

No. 133.

CROWNS OF SCRIPTURE.

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward,

At Walham Green.

14th April, 1913.

OUTLINE:

1. A Corruptible Crown.
2. The Crown of Thorns.
3. The Many Crowns of the Lord Jesus.
4. The Crowns of the Dragon and the Wild Beast in  
Rev. 12,13.
5. Crowns of Life and Glory for the Lord's Redeemed.
6. "That No Man Take Thy Crown".
7. "Ashamed".

\*\*\*\*\*

No. 133.

CROWNS OF SCRIPTURE .

An Address by Mr. P.W.Heward  
At Walham Green,  
14th April, 1913.

OUTLINE:

1. A Corruptible Crown.
2. The Crown of Thorns.
3. The Many Crowns of the Lord Jesus.
4. The Crowns of the Dragon and the Wild Beast in Rev. 12,13.
5. Crowns of Life and Glory for the Lord's Redeemed.
6. "That No Man Take Thy Crown".
7. "Ashamed".

\*\*\*\*\*

Read Isa. 28:1-6; 2 Tim. 4:1-8.

We are to consider this afternoon, dear friends, the Crowns of Scripture. There are several words used by God which are translated "Crown". In the earlier part of the Bible we have the mention of a ledge in connection with the tabernacle, which is called a "crown". Then again we have a word which signifies "a separating" which is translated "crown". In the latter portion of the Bible the words are two; one whence the name "Stephen" comes, the other whence our English word "diadem", literally signifying something "bound". The diadem was bound to the head of the monarch, who wore it. A Crown need not be simply of metal, but could be, as in connection with Israel's high priest, of old, partly of costly garments.

Now we approach the different divisions of our subject. First, a corruptible crown. We turn to / Corinthians 9:25. In the context the apostle is referring to the eastern race-course. He says in verse 24 "Do ye not know that the ones running in a stadium, all on the one hand

run, but one is receiving the award. Thus run in order that ye may have fully received. But everyone that is striving, as to all things is holding himself in. Those, (that is to say the runner, and the striver or wrestler, - those) on the one hand in order that they may have received a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore thus run, as not uncertainly, so do I use my hands as one not striking air, but I buffet my body, and I lead it a bondservant, lest having heralded to others I myself should have become reprobate - (not welcome)". The apostle here is undoubtedly drawing a parallel between the Grecian games and the Christian course. On several occasions he refers to those Grecian games. We recollect the well-known passage in Hebrews, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us", and 2 Timothy 2 where we are told of one who striveth for the mastery, and that he must strive according to law. Moreover, we call to mind that less-known passage in Colossians 2 "Let no man beguile you of your reward". Here is a term taken from the Grecian games. Let no one lead you aside so you will lose the reward which is held in front. Thus we see that the apostle often alluded to these games, and at first sight we may be surprised. Should we refer, at the present time, to the games and pleasures of men to give a picture of the enthusiasm God's people ought to show? Yes, we may sometimes do so, with a holy contrast. We might say, Look at the world's excitement for the pleasures of earth. How much more enthusiastic should we be for the things of God. Or we might put it this way, - The child of God is to aim at the object in front of him far more than the runner in his race aims at reaching the end of the path first. But though we might use such expressions, I do not think we should so frequently at the present time, as if we had lived in those olden days. For games are not viewed exactly in the same way now as they were then. The Grecian games were religious exercises. Alas,

linked with demon worship, but viewed as "religious". They were not only delighted in by the common people, but were regarded as one of the most important arrangements of the state. Visitors to the games who came from different parts were almost regarded in a religious way, when they were the delegates of states or cities. In every way the Grecian games were held out as most important. The crown of wild olives wherewith the victor was crowned in one of those "games" was of little intrinsic character, yet throughout the free Grecian states that was regarded as something to be prized more than almost aught else. To many men it must have been an OBJECT IN LIFE to succeed in the famous Grecian games. NOW we can enter into the apostle's reference to the energy of those who entered, either for running or for wrestling, - both parts being here mentioned. He says, "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown". The olive or laurel, wherewith the crowns were made, could not last forever. The leaves of a tree or of a shrub, as in Eden's garden, are corruptible, and whether those leaves be sewed to make fig leaf aprons, or whether they be twined to make a crown, they remain corruptible. And so the apostle, specially referring to the crowns that were received invited the believers to look and see how EARNEST men were to secure that which was corruptible which was esteemed among MEN. But he quickly turned aside to suggest something infinitely more. All the things of earth are like that crown of wild olives, - all the things of earth are like that crown of laurel, - they all fade away, gold and silver are corruptible, - the things of earth are but for a moment, yet how many there are who set their mind on things below. They desire that they may have earthly possessions, yet what value are earthly possessions in the light of eternity? Dear friends, our hearts have sometimes felt, I have no doubt, that we should "like" this or "like" that, and perhaps almost before we have judged this tendency to covet, another thought has come into our mind, "And what would be the value of it, if we had it"?

and then we have gone on further and thought to ourselves. "All such possessions would not give us knowledge, we would rather have knowledge than earthly possessions, the richest men are not always the cleverest". And then we have thought still further. "But suppose we could have all the cleverness of the world's libraries, and be acquainted with the world's languages, if we could be those who understood all mysteries, all science, as far as men have searched them out. What availeth this?" Beyond all is that which is eternal. Beyond all is the knowledge of Christ, and the things of earth fade in the view of the things of the Lord Jesus, and we have turned aside from that which appeared so beautiful, but quickly made to itself wings, - we have turned aside from all delusive attractions of earth, and we have seen that we have not simply within reach, but placed by grace within our hearts, that which is beyond all earthly pleasures and treasures. Oh how little we value what we have "in Christ Jesus". The best that earth can give is a corruptible crown. Its glories fade, its advantages are soon gone. Over the whole earth there is stamped failure and ruin. The Lord grant that we may realize this more.

The second point is "The Crown of Thorns". Our beloved Lord had once a crown, but not of wild olives, not of laurels; - a crown from the vegetable world, it is true, but contrasted with the crowns in the Grecian games, - a crown of rejection, yea, a crown of thorns. Ah, dear friends, how solemn is that expression "A crown of thorns". Shall we turn to the passage? The narrative is found in three of the Gospels. He was thus arrayed by mocking men. We will look at the account in John 19. "Then therefore Pilate received Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers having platted a crown out of thorns placed it on His head, and a purple garment they cast around Him, and they kept on saying, Rejoice, the King of the Jews, and they kept on giving to Him blows. Therefore Pilate came out again outside, and said to them, See, I lead to you Him outside, that ye

may have come to know that in Him no charge or fault I find. Therefore Jesus went outside, bearing the thorny crown and the purple garment, and he saith to them, "See the Man". Twice over, the crown is mentioned. It is called a crown out from thorns, and then the thorny crown. We can well understand that the soldiers platted it in wickedness, causing the pain which their brutal hands delighted to cause, that the sharp spikes of the thorns might pierce Him Who already had sweat as it were great drops of blood, and Who was already One having passed through a great strain. But they cared not. Here was One whom they treated as their toy, and dared in unparalleled iniquity to regard as their plaything. The Lord of Glory was the object of that mischief which was worse than mischief, that murderous brutality which shows the sad state of the human heart. Pilate looked on and permitted it, he did not interfere, though he knew there was no fault. What mattered to Pilate the feelings of One Who seemed comparatively insignificant? - for the Lord of Glory was despised and rejected of men, - and others who gazed on did not feel for Him. Sympathy was banished from their thoughts. Here was something to make them laugh. A suffering Man Who was more than a man, brought low. They could see nothing but trifling and gratification of their innate cruelty and selfishness, as they beheld the Lord of Glory in this awful position. But behind the works of men there was the plan of God. It was to be made manifest when men insulted and tortured Him, that He was the One to bear the CURSE, hence we particularly are told that He not only wore that crown, but bore it with its emphasized thorns, - that He bore that which reminds of the first Adam, for when the first Adam sinned thorns first grew up, and when the Last Adam was to become the Sin Offering thorns were entwined around His head. He was to bear entirely the weight of the curse for a great number whom no man can number, to take the place of sinners. Not only was He under the cruel torture of men, but He was under the righteous wrath of God when

on Calvary He bare, in deed and truth, the sins of many.

It is well to realize God's hand in history, and God's overruling of man's sin. It is beautiful to see the patience of our blessed Lord, and to realize the fulness of that finished work. No curse is for us, if we in Him are found; no curse, for He has taken that, taken it in our place, He became a curse in our stead, as it hath been written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. The crown of the vegetable world that was put on the Lord of Glory was simply from the thorns. The vegetable world is again brought before us in that He was hanged on a TREE. Twice over we are reminded that the vegetable world has gone under a curse, and we cannot help seeing anew the wondrous fulness of God's refusal of Adam's FIG-leaves. Of necessity this gives an added force to the way in which the apostle speaks of the Grecians' corruptible crown. Oh that we may value more what we have "in Christ" as we see how Christ valued us;

But He Who came the first time to be crowned with thorns, Who came to be lifted up on a stake of wood, shall come the second time crowned with diadems, with many diadems, and lifted up upon a throne, He, Whom they mocked shall then be exalted. He, Whom they took away, shall then take them away, and men will be laid low before Him, and so in Revelation 19 we read of the MANY crowns of the Lord Jesus, - the many DIADEMS, as the word is literally; although the term "crown" is also used of Him, for as Hebrews 2 puts it "We see Jesus...crowned with glory and honor". Undoubtedly there is an allusion in that passage to the transfiguration mount, but the transfiguration mount was anticipatory of His present glory, which in its turn is anticipatory of His coming glory. He is crowned with glory and honor. He Who was laid low is now exalted to the right hand of God as Prince and Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness, waiting until His enemies become His footstool. Now He is the Exalted One in heaven, having been raised from the dead, and the Holy Spirit

delights to call attention to Him. Oh that with the eye of faith, realizing the living power of the Scriptures, we may see Jesus; as Paul the apostle of old said, there was such a view of His glory in the inspired record. But the many crowns of the Lord when He comes back also bring before our mind that He will have dominion FROM SEA TO SEAM, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. ALL nations shall fall down before Him and serve Him. Kings of Tarshish, Sheba and Seba shall bow down, and His enemies shall lick the dust. There will be none who can exalt themselves against Him. As soon as strangers hear they will be afraid out of their close places. The news of His glorious Name shall be spread abroad, and His fame shall be announced to earth's remotest bounds. We know how our beloved Lord was crucified at Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem shall go forth His kingly requirements. Thence will He exercise His sway, for, as Isaiah puts it, the Lord shall be on Mount Zion reigning before His ancients gloriously. It is well to think of that which is in store for HIM upon this earth. The Righteous One, even the Man Christ Jesus, - He is more than a Man, the God-Man shall be seen in that day as Over All. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. Do we believe this? It is a bright and blessed prospect. May our faith be very real.

But Satan has his travesty, and so in Revelation 12 and Revelation 13 we have the dragon and the wild beast both crowned. First there appears a sign in heaven, that sign is a dragon. He has seven heads and ten horns, and on to his heads, seven diadems. In the 13th chapter the wild beast is characterised in exactly the same way, except that instead of the word "on to" there is the word "on". "On his horns ten diadems". Here then we see a wondrous parallel between the dragon and the beast, and a bitterness against Christ. The dragon is plainly Satan, and the mention of the seven crowns or diadems upon the heads suggest how Satan would in heavenly places travesty and oppose the Lord Jesus Christ. The mention of the

beast with the TEN crowns or diadems NOT upon the heads as with the dragon, but on the horns, - the mention of the beast with the ten diadems shows how Satan would ON THE EARTH travesty the Lord Jesus Christ. Seven is the number of perfection. Satan would seek to have the seven diadems in heavenly places. Ten is the number of an assembly. Satan would have an assembly of evil kings, - Satan's "church", if I might so characterise it. Here is rebellion against the Lord and against His Messiah. The crowning is definite, but its period is brief. Already has the prince of this world been judged in a Divine working, and the carrying out of the sentence, though it be not executed speedily from man's standpoint, it yet speedily with Him with Whom a thousand years are as one day. "God shall bruise Satan under your feet SHORTLY", for "He that shall come WILL COME and will not TARRY". Still more brief is the power of the ten crowned horns of Antichrist. It seems that twice or thrice during Antichrist's dominion there will be ten special powers with him, but the longest crowning will only be a few years, the briefest only as it were a few moments. Beloved friends, it is well to realize that though there be a throne of iniquity, it will not have fellowship with God, nor can He allow it. He will early destroy the wicked, and cut off evil doers from the city of the Lord. The crowns of the dragon and of the wild beast suggest to us that now it is MAN'S day. Our Lord is hidden, His diadems are not seen till chapter 19:6 in this context in Revelation. Now Satan parades his glory as the god of this age, but his time is short.

Next we pass to consider crowns in connection with the Lord's redeemed. This is a beautiful subject. First ~~and~~ of all, may I remind you that the Lord is their Crown, as we have seen in Isaiah 28, but in His wonderful grace He crowns them. I need not remind you at length of Psalm 103 where we have a present crowning with loving-kindness and tender mercies, and this has many diadems, for who can utter the mighty acts of the

Lord? Who can show forth all His praise? We would ever mention the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord. His thoughts to usward, and His mighty works also, are more than can be numbered, - as one of old said, How great is the sum of them! We are poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh of us, and giveth to us all spiritual blessings. He crowneth us with loving-kindness and tender mercies. We deserved NOTHING but He gives to us EVERYTHING in His beloved Son. We were ~~w~~ far off, but we have been made near in that precious blood, and not only are all sins removed and a righteousness given, but He That spared not His own Son, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who can estimate aright the possessions of a child of God? Surely we have no need to be ashamed of Him Whose Name we bear! We have all things and abound. There are riches at the present time which are IN Christ Jesus. We are crowned therewith, and would be thankful therefor. But there are future crowns as well. The Lord will give to His people something beyond what they have now when He returns. This body of our humiliation shall be fashioned anew like unto His body of glory. Who can tell what that means? The first Adam had a body of glory and lost it, but in that future day we shall have bodies of ~~gl~~ glory like unto Him Who is the Last Adam. When Christ Who is our Life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. We know not what we shall be, but we know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. This means a wondrous change to this physical frame, and a wondrous change in manifestation, - for the creation is now waiting for the MANIFESTATION of those who are in the family of God. They are hidden at the present time. The bodies they have may suggest by kindly faces and solemn faces that they are in communion with God. Yet their bodies are, though graciously upheld, the same in many respects, as other men's as to physical weakness; but in that day the bodies will be not only perfected, but glorious. If there is a sowing in corruption there

is a raising in power. If there is a sowing as a natural body, there is a being raised as a spiritual body. And then shall be the crown of life, as James 1 puts it, to the Lord's redeemed, observe the 12th verse, and the promise to a man who remains under the test, because having become an approved one, the opposite of the disapproved and rejected of 1 Cor. 9. He shall receive THE crown of THE life which the Lord promised to the ones characterized by loving Him. Yes, the crown of THE life. At the present time we have eternal life spiritually, yet in connection with the body we look for eternal life, and the crown of the life. Happy then are we if we remain under a testing, because there is not only life in that Day for those who remain under the testing but a crown of life. THE crown of THE life, to mark out that those who receive it were first faithful and stood the strain, and, if need be were faithful UNTO DEATH, as Rev. 2:10 puts it, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a CROWN OF LIFE". Oh how often we forget that though God has given to us the Lord Jesus and all things in Christ as a free gift, yet there are certain blessings which are conditional upon our obedience and our faithfulness. Eternal life is, of course, the gift of God, but there are rewards, there are prizes, and we long that by the grace of God we may receive these rewards, that we may enter into the precious possessions of the prizes in that day, and so rejoice our Lord, as it is written - "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into (not only the kingdom) but the joy that belongs to thy Lord". For the wise son is undoubtedly the joy of his father, and a wise saved one will be the joy of his Lord. If Paul, an apostle, could say of other Christians, "They are my joy", will not He, Who is the Great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, will He not say of His people, "My joy"! If in thinking of their glory with Him, for the joy set before Him He remained under a cross, enduring the shame, will He not have joy when He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied, and when He sees

the result of His works in the faithfulness of His people being rewarded? We should not simply press toward the mark that we might have the reward, but that it might belong UNTO HIM; if I might express it so. I am sure we shall fully agree that a child, affectionately trained, when pressing forward for a suitable and true reward in connection with earthly education, longs, not simply to get that prize as a reward for labour, not simply to possess the gift or scholarship, if such be desirable, - but with a view to the encouragement of those dear parents through whose interest and help everything has been possible. So is it with the Lord's people, they press forward to HIS glory, and to HIS joy, that He indeed may see in them that which pleases Him.

We must not forget that in 1 Peter 5:4 we are told of a crown of glory that will be given to those faithful one's who tend the flock of God. The passage almost implies that they will have a crown of suffering now, but when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested they will receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away. Here is another contrast with the wild olive! Yet more, in 2 Timothy 4:8 we read that the Lord will give a crown of righteousness to those that love His appearing. In James 1 we read of loving Him, and in 2 Timothy 4 of loving His ~~■~~ appearing. Himself, and His appearing are inseparable, and love to Himself is love to that which is of Him. Furthermore, believers to whom we are useful will be in some measure our crown, <sup>or</sup> ~~on~~ the cause of a crown in that day, as Philippians 4:1 says "My joy and crown". 2 Timothy 2:5 should also be noticed in this connection, where we have a striving lawfully and then a being crowned.

But oh, dear friends, though we look forward to crowns and wondrous glory to the redeemed who are faithful, there is also another side to the same question. To one of old, who had a little strength the Lord said, "Be careful that no man take thy crown". "THY CROWN", and yet there is a

possibility some man may take it. It is for thee if thou shalt continue faithful in the position where thou art placed, but if not, will not some one have thy crown, and there will be no arrangement for thy possession of that honor because thou didst become careless, - another will have done the work, and thou wilt have been beguiled of thy reward. Be careful. Be careful lest others should entice. Do not yield to human opinions and human fancies. Press toward the mark; be in earnest; live for the Lord; make manifest what Christ has done. The Holy Spirit indwells to enable.

Beloved friends, you know those words of 1 John 2, "Now little children, abide in Him, that when He shall have been manifested we (ah, these words search our hearts); that when He shall have become manifested and made to shine forth, we may have confidence and not be shamed away from Him IN His presence. In His presence, but shamed away. We know what it is to feel awkward in the presence of one whom we have grieved, - at least I suppose all of us at some time of our life have realized that. We have felt awkward in the presence & the more so because of the affection of one whom we have grieved. And the Lord says to His people that if they are unfaithful, they may be shamed away, in His presence. A child is naughty, he does not cease to be a child by that act of naughtiness. He does not diminish the parent's affection, but he feels an unpleasantness in the parent's presence, not blaming the parent but blaming himself. The parent returns, and if there has not been a dealing with the sin that has made the unpleasantness, the child hesitates to run up brightly and happily to the parent, - there is a cloud between, the child is shamed away. Oh that we, having received such love from our heavenly Father, may not be those who fritter away our time. Oh that we may live as those looking for that blessed Hope, that when He shall appear, having looked for Him and longed to see Him, we shall go boldly yet withal humbly unto Him and

be at His side welcomed. Ah, then how small will the things of earth seem that we have put on one side? We have lost perhaps the tinsel of men; what will that matter in the light of the glory? We have been looked down upon and counted foolish, we have put aside our natural wishes, and have sought to mortify the deeds of the body; what will it matter then when we enter the joy of our Lord? Let us, dear friends, in the light of this, seek grace from God, and the working of the Holy Spirit, that we may live on earth, but belong to the glory, as those who are looking for Christ. Let us not talk of what we give up, let us not talk of our strain and our trials, let us have respect unto the recompence of the reward. Having Christ, what do we want of earth's tinsel? Having Christ, what do we want of earth's pleasures? Having Christ, what do we want of earth's greatness? What fascination for us is there in the plaudits of a doomed world? We have all in Christ, and our prospect is Christ, and everything in Christ. May it be ours, by grace, confessing the sin of failure, - which I am sure we must all feel - confessing the sin of failure, - in these very particulars, may it be ours henceforth to seek to live the brief and ever shortening remaining part of our life in the power of the Holy Spirit, as those who are occupied with Christ and loving His Appearing.

-----