

The Basis ✖
of the
Resurrection
World. ✖ ✖

Readings and Addresses
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The Basis of the Resurrection World.

THE BUILDER.

READ MATTHEW XXVI. 4, 5 ;

MATTHEW XXVII. 1-4, 19, 24, 25, 45, 46,
50-54, 62 TO END ;

MATTHEW XXVIII. 1-4 AND 9 TO END.

P. R. M. I think that we might take up the latter part of the gospels in order to see how Christ inaugurates the resurrection world in the greatness of His own Person.

H. G. Does each gospel present a distinct view of the resurrection world ?

P. R. M. I cannot say that I have traced it out. But I thought we might get light and help from one another as to it. Each gospel undoubtedly presents a different aspect of the death of Christ, and hence it must follow that the aspect of the resurrection world which He inaugurates must be different in each case. We cannot have the resurrection world apart from His death, and hence we must first have the aspect of His death in

each. All rests on that. The order in which the gospels stand has no doubt been divinely overruled, for there is a moral sequence.

A. A. T. What is the distinctive aspect of His death in Matthew?

P. R. M. Well, both Matthew and Mark present atonement, the absolutely essential basis of all. Now that is denied on every hand to-day, yet without that foundation Christianity does not exist.

QUES. Why did you begin with the religious leaders here?

P. R. M. Because I thought that what we find in Matthew is the inveterate vindictiveness of the religious man against all that is divine. That comes out more patently in Matthew than in any of the other gospels; the vindictive hatred of the religious man not only follows Christ to death, but it follows Him into resurrection, and stamps a lie upon the historical version of the resurrection.

J. T. I suppose it is important to recognise that the gospels were written to support the gospel; that therefore they are on a higher plane than merely the confirmation or establishment of the promises made to the fathers. While Matthew includes that, of necessity it is on a higher plane, inasmuch as it is written to establish the gospel

in the minds of Jewish believers and the like.

P. R. M. All the gospels were written from the standpoint of Christ being in glory, written when He was in glory; they are not diaries of events in the life of the Lord, written at the time, but they are written from the standpoint of His glory to lead our souls into the present apprehension of that glory.

J. T. Yes, that is it.

P. R. M. There is one solemn consideration that seems to mark all that comes out in the end of Matthew; that is, that religious hatred is always marked by cowardice. We can see all through these chapters how every one attempts to shelve the blame on to his fellow. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only One who takes all on His own shoulders as the great Sin-bearer; every one else tries to shift the blame on to his fellow. The chief priests try to arrange the thing according to expediency—not on the feast day, &c.—but the divine ordering was that Christ should die on the feast day.

Judas seeks, in his remorse, to shift the blame on to the chief priests. He forces his way not simply into the outer courts of the temple, but right into the shrine, where only the priests should have gone,

to return the blood money on the head of the priests.

In this gospel no detail is spared which could serve to enhance the base and awful character of His death. He passes down under the judgment to close up the heart of man and to bring to light in righteousness the heart of God. Never could we have a more awful exposure of the heart of man nor a more blessed one of the heart of God.

Then Pilate washes his hands, using the same words as the priests, "see ye to it"—he would shift the blame on to them. There is one incident which is peculiar to Matthew, the dream of Pilate's wife, which comes in and forces a testimony to the innocence of Christ. In spite of man, God forces a testimony to the innocence of Christ on the lips of Pilate's wife, on the lips of Pilate, and on the lips of Judas, while the centurion says, "Truly this was the Son of God."

K—N. In spite of all man's efforts to escape the responsibility, God has taken account of it. In the Acts you find it placed on the Gentiles, the people of Israel, and Pontius Pilate.

P. R. M. Here we get the complete proof of the unrighteousness of man in every estate. Christ was the Truth, the true light

shewing it all up. But God never exposes things until the remedy is there. When Emmanuel was there—God with us—God could fully expose all that was in the world. When the death of Christ was about to come in, God could afford to bring in the exposure of the whole world-system, since He was going to inaugurate a new world in the Person of Christ.

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F. L. It would greatly help if we had a statement of the different aspects of the death of Christ in each of the gospels.

J. T. We have atonement in Matthew and Mark, whereas in Luke it is Christ on man's side; therefore everything must be sacrificial, so we have Him as a priest. In John it is invariably a question of the Person, and in John His death brings to light the Person, for there it is an act of His power.

P. R. M. He seals His own work in John as a divine Person: "It is finished."

R. S. S. There in His death it says He delivered up His spirit.

J. T. Yes, He dismisses His spirit. What is striking in John is that all that happens is by His own arrangement. He is in supreme control of everything.

From chapter xviii. He provides for every-

body. For instance, as to the disciples in the garden: "Let these go their way."

P. R. M. Evidently He comes into prominence as the victim in the aspect of His death in Matthew; then in Mark you get the forsaking emphasized even more powerfully than in Matthew, but in both it is a question of atonement. The sacrificial death of Christ as the victim is insisted on. And in Luke He is a martyr at the hands of man.

J. T. It is clear that the thought of the sin offering of necessity must appear in both Matthew and Mark, for the reason that it is a question of atonement, because it was the blood of the sin offering that was carried within the veil, whereas I think that perhaps His devotedness, as in the burnt offering, might appear in Luke and John.

P. R. M. The powers of Hades were in counsel at this moment, in order to hinder the building of Christ. The gates of Hades present the counsel of evil—the gate is the place of counsel, and they are all in counsel to frustrate the purpose of Christ in building His assembly here. Satan had no conception of resurrection. Resurrection was the great weapon by which Satan was wholly defeated. A little further on we see how God inaugurates the power of resurrection publicly in that the bodies of the saints which

slept arose. It is brought in very patently in Matthew.

J. T. Yes, and they entered into the holy city as a testimony—they appeared to many. I had thought that Matthew sets up the assembly here in testimony, and it was a great thing to know that He had all power, whether in heaven or upon earth. That is the great end in the gospel, that the saints should know that the Lord has all power; therefore there would be no possibility of defeat. In Mark and Luke the Lord is seen as in heaven in connection with the protection of the testimony on the earth. So in Mark He is presented as “working with them.” In Luke He goes into heaven. It is not a question of the church as the vessel of testimony, neither is it a question of the testimony being promulgated, but rather to shew the greatness of what God has devised for man and brought to pass in Christ; that is, a place in heaven. There is to be a place in heaven for man, and the Lord goes up into heaven in the character of the Blessor. In Mark the Lord is seen at the right hand of God taking care of the testimony here on earth. He sent them forth to preach, and then it says, “He sat at the right hand of God,” and “the Lord working with them,” &c., indicating that Mark’s great point is to

shew that the testimony here on earth is to be preserved and protected by the Lord in heaven; whereas Luke is the excess of grace which the gospel brings to light; that is, that man is not only to be relieved in regard to his conscience and given the Spirit, but he is to have a place in heaven. I think that Luke in that way exceeds them all, as shewing the excess of grace.

P. R. M. Matthew and Mark record that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. They place it after His death. Luke also refers to the rending of the veil, but he puts it in a different place. I suppose the rending of the veil was the most significant act of God in regard to the whole course of the system of religion here committed to Israel. It was evidently the closing of the old economy in its entirety to bring to light all that up to that time had been hid. It shews the removal of all the distance from the divine side. God begins from His own side; man begins at the other end.

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H. GR. What would you say is the feature of the resurrection world in this gospel? I cannot just get hold of it yet.

P. R. M. I think, as Mr. Taylor has brought

it in, we might very well connect it with Christ's building. He shews His power to effect His own building; in fact, that all power in heaven and earth is His to that end. He stands out in the last chapter as Master of heaven and earth in resurrection, with ability to build what will fill the whole scene with the knowledge of the Godhead. Not only is He "Emmanuel," God *with us*, but it will be God in the whole scene. He has power to bring God into the whole scene in heaven and earth.

QUES. Do you naturally connect the idea of heaven with resurrection?

P. R. M. No, not necessarily; it is in view of it; resurrection is in view of it.

J. T. One great point is that all of the building must of necessity be on resurrection ground; and it is very striking in Kings how much building there is by Solomon, who is in a sense a figure of Christ risen. You know the extent of the building there, how much is said about it. He built a house for Jehovah, his own house, the house of the forest of Lebanon, and the house for Pharaoh's daughter. He also built a great many cities. That is, it would seem that the Spirit of God enlarges upon the sphere of Christ's activity as risen, and how all is marked by building, instead of by tearing down. Now things are

to be set up permanently, and I think the point is good in regard to the resurrection. This gospel shews the power of Christ in resurrection, not simply to rise, but that there was a testimony to His power—many of the saints which slept arose and went into the holy city, and appeared to many, as a witness.

P. R. M. Yes, that is the importance, I think, of dwelling on these few incidents that immediately follow His death. The next thing was, the earth quaked and the rocks rent; that is, the whole hitherto stable system here felt the shock of resurrection. Everything here has already felt the shock of resurrection, the shock of a power which had never been known before. We are only waiting for things to dissolve, because they have already felt the shock of the power which lies outside this world and by means of which they will soon be displaced. The power of resurrection has begun, and this earth has felt it; all that was stable in it has felt it. All the foundations are already shaken. You can get down to bed-rock today. There is no bed-rock in connection with this world now, deep as you may sink the building.

J. T. I suppose there never was any bed-rock in regard to building.

P. R. M. I know of none, except in the death of Christ.

J. T. The earthquake brought that to light.

P. R. M. If the foundation of our souls is not secured on the atoning death of Christ we have no stability. The results of resurrection are inseparably connected with the aspects of His death.

J. T. There is not only the foundation of things, but *the ground of the foundation*, in scripture, a site for the foundation; that is, the light we have in regard to redemption. But if Christ is the foundation in our souls, it is Christ as having died and risen.

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P. R. M. In chapter xxvii. 53 the "holy city" comes again into view. God has never given up His thought as to it, and in resurrection He brings in a power in which every divine thought can be secured. The testimony to the power of resurrection is carried into the holy city and left there. God connects His mighty power with His city. Those saints raised after Christ appear "to many," but it was no public sign: they were not seen by the world. But how the enemy would seek to close up the whole question of the death of Christ! The power of the Roman empire is brought to bear to make

the sepulchre sure. It is sealed with Cæsar's seal, to touch which was death. And they set a watch. But "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." Cæsar's seal counted for very little with the angel. When the power of resurrection appears the power of man's world, man's empire, has but little might. When the powers of the world to come start into force the armaments of man will be but of little account.

REM. I suppose the great thought is brought in in the beginning of chapter xxviii.

P. R. M. Yes, the angel came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. Cæsar's soldiers might say what they would, but he was master of the situation in the power of resurrection. I think that is a magnificent thought, "He sat on it." He had taken possession.

MR. B. Is it in connection with what is Jewish, where angels are so much spoken of, that the angel is referred to here?

P. R. M. We often get the archangel connected with resurrection. Michael is the prince that stands for the chosen of God's people. We find Michael connected, as a rule, with resurrection, especially where Israel is in view.

J. T. The work of the angel is to roll away the stone.

P. R. M. Yes, and to take possession in resurrection power. The stone was not rolled away for Christ to come out.

How wonderful His greeting to the disciples in resurrection, "all hail." He salutes the saints in resurrection. No doubt He does that in the supper.

R. S. S. There is something grand about that, the Lord saluting them in resurrection; it was a new departure.

J. T. Here it is rather the announcement of victory.

F. L. There is quite a contrast between this and John xx. In John xx. the great thought is the presentation of Himself to the Father in all the salutary joy of the first-fruits of resurrection—"I have not yet ascended to my Father." There it is for the heart of the Father. Here it is greeting the saints on the ground of resurrection, on the morning of the day of resurrection; and here they touch Him; they are linked with Him; they take Him by the feet. It is an entirely different scene.

P. R. M. There is quite a difference between holding Him by the feet and what He says to Mary, "Touch me not," &c.

W. H. F. Holding Him by the feet, I

think, is more in connection with the coming day.

P. R. M. We get a lie recorded by the religious world, with bribery and corruption behind it. How much these things mark all that is connected with man's government ; though it has been greatly changed and elevated by the light of God, yet behind it lie the elements of falsehood and of bribery and corruption. On the other hand, we have all the power of God committed into the hands of a Man, the true power, not political power, yet power that will deal with the nations, all committed to the hands of a Man, who will fill the whole scene with the knowledge of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

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QUES. Do not you think that God is bringing the resurrection world in a specially prominent way before the saints just now ?

P. R. M. I am sure He is, I think because He is so soon going to put us publicly into it ; it cannot be long.

H. GR. Would you say a word about what the angel says to the women : " He is not here : he is risen. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

P. R. M. This earth is the place where the

Lord lay. The resurrection world is not on this earth. It is in connection with it, but in view of heaven, and we have the light of it here; it is a scene that man and human intelligence cannot take any account of and of which he can know nothing whatever.

J. T. What the angels pointed out was rather a negative thing, though it was a testimony to a positive thing—where the Lord had been. But then, He appears Himself to them. I suppose that is what we want to come to. It was the negative testimony that He was not there, and yet what a wealth of affection it brings to us when we think of this earth as the place where the Lord lay.

F. L. That is very significant, "He is not here." The Lord is not here. It is brought in in connection with the mountain of Galilee. I suppose it is the point of power that is established, while it is outwardly the place of reproach. It is the mountain which He appointed. The mountain is, so to speak, not connected now with Zion at Jerusalem, it is the mountain of Galilee, the place of scorn and reproach.

P. R. M. And we might look at it in connection with the word He gave on the mountain in chapters v., vi. and vii. There He laid down the laws of the kingdom;

here He brings in the authority in which He will carry them into effect.

F. L. And the other mountain that had been was about to be removed and cast into the sea. But He establishes them in the place of power for discipleship.

P. R. M. And so it is, "Go and disciple all nations."

H. GR. Would you say the Lord would have us here really in the divine intelligence of His being risen, and yet we have to keep in mind the thought that He went into the grave for us?

P. R. M. Yes, "where the Lord lay." Nothing can affect us more than that. It alters the character of everything for us.

F. L. It is part of the gospel—He was buried. We get the elements in 1 Corinthians: His death, burial and resurrection.



THE VICTOR.

READ MARK XIV. 50-53, 60-62 ;

MARK XV. 15-20, 31-38 ;

MARK XVI. 9 TO END.

P. R. M. I suppose one great lesson we learn here as to the death of Christ is that it opens up for man a pathway which nature cannot tread. We read in the Book of Job (chap. xxviii.) that there is a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen and the fierce lion hath not trodden. I suppose that it primarily refers to men burrowing in the earth for treasure ; but here we find a pathway opened out which nature cannot tread, which the most exalted intelligence is powerless to view and the strength of man can never compass, and yet Christ takes it. He went into depths that we could never know.

F. L. Do you think that is illustrated in the young man that followed, but fled naked ?

P. R. M. I do indeed. The writer of this gospel was evidently John Mark, not an apostle ; and if it was not John Mark here who was the young man, he evidently saw

his own picture in it. He essayed to take that path evidently in nature, and he found the power of the world too strong for him. There is little doubt he writes down his own history here. It is peculiar to Mark. We do well to weigh the peculiar incidents in each gospel.

J. T. His nakedness was exposed.

P. R. M. Yes, it was indeed. Nature cannot tread that path, not even the keenest nor strongest—neither the vulture, nor the lion, nor the young lions pass thereby. Nature will not avail us there. Christ has been into death, and His death opens out a pathway which we cannot tread according to nature.

QUES. Would you say that Peter tried it according to nature?

P. R. M. I am very much afraid a great many do. We have to begin with ourselves. But the very fact that John Mark wrote this gospel shews that he learned his lesson.

The priest brings in the thought of the Son of the Blessed here. In Matthew, where it is more official, he administers the oath to the Lord. The Lord would not answer the priest at first, nor does He answer until the divine oath is administered to him. When the priest brings in the name of the Blessed here, Christ answers.

He does not say He is the Son of the living God, but the Son of the Blessed. It is a wonderful term; it was all centralised there in that Man; He was the Son of the Blessed; and the Lord seems at once to connect it with Daniel vii., where the Ancient of Days is brought into view, for we immediately have the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, &c. I think in this gospel Christ takes the place of Victor over the serpent. We see Him at the end here with every power of evil under His feet. He is Conqueror of the whole power of the serpent; He went into every depth that He might bring it about.

J. T. He was the Son of the Blessed as well as being the Son of man here. He says, "I am," and then adds, "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power," &c.

P. R. M. Yes, that marks out His place. We shall see Him in heaven, administering power there—sitting on the right hand of power.

J. T. One feels the Lord would hardly let such an opportunity pass. He confesses His origin, confesses as to who He is. The Son of man is a title that refers to universal dominion and really belongs to the coming age; but I think that the thought is retained

in the gospel and the point of it is that Christ is related to man, taking up all that lay upon man and discharging it all. From the moment of His rejection He speaks of Himself by that term.

F. L. My thought was that He takes what was clearly indicated as to the Son of the Blessed, and then opens it out as to the counsel of God in the Son of man. He must needs draw all that in to the glory of His own Person, and He must be rejected in the full glory of what He was. So to speak, He could not leave the earth without being set forth according to the purpose of God, and so He claims it Himself and it is recorded here, and it is the point with Stephen in Acts vii.—such an One is now at the right hand of God.

P. R. M. I was thinking that, in regard to the sixth hour and the darkness over all the land, it seems as if here particularly it is not so much, as in Matthew, the vindictiveness of religious hatred that follows Him, but the position that Christ takes up under the judgment of God; that He undergoes wrath. The darkness figured the distance from God into which Christ went, He underwent the wrath of God as the victim. He took that place vicariously and positionally for us, though wholly apart from it in the

blessedness of His own Person. But He took that place. As the victim He underwent the wrath of God. He went into the distance into which the Christ-rejecter must go, outside the presence of the Holy God.

REM. Him who knew no sin made sin for us.

P. R. M. Made sin; ever holy in His own Person, He took that place positionally and vicariously for us, but it was an awful reality to Him, hence the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

QUES. You would say that these three hours were between Himself and God?

P. R. M. Yes. It was the point at which time touched eternity, because it was the closing up of everything for God, of all man's glory—the scarlet, the purple and the cedar wood—all went into the burning; they were all consumed there; Christ went down into the whole depths of the wrath of God.

QUES. Do you think the darkness is mentioned as signifying that there was something further than men could ever understand or enter into?

P. R. M. Yes, I do indeed. That was the part that He took. That is the thought we have to hold to-day; for everything is brought forward to weaken that truth.

Christ dying only as a martyr would add glory to man from that point of view. But we have to hold firmly and tenaciously in our souls that He died as a victim; He took the place of a victim under the wrath of God, and then He died.

J. T. Without actually dying there could be no atonement—the life must go, blood must be shed. The life taken up as man must go.

P. R. M. He laid down true human life, else no atonement, and yet a life wholly apart from sin.

There is one touch in this chapter which I think is deeply affecting, and that is, they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh, but He did not receive it. That is, He might have had that which would have benumbed or stupefied His senses as a man during that awful moment. But He would not take it; He would pass down into those depths in undulled vigour.

F. L. This is the aspect of the sin offering, in which the blood is brought into the sanctuary and the body is wholly consumed outside the camp.

P. R. M. Yes, He suffered without the gate.

F. L. I suppose everything, whether in the type or the direct circumstances, goes

to shew the intensity of what was wrapped up in those three hours when He took the place of the sin offering.

P. R. M. Yes, and yet the miracle was that as in that place He wholly consumed the judgment and exhausted it.

J. T. The position of Christ as accomplishing redemption is a most important view of the truth at the present time. You may recall that in Leviticus xvi., where the high priest goes into the sanctuary, he is clothed with linen. That is, in accomplishing the great work of atonement it is not a question of the garments of glory and beauty—what man is in the purpose of God—but what he is in essential holiness. None other could take up that work. He was alone in the sanctuary.

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P. R. M. In the beginning of chapter xvi. we come to a new point, the rising of the sun, at the end of verse 2. A new day has opened in which the power of Satan is annulled and is under the feet of Christ, and yet the marvel is that nobody believed it; it is met with unbelief almost on every hand.

F. L. Well, what characterises this new day, this rising of the sun? I suppose we

get the characteristic marks here in this gospel.

P. R. M. I think so. From verse 9 onward we get the complete dispossession from the scene of the whole Satanic power. We see Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils. The end of the gospel so wonderfully shews that Christ was the victor over the whole power of the serpent. In chapter i. you get man under the power of Satan intruding into the holy place; but the last chapter shews His complete annulling of Satan, and His reception as victorious into heaven. You could not get a more complete dispossession than in seven devils being cast out—a picture of Satanic wickedness. The issues here are most solemn; if Christ went into such depths, there can be nothing less than salvation or damnation for men. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved," while, as to the unbeliever, he shall be condemned.

A. A. T. I understand that where one goes on in the good of this there will be conflict and opposition, and I was wondering if you would connect this with the thought of spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies.

P. R. M. The power of Satan will be active right through to defeat the testimony if it can.

J. T. But we see at the end of the chapter how complete victory is given over it. The Lord is behind the whole testimony. That is our encouragement. On the one hand, we can see our own picture in the disciples being terrified and unbelieving; but on the other hand, we have everything to encourage if we have our eyes on the Victor received up.

F. L. What do you understand by preaching the gospel to all the creation?

P. R. M. Well, I suppose Satan had sullied the whole creation, and the testimony of the Victor must be carried into every spot in which Satan's power had operated and had defiled.

F. L. Well, does it take in the thought of the world to come?

P. R. M. I think the full answer will then be seen in the serpent being in the abyss, as he will afterwards be in the lake of fire.

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J. T. I suppose you observed the difference between the commission in Matthew and that given here.

P. R. M. It is very much wider here.

J. T. Yes, and in Matthew it is a question of teaching the nations, not the creation, but the nations.

P. R. M. I suppose it referred to all the

nations clustered around Israel in Matthew. It is more limited there than here.

J. T. And that they should be brought under the commandments of Christ.

P. R. M. It is the garden of God, as pictured in Ezekiel; all those nations spoken of as the garden of God. They cluster around Israel and derive all their light from Israel. God will bless them because they cluster around Israel. It is much wider here; it is all creation. All that has been sullied by the serpent will get the light of God.

W. H. F. In preaching the gospel would you not set that forth? Is it not rather limiting the gospel to apply it simply to man? It affects the whole scene.

P. R. M. Yes, the whole universe is affected by the death of Christ. The death of Christ does not simply affect this planet upon which it took place.

W. H. F. He tasted death for everything.

P. R. M. Yes, it has its bearings in regard to the whole universe.

W. H. F. But in preaching the gospel you necessarily present it for man to believe.

P. R. M. Yes, of course. But the gospel is much wider. God dealt with sin in its most heinous form; He dealt with it as sin

in the flesh—"God sending his own Son"—He became truly man—"and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." He dealt with it in its most heinous form, and on this planet, but the bearing of the death of Christ is universal and will bring light and blessing to the whole universe.

W. H. F. So that the whole scene will be affected by it.

P. R. M. The whole scene will be brought into blessing on the basis of the death of Christ. It is not that all beings require redemption, but they all require the blessing that flows from the death of Christ.

J. T. The preaching is addressed to those who have intelligence; that is, to man, as such. Man is the intelligent head of creation who is responsible. The preaching is in accord with the commission—they preached everywhere.

P. R. M. Yes, we have to face that extremely solemn verse: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

F. L. What is presented is presented to man for faith, but what is presented is a great deal more than what concerns man merely; it concerns the clearing of the whole universe of that which is offensive to God, everything in the way of lawlessness

and iniquity, and therefore the scope of the gospel should have that in view, although it is presented to man for faith.

J. T. Hebrews ii. shews the Lord having tasted death for everything; everything is not yet put under Him, but we see Him crowned with glory and honour. That is, as having accomplished redemption, He has gone above all, and everything will come under His influence and come into the benefit of redemption.

P. R. M. We could not think that God would leave one trace of the serpent's work in His universe.

H. G. Why is baptism connected with it?

P. R. M. Well, it is very important.

J. T. It is a very remarkable thing that according to this passage you require to be baptised to be saved.

H. G. Figuratively, is not baptism the passage from one world to another?

P. R. M. Yes, in God's eye you cut your links with that world which is under judgment, so that you may come in here on to the ground of resurrection, the world which Christ has brought into view. The whole creation will get blessing when the sons of God come into manifestation; every creature of God will get the benefit of it.

REM. Mr. Taylor, from what you were

saying, it would look as though baptism is the way of salvation.

J. T. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." It would indicate that the salvation that the Lord had in mind was a deliverance from the world, from the sphere dominated by evil.

P. R. M. And yet in His mercy He does not say he that believeth and is not baptised shall be condemned. He only puts it on the positive side, and not on the negative. But the issue is deeply solemn. And there is the maintenance of the thing. It is not simply an act done once and for ever as a mere sacrament, but it is the thing in its living power in the soul. There is no doubt about that.

QUES. How do you understand that verse in Peter, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us," &c. ?

P. R. M. Just the same thing. Baptism saves you. It cuts you off from the world of judgment and brings you into the light of the resurrection world, where Christ is dominant. It always involves a good conscience. You have no outlet for a good conscience in this world, but you have in the resurrection world. The conscience can demand as much as it likes there.

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Now, as to these five signs, five is the thought of weakness. Christ died on the principle of weakness, and yet it is in the very weakness, just as with David's smooth pebbles, that the whole power of the enemy is crushed. The five signs have a moral meaning—they must have—for our encouragement.

F. L. Will you open up these for us?

P. R. M. I do not know that I can. We can look at them together. There are five, and the first is: "In my name shall they cast out demons." That evidently is the power to overcome the present activity of Satan through his agents and emissaries.

F. L. Do you take these signs as continuous?

P. R. M. I think they do continue in their moral power. No doubt they were given primarily to accredit Christianity among men. But they continue morally. We need to see the continuance of them in their moral power in a time when the testimony publicly does not receive credit. It seems to me they form the stand-by of the believer. If he cannot expect to see them publicly carried out, still his confidence is in the One who holds this power and who will use it as He sees fit. If there be failure, it is on our side, not on His.

The second is: "They shall speak with new tongues." Now there we see the complete reversal of the confusion of Babel. We see the power of the Lord to absolutely triumph over the disaster that came in through man's pride. It is evidence of His ability to bring in complete victory over the power that Satan had gained over man in the pride in which he built Babel.

J. T. It is very precious that there should be new tongues. In the different denominations around us, in a sense, their tongues are unknown to one another; they do not understand one another's language. It would seem as if God had come in and shewn His displeasure of them by confounding their languages, whereas in the presence of the Spirit, for those who return to the recognition of the Spirit, you have liberty and new tongues, and they are intelligible. What we say to one another is intelligible. We understand one another's speech.

P. R. M. "They shall take up serpents." We may look at this as some special Satanic power in connection with and against the testimony. It is illustrated in Paul. The moment Paul landed in Melita a viper came out of the heat and fastened on his hand, and they looked to see him fall down dead.

They took it as an evidence of wickedness on his part. But they changed their minds when he shook it off and felt no harm. That is a very great comfort. You may have the most bitter and venomous attacks on the truth or its vessel, but the man of God shakes off the venomous beast into the fire and feels no harm. I think in this we see the way God supports what is of Himself.

J. T. And the serpent being a well-known figure of Satan himself, Satanic power, does it not indicate the great victory the Lord has given us possession of, in that we can take them up and handle them? The disciples, it says, took them up.

P. R. M. Yes; the next thing is, if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them. Now that obviously does not mean that if you drink it purposely it will not hurt you. Any one who does it purposely will have to suffer for it. This fourth victory He gives the saints has been a great comfort to me. There are many deadly things in this world, and I am very glad of this protective clause.

J. T. According to this you would assume that there was some intrinsic power, something that destroys the power of the deadly thing, an antidote for it. I mean, in the

spiritual constitution of the person who drinks it.

P. R. M. Yes.

W. H. F. In what way would they drink it?

P. R. M. Just think of the deadly things abroad to-day, and how, with the greatest care, one might unwittingly come under some poisonous breath that emanates from man's wicked mind. That is a very deadly thing. Well, then, the Lord's mercy and power is to maintain the saints in the face of these noxious, poisonous fumes that are emanating from hell to-day. That is where they come from. Otherwise, it seems to me, we should all be suffocated. I think the Lord affects it unconsciously for a Christian. As we go along through the pathway we pass under the danger of asphyxiation from unseen vapour and smoke from the pit, and perhaps, too, even quite unaware of it, but the Lord preserves us from it, otherwise, I think, we would simply be asphyxiated, for the smoke of the pit is coming up very thick to-day.

QUES. Is that part of the Lord's service as Priest?

P. R. M. I believe it is part of His service as administrating the testimony. You take it now: whatever has preserved any of us

from the unseen fumes of hell? I mean the hellish influences that are at work in the world. It is not because we are so good, or anything of that sort. I believe it is because the Lord is working, because He is caring for us. I think it is the Lord's own doing. He preserves us, it may be unconsciously, from these things.

F. L. What do you make of the last sign: "They shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover"?

P. R. M. Some people hold the idea of faith-curing. I think the Lord contemplates in these things rather that which is in the Christian, the power that is in us. Certainly there is plenty of sickness spiritually, and the question is, who has got the moral power for the touch?

F. L. You take this as having a moral and spiritual application to us?

P. R. M. I think we can only do that in the days of the brokenness of the testimony. I cannot see the public application of these things as in the inauguration of Christianity, still I thought we might see that the power is there in Christ if we can but avail ourselves of it spiritually. That is all I thought of it, because, as to the outward, it is gone.

J. T. And the power in the Christian is the power in Christ?

P. R. M. Yes. I do not think the power in Christ is lessened for a moment, but you feel the vessel is in confusion. These are the powers of the world to come.

J. T. And the powers of the world to come all lie in the Spirit.

F. L. They certainly do. And we must take the concluding verse in connection with that. That is, the Lord takes His place at the right hand of God, and the disciples go forth preaching everywhere, the Lord working with them, &c.

P. R. M. There is a beautiful touch in that last verse but one, when you compare it with Luke's gospel. In Luke's gospel, where He is viewed as the lowly man, it says He was carried up into heaven. It is not that here.

F. L. He is received up into heaven as the victor.

QUES. Does Psalm xxiv. suggest the spirit of it?

P. R. M. Yes. That views what will take place on earth, but in spirit we may take it up and say,

“The gates of heaven are opened wide.
At His name all the angels bow.”

I think we can see the way in which He is hailed as Victor as He enters heaven. He is received up.

J. T. It would give an idea of the welcome

there, the interest of all there in their welcoming Him.

F. L. And in Luke it is very beautiful to see the reluctance of the parting. He was parted from them. It was not eagerness for Him to go; it was the reluctance, as it were, in parting from them.

J. T. In John the allusion to the ascension suggests His power: "I ascend to my Father."

P. R. M. That it was inherent in Himself.

J. T. Yes, He could go up there.

F. L. And so the thought of the Spirit is connected with His going there in John.

P. R. M. In these verses it is the Lord. "After the Lord had spoken to them," it says, "they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." It is the magnitude of His place as Lord.

J. T. And especially seen in His guardianship of the testimony that He was with the preachers.

P. R. M. Yes. And I take it that holds good to-day.

J. T. I suppose we have to attribute the presence of the gospel in this country to that fact. The Lord has brought it here. He has seen to it that it has travelled the whole creation.

FOLLOWING.

SUBSTANCE OF REMARKS ON JOHN XXI. 20

BY B. T. F.

I HAVE thought to link this scripture in a few words with what has been before us: the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, His death and His place in resurrection—as shewing in some measure how these things may be entered into. It is good for us to meditate on these things—on the yearning desire of His heart indicating that He would not be alone. We have considered the dark path, the depths He had to descend to, so that distance between man and God might be completely and eternally removed for faith; but when we seek to enter on what resurrection involves I admit it is a difficult subject, and will be so to every exercised heart. It contemplates a complete break with natural things around, because of one supreme Object filling our heart and shaping our pathway—the Lord Jesus Christ in glory. We get in the disciple described here the picture of one who would follow the Lord Jesus Christ in resurrection, and,

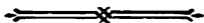
as indicated this afternoon, we shall find this cannot be accomplished without the Holy Spirit. The young man in Mark xiv. 51 followed the Lord only for a certain distance. It was an impossible journey for man in his natural state. Again, in that supreme moment when the Lord was about to undergo the cross, when the suffering and shame lay before Him, the agonies of Gethsemane, and all that the cross involved in His being forsaken of God, let us remember that those who were closest to Him also forsook Him and fled—He was left alone to face the enemy. Thus we see what man is unless there is a power outside to take possession of him and give strength for walk. When the Lord was with His own they knew they could revert to Him; a divine Person was there to shelter and to shield; but when He was delivered to the enemy they all forsook Him and fled. It would be the same to-day were it not that another divine Person has come down from the glory and is here present to sustain and encourage, to fill the poor, weak, failing heart with heavenly joy, so that we can be lifted above the oppositions, the trials and persecutions of this world.

In our scripture we have the characteristics of the soul that will remain by the grace of

God—without exalting man—until the Lord comes again. In the power of the Holy Ghost He will have followers. We have seen what we are naturally and that we must face. It may be said by some here—“We are not advanced in these spiritual truths and we find it hard to get on,” and so forth; but what was true of the follower of our blessed Lord then is possible for every one of us now. The scripture abundantly vindicates this assertion. Turning about, Peter “seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following”; Jesus fills the vision of the writer of this word, he has no desire to name himself, but he has one simple fact to emphasise, “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” You may not have an accurate knowledge of scripture—I say this for encouragement, I do not want to imply that it is not well to have an accurate knowledge of scripture, it is, it is intensely important; again, you may say you have not capacity—memory fails; however this may be, every believer is privileged to know consciously that he is loved by the Lord Jesus. No height of learning, no great memory or ability is required to grasp that the One who died for me loves me. This is the characteristic of the disciple who was to follow the Lord to the end.

Another thought is beautifully brought before us in the words, "which also leaned on his breast at supper." There is no self-assertion; he knew a place where there was found a response and a solace for every longing in his breast and he could recline there. So may each believer here. John could then refer to the Lord for an answer to an important question when it was needful he should have light. No great ability was needful for this, but simply the consciousness that he was loved by, and was in the confidence of, the Lord.

Here, then, are the characteristics of a follower until the Lord comes. The one who responded to His love got light when he wanted it, and so the simple believer close to the heart of the Lord may be in the good now of what is set forth in this scripture.



THE BASKET OF FIRSTFRUITS.

ADDRESS BY J. T.

(DEUT. I. 5-8; XXVI. 1-11.)

PERHAPS one might say that there are few books in the Bible less understood than the Book of Deuteronomy, and I think it is because the assembly is not understood, for I take it that Deuteronomy contains regulations for the assembly. You will notice in chapter i. that Moses speaks of a second law. He had given the first one in Exodus xx. The first law was largely intended to regulate the people in the wilderness. There were many regulations for the wilderness the force of which, of necessity, ceased after the wilderness journey was over. But what you find in the Book of Deuteronomy are instructions for the people which were to be permanent; laws which applied to them only as in the land.

Now it is to my mind of great importance that that thought should be laid hold of. You will notice that, after speaking of the law given in the land of Moab, the Spirit

proceeds to indicate the character of it: "The Lord our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them." That is, God took account of the people in the wilderness; He knew perfectly what the wilderness was. It was not a land flowing with milk and honey. The people had been there forty years, and in the kindness of His heart God suggested to them to move on; He says, you have been at the mount long enough. It is true that this had been said at Horeb, but the generation to which the first law was given never answered to it, so here it is set at the beginning of the second law, which is spoken to another generation. I allude to it just for a moment, for one is forced to the conclusion that the people of God are more content in the wilderness than in the

land, and, if not in the wilderness strictly, at any rate, in the plains of Moab.

Now there was no law for the plains of Moab; the second law alluded to here was given there, but it did not apply to the plains of Moab; it applied to the land of Canaan, and it is most touching that God, through Moses, should proceed to suggest to the people that they move on, opening up to them the entire extent of the promised land.

Now that is what the Spirit of God would seek to do for us. The resurrection and ascension of Christ secures for man at the present moment the entire extent of the land of promise, from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates, including the valleys and the hills, Lebanon and the sea-shore; a land flowing with milk and honey, a land watered with the rain from heaven, a land influenced by heaven itself—that land is opened up to the people of God at the present moment, and it is most touching that Jehovah, in opening up His second law, in giving the regulations for the land, should suggest to them to go in.

Well, I would suggest to all here that, inasmuch as the Lord Jesus Christ has taken up a place in resurrection as man, it entitles every man to the land of promise.

The time will come when God will discriminate; some of His people will remain upon the earth, while others will inhabit heaven. But the Lord Jesus Christ has gone into heaven as a risen man; He has taken up a place as man in resurrection, and the place He occupies is God's mind for man. There is nothing limited; the whole land, from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates, is opened up to man. It opens out a wonderful vista. Moses did not put his feet there, but he *saw* it. It is a wonderful thing to get a glimpse of the land of promise. All these things were spoken in the plains of Moab. Moses saw the land from Moab, but never put his feet there until he appeared with Christ on the mount of transfiguration. That was when Moses got into the land of Canaan.

Now, beloved friends, where are we? You know the plains of Moab is a most desirable place for a certain state of soul in Christians. The Israelite that inhabited the plains of Moab had the Spirit typically. Typically he had the Holy Ghost and was an intelligent believer, but he dwelt in the land in which there was no law, because Moab was not strictly the wilderness, and the regulations given in relation to the tabernacle did not extend beyond the brazen

serpent; and the second law, given subsequently, refers to Canaan. You will get no help from God, no specific directions from Him, as dwelling in the plains of Moab. People who dwell in the plains of Moab are Christians. They have title to Canaan, but they do not go there, and inasmuch as they have no regulations from God, they make regulations for themselves, they formulate codes of laws for themselves; these laws are especially fitted for them, but they are not God's laws. Now God begins His law by directing His people to move into Canaan, and He opens up the entire extent of the land of promise to them.

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Well, now, I was saying that Deuteronomy corresponds with the assembly in a sense. One could easily shew that from different passages. I refer to one particularly, chapter xv., in which Jehovah enjoins the people, all the males, to appear before Him three times in the year. Now I take it that when the Spirit of God specifies the males among His people He alludes to the saints viewed as formed in the intelligence of the Spirit, and hence they represent the whole. They were to appear three times in the year. I venture to connect it with the Lord's request in

regard to the supper. It may be inquired, Why three times? I believe that three is an adequate testimony, and in the threefold appearance of all the males of Israel in the presence of Jehovah you have an adequate testimony of their affections, affections formed by the Spirit of God, and they are not on the wane. If they only appeared once or twice one might conclude that their affections were declining; but inasmuch as they were to appear three times in the year it indicates how Jehovah would secure for Himself the affections of His people. As often as they responded there was a positive testimony to sustained affection.

Now I think that it is in that way the Lord maintains us. We do not come three times in the year only; we come on the first day in the week in answer to the request of our Lord. Every Christian who neglects the supper virtually confesses that he has got no affection for Christ. It is impossible for one who really has affection for Christ, and who rightly understands the supper, to neglect it. Therefore the supper was to be a continual law, so to say. It was to be permanent during the absence of Christ. It was to afford an opportunity for the saints to attest their affection for the Lord. But what I wish specially to call attention to is

that in the assembly there is a witness to resurrection.

I do not say, for the moment, that the assembly itself is that, although that is also true. But what I see in chapter xxvi. is that, as the Lord's people appear before God they do not appear in their own nakedness; they appear with that in evidence which is an obvious testimony to Christ in resurrection—the basket of firstfruits. That is what I had specially before my mind. I may fail in making it clear to you, but I should like to encourage you first of all in regard to the assembly. The resurrection of Christ realised, laid hold of in the soul, leads to the assembly, and once there you are under the law that is to regulate the assembly. Now, I would impress you with that, because we are living in a most lawless age; and I would point out again that the law that is to regulate you in your individual conduct is not the law that is to regulate you in the church. There are regulations for the church that have no reference to the wilderness, and there are regulations for the wilderness which have no reference to the assembly; and it is most important, if we are to walk together, and if we are to maintain the order that belongs to God and to God's house, that we should recognise that

there are a code of laws, so to speak, which regulate the assembly. Those laws are of a unique character; as I have already pointed out, they begin with directing the saints to go in, and that in itself suggests a great deal. They are of a unique character; in truth, beloved friends, it is the law of new creation. Now, who can tell anything about the law of new creation? Certainly none but those who are created anew. The apostle says, "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them," &c. Is that your rule? It is a rule that is altogether outside of the ken of man in the flesh. He may know something of the law given at Sinai, but the law of new creation is outside of him. The law that rules in God's world is altogether and absolutely outside of the knowledge of man in the flesh. "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them and upon the Israel of God."

Now that is what the assembly presents under the eye of God. It is a company of people here upon earth risen with Christ, outside the present order of things, to which the laws of the present world have no

application; it is ruled by the law of new creation. But then there is that which is for God in it, and it is because of that I delight in the Book of Deuteronomy. It is the family book. The priest and the Levite have little place there. The priest is recognised here in the chapter which I read, but when the man came in with his basket of firstfruits he was the most conspicuous person, not that he was conspicuous personally, but the basket of firstfruits was conspicuous. You may ask where he got it. We must not be too abstract in dealing with divine things. Divine things are very practical things, and if that man came in with his basket of firstfruits they cost him something; they were placed down by the altar; they were a sacrifice. You remember David positively declined to do anything or offer anything to God that he did not pay for, and the man who can come up on the first day of the week with a basket of firstfruits brings what has cost him something; they have cost him a good deal of self-denial and a good deal of sacrifice. They are the fruit of the Holy Spirit in his affections. They are the fruit of the Holy Spirit forming a man after Christ, so that, instead of the Syrian, instead of a poor, dying, perishing Syrian, you have a man living; for, re-

member, the basket is the man. The man himself is the basket. The firstfruits are in the man; they are not separated from the man, they are in him. The man is formed after Christ by the power of the Spirit of God. That man appears in the presence of God in all the character of Christ risen from the dead. It is the firstfruits. He got them out of the land; he came up to Jehovah with something he had got in the land. As risen with Christ (we are risen by faith of the working of God) the Holy Spirit has had His way with him, and the Syrian is not there. The man himself is the basket; the fruit is in the basket, and he appears in the presence of God. But he does not forget what his father was—a Syrian ready to perish. But *he* is not ready to perish. Viewed as risen with Christ we are not ready to perish; we are living; we are made to live by the power of the Spirit, and we appear before God in all that Christ is. It is not simply Christ objectively. I repeat that the basket was full of firstfruits, and that the basket is the man, it is the affections of the man. The firstfruits are in the man. We appear before God as formed by the Spirit, so that what God sees is Christ. He does not see the Syrian; He sees Christ. The assembly is not com-

posed of Syrians ready to perish. It is composed of men risen with Christ, and those men are not only risen with Christ as an objective truth, they are also quickened subjectively. (See Col. ii.)

The basket is placed down there at the altar of God by the priest, and the man worships. And it goes on to say (ver. 10): "And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me." The man is in the land, and he recognises that God has brought him there and given it to him, and he says: "I have brought the firstfruits," brought them to God. It is a great thing for God to find in us the gracious fruit of the Spirit formed in our affections, so that morally Christ appears and not the Syrian.

And it says: "And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God." Now it seems to me that all these things are found to-day in the assembly.

And then it says: "And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you." There is the side of things that God indicates for His people. God receives His portion from us, and there

is joy, there is abundance, and there is joy not only for ourselves, but also for the Levite and the stranger. The Lord's servant is not neglected, neither is the stranger.

Such, beloved friends, is the order of things that God has inaugurated here upon the earth in connection with Christ risen from the dead. His beloved people are formed by the Spirit, and thus all those things come to pass in the assembly.



THE MYSTERY OF PIETY.

ADDRESS BY F. L.

(I TIM. III. 14 TO END.)

It is with more than ordinary diffidence that I take a few minutes of the time; but in the course of what has been said to-night these verses have been very forcibly brought home to my own mind: therefore I venture to call your attention to them.

I think they come in line with what we have been having. In the New Testament, I daresay, all of us have noticed that we have not many laws given to us, although our brother has called attention to the fact that this does not by any means imply that we are without rule or order, or are lawless. On the contrary, everything is set in the most perfect and absolute divine order, and the place in which we find ourselves to-day, if it means anything at all, means that we follow that order, set a great price upon it, and count it worth so much that we are willing to come apart from all that obtains in Christendom for the sake of finding our-

selves under the sway of that reasonable and blessed rule which we find in the assembly.

Here is a case in which we are told what we ought to do to-day; that is, we are instructed as to how we ought to behave ourselves in the house of God, which is the assembly of the living God. And then it continues that it is the pillar and the ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of piety.

Now, beloved brethren, it is not easy to find things, at any rate amongst men, that are without controversy. The whole atmosphere of Christendom reeks with controversy, but our attention is called here by the apostle to that which is without controversy and which he tells us is GREAT. Now the mind of man naturally is impressed by what is great. But I venture to suggest for us that we are but very little impressed with the greatness, the enormous importance of this mystery which is without controversy.

Mystery for us implies that which is hidden from the uninitiated, the uneducated, the careless, from those who are of the course of this world, from those who are in and of its religious element; but mystery is that which invites us to come to the other side of that veil, which excludes

man according to the flesh, and to enter deeply into the precious reality of what lies on the other side of the veil.

And so it is a direct invitation to us—“Great is the mystery of piety”—and if we respond to that invitation and come to the other side, what do we find is wrapped up for our appreciation, for our benefit and blessing, in the mystery of piety?

The first thing that comes before us is—God manifest in the flesh. Here is something that has come in wholly outside of what is of man, otherwise it would have no meaning and the element about it would not be great. But it is brought to us in this way in order that it may produce movement in our souls. It is set before us as a part of the divine system of things which has come in consequent on Christ having come into the world and inaugurated that order which has been much before us to-day, and to which our attention has been called in connection with “the land,” that order of things where everything is of God. And so God was manifest in the flesh, He was justified in spirit. We find the blessed Lord laying down His life—He was denied justification by man. Man would not admit of justification for Him in the flesh, but He is justified in spirit. In this wondrous mystery of piety

we do not get expressly named redemption or the death of Christ itself, nor do we get expressly named the resurrection, yet all these are understood as embraced, so that coming into the light of the mystery there is deep and precious value for us in the fact that He was justified in spirit. What man denied Him the Spirit gives Him, while in being withdrawn from the realm of man, there is set up, in connection with the Holy Spirit's realm, a sphere of things where everything speaks of the justification of the One who came in flesh in order to make good everything which was purposed in Himself, and who, by passing into death, introduces us into His own realm of things.

Thus we are brought into contact with it, and if we rightly understand it, it means that there is a company which prizes what is established here in the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God brings us into the sphere of things where everything justifies, where everything acknowledges and everything maintains what was set forth in the blessed Lord, what was exemplified in Him, and as concerning which He could not and did not get justification from man in the flesh. He is justified in spirit.

Then we get another word—He was seen of angels. What is brought about in con-

nection with Christ coming and what He has worked out is of the profoundest interest to angels. We might have thought that when they came to announce the glad tidings of good pleasure in *men* they might well have coveted that good pleasure might have been expressed in *angels* rather than in men. These were things which the angels desired to look into, and whatever may be true as concerning man in the flesh, or of us in our lassitude and indifference, one thing remains true, which is that we are connected with an order of things which Christ has brought to pass of the deepest and most unchanging interest to the inhabitants of heaven—seen of angels.

Then we get, "preached unto the Gentiles." The barriers are broken down. This is a part of the mystery of godliness. The favoured locality, as to the spiritual value of which much has been brought before us this evening, is the favoured spot no longer. It is no longer a cultivated spot on this earth. The barrier was broken down in the One who had come God manifest in the flesh. He was preached unto the Gentiles. This was a part of the mystery of piety which most profoundly affects us, for it is thus we come in in the breaking down of the wall of partition. Then follows—

“believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

I do not dwell on the details, but just simply lead our thoughts along the same line which we have already had. I take it that the mystery of piety includes all that which God has introduced by Christ, that which has been justified and maintained in the power and energy of the Holy Spirit. It carries right through all that with which we now are in touch, and it includes in its scope the whole sphere of light and glory.

Thus we cannot consider the mystery of piety apart from considering the body of Christ in relation to it, and as it begins with God manifest in the flesh, so does it follow through its course until it takes us into the place where He has gone—received up into glory.

The whole line of things which we get here is said in connection with behaviour in “the house of God, which is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” However much we may speak of failure, or be conscious of breakdown, that which is thus definitely brought into view from the divine side never fails and never breaks down, while the assembly is that which (dwelling of the Spirit as it is) supports and in a practical, living way stands

back of the truth. The assembly is still that which is occupying here upon earth the attention of the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, and we cannot conceive of a higher privilege than that in any measure our minds and hearts have been brought into accord with the wondrous elements that are contained in this, which without controversy is great, "the mystery of piety."



THE FATHER'S HOUSE.

JOHN XIV. 1-14 ;

1 KINGS VI. 5-6, 31 TO END ;

KINGS VII. 1-8.

J. T. I had in mind to suggest 1 Kings as foreshadowing the greatness and grandeur of the millennial state of things ; but I felt that if we were occupied exclusively with that we should miss that which is more immediately connected with ourselves ; that is to say, with the saints of the present moment ; and therefore I felt it was but right that we should make the connection with the Gospel of John. The way in which the Father's house is spoken of there seems to connect it with the saints viewed in relation to God, either as sons or as children. The point in John is the family.

R. S. S. The way the house is spoken of in the New Testament ?

J. T. Yes ; the Spirit of God speaks of the house in that connection. As God's house it is a place of interest to His family. In chapter viii. we get the fact that the Son abides in the house for ever ; and in chapter xiv. the Father's house is mentioned, and

there was to be a place in it for the disciples. So that I think the house, as seen in the Gospel of John, is the place for the saints viewed as the family of God, and as such it is foreshadowed in 1 Kings. Therefore you have the chambers, and the veil is not presented in the description of the house. The oracle is separated from the holy place by doors which can be thrown open—folding doors, indeed.

R. S. S. What is indicated by the fact that they were folding?

J. T. I suppose the idea is that God can throw all into one, so that the whole scene can be in touch with God.

R. S. S. Did these folding doors take the place of the veil?

J. T. There was a veil, according to the account given in Chronicles, but it is not spoken of in the description given here; and inasmuch as other houses are presented in 1 Kings, to shew the greatness and grandeur of Solomon's position, one would conclude that it is the heavenly system of things rather than the earthly that is in view; and then you have the whole scene—heavenly and earthly—thrown together, and God's dwelling-place the centre of all. But then there are other houses, such as the house of the forest of Lebanon, Solomon's house,

and the house built for Pharaoh's daughter, all of which would shew the greatness of Christ and the different places of abode that He will have.

P. R. M. Would you tell us what is, in your mind, the difference between Chronicles and Kings?

J. T. I think Chronicles deals with the house of David, and Christ reigning on David's throne. The veil and the altar are more prominent there than in Kings; so that you would conclude it is more a question of approach where there is distance; whereas in Kings I think you have the sphere of the love of God and the peculiar places that the Lord Jesus will have personally—places that He reserves (as it were) for Himself—such as His own house. We do not get the interior of it, nor do we get the description of the interior of the house built for Pharaoh's daughter, nor of the other houses; simply the fact that they existed as built by Solomon is stated.

R. S. S. Would that indicate that they were more private in character?

J. T. Yes; and it would set forth the greatness of Christ that He has those houses. What is so precious to my mind is that the immediate abode of God, the inner shrine, could be immediately connected

with the outer, so that all becomes pervaded by what God is.

QUES. Do you understand that the holy place was divided from the most holy both with doors and with veil?

J. T. Evidently; but the Spirit has a different thought in Kings from what He has in Chronicles, as we have been saying. In Kings there is a more direct bearing upon ourselves, because it shews the house of God as having abiding places, whereas you do not get these in Chronicles; you get other thoughts in Chronicles. The chambers are doubtless what the Lord alludes to in John xiv.

J. P. In regard to the expression "many abodes," I was thinking just now of the language of the apostle in Ephesians iii.: "Of whom every family in the heavens and the earth is named."

QUES. What would you say was the distinction between the Father's house and the house of God?

J. T. The house of God is spoken of in Luke, and it is connected with the gospel. In the epistles it is brought in more largely in connection with divine order. In Luke the house is seen as a place of privilege; in chapter xiv. God would have it filled, and in chapter xv. you get something of what goes

on inside ; but you do not get the family exactly. Whereas in the epistles the house is connected with divine order, that which is according to God. But in John it is the place for those who are in family relationship with God. In chapter i. we get, "As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God." You feel that God's house is the place for the children.

F. L. The Lord's first words in resurrection were, "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father."

J. T. It is a question of relationship. It is not a question in John of meeting man's need, nor of man approaching God. It is a question more of man being in family relationship with God. Therefore it presents what is, in a sense, the greatest thing for us.

R. S. S. Would you make clear to us what is in your mind in regard to the Father's house? There are two thoughts in my mind in connection with the Father's house: one is that it is a place of intimacy and retirement and nearness to God; the other is that it includes the whole universe and every family in heaven and earth.

J. T. Yes. No doubt the temple of Solomon taken in its largest aspect, including the court, gives us some idea of the scene

that will be influenced by God and in which (in a sense) He dwells; but you cannot fail to see that the holy place and the holiest of all suggest greater nearness, and there only the chambers were: they were apparently connected with the holy place and the holiest of all.

R. S. S. These chambers would correspond with the abodes. (John xiv.)

J. T. And then all could be thrown together. The idea presented is of God being in touch with the whole scene—distance gone—rather than man approaching Him.

R. S. S. Wherein do the tabernacle and the temple differ in regard to what you are speaking of now?

J. T. The tabernacle was connected with the wilderness only, and was moveable. It suggested also rather that God was hidden. What we see in the tabernacle is the way in which God would be approached, so that you get both the brazen altar and the golden altar and the mercy-seat. All these things have reference, on the one hand, to the means by which God puts Himself in relation to man and the whole universe in *righteousness*; and, on the other, to the mode of man's approach to Him. But when you come to the temple you have a fixed

abode, a settled dwelling-place for ever. The tabernacle did not suggest a place of affection: God, in the infinite majesty of His holy nature, was, in type, entering into relationship with a redeemed world. But the house, as seen in 1 Kings, was a settled dwelling-place—a place of affection.

W. H. F. The temple is in the land.

H. A. S. Could you say anything about the Father's house in the present day?

J. T. I would not say that the Father's house is a present thing exactly. In character it is; but I think that in the light in which John xiv. presents it it is future.

P. R. M. It is not yet brought into evidence, but I think we have had the enjoyment of it to-day. In the light of Ephesians it has reference to the great scheme of blessing which God will inaugurate in a future day.

J. T. If we are enabled to see the peculiar place which we shall have in that day as the family of God, we may perhaps review the outward surroundings of the abode of God. And these outward surroundings, I think, are all brought in in Kings to enhance our apprehension of the glory of Christ as in connection with the millennial order of things. He has got an abode among the Gentiles. He has an abode of His own in Jerusalem,

and then He has got a special place for the church viewed as His bride. The house of the forest of Lebanon is the place that He will have among the Gentiles. I think it does us good to have a look into the future in that way.

H. P. What is the difference between this and what we get in the end of Ezekiel?

J. T. Ezekiel presents the house as a source of blessing: the river flows out from beneath the altar. The great point in Ezekiel is *life*. But Kings presents to us the grandeur of the coming age in its heavenly and earthly aspects; and we are entitled to introduce ourselves into it, inasmuch as the Father's house is there; but then we have also an abode for the church viewed as the bride of Christ. But the Spirit of God brings before us the interior of the dwelling-place of the Father.

QUES. Have you any thought with regard to the cherubim?

J. T. I think the idea is that they protect the ark. One is struck with the number of the cherubim; they not only appear inside as protecting the ark, but they are in the doors and they are all around the walls of the house.

R. S. S. What do they set forth? The government of God?

J. T. That is a great thing to learn in the house. Everywhere you look there is an indication of God's governmental authority.

QUES. Would you say that there is that thought connected with the Father's house?

J. T. I think the idea of rule must ever be found where God dwells. I have no doubt that the cherubim ever refer to the rule of God.

REM. There should be the sense of sonship, but also that of rule.

J. T. Yes; as knowing God, we should never think of eliminating His rule from His dwelling-place. God's will is supreme rule, though there are no opposing elements in the heavens. Everything is regulated by the will of God, and there is full response to it.

P. R. M. There are the commandments: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

REM. Those who form the house of God are great gainers by knowing these things.

J. T. Everything, the palm trees, &c., has its own meaning. I suppose the palm means shelter. The flowers are not fully in bloom, but they are there.

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QUES. Would you say that our capacity for present enjoyment depends on what you get in John xiii. ?

J. T. I think that in order to enjoy the home you have to be formed after the parents.

P. R. M. Certainly. Do you refer that to John xiii. ?

J. T. Yes, because the saints were to be formed after what was set forth in Christ.

P. R. M. I suppose one great thought connected with it is that there is intimacy there—the Lord Jesus bringing the saints into intimacy for the enjoyment of what is within ; so that intimacy would be connected with what He brings them into.

J. T. I have no doubt that a child is properly formed by the love of its parents, and then it is set in relation to the other children of the house. And all that is good is formed by the parent. The house is thrown open to the children. John xiv. is for the family. In Luke the house is connected with men ; they are to be brought into the house, not simply as God's sons, but as men.

R. S. S. So that Luke presents one of the two aspects that I was speaking of a little while ago.

QUES. Are all in the Father's house in the good of sonship ?

J. T. I think so ; they are all sons ; if not, they will not remain in it. (Compare John viii. 35.)

C. M. I wonder how you connect sonship with the different families ?

J. T. I believe that all in the future are set in relation to God in sonship—in principle, at least.

P. R. M. All are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. (Luke xx. 36.)

J. T. I think that Ephesians speaks of sonship as having reference to the church; there you get the peculiar place and privilege of the church—of the saints that form the church.

P. R. M. “I go to prepare a place for you.” That is a distinct thought, is it not ?

J. T. As those who share the rejection of Christ, we shall have a special place in the house.

REM. It is the church He came to redeem. That is His only interest on earth.

J. T. He came to do more than that. He was the minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made to the fathers.

QUES. But is not the church His only interest on earth now ?

J. T. Yes, at the present moment. He came to confirm the promises made to the fathers, but that is in abeyance for the moment. Some of us lately have been dwelling on Genesis xlvi. Jacob is there seen at Beersheba, going down to Joseph.

God appeared to him as the God of his father ; not as the God of Abraham, but as the God of his father Isaac. God assured him that, although the promises were to be in abeyance for the moment, they were all secured in Christ risen.

R. S. S. So that Abraham is not in view. Only Isaac, who sets forth Christ in resurrection.

J. T. But when God speaks to Moses in the wilderness, He says, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob"; and then He says, "My name is Jehovah"—that was the sign that now He was undertaking to fulfil the promises ; therefore He goes back to Abraham, and tells the new name which indicated His faithfulness. Christ came to effectuate all the promises made to the fathers, but on the ground of His rejection the promises are in abeyance ; and the church is brought out.

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C. H. B. Would you expect to see the palm trees and the flowers now ?

J. T. I think so. All these things are found here at the present time in the house. The cherubim certainly are found always where God dwells.

QUES. What is the fatness of God's house ?

P. R. M. It has to be tasted to be known.

J. T. In the psalms we can see it was David who apprehended the blessedness of the house of God. He had a wonderful appreciation of it as a place of blessing.

J. T. You have to get the grouping of things in Kings. In order to see what the Spirit has in view, you have to see the whole range of things together, and I think that the future heavenly and earthly glories of Christ risen are foreshadowed in the description given in 1 Kings; that is, all these things will be seen together. The effect upon ourselves of seeing them would be to divert us from the present course of things in this world.

F. L. I think that David personally helps us a little to understand how he felt in regard to the house of God. That is, in his day there was an intense appreciation of it, and there was the preparation of the material; and then, if we turn to the psalms, we find that in heart and spirit he was in the full enjoyment of the house; he was in it, although the house itself was not actually built.

J. T. Yes, the psalms help us greatly in the apprehension of the house, for they shew that David had a great desire to have a house for the Lord, and then he had a

great appreciation of it as a place for *himself as well*.

QUES. Does the house give you the idea of a dwelling?

J. T. The great central feature of the universe is God's dwelling-place. But then there are the surrounding houses; they are secondary, we may say, in a sense, but they enhance the house of God and they enhance the glory of Christ.

QUES. When the eternal state is in view in the Revelation, how is it that it is the tabernacle that is spoken of?

J. T. I have thought that the tabernacle of God there refers to the fact that God shall have ultimately secured the thought He set forth in the wilderness—it is now permanently with men. But I think that 1 Kings presents to us the importance of the Father's house, and then the surrounding scenes of grandeur and glory that the Lord Jesus has in these other places; He will not be limited in that day. His place may be very limited among His people at the present time, but in that day things will not be limited.

F. L. I rather think that in the Revelation more is made of the glorious nature of the *fact* that the habitation with men is finally reached than of the glory of the house. It

would seem that the delight of God was with men before the earth was formed, and then, when the eternal state is brought into view, it is the greatness of the fact that He dwells *with them*. The idea of the house would suggest the glory of the house.

J. T. Yes. The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us. That tabernacle has disappeared from view, but in future the tabernacle of God is with men.

H. P. The distinction between the houses remains in the eternal state.

J. T. I think not. I think they refer to the millennial state of things. They appear as enhancing the glory of Christ—shewing, in one respect, what He shall have as having been rejected here.

REM. In the eternal state there is nothing to interfere.

J. T. I think that what comes out in Kings is the vastness of the scheme. Solomon really sets forth Christ in resurrection, and what is evolved out of that is a scene of vastness and grandeur. *Building* was a great feature of Solomon's reign. (See 1 Kings ix. 15-19.) Divine building is on the ground of resurrection.

F. L. The opening flowers, etc., speak of resurrection. (Compare Aaron's rod that budded.)

P. R. M. The thought of the porch seems to be a place of judgment: Solomon's throne of judgment was there. In John x. the Lord walked in Solomon's porch. The summer had not come with the opening of the flowers, He walked in Solomon's porch as coming in judgment and discrimination. The opening flowers were not on the walls, nor the palm trees. But is it not remarkable that the house which He built for His bride was after the pattern of the porch where the throne of judgment was? Does it not shew that the public place the bride will have will be unchallengeable?

J. T. As answering to the place of judgment?

P. R. M. Yes. Christ was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. I thought that the place of the bride will be unchallengeable, because it will be in accordance with the place of judgment.

J. T. Yes, I think that in another sense the saints are in accord with Christ. The throne was not in the house of the daughter of Pharaoh, but her house was in accord with the place where the throne was. Therefore you will expect that the saints will be in accord with the judgment rendered by the throne.

R. S. S. Would it not also be connected with the thought that administration will be connected with the heavenly city?

P. R. M. Yes, and that will be the bride.

J. T. Does it not say that the saints shall judge angels? Saints ought to be able to settle things amongst themselves. There is nothing indicates weakness among the saints more than the inability to adjust local differences. When you think of the place that we shall occupy in this scene of grandeur and glory as formed by the Spirit, you feel how immense the discrepancy is between this and a company of saints now who are unable to adjust local differences.

P. R. M. All these little things are the education for them.

J. T. The very things that arise among us afford us an opportunity to judge according to God.

P. R. M. Not according to business capacity.

J. T. To act for God according to God, and I have no doubt that the cherubim in the house speak of this. Saints should judge of things and adjust things in a divine way.

P. R. M. I think it would be of great profit to us to see that the truth of the dwelling-place of the bride was dependent

upon the knowledge of the porch as the place of judgment. It is no good talking about the privileges of the bride if we have not learnt the practical side of administration: first in self-judgment, and then the ability to administrate divinely—laying aside mere human ability, and bringing in God.

J. T. In connection with what we have passed through lately, it would seem that a great many saints were unable to judge as to a simple matter in the house of God. If we were formed after Christ, we should have no difficulty in distinguishing between right and wrong.

J. P. That is Isaiah vii. The Lord lived on butter and honey, so that He might know how to refuse the evil and choose the good. And further down in the chapter, those left in the land lived on butter and honey; they are formed after Christ, and so they have ability to refuse the evil and choose the good.

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H. P. How about the expression, "I go to prepare a place for you"?

P. R. M. The preparation of that place is inaugurated by His returning to the Father as Man.

J. T. And it was to be "for you"—for those who had shared His afflictions here.

F. L. I suppose, looked at from a different standpoint, it is "whither the forerunner is for us entered in."

J. T. It is the same thing in principle, because if there is a *Forerunner* there are *after*-runners.

R. S. S. Is there not then the other thought, in regard to our preparation for that place? Would you not think that chapter xiii. suggested something as to that?

P. R. M. Yes, that must precede it.

R. S. S. That is very important and practical—that *we* should be prepared for the place.

J. T. He really left a family here of the kind that would be admitted there. He was forming the disciples after Himself, after the pattern of divine love.

R. S. S. In connection with the new commandment?

J. T. Normally the children in a family are formed by the affections of the parents, and are set in relation to each other. I think the Lord may be taken as the One in whom the love is manifested in chapter xiii., and the disciples were to be formed after that, so as to be suitable to the abode of the Father.

F. L. Forming a new generation for the house.

J. P. But it all had its spring in the Father's love; He had loved them as the Father had loved Him, and now they were to love each other as He had loved them.

F. L. I suppose the wood is significant here—the olive, fir tree, cedar, &c.

J. T. I should be glad if you would give us some light about it.

F. L. I thought that the cedar suggested glory, the olive suggests the Spirit, the fir tree suggests perpetuity.

R. S. S. The Spirit pervades what was there. Would the beginning of John xiii. suggest anything in connection with the Father's house? "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

P. R. M. It was the preparation for it by the removal of what was unsuitable, so that we might enter on that scene according to God.

R. S. S. That is a practical thing now, is it not?

P. R. M. To which we are all contributory.

R. S. S. The Lord washed the disciples' feet, and we ought to give the same service one to another. Christ does the feet-washing, not immediately, but mediately.

J. T. He does it as knowing that He was departing out of the world to the Father.

F. L. I suppose the whole thought of part with Him is passing into another order of things where He has gone to the Father. He does not so much concern Himself with things down here.

P. R. M. I take it it is all in view of intimacy.

R. S. S. I wish you would enlarge your thought of intimacy.

P. R. M. The standard for many a Christian is that he has a good conscience—nothing between him and the Lord. But the standard of Christianity is not a clean book; you do not keep a debtor and creditor account; that is not Christianity, but Judaism. The thought of John xiii. is that we might walk in intimacy with the Lord—intimacy in the midst of a scene of confusion.

R. S. S. That is a most blessed thought in connection with the Father's house.

P. R. M. Peter got his conscience met after the resurrection, but he was not free with the Lord. We must go to the last chapter to find out how the Lord brings Peter into intimacy with Himself. That was a further step.

R. S. S. The first took place on the resurrection day, when the Lord arose, and the other came in later.

P. R. M. That is restoration of heart, with

the object of intimacy with the Lord: not simply having nothing between Him and us, but that we should be in intimacy in the Father's house and have part with Him.

REM. "He restoreth my soul." It is an abiding restoration, not a thing that is here and there; you are kept in that condition continually.

QUES. What was the end He had in view in introducing it here?

J. T. I suppose it would be to confirm and encourage the disciples in view of their place in connection with the testimony during His absence.

R. S. S. Would it not be to prepare us for that place?

J. T. I think in this part of the Gospel of John He has the position before Him that they should have in connection with the testimony when He was absent.

R. S. S. I suppose He had in view what we get in chapter xx.—association.

J. T. I think the Lord here is really preparing them for the place of witness during His absence—that their hearts should not be troubled—and then He goes on to speak of going to prepare a place for them, and would come again for them. All this would be a stay to their hearts, in the place of testimony, while He was away. I think

every man standing for Christ should maintain in his soul the place that he has in Christ's heart up there. He says, "Believe in *me*," and then He goes on to say what He would do for them.

REM. So there is enough encouragement for us as long as we are here in this scene: All this (the Father's house, &c.) is future, yet, by the power of the Spirit, we touch it now.



“THE TREE OF LIFE.”

READ LUKE XXII. 41-46 ;

LUKE XXIII. 12, 18, 19, 26-47 ;

LUKE XXIV. 25 TO END.

R. S. S. At the beginning of the meetings you said you thought the order in which we find the gospels in our Bibles was divinely overruled. What do you see in the order which leads you to say that ?

P. R. M. We should be slow to touch Luke's gospel except as we see the basis of atonement laid as in Matthew and Mark. In Luke we get Christ presented in His death, specially as *a martyr* at the hands of man, but we cannot, however, regard or touch this side apart from the foundation of atonement as in the previous gospels. Men to-day bring into prominence the truth of Christ as a martyr, adding to that the thought of Him as a great reformer ; but they ignore the necessarily underlying truth of atonement.

R. S. S. In regard to John, why should his gospel come last ?

P. R. M. I thought that there we get pointed out the church position in its moral

character and influence. We need to have the basis laid in our souls before we can be carried on to that ground.

J. T. John's gospel comes in later than Luke's. I suppose Luke has in view the support of Paul's gospel—when the church was in order—whereas John writes when all has broken down outwardly to shew that everything is secured in the Person of Christ.

P. R. M. And he brings in the moral character of things which will abide when all that is outward fails.

J. T. Luke shews divine grace acting among men in grace.

P. R. M. The Spirit does not set aside the man who writes, as we saw in the case of John Mark ; Luke, who was "the beloved physician," shews the apprehension he had of the Great Physician, the only One who could not only diagnose the condition of men, but could Himself become the source of life that men might live by Him.

J. T. You get that beautifully confirmed in chapter iv. We see there His untiring care for men as the Great Physician ; when the sun was setting there was the utmost activity in relieving the suffering that was brought to Him. It was as fully in exercise at the sun-setting as in the morning.

P. R. M. The presentation of Christ in Luke is as the tree of life. He was here as the green tree, in which there was everything eternally fresh and verdant for God. It was cut off here by man, but transplanted to its own soil to yield there its fruits in the richest abundance for healing and sustenance. The tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God yields its fruit anticipatively at the present moment for the healing of the nations. That is my apprehension of the nature of Luke's gospel.

R. S. S. What is meant by the *dry*?

P. R. M. I suppose Jerusalem—all that should have stood for God on earth; but it had become lifeless and only fitted for the judgment of God.

J. T. The Lord was there in all the vigour of life before God, and if these things were happening to Him, what could be done in the dry tree where there was nothing for God?

P. R. M. But in Him there was one spot here on earth in which everything was maintained in perennial freshness.

J. T. His own word shews the untiringness of His patience and His compassion for man. “Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves.”

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R. S. S. Why did you read first that portion in chapter xxii. which refers to the agony in the garden ?

P. R. M. Because His sufferings seem to come out more fully in Luke than in any other gospel. His agonies are detailed here as nowhere else. His sufferings took their character from the divine sensibilities proper to His Person. He had the inherent knowledge of good and evil, according to God, and His anguish was marked by all that He was as a divine Person come into manhood.

B. Does the crying in Hebrews v. : "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him out of death, and was heard for his piety," refer to this time ?

J. T. I suppose so.

P. R. M. And even in His extreme agony we find how the angels which had heralded His birth into this world are there attendant on Him ; all heaven was engaged with the divine Sufferer.

J. T. In John He could have had twelve legions of them had He asked. Here it is the human side, and angels support Him.

F. L. It comes out very signally in connection with the disciples, that flesh and

blood is no good in the hour of sorrow any more than in the glory of the mount of transfiguration. It was not equal to either the suffering or the glory! Only by the Spirit can we touch either.

P. R. M. Then we see the misguided zeal of Peter in cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant, but the Great Physician steps in and heals him. The only record we get of it is in this gospel. Though He was in the path of death, His healing power could become life to man.

F. L. Luke's gospel is like the word we get in Titus: "The grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men." Luke writes very much in the support of Paul's doctrine; he was Paul's companion in his travels:

P. R. M. It is remarkable in the Acts how the narrative passes from "*they*" to "*we*," as it does constantly toward the close; that is Luke unconsciously slipping into the narrative. It is worth noting as a touch of divine grace: He hides Himself behind the apostle. Paul gives the letterpress—the text—and Luke gives the illustrations.

J. T. That is, he supports the text by the illustrations. In regard to the servant of the high priest, it only verifies what we have been saying: there is no limitation, it is Christ in His service to man as such.

H. G. What do you think would be the signification of cutting off the man's ear?

J. T. It was the last thing he should have done. It was the only means he would have for hearing the message which was to go out from Jerusalem.

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P. R. M. In the next chapter (ver. 12) we get a case of healing according to man. This is the principle that is rife to-day.

J. T. You mean the healing between Pilate and Herod.

P. R. M. The human physicians are at work: all differences are sunk in enmity against the Christ. Any amalgamations can be formed on the common basis of enmity against the testimony.

R. S. S. It is very striking. "The same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves."

F. L. The power of evil was intensely active at this time: Satan had entered into the heart of Judas Iscariot, and the Lord had said to Peter: "Satan hath desired to have you." I suppose Peter was the central point, as having the keys of the kingdom. The power of Satan was behind this amalgamation of the world powers.

J. T. We often see things analogous to

this in the present testimony of Christ and in those who profess to stand for it. Rival elements become combined, and the only thing that holds them together is antagonism to what is of God.

P. R. M. Then the type of Antichrist comes in in Barabbas—the "son of the father," awful parody of the truth as to Christ as Son of the Father. Sedition we get in Adam, and murder in Cain, but in this man we get the summing up of both. Barabbas lies bound, just as Satan will lie bound during the thousand years of Christ's reign. Man has deliberately given in his vote for the man of sin, and that vote has never been reversed. I find no record in history of that vote having been reversed.

J. T. And it is all the more terrible as the choice was between Christ and him. It is difficult to conceive that Christendom, having had such an opportunity of knowing about Christ, should deliberately choose such a character in preference to Christ.

P. R. M. But man *will* choose such a character. He will be what men think a magnificent being, a man who will win the loyalty and admiration of men's hearts; they will vote for him, his election will be a public thing. Antichrist *is* elected; he only awaits the time to step forward.

F. L. Do you not think that God permitted the rise of such a one as Napoleon in order to test man and to shew the way in which men can be carried along under a great human influence.

P. R. M. In the French Revolution you get the foreshadowing of all the awful principles which will yet move men at the end. So awful was the lawlessness that they had to invent a new machine to keep pace with it—the guillotine. And in the last time those principles will be set up again. When man's lawlessness becomes full-blown, the guillotine will again come into play, as we may gather from Revelation xx. 4.

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REM. What comes out in this gospel exposes the character of things which obtains in the world.

J. T. It shews the character of man as such, or rather, what man is in the presence of such grace on his behalf.

B. It does not confine itself to the Jews.

P. R. M. No, it is man as man. When Christ was placed upon the cross, His title was written in Greek and Roman and Hebrew: "And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." That is, the sentence went forth

to the whole world in the languages of the whole world: in Greek, the language of learning; Roman, the language of empire, and Hebrew, of religion; the sentence of Christ reached every sphere in this world; it reached the princes of this world, the leaders of empire, and its religious heads. It was a world-wide proclamation.

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P. R. M. We do not get the cry of forsaking in this gospel, but the prayer of Christ which underlies the whole of this gospel period: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

J. T. One thief on the cross got the benefit of it, but the other one reviled Him—awful expression of the malignity of the human heart.

R. S. S. One gospel records that they both did it.

P. R. M. The Spirit buries that in oblivion here: He draws a veil over his past history in reviling Christ.

F. L. I think it is very significant that the reviling of the thief comes out on the cross; it is the concentrated evidence of the natural hatred of man according to Adam, to Man according to the order of Christ. The last witness is the strongest witness; that of the dying thief divulges how utterly irrecon-

cilable man in the flesh is. It is one order of man against the other order of man.

J. T. The peculiar evidence of the work of God in the other thief must have been a wonderful source of comfort to the Lord, as shewing that which should eventually result from His death.

P. R. M. "*To-day* shalt thou be with me"—there is no sleep of the soul here. That day he was with Christ in Paradise.

J. T. It is a wonderful triumph in the face of the foe; when hostility comes out in this terrible way, He takes one man into Paradise as a trophy with Him.

P. R. M. The thief's apprehension of Christ was that while he himself had done everything amiss, everything wrongly—sinfully—this One had done nothing amiss, nothing out of season, nothing out of place. He did everything in holy and divine grace, like the righteous one in Psalm i.: "a tree planted by rivers of water, bringing forth its fruit in its season." The thief in that way got an apprehension of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. There beside him on the cross was the tree of life, and that man by faith put forth his hand and took of it.

J. T. He only thought of the kingdom, but the Lord's answer is: "This day," &c.

You feel that it is an allusion to Eden; man had been driven out from there; now man is to be reinstated in Paradise.

R. S. S. That would sustain the thought of the tree of life. Do you not think he was affected by hearing the Lord praying for His enemies in the way He did: “Father, forgive them”?

P. R. M. I have little doubt that was what converted him. What a theme it has been along the centuries since!

J. T. Christ, according to the thief’s apprehension, had done nothing amiss. It is on that ground that He can reinstate man in Paradise, as having met and solved the whole question of good and evil for man aside from the question of responsibility being settled. The tree of knowledge of good and evil is not now spoken of: it is a question of life, and the tree of life is prominent.

P. R. M. The question of good and evil is resolved in the death of Christ. The thief forms the transition pattern from the old to the new; he is the pattern of the new order of faith which puts forth its hand and takes of life and eats and lives for ever.

J. T. The tree is no longer guarded lest man should take of it.

P. R. M. No, the cherubim are now on behalf of man. They guard the way of man

to it, instead of from it. Angels take up a place on behalf of those who shall be heirs of salvation.

J. T. The cherubim are the executors of God's judgment: that came out in the cross.

F. L. I think one idea of the kingdom is to keep open the way of access.

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P. R. M. It does not say here that the veil was rent from the top to the bottom, but it was "rent in the midst," in remarkable contrast to Matthew and Mark, and we get that chronicled here *before His death*. John does not give it at all. "In the midst" gives the fuller thought of God coming out in reconciliation, as if the activities of God were just yearning to flow out.

J. T. It is rather God coming *out* to man than coming *down*.

F. L. Illustrated in Luke xv.: "When he was yet a great way off."

P. R. M. Yes; it is the activity of divine love bursting forth.

C. All the love of God pent up in other ages bursting forth. God had been awaiting this moment.

QUES. The Lord says, "*To-day* shalt thou be with me in paradise." Does that mean that it is really opened up and available now?

P. R. M. I think so. There is no longer, for the Christian who passes into death, Sheol or Hades, a place of unseen spirits, nor even as viewed from the standpoint of the old order, the bosom of Abraham. But it is in the presence of Christ now: “Thou shalt be with ME.” You rest there for His satisfaction.

J. T. It is not here a question of attesting a divine person, but the conclusion reached is that He was *just*. (Ver. 47.) That shews His right to re-open Paradise.

P. R. M. He was competent to open it up for man. But before it could be, the flaming sword must be sheathed in His bosom. I have no doubt that the flaming sword of Paradise, which turned every way, was death meeting man at every turn.

R. S. S. Is that true of the believer now who has died—that he is now with the Lord in Paradise?

P. R. M. Certainly.

R. S. S. We are much more accustomed to think of the other thought: to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

P. R. M. Paul speaks of the same thing in the second Epistle to the Corinthians.

B. Does the Spirit apply it to-day to the obedience of faith? “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have

right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

P. R. M. It is those who do His commandments who have right.

J. T. Because Paradise was lost to man on the ground of disobedience.

W. Is it the same Paradise regained?

J. T. I should think not. I should think now Paradise of necessity takes a new character. It must be in accordance with the revelation of God now.

P. R. M. That was the Paradise of man; this is the Paradise of God.

F. L. I suppose in a way nothing is ever regained; it is replaced, and the replacement is on a higher order—on the basis of resurrection.

J. T. Every thought of God will be carried out in recovery. The thing however differs; while it is the same in principle, it of necessity will be different and infinitely better; but for us, nevertheless, it is Paradise.

P. R. M. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life."

F. L. And "To him that overcomes I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." I suppose it is on the same line.

P. R. M. In connection with doing His

commandments, the test of truth is obedience now, as always. If a man says “I *cannot* believe,” he should say “I will not”; it is insubjection.

F. L. Would you lead our minds on to the resurrection ground?

QUES. The Lord says “to-day.” Would you say it is still present?

P. R. M. He inaugurates that day, the present gospel era in which man can pass with Him into the paradise of God. It is opened up in pattern to the thief. He makes effective here, in chapter xxiii., the day which He initiated in chapter iv., “To-day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” And the thief steps in and avails himself of it. “To-day” only exists in the light of resurrection. He spoke this beyond the sorrow: the veil of the temple was rent in the midst, the work was finished, and He was about to commit Himself into the hands of the Father.

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H. G. What is the difference between the veil in the tabernacle and the veil in the temple?

P. R. M. I take it that in Hebrews, where the tabernacle is in question, the veil is not rent: we go through it. But here it is the veil of the temple that is connected with the kingdom; the temple and the kingdom

always go together in scripture. The veil is rent here in order that God may come out.

F. L. In the world to come the temple will have a veil. I suppose that in Christianity the veil is really Christ.

P. R. M. It is His having come here in the perfection of His manhood: the veil which is His perfect humanity is interwoven with the cherubim. We pass in through the appropriation of His death, as having come here into manhood. The cherubim are the symbols of God's holy government, and this was fully upheld in Christ here.

J. T. When it is a question of God coming out to man, we get a rent veil; but when our going in is in question, we pass through the veil.

P. R. M. The High Priest always went through the veil into the holiest, and so do we.

F. L. So that the idea of the veil in Judaism is exclusion; the idea of the veil in Christianity is entering in.

P. R. M. He has dedicated a new and living way through the veil, as having become man and having died. The veil is rent and God has come out in the full declaration of Himself, but the answer on our side is that we draw near.

J. T. If we are to draw near, we cannot

do so as men in the flesh. That order must be left outside; we pass in as of another order.

P. R. M. And it is by a new and living way.

QUES. Would you say that the rent veil signified that it was no longer needed?

P. R. M. Yes, from the divine side.

J. T. The rending of the veil shews that that order of things is set aside; it is not needed any more.

F. L. But morally the elements of the veil still remain upon the heart of the people—the Jew—but when it shall turn to the Lord the veil shall be taken away. The presence of the veil expressed that God was shut in and man was shut out.

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A. A. T. Why did you read those verses in chapter xxiv.—the Lord's talk to His disciples?

P. R. M. He was about to bring into evidence the resurrection scene which He would fill, and we see here the activity of His love in gathering up everything for His pleasure, that it may find place in that world. It is still the idea of healing, as we see His love and care going out after these two that were going astray.

J. T. Chapter xxiv. sets forth the Lord as Priest in relation to man. It is wonderful

to see how He attends upon them and instructs them as a Priest.

F. L. One of the most beautiful touches in this chapter in connection with the priesthood of Christ is the word that the assembled company give to the two: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon." We have no record of what took place when He appeared to Simon; but before the public word which we get in John xx. there had been a personal interview between the Lord and Simon. We get it in 1 Corinthians xv. that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.

P. R. M. Another evidence of His healing power!

F. L. It is very beautiful as shewing the priestly character that Christ takes up as soon as He comes into resurrection.

P. R. M. His love is not intruded upon us, He desires that we should go after Him. He would have us woo His love, set ourselves to draw it forth.

J. T. What you say as to our wooing the Lord's love is very suggestive. People say: We have got the Lord with us. That is easily spoken, but the question is: do we give Him any encouragement to be with us? I think that if we cared for His presence we should encourage Him to remain.

QUES. From this time on did the disciples understand the Lord better and enter into His thoughts ?

P. R. M. He opened their understanding.

F. L. There was a quick flash of intelligence when He did the simple act of breaking bread.

P. R. M. He did nothing amiss : all was beautiful in its season and was marked by a divine grace which was inimitable : “ He hath done all things well ”—really “ beautifully.”

J. T. So that when He did it here they recognised that it could be none other than He.

P. R. M. It was the grace in which He took the place of host.

F. L. He came in under persuasion, but, coming in, He must take the place of head.

P. R. M. He must be pre-eminent in every circle He touches ; He takes the first place in the inimitable grace of His Person.

R. S. S. This was an occasion when the Lord could not be hid.

P. R. M. He was not here to help these two in regard of their own circle, but He turns them to the circle in which He is pre-eminent.

J. T. It is remarkable how He made Himself known to them. Verse 35 : “ And *they*

related what had happened on the way, and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.”

R. S. S. Is there any relation between the moment when the Lord broke the bread at this time and when we come together and the loaf is broken? It was at that moment that He was recognised. Does it indicate that we recognise the moment when the Lord takes up His place?

P. R. M. I suppose the moral application might be made, though here it was not the eucharist but the simple family meal.

F. L. Do you not think it is in the way it is put here: “And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them.”

P. R. M. No doubt we may transfer the thought to the supper, but it was not the supper. But no doubt there is a moment when the Lord identifies Himself to us, as here, by the marks of His death.

J. T. Only the supper was inaugurated at the ordinary meal, otherwise it would not be a supper.

P. R. M. I have no doubt it would recall to them the last supper.

KN. Do you not think that it is in the

breaking of the bread that the expression of His glory comes out ?

P. R. M. It is connected with the incoming of His glory in this scene: we do it “till he come.”

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QUES. “To enter into his glory.” (Ver. 26.) What would you say the glory is ?

P. R. M. It is the glory of the Christ here—of the anointed man: it is a general thought.

QUES. Would you say that He entered into it here as coming into the midst of His own ?

J. T. “Ought not the Messiah to suffer these things and to enter into his glory ?” It is what they, as Jews, ought to have understood.

F. L. So Peter, in writing to the Hebrews, says that he is a witness of the sufferings of Christ and of the glories that should follow.

P. R. M. The Messianic sufferings, and the “after these” glories. They looked for the Messianic glories, but overlooked the Messianic sufferings. But the Spirit bore witness to both the sufferings and the glory.

F. L. Peter could write of them in his letter, but when the Lord first opened them out to him, he said: “This be far from thee, Lord.”

P. R. M. He did not anticipate Messianic

sufferings. It is the glories of the Messiah that are in view here—what was brought out in the Old Testament scriptures. It is of great importance, considering how the holy scriptures are attacked to-day, to see that in resurrection He lays the greatest stress upon their authority. He does it twice.

J. T. You never get a full answer to the scriptures till you get Christ risen.

P. R. M. He stamped the seal of authenticity upon them in resurrection.

A. A. T. Was there significance in His eating before them ?

J. T. Would it not be that He proved the reality of His manhood in resurrection ?

P. R. M. I think that is the point. It was not the necessity of His eating, but He proved the reality of His resurrection as Man in that act.

F. L. What would you make of the difference here—"he shewed unto them his hands and his *feet*"—and in John xx., where He shewed them His hands and His *side* ? John's gospel gives more the aspect of the assembly, so, coming in, He shews them His hands and His side.

J. T. John is the only evangelist who records the piercing of the side, shewing whence the means of cleansing flows. Perhaps there is something in that.

P. R. M. I think the line of Luke's gospel is that “He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.” It is His gracious service: hence His “hands and feet.” But John rather presents the side of divine affections: hence the side.

F. L. Service and walk—hands and feet.

P. R. M. He says, “It is I myself”; He identifies Himself to them in resurrection by the tokens of His suffering. He will ever identify Himself to us in that way; we shall never know Him apart from His sufferings. If you go on to Revelation, you find, “I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain”; and a little further down, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.”

J. T. His hands and feet very likely point to the fact that He was a servant for ever.

H. G. Do you think, when we come together to remember the Lord, His sufferings should be before us?

P. R. M. I thought we should always know Him in connection with His having suffered and in the abiding efficacy of His death, and in the breaking of bread, while

in it we shew His death, we are in touch with Him as living; we do not recall His sufferings, because they are accomplished, but we know Him in the value of eternal redemption.

QUES. But do not His sufferings prove the intensity of His love?

P. R. M. And if they did not have their place with us we should lose immensely. But they are more for our individual contemplation than when we come together in assembly. In assembly we meet Him risen. His sufferings are accomplished, but He bears the marks eternally, and it is in that way that we identify Him.

F. L. I am sure we all of us prize that thought.

P. R. M. Paul identified Him thus when he said, "who loved me and gave himself for me."

REM. They will be brought before Israel, shewing He is the One who died for them. (Zech. xiii. 6.)

P. R. M. And so Thomas would thrust his finger into His hands and side.

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QUES. I should like to ask about the preaching in Luke; it is different from Matthew and Mark—repentance and remission of sins to be preached.

P. R. M. I take it that in Luke He takes the place of the tree of life anticipatively; in Revelation xxii. 2 we get the tree of life, and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations.

QUES. How do you connect that with repentance and remission?

P. R. M. Even to-day we know the healing as Gentiles, as having been granted repentance—repentance is healing.

F. L. Luke, accompanying Paul, speaks of his preaching as presenting “repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.”

P. R. M. And “then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”

REM. In Mark *salvation* seems to be prominent: “He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved.” What is the difference between salvation and redemption? I thought repentance had to do with self-judgment.

P. R. M. A man cannot judge himself except he has the Spirit. I think we should make a distinction between repentance and self-judgment. An unconverted man repents because it is God’s gift to him. God’s gift is repentance, but the power of self-judgment lies in the Spirit. Having repented by God’s gift, we are justified and we receive the

Spirit, and in the Spirit we have the power for self-judgment.

REM. I thought God gave man an opportunity to judge himself.

P. R. M. I think we mix those two terms up. We constantly look for self-judgment in unconverted men; I do not see what right we have to expect it.

R. S. S. Self-judgment includes not only what you have done, but what you are.

REM. "God be merciful to me a sinner."

P. R. M. It says he was justified.

F. L. How does this ministry of preaching here compare with the ministry of which Paul speaks at the end of 2 Corinthians v.?

P. R. M. That is the full truth of reconciliation; but it was *initiated* here because "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," and it all has its basis in that prayer of Christ: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

J. T. The greatness of the grace is set forth in the fact that the preaching was to begin at Jerusalem.

P. R. M. Luke is the great gospel of grace, and there are a number of words which are characteristic of his gospel: grace occurs for the first time in Luke, so also redemption. It is the presentation of the tree

of life bearing all its healing and health-giving influences. The moment has arrived when that One is to be separated from them and carried up into heaven—transplanted to its own rich soil, and, beholding Him, they worship.

R. S. S. Is this the way we are introduced into the resurrection world, just as the disciples were?

P. R. M. It existed in His own Person then, and its fruits were to exist still in His own Person as the tree of life, so that they are available for us, too, as we touch Him. The resurrection world is not an abstract thought: it is one which centres in His own Person, and everything that will fill it is inherent in Himself as Man.

J. T. It is a wonderful thing to see Man going up to heaven in the character of a Blessor; only a divine Person could be a Blessor, but it is blessing in man.

P. R. M. Those hands have never been let down; unlike Moses' hands which had to be held up by Aaron and Hur, they are borne up in the inherent power of His Person. He is carried up into heaven, the lowly Man, no longer in weakness, yet *carried* up into His own proper place.

REM. The last four verses are characteristic, and they will abide.

H. G. "As far as to Bethany." It would indicate that we can go thus far; I thought that Bethany was the resurrection spot.

F. L. The place of home affections and appreciation of the Lord.

P. R. M. A sabbath day's journey: that is not very far. It is what the heart can compass in rest.

REM. You have the world to come in view in what you have been saying.

P. R. M. The resurrection scene brought to us in present power in His Person; the world to come is when it is brought into public display.

REM. In the last verses we get blessing, power, joy and praise.

P. R. M. Yes, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. That was a good start. They were competent witnesses for Christ.

A. W. Does the last sentence look on to the eternal state—praising and blessing God?

P. R. M. It may. No doubt in that way it is the answer to the song of heaven when Christ was born, that man on earth can be here blessing God.

J. T. Luke opens with the temple and closes with the temple.

H. G. He opens with a *dumb* priest, and closes with a company of praising priests.

“THE PRINCE OF LIFE.”

READ JOHN XII. 20-24, 30-33 ;

XVIII. 1-6, 31-36 ;

XIX. 18-30 ;

XX. 15-17, 30-31.

F. L. In John xii. we get the solemn judgment of one world and its prince and the bringing into view of a new world with its glorious centre. “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me.”

P. R. M. And the “much fruit” that will fill that world. It shews the immense place that this particular aspect of the death of Christ has in John’s gospel.

H. G. Will the Father’s house be the granary for that much fruit ?

P. R. M. Doubtless it will. I turned to this chapter because He signifies in it by what death He should die.

F. L. His death and the manner of it carries with it the judgment of this world. And we have to come to that judgment in our own souls.

P. R. M. That is the importance of it ; that is, His being lifted up out of the earth

constitutes the judgment of it. He is lifted up as unfitted for it in the judgment of man: earth casts Him off.

R. S. S. "By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" is the answer on our side.

P. R. M. His death was a sign: it forms the culminating and seventh sign of the gospel. There are seven signs in the gospel of John.

H. G. Why are they called signs in John, and in the others miracles?

P. R. M. A miracle might stop at an act of power, but a sign has something attached to it, a line of teaching. A miracle might not necessarily have that. It has been beautifully said that Christ wrought no miracle that He might not die, but wrought a miracle by dying. And His death in John is the great sign-miracle of the gospel.

J. P. It completes the signs, and a sign is connected with the truth of His Person: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." A miracle was the evidence of God's goodness and power in the midst of His people here.

P. R. M. Miracles deal with what is there; signs point forward to what is to come.

J. P. And bear witness to what He is.

J. T. In this gospel the object is that they should believe in regard to the person: “These are written that ye might believe.” In the first sign—in chapter ii.—the result was that His disciples believed in Him.

J. P. It says also that He manifested forth His glory.

P. R. M. He took the place of the Bridegroom in chapter ii., and as such He is the initiator of a new day.

J. P. It belonged to the Bridegroom to supply the joy.

P. R. M. He initiates in chapter ii. the new day which is the subject of John’s gospel.

F. L. We have to see the complete breaking of the present world power: “Now is the judgment of this world.”

P. R. M. Sentence has been definitively passed on this world-system, and it has never been reversed.

J. P. It is a system already judged. I was thinking of what you said about the Lord signifying His death. His being lifted up out of the earth not only involved the judgment of this world, but in being thus lifted out of the earth He becomes the centre of attraction for God’s world.

R. S. S. So in 1 Peter ii. 4: “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed

indeed of men, but chosen of God." If it is Christ lifted up from the earth, He is there as the rejected One, and as such we come to Him.

J. P. Hence there has to be the acceptance on our side of His death.

F. L. Does it not go even farther than that? It is as the centre of a new *system*, so He says: "I will draw *all* unto me." Not only man, but He gathers everything up: every principality and power and every sphere of blessing is all gathered unto Himself.

J. T. The coming up of the Greeks and the consequent remarks passed by the Lord shew that in John it is not the question of the reinstatement of man as such; it is the question of the introduction of a new order of man. And that new order was set forth in Himself, but as such He was alone: He has to die in order that there should be much fruit.

F. L. It is a sign in that way that "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die." It is *the* grain: there was only one, and if that failed everything was gone.

P. R. M. That was the miracle of His death—the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying.

J. T. The need for new birth in John is

remarkable as shewing a new generation, a new order of man. In Luke man is recovered for God, and Paradise is recovered for man.

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P. R. M. Passing to chapter xviii., it is significant that they came to take Him who was the Light of the world and the Prince of Peace with lanterns and torches and weapons. It is a pitiable picture. And when they come to take Him the greatness of His Person shines out. It is not the lanterns and torches that bring Him to light.

J. T. The lanterns and torches and weapons and those that bore them all quickly find their place. "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground."

P. R. M. The light of the Person overpowers them. His answer enshrines the name of "Jehovah." On a previous occasion they took up stones to stone Him when He said, "I am."

W. H. What He did while here below He did by the power of the Holy Ghost; but on this occasion it was the setting forth of who He was as a divine Person that caused them to go backward.

F. L. It is singular how the garden comes in. In the first place, God made a garden for man and there man lost God and man

was lost to God. Then man made a garden for himself, but a tomb is there. Finally God recovers everything in the paradise of God.

J. T. The *omissions* here, as compared with Luke and other gospels, are very suggestive. It is no question of man in weakness here as in Luke; there is no prayer here as to the cup; it is a divine Person who is in view, and everything brings out the dignity of His Person.

P. R. M. In John's gospel we get no transfiguration; the proper glory of the Son shines throughout; it is the setting forth in detail of what in the other gospels involved the transfiguration.

F. L. The reference to the cup here is given to shew that it is not a petition or prayer for its removal, but to prove His devotedness to the will of His Father.

P. R. M. Yes, He carries through His work as a divine Person to the end.

J. T. They could not arrest Him; He delivers Himself up voluntarily, but He says, "Let these go their way."

P. R. M. He stands in the breach.

J. T. If John's gospel was written for the last days, it is a very great encouragement. The Lord will take care of His saints, be the position what it may, right on to the end.

P. R. M. A great encouragement! He could say at the end of His pathway, “Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.”

C. And then would you say that chapter xvii. is the present prayer of the Lord for His people?

J. T. Yes; chapter xvii. is what He can be for us within; chapter xviii. shews His power for us without, in the presence of the enemy. Upon these two things, I suppose, hangs our present position in this world.

P. R. M. Then we see His testimony before Pilate in chapter xviii., “My kingdom is not of this world.”

H. G. Does Paul speak of that as the confession that He witnessed?

P. R. M. Without doubt.

F. L. Else “would my servants fight that I should not be delivered up to the Jews.” It does not say “that I might not be delivered up to the Romans,” of whom Pontius Pilate was the representative; the whole guilt comes back on the people.

J. P. I was struck with that. “Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees.” The Jew is very prominent, and I suppose the Jew stands for the world in John’s gospel.

J. T. Would you not say that His whole discourse before Pilate is His confession? He bore witness to the fact that He was a king—did not deny it—and, moreover, that He came into the world to bear witness to the truth.

H. G. The Lord seems to treat Pilate with more respect than the high priest. It was the high priest's privilege to go in where the ark was; the true ark was here, and the high priest did not know it.

F. L. The Lord recognises in that way the power that was committed to the Romans.

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P. R. M. If we pass on to the crucifixion, we find that "they crucified him, and two other with him." In the face of the judgment of the world and the end of man as such, the writer does not stop to specify what the others were—"other," that is all. It was the end of *man*—not the end of robbers and thieves, but far more sweeping than that.

J. T. I suppose Golgotha signifies that. "The place of a skull."

P. R. M. It set forth the closing up of man's greatest intelligence, of the magnificence of the learning of this world and its wisdom. Christ died at the moment

which was the climax of human intelligence. It has never been surpassed. If you take the inscription on the cross—which answers, I suppose, to the skull—the inscription was in Hebrew and Greek and Latin. The ritual of religion has never been surpassed. The philosophy and literature have never been exceeded; all classical education of to-day is derived from the period just previous to that moment. Then as to the political world, the Roman constitution was at its height, and the whole system of law in the world has been modelled on the Roman system of that age. Christ died at the time of the greatest brilliance of the world; not in its inventions, which are mere matters of detail; we go back now to their writings and their laws and their light. We need to bear in mind that it was far from a moment of ignorance and semi-darkness.

J. P. I think that is very important.

F. L. “Had the princes of this world known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

J. T. Cæsar and the system that obtained at that time is what you allude to in regard to empire. Everything was at its climax.

F. L. The condition of the Jew comes out: “We have no king but Cæsar.”

QUES. Has not God held the Jew to that?

F. L. I think He has held the Jew to the end of John iii. "He that is not subject to the Son."

P. R. M. They sealed their irrevocable doom in those words. They bound the Roman yoke for ever on their shoulders when they said "We have no king but Cæsar," thus deliberately casting off their Messiah. And Pilate's refusal to alter the writing is most remarkable: "What I have written I have written." And it stands recorded, and will stand till that despised King reigns over Israel. The writing of Pilate will never be reversed.

J. T. Hebrew comes first here.

P. R. M. The order is different in Luke. (Matthew and Mark do not say anything about the languages.)

F. L. In Luke Greek is first, doubtless referring to those to whom the testimony has been rendered. But John, I think, has the Jewish system more particularly before him.

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P. R. M. We must pass on to see how He does what no man can do before his death: He deliberately breaks the relationships into which He had entered here as man. Death breaks them for us; but He broke them before His death.

F. L. You mean in connection with His mother and John?

P. R. M. Yes; it was a real breaking of the link on His side.

F. L. That was the difficulty with Mary Magdalene when she sought Him in chapter xx. in not knowing what He had effected in His cross.

P. R. M. Mary would fain have taken the link up again. But Christ laid it down in His death; so it is “Touch me not.”

J. T. He does everything as if in supreme command. It is an act of His own power. It is important to note that the death of the Lord was not a natural death—not from exhaustion.

P. R. M. It was a miraculous death—that of a divine Person come into manhood, and hence a sign.

R. S. S. So that Pilate marvelled.

QUES. Did that shew that He laid down His life?

J. T. It did. He had authority to do so, or it would not have been obedience; it was an act of power, but still under authority from the Father.

F. L. The affection of the Father is connected with this very thing. “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again.”

J. P. "This commandment have I received of my Father."

P. R. M. Exactly; then we get that one word: "Accomplished." His work was done. As a divine Person He set His seal to the completion of His own work and to the rolling away of this world-system. "It is finished."

J. T. If He said, "I thirst," it was for the fulfilment of the scriptures. It brings out in such a remarkable way the fact of the Person who was there.

J. P. That shews the unique character of His manhood. He dies, for He has come into manhood that He might die; but being a divine Person in manhood, He could not die a natural death.

P. R. M. He came here, not *liable* to death, but *subject* to it.

F. L. I suppose the thirst was moral—of His spirit—to drink into the fruit of the travail of His soul; one hardly thinks of it as natural thirst in His case.

H. G. Naturally, a man dies through weakness, but the Lord dies in the full vigour of manhood. "He cried with a loud voice"; there was full vigour there.

P. R. M. And how magnificent that pronouncement of Christ: "It is finished." All is closed up in death. It will take public

effect presently when in Revelation xxi. 6 He says, “It is done!”

J. T. I think we have been hindered by bringing into this the question of our need. In John it stands in more marvellous connections; it is the revelation of the Father and the effectuating—the accomplishing—of the Father’s counsels and all that that involves.

P. R. M. And yet nothing could, like that, give peace to the soul.

J. P. It is peace on a divine basis—a peace that the devil cannot disturb.

F. L. The question of atonement for sins as such is not brought in here at all.

P. R. M. Unless it be in the piercing of the side and the flowing out of *the blood* and water.

J. T. It is the end of that order of man.

P. R. M. And the end of that order of world in the water.

J. P. Man and the world and the ruler of it all go together.

J. T. And you get another Man, another world and another Ruler. And the allusion to it in the epistle shews that it is the divine way of reaching life; it is not a question of forgiveness, but of life.

P. R. M. He came in connection with water and blood. That marked His pathway throughout.

F. L. It is a question of life here, not of atonement.

J. T. It is no question here of how man's sin has been met, but of how we enter into life.

P. R. M. The blood and water were part of the sign miracle of His death.

J. T. "And he that saw it bare record." John records it, "that ye might believe."

R. S. S. I think it is important that the blood here was for man's eye specially.

J. T. "There are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree in one."

J. P. The object of the testimony is "that ye might believe." God did not need that.

R. S. S. In the Passover the blood was for God's eye.

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R. S. S. What do we see in chapter xx.?

P. R. M. I suppose we see at the beginning of it the marks of the victory of Christ: the position of the linen clothes in the tomb, marking the orderly victory that was accomplished by Christ and that a divine Person had been there. The wrappings of the dead were all laid aside, and each in its place. When Lazarus came forth in resurrection he

returned to life bound hand and foot with grave clothes; not so the Son of God. All was laid aside, and in its own place in orderly victory. There is no sign of any haste or any disorder.

J. P. Resurrection was inherent in the Person who died; you do not need an account of His resurrection.

F. L. It has often been remarked that Mary of Bethany was not found at the tomb; she had been at the grave of Lazarus, and she heard the One who said: “I am the resurrection and the life.”

P. R. M. And it was reserved for her to form the pattern of the new worshipping company in the fragrance of her offering. She could not come again on the scene in that way: she had disappeared in worship.

J. T. She and Lazarus disappear together.

P. R. M. But another comes into view in whom the full power of Satan (seven demons) had been dispossessed. We see in her the clearance of the ground that Christ may come in in resurrection.

J. T. Mary of Magdala is probably a type of the remnant here, as representing the affection yet to be begotten in them: she lingered at the sepulchre.

P. R. M. His first words in resurrection

are extremely wonderful. If we look forward to the moment when God will display Himself, He will wipe away all tears; we see Christ inaugurating that in resurrection: "Woman, why weepest thou?"

J. T. The sight of Him in resurrection will dry up all tears.

J. P. What a moment it must have been when He pronounced her name! One feels how little we are able to take it in—the magnificence of it, because in the earlier part of the chapter she is the picture of inconsolable grief; but in pronouncing her name He wiped all her tears away.

R. S. S. "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

F. L. I suppose the whole character of the resurrection day is stamped with the announcement, "my brethren," "my Father, and your Father; . . . my God, and your God."

P. R. M. It is the revelation of His name.

J. P. I have felt that there is a good deal of significance in what the Lord said to her. She evidently approached Him to embrace Him, and He said: "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended." I suppose when He came to the company she could touch Him there. He had not yet ascended, but "go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend

unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” She goes and bears the message, and when they are together He comes; it is not simply as the risen One; you must bring in ascension as well as resurrection to have the full character of the assembly.

P. R. M. I take it that the force of the passage is that she could not have to say to Him in any of the old relationships; but she could have to say to Him when He could bring into view new relationships.

R. S. S. Do you not think that when she got into that new order of things in the assembled company there was no prohibition there in regard to touching the Lord?

J. T. As in the circle of His brethren, she is in the new order of His things: we are sons.

F. L. He is then the ascended One in principle. Is not the thought here clearly that He first presents Himself to His Father, and we know Him as the ascended One. He comes into the assembly, and makes it good to us.

P. R. M. We cannot touch Him in the old relationships, but we can in new relationships. He severed those old relationships before He died.

F. L. Mary Magdalene became part of

the company when she gave the message. He says, "My Father, and your Father"; she becomes part of the company in a sense, though He had not yet ascended to His Father.

R. S. S. I think that is exceedingly helpful. My difficulty was that historically, even when He met His disciples in assembly, He had not yet ascended to His Father, but in principle He has already done so.

J. T. I think it helps as to the pattern that is set before us.

P. R. M. The Gospel of John sets before us patterns, not types—patterns which cover the period of Christianity in their application and abide.

F. L. So when He joins the company there is the Spirit. He breathed on them the Spirit; everything is in perfect order.

R. S. S. This is the way we reach the resurrection platform; that is, when we find ourselves in company with the Man in resurrection.

J. T. And an ascended Man really. Therefore it is the heavenly Man, as it were, in His own sphere. He is on the earth as a matter of fact, and yet not connected in any sense with the earth.

F. L. Is that not why there is particular mention of the door being shut? The door

was shut when the Lord came in, so that the old sphere was excluded; it was a *new* sphere.

P. R. M. As set out in Mary Magdalene, He brings their intelligence into line with their affection. She has affection but not much intelligence; but He gives her intelligence.

J. T. I think that His message to the brethren was to prepare them for the visit. He was coming as an august Person—with all the dignity of a divine Person. And the nature of the visitation is altogether unique; He came through closed doors.

REM. In chapter xiv. He says, "I am coming to you."

J. T. That is the thing we should be prepared for. It is altogether outside of anything of nature.

P. R. M. In that sphere, while He introduces us into the same relationships, He maintains His place of absolute and special pre-eminence. He says, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God."

J. T. And does He not first of all constitute a company great enough to receive Him? It is not a company of Jews, nor even the remnant of Israel. I think the message was intended to constitute them in

their minds sufficiently great to receive Him.

REM. So that you do not get any idea of fear, but they were glad to see Him.

J. P. He constitutes a company of His own order, but that does not constitute equality. He is the "firstborn from the dead; that *in all things* he might have the pre-eminence."

J. T. The great thing is that the saints should be in trim for a divine visitation. You hear people say, "The Lord is with us"; but the question is whether they are great enough to have Him with them. There is no company on earth great enough, except His brethren. The Holy Spirit would enable us to take the ground of the brethren of Christ in the assembly—and if we do, I think He will not fail to come in. But it is not simply the assembly as convened, as in Corinthians; but outside the flesh, as in Christ.

B. In resurrection.

J. T. It is not a question of the greatness of individuals here, but of the company and of the greatness of the saints as united to Christ.

P. R. M. The company He has honoured will never be beneath the dignity of His presence.

J. P. In the scriptures here it is not our relation one to another, but our relationship to *Him*—we are *His* brethren.

P. R. M. It is an unique expression here.

J. P. It is not a certain number of people breaking bread at a certain meeting room.

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P. R. M. The failure of Thomas serves to bring out a peculiar blessing on the saints of this day.

F. L. Thomas really represents the remnant, does he not ?

P. R. M. It serves to bring out the special blessing of Christianity—“Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

J. T. I thought of that too. I think that is very good.

P. R. M. The blessing of Israel will be great in the future day, when they acknowledge Christ as their Lord and their God ; but the blessedness of the saints of this day is even greater : “blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

F. L. It is the eighth day—the day of sight. It is not the first day. I suppose the first day is the day of the Spirit, the eighth day the day of the world to come.

QUES. The first day is the eighth day, is it not ?

F. L. The first day is the first day.

P. R. M. The eighth day is the public resurrection day, but we anticipate that in the first day, the Lord's day : He has marked off for Himself His own day, the dominical day.

J. P. It is the eighth day in Ezekiel. The first becomes the eighth.

F. L. The first day is peculiarly the day of the Spirit, and the eighth day the day of resurrection in display in the world to come.

R. S. S. Is not the first day the inauguration of a new order of things entirely in Christianity, whereas the eighth day would rather be connected with what is Jewish ?

J. T. And a new departure in connection with what had previously existed.

J. P. It is all new ; it is not anything old re-adjusted. Behold, "all things are become new." The old things are passed away.

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F. L. The only other reference we have to Nathanael comes in in the millennial world, the world to come ; the first chapter and the last chapter.

R. S. S. I suppose it becomes now a question of which world we are going in for.

P. R. M. Yes, it does ; one is judged for

ever, and Christ will shortly roll it up publicly. Our name attaches us to this world; if we have life in *His* name we are attached to another world, the resurrection world is very near. It could not be nearer than this: “Then came Jesus and stood in the midst.”

QUES. Would you say that we get in John a pattern of this new world?

P. R. M. I think so. He inaugurates, through His death, in the greatness of His own Person, the resurrection world, and brings it into presence.

G. Would you think that there would be a danger of our looking to find this pattern in a way in the saints in any particular meeting?

P. R. M. This is no particular meeting; this is the company which takes all its character from Him: it is the saints viewed as His brethren.

REM. So that we have to find it in Him.

P. R. M. He inaugurates the resurrection world in the grace of His own person.

R. S. S. And you might find a reflection of it in the saints.

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J. T. One would like to see inquiry among God's people as regards life. The

other gospels might have more general reference, but John's is written exclusively to Christians.

B. Would you say something about getting life in His name?

J. T. Those convicted as to sin require forgiveness and life. I suppose if we have it in His name there is no danger of its being forfeited again. It is a great thing to hold it in His name.

P. R. M. And what do you understand by having life?

J. T. It supposes the existence of certain conditions, all of which are found in this gospel. I suppose if we take the signs together, they indicate the conditions of life. What would you say? The Lord has inaugurated certain conditions upon which life depends.

QUES. Is not life viewed in John in its present aspect?

J. T. I think that in the nature of this gospel "that ye might have life in his name" must of necessity refer to the present moment; it is not what the saints shall have in resurrection, but what they are to have now.

P. R. M. I take it that life according to God is ability to enjoy the relationships and

breathe the atmosphere of the resurrection scene which He brings into view.

J. T. Life is sometimes spoken of as the power by which we do enjoy. But life is also spoken of as the order of things.

J. P. Hence, we are passed out of death into life.

J. T. The Spirit of God has set these things out that the saints might believe and have life in His name.

P. R. M. They were selected from the mass of evidence for that purpose. “These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

J. T. The signs mean certain conditions in the soul.

R. S. S. Believing is connected with the Christ, the Son of God. And that brings us into His own sphere of things.

A. W. It says that He is the Christ, the Son of God. Why is that?

J. T. The saints were to be enlightened as to who He was, not only the Messiah, but the Son of God.

R. S. S. You get the illustration in chapter iv., when He says to the woman, “If thou knewest.” It is clearly only a divine Person who could give living water. I sup-

pose we recognise Him as the Christ before we can know much about Him as the Son of God.

J. T. In the epistle it is the test: he that overcomes the world is he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

P. R. M. So that the Son of God stands in that connection as in contrast with this world. It was always so. It is no longer a question of your name, but life in His name; not life in your name.

J. P. And in the order in which things are put in the Gospel of John, resurrection precedes life: "I am the resurrection and the life"; so that, as you said, the conditions of eternal life are found only in resurrection.

P. R. M. Referring to the last verse of the gospel, the resurrection world will contain all the truth of His works and acts. The material universe could not contain them: they are too great; they are infinite; but they are all treasured up in the resurrection world.

J. P. The Father has put them where neither the devil nor death can touch them.

J. T. You could not think that God would allow anything that emanated from Christ to fall to the ground.

P. R. M. And the signs given us just pro-

vide a foretaste of the infinite feast stored up for the saints in eternity.

J. T. John appreciates the Lord's ministry in all its infinite greatness.

P. R. M. It was the greatness of His Person that gave the grace and beauty to all that He said and did.

F. It is the greatness of His Person that is in view all through.



“Till Break of Day.”

(ACTS XX. 11.)

“TILL I COME.” (JOHN XXI. 22.)

“TILL HE COME.” (I COR. XI. 26.)

READ ALSO ACTS XX. 6-12, 28, AND JOHN XX.
19-23 ; XXI. 20-23.

(CLOSING ADDRESS BY P. R. M.)

IF I put out my thoughts somewhat clumsily to-night, I trust that you will yet be able to enter into the truth that I wish to convey. You will have noted that it connects itself in both scriptures with the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the one case the words are on His own lips, “Till *I* come”; in the other case they are from the pen of the Apostle Paul, “Till *he* come.”

Evidently, as I had before me in prayer, the heart of the Lord Jesus, during this His rejection by the world and consequent absence from it, overleapt that period at the outset, and looked forward with exultation to the moment when He would uninterruptedly enjoy the company of those who are

begotten through His death and brought to light through His resurrection, the Christian company, the church of God on earth, His bride and His body. But before that moment comes about, and during this protracted interval, He has made every provision for the support and sustenance of that company upon this earth, that they may not become submerged by evil and by the attacks of the gates of Hades, the counsels of evil, against that which is of God.

He has, pre-eminently through two apostolic servants of His, made that provision, and it is to those two I want to turn to-night, to shew the comfort that He ministers to the hearts of His saints through circumstances of the deepest anguish and distress, that they may know that, instead of things going to pieces here, as we see them, He will preserve all that is of Himself intact for His own heart's delight.

Perhaps I might hesitate as to which to turn to first—whether to Paul or to John. Turning first to Paul, it will be in connection with Acts xx. and with the revelation made to him in 1 Corinthians xi. We shall notice as we turn to Acts xx. that the writer, who is Luke the beloved physician, writes in the first person plural. In verses 6 and 7 he

says "*we* sailed away" and "when *we* came together to break bread." (See New Trans.) In one of those delicate touches which are begotten alone of Christianity he hides himself behind the apostle; we see the grace with which he accompanies that apostolic party, privileged to be the companion of Paul, and they come to the city of Troas in Asia Minor.

I purpose to use this incident at Troas in an illustrative way. They tarried at Troas seven days. Seven days, in scripture, we know to be a perfect period, and we shall therefore employ that to denote the complete period of Christianity on earth, and we shall see that what comes into view is something which John never touches, never mentions, and that is the breaking of bread. Now John does mention the first day of the week, and that in the scripture in John xx.; he will also mention it in Revelation i., at the same time giving it there a wider thought. It is the *dominical* day, the day of the Lord Jesus in contradistinction to the Jewish Sabbath, a marked day, marked with His own authority and His own love; a day that is loved and valued by every soul that has affection for the Lord Jesus Christ. On that day "*we*" came together to break bread. We may note that Christianity in that way

began with the breaking of bread, and I hope to shew that it is going to finish with it too.

The thought of the breaking of bread as delivered to us by Paul will cover the whole period of the absence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Lord Jesus has made the fullest provision for that act of devotion on the part of His saints to be maintained during that interval. I ask you, dear friends, Do you break bread? If not, it should raise the question with you as to whether you are in the truth of Christianity and have entered into the present mind of the Lord Jesus for His saints.

It states that Paul discoursed unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight. I have little doubt that we get there an illustration of the way in which the truth that the Lord Jesus ministered through Paul is connected with that special revelation from the Lord to him—the breaking of bread—and we get there a hint that the testimony of Paul persisted through the centuries until a particular moment arrived in which it became submerged. "Paul discoursed to them until midnight, ready to depart on the morrow." That is, the apostolic testimony through Paul, in its unique character, in the three

great revelations made to him, continued down the ages until a certain moment arrived.

The testimony of Paul is marked by the three revelations made to him. The first of them is what we are considering here—the breaking of bread. We learn from 1 Corinthians xi. that this was a peculiar revelation to Paul. He there states, “I received of the Lord”—evidently in ascension—“that which also I delivered unto you.” The second of them is, I suppose, the truth of the rapture. He evidently had that by revelation—“For this we say unto you *by the word of the Lord*. . . . For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven. . . . Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up . . . and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. iv. 15–17.) Blessed truth! at the end of this period of Christianity the Lord is coming back, and in one moment will raise the dead saints and catch up the living ones to meet Him in the air: this was an integral part of Paul’s discourse. The last was that made known to Paul in the administration of the mystery in Ephesians iii.; that is, that the Gentiles were to be of one body with the Jews; that there was to be *one* body, no longer two, no longer Jew and Gentile on earth, but that the body of Christ here was

to be one of which all Christians formed part.

These three distinct revelations to Paul alone doubtless formed the subject of the Pauline teaching during the early centuries of Christianity. The moment when this remarkable incident comes in was not one of public darkness, but of much outward activity; there was the upper chamber and there were many lights burning. A great profession was being made with but little vitality: the professing church had become conspicuous in the eyes of the world and was bound up with the whole political system, and was lording it over God's heritage. There was much outward light, yet drowsiness had overcome the church: there was lack of fresh air to breathe, and the light within the souls of the saints had become dim. We have here the gradual process that came in: "There sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep. . . . he sunk down with sleep, and fell down." (Ver. 9.) Note the gradual decline. Ages supervened characterised by low testimony. All that God had given through Paul seemed to have gone by the wall; the simple breaking of bread had given place to the Roman Catholic mass, with its idolatrous accom-

paniments, and the life of the church appeared to be extinct.

And now we see how the Lord Jesus took account of all that public profession which had a name to live but was dead. Acting once more through apostolic testimony He revives the essential truth of christianity in its pristine power, and recalls the saints in affection to Himself. "And Paul went down, and fell on him." (Ver. 10.) There we get in figure the revival of the apostolic testimony in power to reach the affections. The presentation of the truth of Paul's ministry has been powerful to touch the sleeping condition of the saints. The word has gone forth, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." And now what does he say? "Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him." None but the priestly eye of the Lord Jesus could have discerned that there was still that which could respond to Himself. There was apparent deadness, but his life was yet in him. Now I have no doubt that this incident illustrates the restoration, the revival, of the testimony in Paul's doctrine. It would be a long and dreary history to trace how it was lost in the church, but the great comfort to us is that it is revived and that it will continue until the end. Paul went down, and now

we find he goes up. That is, the testimony went down to meet the condition of the saints, and now it is effectual to raise them up.

"When he therefore was come up again, and had broken *the* bread": that is, it brings us back to the breaking of the bread. Now it is not a little remarkable, in connection with Paul's teaching, that the revival of the truth is again associated with the breaking of the bread, and I think it is indissolubly bound up with it. It begins again, after this interval of darkness into which Eutychus fell, with the breaking of the bread. It is a very simple act, and, I repeat, it is an act of devotion to the Lord. Christians may accept Paul's doctrine in the main, and yet ignore the privilege of the supper; but it is not for us to choose and say: "We will accept the benefits of Christ's death, but please ourselves as regards the breaking of bread." The breaking of the bread is the great recall to affection in the saints. It is at the supper of the Lord that we get our affections put in place, and it forms the continuous link with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in power to this earth. Paul can say to them in 1 Corinthians xi.: "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come": that is, that

the supper of the Lord Jesus puts them in direct touch with the incoming glory of His appearing.

And now, having broken the bread, *he talked a long while*. There we have the revival and continuance of the apostolic doctrine in its full power. For how long? Till some fresh trouble came in? No; the darkness had been; he talked a long while, until (thank God!) *the break of day*. We have the apostolic doctrine intact until the day of Christ's return. We may well thank God for it from the bottom of our hearts. "Even till break of day." How great the comfort of it! "And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted." This is the present position of the saints. The testimony is revived; we have it no longer inoperative in the hearts of the saints, but their affections have been touched; they are quickened by the truth that Paul has, in the grace of Christ, revived and restored to them. What is the effect? Nothing magnificent for the world to take account of, but they are "not a little comforted." Do you know that comfort? We cannot get beyond that. The beautiful thought of that comfort of His own, one to another, expresses the truth of christian fellowship in the light of resurrection.

So far the illustration. Now a few words on the power of Paul's testimony. I have no doubt that is what he tells us in the end of the chapter. He there pictures the departure that would set in from within. We have had a picture as from the outside—sleep coming on—and a picture of the inside and what he discourses to them. Now the preservation of the Pauline testimony is effective: I speak of verse 28. In calling the elders of Ephesus, he warns them to take heed to the flock *in* which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, "to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with the blood of his own." (See New Trans.) How dear the church must be to God that He gave up all for it! It is bought with the blood of His own—His peculiarly own—that is, the Son. He warns them what would intervene. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." From the outside, that would be bad enough. But the more subtle test would be this: of their own selves would men arise speaking perverse things. There is a peculiarly subtle character in perverse things. You can meet a falsehood face to face; but you cannot meet perverted things face to face. They have all the *appearance* of truth, but

in some way they have received the human impress which has turned them aside from their divine meaning. The test comes. How are you going to be preserved against it? You will be preserved by good food, by nothing else. The person in this world that is not fortified by good food gets a poor constitution, and is subject to every disease that is abroad. Preservation lies in the nourishment ministered; that is, the word of God. Here it is called the word of His grace, by which the souls of His saints can be preserved from perverted things which men shall speak "to draw away the disciples after them."

We may rely upon it that after any period of helpful ministry at any time in the history of the church we shall get men rising up under the hand of Satan to seek to pervert it. The Lord has given us some light as to Himself, so we may expect that men will rise up to draw away the disciples after them. "Therefore watch"! Be on your guard! Do not think you can sit down here and take things in a careless fashion, but "watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace." We are not handed

over to anybody or to anything down here, but to God and to the testimony of His grace; all of grace, nothing of us. It is "the word of his grace, which is able to build you up." Yes, the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. And it is able to "give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." It builds up souls in the knowledge of God, and gives an inheritance among all them that are set apart from the course of this world. Paul discourses on all that will intervene till the break of day. In spite of the wolves from without and the men arising from within speaking perverse things, the Lord will preserve His testimony through His servant Paul until the end. The light through Paul continues "till he come."

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Let us turn to John—to the last chapter of his gospel. I take it that John was not exactly concerning himself with what is outward; but he brings before us (himself the beloved disciple) those traits in which all that is divine in Christianity will abide here in moral power in the saints, spite of all breakdown. In his gospel he does not mention the church as such; it is not a pre-eminently church gospel, yet the traits

of the christian company—the moral continuation of Christ here—are given in the way in which they will abide in the hearts of the saints right on to the end. And John was peculiarly fitted to bring the substance of Christianity before us, for he it was who was the pattern of the christian company. John's gospel gives us patterns, and patterns are such as have general application and abide in their meaning right on to the end. In John's own position on the Lord's breast we see the abiding pattern of the place of intimacy in which the saints are warned of the approach of evil, and of the betrayal of His testimony here on earth, one in which they are so near His heart as to be in the current of His mind; John lay on His breast. He it was who could say to Him, "Lord, who is it that betrayeth thee?" and who could thus, in intimacy with the Lord, foresee the advent of the evil that would assail His testimony here. And the Lord Jesus gives the blessed assurance to us that the testimony through John and the church position as patterned in John, will abide here down the ages until—in His own words—"till I come." "If I will that he tarry till I come."

I now turn to chapter xx. for a few

moments to shew there the position of that new company which the Lord Jesus has left here on the ground of resurrection during His absence, and its lasting characteristics. All has for its basis the announcement, through Mary, of His ascension to the Father, involving new relationships in a new sphere. The subsequent accomplishment of this together with the consequent descent of the Spirit is anticipated in the completeness of the pattern incident which follows—"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week." (Vers. 19, 20.) But if we do not get the supper given us by John, we get what underlies the supper, and that is of equal importance: it is the immovable foundation on which the affections of the saints rest as they come together. "When therefore it was evening on that day, which was the first day of the week, and the doors shut where the disciples were, through fear of the Jews." (New Trans.) Now, if we are to know anything of the divine position which the Lord Jesus has given His saints here, the first qualification is this, that the doors be shut for fear of the Jews. At the present time the doors are no material doors; the Jew is the religious man, the busy man who wants to control everything in the meeting, the man who wants to manage things and

have all as he thinks fit. But the door of the heart must be shut against him, and we each carry that man within us. But the doors of the heart, in affection to Christ, must be closed against that man, as the power of His death in putting him out of court comes home to our souls. If that be not the case with us, we can have little hope of realising the presence of the Lord vouchsafed to the christian company.

“Came Jesus and stood in the midst.” That is the position He has taken up in the company of His own in resurrection. It is a reality; we cannot explain it, but the positive presence of the Lord Jesus in the midst of the christian company is an absolutely true yet miraculous fact. The first word with which He greets them is “Peace be unto you”! I have no doubt that those words were to them the proclamation in resurrection of the new divine realm He had won for man in death. Peace is not a negative quality in scripture: it is a positive thought. I take it to be this, that the very realm which was occupied by the enemy’s power He has by death cleared of every foe, and has made that new ground available for man in resurrection, and the heralding of peace is this: that the new ground is available for man.

“And when he had so said, he shewed them his hands and his side.” He identifies Himself to them in resurrection in the very marks of His having suffered, and He does that continuously and abidingly through the supper. John does not give us the dark part of it, but he does give us the moral side of it in affection which will abide throughout Christianity.

“Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.” That is the pattern of the assembly of God abiding in power, and as we understand the position the Lord Jesus takes up in the midst of the company as He identifies Himself to us in the marks of His death, our hearts go out to Him, and we rejoice.

“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” That is not the same as the first “Peace.” He was sending them now to occupy the ground that He had won for them in the victory of His death. As His Father had sent Him forth in apostolic power, He would send them; they are sent to take possession of the new place He had acquired for them through His death. He has taken His saints out of this world, and now He sends them into it as heavenly visitants bringing the light of resurrection

and joy and heaven into a dry and thirsty scene, sent back to occupy it here for a brief space till He come. He sends them here shod with the peace of His own presence to occupy the territory.

“And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” Now the Lord Jesus takes up the position of last Adam. The first Adam breathed death into his race, but the last Adam, in resurrection, the Lord Jesus Christ, as a quickening Spirit, breathes life into His brethren. We see here the great primal act of the last Adam, as in resurrection power He breathes His risen life into His disciples that they may live. He quickens them; it is not exactly the impartation of the Holy Spirit personally, but He Himself as Man, in resurrection, becomes their life, that they may henceforward live in new and blessed relationships outside the old scene of sin and death, that they may breathe the atmosphere of that new and holy scene where sin and death will never find an entrance. There they live the life of that risen, glorious Man.

“Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” To that company on earth He grants the privilege of the

forgiveness and the retention of sins. That is a wonderful fact, and what I believe to be involved in that fact is this: that it proves that blessed company of His brethren to be a company against which as such no charge of sin can lie. That is viewed as in the divine mind; I am not speaking of any particular meeting in any locality; but viewed as in the divine mind the company of Christ's brethren is one against which no imputation of sins will lie, for it is holy essentially, holy in its character. And there it stands, begotten in the death of Christ, having as such no previous history, standing up in the power of resurrection on this earth, imbued with His quickening breath, a deathless company (for the church of God never dies) amidst a dying world, in the full light of His word, "Till I come."

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"The testimony of two men is true." (John viii. 17.) Of John "we know that his testimony is true" (John xxi. 24), and we have been accustomed to the thought of his abiding in the power of his ministry till the end. But I venture to hope that the line we have been pursuing to-night will convince us that the light given through Paul (who is specially *our* apostle, as being the apostle to

the Gentiles) will likewise remain in power till the Lord comes. "God and the word of his grace" abide, and we thus see that all that is vital in the ministry of Paul does and will continue with the church "even till break of day."

