

No.

176.

"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.

H O S P I T A L I T Y .

An Address (revised) at

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by

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An Address by Mr. P. H. Heward,
Aldgate, 12th July, 1921.

OUTLINE:-

1. The Commands of the Holy Spirit in their Individual and Assembly Aspects (Rom. 12.13, 1 Tim. 3. 2, Tit. 1. 8, 1 Pet. 4. 9.)
2. Scriptural Examples.
3. The Attitude of Love in All Things.
4. IHospitality - Right and Wrong (2 John 10, 11).

We have, beloved friends, a deeply practical subject, "Hospitality" and what the SCRIPTURE says concerning this. Thanks be unto God the Scripture says SOMETHING concerning EVERYTHING, not always in the way men would choose, not always in the way we should expect, but there are statements, principles, examples, contrasts: - all precious to be obedient heart. Indeed, there is information of a wondrously varied kind, that, as it is applied by the Holy Spirit, we may know what WE ought to do, and what we ought not to do; where we ought to be, and where we ought not to be; how we are to speak, and how we are not to speak; and what should be the manner of our thoughts, and what should NOT be the manner of our thoughts, - on every occasion, and under, or rather amid, all circumstances. The child of God has not received an insufficient guidebook. He feels his need for a spirituality of heart that he may receive from God that instruction which applied in his life may make him simply a witness in the dark

days in which we live.

"Hospitality". The Holy Spirit uses a word so translated in five passages. We therefore turn to those five passages, for THEY are our Bible dictionary. Yes, the occurrences themselves are our dictionary, or the basis of it. The word does not, I think, occur once in the Septuagint. Let us prayerfully approach the verses. In Romans 12. 13 "Having fellowship with the necessities of the saints, pursuing the HOSPITALITY". 1 Tim. 3. 2 "It is necessary therefore for the overseer to be one without charge laid against him, a husband of one wife, sober, of a sound mind, well ordered, HOSPITABLE, able to teach". Titus 1. 8. Concerning the overseer who is to be uncharged, as God's steward, it is added - "Not having base gain, but HOSPITABLE, one that loveth good, of a sound mind, righteous, pious, self-controlled, holding the faithful word according to the teaching", - in such a way that he holds it as precious to himself against all who oppose, "in order that he may be able both to encourage in the teaching that is sound, and to convict the ones who speak against". 1 Pet. 4.9 "Be HOSPITABLE one to another without murmuring, each one according as he received a grace gift, ministering it to yourselves, as good stewards of the variegated grace of God". Heb. 13. 1,2 "Let brotherly love remain. Be not forgetful of the HOSPITALITY, for through this some unawares have entertained angels". Now at once we draw an inference, that the Holy Spirit is putting hospitality before us as a COMMAND to believers in THREE passages, and as a

3.

statement concerning exemplary believers (believers who have responsibilities) in two passages. Furthermore, in Romans, Peter and Hebrews, the word is closely linked with the word "Love", and THIS is important. We do well to remember that in the third epistle of John, which we shall ponder more afterwards, we find this encouragement to Gaius, "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou workest, with a view to the brethren and as to the STRANGERS" - "stranger-brethren", that is, not having been seen before in the flesh, or, if you will, "guest-brethren", for the same word suggests both a stranger and a guest". This word "stranger" which occurs in this passage reminds us of Eph. 2 where we read "Now then ye are no longer strangers (that is to say, no longer merely guests), but fellow-citizens", (and this reminds us of 1 Pet.4 where it is written in verse 12 "Beloved, do not think it STRANGE concerning the fiery trial which is among you to test you, as though a strange thing were happening to you, but rejoice". Now this word "stranger" is half the word "hospitality". Hospitality is literally "the love of strangers", or the manifestation of love to guests. It is the very same word which is brought before us in the compound noun of these passages, - the love of strangers, the love of guests. This gives a force to 1 Pet. 4. After the apostle has urged the love of strangers, he says, Beloved, do not think that the fiery trial is a stranger. Welcome guests, but the fiery trial has come to stay longer than a guest stays. It is to be quite recognised as a member of your

4.

home. Do not think that a strange thing is happening to you, or that a visitor has come to see you when a trial comes along, but rejoice inasmuch as ye are normally and continuously partakers of the sufferings of Christ. It is not simply a visitor for a few weeks; you are to expect trials until you reach the glory, and therefore if God allows a fiery trial all the time, do not be surprised, do not think the trials will soon be past. While in this body of humiliation, they remain. The Lord may be pleased to keep on REFINING His gold, and, therefore, do not think it strange that the Refiner allows the trials to be more than that of a temporary guest.

Now having seen the word used by the Holy Spirit, and that it is linked with "love" and the fact that it is made up of TWO words so as to denote the love of strangers, or the friendship of strangers, and having seen how elsewhere the word "stranger" is used, we can understand something of God's teaching. Literally it is, "Making a stranger a friend". The first part of the word is "friend", the second part of the word is "stranger", - "befriend a stranger", that is the Divine statement, and THAT is hospitality. How many of us are so used to living in the present day use of English words, and we narrow down the terms of the Holy Spirit. But this is a mistake, against which the lawyer in Luke 10 was so wondrously warned. We must not for one moment think that inviting someone to have a meal is the beginning and end of hospitality, or that inviting him to stay the night is the sum and substance of it. These MATERIAL

5.

expressions of hospitality are comparatively small, UNLESS something else is linked therewith, and it is by no means remarkable that the Holy Spirit uses a generic word with a wide meaning and a hundred applications, yea, myriads of applications - which are so often found in the Scriptures of truth. Ah, beloved friends, we thank God for the MANY applications of His words. Let us therefore be clear upon this point. Physical actions WITHOUT the spiritual befriending are NOT hospitality, and further, hospitality is by no means to be limited to, nor is it necessarily expressed by, the inviting to a meal or a bed. There are MANY other forms of hospitality, and the Lord may call us to SOME of these. It is quite clear that the aspect of a lodging is OFTEN included. Philemon will show that. BUT NOT as the only aspect, any more than the word "kiss" meant simply a salutation on the cheek. The word employed by the Holy Spirit denoted something made by friendly love, and the Holy Spirit, knowing the diverse circumstances of different lands and times, used a GENERIC word in order that we might all apply in connection with our present arrangements. There is no alteration of the word if we say "Salute every saint with something made in friendly love", that is the intrinsic meaning of the term; and if you shake hands you are fulfilling the meaning of that word, provided you do it in a saintly way, - but not otherwise. The Holy Spirit knew what word to use to apply at all times. So is it with respect to the

word "hospitality", and I suppose there are many dear children of God who are glad of this. Suppose it simply meant "Invite to your home", - how many dear unmarried children of God would say "I cannot obey that command; yet it seems to be addressed to all saints". But the Lord has graciously arranged commands to suit His people in their varied positions. If we grasp this we shall understand Scripture much more fully, and remember whatever we give unto the Lord is accepted according to that which we have, and not according to that which we have not. This is important. If we have ANYTHING, we may and should use it for the Lord, but if we have not one thing, the Lord graciously arranges that we use something else for Him on the line of His comprehensive command "Be hospitable". Brotherly love can be shown in the street as well as in the home. Indeed the friendliness to a stranger, the greeting to a stranger, the right recognition of a stranger is a privilege that belongs to every possible circumstance. Israel had many instructions concerning hospitality.

A few words may be helpful in this connection as to the one form of hospitality which in English is usually understood, and with this we will couple the Scriptural examples. Heb. 13 brings before us the way in which Abraham and others entertained angels, and believers are encouraged not to be FORGETFUL. I suppose there is much discourtesy through forgetfulness. We INTEND to do certain things, but we lose

the opportunity through forgetfulness. "Be not forgetful".

The Holy Spirit thus gives a COMMAND to the Lord's dear people. As an assembly saints were to carry it out. I do not mean they were all to fulfil it in the same way, or at the same time. Indeed the visitor would find it most embarrassing if all wished to carry it out in the ONE narrowed conception which has passed into our English idea. We need to be more broad-minded for the Lord's commandments which are exceeding broad. Thus shall we realise the fulness of that which the Lord has set forth. When He sent forth His disciples among Israel, they were to accept house-hospitality. Why? Because Israel were not then set aside. But when the Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane marked out the conflict with the prince of this world, and when the judgment of this world came, and the circumstances were altogether altered, it is plain from Luke 22 that believers cannot expect the same hospitality from those of any earthly nation. The world is viewed as that which is against the redeemed, and though the barbarous people may show us no little kindness, we are not to anticipate this, but rather to be willing to be abiding in the city certain days until the Lord opens arrangements as He did at Philippi. We are to be VERY CAREFUL in this connection. Observe too, afterwards:- "If ye have judged me faithful to the Lord, come into my house". A rather difficult problem is hereby suggested, but I think a suggestive problem. We must often be very careful as to going into houses unless we judge those in

them to be faithful to the Lord. Unless a believer is faithful to the Lord he is not competent to welcome into his house, nor are we to encourage this. The problem is a very difficult one. Furthermore, in the third epistle of John we have brought before us a Gaius who appears to have been like "Gaius mine host, and of the whole church", if not the same man. He showed grace-given love to strangers, and the apostle said "Thou doest it faithfully" "For the sake of the Name they went forth taking nothing from the Gentiles". There we have the same principle, the principle of fellowship, but not receiving from an earthly nation. While Israel were God's earthly people the apostles received from them, but did not expect this afterwards. This is a solemn principle. I suppose these aspects of hospitality and what has been called the social element in the relationship of believers, must be viewed as a very, very difficult problem. In the early church there was a great advantage, for the believers were daily of one accord in SOLOMON'S PORCH. They met in days of revival for daily MEETINGS, and that was their usual gathering place. In the houses they broken bread, - not in every house or at home, as our VERSION might suggest, but rather, along the houses; which, as the house of a Philemon, or an Aquila and Priscilla, as elsewhere mentioned, were the places where in contradistinction to the PUBLIC temple they gathered for the simple assembly-appointment of breaking bread. I said just now that hospitality involved many problems. Undoubtedly it does in this narrowed, and yet important, aspect. For example, even the apostles were

urged not to go from house to house. The damage to themselves,, the awakening of a rivalry among various ones, - these things are hinted. But not only would there be a waste of time in many cases, there would also be more serious results, and 1 Tim. 5 refers to a going from house to house as productive of slander and laziness. One cannot be too careful in connection with the Scripture warnings with respect to that which has been viewed as the "social aspect". The fact is children of God who are in any measure awakened are far too busy to sit down for an "ordinary" talk, they are far too busy to waste their time in going about the houses. They realise for their own sake and the sake of example, and for many other reasons, it is a very solemn thing to go to the house of another, because when any are gathered together in a more informal way, the perils of ordinary time wasted, and unspiritual conversation, to say nothing of words concerning others which are not always profitable,- to say nothing of this, - even the other perils are sufficiently real to make believers guarded. If we had a command to do this, we should risk the consequences, trusting in the living God, but as Scripture arrangements are rather for saints to meet TOGETHER at gatherings, and as we do not have this social element brought before us, we have a considerable problem if we introduce that which is not appointed, in the way it is often at the present time understood. We are not warranted in making our own problems. In this connection observe that the hospitality is the attention to the needs as Heb. 13 shows, of strangers.

It is not the idea of "going out to tea" of those who are near one another. It is something vastly different. I do not doubt that there may be cases where an Aquilâ and Priscilla may invite an Apollos, though we are not told whether he had a meal or not. Certainly he had a spiritual meal, and that was the important matter. But they were competent saints for that which is more difficult than giving an address, - the carrying through of *profitable* spiritual CONVERSATION in the home. We are not surprised, therefore, that the Holy Spirit not only is urging hospitality on the church generally, but shows that the "receiving into the home" aspect specially belonged to the elders in BOTH the passages of Timothy and Titus. We are not surprised that we have this, and that other passages confirm the same thought, which has principles to be applied, in measure, amid all surroundings. Let us come to the other passages. For example, Paul desires to go to Philemon, to the Colossians, and to the Laodiceans; he asks Philemon, in whose house saints were gathered, TO ARRANGE ABOUT THE LODGING. It is for him to see to it. The matter is so solemn and so important, so much time might be wasted, so many wrong examples might be given, so much hindrance might be made, unless there were as much care about appointing the lodging as care about guidance as to the public testimony. Indeed the homes are quite as important as the addresses in the meeting, and, if they fall short, the general assembly life goes down, even though the meetings are spiritually profitable. The home is the keener

test, and this is emphasized in Scripture. Great mental ability is not brought before us in Timothy 3 or in Titus 1, as a prerequisite for responsibility in the same way as a godly home. Undoubtedly the overseer would have certain mental qualifications, but such qualifications are second. Personal godliness and devotedness, seen in the homes, are brought into prominent Divinely-encouraging emphasis. This leads on to another thought. When the apostle is arranging for Demetrius and his colleagues or colleagues, in 3 John, he does not make any individualizing arrangements, even with godly Gaius, first. He says "I wrote unto the church". It was only when the church deliberately and definitely put the hospitality on one side that John wrote to one who was a faithful servant of the Lord. The hospitality in this narrowed aspect of receiving into the home, and in the wider aspects of showing a welcome and greeting, were alike the responsibilities of the assembly and not the "individual" actions in a way which ignored those responsibilities, or which hindered the full manifestation of those responsibilities. It is so in Rev. 2 and 3, the words "He that hath an ear" FOLLOW; the Lord writes first to one representing the assembly, not as an individual, but in the Lord's godly ordering. Confusion is not His will. We have all overlooked this, but I suppose everyone of us can now see the deep importance in the very matter before us. I am not now speaking of an ungodly mischief maker who desires to hinder God's work. He might try and arrange hospitality in order to twist aside from the Truth.

But I am speaking now of other circumstances. Just as very frequently a dear child of God attempts to preach before he has been^b with the Lord sufficiently, so it is quite easy for us to overrate our abilities in other things. Furthermore, there is another form of error which is not exactly overrating ability, but is linked with a real humility, and yet not with sufficient humility. What I mean is this, a dear child of God steps into a "gap", he feels that there must be certain preaching, and he steps into it, instead of WAITING on the Lord that the Lord would fill the gap. So with regard to this form of hospitality, it is quite possible for a believer to try and do the best he can in a way that would only hinder the work of God, if he is not fitted for it.

This leads to another thought. You say, But what about an emergency? Undoubtedly God steps in when an emergency arrives. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers" in that connection applies very wonderfully, though even then we should be careful that we should do all things decently, and in order, for that is a DIVINE PRINCIPLE. Let me illustrate what I mean. Heb. 13 is not referring to an invitation, but when the strangers HAVE ARRIVED. That is altogether different. The preparing of the lodging beforehand is different - an assembly matter, as 3rd John, Philemon and the Book of Acts show. If on the other hand there be the arrival of some, there may be an emergency, and I take it that a child of God would adopt such a PRINCIPLE as the following:- "well, I am glad you have come among us to

hear something more of the Word of the Lord. If no one can make the arrangements so easily, I shall be delighted that you might share my simple arrangements, if this is quite in accord with the mind of any dear brethren who guide, in the shepherding as Eph. 4 indicates", or in any measure help, (if the Lord grants overseers, as in Timothy and Titus) And I take it, the child of God would welcome for the time being, and then would consult such dear brethren, and if they felt they were able to make the arrangement otherwise, the child of God would gladly say, "This will be a pleasure, but I did not want the saint who came to the neighbourhood, or one who professes to be concerned for the truth of God, to feel in any sense NEGLECTED, so I took action at once in the emergency just awaiting further action on the part of the Lord's people in the assembly fellowship, to which HE has brought us". Yes, He brings to this, and the figure of a body shows the beautiful harmony which should exist. But when there is the knowing BEFOREhand, the arrangements are PECULIARLY definite and worked out. By the way, the arrangements of the home are actually more resultful oftentimes than the presence in the meeting. Hence one of the most remarkable examples in the book of Acts should be pondered. The apostle is going to Jerusalem, and they took with them a certain Mnason, "An old disciple with whom we should lodge". It seems extraordinary to be journeying along with the one with whom they were to lodge. Just before

this the apostle entered into the house of Philip the evangelist. These two passages in Acts 21 confirm the thought of Timothy and Titus. They show us how the early church had a right realisation of the GREAT importance of a godly home, of the great importance of hospitality, in this aspect, by those who were competent to exercise it to the glory of God.

And now, beloved friends, we pass further. Love has MANY activities, and the Holy Spirit calls to the WIDER aspect of hospitality, that everything may be done with a love of strangers without MURMURING, as 1 Peter emphasizes. Let me illustrate what I mean. Not all have the same temptations. Indeed, some have certain actions which appear to be spiritual, which MAY be very fleshly, or which appear to be spiritual, yet are not ~~accompanied~~ ^{accompanied} by an all-round spirituality. Let me put two cases before you. "A" is a believer, he is very fond of study. Even before he was saved, he was fond of study. Now that he is saved he studies the Scriptures continually, and various things concerning the Truth. He learns the verses of Truth, and we rejoice to see the continual earnestness. He does not take up the study of Greek, and put it down again. He continues, with a view to the knowledge of the Scriptures. There is a godly persistency. You say, A very excellent believer. Granted, in certain ways. "B" is a believer who is not particularly fond of study, he never was. He likes a talk; he is saved by grace and he likes to talk about grace. Now notice the problems those two dear saints have. A stranger arrives on the scene. "A" is

very glad to see him, but he thinks, "How shall I get my study done this week?" and this undercurrent affects the truly desired warmth of the greeting toward this stranger. "B" is delighted to see him, he will be so glad to have a talk, he will put aside his study with the greatest of pleasure to try and help. The visitor has come along, and both wish to help. But "B" thinks "A" is rather selfish, and "A" does want to finish the study; and "A" thinks "B" is too much occupied with novelties, and if he was a little quieter and did a little more study it would be all the better for him. "A" sees "B's" fault and "B" sees "A's" fault. Hence a little friction. Each needs to see his own fault, and to deal with it before the Lord, and THEN to wash the other's feet, and pull out the mote with love's tenderness. "A" may have a considerable amount of spirituality in his study, but a considerable amount of fleshly energy ~~is added~~ ^{intrudes}. "B" may have a considerable amount of love in his welcome, but a considerable amount of natural interest is added. The Lord sorts out the complex actions. The Lord will analyze them and reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. But we do feel the need for reserving the judgment till that day, because we cannot analyze. But surely the words ring out with force to us, that believers should seek to grow up unto Christ in ALL things, that there may not be a ONEsided growth, but a development of the various parts of the believing life, to the praise of the glory of God's grace. Do not misunderstand me if I say there are two important principles that apply which are seemingly contradictory. One is this. It is

a good thing to do that on which your heart is set. Secondly, it is a good thing to do that on which you are not set. What I mean is this. It may be well for "A" to be disturbed in his study, - perhaps he is the one who should look after this visitor. On the other hand there are circumstances where the Lord fits one in one way and one in another, and where the Lord Himself prepares one brother to be more suitable for conversation, and another to feel the especial need for definite preparation, that he may minister the word in certain arrangements from the Lord. The Lord could equip some, as in the case of the apostles, to do MANY parts of work, and we should pray for more usefulness, but in 1 Pet. 4 where we have the need of hospitality without grudging, without murmuring, the next verse is "Stewards of the variegated grace of God". Remember hospitality meant a variegated work for the whole assembly; and the foot cannot do what the hand can do, and the hand cannot do what the foot can do; the hand is not to ignore the foot, nor to get in the way of the foot, nor to envy the foot, but to work with the foot, and to be thankful for the foot, and it is to be the same with the foot. Thus is there a spiritual enjoyment of the animating and uniting power of the Holy Spirit, under the directing power of the glorious Lord. Otherwise there must be failure in the assembly, and failure in the individual life. The love of strangers is a love which is to extend in VARIOUS ways. The Lord's words in Luke 14, echoing Isa. 58 and reminding of Matt. 25, suggest that something which is given to the least of His brethren may be given unto Him, and not only so, but that

certain actions may be done toward those whom the Lord has not yet drawn to Himself, but whom He is drawing, which will be used as a witness for Him. These principles are deeply important. The welcoming of those who are not wealthy friends, but who are the outcasts of Luke 14, implies a principle contradictory of many present theories, as understood by the world, but the child of God has learned to contradict these, and love is to be shown to those who are the least. Compare the message about the little ones, and even the cup of cold water in the name of a disciple. The Lord looks at LITTLE things which are done to LITTLE ones, and to those who are but weak believers, and upon them we are encouraged to bestow the more abundant honour, - so gracious is God's suggestion. I think we feel what this means. There are some children of God that you can put on one side, you need not give them the abundant honour of looking after them. What I mean is this - they are not offended if you do not speak to them, they do not misunderstand it. There are other children of God who are the weaker saints, who are necessary, but you must bestow upon them the more abundant honour, or otherwise they will have some spiritual disease of despondency, and be offended, and think you are overlooking them with some "object". It is not always so encouraging to have the need for abundant honour bestowed upon one in this way. It is more encouraging when we are willing to be neglected. And so is it with respect to hospitality. SPECIAL care must be shown for the little ones, (I speak just now *of* in a spiritual sense), who believe in the Lord.

And now let me plead for IN-hospitality. I need hardly say that love is the most hating thing in the world, and the more our love is, the greater will be the intensity of our godly hatred. Those who love the Lord and fear Him, are to HATE EVIL, and Scripture speaks of a hating with perfect hatred. "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated lawlessness". Love involves its opposite. Affection has a strong hatred. Every step we go heavenward, is a step AWAY FROM the world, and every act of love involves a contrary. In like manner there is a need for inhospitality. There are some people who are hospitable for everything. They are Athenians, and like to hear something new, or when strangers come they are afraid lest they should be IMPOLITE, and this right attitude, in a right context, not being coupled with discernment is twisted to something else, - for Satan's great desire is to get hold of that which is right and to produce a skilfully disguised substitute for it, and to lead us astray. If we have the affection of Barnabas, we need to have the discernment of Paul, lest we are carried away by the dissimulation of others, or wish to take John Mark with us before he has been trained sufficiently. The affection of Barnabas is very beautiful, but Paul was stronger in discernment, and love must be with allperception and discernment, as Phil. 1.9 shows. If it is not so, we shall find that we shall be welcoming spots in feasts of charity, and encouraging those who are wandering stars, and hindering other saints by our misguided hospitality. The apostle, therefore, urges believers on certain occasions to

be severe, for if 3rd John shows the beautiful hospitality of a Gains, the second epistle shows the inhospitality which is appointed. The apostle says, "If anyone come unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him "Rejoice"- for he that biddeth him "Rejoice" is partaker of his evil deeds". This is the right inhospitality. We must be inhospitable toward error and evil. We must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, and those who would mislead must not be encouraged. We need to be on our guard in this connection, lest we bring those who do mischief across the path of others, to say nothing of damage to ourselves. Love to the Lord, and love to the Lord's people, must be linked with a holy hatred of that which is against the Lord, and that which is not emphasized as the Truth revealed in the Scriptures of Truth. Surely, amid all these problems, we need much grace that we obey the command of 1 Pet. 4, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and, being rightly hospitable to all, may realise the need for the variegated grace of God that, in a spiritual harmony and happy co-working, God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ, - to Whom is the glory and the might into the ages of the ages, Amen.
