easily found out, under such conditions. Let me explain what I mean. Sometimes a word was written in the margin as an explanation; the next writer incorporated it. Others did the same. The result is, many manuscripts written in one district may retain the same incorporation, others written in another district may leave it out. You check the two together. But is it not possible that those written in another district left out a word by mistake when the writer copied it? Quite possible. Sometimes therefore you cannot say definitely "This is put in" or "This is left out". You cannot say WHERE the mistake is. But the fact that the difference exists tells us there is ONE WORD which you cannot apply in argument. You do not know what the mistake is, but you know there is a mistake. That is sufficient, for us at the present time. It was impossible to falsify the Scripture and hide this up. The wide circulation involved the handing down of evidence as to the mistake. The Scriptures were too much circulated to allow of corruption and a covering up. Some other manuscripts written a long way off can be brought forward to give their testimony, and all tend to make us careful. Moreover, when people tells us the gospels were not written till the fourth century, and so forth, we reply "It is very extraordinary they were QUOTED and even translated before they were written". It is remarkable we have so many quotations in earlier writers, earlier than the fourth century; remarkable that we have the books referred to by name in a way that shows they were the same books as we now use.

But some will say that they were written afterwards to agree with the quotations before hand. Apart from the remarkable skill that would be required for such extraordinary forgeries, there was no time in which such rearrangement was possible. The wide circulation of the new books and then the losing of the books to which there were references made, would demand a miracle. Human theories are often beyond all human conception. There was no room for the imagined falsification, there was no room for this tremendous change. The only possible interpretation is that we have books handed down from the days of the apostles, preserved by careful custodians ever since, and in such a way that the manuscript differences are brought before us to prevent our building on any doubtful word. Some will tell us that because we have manuscript differences we do not know what the inspired Scripture is. They will say, "You have not obtained verbal inspiration". But such an objection is a confusion of two things. We say that God's words as originally written were perfectly inspired. They reply What is the value of this thought if some word has been altered since? We answer, "If we had ONE manuscript which might have been altered a GREAT deal, and altered uncertainly, there would be some force in your objection", but when the multitude of manuscripts show us WHICH are the doubtful words, we are quite content to humbly acknowledge man has spoilt everything entrusted to him. In like manner, we have a hindering of the full MANIFESTATION of our 'salvation', that wondrous miracle which was entrusted to us. Man HAS spoilt everything, but we are content till we reach the glory to build our faith on (shall I say?) 59 words out of 60, or on 99 out of 100, and to wait until we reach the Lord's presence to know which is the 60th or 100th word. We acknowledge there are certain words, we acknowledge there are two or three verses in the New Testament, as to the authenticity of which there is a doubt, but we acknowledge also that these verses have been tracked down by the number of manuscripts, and we can say where an error has come in, and see how the mistake has been made. If Satan tried to confuse the issue by making someone write down incorrectly, God has given sufficient manuscripts to track down Satan's attack, and also to provide us with a humbling lesson. Alas, men write incorrectly and do everything incorrectly. Beloved friends, you well know that if all present attempted to take down a letter which might be dictated in this room, the manuscript copies would differ.

You know this, it is nothing strange, the difference of manuscript is to be expected. The remarkable thing is that there are such few differences, and God has preserved us many manuscripts to help His people, and to enable us to see the way in which His words were written.

Rather remarkably, too, the very opponents of Scripture give their testimony. The ancient heretics and the ancient infidels dealt in their way with the Scriptures, and, therefore, the opposing books which these wrote show that the Scriptures then existed. Their opposition has been overruled. The wrath of man praises God, and the remainder has been restrained.

It is a delightful evidence of Divine overruling to see that the Jews have handed down the Scripture which convicts them, and Christendom has handed down for example, the parable of the leaven, and other Scriptures which are so definitely against her practices. It is wondrous to notice the Lord's care over the manuscripts on the part of those who could not interpret them, or if they interpreted them, made a mistake as to the meaning. Their very misinterpretations, however, make God's own Truth to stand out the more definitely. I grant there are difficulties, sometimes we do not know how a word is spelled, sometimes we do not know which word is used. These, however, are a call to prayer, a call to humility, a call to gratitude for the Truth handed down - a call to deep prayerful study, a call to compare Scripture with Scripture, and thus there is much fruit as we give thanks in the Name of the Lord Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit, for the many blessings which we have received as accompaniments of His marvellous saving grace.

oOoOo

THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

Outline:-

1. The Reality of God's Truth and the Danger of Man's Opinion.
2. (a) How may we know?
(b) When is a passage to be taken Figuratively? and similar questions.
3. Thoughts on 1 Corinthians 2, and Psalm 25, and on the misuse of Truth.
4. Meaning of John 7.17.
5. The Right Attitude toward those who differ and yet who seem to love the Lord.

. . . .

Do not interpretations belong to God? With this thought in our mind, we humbly approach our subject. God has been pleased to give us a precious book, a book which is all absolutely inspired, a book which contains, in its original form, no error. Now we believe this with a heart-belief which is intensely practical. Often times a man's condition and wishes affect his belief. We want our belief to affect our condition and wishes, that, recognising GOD has spoken these things, we may ACT upon the word of the living God as if it were what it is - that it may be to us a reality, a miracle of Divine revelation! Thus shall we have no hesitation, but with happy devotedness, ACCEPT the Scriptures, and in the power of Spirit of God frame our life according to them. I suppose we all recognise that Truth is considerably affected by that which is placed in between ourselves and it, and by our own condition. This is as to everything. In front of you there is something which is very excellent, but let us suppose you do not look at it, you look at the reflection of it in a mirror made of bad glass, you do not see the original. There are certain defects as a result - you get the general outline, but you say, the defects somewhat hinder a full perception. A "translation" is a mirror. If it be a good translation, it is fairly good glass; if it be a bad translation, it is like some window-panes which distort everything.. It may even be like to a broken mirror. I go a step further - men will tell us they can

only believe what they can see. I cannot believe all that I do see. I have seen conditions among the heavenly bodies which I know do not exist. My eyes have falsified what I know to be there. I cannot trust my eyes, and I pity the man who DARES to depend on his eyes. So is it with Scripture. You have the original, you look in the mirror of the translation - at least, some are seeking by grace to put that mirror a little on one side and to go straight to the original: but still to some extent we all use the translation, and thank God for it. Yet we feel there is a further defect - our eyesight. Give me a poor mirror and good eyes, and I shall get along better than with a good mirror and eyes which distort. Now, if you and I are not walking with God our eyes distort the Truth, and we see what is not there, and we do not see what is there. I suppose many of you can sympathise with me. You have seen appearances among the heavenly bodies which you know are not there, and yet you have seen them; and there are plenty of people who behold things in Scripture which are not there, but they have seen them, and they are quite convinced that they are there. The fault is in their eyes, and the need is that something should be done for their eyes. While their eyes are wrong, they will continue to pervert the Scriptures. Absolute Truth is not realised by any of us in an imperfect condition. When we reach glory, we shall all be surprised at its fulness. I think you will understand what I mean, if I put it thus - You believe what you think Scripture sets forth. If what you think Scripture sets forth IS what Scripture sets forth, you believe what Scripture sets forth, but in proportion as your thinking and your perceiving fall short; so your believing falls short. There is not a single man who can dare to say without presumptuous pride, "I take the Scripture, exactly as it stands", in THIS sense of the expression. I am quite aware that in another context that SHOULD be our attitude - and indeed it should be our desire as to everything, but in this context we feel that all of us reduce the Scripture, and LOSE some of its force, before we believe it. We need to be humbled because we do not realise all that is there. Nevertheless, Truth exists. Oh, let us rejoice in this fact, beloved friends, there is such a thing as Truth. All the transcriptions and translations and realizations and interpretations do not alter the fact, THERE IS TRUTH. We are not dealing with that which is a

variable quantity. I was speaking to a Jewish man the other day, and he said, "I believe in PARTS of Scripture". I reminded him he was just taking the position which we have in the book of Genesis. The temptation to Eve was, You shall be as gods knowing good and evil, you will be the deciding ones, you will have the knowledge; he took the devil's bait, he wanted to be the deciding one, he accepted those parts of Scripture which agreed with what he thought. Now there are some people who read Scripture to criticise it: others who, by the grace of God, read it that the Lord's truth may criticise them. There are some who go to the Scripture in order that they may arrange it in accord with their wishes: others, by the grace of God, go to it that they may arrange their wishes according to it, and in the power of the Holy Spirit we want to be like those who are willing to be brought into line with the Truth, not to try and bring it into line with us. Every denial of the infallibility of Scripture tends to an emphasis on the fallibility of a man, or at least to human pride and self-confidence. Every emphasis on the infallibility of Scripture is itself humbling, and even in this connection, as a practical part of Truth, it is very precious and useful. We cannot be humbled too much, but it is easy to be humbled too little. We rejoice therefore, beloved friends, that God has brought us to accept the precious thought, and to confess that He has given His Truth which means us to know. As Prov. 1.6 puts it - "to understand the proverb and the interpretation, the words of the wise and their dark sayings". By the way, "the interpretation" may also mean "the sweetness". Surely, by the grace of God, we can enter into the spiritual meaning of this, "How sweet are Thy words" may be our prayerful and happy thought, If God's book of Truth has a real meaning, if it is not something to be twisted any way we like, but if it has a real meaning and we believe that God has given it, that we may understand, we enter into a forceful statement, "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things, prudent and he shall know them". And again our mind recollects the statement, "All the words of my mouth are righteous, there is nothing froward or perverse in them; they are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge". God does not wish His children to be in the dark, He expects that we will listen to His invitation, "My son, if thou wilt receive My words, and hide My commandments with thee..if thou

criest after knowledge..if thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, for the Lord giveth wisdom". We are told, "So many man, so many opinions". But there is one God and one Truth. We do not wish to walk as men, we desire that our opinions, as our other sins might be laid low and confessed. There are some people who are afraid to be DEFINITE. They seem to think that this firmness is unattainable. Beloved friends, we need grace to get out of this error. Truth us set before us that we may KNOW the things which are freely given us of God. Believers are not to be occupied with "I think" as to doctrine, any more than the "I hope" as to being saved. God has given His Word that we may know - KNOW a Person, and KNOW the Truth. Is it not clearly written, "These things have I written unto you, that ye may KNOW" and again, "Ye shall KNOW the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free?" Let us be very careful, however, that we seek grace to avoid both human extremes. One extreme is, SELF'S dogmatism, and the other extreme is self's uncertainty. Scripture is clear, and we shall see it more fully a little later. "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the Truth". You cannot jerk into a knowledge of the will of God. "If ye CONTINUE in My word". "CONTINUE thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of Whom thou hast learned them". The apostle said to Timothy, "Be in these things that thy profiting may appear to all". If we are to have the interpretation of Scripture, we must be in a right CONDITION. And so this leads us on to our second point, "HOW may we know?"

I feel that points 2 and 3 somewhat overlap, and I should like to take 1 Cor. 2 and Ps. 25 in this connection. HOW may we know? 1 Cor. 2 declares to us that "We have received not the Spirit of the world, but the SPIRIT WHICH IS OF GOD, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God. Which things we speak". Beloved friends, here is a definite statement - "That we may know the things which are freely given us of God". The apostle, in chapter 1 says the wisdom of this world is cast on one side, and then in chapter 3 "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness". We have received a wisdom, not of this age, nor of the princes of this age, who are coming to

nought,- the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages, the wisdom of God in a mystery, which none of the princes of this age knew, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Here then we see that if we are to KNOW God's teaching, it must be by the Spirit of God. Human intelligence fails. You may be the cleverest man in the world, and yet make the gravest mistakes. We have illustrations of this again and again. I recollect as a boy, when examined on Matt. 13 how a most learned examiner strongly objected to the interpretation that leaven was evil. I suppose I lost marks at the examination on this account. But how many there are who are exceedingly clever, and yet have no perception of the parts of Truth which cut against worldliness, and cut against the admixture with the things of this ruined age. Their intelligence is Hebrew grammar, their intelligence is Greek syntax, their intelligence is a brain full of vocabulary, but their intelligence is not the mind of God. It is most important that we should know Scripture in a truly spiritual way by being WITH God. I would speak to myself and plead with others, that we may have the leading of the Spirit of God, and that we may be LED of the Spirit - if we have been BORN of the Spirit, for it is the birthright of God's people thus to be led. But, beloved friends, let us remember, the leading of the Spirit of God is not an excuse for our own ideas and our own carelessness. If we label our own opinions "the leading of the Spirit", we are bringing that solemn sacred privilege into disrepute. The Pharisees asserted that the work of the Spirit of God was in the power of demons. It is not the same thing, but it is very serious, and in some respects similar, sin for us to attribute our own wishes to the Spirit of God, and to claim that we are guided by Him, when we are having our own way. If we are truly led by the Spirit of God, He will lead us IN THE SCRIPTURES. It is deeply important we should have an inner acquaintance of God's book. Before you go to a town, you may study the map, and know a fair amount about the locality. When you get there, you feel the arrangements are somewhat different from the map. You do not feel at home there; you know the names of the streets, you know just where you want to go, whereas in a part of London you may not know the names of the streets, but you know where you are and you know how to find your way about. There is a great difference between the two forms of knowledge. There are some people who know the names of the streets of the Bible. They know

the Bible facts - I have not a word to say against that, but they cannot find their way about spiritually, because they have never lived there. There are others who have lived there, sometimes they are, alas, careless and do not know the names of the streets (I should think as they live there, they might look up and notice the guide posts, and they might know a little more, that they might direct other people about) - but it is deeply important FIRST that we live there. Again, there are some people who have a grammar-and-vocabulary-knowledge of the Scriptures, even as some of us have learned languages. We know a number of words, but we could not speak grammatically. We know a number of words, but we cannot use the language, and there are many people who know a great deal of Scripture, and they can never use it because they do not possess it as their own language they have not used it. I believe, beloved friends, the more we use the Scriptures in our daily life, the more we shall know what they mean. The more we translate them into practice, the more shall we understand them. We must work the machinery to know just how it is arranged, not simply look at a picture of it. We need to bring the things of God into our daily life, and thus we shall obtain a wonderful key.

"If any one will to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine". I suppose that here we have the important thought of doing the will, and the way in which by grace we become accustomed to the meaning of Truth. But there is a tremendous force on "WILLING to do His will". It is not merely that we do it because we think we ought, or that we do this with a sense of religious pride, but because we are WILLING to do His will, and thus by the grace of God we are brought into harmony with the Writer of Scripture. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Ye are My friends, if ye do WHATSOEVER I command you". Now the friend is WITH the friend, and knows the STANDPOINT of the friend, and takes the same view as the friend, and He says, "I have called you friends. All things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you". There are some very strange things which people say, very strange things, and they are reported, and you hear them, at least you have an opportunity to hear them, from a third person, and when you hear them they seem extraordinary statements, and the one who informs you tells you what strange

beliefs such and such a person has. If you listen to this mode of conversation. (I am not sure that it is wise; rather I am sure it is unwise) - if you listen to it, you can oftentimes quickly answer, "I know he does not hold that belief, because he is a friend of mine, and I know his standpoint, and understand just what he means". Thus you say to the objector, "No, I can see just what mistake you have made. You have left one word out here, or altered one word there. I know just what he would say, because I am always with him". So it is with the things of the Lord. If you are with the other, you will know just what he means from the standpoint of fellowship. To approach Scripture from any other standpoint is to court failure. We need to be with the Author, we need to be in communion with the Author.

But there are other questions which rise up in the mind. A believer says, "How may I know to whom this passage is addressed?" Let us be careful in this connection, beloved friends. Do we agree that stealing is wrong, even if it is stealing Scripture? When a man of the world steals Divine statements which belong to those who are children of God, we say "This is terrible, he claims that God is his Father, it is most sinful". But if you and I claim a part of Truth which is not addressed to us, we are making a grave mistake. You would not open a letter addressed to someone else. You would not assume that a message written to someone else must be written to you because it came to your house; it might come to another member of the family; and there are parts of Scripture which are meant for other members of the family. True, we may be able to read the letter with them, we may be able to enjoy the facts. I suppose you have sometimes heard of arrangements which have been very encouraging to the one who has received the letter, and he has told you about them, he had read the letter to you, you have enjoyed with him that which is stated, and you have noticed that it means you have a share in his joy and a share in what is said to him, but you cannot say the whole letter belongs to you, and you cannot say the whole of Scripture promises belong to you. You must see to whom they are addressed. How can we tell? I suppose, beloved friends, the great thing is to be simple enough, and to be quiet enough, to know what God has set forth. You look to God's arrangements on Mount Sinai. "God spake all these words". He addressed them to Israel. "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt".

Now, you know very well that there are those in this land (and I beseech you, beloved friends, to treat it seriously), who will quote those verses, and ask God immediately after in prayer to incline their heart to keep that law, and all the time they KNOW that they never keep the seventh day, which God has marked out. They have no thought of keeping the seventh day which God has marked out. Indeed the seventh day does not belong to us in the present dispensation, but the attempt to apply a portion of the earlier Scriptures in a WRONG way produces this untruthfulness before God. At the present time we have seen many who take hold of parts of Scripture concerning earthly arrangements of vengeance, and they call upon believers to carry them out today. They will not look to whom the Scripture was addressed. There are those who, by grace, have their eyes open to see this error, but they will equally take hold of passages which speak of musical instruments, and plead for them at the present time among the Lord's people, whereas if a ritualist comes forward in favour of elaborate clothing, and brings forward a passage from the earlier Scriptures, they say, that belongs to the old dispensation. Let us be consistent. Let us see to whom the parts of Truth are addressed, and where we are definitely mentioned or implied. I suppose we are all aware that Scripture PRINCIPLES apply to all dispensations. The apostle, referring to the arrangements in a christian assembly makes the statement, "Saith not the law the same also"? But every part of the law reaches us as the law of Christ. Nothing has reached us of blessing, and nothing reaches us as a commandment except IN Christ. "If ye love Me keep My commandments" - that is the law IN which we are. In general, whatever is an unveiling of God's will in any dispensation applies to saints in other dispensations unless it is localized. God Himself shows where there is a limitation, just as we have seen in connection with ISRAEL and Exodus 20 the limitations as to us. But if you take all the other nine commandments, they are ALL brought before us in the New Testament as part of the law of Christ, but the fourth commandment is never thus brought before us. All the others are emphasized to show they are a transcript of that which is in accord with the character of God for all His people in all ages. The ONE "fourth commandment" is

not only left out in the epistles, but we distinctly read that if believers keep the seventh day they are in danger of losing at the judgment seat of Christ. It is a sin to keep religiously, as an ordinance, the seventh day at the present time; just as it is a sin now to be circumcised, whereas in the olden days it was to risk judgment not to be circumcised. But God makes clear when anything is put on one side. Arrangements are very definite as to circumcision and the sabbath being put away. So is it with animal sacrifices. We may rest assured God indicates His will somewhere in the Scripture. Here is a most important principle. In 1 Corinthians 2 you have "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual". We need to be simple enough to accept the Scripture as it stands. We need to be thorough enough to compare Scripture with Scripture. That is the key. So is it with respect to figurative passages. There are some dear children of God who will say "How can we know what is figurative?" Easily, in a number of passages, God in the context, or somewhere else, indicates what is a figure. I think that we reach a Divine principle and touchstone in this way. SOMEWHERE God explains everything else. It may not be on the same page. Abraham told a lie - we are not told it as a sin on that page, but elsewhere we are told of the sinfulness of a lie. God's servant Paul preached, mingling some confidence in human words, on Mar's hill - we are not TOLD there it was a sin, but elsewhere we are. Comparing Scripture with Scripture is important. If there is anything which is against God's teaching for us elsewhere we may be sure the command applies to someone else, or that we have misunderstood it, or that it is revealed to be figurative when we have taken it otherwise. God often says in the very passage, it is a figure, and as for example, where we have a "sign" set before us in Revelation, or the word "This is like" in so many of the picture-stories in the gospels. God indicates His own teaching. May I plead for the avoidance of pulling verses out of their context in this connection? Undoubtedly it is enjoyable to examine pearls individually, but be very careful that you do not cut the pearl in two, and remember that if you have the pearl necklace, if you pull one out of the context, you may break the necklace, and God means that we should be ADORNED WITH this kind of decoration. The book of Proverbs says so. We read of a Divine necklace there, and believers may have as many adornments of THIS character as they choose - and it is well to choose them. There are some

dear children of God who grasp hold of a verse like "He shall direct thy paths", and they leave out the first part, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him". They remember, "Lo, I am with you alway", and they forget "Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you, AND, lo, I am with you alway". They take the expression "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin", but they forget "If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another, AND the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin". Let us be careful to take verses in their setting, and thus we shall oftentimes be helped. I suppose every one is conscious of the fact that the devil tries to make us have some FAVOURITE opinions. Sometimes we think we have a little light which other people have not attained, and we are so glad about a certain point which we think we see. We emphasize it. Let me illustrate what I mean. I had a letter this morning which sought to interpret Matt. 24, The letter is from one whom I highly esteem in the Lord. The statement is made that the Lord's coming with power and might is the coming with His people because THEY are His power and might, and therefore they must be with Him first, that He might come with them. Now you will quite realize there is a form of interpretation which is very difficult to answer. It is easy to answer arguments, but it is VERY hard to answer assumptions. That has long been realised - assumptions are the most difficult to answer, and people can bring these forward and state them with the authority of Truth, and one does not know HOW to deal with them best. The only thing we can do is to ask them to prove where any Scripture says that the Lord's people are His power and might, and that this passage has such an allusion. By the way, it is not the word "power and might" in the passage, but "power and glory". You see the thought. One has a certain interpretation in the mind, and then having fixed that there, draws an inference and builds another storey in the house when the foundation has nothing on which to stand. INFERENCES are very precious, beloved friends, but be sure you have the foundation first. The inference from nothing is nothing. Be careful as to that. This has often led dear children of God astray, particularly when they are so glad they have reached some further thought that no one else has. There is always a measure of joy when we think we see something which

startles us, which is so attractive, and which may be an apparently spiritual thought. It may be right in itself, but NOT an interpretation of the passage we have in front of us, and therefore we read into the passage an interpretation which may be made the basis for another misinterpretation and that in its turn becomes the basis for another misinterpretation. We can hardly realise where the error will end. In this connection, let me plead for much care as to the use of types. Where the Holy Spirit says "This IS that", I believe this is that, but where a dear christian brother comes along and says "This is that", I say, I will accept it, if you give me a Scripture that illustrates. But the types, thus applied, confirm; they are not foundations. They confirm what is revealed elsewhere. If you say, "this is a beautiful picture of such and such things", but you cannot find those things in Scripture, I doubt you. Do you find them elsewhere in the Scripture? If you can find them elsewhere in the Scriptures, and the type can illustrate and emphasize, I rejoice in the type, I rejoice in the parable; but if you are saying "Here is a picture of this" or, "Here is a picture of that", without any authority from the Lord, there is grave danger. Some dear children of God have brought forward the case of Enoch. They have said, "Enoch was caught up without dying, before the flood, therefore children of God will be caught up before the tribulation". But, first of all, care will be needed as to saying that the flood is a picture of the tribulation. In the light of Matthew 24, I think they will find it hard to prove that the flood is a picture of the tribulation. Secondly, Enoch was caught up several hundred years before, because his son Methuselah died in the year of the flood, and he was nine hundred and sixty-nine years old, and Enoch was translated when his son was only three hundred years - so that we have brought before us a considerable period. No, beloved friends, when we have a case like that, have we any evidence that Enoch was put before us a type of the Lord's people caught up as to TIME and CIRCUMSTANCES and ARRANGEMENTS? Scripture does not say so, nor should we assume the type, and then say "Therefore". Give me Scripture statements and then let the types illustrate it. Let us be very clear upon this point. You obtain a book with some pictures in it. You look at the pictures, and you write the story to fit the pictures. Then you read the story which the pictures were to illustrate - they are not the same. You can understand what I mean if I put it in

that simple way. Be very careful about writing the book from the pictures. You may have some points right, but you will have some points wrong. Beloved friends, we are just taking this in a very simple homely way, but I do trust by the grace of God, we shall be kept from being led astray and from leading other people astray, because that is a very serious thing. To cause any one else to stumble in practice is wrong, to cause any one else to stumble in doctrine is wrong. We need grace to keep to the Truth, for our own sake, for the sake of others and for the sake of the Lord's glory.

Now at the end, we remember there are our children of God who differ. There are those we come across who seem to be children of God, and they do not agree. How shall we treat them? Coldness is always out of place. Love belongs to children of God. Love is the characteristic of children of God, but love is the most hating thing in the world. If we love intensely, we shall hate definitely. The mark of the believer is to hate evil, to hate that which is against God. Now, that being the case, we must hate every error WHEREVER it is found. If we have seen our own errors, we need to see them with horror and with repentance, not simply the thought, I have learned something fresh, but I have UNlearned something that was corrupt. It is a mercy to be delivered from our errors, and I know the Lord wants us to rejoice in the fresh teaching He gives us. THE LORD does not wish His people to be miserable, they are to have the joy of the Lord as their strength, and to learn something more, but we should rejoice with trembling when we realize that we have held error, and perhaps spread error, and we need grace to walk very softly all our days, knowing how easy it is to be deflected from the will of the Lord. And, therefore, if we hate error in ourselves, we should hate error, in others, and if there are differences among children of God, there should be a seeking to come together to deal with those differences, that believers may come to oneness of mind.

Question. Did you not intend to take Psalm 25?

Answer. Psalm 25 says, "The meek will He guide in judgment and the meek will He teach His way". Link that with

the contrasted expression "They waited not for His counsel". Here is a deeply important thought. "They waited not for His counsel". If we are not meek, if we are not quiet before God we shall lose His instruction, we shall lose the guidance which He waits to give.

oOoOo

AN EXTRACT FROM -
HELP AND GUIDANCE
THROUGH GOD'S GRACIOUS HAND IN HISTOERY

If, beloved friends, a believer who had only looked at God's arrangements clearly marked out in the Scripture, were suddenly brought into this wide and wicked city, what would amaze him? He would not only see the evil of the world, but one of his greatest surprises would be that those who bore the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ differed and were unconcerned about these differences, or, otherwise, quarrelled about them instead of being humbled before the Lord. He would be surprised to see those who professed the Name of the Lord meeting in different buildings, not for convenience' sake because they were too many to meet in one, but for choice' sake. He would see an empty (or comparatively empty) building with an outward gorgeous parade, and then would find other empty buildings near in many districts of this city. He would find, moreover, some buildings filling with those who gathered to hear social discourses, to listen to beautiful singing, to have a parade of earth's fashions - anything and everything but the worship of God. And all on which such an one, suddenly transplanted into this land, would look, would surely suggest to him that there was a vast change from that which God appointed. Now this change has not come in a moment. Between us and the day of Pentecost there are nearly nineteen centuries. Evil quickly came in and evil spread. There were temporary lulls and temporary reformations, but the sad fact remains that the prophetic parables of the Lord Jesus have been most fully illustrated. The tares are mingled with the wheat. The mustard tree of a governing christendom is very manifest. And the woman has

hid the leaven in three measures of meal, and the doctrine of God is almost all leavened. Truth has been twisted. In almost everything with regard to God's Book there are wide diversities of opinions. Take one or two simple things. Take the question as to whether a believer is saved eternally, or may lose his salvation and "fall away". You will find those who profess the Name of the one Lord contradicting one another on this point. Take the setting forth of God's own infinite grace causing that there are sinners saved out from every nation. You will find the majority of professing christians defining that grace as God's reply to something good in man. Take the unveiling of eternal punishment. It is only a minority of those who profess the Name of the one Lord who now acknowledge its reality, and only a minority of that minority are affected by it in their daily life. Take the question of arrangements of gatherings for God's people. You will find a large number asserting that Christ appointed and approved Infant Sprinkling, a large number rightly asserting that He only appointed Believers' Immersion. Do you wonder that the man of the world turns away disgusted? The amazing fact is that those who bear the Name of the one Lord are not concerned about these differences. Here is a standing disgrace AGAINST THE NAME OF THE LORD. It looks to those who gaze on as if the Scripture were a mystifying Book, whereas its utterances are plain to those who have understanding. As the last verse of Hosea puts it, the wise and prudent(not with earth's wisdom) will own God's ways, but the transgressors will fall therein. "If anyone will to do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine" is still the wondrous statement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and differences are not the accidents of circumstances. Differences are not the desirable variations that some would have us believe, but differences are the evidence of hearts out of harmony with the Lord. I do not mean only that those who hold almost all error have their hearts out of harmony with the Lord. Much truth can be held, and the heart still be out of harmony, for a large amount of truth is 'held' among believers at the present day just as the Mohammedan holds his Mohammedanism - he is trained to it. There is a mental grasp without a spiritual hold. Many things that believers accept, they accept(even though the beliefs are true), not because God's

Holy Spirit has convinced them, but because they have been brought up in certain surroundings. Beloved friends, unless truth holds us, unless everything we accept¹⁸ on the authority of the Spirit of God, we are in a perilous condition. Satan may wrest from us our beliefs unless God's Holy Spirit has put them there. These things should search us to our very hearts. Believers differing, believers arrangements upside-down, and so confused with unbelievers that you cannot say who have passed from death unto life, and who are only worse than the foolish virgins - how solemn is all this! THE LORD knoweth them that are His, but we cannot tell except as those who name the Name of the Lord Jesus depart from unrighteousness. Man looketh at the outward appearance, necessarily, and even believers cannot judge of all the inward condition. By their FRUITES ye shall know them. Undoubtedly we can tell much of that which is within by the outside, but we cannot claim by inspiration to know the inside, and therefore we have to leave the greater number of professing christians and say "I do not know if they are saved or not. THE LORD knoweth them that are His"

But the outlook, though dark, is brightened. Nothing has taken God by surprise. The ruin, though sinful, has been fore-revealed. It is therefore for us to seek a plain path because of those who observe us, humbled by the ruin, but not despondent on account thereof. God lives: truth remains: the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, and though the sects, systems and schemes of men exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, yet His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure; and by all manner of means(yet, in another sense, by the wondrous UNIQUE means of the Gospel of Grace) will He prove that He has a power unto salvation grasping guilty sinners in all manner of surroundings, and bringing them to a saving knowledge of the truth, so that there shall not be one vacant seat at the marriage-supper of the Lamb, for Christ SHALL see of the travail of His soul.

To understand something of the present, and of God's will for us in the present, we must look back over the past. The Scriptures are full of history, and we may see God's hand in history. It is hard to read, not because it is absent, but because our eyesight is faulty. Some will tell us that the hist-

orical parts of Scripture did not need inspiration. I venture to suggest that no perfect history could be written without inspiration. Anyone who has tried to write about history, or to talk about it, must feel the impossibility. Write your own autobiography, and you will understand what I mean. Every man has a bias, and that bias comes into everything, and bias is sin. O for grace to look back upon history more than ever from God's standpoint! We know He has worked all along the ages, for He promised so to do, but HIS work has been largely unknown. There are many whose names are in the Book of life who are not in the book of fame. God has had His purpose, and God has worked out His purposes, and not infrequently His saints have been background saints, and His works background works. CHRIST was despised and rejected of men. The national historians did not write His history. Search through heathen writers, you will find few allusions to Christ. When you find human writers, profane historians, referring a great deal to christianity, you begin to doubt if it is christianity at all. That which comes to the front is oftentimes not of God. The work of God has a long history in heaven but a short history on earth. Christendom has many histories on earth, but from the Divine-approval standpoint only a few pages; ah, may we not say less than that? for it is like the nations "Less than nothing and vanity"!

In older times, before Christ came, God was pleased to work in various ways with Israel. He led them up out of Egypt with that wondrous strength before which neither Pharaoh nor sea could stand, and He brought them in, after meeting their needs for forty years in that wilderness of pits and snares and dangers. He led them in, but they rebelled. They had no king, but God was pleased after Joshua, and after the elders who outlived Joshua, to raise up judges. The Books of Moses tell of the law, and Moses' life is brought before us in four books. This leads to Joshua, and Joshua leads to Judges with an appendix Ruth, and then we reach a revival introducing the kingdom. Four books of the later Scriptures give the life of a Greater than Moses, of One Who kept the law. The gospels lead to the Acts in which we see the work of the Holy Spirit, Who as Joshua, led into the land, but when the apostles were rejected and the elders who outlived them passed away, there came the parallel with the time of the Judges. Thanks be unto God some of us believe that there will be a reviving, as in the days of Samuel, before the antichrist (like to Saul), rules, and we look beyond the antichrist Saul to the reign of the Greater than David and Solomon, whose kingdom shall never be divided, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end.

This book and many other free publications from the same author can be obtained from:

*Scriptural literature for Believers
Gottlieb-Daimler-Str.1
74343 Sachsenheim
GERMANY
Answer phone for orders: 0049 7147 271 678*

Different languages are available: e.g. German, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Polish, Portuguese, Arabic, Romanian

Publications from the same author:

- ❖ THE DEITY OF CHRIST
- ❖ A CHRISTIAN FAMILY
- ❖ THE LORDS SUPPER
- ❖ GOD'S APPOINTMENTS FOR BRETHREN AND SISTERS
- ❖ THE GODHEAD OF GOD
- ❖ THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
- ❖ "THAT BLESSED HOPE" – TITUS 2.13
- ❖ THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
- ❖ "TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY" 2 THES.2.7
- ❖ "THE HOUR" – REV.3.10
- ❖ THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN IN SCRIPTURE
- ❖ BOUGHT WITH A PRICE - THE CHRISTIAN, THE WORLD AND ITS WAREFARE
- ❖ *Book: **The Parables of the Lord Jesus***

„Typewritten Notes“

Following notes of addresses by Percy W. Heward are available for free:

- No. 1 Christ in the Psalms
- No. 2 Greater than Christ Exalted
- No. 5 Genealogies of Christ
- No. 6 Devotion unto the Lord
- No. 9 Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God
- No. 11 The Priesthood of the Lord Jesus
- No. 13 The Promised Reviving
- No. 17 Operations of the Holy Spirit
- No. 20 Predestination and Election
- No. 21 Romans 9 and 10
- No. 25 Types and Shadows of Christ
- No. 29 Gathering to the Name of the Lord - Part 1
- No. 30 Gathering to the Name of the Lord - Part 2
- No. 31 The Glorious Church (Eph.5,2)
- No. 32 The One Body
- No. 33 Supernatural Gifts
- No. 36 Acts 7
- No. 39 Last Section of Second Gospel
- No. 40 Hebrews 13
- No. 43 John 3,14-30
- No. 45 Personal Antichrist
- No. 46 Babylon to be Rebuilt
- No. 47 Destruction of Babylon
The Church and the Tribulation,
- No. 48 with thoughts on the Gospel of the Kingdom
- No. 49 Daniel 5,25

No.	50	Daniel 9
No.	52	The Mystery
No.	54	Unveiling of Messianic Prophecy
No.	55	Matthew 24
No.	58	Consideration of some Questions on Prophecy
No.	59	Revelation 8
No.	60	Revelation 12
No.	62	Bodies of the Lord's People
No.	68	God's Appointed Method of Preaching to the Unsaved
No.	69	Redeeming the Time
No.	73	Revised Version of the Later Scriptures
No.	83	Lent, Good Friday, and Easter
No.	84	Dispensational Outline
No.	85	Various aspects of the death of Christ
No.	91	Deity of the Lord set forth in earlier scripture
No.	98	Resurrection of our Beloved Lord
No.	100	Christ's Relation to the Law
No.	102	Some of those things which are most surely believed among us
No.	105	Prayers of Christ
No.	106	Adornment
No.	114	Baptism in the Spirit
No.	117	Romans 13
No.	122	Last Week of Christ's Earthly Life and the First in Resurrection
No.	131	Jehoshaphat and World-bordering
No.	134	Socialism in the Light of Scripture
No.	135	Philippians 2
No.	139	Riches of the Lord and of His Redeemed
No.	140	Meaning and Helplessness of Socialism.
No.	146	1.Corinthians 11.1-15
No.	153	Clusters of Types in the Tabernacle
No.	155	Isaiah 55.1,2

- No. 157 Gods Gracious Provision for His People of His Truth
- No. 159 Inspiration
- No. 165 The Parousia
- No. 174 Aspects of the Pilgrim Path
- No. 177 Interpretation of Scripture
- No. 180 Luke 3,21,22
- No. 181 The Lampstand (Tabernacle Types)
- No. 186 Rising Early
- No. 187 The Laver
- No. 189 Humanity of Christ
- No. 209 Coats of skin (Gen 3:21)
- No. 210 No room - Luke 2
- No. 211 Christ as the shepherd
- No. 212 Regeneration
- No. 215 Holy Spirit work - some aspects (John 14-16)
- No. 216 Sidelights on the Deity of Christ
- No. 220 Holy Scriptures
- No. 240 Parables of the Lord Jesus - Matth.25,1-13
- No. 260 Forbearance and Longsuffering of God
- No. 327 That day
- No. 328 Attitude toward the failures of other people
- No. X1 Relationship of Rom.7 and 8
- No. X2 1.Cor.11 - 14
- No. X3 Food question - and the Believers
- No. X4 An Address on Christmas
- No. X5 Living word and ... Hebr.4,12
- No. X6 That blessed hope - Tit.2,13