

No.
162.

"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.

ROMANS XI.

An Address (revised) at

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by

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"Blindness in part hath happened". Those words toward the end of the chapter express briefly an important thought which is on one's mind. Blindness and hardness in part, - This is solemn, but not in whole, - this is precious. Until, - and not for ever, for all Israel shall be saved. The remnant will become the nation, a little one the thousand; the Lord will hasten it, yet will it be in His and its time.

You will remember, dear friends, that we saw the apostle quotes from the earlier Scriptures again and again to show that his teaching is not something fresh, but in accord with what God has set forth there as to election, and as to the fact that the larger number did not believe, did not hear with faith, but would have their very table with a snare instead of food, and a trap instead of refreshment. Hence God has never been disappointed. Our beloved Lord Jesus could not be discouraged. He shall yet set judgment in the earth. The isles shall yet wait for His law. There may seem a delay. There may seem a failure, but the eternal purpose is an unbroken purpose, and covenant love is a standing, stable fact. God is not changed by circumstances, nor hindered by men. What if some did not believe? Can their unbelief make the faithfulness of

God of none effect? Let God be true, but every man a liar. Our God is in the heavens, He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. Men may rise and assert themselves, but the Lord hath His way both among the armies of heaven and inhabitants of earth, and none can stay His hand, for His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure. It is refreshing therefore, to notice that God has no afterthought. With Him there is all forethought. God does not come to know. He knew, He knows, He will not change. Abraham was personally elect, and Abraham's seed were nationally elect. Among the seed of Abraham there were those who were personally elect. Two aspects of election, one to dispensational privilege, and the other to eternal glory. Election to dispensational privilege is parallel with election to service. "Have I not CHOSEN you twelve? but one of you is a devil". The Lord said, "I know whom I have chosen", but when Judas had gone forth "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain". They were chosen to life everlasting. "Those that thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, - but the son of perdition that the Scripture might be fulfilled". Hence God's election was never wider than a portion of Israel unto eternal life, but God's election was never so narrow that it excluded all Israel. Hence though the aspect and the percentage, if I may so put it, would appear to be different at times, the purpose is the same.

and there is the Divine working out of that which cannot be broken, but not only so: that which appears to be a failure is full of glorious blessing. "Ye meant it for evil, God meant it for good". Thus may we write across the sad, yet bright, history of Joseph. The slaying of the Canaanite nations brought about the eternal blessing of infants among them. The greatest tragedy in history, when wicked hands were raised against the Lord of glory, has been overruled to bring salvation to a great number whom no man can number. With that in view we dare not doubt that the very wrath of man shall praise God, and the remainder of wrath will He restrain. The fall of Israel is not a fall without an afterwards. Through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles. Hence we have in verse 11 that expression, and in verse 12, "The riches of the world, and the riches of the Gentiles", and in verse 13 "The reconciling of the world". I am inclined to leave out the word "the"; it is not "of THE world", nor "of THE Gentiles", but "Of A world, and "Of Gentiles". So in Rom. 5 we see the force more clearly if we render "Whrist died for ungodly ones". "For the ungodly" might involve a vague universalism without an power, but "For ungodly ones" tells of that Divine purpose which will secure the eternal salvation of all for whom He died. So is it here. We have a stress upon the fact that there are those of all nations who are brought near unto God, but is that the goal? Is the

present dispensation the climax? By no means. God who, as it were, set aside the Gentiles for a while after Babel, and picked out Abraham, and who set aside Israel after they refused the Lord of Glory, and dealt mainly with Gentiles, will take up the threads of an unbroken plan, and will yet choose Israel and Jerusalem, and the city and the people and the land shall be blessed together. God has not forgotten. He will have mercy on Jacob. His covenant with the day and the night cannot be removed, nor will He cast away the seed of Israel for all that they have done. A GREATER doing prevents this, and all which HE hath done Who died for that nation must have its fruit, for that which is united to the seed of corn which has been raised shall share an eternal blessedness with Him. It is well, beloved friends, that our hearts should be stirred in this connection and that we should rejoice that there will come a time when God will bless the fulness of Israel. The fall of them was the riches of the world, the diminishing of them, the riches of the Gentiles, how much more THEIR fulness. What shall the receiving of THEM be but life from the dead? All "reserved" Israel shall be saved, and then ten men out of all nations of the earth will take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew and say, We will go with you for we have heard that God is with you. Thus with a continual variation before men, there is the working out of that which is unvaried before God. Adam fails. God works

in wondrous love with Abel. Abel is cut off, and Cain's family is ruined. God deals with Seth's line. The earth is filled with violence, but God has Noah. Men erected Babel, and God chooses Abraham. Abraham's people turned from the Lord, and finally crucified that precious Saviour of sinners. Blessing is spread to Gentiles. "Be it known unto you that the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and that they will hear it". The Gentiles are proud and rebellious. God will seal Israel, the remnant of Israel, and through Israel shall come blessing to Gentiles again. Thus we have the continued working of a perfect purpose, for, says the apostle, I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify (I glorify) my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. An apostle of Gentiles, a privilege with respect to all nations. The Lord Jesus originally said to His disciples, Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Peter had a special privilege in this connection. Acts 10 records it, but Peter hesitated, and therefore a little later on in Gal. 2, the Lord limited him, even as He limited Moses, and Peter was an apostle of the circumcision. But the ministry of the uncircumcision was given to Paul. The wider declaration of the Truth was thus granted, and Paul glorifies, not himself, but the ministry, which is the ministry of life, and of all blessing. But He emphasizes, not simply that he may emphasize it, but because he would desire to provoke to jealousy his flesh, his

brethren according to the flesh who are still dear unto him, and for whom, as Christ wept over Jerusalem, he, too, would weep, longing to be the means of saving some of them. "SOME"-that word is a mark of the present time with respect to Israel. Not all; but thanks be unto God there is an absence of the idea that none will be saved. Some, some, some, out from them. For those who are saved by grace must be saved OUT from Judaism, as well as CUT from Gentilism, unto Christ. For if the casting away of them, with a holy sternness, be a reconciling, be a bringing from one place to another; what shall the receiving. (the receiving to, the receiving to the Lord,) what shall the receiving be, but life out from dead ones? By nature Israel are dead, and dead in sins. But if the Firstfruits be holy, Christ, (His people are a kind of firstfruits), but He is emphasized as in 1 Cor. 15, as the Firstfruits), so is the lump. The Firstfruits is the pledge of the lump, and His people will be like unto Him. He is not only the Pledge of the salvation of men out of all nations, but the Pledge of the salvation of Israel, for His Name was Israel; and therefore all Israel must be saved. The firstfruits of Israel is Christ, as well as the Firstfruits of the Gentiles. Those who are saved as Gentiles are saved in Him, those who are saved of Israel are saved in Him; but His relationship to the nation of Israel was a peculiar one in that He was the True Israel, and died for that nation as a whole; and there must come a time when every spared individual of that nation shall be saved. He was the

Pledge of that, the Firstfruits. "But if the Root is holy", - the figure is changed from the sacrificial aspect to that of a tree. Christ is the Root, but of whom is He the Root? "I am the Root and Offspring of David". Here we have salvation to the people of Israel, and we call to mind the words concerning this Root of Jesse in Isaiah 11, and the way in which upon the house of David, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, shall be yet poured out the spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon Him Whom they pierced. Christ the Root, and the branches also are holy. There is no question as to His holiness, but all acceptance before God is only by union with Himself, - therefore the branches are holy. Here we see the position of blessedness. But we read "But if certain of the branches were broken out". The word "branch" and the word "broken out" seem to come from the same root. Here is a problem. Though the word here employed is not exactly that of John 15, it seems almost to imply that the branches here are grafted-in branches. That is no difficulty with respect to the branches from the Gentiles, for we are distinctly told in verse 19 that they are grafted in. But what about those who are called the natural branches? Is it possible that we have two aspects before us in this context? Can it be that there are those who are natural branches in one sense, yet at the same time are grafted in branches in another sense? That would meet the whole force of the word used, but yet would explain the seeming contradiction. Does the thought fit the context? We look at Romans 9, and we find there are those who

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are of Israel, yet not of Israel. That implies there are those who are twice of Israel. Those who are twice of Israel are twice blessed. How? We read in the book of Jude that the Lord having saved a people out of Egypt afterwards destroyed them that believed not; but concerning others of Israel we read, Israel shall be saved with an everlasting salvation, and there were those who could speak of God as their Saviour in the olden times. In other words they were twice saved. There was a salvation as to dispensational privilege, a salvation as to recognition in union with God; and a salvation as to an eternal relationship to Him. "Is He not thy Father who hath bought thee?" so says Deut. 32. But there were others who could say from the heart, "Doubtless Thou art our Father, ... Thou art our Father, Thy Name is from everlasting". Israel were taught as a people to praise God, and the Psalms bear witness; but there were those who not only with their lips, but with their hearts drew near unto Him, and they could twice draw near. Hence in one sense Israel were natural branches, for there are two elections. In another sense only those who were believers were branches, and they were grafted in branches, having been brought from the natural position of death. We read as to the future that God will have mercy upon all, - but that is the principle of all dispensations. Man is by nature a child of wrath. Man is by nature dead in trespasses and sins. It is this which gives the key to this difficult passage. One part of the chapter seems to suggest merely privileges, and then the believer is suddenly startled by the

words "Thou standest by faith", - the personal "Thou". There are those who have said "Oh this cannot be taken in a wider sense as to Gentiles, but it is a very personal matter of those who are children of God. "Thou standest by faith". And thus we have the startling thought that in the old dispensations all life was linked with God's fore-application of the work of the Lord Jesus. He was from this standpoint the Root in the olden times, and there were those who lived then. What! is there the same tree? Yes, with respect to election, the same tree. "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and bodied together, and partakers of His promise through Christ in the Gospel". Hence we have the wondrous teaching that we are blessed WITH believing Abraham, and you recollect the precious teaching in Ephesians that those who were strangers from the covenants of promise are now fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. If you look carefully at Eph. 2 and Eph. 3 you will find believers of the present dispensation are related to believers of the old dispensation. Yet there is something fresh in the present dispensation, for the foundation of the apostles and prophets implies a new dispensation, - something that did not exist before. The temple belongs to that which is subsequent to Calvary. The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus must be emphasized, yet the family existed before. The son, so long as he is an infant, says Gal. 4, does not differ from a servant, though he is lord of all. In the olden times there were those who were in the family just as much as believers are in the family now. There

was life in the olden times. Believers lived with the spiritual life which, by grace, we have received; BUT there is a different aspect now that we have been united with our Lord Jesus Christ, in the manifestation of what His work has accomplished, and in a fuller realisation. Oh that we may distinguish things that differ, and rejoice in the way in which they harmonise with the way the Holy Spirit handles them as in the eleventh chapter of Romans!