

TRUTH FOR THE TIME.

(PART VIII.)

BEING NOTES OF ADDRESSES AND
READINGS AT QUEMERFORD,
MAY, 1895.

REVISED.

LONDON :
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

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LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE.

(2 TIM. II. 11.)

THE construction of this passage is remarkable. It is very difficult to translate it. It is the same word that you get in another place (1 Thess. v. 10): "Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." The meaning of the passage is, if you are in company with Him in death, you are in company with Him in life. The entering into this would greatly affect every one of us; historically I believe it tells exactly where we are. I will try presently to trace it to its height, but first I will briefly trace its history in the soul.

I turn first for an illustration of it. Exodus xiv. is the first lesson we have in death. In Exodus xii. we have a people sheltered from judgment by blood. It is an immense relief to the sin-burdened soul to believe that when God sees the blood He will pass over. But if you will study not only the history of Israel but your own history, you will find that it is not only relief that you need, but you want to

be delivered from the power of the enemy. Israel when sheltered by the blood, was not delivered from Pharaoh and the Egyptians; they were not out of Egypt. Egypt is the world under judgment. Now that is the state of many souls. They are saved from the judgment of God, they are sure of safety. This is quite true, and I would not weaken the sense of it; but at the same time they are exposed to the full force of the enemy's power—Israel was still under the pressure of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. For us it is Satan and the flesh. As another has said, There is now, as there was then, a large company at Pi-hahiroth. How were they relieved? There was a way made for them through the Red Sea; they did not make it; God made it, and the light of God shewed it to them, but they *walked* it.

Now I ask every one in this room, Have *you* ever walked it? I do not ask are you saved, but have you ever walked through the Sea? Israel walked it, and they saw the water a wall on the right hand and on the left. (Ver. 29.) They did not make the way, but there was a way made for them, and they appropriated it and got through. This was accomplished for us by the death of Christ. It is a type of His death, and we have to appropriate it. Saul of Tarsus learnt it in

those three days when he did neither eat nor drink ; he was really walking through the Red Sea—appropriating the death of Christ. When Israel came out on the other side of the Red Sea they sang. A young convert cannot sing. A bird sings when it can fly, not before. There are three capabilities which come together in a bird : it flies, it sings, and it feeds—provides for itself. You have to walk through the water to appropriate the death of Christ, to get clear of death. You get clear of the judgment of death by appropriating the death of Christ. That is Exodus. xiv. Israel are now clear of the power of Pharaoh and the place where Pharaoh is, and they come out in triumph. The death which had opened a way for them and by which they are brought to God, is the destruction of their enemies, "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

Now we come to chapter xv. Now Israel are singing. You have the song. They are out of death. How would you know that you are out ? There are three great characteristics of those who are out. First, the Lord is before you, He is everything to you. Instead of Pharaoh and the Egyptians being before you, the Lord is before you ; you have changed your ground. That is the great mark of a man

who has got the Holy Ghost; God is before him. "I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." That is the first note. It is really the chorus: the women sang it. The second characteristic is, you have an entirely new interest. The Lord's interest is before you. It is not only "the Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation," but "I will prepare him an habitation." I know the man at once who has got really clear (not merely safe), he has a new object; first, the Lord is before him; then the Lord's interests. The third characteristic is, he knows that the Lord will bring him to His habitation: "Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." These are the three characteristics of salvation.

Now, beloved brethren, I must touch on the most solemn subject, the journey of the soul from the world of judgment to heaven. To use a figure, we start from the port of salvation—we are clear of judgment, and we shall most surely come to the desired haven at the end—to heaven. For this we are bound; all is secured by the work of Christ. But if I come to my own history (would to God we all remembered and took note of our history: I do not call a diary a history; a history is a record of events, a diary

generally of feelings)—what sort of person have you been between Egypt and Canaan? That is where every one is proved. It is the moral region which lies between those two places that discloses our real state. All that lies between the Red Sea, the song, and Canaan is the wilderness. The wilderness to Israel was a vast howling desert, nothing for them there but God; but we have all generally the same opportunities for self-indulgence after our conversion that we had before it; we have to arm ourselves with Christ's death, and as we do we suffer in the flesh (1 Pet. iv. 1); then the world is a wilderness to us. This is very testing. I should like to see the man who is truly in the wilderness, one who is consciously in a scene where there is nothing for him but God. We have to remember that God could not minister anything to the man that He had judicially set aside in the cross. That interval between Egypt and Canaan is the test ground for us all. It came out after thirty-nine years of journeying in the wilderness, that they (Israel) were unmendably bad. God leaves us in the wilderness to prove us, to "know what is in your heart." (Deut. viii.) It is a great thing to know what is in your heart. What is disclosed? That we are unmendably bad. Numbers xxi. is a picture of our experience. "As Moses lifted

up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up ;" the man must go in death. Here John's gospel begins. He begins at our side. Man is gone. Man is irretrievable, there is no recuperative power in him. In Numbers xxi. you see in figure Christ made sin. You practically learn it in Romans vii. : " I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." What next? " I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." You have changed your man now. Not only have you got out of death, but you have changed your man. It is a great thing to get hold of this. If I were to state the gospel in a few words I should say: It is that the Man who has glorified God on earth has displaced the man who had offended against God. The great thought of the gospel is a Person, a Man, who supersedes all others. The angel announces to the shepherds: Lo, I bring you good tidings of great joy. For unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. " Look *unto me*, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Many other passages I could quote to shew that it is Christ personally who is presented. John begins with a Person, the Son of man lifted up, not with the blood on the lintel and the Red Sea, which are on God's side; but he sets forth your state through grace, which

answers to the standing before God. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." One man is irretrievable, and the Man Christ Jesus has glorified God where we dishonoured Him. In chapters iii., iv., v., you get it increasing till you come to chapter vi.: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." You must feed on His death to get it. It is not merely His death for you, every Christian has that; but how you enter into it; you must feed on His death to get it.

Now a new course is before you, and instead of looking for anything in the wilderness, like Israel, you are leaving it. You feed on manna, you seek for nothing in the wilderness. Now you cross Jordan—death with Christ—but you find that there is no "water," no judgment there. The old divines looked upon it as tantamount to the Red Sea. As one of the old hymns puts it:

"Shivering on the brink;"

but the fact is, there is no water in it; the nearer you come to it the less will be your fear (you may notice at death-beds)—the nearer the believer comes to actual dissolution, the less

fear there is. There is no water in Jordan. To have crossed Jordan is an immense privilege.

I know this has been refused, but I say that it *is* a privilege. Would to God every heart in this room could say, Thank God, I see it is a privilege and accept it. It is then that you are undetained by things here. The young man in 1 John ii. is not dead to earthly things. He is clear of Pharaoh, he has overcome the wicked one, but he is not morally apart from things here. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," is the word to him. You might say, Do you want me to be an ascetic? No; but I want you to be morally outside of everything here. As in Colossians ii., "Dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world," and consequently risen with Him.

If you were morally apart from everything visible, you would be in a wonderful sphere—the sphere of Christ's life. If you are not morally outside of everything here, you do not realise Christ's life in its own sphere. I do not say that you are in heaven, but when you are in Christ's life you are morally apart from everything here. Your affections are set on things above, not on things on the earth. You seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth. I am sure that any one who is seeking to go on would like to realise it. I have longed

for it myself. I would like to be like Paul, for one day even, to see what it is to be morally apart from everything here. You will be so one day actually, and if you are now in the Spirit, you enjoy Christ where there is no hindrance to it.

When you come to Colossians you find that Christ who is your life is also your Head, the One who directs you. You not only live, but you live for Him. You may say that we are not in the power of this truth, but I ask are we not to seek it? I want you to accept it. What is the good of having truth presented to us if we do not wait on the Lord and seek to get hold of it experimentally? We have to learn, and it is only as we go on that we do learn it.

When the truth of our being heavenly first came out, what characterised those who accepted it, was renunciation, giving up. I remember thinking that whenever one gave up any earthly thing, one got more of heavenly things. Then came more light but less practice. Many saw that their calling was heavenly through God's grace to them, but they held the truth only objectively, they were not in practical correspondence with it. Jordan was not experimentally crossed over; death with Christ was not practically accepted. They tried to make their state depend on faith and not on the work of

the Spirit. They thought they could be "dead to sin" by faith; they had to learn that, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." It is only by the Spirit that you can mortify. What you want is to be in company with Him and you must begin with His company in death in order to be in His company in life. That is what we have to learn and no doubt great blessing will come out of it.

Nearly the last words of a beloved servant of God directed us to John's writings, and it is remarkable that the first error that came to light afterwards was that every one born anew had eternal life. I only speak of it as shewing what we have to learn. It is by degrees that we learn. I am surprised at myself, so long on the road, and how slowly I have learnt.

It is not by renunciation that we are morally apart from the world, but *by death with Christ*. I ask, would you not like to be free from everything which would detain you or divert you from Him "who is our life." If your heart enters into the blessedness of being in His life you would rejoice that you are dead with Him from the rudiments of this world, and now risen with Him in His life, you are come into a new order of things, because He is your Head and He directs you in His own circle. I know many do not enter into it, but it is a great thing that the

desire to know Christ as Head should be awakened in any heart. May your hearts be so drawn to Him that you may long to be set free from everything here which would divert you from Him. And then you will thankfully own that Jordan is a privilege and your happy answer to the Red Sea. It is not merely that you are out of Egypt and on the road to heaven, but you know that you are so severed from everything here, that you enjoy unhinderedly the sphere of His life. Then you are in communion with Him and when you are in communion with Him you know that you are united to Him, which is the consummation of every blessing. I know many Christians who do not know union. I say it sorrowfully after many years of service. I see Abraham's steward—how well he did his work—he conducted Rebekah to Isaac. I should rejoice to be in any degree instrumental in conducting souls to Christ where He is, into the realisation of union with Him. Many know the doctrine of union very well. It is one thing to know that everything has been done *for* me, but quite another to have it done *in* me. The Spirit's work in you is the measure of your realisation. The measure of God's grace is that all has been done *for* you, it is unbounded, there is no limit to it, but how much do you realise of it?

The Lord grant that each here may understand what a blessed thing it is to be so detached from everything here by His death, that we may know the great joy and privilege of being in the sphere of His life ; and to taste even now what it is to be in that sphere of supreme blessedness, not to wait for it till we die, but *now* to sit under His shadow with great delight and His fruit sweet to our taste.

J. B. S.



THE POWER OF AFFECTION.

I WOULD like to add a word on what I deem to be an important point in connection with what we have heard, that is, as to the place which affection has in leading us into the realisation of that sphere of life in which, in the grace of God, we are privileged to be with Christ.

I will just read a verse in Romans vi. 10: "In that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." I think that we should all agree with the remark which was made a few moments since; that the gospel presents to us a Person. He is presented to us in the value of the work which He has accomplished, but it could not be questioned that the gospel presents to us a Person; and it is with a Person that the thought of affection connects itself. When you come to affection it must be so. I can understand any one having the love of all that is good, but for the true thought of affection with us you must introduce an object; and as we have often been told, a worthy object. And this is where I see the importance of the truth of the gospel centring in a Person.

To a certain extent, I think, in our minds we

confuse faith and the working of the Spirit. I am satisfied that they are very much confounded. This may not be understood by all, but I see it very plainly. What I understand by faith is the admission of divine light into the heart. The heart is enlightened by light from God. What I never could have known if God had not been pleased to reveal it, is now light to my heart. The revelation of God—that is, God come out in the revelation of Himself—is the light of the believer's heart. I do not think you really realise it till the Holy Ghost is received. Then the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost. The heart of man was never of itself acquainted with the love of God. I do not say there may not have been an apprehension of grace.

What I desire to say a word about is the way the Spirit works in the believer through affection. I think that is the manner of the Spirit's work. Evidently our being made acquainted with the love of God must produce a most extraordinary moral change in us. It is impossible for any one to love God until He knows that God loves him. Scripture is clear on that: "We love him, because he first loved us." When the love of God is brought home to a man's heart it must produce a mighty effect in him. Then he loves God; and a great deal

more hangs upon this. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." They are made known to the one who loves God. If we answer to God's love to us, it is His pleasure to make known to us those things which He has prepared for them that love Him. But the real spring is His love.

My point is that we are led by affection into that sphere of life which is true in Christ; as to the realisation of it, I mean. No one disputes the title to it. The title is entirely in the purpose of God: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should . . . have eternal life." The title lies in the purpose of God, which is the fruit of His love. The purpose cannot be gainsaid; but the purpose, and the realisation of it in the soul of the believer are two different things, and the realisation is the important point to us down here, and is wrought by the Spirit through the affections. I begin by reminding you that all blessing comes to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. The administration of divine grace is committed into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and has given gifts to men. The ground of salvation is believing on the Lord

Jesus Christ: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord . . . shall be saved." The simple explanation is—that the administration of divine grace is committed to Christ as Lord. God's salvation is set forth in Him. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now another truth is developed in the latter part of Romans v, which connects itself with the thought of the Person: namely, that not only does Christ administer all, but that by His own personal perfectness He has secured everything He administers. It is His one "obedience" and "one righteousness," on which it all rests, and by virtue of which He has secured everything. I believe it to be the opening up of an immense field to us. As we trace sin and death to one man, to one act of disobedience, one man's offence, so we trace everything connected with grace up to one Man, as its first cause, to one righteousness, one obedience, the perfectness of one Man. All this culminates in the cross of Christ, where for us all blessing begins. Our blessings are very great. By Him we have peace with God. By Him we have access into divine favour; rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, the Holy Ghost given to us, the love of God shed abroad in the heart, reconciliation received; we know the terms on which we are with God. Now

the Spirit of God begins to teach me that I have to trace everything up to the perfectness and obedience of one Man who has secured these things, that He might administer all on the part of God. I believe that is where the Spirit of God begins to form the first link of affection between the heart of the believer and Christ. As we see these things we begin to appreciate His own personal excellency. And now we derive from Him; you cannot deny your descent from Adam or what you get from Adam and the fall. It is equally true that you cannot deny that what you have from Christ is the fruit of His work, His obedience, His righteousness. He came into the place of man's disobedience and unrighteousness, and perfectly fulfilled obedience and righteousness, all that was necessary for the glory of God, even to the putting away of sin. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

I come now to another point which I think stands next in order of apprehension. In resurrection Christ has established a new platform for man before God. The first thought I want you to bear in mind is that of His own absolute perfectness as displayed in man, by which I believe He engages our hearts; then that in resurrection He has established a new platform for man

before God, which He is the first to occupy. "In that he died, he died unto sin once; in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." It is most important to see in scripture that Christ has taken up a place for man before God in resurrection. God has come out in grace in the person of the Son to reveal Himself. That is one side of the truth. And Christ has revealed God, and secured everything to us by His own perfectness. But there is the other side, and that is, that He Himself as man liveth unto God.

Now I will tell you what the Spirit of God will do. He will work in us by the power of affection to draw us to Christ in that place. It is not here so much a question of faith as of affection, which leads us to the One who has secured everything to us on the part of God, in the place in which He now is. We are drawn to Him where He is now to know His company there. The believer is set upon being in His company. "He liveth to God." We want to be with Him, and to be with Him we must be outside of all that is here. It is a question not exactly of faith but of affection, you will not reach Him there but by affection. The Spirit of God draws me to Him by affection, and to be with Him where He is I must be outside of all here which is contrary to Him. He died to sin once. There is nothing in this world that is not

dominated by sin, and to be with Him in spirit I must be free of its power. When you get the apprehension of what Christ has accomplished that you might be brought into blessing, and secured in it, you want to be with Him where He is. That is what affection craves, and what affection *will* have, and what affection *does* have.

I see it in principle in the demoniac. (Mark v. 18.) He desired that he might be with Him. What was not then given to him is given to us by the Spirit of God, that we should join Christ, in the sphere of life into which He has entered, in resurrection. It is on the other side, outside of everything here. We have to remember that He has died to sin, and it is as we have died to sin, that we live to God in Christ Jesus. "If we have died with him we shall also live with him." You must have that side as well as the other. But it is the Spirit of God working in the heart of the believer by affection to draw him to that ground where Christ is as alive from the dead. And He delights thus to lead the believer to be in spirit with Christ.

I do not go further into it; but it is important to remember that there is the same Spirit of life in every believer, and it is of life, not in us, but in Christ Jesus. That brings in a very important truth, that we are one in Him, one

body in Christ. It is there you get the true idea of spiritual unity, "We, being many, are one body in Christ."

He has entered into that sphere of life as risen from the dead. As "the corn of wheat" He abode alone, but now there is much fruit; but to enter into association with Christ we must reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

I begin to get a glimpse of it, and to understand a little how the Spirit of God works through the affections. We have, as I said before, confused two things, faith, and the work of the Spirit. The knowledge of your title is by faith. If you have not title you cannot travel on that line at all. The title is founded in the work of Christ; but the way in which you apprehend what you have title to is in the Spirit of God working through the affections. You see Christ as the One who has secured all by His own perfectness. He Himself is the forerunner, and the next thing is, affection desires to be with the One who is endeared to you by the Spirit. Affection secures everything for the believer. I think that is the way we get it, if I do not mistake.

F. E. R.



“THAT I MAY KNOW HIM.”

(JOHN XIV. 15-20; 2 COR. I. 20, 21.)

I WOULD like to follow on a little what has been said. I do feel more and more, beloved brethren, the necessity of our being drawn into the company of the Person of the Lord; and that no amount of truth which we may have will do for us, or will ever stand us in stead, unless we know it in connection with Christ unless He really is the object of our heart. The verses I have read from John xiv. shew us that it is by the Holy Ghost, as taking the Lord's place on earth, that we enter into (and it is a very blessed thing for us that we do!) what is presented to us in pattern when the Lord was here.

We see Him doing many works of power, but we see, too, His delight was to draw souls into His own company. I bring one instance which presents itself to my mind, as a pattern of this delight: the poor woman who came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment. It was a very simple act, very simple faith. She had a great need, and she came

behind Him and touched the hem of His garment; she got relief, and was going away with it. But what I see in the blessed Lord is, that He did not merely come to relieve me, but He came to *have* me; and it is wonderful when the soul gets the sense of it. Therefore He will not let her go away with relief only. She has to come into His presence, and to own what she touched Him for, and He would have her know the heart from which the blessing came. He says, as it were: You touched me for the virtue; you felt your need and the *extent* of your need; but I would like you to know the *extent* of the heart that met it. We are long in learning it, but it is a wonderful moment when the heart gets introduced to Himself and learns something of His heart.

We get to know things through need. As we get the sense of need we come to the point that there is not a single resource in myself that I can draw upon. It is difficult to learn that we are unmendably bad, for we are apt to think there is a little something, a little bit of faithfulness or love in *ourselves* (not that I make light of these); but we have to come to the point that we must get everything from Him; but He will not let us stay there, He would have us know Himself.

It was a wonderful moment for that woman,

though she had to fall down before Him and own why she had touched Him; He would not let her go away saying, I went and touched Him for my need, and it was met; but she went away knowing His heart. It was as if He said to her, You are perfectly welcome to what you have got. You have come to a heart which is perfectly open to you.

It is an immense thing to learn that. I believe the line the Spirit of God has already carried us upon this morning is an important one, and a line we must each take. We never can give up in this world unless we have something positive which enables us to give up. It would only be monkish effort. But when you know Him and He has cast His look of love upon you, somehow or other you cannot help going after Him. I know very well the thousand attractions and difficulties which would hinder, but it is a wonderful thing when the soul is set that way, and when affection is drawing us into His company.

I quite go with what has been said. It is that we are drawn by the Spirit through the affections. That is why I read the passage in John. The Spirit comes on the love side. "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter." But first I would say a word which

I think is important. If we knew the Lordship of Christ more, governing and directing us in our pathway down here, we should be more prepared to enter into His Headship where we derive from Him. His Lordship has to do with us in our responsible life on earth. First, every blessing which God gives me down here is administered through Him as Lord; secondly, while I am actually down here making my way through the wilderness, it is a wonderful thing that I have a Person to command me. A Person who commands every blessing for me, that is the first thing, and then who commands me for blessing. Do we understand what it is to be controlled by the Lord? He *is* our Lord. It is easy to *say* "My Lord," but am I controlled by Him? Do I listen to Him?

It is not exactly that you get Lordship here, but the effect of His company, love that keeps His commandments; but it is an immense thing to have the sense that down here it is not to be my will now, because I have found One who has all the blessing of God for me; and I trust myself in His hands to be controlled, and He will command me for blessing, just as He commands blessing for me. I think if we accepted that truth, it would be a great point gained in our souls, because it would set us free with regard to our responsible life

here; but it is the Spirit which enables us to be governed by love and to respond to it, and we are thus prepared to be in His company and to learn Himself. In this passage He counts on their love for Him, and says, “I will come *to you*.” Take the case of the poor woman I have spoken of. She was actually in His company, but it is the Spirit now that acquaints me with Him and enables me to see Him. He tells the disciples He is going away, and counts on their love: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” His commandments are the expression of what He is Himself, and we love Him for what He is. We have learnt Him, and know His love, and that He could not command us in any way but what is according to Himself.

And then He says, “I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter.” He was not going to be here any longer; but the Comforter would come, and He *has* come to make *us* acquainted with Himself. It is thus He draws us to His side of things.

I leave that passage for a moment because I would like to touch the point in Corinthians. The Corinthians had been indulging the flesh, and had reaped the fruit and consequence of it; they had been depending upon man—human intellect and the wisdom of man—and it had

let them down. They had been leaning upon a staff that had pierced their hands. Now the apostle comes in to comfort them, but he comforts them with the truth which we have had this morning before us—death and resurrection.

That is no comfort to the flesh but it is a great comfort to the spiritual man, because it is that which will take me away from myself and fix my eye on Christ. The truth of death and resurrection brings the flesh to its own nothingness, but there is inconceivable blessing in it—therefore he brings it in to help the Corinthians.

Any one who has traversed the path will see the importance of the truth Paul presents to them. Whatever are the promises of God, in Christ is the Yea and in Him the Amen. Whatever promise expressed the purpose of God in blessing, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the verification, the yea and amen of all, and it is in resurrection that He is declared Son of God with power. It takes them entirely off the ground of man to stablish them upon Christ.

Then he goes on: "He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." There

we have the Holy Spirit brought in. First, God establishes them in Christ; but suppose I see that, so that blessed be God, everything is secured for me in Christ now—for God has firmly attached me to Him—it would be a poor thing for me if I could not know Him in whom I am established! If I were simply brought to Christ to know everything secured in Him, and did not know Him, and could not have communion with Him—with the One I was brought to—it would only give the sense of security. So the anointing comes in in connection with the establishing. He has given us the Spirit (as we read in 1 John ii., “the anointing” that teaches us to abide in Him, and in Ephesians, “the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him”) that we may know the Person that He has firmly attached us to. The anointing is thus connected with the power whereby we know the Person. It is in connection with the knowledge of the Person that the Spirit is given as the anointing, but on the ground of the work, the blood-shedding of Christ; that is the ground-work of the gift—but it is that I may know the Person.

It is remarkable that in Ephesians and 2 Corinthians you get the Spirit as seal and anointing put in an opposite way. In Ephesians the seal-

ing comes first, the anointing (for I take "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation" as the anointing) comes after. In Ephesians we are looking at things from the divine side. It is different from any other epistle. The apostle had not to begin with the state of the saints he wrote to. He begins from God, and His counsels and purpose. In Colossians he had to speak of their state; in Corinthians, too; even in Philippians a little, though he brings in his own wonderful experience; but in Ephesians he had not to occupy himself with the state of the saints to whom he wrote, and he could begin immediately with God, and unfold their calling according to His purpose. The sealing is more on that side. It is the same blessed Spirit who is the Seal, the Anointing, and the Earnest; but in Ephesians we have the Spirit sealing for God those, who having heard the gospel of salvation believed in the Christ of God: thus God put His stamp upon the subjects of His own eternal counsel and purpose. In Corinthians the order is opposite. It is more our side there, and the anointing comes first. Am I to have all the promises of God secured to me in Christ who is the Yea and Amen, and am I not to know Him and to enter into what is revealed to me in Him? There comes in the power of acquaintance with a Person. Hence it is

the anointing I specially desired to dwell upon, noting the way in which it comes out here in this epistle.

I would just ask every one here, in God's presence, Is it the company of that blessed Person that you and I really want? Having come together, is it a little more light and understanding of the truth we want, or is it Himself? Let every heart answer whether, as gathered together here, the desire of our hearts is that the Spirit of God should acquaint us with Himself, and all that He is to God, as well as the revelation of God in love to us.

I think what our brother brought before us as to Exodus xv. most important. It came before me very much in the prayer-meeting last night, not merely that we should be together with the desire for our blessing, like the woman coming behind and touching the hem of the garment—her thought was her blessing—but to get drawn more to Himself. The moment we get the Spirit of God, He directs our thoughts *to the Lord*. It is the Lord who has delivered us, who occupies us. “The Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation. He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation.” The Spirit will open out to me what there is in the Lord. If that takes place I know there will be death on this side, but death now takes the form

of gain, a place of liberty. There was no water in Jordan. You are past the sea when you have got the Lord before you. You are there looking at death as the salvation of God in that Christ has died, the Holy Ghost then directing your soul to Him ; but when you come to the truth of Jordan you find there is no water. We begin to find that death is gain, that there is something before us that is so incomparably precious that we want to be more acquainted with it, and we have the Spirit in order that we should be acquainted with Him in whom all is treasured up. There comes in the thought : perhaps you must give up this and that ; and you must put down this and that. No ; I believe the Spirit of God would acquaint us with the gain side, and the more the Spirit draws us (oh ! that it may be so to-day) in our affections to Him, the more we shall realise our gain. The apostle says to the Corinthians, “ *The Son of God* who was preached among you.” It was a Person, that wonderful Person, the Son of God in power over death. In that One everything is verified that God has purposed for man, so that all might be for His own glory. He could teach a poor Corinthian, who had learned that the flesh he trusted had let him fall, through the apostle, how God had attached him firmly to Christ, and that he had the Spirit as anointing, that he might know

the Person in whom everything is yea and amen. God has firmly attached us to Christ. It is there we learn that we are united to Christ. The Spirit is given that we may know union with that Person to whom our affections are drawn and to whom we are firmly attached. That is opened out in Ephesians, but I am speaking more of being led into His company. It is a wonderful thing that the Spirit of God has been given to us that we may know Him, and that there is a platform now where we can be with Him, for we know Him in resurrection. May God give us to occupy it !

What a wonderful moment it was for Jacob, when (after allowing the flesh to choose a place for him at Shechem) God said to him, “ Arise ; go up to Bethel, and dwell there.” When we see Christ risen out of death and out of all that was under the power of death, He is the One to whom by the Spirit we are conducted. It was a blessed moment for Jacob to change Shechem for Bethel and the God of Bethel, and what a moment when the Spirit leads you out of this scene of death and you see Christ in resurrection life, and you occupy a new platform ; and He draws your heart to Him ! It is a great thing to get a sight of it—I don’t say how much we enter into it—but to get our eyes turned there and to know the heart that loves me, and desires that I should

know the extent of His heart is very blessed. When I first touched Him for relief His thought was, that I should know the whole extent of His heart for me. The Spirit now acquaints us with Himself, that we may know His heart, and our hearts be drawn to Him.

May the Lord thus draw us, beloved brethren !

T. H. R.



READING.

(COL. I., II.)

F. H. B. I have thought that the *object* of ministry would be a good subject, as so many labouring brethren are present.

QUES. What scripture do you propose?

F. H. B. We might take up Colossians i. and ii. I think that if we understand what God's thought and purpose in ministry is, we should think more seriously of ministry. Is it correct to say all that is of God in us is effected by ministry, that the Spirit of God effects it by ministry?

E. C—P. What do you mean by ministry?

F. H. B. The ministry of the word.

E. C—P. Is that always by the ministry of a servant?

F. H. B. Not necessarily. It is the ministry of the word, but not the ministry of a servant necessarily.

D. L. H. I thought the word of God came to us through servants—through Paul and through John, &c.—that is, primarily. Though it is the word of God we get, it is through the servants we get it.

F. H. B. What is the ministry to effect ?

W. T. P. W. What B. spoke of was more a spiritual gift.

F. H. B. Look again at chapter i. 28.

W. T. P. W. That is the exercise surely of a spiritual gift. What is ministry ?

F. H. B. I mean the ministry of the word—teaching specially. I was thinking more of the effect in the saint. What is to be effected by it in you and me ? Paul says, “That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

W. T. P. W. Broadly speaking, would you not say ministry is the exercise of a spiritual gift ? What you have been speaking of might take place in a soul apart from the ministry of a servant, as C. says.

F. H. B. Take an evangelist, he has a distinct design before him, a distinct thought in his soul, namely, to get souls saved ?

W. T. P. W. I would not let the evangelist stop there ; that is the beginning.

F. H. B. Have you not got the ministry in this very chapter ? The ministry of the gospel and the ministry of the church, for both of which Paul was specially called and fitted.

W. T. P. W. I dare say the gospel of the apostle Paul was somewhat different to what some evangelists of the present day call the gospel, and as there are a good many here

to-day, it might do us good to get brushed up a little. Was that your desire?

F. H. B. My desire was to get help. I think if we understood better what the design of ministry is, we should know how to do the work better.

T. H. R. I think it is an immense thing to go back to the fountain head, because things *do* come to us through ministry, and Christ is the minister. I must have everything ministered to me from God, and Christ is the apostle. Here, in a certain sense, you get what is apostolic to begin with. If I do not get a thing distinctly through apostolic ministry, I do not get it from God. It is important to get a thing properly. If I do not get the thing ministered I do not get it properly. We get it first through the apostles.

W. T. P. W. Do you mean that it must come through some spiritual gift?

T. H. R. I was not speaking of that; but I think to understand it you must go back to the beginning.

W. T. P. W. It is the revelation of God to the soul, no matter what is the channel.

T. H. R. You must be sure of the channel.

W. T. P. W. What do you mean by that?

T. H. R. I mean this—*God* spoke through Moses, *God* gave communications to Israel through Moses; and it had to come through

Moses, and in that dispensation Moses was the apostle by whom God spoke. It must come through a properly qualified channel.

W. T. P. W. I should like that amplified.

T. H. R. It was given from heaven through divinely commissioned men; they spoke as apostles of Jesus Christ, who is *the* Apostle of *our* profession.

H. D'A. C. You cannot set aside the channel through which the ministry comes.

D. L. H. In that respect it is not true that apostles are still in the church—"He gave some apostles" (Eph. iv.)?

T. H. R. Yes; we get them in the word, the apostolic office of Christ does not cease. Would you not say so, R.?

F. E. R. Yes; the only thing is that the apostles inaugurate the system—introduce it.

T. H. R. At the present moment in the history of the church—for the church goes through phases—I think we do depend upon Christ as Apostle to get the truth suited to the moment through which we are passing—all the truth brought out of late years, for instance. It is all *in* scripture, but it is brought out because Christ is still the Apostle of our profession.

F. E. R. I think we distinguish between the initial ministry and ministry that goes on in detail. You could not put anything now

on a level with the apostles' ministry. The end is the same, but to-day's ministry can hardly be placed beside the first; no one now could be a minister of the gospel or the church, as Paul was.

G. E. "We are of God; he that is of God heareth us." That is apostolic distinctly.

F. H. B. Ministry, as it is exercised to-day, is not merely explaining the truths of the Bible, but there is something to be effected in souls by it, souls are to be formed by it. It is not simply informing the intelligence, the object of ministry is much more.

F. E. R. I suppose it is what you get in the end of the chapter, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ." That was the apostle's object, but *I* cannot effect anything in you, nor you in me.

F. H. B. Yes, but it may come through you; it might be effected through your ministry by the Spirit of God.

F. E. R. Oh, yes.

G. G. What do you mean by the apostolic office of Christ continuing?

T. H. R. Christ is the Apostle of our profession. Of course you get the inauguration of Christianity apostolically at first; but I think also that as the church goes through the various

phases of her history on earth, the church gets guidance distinctly from Christ. Christ would bring out men and qualify them, in order to bring out any particular truth suited to its state.

W. H. B—T. Would you say any distinct re-suscitation of truth would be by Christ in that way?

T. H. R. I think so, but you get Christ's care *for the church*. You get *nothing new*, but what is in the word, but His care on high over the church would bring out at every part of her history truths that were suited for the moment. I think Christ would qualify men. Joshua had to observe all that Moses commanded, but the Lord adds, "Have not I commanded thee?"

G. G. He would use ministry to bring that out?

T. H. R. I think so.

F. E. R. There is one important point, the ministry is the ministry of what has been effected.

W. T. P. W. In what way?

F. E. R. I should say what has been effected in Christ.

F. H. B. Is it looking for it as a present result when it says, "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus"?

F. E. R. Certainly.

J. P. What has been effected in Christ?

F. E. R. All has been effected in Christ. If it is the ministry of reconciliation, the reconciliation has been accomplished. There would be no ministry of it if it had not been effected. Everything for God has been effected in Christ, souls have to come into it; but in Christ is displayed the measure of what has been effected. If it is the new covenant, Paul could fully minister the terms on which God was with man. You try to bring home to people the terms. The new covenant has been established in Christ.

W. T. P. W. In what sense was the apostle an able minister of the new covenant?

F. E. R. He was competent as being fully in the light of what has been effected in Christ. I think that is the character of ministry. Paul speaks of "the word of reconciliation." If reconciliation had not been accomplished, he could not speak about "the word of reconciliation;" so as to righteousness, the righteousness must be there before it can be ministered. It is revealed in Christ.

F. H. B. Then the object would be to bring us consciously into it?

F. E. R. The full effect here is "To present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," that is, full-grown in Christ—nothing lacking morally.

T. H. R. Christ is everything.

QUES. As to the apprehension in the soul?

F. E. R. The verse shews the end the apostle had in view, it is not a question as to whether any could say he was perfect or not, but it was the object of the ministry.

F. H. B. That is important. Not an understanding of the thing, but something morally effected in him.

F. E. R. It is not only preaching, but warning every man.

A. M. Is the evangelist to have the same object as the minister of the church?

F. E. R. There can be but one end before everybody with regard to what you minister. You can have but one end in view, though all may not carry souls on to the end.

F. H. B. That is important, no matter what the gift, there is only one end.

F. E. R. You may not be able to bring the person to the full end, but you cannot have another end in view.

F. H. B. All then are workers together to one end—helpers together?

G. G. Is that the meaning of the "Hope of the gospel"?

F. E. R. No; the hope of the gospel refers to heaven.

F. H. B. You (T. H. R.) made a remark the other day which was very helpful, God has put

us in Christ, but we do not always put ourselves where God has set us.

F. E. R. Ministry refers to the subjective side. "To present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" does not refer to standing, it is subjective.

W. T. P. W. I do not know if we all understand what is the subjective side ?

F. E. R. It is the state effected in the believer, and the formation of the believer in a state.

J. P. Is not that effected by the Holy Ghost ? I thought an objective ministry would produce the subjective state.

F. E. R. That may be. The purpose is subjective, though it be produced by an objective ministry.

G. G. Would you explain what it is to be perfect—subjectively in Christ ?

F. E. R. All that I understand by it is, that there should be no moral quality of Christ lacking in the believer.

F. H. B. That the believer should be formed according to Christ—Christ formed in him. "Whom we preach" is objective.

F. E. R. You get the statement of it in a way in Ephesians—"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus," it says ; that is God's work.

W. T. P. W. Should that object be equally before the evangelist ?

F. E. R. I think it ought to be the end before all, to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

W. T. P. W. I think to put the gospel to meet the need of man only, is very sad. Christendom does it, but I hope we have another line.

F. E. R. God has sent the gospel into the world to effectuate His own purpose. His purpose at the present time is the body of Christ. God may in the gospel open the door to every one, and has done so; but the purpose before Him is the body of Christ.

REMARKED. The evangelist goes forth in the sense that God has a purpose gathering out sinners to complete His pleasure.

W. T. P. W. Why does the evangelist see so little result? That is what exercises me very often.

A. M. Some have said evangelists do not stay long enough in a place.

W. T. P. W. Paul only stayed three sabbath days at Thessalonica. I do not think that is the only reason.

REMARKED. If the gospel is to effectuate God's purpose, He can do without me or with me. God is very graciously pleased to use the preaching of the gospel.

W. T. P. W. I was thinking about having the truth and carrying it out. I dare say many of

us are like that young man in the Old Testament. Ahimaaz ran to the king. (2 Sam. xviii.) He was a runner with tidings, but he had no distinct message. We are often like that, we have not got it distinctly enough ourselves. He had not got the tidings ready.

A. P. We have to get it ourselves before we can give it to others. With regard "to presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus," you could not present a man perfect in Christ unless you were perfect in Christ yourself?

F. E. R. I think so. I should venture to make a difference (only so many preachers are here I hardly dare say so!) between God's purpose in the gospel and God's purpose in the church, I mean as to ministry, not as to the end, but as to immediate result. What I understand by God's purpose in the gospel is that God may be known, according to what He is, in the heart of man; the gospel comes in to make God known.

F. H. B. I thought you said the gospel was to bring in another man?

F. E. R. No; that I think brings in more the church. God's immediate end in the gospel is to make Himself known as He has revealed Himself to be.

A. M. Do you mean as a Saviour-God?

F. E. R. I mean to make known His love, to

reveal Himself in what He is in His own nature, in what He Himself is.

QUES. "God so loved the world?"

F. E. R. That is the coming out of His love, the expression of it. God is love.

QUES. Would you not say God is light?

F. E. R. I would not say God is light in the same sense as He is said to be love. I would not say God is light if I wanted to express His nature, only one word describes the nature of God, that is, love. Light is presented relatively, love absolutely.

D. L. H. We have been accustomed to say God is light and God is love.

F. E. R. I do not think we express it quite correctly if we say that two things describe the nature of God. If darkness is in question, then God is light, but when it is a statement of the nature of God in any absolute sense He is love. Every activity of God is originated in love, every movement of God is the fruit of it. It all originates in love. Light is spoken of relatively, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Because there is darkness it necessarily brings in the truth, "God is light," but when it is a statement of God's nature absolutely, He is love.

W. T. P. W. Well, but you would feel it necessary to present the truth—"God is light" in a day like this, when so many press the love of

God and say all will be saved, because so many are giving up the truth as to the judgment of sin, eternal punishment, and so on ?

F. E. R. Yes, I would press it certainly because men are in darkness, I do not see any love in ignoring that. To my mind the great end of the gospel is that God might be known and that is in love. God has come out in Christ. "In him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." You cannot know anything of the love of God except in the expression of it in Christ. It is the gospel of God concerning His Son.

QUES. Would not that be objective ?

F. E. R. Yes, but if that truth, the truth of what God is, is made known to me it must produce a great subjective effect, a revolution in me. The instant it comes home to a man that God is love it produces a momentous change.

G. G. I do not understand about God is light. Was He not always light ?

F. E. R. Light is relative, love is substantive. Light is presented in contrast to darkness : it all comes in in reference to the state in which man is found, "God is light and in him is no darkness at all," but when you come to nature, what really characterised God, what originates everything in God, it is "God is *love*."

J. P. You would not call universalism love at all ?

F. E. R. No; universalism is not love, it simply reduces God to the level of man.

F. H. B. Setting forth the truth of the nature of God would do away with all that; it would necessarily bring in the dealing with sin.

W. T. P. W. I quite accept all that has been said about the love, that love is absolute and light relative, I go with it fully.

D. L. H. *We* are said to be light in the Lord, but never love.

F. E. R. I did not understand that for a long time, but I think I do now.

QUES. What do you understand?

F. E. R. It came out in connection with the statement that love is sovereign; the statement was that it could not be so with any creature. In a creature love is response, but with God love originates. It is the sovereignty of love that originates every movement of God; all the revelation of God originates in love. You could not speak of that in regard to a creature. "We love him because he first loved us." It is because of what He is in Himself that He loves.

W. T. P. W. Then you would connect all the purposes and counsels of God with love?

F. E. R. Yes, and the great thing is, "He will rest in his love."

W. T. P. W. What is the difference between grace and love?

F. F. R. There is a difference. Grace is the adaptation of love in a certain sense to meet man in his responsibility. Grace is love suited to man in the state in which he is as responsible, but also to bring him into the enjoyment of what love has purposed. You cannot say God is grace, but you speak of the grace of God; you rightly say He is love. No man knows God's love until he knows His grace.

F. C. Is grace love in activity?

F. E. R. Yes it is, but it is the love of God to meet you in responsibility.

E. C—P. Love requires no motive.

F. E. R. Love is the motive. Every man learns God's grace first, it is the adaptation of love to the state of man who needs love. Love is the spring. Love is the motive and a most powerful motive.

H. D'A. C. Is there not this in a Christian toward a sinner?

F. E. R. Yes, if you are under the influence of God's love you are formed in it and thus you love the sinner; but I ask under whose influence is God?

D. L. H. You are not a source; God is.

F. E. R. The spring of everything in God is love.

G. G. But does not love require an object?

F. E. R. God's love has found its object, but

it does not need one in God. All the counsels and purposes of God have originated in love.

E. C. Love is its own object, we are not the objects of love, we are the subjects of love.

F. E. R. Love's object, as I understand it, is to make itself known. It is a difficult thing to realise it.

A. M. Is that the reason why "God is love" in John's epistle is followed by that verse "In this was manifested the love of God"?

F. E. R. Yes.

W. T. P. W. You will make us all evangelists. Every heart would like to carry that message.

F. E. R. It is very difficult to explain it.

W. T. P. W. It makes it so simple in every one's life; if you have got to the source in your own history you cannot help carrying it on; if you are enjoying it you must pass it on. It would mould the life of every saint.

F. H. B. Then that would be the spring of all ministry, whether to the saints or in the gospel?

W. T. P. W. Quite so.

F. E. R. Love is the true measure of every man, not gift. Gift is not a man's measure. If a man has every gift and not love he is nothing, and you could not be less than nothing.

F. H. B. Would you say a little on the difference between the ministry of the gospel and the ministry of the church?

F. E. R. The ministry of the church has more reference to our subjective state, that we may be formed in Christ. To my mind the work of the evangelist, the ministry of the gospel (if I may speak with great respect), is to make known to the heart of man what God has revealed Himself to be.

W. T. P. W. Then God's purpose about man has more to do with the church; in connection with that is our being formed. You would not tell a sinner about the counsel of God with respect to the church?

F. E. R. Well, it would not be much use to him.

D. L. H. In Luke xv. do you get more than what you call the ministry of the gospel?

F. E. R. I think it brings in reconciliation. The ministry of the new covenant connects itself, I think, with the gospel; the ministry of reconciliation with the church. The gospel is God's approach to man. It is the pleasure of God to make Himself known according to what He is, to man. In virtue of the blood of Christ, God comes out to man, approaches man. Then comes out the ministry of the new covenant. Just as the first covenant was the declaration of the terms on which God was with Israel, so the new covenant is the declaration of the terms on which God is with the believer, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

D. L. H. Still the gospel ?

F. E. R. Well, it connects itself with it very intimately.

W. T. P. W. Would you say it is in force now ?

F. E. R. Not strictly, but in principle you are under the new covenant. The letter kills but we have the spirit of it. 2 Corinthians iii. brings it out, "Able ministers of the new covenant."

QUES. What are those terms ?

F. E. R. The terms on which God is with us, are, forgiveness and divine teaching. God forgives you and then teaches you.

F. H. B. Why do you bring in the teaching ?

F. E. R. Because it is an essential part of it. It is all on the ground of the death of Christ. The terms are—God does not impute to you but imparts to you.

W. T. P. W. It is incomprehensible grace.

F. E. R. Yes, surely.

QUES. What is the ministry of righteousness ?

F. E. R. It is the ministry of righteousness in contrast to the ministry of condemnation, the teaching is an essential part of it. "I will put my law in their hearts." Those are the great points. We do not get the law written in the heart, but we have the Spirit, and we do not get forgiveness simply in an administrative way as

Israel, but we get no sin imputed ; the believer is completely justified in Christ.

D. L. H. Now there is another thing. You have not spoken of the ministry of reconciliation.

F. E. R. The ministry of reconciliation is that all distance between God and man has been so completely removed in Christ that man can be brought into a new state before God, a state suitable to God, and that brings in the church ; that is, it borders close on it ; the state that marks you is the state that marks me.

E. R. Are you connecting this still with Luke xv. ?

F. E. R. Yes. It paves the way for the church, because it is on the ground of new creation the church comes in. "If any man be in Christ there is a new creation." You are on that ground now and reconciliation is to that end. The distance has been removed that we might be a new creation. The prodigal had been a long way off but the distance has been removed.

W. T. P. W. Why do you always connect distance with reconciliation. Is it not more state ?

F. E. R. Well, it is the alienation of the heart of man from God, moral distance I mean. The prodigal is a good illustration. In the case of the prodigal he found the distance removed, but

he is more than reconciled, he is clothed, he has the best robe put on him; "the best robe formed no part of the prodigal's first inheritance," J. N. D. used to say.

A. H. Would not the gospel include not only God coming out to man but man being brought to God?

F. E. R. Well, but then you get on to the ground of reconciliation immediately.

A. H. But you get God coming out in Romans v.?

F. E. R. You get God coming out in Romans at the beginning; then you come to the terms on which God is with man in chapters iv. and v. till you get to reconciliation, and in the succeeding chapter you get the state in which you are for God, which leads up to the very verge of the church; I think it goes beyond the gospel.

F. H. B. Would it not be included in what Paul calls the ministry of the gospel?

F. E. R. I think the ministry of reconciliation leads on to the church, and that is a different thing to the glad tidings of the grace of God. I think the great point of the gospel or glad tidings is God coming out to man. It is His pleasure to make Himself known to man.

E. C. That would be part of the evangelist's work and therefore part of the gospel?

F. E. R. I think the gospel in itself ends with

the "love of God shed abroad in the heart" by the Holy Ghost given; when a man has got that he has got the good of the gospel; you can never get more than the love of God.

F. H. B. But when Paul speaks of "my gospel" does not that take in the thought of reconciliation, the gospel of the glory?

F. E. R. It is all included in the terms on which God can be with man. You can only learn this in Christ in glory, and you are to be in the state of Christ, a new creation, that is another point.

J. P. When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart is not that the soul brought to God?

F. E. R. I should say that is rather God brought to the soul than we brought to God, though on the Holy Ghost being given we are morally brought to God.

H. D'A. C. When the father kissed the prodigal where does that come in?

F. E. R. That was reconciliation. The father had come out, but the prodigal had to go in.

W. T. P. W. The evangelist has not done his work till the soul has the Holy Ghost and the love of God shed abroad in his heart.

F. E. R. People know only poorly what it is to be brought to God. I think they may have the love of God shed abroad in the heart without the full sense of being brought to God. To be

brought to God means to be brought to God in God's own habitation—sharing Christ's exaltation in heavenly places; that is the purpose of the love of God. God brought Himself to Israel in Exodus xv. In the early part of the song they prepare Him an habitation, but in the latter part they are brought into the place He has made for Himself to dwell in. In purpose brought to God in Canaan. We do not know much about the love of God, the full bearing of the love of God is, that God will have us in His own habitation.

E. C—P. It is present to faith?

F. E. R. Yes; but it is to satisfy God's love "For his great love wherewith he loved us."

F. H. B. But they were brought to God when they were across the Red Sea. Peter says, "That he might bring us to God."

F. E. R. In Peter it is the purpose for which Christ suffered, "that he *might bring* us to God."

F. H. B. He is brought to God morally now?

F. E. R. Yes; he is brought to God morally. A man is brought to God morally when he has got the Spirit, but the full thought is to be brought to God perfectly suited to Him in His own habitation.

A. M. When the Lord sent Paul to the Gentiles it was that they should receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified.

F. E. R. That leaves a man where he is down here, but forgiven, and having inheritance.

QUES. Being brought to God, in its full extent, we are waiting for?

F. H. B. But it is very important that we are brought to God morally now?

F. E. R. Morally you are with God now, but you have to look at the thing on the divine side and you have to see what will satisfy God, that is, many sons brought to glory.

W. H. B—T. What is the adaptation to Christianity of "I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself," Exodus xix.?

F. E. R. You have it now morally, but in its full extent it is the habitation. It is one thing to have Christ in us as the hope of glory and it is another thing to be in the glory, sharing all the glory and exaltation of Christ where He is; that is union. Union is not down here.

E. C. You cannot know it here?

F. E. R. You cannot know it *here*, but you can know it *while* you are here. Union is in heaven, not on earth. Union means to reach Christ where He is. Then we lose individual interests.

QUES. Do you make the way we are brought to God everything?

F. E. R. I think you need to enter into the

love of God about you. If you make being brought to God, as we are now, the full extent of grace, you do not enter into what the love of God has purposed for you. God must satisfy Himself. If it is the purpose of His love to have you there, you must be there to know it.

A. M. That verse in Peter, already quoted, is the statement of purpose?

F. E. R. Being brought to God takes in the whole scope. It does not shut out what you have now, but it takes in all. What could you have more down here than the Spirit given and the love of God shed abroad in your heart?

E. C. What did J. B. S. mean when he said, "So few souls know union"?

F. E. R. He means, I judge, that they have not reached Christ where Christ is. There is not the appropriation in the mass of people here of the love of God, so that it could be said they are sitting together in heavenly places in Christ, they are not willing to leave things here and join Christ where He is. God has prepared wonderful things for them that love Him. I believe He makes known those things He has prepared to them that *love Him*. I do not doubt God would make them known. As to loving God, it is a question of entering into His love for us.

F. C. Would you make any difference be-

tween being brought to God as sons, and brought to God in Christ?

F. E. R. No; I think it is in Christ that we have sonship.

J. P. Did you say we could not know union till glory?

F. E. R. No, I did not say that; but that we cannot know it down *here*. Union is to reach Christ where Christ is.

W. T. P. W. We ought to know it *while* we are down here?

F. H. B. Is not ministry that which conducts the soul that way, step by step?

F. E. R. What was Ephesians ii. ministered for but to lead them into union in the conscious knowledge of it?

D. L. H. Union does not set aside your individuality?

F. E. R. No; but you have a new set of interests, which are Christ's. Individuality never is lost if once it exists. Where there is the existence of a moral being, what we call a person, that person cannot cease to be. You may get the state changed, but the person remains.

QUES. Are we at the Lord's table as individuals?

F. E. R. The idea of the Lord's table is fellowship.

F. H. B. Paul says to the Galatians, "That Christ may be formed in you"—does that increase?

F. E. R. Well, I doubt if every one would agree with my thought of that, but I think it refers to the company the apostle laboured for, that Christ should be formed in them as a company.

QUES. But taking Isaac and Ishmael as the figure, would you still think it corporate?

F. E. R. I think so, but I am not going to be dogmatic about it.

F. H. B. But is it not a fact that Christ is formed in the individual?

F. E. R. Christ is in the individual indisputably; you get that in Romans viii. It is the Spirit of Christ in the individual, I am not disputing that for a moment; but I think the apostle's anxiety with regard to the Galatians was that Christ might be formed in them collectively; that they might answer, as a company, to the mind and purpose of God about them with regard to the church; it is like what you get here in Colossians.

F. H. B. I could understand that in Colossians but not in Galatians. The Galatians were so far behind.

F. E. R. Yes, but that was what the apostle laboured for.

E. C. The Galatians were scarcely on Christian ground ?

F. E. R. No ; the apostle laboured to set them there, as to their spiritual state. There was a certain result of the first travail, but they had stopped, and Paul travailed in birth again. Who stopped you, the apostle says ?

F. C. The apostle thought Christ had been formed in them, but found it was not so ?

E. C—P. Then you think Christ formed in them is in the company ?

F. E. R. Yes ; at all events, in Colossians. Christ in you is collective.

E. C—P. Is Christ formed in the company with a view to display ?

F. E. R. I think so, as it is here, "Christ in you the hope of glory." That is collective. It is Christ in the Gentiles. "To present every man perfect" is in view of the display.

F. H. B. Each individual is to have Christ formed in him ?

F. E. R. Yes ; that is what it goes on to—"to present every man."

D. L. H. For whom is the display ?

F. E. R. God will not have Christ displaced here. The display might be a testimony before the world, or it might be before principalities and powers. Man is not stronger than God. Christ has been here, and is not to be displaced.

He is not here personally, but He is here in the body.

D. L. H. It takes the whole body for the display of Christ.

T. H. R. And I think the hope of glory connects itself with that.

QUES. How?

T. H. R. The coming out. In chapter iii. it goes on to the appearing; but that is Christ's manifestation. It is all to be brought out in the church.



THE LOVE OF GOD.

(ROM. v. 5-11; 1 COR. ii. 9-11, 15, 16; ROM. viii. 28-39;

EPH. ii. 4-7.)

I WOULD like to say a few words as to the way in which we are led on in the knowledge of the love of God. To this end I must refer you to a few scriptures. The first is Romans v. 5-11. My object is more to draw attention to the scriptures than to attempt to expound them. The scriptures will tell their own tale without much comment of mine.

We were speaking this afternoon of the purpose of the gospel. I do not think that any one would be disposed to question the statement that the purpose of God in the gospel is that He might be made known, according to what He is in His nature, in the heart of man. What man is to be brought into is another point; but the first thing is that God might be known in the heart of man as He has been pleased to reveal Himself. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil." The great work of the devil was to produce in

the heart of man distrust of God and rebellion. There is a rivalry existing there. Then it is that God in due time comes in in His Son to make known what He is, so that the heart of man might be encouraged to trust God. God's love enters so that we may have confidence in Him. It is made effective by the Spirit in the believer's heart. It is impossible to trust any one that you do not know, nor will any one trust God till he knows Him. When God is known as He has been pleased to reveal Himself, then all is changed for us. Here we get the true expression of the love of God. "When we were yet sinners Christ died for us." It goes further than expression, for the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us. It is not only that God has in the most inconceivable way proved His love, but the love of God is realised in the believer by divine power. A man may get an apprehension of the grace of God, but I am confident that it is impossible to know God according to what He is in His nature until the Holy Ghost is received; then it is that "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart." And that is the force of the passage "Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us." Why "not ashamed"? Because the heart is able to confide in God. There is confidence in

God as to all the changes and trials and exercises of the wilderness. Tribulation works patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope is assured by the love of God. That is the first scripture I turn to, the very beginning. I trust every one will go with the thought that the purpose of God in the gospel is to make known to man the heart of God. Light is the revelation of God in love. I have often spoken of the intimate connection between light and love. Light exposes, but if even I am exposed by the knowledge of God it is the light of His love, the more light I have the more I am acquainted with His blessed Being; so that the more I am acquainted with the light the more I know the love. One word describes His nature, and that is—*love*.

Now I want to come to the next step, 1 Corinthians ii. is the scripture I turn to (vers. 9-11 and 15, 16). I believe that here you get something presented which is intended to attract the heart. It supposes the love of God is known, for the proper answer to the love of God on our part is that we love God. No man ever loves God until he knows that God loves him. Love on our part is the response of the heart by the Spirit to what God has made known of Himself. "Every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God." We could not love God if

He were not made known. I cannot know Him apart from the revelation of Himself.

But now that God is known the heart is attracted by the thought put forward. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." It does not say here for those whom He loves; but our love toward God is the answer of our hearts to His love. I am attracted in this way. Of course loving God ought to be the mark of every Christian, for every Christian ought to love God, and every Christian does love God. His love may be deep down and overlaid, but the love is there. Now, loving God, something is presented to our affection, the thought of the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

There are wonderful things to be made known to us, which eye hath not seen (the Corinthians did not know them), which have never entered into the heart of man to conceive. Many would say that God has prepared these things for the Christian, and that they belong to the future. Yes; but the present knowledge of these things belongs to those who love God. Every Christian will enter into them eventually, I quite admit, but the present enjoyment is to those who love God. If our hearts are entering into that love,

He will lead us into the enjoyment of these things, and that is present.

The way to love God is to get the heart under the influence of His love. If we love Him then He delights to make known to us the things which He has prepared for them that love Him, and which never formed any part of man's conception. I only just refer to this passage because I believe it is by what is presented here that the heart is attracted. It is the spiritual man that discerns these things; they are not entered into by the natural man any more than they are seen by him. He that loves is born of God and knows God. If you love Him you will get a present entrance into the purposes of His love.

Now if you turn to Romans viii. I think you will come to what I may call the third step—verses 28–30 and 35–39. Here we get what I should call the complete answer in the heart of the saint to the work of the devil. His work was to create in the heart of man distrust of God; here I get full confidence in the love of God. It begins in this way in verse 28: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Not only have we been attracted by the thought that God can make known to us what eye hath not seen nor ear heard, all those things that He has prepared for them that love Him;

but we know that nothing can go wrong, because we are conscious that all things work together for good to them that love God.

Then in the remainder of the passage we have the complete and blessed response on our side to that which is found in chapter v. Chapter v. makes known to us the attitude in which God is towards us now, and whenever a soul has entered into the truth of God's purpose, it is persuaded that nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. You may not have, as yet, a full entrance into the effect of the love of God, but you have a full persuasion about that love, and that nothing can separate you from that love. "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The most mighty power in the universe is the love of God! It is transcendent and of God. There is full persuasion in the saint that nothing can separate us from that love.

It is a great thing to be attracted by the thought that God delights to make known to them that love Him what He has prepared for them, but it is greater to be persuaded

that nothing can separate you from the love of God, and that all things work together for good to them that love God. Every created thing, all that is great and mighty in this world, or outside of it, is put in contrast to the love of God, and the love of God is greater than all. In Christ Jesus our Lord we are in the blessed circle of the love of God. It is the portion of the saint as belonging to that circle, not as being in the wilderness here; in the realisation of God's purpose he is in spirit outside of it.

The last passage I turn to is in Ephesians ii. 4-7. Here we have the full display of love in the way in which it comes out towards us. There are three qualities of God seen in the passage: 1, God is "rich in mercy;" 2, "His great love wherewith he loved us;" 3, "That he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." But the point I am dwelling on is the love that originated all. God has made known to us here the things that He has prepared for them that love Him. It is not simply bringing us through redemption into the wilderness and giving us His Spirit; that did not content the heart of God. It is not even blessing us with manifold blessings—that will not satisfy His heart. What suits His heart is to have

us with Him where Christ is, in His own dwelling-place, His own habitation, in the full enjoyment of His love—that we should be with Him there in the exaltation of Christ as man.

The point in all this is not what you want, or what I want, but what God wants. God works to satisfy His love. Nothing makes so great a demand on God as His love. To satisfy His love He will have the subjects of His love in His own habitation. It was a great thing for Israel when they were brought into the wilderness, and God had set up His dwelling-place among them; I admit they were brought to God, but they were not yet brought to the full purpose of God as to them. In Exodus xv. it says, "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established"—that was God's thought. And so it is the thought of God's love now in regard to Christians, that they should be in His dwelling-place, graced in the honour and exaltation in which Christ is there as man. The foundation is in the way in which God has been completely glorified in Christ. He has gained the place of honour at the right hand of God; but the honour He has gained is that into which we

are to enter, in order to satisfy the heart of God about us.

Verse 7 refers, I judge, to the public display : "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." In the church will be the display of the exceeding riches of His grace. That is future, when He will shew to the whole universe His grace.

We are led on thus in the knowledge of His love ; and it is a great thing to love God, and to know His love. If you love God, He will make known to you the things He has prepared for them that love Him. I believe that God delights in an attentive ear. If He brings a saint into a condition in which he can appreciate these things, then it is His delight to make them known to him.

I only just desired to point out these steps by which we are led on into the great reality of the love of God. First, we are attracted by it ; then we are persuaded of it ; and then the soul enters into the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

F. E. R.



PERSONAL ATTACHMENT.

(JOHN i. 35-42 ; xiv. 28 ; xx. 10-18.)

WE have heard several times to-day, beloved brethren, in the course of the ministry of the word, that it is the loving heart that learns ; it is the loving heart that the Lord leads on. I just turn to these scriptures as illustrative of this precious principle. It is a question all through, you see, of a Person. It is an immense thing to know that Christianity is not a question of doctrines, but of a Person, and the heart attached to a Person. It is not the head assenting to a scheme of truth, but truth wrapped up in the Person of a living Man, and the heart attached to that Person. There is a peculiar charm in looking at the gospels, particularly John's gospel, in this way.

No doubt God had recorded these simple narratives for our help, and to win our hearts to His dear Son, after a similar sort. You see in the early part of the gospel a beautiful display of Christ in this scene, and the various ways in which the Lord revealed Himself to many souls, and the way in which He attracted them to, and

eventually attached them to Himself. You have the Lord attracting souls in the early part of the gospel—like a magnet—drawing them out from one recess and another. He attracted hearts to Himself by the revelation of Himself, in a way that met the peculiar state of the soul He was attracting, and that is just what He is doing to-day. The work is peculiarly individual, and is done very quietly, whether it be in the case of Andrew and his fellow ; Peter, Philip, or Nathaniel (chap. i.) ; Nicodemus (iii.) ; the woman at the well, and the nobleman (iv.) ; the paralytic of Bethesda (v.) ; the woman in the temple (viii.) ; the man born blind (ix.) ; or Mary of Bethany (xi.) ; and they are but samples of many others of whom you read in the gospels, and see the winsome way in which Jesus attracts souls to Himself, and ministers to them according to the skilfulness of His hands, and the integrity of His heart.

At the end of the gospel you will see what a wonderful place some of these attracted ones have. You will find some of those hearts were able to minister to Him ; were able, as it were, to present to Him a cup of cold water, as none else could, in the moment of His deep sorrow in this scene. It is a wonderful thing to be able to minister to the heart of Christ in this scene. It is like Genesis xxiv. ; the bride was chosen really

by the father ; the anointed servant took her to Isaac. Isaac *loved* her, and then in the hour of his sorrow—for his mother had died—it was by Rebecca that he was *comforted*. In Genesis xxii. you have the story of the love of the father to the son. It is interesting to note that this is the first time in scripture where you get love mentioned ; the next time we find it spoken of it is the love of the bridegroom to the bride. (Chap. xxiv.) He loves her, and she comforts him. That is exactly what you would expect to find in scripture, the love of the Father for the Son first, and then the love of the Bridegroom for the bride, He comforted by her. Yes, love is always personal, and reciprocal.

If you look at this scene where John opens his gospel, it is beautiful. The Baptist sees the Lord, and says, “ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (Chap. i. 29.) Now, observe that no one follows Him, as the fruit of that testimony. It was a good remark made here to-day, that, It is not merely a work we have to present, but a Person. When the work was presented, no one followed him. The next day John’s eye rested on the Lord again, in a sort of contemplative way, and, as he gazed on Him, he exclaimed, “ Behold the Lamb of God ! ” (Ver. 36.) Immediately it detaches two of his disciples from himself, and they follow the Lord.

The Lord turns and sees them following, and says, "*What seek ye?*" To them it was a suited query, for it raised the question as to whether affection really wrought in their hearts: but when the Lord comes to Mary (John xx.) He does not say, "*What seekest thou?*" No, angels may inquire, "Woman, why weepest thou?" but He says, "*Whom seekest thou?*" He has awakened in her soul affections that only Himself can satisfy, and He says, "*Whom seekest thou?*" Peter and John, after seeing the sepulchre, might go away home, but without Jesus Mary was homeless. Nothing could satisfy her but Himself.

No doubt the Lord begins with us often with "*What seek ye?*" but when love has its own way it is, "*Whom seek ye?*" "Woman, why weepest thou? *Whom seekest thou?*" speaks volumes. Here He says to the two disciples, "*What seek ye?*" and the answer is very beautiful, "Master, where dwellest thou?" that is, where is the place that we can always be sure of finding you? They really wanted His company. He says, "Come and see." They abode with Him that day. There were two hours left of the day. But what was the effect of those two hours? Well, I know that if you spent two hours with Jesus, in the enjoyment of His love and His company, you would be obliged

to go and get some one to share it too. Saints sometimes say they cannot preach the gospel! You could not help it if you were to spend two hours with that blessed One. If you sat under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to your taste, you would be obliged to go, you could not rest till you had got some one else to share the banquet with you.

We only hear of Andrew's voice thrice in the gospels. First, he tells Simon of Jesus; next, he informs the Lord about the "five barley loaves, and two small fishes" (John vi. 9); and lastly, he tells Jesus of the wish of the Gentiles to see Him. (John xii. 21, 22.) This day he went off to get Peter. We hear very little after this of Andrew, but a great deal of Peter. Nevertheless, by-and-by, I think it will be very interesting to see the Lord's estimate of, and reward to the man who was the means of Peter's conversion. Probably he was not a great preacher, nor may you be; but he was a lover of Jesus, so brought his brother to Him. "Go, and do thou likewise." If you were the means of introducing some one to the Lord, who turned out like Peter, it would be a very wonderful day's work, though you did no more. Have you ever had two hours with Jesus? It would leave its stamp on you. I know if you had two hours with Him you

would want three, and if you had three you would want four! and some one to share your joy and delight in Him.

I do not go into all the cases where the Lord attracts people to Himself. The man of the third chapter (Nicodemus) was drawn by a needy conscience; the woman of the fourth, by the achings of an empty heart; but in these and every other case it was the influence of His own Person. How blessed to see the Lord drawing hearts to Himself! That was the early part of His ministry. Towards the close of that wondrous life, God shews the other side of our subject, and He has been very careful to shew it; but not till the last week of the Lord's life does it all come out.

In John xii. we have the touching scene of the supper at Bethany, "six days before the passover" (that is, the Lord's day really, I suppose) and you get the moment when the Lord is "comforted," if I may use the expression. In the hour of His rapidly approaching sorrow, the Lord's heart—deeply feeling all that was coming—was met and ministered to by a heart long before attracted to Him. Mary is only mentioned three times. You have her first in Luke x. Martha was busy about service, but Mary sat at His feet and heard His word. You always find her in the same posture, "at his

feet." The Holy Ghost is careful to record it. In John xi. she is there again. The Lord loved her, and I conclude she knew it right well, for it says: "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." It is very sweet to know the love of Jesus—not merely His love of pity, which meets us in our needs—but the love of complacency and delight. The Old Testament is very full of it in figure. How sweet to know yourself loved by Him!

John xi. finds Mary at the feet of the Lord in the moment of *her* sorrow. She then tasted the sweetness of His sympathy, and her heart got more firmly knit to Him than ever. Then when the moment of *His* sorrow hovered in the distance—when she saw how His death was desired by the Jews, with the intuitive perception of love (nothing is so keen-sighted as love), when the appointed supper-hour came, she brought her alabaster box of ointment and poured it on His feet. It has been well said that Mary's action was the only thing that was right and suitable at that moment. The heart that had learned the sweetness of His love, and the knowledge of His ways, alone had the mind of God for the moment. If you knew some one you loved was going to be cruelly murdered within six days, you would not make a feast. That is not the way you

would express your love; so this heart that loved Him, that had heard His word, and knew His fulness, that had learned His sympathy, intuitively felt the feast was out of place, but seized the opportunity of lavishing her love—her all—on the One to whom she owed everything. It was a comely act, never to be forgotten. He was alongside of her in her sorrow, she heard Him groan, and saw Him weep; now she is fitted, through affection, to be a comfort to Him in the moment of His sorrow, and to minister to His blessed heart as love alone can do, and, I am bold to say, she did the only thing that was suitable at the moment.

There was not one at that moment in the mind of God but this woman. She brings her box, and anoints the Lord with the ointment. She had kept it for His burial, but she had the sense—"If I wait till He is dead, I may never break it over Him; the grave, out of which He took my brother, cannot hold Him." It was affection that acted so sweetly here. I do not suppose she could have told you in words why she did it. The brethren all looked down upon her. Do you think she wanted to draw the eyes of the brethren upon her? To display her devotedness? I think, had you asked her, "Mary, why did you do that?" she would only have said, "I

do not know *why*, but I just know I did it." It was the one right thing, and the Lord, as it were, throws His wing over her, and says: "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached . . . this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." There will be thousands of Marys in heaven, but, of them all, one will be known as the Mary who did the right thing, in the right way, and at the right time, and it was her simple love to Jesus that prompted and wrought such a "good work." If there is one thing above another that God appreciates in this scene it is attachment of heart to His Son. Was not her act dear to the Lord? I could not trust myself to speak of what it was to Him, but you can infer His estimate of it by the eternal and world-wide publicity He declares her act shall have.

I now pass on to another Mary. (John xx.) She had not the intelligence of the first Mary, but she loved the Lord. The other disciples could go to their homes; Mary Magdalene had no home in this scene but the grave of her blessed Lord. He was gone, the light of her life was gone out with His death, and the world was a vast blank. Her heart was buried in the grave of her Lord. He had died. The angels greet her with "Woman, why weepest thou?" She replies, "They have taken away

my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." She could say in the early part of the chapter to the disciples, "They have taken away *the* Lord;" now in this deep sorrow it is "*my* Lord." Was not that sweet to the ear of the Father? Nor is this all—angels in no sense detain her. Methinks many of us would have taken a good look at these angelic messengers; she turns her back on them. Nothing but Jesus can meet and fill her desolate heart. Turning her back on angels, she sees a Man, and then she hears a voice which says, "Woman why weepest thou? *Whom* seekest thou?" He alone knew how to do it, and wondrously does He touch a spring in her soul. "Tell me where thou hast laid *him*, and I will take *him* away," was her reply. Do you not think that her answer was most grateful to the heart of the Saviour? A little affection for Himself goes a long way. He loves to have the simple, unfeigned affection of our hearts.

He knew He had her heart's love, even though she loved Him dead; but it was Himself she loved. He says but one word, "Mary." It is enough. She hears the voice she has heard before; she is at His feet, and He brings out to her that wonderful unfolding of truth, the like of which was never presented to any before, as He says to her: "Touch me not;

for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." He says to her, as it were, you have had Me here, Mary, and lost Me; but I have a place up yonder that was always Mine; it was Mine from all eternity, but I was in it alone. Now I have come down, and died, and risen again, and I am about to return to that place of joy and rest with the Father; but I am not going back alone, I am going to share that place with others now. He stands on a new platform before God, and says—I am going to share it with My brethren; go and tell them.

You cannot tell what a wonderful privilege it was for that woman to get that message from the Lord on that resurrection morning, and what a cheer to Him to get a heart really occupied with Himself! True, I repeat, she loved Him dead; but she loved *Him*. Was it not grateful to His heart? I believe it was deeply grateful to Him to find a heart that had not a single thing in the world but Himself. That was the first heart He met when He rose from the cold and silent tomb, and if He blessedly comforted Mary, be assured of it that her love was deeply prized by Him. Oh! to be more like her!

If the box of ointment in Bethany was like water to His thirsty spirit, and the dying thief's blessed testimony—who owned Him when all the world was against Him—was a similar cheer to His heart, was it not refreshing to Him to see, as He came alive in this cold scene once more, a heart that could turn its back on everything in this world for love of Himself? I verily believe it was.

But things are changed now. He has gone to the Father, and He says, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father." What a wonderful thing that He should care about the love of such hearts as yours and mine! We have heard much of His love to-day, the Father's love, and the love of Christ. May the result be that we each more simply and truly love Him, while waiting for Him. Then we shall see His face, and rejoice for ever in His presence!

W. T. P. W.



OUR RESOURCE.

THE GREATEST LIGHT IN THE DARKEST DAY.

(JOHN VIII. 12.)

I DESIRE to say a little upon "light," and to present to you, the Lord helping me, our resource in the darkest day. I have read from John's gospel. In John's gospel you get not so much your responsibility as the resources for your responsibility, and these continue unto the close. It is of all importance to know where your resource is. I will unfold the subject as carefully as I can, that the youngest may be able to follow it. Your resource is the light, the greatest light for the greatest darkness. The great defect in us is that we do not keep in the light. If you do not keep in the light you have no resource in the darkness. It is not that you do not see a thing, but often it is only by memory that you see it. It is as though a light were brought into the room and then taken away; you remember what you saw when the light was there; but if

you are not in the light it is not what you *see* but what you *did* see. If you are in the light it is not something you *did* see but something which you see *at the time*. It is fresh and vivid to you. It is interesting to bear in mind that it is the light of life. Through Christ's death you see that you are clear of everything on your own side and you come out in the light of the Lord; and it is the light which is your resource. Of the New Jerusalem we read that "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

I hope to trace the effect of the light and to shew how it is our resource. The subject may seem a large one, but I shall try to be brief. If I can present it to you for your meditation I shall be thankful. The beginning is "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." That is the start. I see many who have their eyes opened. The blind man in John ix. is an example of this. He had to break with everything religious under the law, and eventually he is in the solitude of light, he is outside of everything of man; and the Lord comes to him, and He says to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" This is all individual. It is a great moment in the history of your soul when you are in the presence of the Son of God, and believe on Him. When you

have come to this you have come to "the living stone." You are outside of everything human ; you have come to Himself. We read in chapter x. 14, 15, a most wonderful fact—"I know my sheep and am known of mine, as the Father knoweth me and I know the Father." This is the climax for the individual. The same character of intimacy is established between the Shepherd and the sheep as between the Father and the Son. Who can comprehend it? Can you explain it to me? I rejoice, while I adore, though its fulness is incomprehensible ! This is individual. If you have not found the Lord in this individual way you have not followed Him. If you have not the beginning you cannot advance, "If any man serve me let him follow me, and where I am there shall also my servant be." Following Himself must be your one object. A great many follow work who do not follow Himself. I know your hindrances and difficulties by knowing my own. Every subtilty and snare in which I see another I can trace to myself ; but I also see that the grace of God will bring you out of it if you *follow Him*. That is the way out of every difficulty. I see that the new company in Luke x. began with two women, Martha and Mary. These two women characterise all Christians, one in one way, the other in another way. One is occupied with service—usefulness, the other is engrossed

with Himself. So it is to-day ; some are occupied with usefulness, some are occupied with Himself. You may get little credit or notice if you are occupied with Himself ; you will not be conspicuous, but you will come out for Him at the right time. Never fear ! We all know how the blessed Lord approved of and owned Mary's act, and He took care that it should be recognised. He said, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." It is not here that Christ loved the sinner, but that the sinner loved Him. She takes the most costly thing she had and anoints Him for His burial. When her Lord was about to die her heart says, I seek no distinction here where He has died.

I next turn to our service here for Him. I have been speaking of the individual first, because if you are not right there you cannot be right in the assembly. I come to John xiii. ; I know how slowly we learn. It is very humbling to me that after many years I have had so little effect on others. . If the truth had more effect upon myself, I should have been more effective. You cannot lead another beyond where you are yourself. You may enunciate many great things, but if they have no effect on yourself you do not substantiate them. If they

do not produce an effect on yourself you invalidate what you propound. "Be thou an example of the believers." The Lord said to the demoniac: "Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee." I believe a young evangelist is often very effective because he tells out of a full heart what God has done for him.

I speak solemnly; we are coming to the close; one sees the distraction and difficulty all around, and my desire is to present to you the only resource in difficult times. Note, the Lord says to Peter in this chapter (xiii. 8), "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." I find generally that this is little known, and the lack in this is where the defect lies. A competent physician can not only tell his patients the cause of their illness, but he can prescribe the true remedy. I am afraid few enjoy having part with Christ. Part with Christ is that you are in company with Him where He is.

I am coming now to what I call the second part—preparation for service. Many are in service who are not ready for it. It was so with myself. I think some have undertaken service before they were ready for it. In John xiii. the preparation begins. Many earnest labourers have never got beyond chapters xiii. and xiv.; as far as I see they have not touched

chapter xv. Chapters xiii. and xiv. are the preparation, they are inside ; xv. and xvi., which I hope to come to, are outside. A recruit is brought to the barracks, not to the battle-field ; he is brought to the barracks to learn to be a soldier. Chapters xiii. and xiv. are the barracks where you learn to be a servant ; the preparation and provision are inside. Chapters xv. and xvi. are the battle-field.

The first point is, you come to His side. Let me shew you your gain there. If you turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews the great thing there is that you are in company with Him ; we are His fellows or companions. If you are not His companion you will never know union with Him. If you are not fit to be His companion you are not fit to be united to Him. The only thing Abraham's steward was sworn to was, that the bride for Isaac must be of his *kindred*. I thank God that I have learned much from John xiii. and xiv., inside with Himself. It culminates in the Holy Ghost being sent in Christ's name by the Father (ver. 26), "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." This embraces all that had been. Many a servant of God knows something of the past as recorded in scripture. In Christendom they know some-

thing about the past, and are occupied with prophecy—the future; but of the present they know nothing. The present, of which many are ignorant, I seek to bring before you. Now if you turn to chapter xv., you will find that there are three traits of the servant. The first is, you are a disciple, “Abide in me.” Not merely that you understand a passage in scripture, and can interpret it, but that you are consciously directed by Christ. If you abide in Him, you come fresh from the Head; you must know the Head to abide in Him, and then you bring forth fruit. Now you are in the battle-field. The second trait is you are His friend. You have the same kind of love for His own that He has (ver. 12), “Love one another, as I have loved you,” that is, the eleven. The eleven were to be devoted in love one to the other. “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. . . . Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” Not only His disciples, but His friends. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” This love should characterise every servant. The servant should be known as one who would die for the saints. This exposes you to the hatred of the world, because you are chosen out of the world, and you prefer the company of the saints

to that of your own family. Those who are in no way related to you are more to you than your own relations !

Now we come to the third trait—witnessing of Christ by the present ministry of the Spirit. The present ministry (chap. xv. 26) is the light; not *some* of the light but *the* light from the source—Christ as *He is*, not merely as *He was*. The past is light, I admit, but it does not connect you with the source—Christ as *He is*. Bring a light into a room and then remove it; you remember the things you had seen, but you do not see them now. As witnesses we have to come from Christ *as He is*, and this is the light. In chapter xv. 26 we read, “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of *me*.” He will be descriptive of the heavenly man here on earth. This is the character of the servant. There is the outside servant, and the inside servant. The outside servant is the evangelist, the inside servant is working in the assembly. The outside servant—the evangelist—knows His Lord’s purpose. I would press this on the evangelist. It is not merely that he has a love for souls, but he must also be so in the Lord’s mind that he is working for Him. We should rejoice that souls are saved,

and you should be ready to suffer in order to save; but the evangelist must rise above philanthropy. Too often only the happiness of souls is thought of, and not Christ's part in them. The more you reduce grace to human feeling, the more popular you will be. I do not know a single doctrine in Christendom which is scripturally defined. It is reduced to human feeling. The resurrection, for instance, is spoken of as a receipt for a debt paid. The resurrection is that there is a MAN out of death before God according to His delight. The two ministries we are entrusted with are the gospel and the church. The gospel is that the man who had offended against God is to be displaced by the MAN who removed the offence and glorified God, bearing His judgment. You have exchanged Adam for Christ—the Man who glorified God. That is the gospel, a wonderful delight to the heart! The MAN who has borne the judgment, and who glorified God where you had dishonoured Him, is your Saviour! You know Him now in glory. This is called the gospel of the glory, and the light comes from Christ in glory. Just see how grace works: you cannot estimate the importance of it. Whence did the light in your soul come? It came out of heaven. The light that converted you came out of heaven, but you may not have got to it yet. I illustrate it thus—a man roam-

ing in a wild forest in a dark night on the edge of a precipice; the light from a mansion crosses his path; he sees the precipice, and the enemy trying to divert him from the light; but though he has not reached the mansion, the light has come to him *from* it, and he gets to the mansion eventually. This is the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. I say to the evangelist—In your gospel present Christ risen. The first impression is of paramount importance; much harm or much blessing is caused by the way the gospel is presented to an awakened soul. See how Paul presents to the awakened jailor a *Person*. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” The jailor might have said, “I do not know who He is;” but Paul put the right Person before him. So Philip and the eunuch. He preached (evangelised is the right reading) Jesus to him. Peter says in Acts x., “Through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” The evangelist must be in the light of the gospel to be effective. “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, for the shining forth of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” I see my Saviour in glory. He has accomplished everything, and now there is a ministration of righteousness from the glory.

He has accomplished the work, and glorified God, so that the nearer you approach to the light of the glory, instead of being repelled as Isaiah was, you are attracted; and the nearer you get the more you are transformed into moral correspondence with the Lord. Stephen saw his Saviour in the glory, and he goes to Him. Marvellously grand is the gospel of the blessed God!

Next, what is the church? It is the expression of all the members of the Man Christ Jesus, who has displaced Adam. The gospel is to displace Adam by Christ. The church is to express Christ here through His body. The Holy Ghost comes from Christ in heaven, as He said, "To testify of me." In the next chapter (xvi.) you read, when He is come, sent by Christ, and acting from Him, He will demonstrate that the world is sin, and that righteousness is not here, "and of judgment because the prince of this world is judged." It is of immense importance that the servant should bear in mind that, if he is in communion with Christ, he will realise that he is united to Him, and consequently he is here by the Spirit in the power of His exaltation. There are many distractions and difficulties here, but your resource is in Christ exalted to the right hand of God, and as you are with Him there, you receive

power by the Holy Ghost to testify of Him here; you will surmount every opposition, though the world is sin, and righteousness is not here, yet Christ at the right hand of God is above it all, and if you are in conscious union with Him, you will be superior to the power of the enemy; you will find that the prince of this world is judged. Nothing can prevent the testifying of Christ. Thus we read in Ephesians vi., "Having done all, to stand." "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." "No weapon formed against you shall prosper."

I trust you now see your resource. One or two brief remarks in conclusion, as to the character of evil at the close. Turn to Revelation iii. 7—Philadelphia. The great thing you are taught there is, that you have to be in moral association with Himself wholly. What would you do, beloved friends, if you heard that all the streams in a place were tainted? What would you do? Would you not say, I will go to the source? It is to Christ, the source, I am directing you. He is "the Holy, the True." (Ver. 7.) You must come to Him; you must rise to the top. You get the same instruction in 2 Timothy iii., "Thou hast fully known my doctrine." It has been immense

help to me to see that the greatest light is required for the greatest darkness. There is some light in the world—gleams of the light. This clergyman has a little light, or this minister or this preacher has a little light. It is not a little light you want, it is *the* light, and you should come *from* the Light. The darkness cannot be greater; you require the greatest light to expose it. It is a divine principle that the full light only will counteract the darkness of the present hour. Hence Paul writes to Timothy, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine." The full light only can expose the "Form of godliness, while denying the power thereof." The truth which God revived in this century was the knowledge of the Head. The source of all light was revived before the gospel. The servant of God to whom the truth was made known did not know the gospel fully at the time. The light came from the source; God *starts* from Christ. The gospel had to be learned in order to enjoy the Head. No one's gospel is beyond his idea of the church. When you hear the gospel that a man preaches you can tell how much he knows of the church; you can apprehend his aim, the end for which he is working. He works to bring you to something. The gospel sets you in company with Christ in glory. If you are not at home

with Him, how can you be united to Him? The prodigal could say after the feast—I am greatly blessed. Now he is prepared to hear that he is united to Christ who had brought him in His own acceptance unto God; and this is his place for ever. The more the difficulties increase, the nearer you are to Him who is exalted to the right hand of God, the more you triumph in His triumphs. If you are in conscious union with Him in the darkest day, you will come forth in the greatest light direct from Himself who is the Light. Your one undeviating purpose is to be in moral association with Him, and you can confront the darkest hour, as Moses came from the mount with God to confront the idolatry of Israel. Our blessed Lord descends from the mount of transfiguration to the cross. He came down from the mount to die. The greatest Light has come down to the greatest darkness!

Now I turn to Revelation xxii. There I find that the Lord presents Himself to the heart, “I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” As you look at Him, and the more you do, the more you receive light from Himself, and you can say, “Come.” I am not referring to the mere event of His coming, I am presenting Him personally to your heart. The rapture is the beginning, the event.

But it is Christ Himself who is the bright and morning star.

I need not add more. I trust I have brought enough before you to interest your heart in the scriptures I have presented to you. You open the book of Revelation and find everything in the most deplorable condition. You close it, and find there will be a company here who will answer to His heart, expressing one desire—"Come." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." It is cheering that up to the close the true heart can say, He is my resource! I am not looking to any other, I have Himself. The nearer you are to Himself the better you will know Him, and the better you know Him, the more will you draw from Him. Many of you may be left long on the battlefield, and though the darkness will increase, and the difficulties too, I would encourage you by His word, "I have set before thee an opened door, which no one can shut." He will stand by you. You will have the comfort of His present support. I see it with Paul; he could say, "The Lord stood with me." It was not only—The Lord opened His mind to me, which He did; but He (the Lord) stood with me. Paul had been caught up to the third heaven, he had learned at the source; he came from the highest to the lowest. Many do not begin from the source, from Christ Himself; they content themselves

with the past, or with the future as revealed in scripture; they do not seek, they have never known the ministry of the Spirit from the highest point, from Christ in His exaltation. If you are to be led by the Spirit sent by Christ in heaven you must start from this. Unless you come from Himself you cannot face things here.

May the Lord shew you the blessed portion to which you are called. It is a most gracious favour to be here for Him—to be in the midst of all the ruin and disaster *for* Him, and *with* Him. It is not a question of who will stand with you. Paul was the master-builder and he had to stand alone. The question is—Are you standing for the Lord? Is He your resource? Many will accompany you at the start who will drop off, as Paul found, the more unflinchingly he stood for the exalted Christ. Though deserted by man the Lord was more than ever to him. Thus you will have the greatest light in the darkest day.

J. B. S.

THE CHARACTER OF THE REMNANT; THEY HEARKEN TO CHRIST.

(ISA. lxi. 1-3 and 10, 11; lxii. 1, 2, 6, 7.)

I KNOW, beloved brethren, that this is spoken of the earthly Jerusalem, but there are some principles in the passage that I wish, as the Lord may enable me, to bring before you, as they are valuable for us to-day. I doubt not many of us have felt how much we are oftentimes distracted from that which is God's object, and consequently from that which He would have before us. A thousand things intrude to divert us, and there are difficulties also. It is with the thought that the Lord may use this scripture for our help that I have read it.

I have no doubt that the book of Isaiah may be called the book of the remnant—those who will find the salvation of the Lord. It sets forth how God connects a feeble few, who feared the Lord and in spirit owned His Christ, with the blessing established in the Messiah, so that God might be glorified. Outwardly there was the nation connected with the name of the Lord, boasting in

their national privileges, and drawing near to Him with their lips but their hearts far from Him. To them He said, "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth." Then comes out this deeply important principle, that God would have a remnant, in whom He would establish His purpose as to the nation, and whom He would connect with His Christ, for this great result that He might be glorified. Because God never gives up His purpose, but establishes what has failed in the hands of man in Christ and the elect given to Him. So Paul wrote when all in Asia had turned from him, "Therefore I endure all things for the *elect's* sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." We see the fulness of God's purpose in the epistle to the Ephesians, that He will gather together everything in Christ, and that He has given Him to be Head of His body, which is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all—that which will eternally be to the praise of His glory. It will also be Christ's delight (as Jerusalem is called Hephzibah, my delight is in her, chap. lxii. 4), not only because He has loved it and given Himself for it, but because it will set forth what was so dear to Him; He came to glorify God, and in that blessed Man, His Son, God has been manifested, and will be eternally known by every created intelligence through the

church as the fulness of the Christ—the display of Himself.

These are God's great thoughts for His glory by us. Would that we knew them better, beloved brethren, that He takes up poor creatures such as we are, to make them the eternal display of His glory in Christ. It was brought before us yesterday.

What I find in this scripture (and to me it is exceedingly beautiful, the Lord quotes it of Himself in Luke iv.) is, that the Spirit of the Lord God which rested upon His Messiah addressed all that was broken and low—the meek and the broken-hearted, the captives, the mourners—in fact the remnant. If *we* think that there is any competency or power in ourselves to be in company with the light, or understand truth apart from a broken state of soul, we shall find ourselves mistaken—we may be able in a certain way to apprehend and speak about doctrines, and certain things may commend themselves to us as exceedingly nice and beautiful, and so on; but I do not think our souls can apprehend the action of the Spirit, whom we see here as resting on the Lord, unless we are broken in ourselves. We may say that we see self ended in the cross, but do we accept it, so that we are broken in spirit?

I see the Lord here beginning with the remnant

who have this character of need and brokenness. It is a delight to see Him come forth and say, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath sent me" (I know it is Jehovah here—for us the Father). As anointed and sent He preached glad tidings to the meek—the poor of the flock in Israel. It follows beautifully on the prophetic declaration of chapter lix. 20, that the Redeemer should come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob, that is the remnant. Then in chapter lx. there is the prophetic call for Zion to "arise and shine," because Messiah has now a remnant to inhabit God's holy mountain; and its full glory is at once declared, for there is a people to inhabit it—"the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified" (Compare lx. 21, with lxi. 3.)

The remnant is very distinctly marked out in Isaiah. For instance, the Spirit of God inquires (chap. l. 10), "Who is among you that feareth the Lord and obeyeth the voice of his servant?" These are the two characteristics of the remnant. You get in Philadelphia (Rev. iii.) those "who keep my word;" they also, as these, hearken to the voice of Christ. Then in chapter li. the servant of the Lord speaks. He says, "Hearken to me." He addresses those who fear the Lord; "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord." Do we want the

things of God—that He should be glorified? We must then hearken to Christ, so that His words should abide in us. I notice that all through scripture there were those who felt that sin was here. Grace produced in them a divine sensibility, according to their measure, as to the state of things around them. Such were Abel, Enoch, Abraham and Moses; and prayers and cries went up to God in sympathy with His mind, and in anticipation of the advent of His Anointed. This we see in Hannah's prayer, and very fully in the Psalms. I connect these prayers in my own mind with the vials full of odours of Revelation v. I believe there never was a tear or a cry, which went up from this earth from the lips of one who felt things according to God, that is not treasured up in heaven; and the prayers of saints will get their answer in blessing from God through the redemption of His Lamb. We want to have our hearts in sympathy with the Spirit of Christ, and thus be able to see things according to God. Now the Spirit dwelling in the believer, while still in a groaning creation, makes intercession for the saints according to God. But the flesh must be judged and brought into brokenness, so that we may hearken to the Lord, and be in sympathy with His mind.

This scripture then shews us the Lord's Anointed addressing the remnant—Himself the

answer to their need—with the result that they might be trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified. When Christ joined Himself, as at John's baptism (Matt. iii. 13-15), to the feeble remnant of Israel, who had the sense of need before God and waited upon Him, they at once recognised the voice of Jehovah's Servant when He spoke, and they were prepared to hearken to Him and to follow Him. (Matt. iv. 18-22.) I believe the Lord often addresses us (as at a meeting like this), and we are not prepared to hearken; we are slow to recognise His voice. We might say that we got a little more light on this epistle or that, but have we heard His voice? Have our hearts been engaged with Him? It would leave a wonderful mark upon us if in the true spirit of the remnant we have listened to Him who is here called Jehovah's Servant. Surely the Spirit would engage at this time all our hearts to listen to Christ.

I see nothing to be discouraged about at the present moment, in one sense I was never more encouraged. What I crave is the state of soul that can hear Christ's voice. It is not to get more truth only, or to understand scripture better, but in a spirit of brokenness to listen to His voice; it will put me in the way of His footsteps. If I hear Him say, "Hearken

unto me," it will draw me into His company, so that I may follow Him.

I turn now to an interesting point with regard to the remnant in John i. We do not find the remnant in a Jewish character only in that chapter. They come before us in different characters, and the truth they receive with regard to Christ puts them into different positions. It is through grace that we receive any truth, but Nathaniel did not apprehend the truth which led the two disciples to leave John (who spoke earthly things) and to follow Christ. I fully go with what was said yesterday, that it was the delight of John's heart in Christ as God's Lamb that impressed them; and also, that we never impress a person beyond the impression produced on ourselves. If people see that we desire the Lord's company, as they are impressed, they will desire it also.

As he saw Jesus walking down here, John was impressed with the great fact that the One before him was to take up everything for God—God's Lamb—the Taker-away of the sin of the world, and the Baptiser with the Holy Ghost. John had been sent to prepare the way of the Lord, and his testimony as to man was "All flesh is grass." It was the preparation for God to bring in His salvation, and consequently Jesus, anointed by the Spirit, was sent to those

who were in measure owning the truth of John's testimony. The first movement of the soul to God in the sense of need is everything to Him. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents. The father ran to meet the returning prodigal; the prodigal had proved that all flesh is grass, but his face had been turned by need, and the thought of his father, to the father who had everything for him—the best robe—the fatted calf, and his father's company and home. But in this chapter we have not John's cry as to *man*, but John's testimony as to *God's Lamb*, and then we have the movement in John's own heart as he looked upon the One who had come to take up everything for God. He came from scenes of light and love; but anointed with the Spirit, He began with the lowly remnant who were broken and weak, and became the attractive centre for such. The impression produced upon them by John's words as to God's Lamb, led them to seek the place where He dwelt, and to abide with Him. Do we desire that spot? What can He not open out to us there? even as Mary heard His words while sitting at His feet.

It is by the Spirit that we now enter into that which impressed John and his two disciples. It seems to me that we get the culmination of the Spirit's work in Ephesians. There the apostle

prays that they might have "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him," and then in chapter iii. that they may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that the Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith. "The Christ," as I understand it, is not only the One in whom God has found His pleasure as presenting man to God, but the One in whom all God's thoughts and purposes are centred—"being rooted and grounded in love," so that we may comprehend the whole range of God's glory in Christ, and "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." Wonderful, is it not, the Spirit's work? but it is blessed to see the Lord beginning with two disciples, and becoming the attractive centre for their hearts. It is not how much we know or understand of doctrine, but what have we found in His company? What has listening to Christ brought our souls into?

John, as I have said, was occupied with the One who would do everything for God—God's Lamb. Is He not the Lamb for us? you say. It is the same Lamb, hence in the Passover it was "Take you a lamb." That was for the sinner's need, but John was looking at God's Lamb—the One who was going to clear everything out of God's universe that is offensive to Him, and secure a world of bliss for God. If

you speak of the Lamb as meeting the needs of the sinner, people will listen; but here are two that are affected by John's testimony, as they see how the truth of God's Lamb affected him. There had been preparation of heart in them through John's call to repentance and baptism, and now they leave John for Christ. As I said, I see from the first the Spirit of Christ producing in souls the sense of what was suited to God. We may begin with Abel. He saw things from God's side; and all down the history of man given in scripture there has been a remnant who have groaned in sympathy with the mind of God. The Spirit of Christ produced it in them in the midst of *a world of sin, where men were not only miserable, but where all was contrary to God.* We may come down to Simeon and Anna in New Testament times, and then to the remnant of John's day, of which these two formed part. They hear John speak, and follow Jesus with a desire to be in His company—"Master, where dwellest thou?" Thus attracted they find their home with Him.

In the case of Peter (vers. 40-42) I see another side, not only that the Lord can attract the remnant, but also connect them definitely with Himself. I do not say that Peter understood the full import of what took place between

the Lord and him at that moment, but that does not alter its character. The Lord addressed him as "Simon, son of Jona." It was his description in this world—his name as connected with Israel, the people of promise; but allowing all these privileges to Peter—all that flesh can boast in—what is it all? "All flesh is grass." It is a great thing when that point is reached in the soul. The Lord, who knew full well who and what Peter was as born into this world, says to him: "Thou shalt be called Cephas." He gave him a name which indicated that he was to be part of an entirely new structure (no longer of the house of Israel), and put him thereby, as having divine title to do it, in connection with Himself. The two were welcomed to where *He dwelt*, and Peter received a name which indicated that he was to be *of the house*. The name, as has been often said, was confirmed to him in Matthew xvi., when he received the revelation as to the Person of Christ; but here, we have the divine title in Him who had come from God, to put Peter directly in connection with Himself. Jehovah exercises this prerogative with regard to Zion—the remnant who form it should be called by "a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." (Isa. lxii. 3.)

I see in his first epistle that Peter understood

his dissociation from Judaism. He speaks there of being redeemed not with corruptible things "from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers." They had been redeemed, not in this case from the filthiness of heathendom, but from the religion of the flesh—from Judaism—by "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." It was in view of the blood of redemption, that Simon, son of Jona, of the remnant of Israel, was brought to hear the voice of Jehovah's Servant calling him by a new name and connecting him with Himself.

One other thought—what we have considered took place on the *first* of three special days. I think that first day sets before us "part with Christ." On the next day (the morrow), you come down to earth, as I understand it. You get the heavenly side on the first day; the remnant drawn to Christ get the testimony as to God's Lamb, and they reach the heavenly side—the place of abode of Him who was walking here. On the morrow Jesus would go forth into Galilee—that was the place of His service in the midst of Israel—and finding Philip saith to him, "Follow me." No doubt Philip was of the remnant, but he is not one who hearing John says, "Master, where dwellest thou"? He represents the company called to follow the

Lord, but in this world. It is a character for earth, and we, as still upon earth, are to bear it, though our own peculiar blessing is to be attracted to Him in heaven, where He dwells; but it is a blessed thing in going through this world to have One to follow. He calls us to follow Him.

Then we come to the strictly earthly company in Nathaniel, and on the third day to the marriage feast. (Chap. ii.) To it Jesus and His disciples were bidden; the heavenly company, it seems to me, are there to bring in millennial joy.

The first thought for our hearts, if we are those who hearken to the voice of the Spirit as to God's Lamb, should be "Where does He dwell?" Then we have to make our way through the world, but, thank God, there is a way through it—that is a blessed thing for us, Christ is the way. As we follow Him we have the light of life. We shall not be discouraged nor distracted as our hearts are occupied with Christ.

The Lord grant it for His name sake!

T. H. R.



“THE REMNANT THAT ARE LEFT.”

“Wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.” (2 KINGS XIX. 4.)

IN the previous part of this passage Hezekiah says—“This day is a day of trouble and of rebuke and blasphemy, for the children are come to the birth and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be the Lord thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria, his master, hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard.” And then comes what I have just read, “Wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.” Later on in the chapter you get the answer (ver. 30)—“The remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of Mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.”

I need hardly say it is with great diffidence that one rises to speak on such an occasion as this, but I feel so distinctly pressed to say a few words that I think I must, and therefore I do

not think I need apologise. It is not a day for being afraid. Look at the man in Psalm cxii., "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid."

In the case of Hezekiah the Assyrians had closed round about the remnant. They were the great objects of Satan's malice, at that time. Hezekiah had done a great deal for Jehovah (see chap. xviii. 4-7), he had removed the high places and had broken in pieces the brazen serpent and called it Nehushtan. It seems very clear that a man who does anything for God is bound to be opposed. If there is any attempt to-day at destroying Nehushtan, or removing idolatry, not only in the world, but in Christendom—if there is any attempt at anything for God, or to make christian fellowship what is according to God, we are bound to have the enemy doing his best to make an end of it or break it all down. I do not see that one should be very much disturbed about that; we ought to expect it; we ought not to be astonished at it, we ought to see it in principle in God's word.

I have been much struck lately with the correspondence between 2 Kings xix. and Acts iv. 23, &c. Note the threatening of Peter and John on the part of the council, and then we are told that "being let go, they went to their own

company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them ;” and the effect was, that “ when they heard that they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, Lord, thou art God which hast made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is.” Almost the very words of Hezekiah are used here. Hezekiah prayed before Jehovah and said, “ O Jehovah, God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth ; thou hast made heaven and earth.” There was the sense that all power, everything, was in the hands of God ; God’s purposes cannot be thwarted ; nothing can stand before Him. Do you think God is going to have nothing here for Christ to-day ? God will always have a people. The serious thing is to see that *we* are found in the pathway of Christ. All I fear is—“ Shall I be found at the end amongst the company of the faithful ones ? ” For we are so easily turned aside.

It is a day of the very greatest pressure. We have nothing else to expect here until Christ comes but the greatest opposition. But we may take courage at the thought that God will have something for Christ here, and we may go on perfectly certain that God is for us and with us, and if God be for us who can be against us ? There is nothing to be afraid of. “ He shall not

be afraid of evil tidings. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."

I will just read those verses in Acts iv., because they are very encouraging. They said, "Lord, thou art God who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together." To do what? "Whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." (Vers. 24-28.) You may be quite sure it will all come right. God's purpose will come out; God will have something from all the trouble that His people are passing through. He will have something for Christ here.

Bear with me if I ask, Have we not been immensely benefited by the ministry of the last few years? I am personally very thankful for the light that has been given. I know for myself I knew very little before of what is, properly speaking, Christianity; I mean in its true bearing. Are we to turn away from Christ's present ministry, from the servants through whom the Lord has ministered it? Nay, do

we not all thankfully own what God has given us? and shall we not look to the Lord to lead us on? He will minister to His people still; otherwise He would cease to be Lord. Whilst not setting aside all the valuable ministry He has given in past days, surely we may count on a *present* ministry from the same Lord?

Let us read verses 29-35: “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child [or servant] Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked,” &c. Great grace was upon them all, and they spake with great boldness. See what marked that company and the spared remnant out of Israel! One mark was, they were filled with

the Holy Ghost. Also they were all very bold, not the boldness of the flesh, but they looked *up*, and knew that God was *with* them, God was *for* them, God had made Jesus Lord and Christ, and, whatever the heathen did, they knew God's counsels would be carried out in spite of all.

Not only was there great confidence in God, but great grace was upon them all. All were of one heart and one soul. Some one was speaking yesterday of "disintegration," and surely christian fellowship is not marked by that. It is a terrible thing to rend asunder the saints of God. This company (in Acts) who cared for Christ's interests were bound together as the heart of one man. If Christ is the object of the soul, there is bound to be love flowing from one to another. In these last days the Spirit of God has formed a fellowship within a fellowship, as it were. Christendom is a mere nominal fellowship, for surely Christendom, as a whole, is not caring for Christ's interests at all to-day. The Spirit is drawing to Christ a company separate from all iniquity, who "flee youthful lusts," and who "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart"—(2 Tim. ii. 22)—a company whose great desire is to keep something for Christ in the midst of all the ruin. It is not

a question of wanting to be thought “in fellowship,” like Ananias and Sapphira; they wanted the credit of it, and were not a bit in fellowship really, and in that day the Lord graciously made it clear what they were. They were found out; and the result was, “Of the rest durst no man join himself to them;” but believers “were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.”

How often one has been pained to see how little love flows in the christian fellowship to-day. No wonder the Lord does not “add.” Still we may be thankful for what love there is, and it is a great joy to see any flow of christian love. The thing is to seek to help one another. If we are really in the fellowship of the Lord, if He is first and last to us, love *will* flow. It is when selfish interests come in, when ourselves are before us, that these other troubles come in; we are not then really in the fellowship of His death. The present is an extremely trying moment, a day when “all seek their own.” When we lose sight of Christ, we are not honestly in the fellowship of His death. If a man were an idolater all the week, given over to self-pleasure and the world (1 Cor. x.), could he expect to take the Lord’s cup on the Lord’s day? Surely the Lord would not give it to such an one? The Lord would

have us real. You would not like anything else, would you? Do we not desire that there be something real for Christ in these last days? No doubt there may be a lot of knocking about and trial needed, in order that God may have His way and make us real. If God is your object, you want to be for Christ, and His interests are everything to you.

I remember a circumstance that happened a little while ago. A piece of money was lost and a search was made for it at eleven o'clock at night, but it could not be found. On giving up the search and returning home the thought came—why has the Lord allowed this to happen? At once this answer seemed to come to the brother who lost the piece—"You ought to know that there is something very precious to Christ on earth; you will go at eleven o'clock at night to search for money, but have you ever gone at that hour to search for something that is precious to Christ? What a little price you set on Christ's interests!" The money was found the next day under extraordinary circumstances, but it was *the light of day* that revealed it. We very often forget that the Spirit of God is here, we do not take the advantage of it that we ought to do. He is the light that can shew us all the pieces of silver, that can lead us to the right house, and the right individual, the One whom

God is going to bless. Naturally we prefer any light to *God's* light, but it is the light of the Spirit alone that can bring us to the right spot, and shew us the treasure of Christ's heart here, the souls that are precious to Christ. Only *God's* light can discover Christ's treasure here. The sweeping of the house (Luke xv.) was not for the *dust*, but to find that which was of value. Are our hearts really set on finding what is of Christ here? If so there will be a drawing of heart to each other; we shall love one another more, and there will be practical fellowship.

In those days "they had all things common." It was not in the assembly then as it is now. How many there are in our fellowship who earn barely enough to exist upon, and others of their brethren living in comparative luxury. Do we not desire that there should be more practical fellowship in all sorts of ways? If a person is really in the fellowship of Christ's death, Christ is everything. As soon as Christ is everything, the saints come in and are very dear to us then, and there is real love and thought for those who are Christ's. The Spirit of God is forming a company for Christ, and what should mark us is christian love and separation from evil. Where did Peter and John go when they got out of prison? According to the thoughts of the

present day they would have gone to their own relations, but according to Acts iv. they went to "*their own company*," that new company which was just formed to care for Christ's things, and which was set upon preserving the rights of Christ in the presence of a hostile world.

In closing I would say: Are we not many of us very thankful to the Lord for the ministry of the present day? And surely if we are going on with God we shall help and not hinder the ministry which He may be pleased to give. The great thing is, let love flow. We may not all agree in the way of working, one may serve in one way and one in another, but are we going to shut our hearts up? Not a bit of it! The Lord is going to draw us more and more together. If we think a brother wants a little more light let us pray that he may get it. If we think another is using, as it were, a "carnal weapon," let us pray that he may drop it, and depend only on those weapons which are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

I do not want in any way by these remarks to take away the effect of what has already been said to us. May the Lord bless anything that has been according to His mind for His name's sake!

H. D'A. C.

READING.

(HEB. I. AND II.)

F. H. B. It is proposed that we read Hebrews i. and ii.

F. E. R. I think it is evident that in the Epistle to the Hebrews we get two great truths set forth in one and the same Person. One is that God has come out; the other that man is gone in. In the one we see the Apostle, in the other the High Priest.

W. T. P. W. That is chapters i. and ii.

F. E. R. Chapter i., and the latter part of chapter ii. He is on that road as High Priest, but He is not seen as entered in, as far as I know, till you get to chapter vi.

F. H. B. "Made perfect through sufferings." Would not that involve it?

F. E. R. "It became him"—God, that the Captain of salvation should be made perfect in that way. It is merely a statement of what was appropriate. As to the actual expression, "entered in," I do not think you get it till chapter vi. In chapter iv. He is passed through the heavens; in chapter vi. He has entered in.

W. T. P. W. What is the difference between entered in and passed through ?

F. E. R. I do not think till He has entered in that He has actually reached the place God purposed He should have as Man. "Passed through" is the road to it, but you do not get Him entered in.

W. T. P. W. Is chapter vi. a step further on ?

F. E. R. Yes ; and chapter viii. a step further still. He is set down as High Priest.

F. C. It is implied of course that He is entered in after chapter ii., in His being named a High Priest ?

F. E. R. In chapter ii. it is that He might be High Priest. It behoved Him. And then you get the qualification (ver. 18), but it is more the statement of what was necessary that He might be it.

W. H. Is it not seeing "Jesus crowned with glory and honour ?"

F. E. R. That is not the same thought ; that is in connection with the world to come. It is as Son of man.

W. H. I see ; it is as High Priest He enters in ?

F. E. R. Yes ; and afterwards in chapter vi. you get another thought connected with it—He has entered in as Forerunner.

T. H. R. He enters in as Forerunner to make a place for us ; that is the point of the Priest.

F. E. R. As I understand it, the first who enters in, the first who has run the race, and reached the goal, as it were, is taken up for Priest, saluted as Priest.

J. P. How do you look upon the Lord as Apostle ?

F. E. R. In coming out to make God's will known.

W. T. P. W. Apostle is to usward, not what He is intrinsically.

F. E. R. When you speak of Christ as Apostle, the truth, as I understand it, is that God is come out in the revelation of Himself.

T. H. R. Therefore the first part of the chapter speaks of it. God is speaking in Son. That is the Apostle.

F. E. R. Yes ; and afterwards the chapter goes into the greatness of His Name.

F. H. B. He must be God if He could fully reveal God.

F. E. R. He must be divine to reveal God completely. The prophets told you a great deal about God, but God could only reveal Himself completely in a divine Person.

F. W. G. That is the difference between the prophets of old and the One in whom He has now spoken.

F. E. R. Exactly.

F. H. B. The one who speaks is God. God speaks "in Son."

F. E. R. The Word become flesh, when in the world, could properly reveal God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

F. H. B. And if He were not man the revelation would not be brought to us in a way in which we could apprehend it?

F. E. R. All the fulness was pleased to dwell in Him.

J. P. That is not Hebrews?

F. E. R. No; but it is the same thing. The fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him, as I understand it, is that the Godhead has been completely set forth in Him. The revelation comes out in the Son as Apostle, because in Him the fulness was pleased to dwell. Not merely did He say what God told Him, but He was God.

W. T. P. W. Do you apprehend any difference between the two statements, "In him all the fulness was pleased to dwell," and "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily?"

F. E. R. The one refers to what had been when He came here to make reconciliation. The other presents Him as at this moment, what He is pleased to be at this moment. There is no

substantial difference between the two ; the fulness of the Godhead is dwelling in Him now as man. I think "bodily" is only brought in to counteract Gnostic tendency.

E. C. The one is abstract ; the other concrete.

F. E. R. I think the most important point is to see that you get the setting forth of the Apostle and of the High Priest in one and the same Person. In that one Person God has come out, and man has gone in.

F. W. G. Do I understand you, "In him dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily," is true now ?

F. E. R. Yes, in Him *dwelleth*.

H. D'A. C. What was the Gnostic idea to be counteracted ?

F. E. R. I suppose they held that the Lord's humanity was not actual condition, but a mere form.

T. H. R. They held it was not real, actual, human condition ; it was a phantom.

F. E. R. The great thing is, God has revealed Himself completely in a Man ; that is the wonderful thing.

T. H. R. The Gnostics had a tendency to intrude into spiritual regions, and the Apostle shews that a Man is above all angelic power and He was God. Godhead fulness dwells in a

Man; that is what "bodily" is to shew. It puts Him above all principality and power.

F. E. R. The actual statement is it dwells in that Person bodily.

F. C. If He is presenting Christianity to these Hebrew believers He begins by shewing the glory and greatness of His Person.

F. E. R. Yes; I think the point is the greatness of the Person by whom God has spoken—has come out. He has spoken; that is the great thing.

F. C. He supersedes Moses and Aaron, would you say?

F. E. R. I would say all culminated in Him. They are all verified in Him. The law and the prophets all testify of Christ, but every previous communication is realised in Christ.

J. P. But had not everything to give place to Christ?

F. E. R. They all have their place in Christ. The law and prophets are not exactly set aside, but all has its place in Christ. I do not quite like the word "supersedes." The Lord expounds to them in Moses and the prophets the things concerning Himself. He was the spirit of it all.

T. H. R. "The Lord is that spirit."

W. T. P. W. It was much more than answered in His Person.

F. E. R. They all have their place; we could not do without Moses and the prophets. We should be deficient in our knowledge of Christ if we had not the law and the prophets. He was the great subject and testimony of all scripture.

F. C. I did not mean supersede in that sense, but in the sense of "This is my beloved Son: hear him."

J. P. Was not this epistle the divine title to a Jew to step out of Judaism?

F. E. R. The whole epistle is built up on Old Testament scriptures. Two especially: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," and "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." It led them out of Judaism as a mere external system, but it led them into the reality of what had been spoken of in the scriptures.

G. G. I suppose it supplemented and completed the old.

T. H. R. It leads them out of the earthly shadow into the heavenly reality which had been figuratively presented in the Old Testament.

F. E. R. You have in Hebrews brought to light that which in the Old Testament was merely seen in type and shadow.

The very fact of God speaking in His Son must set aside the idea of any further revelation. I remember once having a battle with a Mor-

monite. I met him with Colossians i. that it was given to Paul to fill up the word of God. I might better have met him with the fact of God having spoken in His Son. Who is going to speak after the Son?

F. W. G. Did not the Lord say, "I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets"? Is that the sense in which you mean?

F. E. R. Yes; they all have their place in Christ.

G. W. F. Does not the Melchisedec priesthood set aside that of Aaron?

F. E. R. It does as to order, but not in character. Christ's priesthood is exercised now after the character and pattern of Aaron's. I think the Melchisedec priesthood is properly millennial. It is for the man who has the promises, and is victorious over the enemies.

W. T. P. W. Does not the royal priesthood of 2 Peter touch it even now?

F. E. R. It is scarcely like it. Melchisedec was the priest of the Most High God. His priesthood had its character in blessing the man who had the promises.

We are a royal priesthood to shew forth the praises of Him who has called us into His marvellous light.

W. T. P. W. It is a priesthood of blessing rather on the same lines.

F. H. B. The Person who came out is the Person who went in ; that is the great thing.

F. E. R. It is a wonderful idea that no one can grasp ; I can well understand scripture saying, "No man knows the Son but the Father." It is impossible for any human mind to take in the two ideas at one and the same moment. The position which He has taken has all its virtue and character from His Person. Manhood did not add anything to Christ morally.

J. P. What do you mean by that ?

F. E. R. It could not possibly add anything.

F. H. B. That is the point that has been raised.

F. E. R. It is impossible to change the Person. Manhood in His case derived its character from what He Himself was. John vi. brings it out ; Christ incarnate is living bread come down from heaven. Everything which came out in Him morally was of His own Person, Himself, a divine Person in the condition of human life down here.

W. T. P. W. Would you say you have the life and nature of God displayed in a man ?

F. E. R. I think you have the nature. I am not quite certain as to the life of God ; in a moral sense you have.

QUES. The Father was displayed ?

F. E. R. The Father was revealed ; you could

hardly say displayed. The Son revealed the Father, and the Father bore witness to the Son.

A. H. In using the words "human condition," do you mean it in contrast to angelic condition?

F. E. R. I should use it in contrast to divine condition. He became a man. It is amazing to think that One who subsisted in the form of God, could come into the world and present Himself in human condition, to act and live in the presence of men as a man.

G. E. It brings out the grace.

F. E. R. It is amazing. There is nothing like the truth of incarnation.

G. G. But always God?

F. E. R. Of course He was; you cannot touch His Person.

W. H. B—T. Would you explain a little more fully what the form of a servant and the form of God mean?

T. H. R. I do not think you can explain.

F. E. R. It would be a very presumptuous man that would attempt to explain the form of God. It is to shew to you the great fact that He emptied Himself and took the form of a servant. No living being can explain what the form of God is. I know what man's form is because I am a man, but to attempt to say what the form of God is would be to make out you were divine.

W. T. P. W. There is a great deal revealed for our souls to adore and enjoy that we cannot grasp.

F. E. R. No living being can tell what the conditions of divine life are as such.

D. L. H. In that sense God dwells in the light that no one can approach unto.

W. T. P. W. It is important to see He had human life?

F. E. R. Yes; how could He have died if He had not human life? The whole fabric of scripture would fall if He had not human life.

The point we get at the close of chapter ii. is, that as the children were partakers of flesh and blood He also Himself likewise took part of the same. The Lord entered into all the conditions of human life, its sensibilities, feelings and affections; everything dependent on man's condition and organisation apart from sin.

QUES. It was all real?

F. E. R. Yes; if scripture is real it was so. You cannot suppose anything unreal of Him.

W. T. P. W. Do you find the word "human" in scripture in relation to Christ?

F. E. R. I don't know.

W. T. P. W. I ask because many pious souls shrink from the word as applied to the Lord; it is taken from "humos" earth. I don't myself see why one need shrink from it.

T. H. R. The very word man "Adam" means red earth, the one is Hebrew, the other Latin.

F. E. R. If the meaning of a word is pretty well understood amongst us there is no fear of using it if you have the right thought. We have to use words that express what we mean. You cannot always find a word in scripture to express what you mean.

A. H. Will you explain a little why you object to the expression "Unity of the Person"?

F. E. R. Unity is not incarnation; that is the main objection in my mind in regard to the idea. The great thought in scripture is incarnation. It is true that in one and the same Person you get the setting forth of God and man. That is the true idea of union, but "unity of the Person" has been used in a different sense entirely.

A. H. Mr. Darby says in the Synopsis on Colossians i., Christ is God and Christ is man; one Christ.

F. E. R. Yes; but you must be careful how you take up an expression like that. In Person He is God; in condition He is man.

QUES. Why is He not *personally* man?

F. E. R. He is personally the Son. You cannot have two personalities in one. If He is the Son He cannot be any other Person. He always was the Son and will always be the Son. He was the Son here as man and He will be no

less the Son through all eternity. He was that divine Person and He was exactly that same divine Person when He became man. The proof of this is John v. "The Son can do nothing of himself." He is the Son, but in the condition of a man. People are getting to the idea of two personalities.

Unity is not a happy word, as applied to the Lord. The teaching of scripture is incarnation. The scriptural thought is: The Son became man; the Word became flesh.

T. H. R. "A body hast thou prepared me." Who is *Me*? Who was it who became man? Did He, the Son, become as to Person anything different from what He was before?

F. E. R. He did not cease to be what He was before, and as to His Person, He was nothing different from what He was before, except that He took a position relatively that He had not before. He took a place in subjection to the Father.

F. H. B. In this chapter: As the children were partakers of flesh and blood He also Himself likewise took part of the same. "*He*"—Who was "*He*"?

A. H. But He became what He was not before.

T. H. R. Yes; but *who* became it? Let any

one ask that question: Who was *He*? *Who* humbled Himself?

F. E. R. The teaching of scripture is that He is a divine Person who came into human form and condition. That divine Person might have an existence, as to His Person, apart from that condition.

F. C. We are in human condition in contrast to angelic condition.

F. E. R. But your person exists when you are not in human condition in flesh and blood.

Do you remember what the Lord says to the thief, "This day shalt *thou* be with me in Paradise."

A person is an intelligent moral being; he may be in the condition of flesh and blood or out of it. When God created Adam He made him out of the dust of the earth. What made him a person was that God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul. You do not call a beast a person. It was the breath of God that made Adam a person. The Lord brought into manhood all that He was morally. With us it is a creation of God in every case. You may say you get life from your parents, but you get it from God in creation. We are His offspring.

G. E. You could not say that the Lord God breathed into Him?

F. E. R. It would be dreadful to say so. There was no creation of a moral being in the case of the Lord. *He became flesh.*

W. T. P. W. We say of man he is a tri-partite creature, body, soul and spirit. The Lord was . . . you do not contend against His manhood?

F. E. R. No; but you might be near error there. You get on dangerous ground in applying such things to the Lord. He is a divine Person in manhood. In the thought of spirit I believe you get the idea of personality. "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." It was the spirit of a man, but that man was Son of God. He committed to the Father that which was immaterial, what referred to the Father, beneath flesh and blood.

A. M. But the Lord is identified with His body the moment He became man, and so is man.

F. E. R. Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

F. C. Come see the place where the Lord lay.

F. E. R. That is true, but the Person who is gone in first came out, though now He has gone in in human form. The real point in question is the truth of Christ as on our side, that is looked at as man Godward, the firstborn among many brethren. He has His character

thus from what He is as divine. He is as much Son on our side when He goes in to God as when He reveals God to man. If He is priest He is Son. The word of the oath makes the Son a priest. And in fact He could not be the fore-runner for us if He were not that, for God is bringing many sons to glory, therefore the Leader must be the Son.

D. L. H. He gives character to manhood? In Him manhood gets all its character morally, from what He is as divine.

G. G. He partook of flesh and blood.

F. E. R. God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin. He was the Son revealing the Father; He was equally Son in going in. See how scripture puts it (Gal. iv.): "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son," &c. He comes forth that we might receive sonship. We having received sonship, He is the firstborn among many brethren.

W. T. P. W. In what way does scripture speak of Son?

F. E. R. I think on the divine side and on our side. We have on our side the Spirit of God's Son; Christ reveals the Father on the divine side.

W. T. P. W. What would you say of verse 5 of Hebrews i.

F. E. R. I think that is the truth of His incarnation.

QUES. Not resurrection ?

F. E. R. Resurrection declares Him to be the Son of God, but He was Son of God in incarnation. It is God's Son sent forth.

E. C. The Father loveth the Son ?

F. E. R. It is that Person. He is always the eternal Son. He could not be anything else.

The question is whether you look at Him on God's side or on ours. On God's side He is the eternal Son, a divine Person of the God-head ; as such we have no part in Him. On our side He is Son as man, to bring us into sonship. The point in John v. is, the Son quickens ; in chapter vi. we appropriate Him. In chapter v. He is on the divine side ; in chapter vi. He is on our side. But it is the same Person. The eternal Son was ever there, and there could be no difference between the eternal Son and the Son born in time except as to His condition. "In the days of his flesh," scripture says. He is Son of God in the sense that He is Son come out to reveal the Father, and also Son as the first-born among many brethren. It is that Person takes that place.

W. T. P. W. Would you speak of Him as Son

of Adam. Take Luke iii., where He is shewn to be the Son of God as coming through Adam.

F. E. R. It is only the genealogy given, to bring out the fact that He is come out in that line. You must not look at Christ in a mere human way. The birth of Christ was miraculous. He was truly the seed of the woman, but He was "that holy thing;" God claims Him at once, He is to be called the Son of God.

W. H. The truth is involved in that statement, but not exactly taught.

F. E. R. That is the whole thing.

G. W. How would you explain that verse, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man not even the Son, but the Father"?

F. E. R. I cannot explain it; I am very much afraid of getting out of my depth. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." We cannot grasp all; we look at Him in one light and in another light, but who can take in all the lights but the Father?

Many things are revealed in scripture, and I accept them; but I could not undertake to say I understand all that is in scripture. He would be a very bold man who would not say, "I do not know."

W. T. P. W. And a foolish one too.

H. D'A. C. Emmanuel, God with us, did not add to Him?

F. E. R. No ; it is not exactly a title of His Person ; it is what is set forth in Him. You could not exclude the thought of the Father and of the Holy Ghost from "God with us." Christ set forth God completely in what God was toward man and Israel. In divine operation all must be there—Father, Son, and Spirit. "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

T. H. R. When the Lord came forth you get the Father and the Holy Ghost at once. (Matt. iii.)

W. B. What is the meaning of "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" ?

F. E. R. He was begotten in time. The Person down here, the Christ, the Anointed was actually God's Son. God claims Him in that way, "Thou art *my* Son."

REMARKED. Some make a distinction between Son, Son of God, and only-begotten.

F. E. R. What I understand by "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," is the divine generation. He was Son by divine generation. It refers to the place He took down here. There is a shade of distinction between the Son and the Son of God.

QUES. The only-begotten Son ?

F. E. R. The only-begotten Son is a peculiar expression, which has its application to that one Person. He stands alone. As "Firstborn" we are with Him.

T. H. R. The Greek word for "only-begotten" is the Septuagint translation of "only one" in the Hebrew, sometimes "beloved," sometimes "only-begotten" is used in the LXX for the same Hebrew word signifying "only one." In English it is translated "only." Genesis xxii., "Thine *only* son . . . whom thou lovest." In Psalm xxii. it is the same word, "my darling" the margin puts it, "mine only one," that is really the meaning of it. "Only-begotten" has nothing to do with being born at all. It is simply the fact, He is God's *only beloved* Son.

F. E. R. It is a title.

W. T. P. W. That is important. As we speak, it has a tendency to a thought of priority. What you have said guards that so thoroughly, and is in keeping with John i.

T. H. R. We get our idea from the creed: "Begotten before all worlds," which is simply nonsense.

F. E. R. We have got a great deal from creeds, and these creeds were constructed by men of less intelligence than many Christians in this day.

D. L. H. Why the standard of orthodoxy should be fixed 300 years after Christ, is what I never could understand.

E. C. There are certain things true of Christ as man that cannot be touched by us.

F. E. R. Yes; if you look at Him on the divine side, of course, as apostle we cannot touch Him.

F. H. B. He was *sui generis* in some sense.

F. E. R. As firstborn we touch Him. The wonderful thing is, we have both sides in one Person.

God reveals Himself in a man, but that does not alter the relative positions of God and man. In eternity the Son takes a place as subject, which He never had in the past eternity. That proves there is no confusion between God and man. If you look at Him as to what He was with the Father before He came forth, there was no subjection; but in 1 Corinthians xv. He gives up the kingdom, that God may be all in all, and the Son Himself becomes subject as being man. He takes that place as subject, but His Person is unchanged.

F. W. G. No one can explain it.

F. E. R. No; but it proves to me that all that has come to pass in Christ does not blot out the relative places of God and man.

E. C. There is only one Person who could carry it out. "That God may be all in all," that is in the eternal state—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

F. E. R. As man He was dependent here. People have sometimes said, He asserted equality

with the Father; but as man here He says, "My Father is greater than I."

T. H. R. What people have got in their minds has made Christ a kind of independent divine Being down here. I have seen it in writings, a sort of feeling as if Christ, because divine, could act in an independent way when here.

F. W. G. "I and my Father are one."

F. E. R. The unity of the Godhead is the great backbone of scripture. The revelation brings to light there are three Persons in the Trinity, but all through scripture it is the unity of the Godhead. They are one. I admit the Persons, but they are one.

J. P. Would you say a word about the atonement?

F. E. R. Well, in the atonement who died?

J. P. Christ died.

F. E. R. He is designated in that way as Christ, but scripture says we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. He took a condition in which He could die. It was that Person who died, and it was the fact of His being that Person that gave all the value to it.

J. P. You would say all He was as a divine Person gave its value to the atonement?

F. E. R. It is the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son; it gets all its value from that.

REMARKED. He who died was God's Son.

F. E. R. That is the wonderful design of grace. Sin and death came in by the first Adam, but it was in the divine thought that another man should come in, and that Man was God's Son.

W. T. P. W. "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again."

F. E. R. In going into death He does not cease to stand in relation to manhood. He takes up life again as man.

W. H. But in a different condition.

F. E. R. You get the same thought coming out in the beginning of John. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The body is the vessel. It was that in which God was set forth down here.

"We were reconciled to God by the death of *his Son*." "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth *his Son*" to redeem.

F. H. B. So what He was as a divine Person gave all its efficacy to His work.

F. E. R. What He was gave value to what He did. It pleased God He should taste death for everything.

QUES. What of verse 3 of this chapter?

F. E. R. There He is looked at entirely on the divine side. God reveals Himself in His Son. It is the glory of His Person. He sat Himself down on the right hand of God.

He is a divine Person undertaking the purgation of our sins, and having done it, He sat Himself down. It is not like chapter ii., where we see Him crowned, as Son of man, with glory and honour.

C. T. H. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell."

F. E. R. It is one of the parallels of the Old Testament: it simply means, as man He would not be left in the state of death. "Now is my soul troubled." Soul is used here in contrast to the actual, physical condition. The abstraction of Himself from the mere physical condition. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful."

W. H. Would you say in Hebrews i. He is presented as a divine Person, and in chapter ii. that same Person is presented as man?

F. E. R. Yes; it is the divine side in chapter i. very distinctly; He is the Apostle. God has spoken in His Son.

W. H. In Daniel you get the Ancient of Days and the Son of man?

F. E. R. Yes; you constantly get the same idea. "He liveth unto God" as man; and yet He is God.

F. W. G. In chapter i. He is worshipped, and in chapter ii. He sings praises.

F. E. R. I should be very sorry to see the worship of the Son excluded from our meetings,

but if we properly enter into our priestly privilege we know Him as the leader of our praises.

E. R. Have you any objection to the expression, Unity of Nature?

F. E. R. I do not object. Every Christian is a partaker of the divine nature and of human nature, but we do not talk about the unity of our persons.

A. H. Is not that what is meant?

F. E. R. No; that is not what is meant. They will not have that Christ could be viewed distinctly in two lights. They will not have Christ viewed as man Godward, distinct and apart from the rights that belong to Him as God. The whole thing is so absurd I have little patience with it. The Person is the Son. In Him God has come out and man has gone in.

T. H. R. You see the confusion in M. Favez's French tract that came out recently.

F. E. R. The Apostle is entirely on God's side; the High Priest is entirely on our side. You do not get Christ as High Priest if what they say is true.

A. H. J. N. D. says, Christ is God, Christ is Man. He is Christ as both.

F. E. R. Yes; but you must think of what was meant by it. He is not man in the sense that He is God. J. N. D. said many times, He

could not change His Person. In Person He is God, in condition He is Man.

F. W. G. "God was in Christ," &c.

F. E. R. God was set forth in Christ. God came out in Christ.

A. K. What is your objection to the old formula "God and Man, one Christ"?

F. E. R. Because it does not accord with what I find in scripture. The Person who subsisted in the form of God emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, I read in Philippians ii. "God and Man one Christ," expresses to me the union of two individualities; those two united in a Person who is Christ. Thus you have either a change of Person or a dual personality. It is perfectly true that God and man are set forth in Christ. I should press that very strongly. That is a question of what is displayed here.

A. M. Would that be what is meant by true humanity and Godhead being united?

F. E. R. I do not object to that if you speak of what is displayed; but I do to a dual personality. There are certain ideas connected with Him as Man and others connected with Him as God; but as to the Person it is One who was in the form of God, who emptied Himself, and came into man's likeness. What the Person is is one thing, what the display is is another

REMARKED. No one can grasp the thought of the two in one Person. We can accept it.

F. E. R. If you are going to compass Christ, all that is true of Him, you are a very extraordinary person.

W. H. Do they not come very close together at the end of Matthew xvii. ?

F. E. R. All that God was, was here in Christ. He was manifestly "God with us." Continually they come close together, and the one derives from the other, and hence the great importance of maintaining the truth of the Person. Christ is endeared to us by the revelation which He brings to us of God. What a wonderful thing it is that we can then appropriate Him on our side and claim Him as the firstborn among many brethren.

REMARKED. In contemplating Him as man you do not forget He is Son.

F. E. R. Of course you do not.

D. L. H. We must never disconnect His manhood from that which morally gave character to it.

F. E. R. It is God who has spoken. When the Son speaks it is God who speaks. But He brings you into all this blessed light of God, all that God has revealed in the Son, and then you find you can actually claim that blessed Person on your side as the One who is going to lead you in the assembly.

WE HAVE SUCH AN HIGH PRIEST.

(HEB. VII. 26 ; VIII. 2.)

IF you have studied the Epistle to the Hebrews at all attentively, you will remember that previous to this chapter we get a great deal about the High Priest. In chapter ii. we read that "it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest." In chapter iv. it says, "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," which is as much as to say, We have an High Priest who can sympathise. Chapters v. and vi. also speak of the Priest; and in chapter vii. we are told that "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." All these passages refer to the Priest acting, as one might say, on the side of our need. He concerns Himself with regard to us on our side, and by the help which He accords to us down here He makes known to us His care for us in our weakness. That is what the High Priest does for us as we are going through the wilderness.

It is a great point for every one of us to

apprehend the interest and care which the Lord has for us individually in this way. You get an illustration of it in the Lord's prayer for Peter. Peter did not shine much; he was self-confident on the eve of denying the Lord, yet the Lord says, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." He concerns Himself about Peter, and the point in the Lord's mind was that Peter's faith should not fail. That great breakdown in conduct was of less moment in the eyes of the Lord than that his faith should fail. Any one of us might have a breakdown in conduct, the great thing is that our faith should not fail. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us." I think you will admit this, that when Peter came to recall all that the Lord had said, and how He had interceded for him, it must have left a life-long mark on him. He might forget many things, but he never forgot that, and he carried out the Lord's admonition to him: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Satan had desired to have all of the disciples to sift them as wheat, but the Lord had prayed for Peter, and the proof of his being turned round was that he would strengthen his brethren.

The Lord makes known to us thus His concern

and care for us on our side ; but in order to fulfil the proper function of the Priest He must lead us to God's side. He acts in both ways. He comes out to us in succour and sympathy, regarding us where we are, but He is a great Priest over God's house to conduct us in our consciousness into the Holiest. That is the wonderful thing ! and it is the point in chapter vii. 26-28 : " Such an high priest *became us*, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens ; " and it is after all the offering work has been done ; and the oath makes *the Son* Priest. The law made men high priests who had infirmity, " but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. "

In chapter i. you will have noticed that God has spoken in the Son : the Son is there seen on *His* side as apostle ; here it is the Son, as on *our* side, a High Priest becoming us. It is on account of the greatness of our calling that such a High Priest becomes us, and the calling is apprehended in the Priest. God is bringing many sons to glory. Christ is going to conduct you into the Holiest, not exactly to glory, but to God. He is going to conduct you into the realisation of heavenly privilege. That is the true thought of the Priest.

I venture to say that no one will understand the nature of the christian calling except as they learn it in the Priest. He is the Forerunner, the First to go inside the veil; and it is in the One who has gone in, that is the Priest, that I learn the true character of the calling. In order to conduct us in He must be holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, made higher than the heavens.

The beginning of chapter viii. follows very beautifully on the close of chapter vii. The sum of the things spoken is: "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." That is the first time He is said in Hebrews to be set down as Priest. He is installed for us.

I will now say a few words as to how we are conducted in. You must first get a sense of the love of the Priest. The Priest does not merely bear you on His shoulders, but on His heart. The names of the children of Israel were engraved on the breastplate, as well as borne on the shoulders of the high priest. We have to learn that the saints are an object of love to the Priest. He serves us because He loves us. I want if I can to explain why He loves us. He loves us because we have been given to Him by the Father. I could not look upon the saints in that sense as worthless in His eyes. It was

not Christ that drew to Himself. And you could not understand what the saints are in the eye of Christ if you did not first apprehend that they had been drawn to Him by the Father. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." It is the ground invariably taken through the gospel of John. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me." That explains Christ's love to the saints: they are the Father's gift to Him in the time of His rejection by His kindred. I will give you an instance of the Father's drawing. The Father revealed to Peter the truth of Christ's Person as the Son of the living God. Peter was given to the Lord. He was the figure of the church in that sense, and Jesus says: "On this rock I will build my church." The Father gave him to the Lord in making known to him the truth of His Person, and Peter came to Jesus as the living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, precious. You are given to the Lord, and are of value to Christ, because you are given to Him by the Father. The Lord prays thus for the disciples in John xvii., and they were of the deepest interest in His eyes.

I have been so far simply trying to explain the reason of Christ's love to the saints. It pleased God to set His love upon us in the sovereignty

of His purpose; you cannot explain or understand why, but you must believe it. That is not exactly the case as to the love of Christ. This refers to those given to Him during the time of His rejection; and the reason they were given to Him was that He might conduct them to the Father. In John xvii. He confides them to the Father during His absence.

The first thing is to know Christ's love. He is the Son of the living God—the living Stone, according, so to say, to divine generation and nature—chosen of God and precious—declared now to be this by resurrection. And He is the High Priest; He loves us; He proves His love in the help which He affords us on our side; He concerns Himself about us; He maintains us and keeps us, so that our faith fails not, He is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

It is a great thing for us personally thus to get hold of Christ, to learn the interest which He has in us individually; not simply in the company, but in us individually. Peter was a case in point. Every one of us has a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a sense of His interest. We have to appropriate Christ thus, and the appropriation of Him is everything to

us. I am not very far on if I have not learned that He cares for me.

Now the next point is—that the moment I apprehend His love to me I come out according to His nature. I am a living stone. The instant there is love you are a living stone; you are a partaker of the divine nature, and love is your measure. Gift is not your measure, but love. We were referring to it yesterday. If a man have not love he is nothing. Love is the true stature of a man now according to God. Christ's love is now answered to. "We love him because he first loved us." His love is appropriated and there is response to it, and every one who responds to His love has come to the living Stone.

Now the purpose of the Lord is to lead us into privilege, and privilege is beyond fellowship. "Outside the camp" is our proper place as regards fellowship. If we are true to the Lord we go forth. You could not be true to the Lord if you did not accept the fellowship of His death. Not to do so is as much as to say that you can connect the Lord with the existing state of things on earth. All Christendom connects Him with things on earth, but He has died to it all and He will never again have to say to it. If you connect the Lord with the course of things here you are not true to His death, for He has died to all here, to the whole course of

things. If you are true to the Lord you are bound to go outside the camp, and that is where the truth of fellowship comes in. We are in the fellowship of the confession of Christ as Lord, and that involves the fellowship of His death. But that is not exactly heavenly privilege, and Christ's service as Priest is to conduct you into privilege. He loves you because the Father has given you to Him; and His love would not be satisfied short of His leading you to where He is.

Picture to yourself the Assembly as a company of saints gathered in the fellowship of Christ's death. Christ takes these by the Spirit away from all natural associations and distinctions of flesh into the sphere of the Father's love, and all that is of the flesh is lost sight of for the time, and we realise that there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Of course when you leave the assembly you have to revert to these things. In the assembly you are nothing without love. Of course you must have faith or you could not be in the assembly, but when it is a question of the realisation of heavenly privilege nothing avails but affection. Christ loves me and maintains me in faith when I might otherwise break down: and now I love Him, and it is affection that helps me into privilege. He com-

mands the affection of my heart and of the heart of every saint, and *He leads us in*; He leads us into the blessed sense of the Father's presence and the Father's love—the Father's house (not heaven yet), and makes us conscious that we are His companions.

It is a most wonderful thing to be able to appropriate Christ thus on our side. I can understand Him on God's side as apostle, for He came out to make God known, but now He is on our side. As priest, such an one became us, to conduct us in; He will lead us into the sense that we are His companions and the subjects of the love wherewith He is loved. He will lead us into the joy of the Father's love in such a way as to make us feel at home there; He will make us conscious that we are no strangers but welcome guests. It has often been said with regard to heaven that we shall not find a stranger—God there; you will get a welcome in heaven. Well, it is a great thing to know that you have a welcome in the assembly and can be at home there, because Christ conducts you into the sense of the Father's love. Why has the Father made us sons? That we might be companions of Christ, that He might be the firstborn amongst many brethren. We are "predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son," and it is His pleasure to conduct us into the place and

the love that He knows. There is no such idea in scripture as a single companion of Christ. Sonship involves the body, and Christ is in the midst of the company to conduct the company in to that which He alone knows.

I defy any one to get on a step until he knows that the saints are the Father's gift to Christ, and drawn to Him as such, and that that is the secret of the love which He has to them. He delights to engage our hearts. I do not see the gain of our fellowship if we do not know heavenly privilege? I would not shut people out from fellowship, but they may be little gain to us or we to them.

It is a great thing to have the knowledge of Christ's personal love and interest in you. He as priest would secure the affection of our hearts, but His great point is to conduct us in to God the Father. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." Who else could? And He says: "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." What a wonderful thing to be in tune with Him! For Him to sing praises and for us to be in unison with Him, because He leads us into the joy of what He Himself knows, the enjoyment of the Father's love. That is what I should call proper heavenly privilege.

Could God have done more for us than to make us companions of Christ? He is the

leader of our salvation. He leads us in when we have grace to appropriate Him. But there is often such terrible obstruction on our side, we have to go back a long way sometimes to learn really the truth of Christ as Lord. It is impossible to connect anything of the course of things down here with Him as such. There are two things I see in the Lord. All administration is committed to Him, and He directs us into the will of God. He has authority, that is the very first principle of Christianity, and fellowship hangs on the confession of Him as Lord. There is no true fellowship apart from it, but fellowship is not privilege—proper heavenly privilege. Privilege is what He conducts us into, that which He has made known. May the Lord give us to know the interest which Christ has in us in a real practical way! You cannot make Christianity simply doctrinal. You cannot do without doctrine, but Christianity is a present reality—a system of living affections—not affections natural to you, but affections formed in you by the knowledge of love. You cannot do without affection.

May Christ so engage our hearts as to conduct us into the enjoyment of the Father's love!

F. E. R.

“TURNING ABOUT” OR “FOLLOWING” —WHICH?

(JOHN XXI. 15-25.)

I HAVE only a very few words to say, beloved brethren, and it is in connection with these two devoted servants of the Lord, Peter and John, as presented to us in the closing verses of this gospel.

There are in the history of the apostle Peter three very distinct “calls.”

The call of sovereignty. (John i. 42.)

The call of service. (Luke v. 10.)

The call of suffering. (John xxi. 18, 19.)

We have had the first one before us to-night when he was taken from the quarry of nature to become a living stone in the heavenly building.

“Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.” (John i. 42.) This is divine sovereignty. Going on still with his fishing, his boat is used one day by the Lord to address the people by the lake of Gennesaret. “Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.” The multitude of

fishes, the breaking nets, and the sinking ship, awakened the cry, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Now *self-judged*, it is said to him, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." (Luke v. 10.) This is his call to service.

What really led me to impose myself upon you, however, for a few minutes, was what we had in our brother's prayer just now—"Lord, Thou knowest that we love Thee." The Lord brought that confession from Peter, as He looked into his heart and searched it to its deepest springs: He knew how he had broken down in service, and how utterly he had given way, and when the eyes of Christ looked down into Peter's heart, that heart in its very depths could say: "Thou knowest that I love thee."

He is at this point not only reinstated, but advanced, the blessed Lord entrusting him with the shepherding and feeding of His sheep and lambs, and then says, "Follow me;" but immediately we read, "Then Peter, turning about." (John xxi. 20.)

No doubt the Lord has been speaking to each of us in these meetings, looking into our hearts in unfailing love, correcting, instructing, searching, and restoring us; and now what will be our next move as we leave this place? Peter's was to "turn about," John's was to "follow." One of

these two movements will be ours—“following” or “turning.” “Follow me” was the final call of the Lord to His servant, and He had already indicated to where that path would lead—to death; but, oh! what a halo He throws around that death—it was not simply martyrdom, but “This spake he, signifying by what death he [Peter] should GLORIFY GOD.”

This is characteristic of the cross in John’s gospel—“Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” Peter should share in his measure with the Lord Jesus Christ—not indeed as victim, but as martyr—in that wonderful path of suffering, and so glorifying God.

John is distinguished by four things:

First, he was *following*. (Ver. 20.) We have heard a great deal to-day upon this subject: we began this morning with “He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

Secondly, “Which also *leaned on his breast at supper*.” (Ver. 20.)

Thirdly, “If I will that he *tarry till I come*.” (Ver. 23.)

Fourthly, “This is the disciple which *testifieth of these things*.” (Ver. 24.)

Thus his feet are in Christ’s path, his head is on His bosom, his heart awaits His coming, and his mouth testifies of Him, and these are

the closing lines upon the last page of such a gospel! What a finish it is!

The Lord grant that such a wind-up may be ours, for His name's sake.

A. M.



READING.

(HEB. IX. 24 ; X. 1-22.)

F. H. B. What shall we read ?

T. H. R. Well, I was thinking we might go on with Hebrews and have a little more about the priest gone in, in the end of Hebrews ix. I suppose it is not exactly the priest here ; it is not exactly priestly service (ix.) though it is He who is the Priest.

F. E. R. No ; you get the priest again in chapter x. as “great priest over the house of God.” (Chap. x. 21.)

F. C. What distinction do you make between “heaven itself” (chap. ix.) and the holiest (chap. x.) ?

F. E. R. If you had not a place in heaven you could not enter the holiest. Christ has gone into heaven itself to appear in the presence of God for us. He is not only there, but He is there *for us*. If you have not a place in heaven by the will of God you could not enter the holiest, the idea in which is moral—the place of privilege of saints on earth.

W. H. Does His place determine ours ?

F. E. R. I think so. He has gone into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us.

G. G. Is His place now the place we shall have hereafter ?

F. E. R. I think so, as in the Father's house.

J. P. Would you call that our standing ?

F. E. R. No ; it is more place. He goes up and takes that place for us. He is there for us, that gives us a place in heaven. It is His presence in the Father's house as man that makes a place for us. It is not the making a place in any material sense. It is more than title, because it is a place prepared for us.

G. G. Is it as forerunner He prepares the place ?

F. E. R. As forerunner He has entered within the veil, it is more a moral idea ; heaven is a place.

T. H. R. It was a question when the Lord left the earth whether He would return, the eleven only saw Him go into the cloud, they did not see any further. When the moment of His rejection came in the stoning of Stephen (Acts vii.) the heavens were opened, and Stephen looked up and saw the glory of God and Jesus, and the moment he saw Jesus (he looked *through* the cloud, for he says "I see the heavens opened through"), that is *home* ; he knew where he was going ; going home. That makes our place.

Stephen saw Jesus there and that made a place for him. We know the Person who is there. The moment you see the glory of God and Jesus in it, it is home.

A. M. Would you say a word about the end of chapter vi. ?

F. E. R. The idea of the holiest is that which is within the veil.

F. W. G. Are we to understand that "inside the veil" corresponds to the place in chapter x. ? Is chapter vi. moral and not exactly the heavenly places ?

F. E. R. Chapter vi. is not exactly the same as chapter x. In chapter vi. Christ has entered within the veil and become a priest, to lead us into it. "Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul" in chapter vi. When you come to chapter x. *we* enter in.

F. H. B. In chapter vi. within the veil is connected with the hope ? Does the hope apply to us ?

F. E. R. Yes ; for as a Christian here on earth, whether you enter into your privileges or not, your hope is there. Even the Jew had fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope, but in chapter x. we enter in, it is not the hope there, but a question of entering into privilege. You embrace your privilege. The Hebrews had not entered into privilege at all, because they were

still in the camp ; but their hope entered there ; the anchor of the soul sure and stedfast.

J. P. Can you tell us the meaning of within the veil ?

F. E. R. You cannot understand the expression or what it is unless you apprehend what the sanctuary is. An Israelite knew what it meant, because he understood what the sanctuary was. "Within the veil" was the holiest of all, where the high priest went once a year. We have not, as they, a material sanctuary. I believe it is the presence of God ; the revelation of Himself in that which is before Him for His glory. The sanctuary in its entirety is the full display of God. The sanctuary took in all, the holy place and the most holy.

W. H. The veil being rent, it has all a different character ?

F. E. R. You must understand what the sanctuary is before you understand the rending of the veil. It is the full revelation of God through Christ's death.

F. H. B. Why do you say the veil rent is God coming out ?

F. E. R. The veil is never seen as rent in Hebrews, you go through it. Indeed, you do not get the rending of the veil except in the three synoptic gospels. It was rent from the top to the bottom, that was God coming out ;

but that is not what we have in this part of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

QUES. Why?

F. E. R. Because you must go in through death, and that is death effectuated in *you*, you have to appropriate the death of Christ for yourself. It is not here a rent veil, an opened way, but a way through, which depends on the appropriation of death in you. The way is there.

F. H. B. We must go in through it?

F. E. R. The great point is, Christ is gone in first. It is not simply God come out, but Christ has gone that way through death. He is the first to go in. He went in through death, and that is the way you go in, a new and living way. It is not merely by faith in His death, but that death is effectuated in *you*.

F. H. B. You cannot go in as a living man in flesh. You must appropriate His death.

F. E. R. You cannot bring in anything that the rending of the veil has set aside. To put it in other words, it is the soul's realisation of privilege, all is based on the virtue of the death of Christ, His perfect sacrifice. In my soul's appropriation of death I am on an entirely new footing before God.

J. P. Then in the gospels the rending of the veil would be God coming out, and in Hebrews we go in?

F. E. R. Yes; it is the end of man in flesh; it must be made good in us. It is the appropriation of Christ's death, as bringing man to nothing as in the flesh.

F. H. B. As long as God was dealing with man in the flesh the veil could not be rent?

W. H. B—T. Is it not the place where every Christian always is?

F. E. R. No; it is privilege. Access, if you like. In Hebrews it is not power but the *way* that we get in. It is the privilege of the saint here, the soul passing that way. It is the soul's appropriation of privilege, you go in to your privilege. Privilege indicates something conferred on you through the grace of God. The soul passes into it. Every Christian has the privilege; it belongs to him, but he may not be enjoying it. You must not confound privilege with moral state.

T. H. R. The moral state is settled by the way you go on. Every Christian has the privilege, but every Christian does not take it up, he does not go in by the new and living way.

F. E. R. You must maintain the privilege, because that is on the divine side and our title.

W. H. What is the new and living way?

F. E. R. The way by which He passed through. He has died to sin and lives unto God. He is alive, a Person out of death. He has taken up a

platform on which we can be with Him. I think Romans vi. 10 explains it. No one could ever have been with Him after the flesh. He is the corn of wheat that has fallen into the ground and died, He has left the order of things connected with man in the flesh, and has taken up a place in resurrection, out of sin and alive to God, in which we can be with Him. We never could have had association with Him in the flesh.

A. H. What is "through the veil, that is to say, his flesh"?

F. E. R. That refers to the fact of His death.

H. D'A. C. I should like to know why you object to the veil rent in Hebrews.

F. E. R. Because if the way were perfectly open to man, we should go in as we are, as alive in flesh; but we go in through the appropriation of Christ's death to what we are as in the flesh, and you do not go in except that way.

F. H. B. You must go in the same way that Christ went in, but you have to go *that* way, and you will not go in unless you do go that way.

D. L. H. Does it correspond to John vi.?

F. E. R. It is very much the same.

QUES. Is it right to say that Christ went in in virtue of His death?

F. E. R. He went in in the full value of His death. He took the ground up for us, that there

might be a divine basis for His people to go in upon.

A. M. What particular part of John vi. corresponds to it ?

F. E. R. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood."

W. H. What is "my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" ?

F. E. R. It is His flesh given which is the ground for the life of the world. *We* appropriate His death to enter into our place as sons. The privilege of sonship is connected with entering the holiest. The enjoyment of the place of sonship and all privilege with God lies wholly and entirely in the Spirit, not in the flesh. Our companionship with Christ lies wholly in the Spirit, and we must for that appropriate the death of Christ to all that to which He has died.

QUES. "I am the way" ?

F. E. R. Yes ; He is the way.

F. W. G. Is this in Hebrews x. any allusion to the rending of the veil when the Lord died, or is it Aaron entering in within the holiest ?

F. E. R. We have the priest entering in in chapter ix. The allusion in the expression "through the veil" is to the death of Christ ; but, as J. N. D. said over and over again, you never get a rent veil in Hebrews. If it were

rent on our side as it is on God's side, we could go in as men in the flesh.

T. H. R. And Israel would enter in by-and-by and they will not.

F. E. R. The point is, there is a veil to go through. To come to the assembly—We come into the assembly as Christians. The Corinthians came together as Christians, but when thus come together, then in the power of the Spirit of God they passed right away in spirit from all distinctions of the flesh (neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free) into the privilege of the sons of God. By the power of the Spirit of God we pass into the sense that we are all companions of Christ and sons of God. It must be by death, because it is only through death we can get free of the distinctions of flesh. It is only death that can abolish them. When we come out of the assembly we resume our individual position here, these distinctions exist and must be recognised in their place. You may be a free man; you may have a bondman; but in the assembly, in the power of the Spirit of God and of spiritual affections, you pass out of all this into the place of enjoyment and privilege with God. You pass into a new scene where Christ is all and in all, and that is the sanctuary, where there are no distinctions whatever.

E. C. The veil will be up again in the millenium?

F. E. R. It has never, on our side, been taken down. You cannot alter the fulness of the revelation in which God has come out. The question of entering in, according to the full understanding of the revelation God has given, is another thing—that is a question of apprehension.

QUES. The veil is not removed on our side?

F. E. R. No; but on God's side it is rent from top to bottom. He is fully come out. I do not know whether you could say it is removed on God's side, it is *rent* on God's side, so that God has come out; and in Matthew xxviii. you see the full extent of it. The Lord gives the commission to go out and baptise all nations, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" that is, because God has come out in that way; but it does not mean that all nations will necessarily enter into the meaning and power of that revelation.

F. H. B. We want to get away from the material thought to the spiritual idea.

F. E. R. That is the great difficulty.

QUES. Is reconciliation connected with the idea of God coming out?

F. E. R. I think reconciliation is God Himself

removing the distance between Himself and man. It affects nothing for you as to your state. It is God coming out.

REMARKED. The rending of the veil has removed the distance.

F. E. R. Yes ; in the work of Christ God on His own side has completely removed every barrier between Himself and man.

E. C. How far will this epistle affect the remnant by-and-by ?

F. E. R. I think it is all a question of what God will give them according to their spiritual state. They will get the law written on the heart which fits them for earth ; we get the spirit of sonship which fits us for heaven. Everything is dependent on the purpose of grace. God has called us in *this* privilege. He will call them in *another*—we cannot go beyond what He calls us to.

G. W. F. Is not the remnant contemplated in Hebrews ? Is not that why the veil is not rent ?

F. E. R. I think the apostle goes beyond Christianity, and brings in the thought of the world to come. When “the world to come” is established, *you* are completely through. It is not then a question of going through, *you are in*. Everything has been completely met for God ; every demand of His glory completely satisfied ; Christ “has appeared once in the end

of the age, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Every claim of the glory of God in respect of sin has been met by the offering of Christ.

QUES. Is not the blood always for God?

F. E. R. The blood is first for God, but also for you.

G. W. What is the sevenfold sprinkling?

F. E. R. The sevenfold sprinkling is, that everything has been met for God.

G. W. Are there not two sprinklings, on the mercy-seat and before it?

F. E. R. Yes; but I think it is all for God when it is a question of carrying the blood into the holiest, it is what is suited for the glory of God inside.

G. W. Will you say once more why you so insist on no rent veil in Hebrews?

F. E. R. Because you have to go *through* the veil, not an unrent veil, but through the veil; you have to go through by the way Christ made, and by that way alone you pass into privilege that cannot belong to you as a man on the earth.

D. L. H. May we say that as God has come out through death we have to go in through death?

F. E. R. Yes; you can only get free of your position as a living man on earth by death.

F. H. B. You get everything on the ground of death, as to title?

F. E. R. Yes; but you must go in by death if you are going to enter into privilege, which does not belong to you as a living man on earth, because it must put you away. It is only death that can put an end to you as a living man on earth—but then it is Christ's death.

F. C. How do we appropriate death?

F. E. R. I think we are attracted. It is by attraction. The soul is attracted to Himself, and then we are willing to accept the way. You *will* be where Christ is, nothing short of that will satisfy you; that is what love claims; I *will* be where He is; that is what makes it a privilege to accept death. It is wrought by affection. Love claims to be where He is.

W. H. It is the known Person who attracts.

F. E. R. Yes; that is why the priesthood is brought in on your side first in Hebrews. He engages your heart and affections thus, then affection claims to be where Christ is.

W. H. Is it the same thought as in John vi. 68, when the disciples say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life"?

F. E. R. Exactly; it was plain there was no one else to go to. No one can minister anything to me but Christ, and I cannot get Christ

anywhere else but where He is. The secret of Christ's love to us lies in our having been given to Him by the Father. The lines—

“Thou gav'st us, in eternal love,
To Him, to bring us home to Thee”

express the thought.

T. H. R. When we talk of having accepted death, we must remember it is not a kind of monkish effort ; it is real affection and attraction to the Lord. I see it with Elijah and Elisha. “I will not leave thee” was always his answer ; three times he says it, “I will not leave thee ;” then he goes over Jordan with him.

F. E. R. When you come into the assembly you may for the moment think what a crooked person this or that is, &c. You have partialities for some and prejudices toward others, but if your soul gets into the power of the Spirit of God, He carries you above all that, and all fleshly distinctions, to the place where Christ is all and in all. Assembly privilege is on the ground of death : you have gone out of life on earth, and are in the enjoyment of your privilege before God. He leads you into the enjoyment of the Father's love outside all this.

A. M. When you speak of being in the assembly, you do not merely mean sitting together with a company of saints ?

F. E. R. Of course not! That leaves out the presence of Christ in the assembly, and it is Christ's presence in the assembly that leads us to Him, outside all here, that we may be His companions. It is not going into the room, it is the power leading you in affection outside everything here into the Holiest of all where He is. Of course we come together simply as Christians.

T. H. R. You take that ground when you are there. You *begin* with the Lord's death, which abolishes all distinctions. Most people end with it.

QUES. Do not people sometimes think mere outward connection with the assembly is sufficient?

F. E. R. That would be leaving out the place Christ has there. The soul must realise its privilege of companionship with Christ before the Father.

A. H. What is the force of Hebrews x. 19, 20, "by the blood of Jesus," and "by a new and living way"?

F. E. R. The blood is the ground—the title on which you can be there consistently with God's glory. The new and living way is the way you have to go in. It is not the power that is presented in Hebrews that takes you in, but the way you go in. People have not a proper idea of the sanctuary. The sanctuary

is God's blessed revelation of Himself, and of His satisfaction in His Son.

J. P. I suppose the best way to learn the Holiest is to be there?

F. E. R. I think you must learn what the sanctuary is first.

B. I am not quite clear as to what the sanctuary is.

F. E. R. I think it is the delight of God in that which He has accomplished for His own glory in that Man. It is wonderful that His infinite and eternal satisfaction should be found in a Man! and One that is an adequate object for the love of God. You get the idea in the ark of the covenant and the mercy-seat. That is the wonderful thing that has come to light, not simply what God is from all eternity but what He is as come out, that He has found in a Man His infinite and eternal glory and satisfaction.

W. H. B—T. Would you say Christ Himself personally was the sanctuary of God, and if we are found there in our affections and heart we are there with God?

F. E. R. I think so; other things come out in connection with the sanctuary; you get the connection of Christ with Israel; therein was the table, the shewbread. He is not only the antitype of the Holiest, but the antitype of

the whole thing. The sanctuary is, as I understand it, the revelation, the light of God in Christ in that which He has accomplished for His own glory. It is not only God has come out, but He has gained for Himself an adequate object in Man. It is a wonderful thing that man could be an adequate object for God.

A. H. Do you mean that what is portrayed in the sanctuary is God's delight in man?

F. E. R. Yes; the eye of God could rest on the ark of the covenant and the mercy-seat, and see a Man in whom was fulfilled all His counsels and purposes. We speak of the sanctuary in its application to us, but if we speak of the sanctuary in a broad way, you must go on and take in its application to Israel and all.

F. W. G. Does it include the thought of God's dwelling-place?

F. E. R. The sanctuary includes the Holiest and the holy place. It is not only God's dwelling-place, but that He rests in infinite satisfaction in what He has accomplished for Himself, not only for us but for His own eternal satisfaction.

D. L. H. Does 2 Corinthians iii. 18 correspond with this?

F. E. R. Yes.

REMARKED. If the veil had not been rent for God to come out, we could not have gone in.

F. E. R. Quite so; it involves it, but it is

important to keep things as scripture puts them. God must come out if we are to go in. It is of the very last importance to maintain that the veil is rent on the divine side, and that is equally true for the millennium as for now.

W. H. Did it signify the setting aside of the whole of the old system?

F. E. R. Yes; the first system of things could not exist at all with a rent veil; that system could only exist so long as God did not reveal Himself; the whole thing must go when God came out, it must all pass away.

REMARKED. God did come out in a certain way when Christ came into the world.

F. E. R. Yes; it was the beginning. The revelation of the Father in the Son was complete in His life here, but the revelation of the love of God came out in the death of Christ.

E. C. If the sanctuary included the holy place and the Holiest, why was the veil put between the two?

T. H. R. You find a remarkable difference in Chronicles and Kings. In Chronicles you get the veil and the brazen altar. In Kings there is no veil and no brazen altar, but you get the oracle there. Israel itself, I believe, is much more in question in Chronicles; the outward display in Kings. Israel is the place on earth through which everything comes out from

heaven. I do not think Israel goes in, but you get a company in the millennium morally near to heaven. The porch is especially dwelt upon in Kings. My own impression is that the porch figures the administration of what is heavenly to earth; it is not heaven or earth exactly, but the connection between the two. Though not in heaven yet, the 144,000 (Rev. xiv.) are morally beyond the earth, they sing the song of heaven, and are thus a connecting link. You get in the first part of the sanctuary the holy place—what is heavenly in its aspect earthward. You get the oracle in Kings, because Israel are the people who get God's mind from within.

F. E. R. The whole order of things then will be *coming out*, not our going in.

T. H. R. We have gone in, they do not *go in*, but they communicate the heavenly, they learn the heavenly song, though not in heaven. They are the people to whom God's mind is made known, and through whom the revelation comes out.

F. W. G. Will it not be true in that day that Christ Himself will have come out?

F. E. R. I doubt if Christ is ever seen apart from the church. It is in the church, the heavenly Jerusalem, He is known. He does not come out apart from the church; there

He is displayed. The body is the vessel in which He is fully declared. "Every eye shall see him." It will all be made good, but I cannot tell you how. He comes to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe. It is there He is displayed, I believe. That is what I understand by the expression, "his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." He is fully declared. I do not think Israel will ever have again the same thing that has been in the presence of the Lord, as He was among them. I believe Israel missed their opportunity when Christ came among them in humiliation, and my judgment is, they will never have what they missed, they will never get that opportunity again, they will have to learn everything in the church. The identification will be complete there.

J. P. I understand you to say that before getting into the Holiest we have to learn Christ in the sanctuary. I do not quite get hold of that, will you say a little word about it?

F. E. R. I do not think I said you learn Christ in the sanctuary, but what I said was this—You must learn the revelation of God, the way in which He has come out, before you can enter in. The high priest could not go in until the sanctuary existed. You must know Christ as Apostle before you know Him as

Priest. Moses inaugurated the system and Aaron maintained the system that was inaugurated. The system is inaugurated by Christ as Son and Apostle. It is maintained by Christ as Priest. You must first apprehend Him as Apostle before you can be led in by the Priest. What He leads you to is the Father. It is the Father's delight in the Son, not only God's complacency in Man.

D. L. H. Is not the great intent of the Spirit in Hebrews to lead us into the Holiest?

F. E. R. I think so. I came across a beautiful remark by J. N. D. which confirmed me in this thought and opened it out, that in the first part of Hebrews Christ comes to our side with sympathy and succour, in order to bring us to His own side; the great point is to lead you to God's side where He is at home and where He orders everything. Christ orders nothing in this world, He sympathises with me down here and succours me, but He orders everything for God. In the beginning of chapter viii. the 'sum' is "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary," &c.

REMARKED. We have nothing else but Christ.

F. E. R. No; and what can you want more? What can equal for a moment the fact that I am an object of the love of Christ and He takes me into His delight before God. You will not get

to Him except by affection. Faith will not take you in, though you cannot get in without faith, because without faith you would not have light from God. It is affection that takes you in. Power will take you in by-and-by, but nothing but affection will take you in now.

QUES. Is to "draw near with a true heart" response in affection?

F. E. R. I think so, but it is a *true* heart-affection. Faith is light from God, but when it comes to the realisation of anything with God and with Christ it is always a question of the Spirit of God working in you by affection.

W. H. B—T. That is the value of the illustration so often put before us of Rebekah and the servant.

F. E. R. Yes, if you go into heavenly places, it is all by affection; you only go there by affection now. By-and-by the power of God will take you there; so too in regard to the sanctuary. If you are going to be led in in communion with Christ it is a question of affection, appreciating His affection. Affection goes in with Him, nothing short of that will satisfy it. That is why 1 Corinthians xiii. comes in in connection with the assembly, because love is your measure; without it you are nothing. You may have everything, "all gifts," and be nothing. Your

stature is measured by love and love abides when faith and hope shall cease.

QUES. What is the "veil upon their hearts?"

F. E. R. They were all in that state; that with which the veil was connected was Israel, who were clinging to the first order of things; and God has set all aside in the person of Christ. They were doing their utmost to maintain the first order of things which God had set aside and they could not see clearly.

QUES. A Christian may be in that state?

F. E. R. Yes, if you are clinging to "beggarly elements" you are in that state. Christendom is set up on the pattern of the first order.



READING.*

JOHN vi. 32-58.

THE lines of teaching of John and Paul have been too much separated—what they teach must be substantially the same if they both teach us Christianity—the one supports the other. Wherever it is a question of the appropriation of Christ by the believer you are brought very near to John vi.

Would you tell us what you think John supplies?

The substantial difference between John and Paul is, that Paul takes man up to God in righteousness, John brings God down in grace to man. Take for example John i. 18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," and 1 John iv. 12, "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." In the first it is God come out in the only begotten Son, in the second it is God abiding in Christians. Then in the book of

* Saturday Evening, Quemerford.

Revelation John brings Christ back to earth in power and glory. Paul carries man up to God in heaven, according to His purpose, and he gives us the one body—unity; John, one Shepherd, one flock—unity also, answering to the Head and body in Paul.

What is the difference between that and the one flock and one Shepherd?

The flock is linked with the Shepherd, the body with the Head. The idea of a shepherd is more that of leading, He leads the sheep; the Head directs. The Head receives for the body and is expressed in the body. The truth is substantially the same, though expressed under different figures.

Is not the Lord the Centre in John x.?

Yes, but there is the formation of the one flock, and the one flock and the one Shepherd are bound together in the divine nature, as we see in verse 14. I "know my sheep, and am known of mine, as the Father knoweth me and I know the Father."

Is it communion?

Not exactly. It is the divine nature, a knowledge which involves kindred nature. It is not the external professing system that is presented in John x.

Does the flock speak more of affection and the body of administration?

Hardly, for the body is especially connected with affection, Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, and He nourishes and cherishes it.

Is Colossians iii. Paul's side of it in view of administration?

I do not think you get the thought of administration in connection with the body.

With the church?

You get it in connection with the assembly, but not as the body.

What is the administration of the mystery then?

That was the working out of it. In the divine nature the one Shepherd and the one flock are bound together. Christ is the Shepherd of the flock and the Head of the body. You could not transpose the terms and say He is Shepherd of the body and Head of the flock.

But we must get back to John vi. To understand these verses you must go back farther in the chapter. When the Lord saw that they would take Him by force and make Him a king, He goes up into the mountain alone. They in a way acknowledged Him as prophet and would make Him king, but He takes the place of priest. You must take that into account if you wish to understand John vi.; that is where the connection with the Epistle to the Hebrews comes in.

Why do you say He goes up as priest?

He would not have power in a human way from man, and He goes up into a mountain. His going up the mountain is indicative of His taking a place on high; the priest is in heaven. Christ has three great offices belonging to Him—that of Prophet, Priest and King. He goes up as priest in heaven.

How is that connected with “bread” in John vi.?

Because that is where the thought of appropriation comes in. Christ is bread come down from heaven. He is thus within the reach of man’s appropriation, not to make Him a king but as Priest. But the presentation of an incarnate Christ produced nothing, though it is what God had for man, if man would have received it; but the Lord said, “Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life;” and the truth comes out, that no man would come to Him except the Father drew him. The heart of man is such that he would not come, had no desire for what was of God. Christ had come down as Bread of life according to the purpose of God, but men lost their opportunity. In man there is both incapacity and will. It was not simply that they could not, but they would not come.

Is the Father drawing new birth?

No; I judge that it is beyond new birth. It is the Father’s revelation of the Son to the soul; the Father drawing to the Son is connected

with Christianity. New birth is different. It is the sovereign action of the Spirit in all ages.

Would not this necessitate new birth?

Everything connected with the blessing of the soul begins with new birth; that is the action of the Spirit; but this is the Father drawing to the Son. He has come to men, and lived in the presence of men, with a divine thought—the divine thought was life. The satisfaction of God was in giving life to the world. Christ comes within the reach of man, and man will not have Him, there is no affinity. In full result Christ brings life into everything, He fills all things. In verse 33 we come to purpose: God's giving life to the world is, I suppose, in connection with the purpose of God.

How?

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “The next day John [the Baptist] seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

What is “taketh away the sin of the world”?

John claims the world for God. Christ takes away sin, and will by-and-by give life to the world. All will be brought under the power of the Spirit. I do not mean by this universalism

What is the difference between "bread of God" and "bread of life?"

He is bread of God first; bread of life is food of life. He is bread of life for me to appropriate. He was that when here, whether man appropriated Him or not. If I am conscious that I am under death I am glad enough to appropriate Him.

Was He always "bread of God"?

I suppose the thought is connected with His becoming incarnate. But incarnation was no good to man except the Father drew to Christ. And He must die; so He says to those who are drawn to Him—Now you must appropriate death. We must begin with the appropriation of Christ's death. You must be free of the power of the world-system. The world is looked upon as the system in which the flesh lives and has its delights. The whole world-system has been proved and tested by Christ being here, and all found to be darkness. You must be freed from the influence and power of the system in which fallen nature lives, in order to enter into that sphere of things which God has given *to us*.

What is life?

Go back to chapter v. for that; you get the privilege in chapter v. You must take chapters iv., v., vi. together, for they are all

different parts of the subject. In chapter iv. you have the living water, which in the believer springs up to eternal life ; in chapter v. you are raised up in the light of the Father ; and in chapter vi. you get free of the system of things in which flesh lives. You have to be conducted by Christ.

Is chapter v. the new place ?

Yes, quite so, and new links. You have the word of the Son. (Ver. 24.) His word is the expression of Himself. You are linked with the Son and with the Father. Eternal life is, "That they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me," is that—you have new links.

Was the old link the law ?

Yes ; the man who had been powerless for thirty-eight years, is the picture of one under the law—he is raised up. The way Christ raises us up, is by setting us in a completely new place in the light of God as revealed in Himself. You are conducted into blessing by the Son of God. You are not going to enjoy your proper privilege with God apart from the Son. He conducts you in.

Is verse 53, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man,

and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," entrance into it?

The point is, if you have not done it, there is no life in you.

Do verses 53 and 54 make one act of eating?

I think not; "he that eateth," in verse 54, is characteristic. You want to be free from the whole course of things in which the flesh finds its subsistence—the only way is by appropriating death.

Is eating His flesh and drinking His blood the same thing as Romans vi.?

Romans vi. does not go as far as John vi. Romans vi. does not go beyond sin. It is "dead to sin." The point here is appropriation of the Lord's death to the system of things in which the flesh finds sustenance. It is more sweeping than Romans vi.

Is John vi. the same thought as our identification with death in the Lord's supper?

Yes, but it is individual in John vi. In chapters iv. to vi. the question of life is solved and this is individual. From chapters vii. to xii. you get the new period, and the blessings and fellowship of the new company; and from chapter xiii. to xvi. the vessel of witness for Christ. In these first chapters it is all individual because life must be individual.

How far do we find the antitype of the manna here?

I do not think we find it here. It is contrast. Living bread is hardly the same thought as manna. They ate the manna and died.

Is chapter iii. the foundation of what follows?

Yes, it is the thesis, the great divine proposition. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The love of God is the start of all, that is why John iii. is a good gospel chapter. In chapter iii. you have God's side, in chapter iv. it is our side. The Lord solves every question, and He expands the virtue of the living water. It is now the day of the Spirit and the introduction of the subject in chapter iv. is, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him and he would have given thee living water." This woman had exhausted every source of human satisfaction.

Do you link it with Romans viii. 3, "The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"?

Yes; but being set free is only introductory to life. Romans viii. afterwards expands to you all that you have in the Spirit. Every believer has the Spirit, and in having the Spirit has everything, though his soul may not

have entered into it yet. John iii. is fully accomplished in chapter xx. "My Father and your Father, my God and your God" is the point for us; you get all in principle in His saying, "I ascend to my Father." He is going to conduct them in, He is on our side there. (John iii. is God's side.) Everything has been completely removed. In breathing on them He gives them that which livingly connects them with Himself; when you receive the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus then you appropriate the death of Christ; and he that eateth me shall live by me. It is what you have found in Him as conducting you to the Father. He has removed everything that stood in the way and now He can conduct you into the calling of God.

Would you link John vi. with Matthew xiv.?

Yes; Peter walking on the water is in a sense illustrative of the man that is superior to everything here—who has died to it.

How do you understand, "He that eateth me shall live by me?"

He is the object of the soul completely outside the course of things here—what He is to you as conducting you to the Father.

Is it like Colossians ii.?

Yes; an out-of-the-world order of things.

Is the water and the blood in 1 John v. the death of Christ?

Yes; the blood is expiation and you have cleansing from the world in the water. The blood is judicial cleansing; the water is moral-cleansing; you must have both. It is by Christ's death, which the word makes good in us.

Is this John vi. ?

I think so, but if you are to get His death that way you must appropriate it. I have no title to take the place of death to the world except by the death of Christ. No one has a conception of death to the world except in the *death of Christ*. The world is exposed there; it is judged there. If a man is under the power of the world, he has never judged the world. "Now is the judgment of this world." (Chap. xii.) I judge it, but I judge it in the cross. If you have judged a thing you are freed from its power. I do not say that you may not be tempted by it, but you are not under the power of it. The cross was the expression of divine love, but there too the whole system of this world was exposed and judged—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life—all that goes to make up the world as a system. I see One, who is God, who has come right down to death to make effective the love of God. Can you make anything of the world after that? As regards the Spirit in the believer, the Spirit comes first to assure me on my side; He is the

seal of God, and sheds abroad His love in my heart; then the next thing I learn is, that God has, according to His eternal purpose, called me to sonship; and that is outside of the course of things in which the flesh lives; so I must be free of this place; and I learn that God has given me to Christ to be His companion that He may lead me into heavenly things, into the place which God has in love prepared for me. He has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son. He has predestinated us to sonship, but we are not going to enter into it without Christ. We are sons that we may be His companions, and hence Christ has taken that place on our side, the leader of our salvation.

What do you mean?

Christ must, as firstborn among many brethren, conduct you in; there you find companions. "I and the children which God hath given me."

When you say "conduct" what do you mean?

"Such an high priest became us." It is in connection with Christ that you learn the reality of the place that it is His pleasure to lead you into. You learn what Christ is to us according to divine purpose. As Forerunner and Priest He entered in first; He has gone in and you are led into it by affection; you want something more than title here, you want reality and affection to know the power of it. Christ was a

real man down here, but He was absolutely independent of all here, He lived because of the Father—in what the Father was to Him as an object. In John vi. 57 for the first time was realised the fact that there was a man down here who had the Father as the sole object before Him. If I am free of the world it is because I have an object that commands me completely and entirely outside of it. No one will live outside the world without such an object. Love is the power of it all. The Lord says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," that is that He might be an object to them in heaven. All His links were there. He was the "Son of man who is in heaven."

Do you connect the Son conducting us to the Father with chapter xiii. ?

Chapter xiii. is preparatory.

Is the washing to have "part" with him there a priestly action ?

Yes; but not exactly priestly work. The Lord was perfectly conscious of every evil which could affect His own down here after His departure. He takes a complete survey of it all and closes with "Let not your heart be troubled."

Is the Lord's sympathy and succour only means to an end ?

Yes; it is to bring you to Him. His priest-

hood is that you may live because of Him. It is to bring you to the Father.

Where do you get the first action ?

You do not get that side prominent in John ; he deals so exclusively with divine purpose. You get in John that character of priesthood which conducts you in.

Why, in all the books written on Priesthood, is so much said of Christ coming to *our* side ?

People have not got the full idea. The idea of nine out of ten is that the Priest is only to carry us through the wilderness. It is so in a way, but immediately after His ability to save to the uttermost has been stated, you get "Such an high priest became us made higher than the heavens"—suited to the calling of the sons who are being conducted to glory.

How does Christ wash our feet ?

I could not say a bit. It is what I have done *to* you, not *for* you. He set them an example in washing their feet. We ought to do it to one another. It is all private. A great point in removing a spot from another, is that you do not expose it, it is only to be exposed to the individual. If you see a spot on another you are responsible to remove it. I think it begins with prayer ; you cannot remove it without a sense of what it is. If Christ does not wash us,

we have "no part" with Him. It is a very poor thing if we have not a sense of the grace of the Lord in washing our feet when we have got contaminated. What we pass through in the world tends to demoralise. It may be sin or it may be defilement; if you are not made conscious of it, it is not removed. If Christ removes anything from us we must first be made conscious of the defilement.

Then are you to blame?

Yes.

If I were living on account of Him, I should not need this service?

Not if you were entirely living on account of Him, but having to do with things of this world it is almost impossible to avoid contracting defilement. It may be perfectly a wilderness to me, and yet I may pick up defilement from it, for the wilderness is where I come in contact with the things of the world.



READING.*

(JOHN XIV.)

Will you repeat the divisions of John's gospel, which you gave us last night?

I think chapter iii. is the thesis; it gives us the great divine thought, that in which the love of God to the world finds its expression. Chapters iv. to vi. give the solution in Christ of the question of life for man, and the subject here is the individual, for life is of necessity individual. Then chapters vii. to x. the Spirit's day and the leading the sheep out of the fold: and in result the one flock and the one Shepherd. Chapters xi. and xii. the witness to the glories of the Lord, who, as lifted up, becomes the gathering point. In chapters xiii. to xvii. the company drawn to the Lord is seen as the vessel in which He was to be displayed here in His absence in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Is "lifted up" in chapter xii. in contrast with the abiding of the Messiah here?

Yes, I think so. If lifted up He would draw all unto Him. We only know Him here as lifted up. Chapter xiv. is preparatory to the disciples

* Sunday Afternoon, Calne.

being here in testimony for Christ. It was their preparation for it.

Is it communion ?

Communion is rather the result of this Chapter xiii. is the bad side. Chapter xiv. the good side, but the bad is provided for. Such as we are it is impossible to go through the world without contact with evil, but the Lord washes our feet. Chapter xiv. is all inside from the world, and shews the way in which the disciples were to be set up. The great point of the chapter is comfort. "Let not your heart be troubled." They might well be troubled by what at that moment surrounded them.

Is that in connection with what went before.

It is in connection with Christ's going away. If you put together Peter's denial, Judas' betrayal, with the prospect of Christ's going away from them, and the kingdom deferred, all these things combined were a great grief to them ; and if we find ourselves in anything analogous now, we know that our resource is in Him, "Believe *in me*." It is a great comfort to know that there is no evil to which you could be exposed on earth, within or without, of which Christ is not conscious ; and if He knows it, our resource is in Him.

What are the "many mansions" ?

I think the Father's house is a wide place,

there are many abodes, but we know little about them, and the many mansions are, I take it, in contrast with the place He would prepare for them. It is, I think, a mistake to make out the rapture from verse 3.

Is it not involved?

It is not involved, because all is seen here on Christ's side, not our side. The rapture is all on our side, but in this it is Christ's side: "I will come again and receive you unto myself." The way we get comfort is to get to His side—His point of view.

What is the force of "Believe also in me"?

He was going to the Father and He was to be the object of faith to them as Man there.

What is "I will come again" if it is not the rapture?

The point is that it is for Himself; He receives them to Himself for His own satisfaction. You may supply the rapture to the passage if you like, but if you put it into it I think you spoil the force of the passage. The point here is that He may have His complete and eternal satisfaction in them; it is not a question of how it is to be accomplished. I think it is a mistake to bring the event into this passage. The rapture is revealed to the Thessalonians to comfort their hearts in regard to those departed: here the receiving is for Christ Himself. He draws

their hearts thus to His own side ; it is a question of His own affections and having them in the Father's house. They had looked for Him on earth, but He looked for them in heaven. It is not a question of how we get to the Father's house, but that it is His pleasure that we should be there. He says—I will have you where I am. It is the reverse of what He said to the Jews, " Whither I go ye cannot come."

Had they any thought of it before the Lord said this ?

I think not ; it was quite a new thing to their hearts.

The next point is the revelation of the Father, and Christ was the way to the Father, and the revelation of the Father in words and works had been complete in Him. Now, another thing was to come to pass—Christ was to be with the Father, and greater works were to be seen in the believer.

Is it the display of the Father or of Christ ?

The great point is the continuance of what had been in Christ. Greater works would come out in the believer that the Father might be glorified in the Son. He had been glorified in Him when He was on earth ; now He was to be glorified in the Son in the works done by the disciples. It is a most important thing to see that the words and works did not originate

in Himself—they were not the actings of an independent divine Being down here; but of One in whom the Father was expressed; it was the Father's words and the Father's works. In Matthew Christ is seen as the vessel of promise, in Mark as the vessel of testimony, in Luke as the vessel of grace, but in John it is the revelation of the Father in the Son. Mark is more the presentation of the prophet, the mouth-piece of God, and the works come in to attest the glad tidings—a great Prophet; but neither in Matthew, Mark nor Luke do you get the revelation of the Father; they just touch the truth of it, but that is as much as is done. In John we have the Father's will and giving. Chapter iv., "The Father seeketh such to worship him." Then in chapter vi., "My Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven."

What is the meaning of "My Father worketh *hitherto* and I work"?

"Hitherto" is as from the outset—the Father works. The purpose of the Father was to raise man up: sin and death had brought man down; it was not the pleasure of God to leave man in that state, and in the midst of the ruin the Father works to raise man up. You do not get such a justification of working on the Sabbath in any of the other gospels.

What are the "greater works"?

There was a greater display in connection with the apostles than with Christ. When on earth He was straitened, but when He returned to the Father He was unlimited. Every work in John's gospel is the Father's work. Every miracle is characteristic. Each instance brought forward is not simply of blessing given, but for the display of something that was divine. The Father accomplishes all His purposes of grace.

It is only in these scriptures that we get asking in His name.

The disciples' work was not to be anything of a different kind to Christ's; it was to be the continuance of what had been, and what could be more wonderful than that the testimony by the Son here should be continued in them after!

What is the force of "ask the Father in my name"?

In chapter xvi. they are looked at as morally outside of the world, and taken up with His interests in such a way as that whatsoever they should ask of the Father it would be done. It would be so with us if we were more set upon what promotes Christ. Mark! this contemplates collective prayer.

Is there any difference between chapter xiv.

13, "that will I *do*," and chapter xvi. 23, "He will *give* it"?

The two ideas are different. "Do it" was His operating in them. In chapter xiv. it is in confirmation to them of where He was and where they were. They would be confirmed in the sense that they were the vessels of His testimony.

Was the confirmation brought out in Acts iv.?
I think it was.

"I will do it"?

His doing it was to prove that they were the vessels through whom He was working down here. Chapter xvi., "He will give it," is much in advance: they were bent on what promoted Him, and whatever they asked for they would get. If really set for that in oneself or in others you will get what you ask.

That ought to encourage us very much.

I think so: but with us there are such mixed motives. You may pray for things which while you think they would promote Christ's interests would also tend to give us distinction. "I will do it" gives the sense that He was with the Father in power.

Is it like "a double portion of thy spirit"? (Elijah and Elisha.)

Yes, but you must take into account the different position in which Christ was, no longer down

here in humiliation, but now in glory with the Father. In chapter xvii. He asks for glory that He may still glorify the Father. It is that He may give eternal life "to as many as thou hast given me."

Does "As thou hast given him power over all flesh" refer to the future?

No, I think not; it is in regard to what He would effectuate here on earth.

Does "All power is given to me in heaven and earth" refer to this difference in the Lord's position?

That is, I think, more millennial—the authority given to Him in connection with the millennium, and so He says "go ye therefore and disciple all the nations."

What is the difference between "*the* Father" and "*my* Father"?

If you speak of "*the* Father," you refer to that particular divine Person. When you speak of "*MY* Father"—it is what He is in relation to the Son. None of us could know the Father except by Christ having become man. There are scriptures from which you gather the truth of the eternal Son, but in the way in which He is actually presented to us, it is always as man.

Why is it, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," chapter xiv. 15?

All depended on their having affection for Him. It is important to see that the links between the believer and Christ are links not simply of faith but of affection. He is presented as the comfort here. "Commandment" implies authority, but Christ's commandments are the perfect law of liberty. Commandment is a difficult thing to understand.

What do you make of "I know that his commandment is life everlasting?"

The commandment is the expression of God's will, and the Lord's delight was to give place to His will. Eternal life is His pleasure, His ordinance. It is a wonderful thing that we have the expression of His will even though we may fail in carrying it out. Many things are the expression of God's mind and thus of the greatest value to us, but the question arises how are you going to carry it out? You may shape up the outside by means of precepts, but that will not do. We want to be set in the line of God's will, and then the expression of God's will comes in to correct us, when we are not keeping His commandments. Every precept is now exemplified in a Person, though I am thankful to have the precepts. Anything God has ordained is His commandment. Eternal life is His ordinance. (Ps. cxxxiii.) When saints are going on well precepts are of the greatest value: they are like

a sign post ; it assures you that you are going in the right direction and you are glad to see it. There are shades of difference in the expressions, God's commandments, the Father's commandments, and Christ's commandments. They are the expression of the will of the One who speaks ; for instance, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you," but if you set yourself to love one another you do not do it. I should feel a difficulty in exhorting saints to love one another : I would rather set about telling them of the love of Christ, and that would produce it.

But the Lord says, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another?"

He can very well command us to love one another, because He can say, "as I have loved you." If you find suspicion and distrust among saints it is the proof that we are not in love to one another, and the root of it is that we are very poorly under the influence of the love of Christ.

I do not see the link between verses 14 and 15?

He demands the Comforter for those who love Him. If they took the ground of loving Him, they would shew it by keeping His commandments. He says—if you love Me, prove it. And He on His side would pray the Father

and He would give them another Comforter who would *continue* with them for ever.

Does He contemplate that the keeping His commandments would entail loss and suffering here ?

Yes, I think so. The thought of Comforter is of one who would take up their interests ; and He continues, which Christ did not ; and would be in them which Christ was not. They must get the Comforter first in order to appreciate the new way in which Christ would come to them. He had come to them in bodily presence, but it would no longer be so, and they could not appreciate the way He would now come unless they had the Spirit.

Is it collective ?

Yes, because the Lord speaks in the singular afterwards—"If a man love me," etc. The point is that in the presence of the Spirit they had not lost Christ. If they went out into a hostile world (all is against them in chaps. xv., xvi.), when they came in He would come to them, and so with us. He could not give a greater proof of His love than in sending the Comforter.

Why does He call Him here the "Spirit of truth ?"

In contrast with the letter of truth. They would have the source of truth in themselves

if they had the Spirit. Christians have the truth in themselves. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." (1 John ii. 20, 27.) It is a point to be pressed very much, that the Christian is not taught of man: "ye have no need that any man teach you." You might be able to follow an address and retain it all in mind, and perhaps there is only one single point in that address where the Spirit is teaching you. It is not by memory that you get hold of the teaching of scripture. What you get at a meeting by the teaching of the Spirit you may not accurately remember as to the words, yet you have the thing. Scripture is the limit of teaching: any man who goes beyond scripture is a transgressor.

I would give nothing for ministry if it is not truth cast into a man's own words, for his own words express his own apprehension according to what the Spirit has given him. When it is digested you give it out according to your own apprehension of it, but that is not done very

soon, nor when done is it the standard of truth.

The way now is that what is said by one to-day, is to-morrow carried all over the country. For instance, the expression, "change your man;" some people hear a thing to-day and are ministering it to-morrow, but it will not do.

It has taken me a great many years to learn a very little. In a certain sense I feel I know less than twenty-five years ago. You are only effective in what you are taught by the Spirit, and a man only exposes himself if he goes beyond; people see it. We are vessels, not pipes or conduits, like the prophets of old. They did not understand what they spoke or wrote. When the Lord was here He was the blessed and divinely perfect vessel of truth. We are vessels by the Spirit.
