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"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD."
COL.3.1

1 CORINTHIANS 3.12.

An Address (revised)

***At Forest Gate E. 7.
8th July, 1915***

by

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EXTRACT FROM AN ADDRESS ON

1 CORINTHIANS 3.12.

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward,
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. . . . “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble”. I suppose all of us have been accustomed to read the passage thus, “Gold, silver, costly stones, - wood, hay, stubble”; and you will hear expressed a general tendency to tremble lest we build upon the foundation wood, hay and stubble. I am not clear that that is the Divinely appointed division. Shall we turn to the earlier Scriptures for God’s key to this passage? First regarding gold. There are a number of verses, and I shall be glad if some brethren would cooperate in reading them. 1 Kings 6.20, “And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in height thereof; and he overlaid it with pure gold, and so covered the altar which was of cedar”. Likewise we find it in verses 21, 22, 28, 30, 32. There is such a stress in this chapter upon GOLD. The 35th verse might be read. “And he carved thereon cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work”. Chapter 7, verse 48-51. “And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the Lord; the altar of gold, and the table of gold; whereupon the showbread was, and the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps and the tongs of gold, and the bowls and the snuffers and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple. So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the Lord. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; even the silver and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord”. So here we find gold, first for the building,

and then for the vessels of the building. As to the building, compare 1 Cor. 3; as to the vessels of the building, compare 2 Tim. 2.

SILVER. 1 Chron. 22.13,15, “Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord, an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance; timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto”. “Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise, therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee”. Those passages also give to us the stress on stone and timber. The 28th chapter gives us silver together with gold. From verse 14 to 17. “He gave of gold by weight for things of gold, for all instruments of all manner of service; silver also for all instruments of silver by weight, for all instrument for every kind of service; even the weight for the candlesticks of gold, and for their lamps of gold, by weight for every candlesticks, and for the lamps thereof; and for the candlesticks of silver by weight, both for the candlestick, and also for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick. And by weight he gave gold for the tables of showbread, for every table; and likewise silver for the tables of silver; also pure gold for the flesh hooks, and the bowls and the cups; and for the golden basons he gave gold by weight for every bason, and likewise silver by weight for every bason of silver”. It would almost seem that Solomon undervalued the silver, that it was meant to have a greater prominence than Solomon gave it. There is a Divine stress here upon Lampstands of silver by weight, and in chapter 29 we have the deeply important verse 2 which contains the mention of all the four linked materials of Corinthians. I should like that verse read together with verses 3, 4, 5 and 7. “Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God. The gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood, onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold, and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses withal: The gold for things of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and

for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers. And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" ... "And gave for the service of the house of God, of gold five thousand talents, and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron". Here we have a stress on much gold and on much silver, and both are mentioned with respect to overlaying and with regard to vessels.

You have already had the emphasis upon stones, and let us remember the term "precious stones" is used in two ways. First, for precious stones like the onyx for decorating the house, and secondly for costly stones, large hewn stones to make a foundation. Both are called in Scriptural language "precious". 1 King 5.17 "And the king commanded and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house". Chapter 6.7 "And the house when it was in building was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, so that there neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building". The summary of all the buildings of Solomon seem to emphasize this thought of costly or precious stones for beautiful and royal structures. Chapter 7.9-11 "And these were of costly stones, according to the measure of hewed stones, sawed with saws within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside toward the great court. And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits. And above were costly stones after the measure of hewed stones, and cedars". You will notice the reference to cedars. We have already seen timber and stone connected. We also find fir wood and olive wood mentioned very definitely with respect to the temple. But perhaps it would be well to read one or two verses. 1 King 5.6, "Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants, and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint; for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians". Chapter 6.15, "And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir". So, likewise, when the house was repaired, we find a similar stress. 2 Kings 12.12, "And to masons and hewers of stone, and to

buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the Lord, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it". 2 Chron. 34.11, "Even to the artificers and builders gave they it, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to floor the house which the kings of Judah had destroyed". So with the second temple, Ezra 6.3,4. "In the first year of Cyrus the king, the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundation thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; with three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber; and let the expenses be given out of the king's house. The fifth verse alludes to gold and silver, and might be read as well, though it speaks of the vessels. "And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God".

I take it therefore, dear friends that we recognize in the earlier Scriptures, a house of God which contained gold, silver, costly stones, and wood; but there was no hay, there was certainly no stubble. Here then is the contrast. Gold, silver, costly stones, wood, belong to a temple. An ORDINARY house is not built with gold, silver and costly stones! It may have wood, but it will not have gold, silver, or costly stones. Here is the mark that the work of God at Corinth was intended to be very beautiful, but it was quite possible for some to add hay and stubble. The word "hay," is elsewhere translated "grass", and it brings before us the goodness of MAN. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness of MAN is as the flower of the field'. Now that word used for man in Peter is the very word here for "hay". I take it therefore that God means and assembly of His people is to be of His people exclusively, and the goodness of MAN must not be brought into the house of God. It will not remain, it will not continue, it may be beautiful in the eyes of the world. The grass may seem very attractive for a while, but it will not do for building. Further, STUBBLE is connected with building. When we turn back to the poor captive Israelites in the book of Exodus, we find that the cruelty of Pharaoh was marked in this very connection. Up till a certain period they were helped in measure, but then Pharaoh was very angry with them, and imputing to them idleness, he said, Let there more work be laid upon the men, and let them

not regard vain words. So in Exod. 5.10 it adds, "And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake unto the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. Go ye, get you straw when ye can find it, yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw". But what was the need for stubble? What was the need for straw? For making bricks. Hay and stubble then might be well included IF the building were to contain bricks. What is the first brick building of Scripture? The tower of Babel. There were no bricks in the Tabernacle, there were no bricks in the Temple. Bricks are in Scripture linked with Babylon. So we find the altar of bricks in Isaiah 65. Hay and stubble would fit in with Babylonianism. The hay and stubble would be useful for building a treasure house for Pharaoh, but not a treasure house for God. No bricks! Bricks speak of the goodness, the imitation piety of man. The root meaning implies "whiteness". We knew how Nebuchadnezzar built Babylon in after days with bricks, and the bricks of Babylon were used for other cities and villages, when Babylon was destroyed. To this day the burnt bricks can be found, stamped with the mark of Nebuchadnezzar. The brick is linked with Babylon, and God will have none of it in the Temple of Solomon, for God will have nothing of Babylonianism in a house of His. A Temple of God is to be a contrast with the human arrangement. A house of God is to be the opposite of a man-made organism. Here we have a definite stress on that which is well-pleasing in the sight of God. But it is quite POSSIBLE to bring Babylonianism into a professing, yea, to add it unto a real, work of God; to build upon the foundation, hay and stubble: not simply hay and stubble in what I might call their raw state:- no man would be so foolish as to get some gold and some silver, and then to put stubble in between, and some hay on top. The idea is absurd. But any man might prepare the hay and stubble in the form of dry bricks, and incorporate them into the building, and that is the danger, namely, to bring Babylonianism and Babylonians into the work of God. The Lord only wants His people to be there whom He has appointed, whom He has marked out. If any man build Babylonianism into the work of God, the work of every man shall be made manifest for the day shall declare it. The day will show what is the work of God, and what is not the work of God. But you say, Will not earthly fire destroy the timber, and do we not read that the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is? I suppose this has been one of the main reason why many have thought we should have the break after gold,

silver and precious stones; and THEN wood, hay and stubble. But the fire would have a strange effect on some of the precious stones that garnish the house, if we are dealing with merely earthly fire. Moreover, fire would affect gold, and silver, when they were arranged in a building, and would affect their condition, if it were merely literal earthly fire, but this is literal heavenly fire, and we cannot drag it down to an exact earthly parallel. Where have we Scripture with respect to burning? Do we not find a definite testimony that they left off to build the Tower of Babel, and what is the appearance of the Tower of Babel now? It is as though it had been burnt, and what is the prophesy as to Babylon? The Lord will roll thee down, and make thee a burnt mountain. Everything that is of Babylonianism must be dealt with in fire. When Achan introduced Babylonianism we find, they stoned them with stones, and burnt them with fire. He had a goodly Babylonish garment. It is true that the Temple with its gold and silver, costly stones as well as well the wood, was burned in fire: but that was because it was only a typical Temple, and because of the failure of Israel. That which is of God, and by God's appointment, shall stand the test of the fire. This heavenly fire will not remove that which God has arranged, and if we are His dear people and if our service is that which pleases Him, the fire will test our work, but will not destroy it. But if we have introduced those who are not the Lord's people into an assembly of God, the fire will test they are not His; if we have sought after numbers, (for a brick building can be soon put up), the fire will search out, beloved friends. The sects of man are brick building in large measure, and the fire will test. We want that there should be an emphasis upon believers, and believers only, being gathered to their Lord, - and object an assembly for Himself to dwell therein. There is no such thing as "public" worship, in the way men understand the term. There is the worship of the people of God, - it is a private worship of those who have been brought out from the world, who are related to the Lord. God does not want a Babylonian structure, but a temple, a parallel with the Jerusalem-temple. It is not that we are to get tremendous buildings, as that immense amount of brick work in Babylon. We do not want the work to be larger than God has marked out. The Temple of Solomon could not compare in its size with many other structures. It was not so large as many a heathen temple, but owed its chief value to the fact that God had appointed it. Beloved friends, we do not want earthly greatness, we simply want in the power of the Holy Spirit, whatever the Lord arranges, and that He may indwell now, and that He may indwell in that day, that we may not build

up, individually, or collectively, hay and stubble, but that we may build a work in the light of our coming Lord, so that when any man's work abides he shall receive a reward. We are told of those who repaired the Temple, that they received certain gifts, certain rewards in connection with so doing, and those who are occupied with the Lord's temple shall receive a reward. But if any man's work shall be burnt up, he shall suffer loss. Individually he will have no house in which to dwell with God. Collectively he will realize with others who have helped in this failure, he will realize how God is grieved by that which is not His appointment. Oh that we might be concerned to build that which He has arranged, and to live in the light of His will and unto His glory.

Further addresses available:

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