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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.

THE BELIEVER, AND FAITH IN THE LORD

AS TO THE BODY,

AND THE LITTLE THINGS OF DAILY LIFE.

An Address (revised) at

61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, E.

26th December, 1917.

by

PERCY W. HEWARD.

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THE BELIEVER, AND FAITH IN THE LORD

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An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward.

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Romans 8. 1-23.

The subject before us, beloved friends, is a somewhat difficult one, lest anything be stated beyond Scripture, lest there be any proposals which will be used of the evil one to unbalance children of God. It is entitled "The Believer, and Faith in the Lord, as to the Body, and the Little Things of Daily Life". Shall we therefore seek God's especial enabling that we may be preserved from confusion and failure? (A season of prayer).

At the outset I want that there should be impressed upon many minds thoughts which God graciously brought before us yesterday. We need to remember the BOUNDLESS privileges of believers with respect to prayer. Prayer is a resting upon God, a confidence in Himself, a claiming of His promises, and an enjoyment of His power, a hand which grasps blessings, and a wrestling against evil powers who would hinder the believing path of progress. If we read through the Gospels we are compelled to notice the Divine emphasis on faith: - "According to your faith be it unto you"; "O woman, great is thy faith"; "If ye have faith and doubt not"; "If ye have faith as a grain

of mustard seed"; "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel"; and on the other hand, "How is it that ye have no faith?" "Where is your faith?" "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" We remember the words, "Why could not we cast him out?" and the Lord answered with a reference to unbelief. We call to mind the solemn record of the Holy Spirit, the words quoted from the Lord Jesus already prepare us for them, - "He did not there many mighty works because of their unbelief". God delights to be trusted and honoured. Faith is mighty because God, in Whom it believes, is almighty. Let us realise further that we are pondering the position of BELIEVERS in the world. We are not dealing with the case of the ungodly. That the Lord Jesus healed many who knew Him not, is true; that God is the Preserver of ALL, as well as specially of those that have faith, is true; but we are not considering this general phase of God's work; we are thinking definitely of the Scripture testimony as to believers, and the faith to which God calls them with respect to their bodies. In wonderful love those who are in Christ Jesus have been brought out from the death and depths of sin. "Ye who some time were far off are made nigh". "Quickened together with Christ". "Raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus". "That which hath been born of the Spirit is spirit"; but what about the body of a believer? The believer is still the same person, he has still the body, and it is a body of humiliation. Concerning this we read, "If Christ be

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in you, the body is dead because of sin". The quickening of our mortal bodies is future, the future tense is definitely used, - "He SHALL quicken your mortal bodies". While believers are in this tabernacle the words of 2 Cor. 5 apply, - "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened". As Romans 8 puts it, "We ourselves which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body". This mortal shall put on immortality, this corruptible shall put on incorruption. But at present the body is still subject to death and to weakness. The believer's problem is now continually in connection with his body. Satan tempts through the body. We express ourselves through our body. You cannot see a man's life, you cannot see the personality, but we are able to express ourselves through that material body which God has in wonderful wisdom provided for us. I need hardly say this thought gives a wondrous power to the Divine words respecting believers, of (and to) whom the apostle said, "The body of Christ". If we are to be the expression of the Lord Jesus, the manifestation of the unseen Lord, the declaration of what He is, how vast is the thought; it is, indeed, a wondrous privilege to be acted upon by Him, and to act for Him. The believer's difficulty is with the body, for if the body is dead because of sin, the body has not yet been brought into the glorious liberty when we shall have it fashioned like unto His body of glory. Hence we must not speak of the body as if it

had already shared the resurrection. It was a grievous sin of some that they said the resurrection was past already. Believers have frail bodies to use for the Lord. On the one hand, the body has deeds which are to be mortified; on the other hand, we are to present our bodies a living sacrifice. Those two aspects have been to me, and perhaps to you, a measure of difficulty. Mortifying the deeds of the body, yet presenting its members. But have we not a measure of help from James 2, where we are told that, as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. Thus we have a definite statement that the body OF ITSELF is dead. In other words the body viewed simply as that which is physical bears the physical results of Adam's sin. But it is not in itself a sinful personality. It is simply a dead thing in itself. It is an apparatus which, because of its relationship to the fall, is very easily used by Satan, but it is an apparatus which is not essentially part of Satan's authority. We have been redeemed, and therefore, though our body has not yet shared the result of that redemption, we are to present our members as instruments of righteousness. This is the high privilege of those who are in Christ Jesus.

I think from what we have already seen, the majority will agree that "perfect health" is not to be expected in the present dispensation. If you will find me the believer who is enjoying (as we use the term), perfect health, and who claims that this is his condition, I am inclined to think I shall feel very sorry for him. "We that are in this tabernacle do groan,

being burdened". We find it clearly marked out in the Scriptures that those who, in the present age, were faithful men of God, had a physical strain; and it becomes every believer to show that love to the Lord which, in the words of 2 Corinthians 8, will be up to his power, and beyond his power. The believer is expected to be an enthusiast for the Lord, he is to be counted mad for Christ's sake, he is not to husband his physical resources; on the contrary he is to be willing not only to spend, but to be spent, and to leave the results in the hand of Him Who answers the prayer, "Give us day by day the bread that comes upon us", and Who fulfils the promise "As thy days, so shall thy strength be". God has not promised His people a large surplus of physical strength. Indeed, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth" applies very forcibly in this connection. If a believer says, "I do not like to use up all my strength", he is a capitalist of the most dangerous kind. He needs to be one who manifests a devoted love to the Lord which will use up that strength, and trust in God for more as the need arrives.

We pass next to ponder why what we call "Illnesses" come. I do not feel quite at home with some terms. I am somewhat afraid of the word "illness", lest the believer should forget that the Lord does all things well. The word "accident" likewise is a dangerous word. We are all apt to use terms which imply, and encourage, the standpoint of the world, but believers are not only saved out from the world, but out from the world's standpoint. Their position is different, their possessions

are different, and their phraseology should be different as well. We are reminded in Acts 10. 38 that the Lord Jesus Christ went about healing all that were oppressed of the Devil, and in Luke 13. 16 we are told of a woman whom Satan had bound for 18 years. Prepared as we are to find that Scripture sets forth the power of evil spirits, in those who were possessed, like the Gadarene demoniac; prepared as we are to understand certain cases of madness which the Scripture brings before us as linked with evil spirits; are we also prepared to find that which is contrasted with "possessions" of evil spirits, nevertheless stated as something resulting very definitely from the work of Satan? If we are prepared or not, that is the Scripture language. You will recollect, beloved friends, the case of Paul. He had a thorn in the flesh, and to this he referred as a strengthlessness. It was an angel of Satan to buffet him. This was not a case of possession, but a case of conflict, which is widely different. The apostle was not submissive to the indwelling of an evil spirit, but he knew what it was to experience the antagonism of an evil spirit, and his strain physically was largely caused in this connection. We are reminded by the earlier Scriptures that all things are under God's power and God's control. We notice that God appoints leprosy to TEACH something. I do not only refer to Leviticus, but to the case of Moses, suddenly struck and suddenly healed; to the case of Miriam, thus reproved, and then prayed for; to the case of Gehazi to whom

the leprosy was transferred from Naaman. Job's experience is remarkable. By God's permission, Satan attacked him with a most terrible form of disease, which appears to have certain marks of virulent leprosy; but Satan was hedged about by the Divine authority; and God had lessons to teach Job, and to teach us, through all that was permitted. Hence if we recognise Satan's working with respect to illness, we recognise, beyond this, a Divine sovereignty, a Divine control. Nothing can touch the believer without the Divine appointment. The work of an evil spirit in persuading Ahab to go up to Ramoth Gilead, - the work of evil spirits in working out a Divine manifestation of anger against sin in the book of Revelation (ch. 9) - these things will illustrate what I mean. GOD is over all, and whatever He permits is with a purpose. We find that Satan delights to attack the bodies of the Lord's people. Even after death he wished for the body of Moses; and if one ~~what~~ ^{has} who^{has} professed the name of the Lord is removed from the fellowship of the Lord's people, the Holy Spirit refers to a delivering to Satan that the FLESH may be destroyed.

There are various Scripture words used for forms of what men call "illness", and they are ALL used with perfect wisdom. For example, we see in Matthew's Gospel, our beloved Lord healing all manner of disease, and all manner of sickness among the people. The two words there denote, respectively, the ordinary aspect of disease, particularly

including, it may be, organic disease; and that form of disease which may be regarded as a "weakness", a lack of strength under which a man sinks, and to which he yields with an absence of enduring hardness. Now it is deeply important to find that NEITHER of those words is employed for believers' physical sufferings, in the epistles, though they are definitely before us in Matthew's Gospel more than once. It is evident they are as definitely kept out from the epistles. Likewise is it with the word "scourge" which is used in the Gospels. We find it in Mark 5. 29, 34 described as the plague. In the epistle we read of the believers' plague, but it is a scourging which they suffer at the hand of man, a scourging like that of Paul and Silas with regard to Phillippi's prison. Now all these words are kept out from the epistles, in their PHYSICAL use; and the one term that remains is the word "not strength" (ἀσθενεια*) which has passed over into English; but which in its Scripture use is, as every word, if only we have eyes to see, beautifully definite and encouraging. The apostle in 2 Corinthians 11.30 refers to his own experience of "infirmities". Here we find the word. In 12. 5 he adds a further reference, and in Galatians 4 he tells how that because of infirmity in the flesh, he took - not a holiday - but an opportunity in of preaching the Gospel in Galatia. He alludes, moreover, to Timothy's frequent infirmities in I Timothy 5. 23. Now this term might almost be rendered "prostration". It is not, I think, primarily employed to denote ORGANIC disease,

but rather that which is an accompaniment of the present condition of the weak physical frame. For, as Hebrews 5 puts it, man, at the present time, has infirmity, and even the high priest of Israel who was appointed in high honour was no exception to this. The word is before us with its Divine meaning, that believers may realise something of what they are to expect physically. Those who tell us that believers should be enjoying perfect health seem to forget that this would assume the resurrection were past, would deny God's wonderful arrangement as to service of men like Paul and Timothy, would set aside the need for believers to fall asleep unless they are preserved unto the Coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, when His own upon this earth will be caught up and changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Now we come to the thought, How are we to deal with our weakness? Are we not to anticipate that there will be a strain and a stress, even though we may feel drawn to claim from God with increasing faith, a deliverance from certain organic disease, and what men call "accidents?" Thus, though we may feel personally and collectively more and more drawn by God to trust Him in this connection, how are we to deal with those physical infirmities which Scripture shows may even be frequent in a faithful child of God, as Timothy was? The inspired writer in the 5th chapter of James says, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord". Personally I should feel there were very little

difficulty in applying this simple, definite, passage, if the state of affairs were the same now as in the days of James:- in other words, if I could find "elders" according to the Divine marks of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Our problem is, what are we to do in the absence of those who come up to the standard and the qualifications which are there set forth? There is a grave danger of introducing "the best we can", and apparently obeying part of a verse without obeying the other. Do not think that I want to question the loving desire of all who may feel glad to anoint with oil in the Name of the Lord. I am conscious that the Lord graciously accepts many earnest wishes of His dear people, even though sometimes they are mingled with many errors. If He did not receive our love till it was free from the accompaniments of failure, He would never receive our love at all. I would speak guardedly in this connection, for I feel equally clear that much which is associated with the words "Faith-healing" has very little evidence of submissive faith at all, - very little evidence of devoted obedience to the will of God, but is associated with a setting aside of so many of His appointments. Do not think, beloved friends, that these words are uttered lightly or carelessly. A fair amount of experience of various forms of human theories is the background for a sorrowful testimony that error is so prevalent even when mingled with many words of Truth. I am afraid, and I trust we all feel afraid, lest we "assume". I can imagine some anointing with oil in the

Name of the Lord, and thereby forgetting to be humbled before Him as to the absence of elders; forgetting to be humbled before Him as to the failure and confusion which have resulted from forgetting THE UNITY FOR WHICH CHRIST PRAYED. But if we have not these elders, let us recollect that the verse does not simply say, "Let him call for the elders of the church". It lays a great stress upon prayer, and the next verse does not add that the elders, or the oil, shall save the sick, but that the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. If we have not elders, the Divine principle ALWAYS applies, - "In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." God delights that His people should speak with Him, and should approach Him with the filial confidence which He Himself had appointed. "The prayer of faith" is emphasized. And what is faith? Says Mark 11, "Have the faith OF GOD". Faith is not viewed in Scripture as a lump sum which God gives, nor is it on the other hand viewed as something which can be manufactured. In its beginning God gives it, in its development we are responsible for its true growth, though God supplies all the power of growth, and we dare not boast at all. If faith is to grow we must feed it. There must be a seeking from God for the food of faith; and not merely asking for faith, as though He gives quantities to us just when we happen to wish to ask for them. The apostle's instruction to Timothy, moreover, is suggestive, with respect to his frequent infirmities. He was told to use

a little wine. I need hardly say that Scripture tells us how the good Samaritan poured in oil and wine, and that the wine was used in Scripture, suggestive of that which was in many ways beneficial. I need hardly add that the words in Timothy give no indication at all to us of necessarily fermented wine, that in the east unfermented wine is procurable, and that the Lord Jesus particularly refers to it as something distinct from fermented wine, and in a manner which lays a stress on its preferability. I allude to the parable of Mark 2, repeated, with other thoughts related, in Luke 5. This teaching in Timothy is suggestive. If in James 5 we have prayer and the anointing with oil; in Timothy we have, not the external, but the internal application of God's gracious provision IN THE FRUIT OF THE EARTH. I am persuaded that a number of believers increase their physical troubles and cause themselves much hindrance in the spiritual life by carelessness in the matter of food, - a carelessness that I would not compare with Timothy's action, but rather a carelessness on the line of indulgence, and of occupation with the thought of "What shall we eat?" which the Lord has so distinctly forbidden to His own. Moreover, a worrying temperament absolutely hinders true digestion, and indigestion produces many physical complaints. But the child of God sins if he worries; and therefore many of our diseases, if I might use the word, (nay, many of our infirmities, I will say) are resultant upon a disobedience to the Divine command, "Be

anxious for nothing". Occupation with the things of earth, and unwillingness to put the Lord first in everything, will bring us bitter fruits, even in the physical concerns of everyday life. From what has been said, the believer will surely feel that Scripture gives to those who are in Christ Jesus, a view of illnesses, a view of infirmities, quite distinct from that which the world would suggest. If a believer has a physical strain come upon him, if he feels unwell, his right condition involves the thought, "What is the Lord teaching me by this?" He wants to know the Divine instruction, and why it is permitted. Such a view of trusting the Lord more and more, though its setting aside of many human "means" is not to be in the form of dogmatic command, but to be in the form of that which attracts real, enforced faith, - such a view encourages confidence in the wisdom, the power, and the interest of our ever loving heavenly Father. It brings the thought of the Lord's own working into little things, and prevents us from viewing a single circumstance as without its lesson, or without God's gracious willingness to intervene to His own glory.

Therefore we pass next to consider further what should be the believer's action respecting the use of means of healing, as the word "means" may be understood to-day. This is a vast subject. We have already noticed the Lord's reference to the olive and the vine, - two trees of physical value, and spiritual teaching. But is it for the believer to introduce means of the WORLD'S appointment, with the world's standpoint

and the world's attitude? I would like to speak earnestly upon this point. It seems to me that there is a wondrous suggestiveness in the words regarding Asa, that in his disease he sought not to the LORD but to the PHYSICIANS. Granted that the physicians of that time were often linked definitely with evil spirits, we still have the plain statement of the Lord to suggest that the tendency when using "means" is to forget Him, and that Scripture bears this record. You recollect how in another context we are told concerning Hezekiah's plans in concert with his mighty men, to protect Jerusalem, as if to say, "Ye do this, ye do that", but "ye have not looked unto the Maker thereof, neither had respect unto Him That fashioned it long ago". God, Who planted the ear, and gave the eye, Who framed the body, - God understands His people's needs. The principle "Seek ye FIRST the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" must prevent the usual idea in physical infirmity, the usual idea of thinking, "I must see what the doctor says", "I must put myself IN THE HANDS of the doctor", and so forth. The believer's attitude is entirely distinct. He is brought to realise that he is in greater hands than that of any man, from which he dare not take himself OUT. I have felt in this connection the force of David's attitude with regard to Hushai. David was troubled about Ahithophel being one of Absalom's conspirators, and he said, "O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness"; and then

he met Hushai, and said, "Thou mayest for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel". He put the matter in the Lord's hands, and then took it out and put the matter in another's hands. Is it not possible that in other circumstances we do the same? My experience has been, and I think others will bear me out, that, unconsciously and unintentionally, children of God speak most unwisely as to their physical infirmities. You will have one say concerning himself, "I shall not be out again for a week". Similarly many refer to one another. What a trifling way of speaking with respect to that body which is in the power of the Lord! How unwise to make such a prophecy! Surely we must not be surprised if, according to our unbelief so is it unto us. The same naturalness, (not to give it a worse name) which should not exist in those who have been made supernatural, - the same naturalness is found in the way in which children of God are willing to put themselves very definitely under the control of a Doctor, to partake of medicines, and concoctions of which they know nothing. If only they would illustrate a little fraction of their confidence in a doctor, and repose it in the Lord, and own His working through the spiritual help of His people as to the reprov'd spiritual failure, surely there would be an attitude which He would honour. But in THIS matter, independence is often shown. I am not now dealing only with the action, but with the attitude which underlies the action. The attitude I have found again and again expressing itself in words, which shows an entire parallel with the standpoint of

the man of the world, even the man of this age, and which reveals such implicit confidence in man, and such a natural tendency to look to the doctor rather than to the Lord, that one feels there is something wrong in the whole position, and something of failure of STANDPOINT among those who should humbly and happily trust God INCREASINGLY. The words of Ezra, moreover, have become helpful to me. When he was on a journey to Jerusalem he was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers, for he said, "We have said that the hand of our God is upon us for good". Now as to many human remedies I think Ezra's action should be illustrated. If we emphasize what the Lord is, and that our confidence desires to be in Him, we should be ashamed to act just as if we were men OF this world. We are those who are distinguished FROM the world, those who are of the greatest interest to our heavenly Father, and He delights to be trusted. I am quite aware that there are other problems to be solved, not with ~~MBE~~ argument, but upon our knees. I am quite aware that there are problems which I may call "surgical". And the subject of the bones of a believer is one of the most attractive subjects that on some occasion we could take. The Lord's gracious interest in the bones of His people, as well as in the HAIRS of their head, invites their loving confidence in Him. As to faith, if there is the appointment for faith, if there is an individual GROWTH in faith, then we can intelligently anticipate wondrous blessings both in preventing and in curing. And,

by the way, yet more than by the way, I do not think we are sufficiently thankful for God's PREVENTING of the need for being healed both by holding back the myriads of attacks of Satan to prostrate the bodies of God's people, and by preventing the continued power of those attacks when they have already begun to weaken them. The Lord sometimes permits a believer to be brought very low and then raises him up, and the believer thanks God so heartily. But why does he not thank God with equal heartiness when he is only brought down half as low? Why does he not thank God with equal fervency for the holding back of trouble? It is true if one is raised from that which appears to be a death-bed, there is a manifest miracle before the man of this age; but if one is kept from the manifold problems and pitfalls which Satan lays for the child of God, should not those whose eyes are OPEN and anointed be equally thankful to Him Who watches over them, and whose goodness and mercy follows them all the days of their life? We are not as men of this age dependent on things which we can see. Faith deals with the unseen, and we know that as there were horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha, so the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them; and that the keeping of the Lord's people in all their ways is not a dream nor a delusion, but a fact of countless applications to be enjoyed in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus shall we praise in the power of the Holy Spirit for LITTLE things, and trust our God for LITTLE things.

Thus shall we know God's gracious interest in all our emergencies and our problems. Do not think that I am undervaluing God's use of means WHICH HE APPOINTS. He uses food, for He has said so. If there is that which is wrongly in the body, and can be rightly remedied, He approves the use of means, as Matthew 7 shows, casting out that which is wrongly in the eye; and surely a believer would see that it is Scriptural to have a splinter pulled out. But such actions must be entirely distinguished from the willingness to put oneself almost unreservedly in the hands of another to deal with that which cannot be seen, and that which is to be acted upon by unknown combinations of human admixture. This is an ENTIRELY different subject, and entirely separated from God's use of means which HE HIMSELF has approved.

In closing, I would like to remind you that miracles, in the fullest sense of the word, physically, are not a necessary proof of the Lord's approval. We find in olden times that the demons were called the healers, and the Pergamum, where Satan's seat was, had a special temple to Aesculapius, "the god of healing", and that healing was particularly associated with demonism all along the ages. Hence, if, we come across remarkable instances of healing, they are no proof that God is there, nor do we trust to miracles as evidence of truth in any circumstances. But what we do say is this, that if we have experienced that God has wrought the greater miracle for the soul in quickening us from the death of sin, we can

surely realise that the soul is more than meat, and the body more than raiment; that He Who has given the greater, delights to be trusted as to the less, and that we are on dangerous ground if we do anything to discourage in ourselves, or in one another, that simple-hearted confidence in Him, which looks beyond appearances, beyond human standpoint, and trust Him at all times, because HE IS THE LIVING GOD!

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