

SERMONS OF J B STONEY

by J.B. Stoney

Stoney's gospel addresses examining the nature of sin and separation from God, emphasizing the necessity of a sacrificial victim who bears judgment and presenting the Gospel as the solution to humanity's fundamental problem.

25 Chapters

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S. A Gospel Address

A Gospel Address

Revised.

Matthew 27:50; Luke 15:17-32.

You cannot understand the Gospel if you do not understand what is the matter with you. I believe the great lack of souls is that they do not know the nature of their distance from God. If that is not removed there is no true happiness; therefore it is a very important point to know the nature of the weight and of the distance which sin has created between God and man. What is the nature of the distance? All admit that there is a distance. Even heathen admit it. Cain admitted it. As eldest born he recognizes that there is a distance between God and man; but Cain's mistake was that he did not know the nature of the distance. That is where many a religious man is today. He is trying to make terms with God in order to remove the distance. But, beloved friends, he effects nothing but his own confusion, because he does not know the nature of the distance. Such an one is like a physician trying to cure a disease that he does not know. If I know what was the matter with me, and I know that it is removed, I am at peace. But this is the great lack. Now Abel says, "I will show you the right way." He sets forth that there must be a victim, not chargeable with your offence, bearing the judgment of your offence, and, at the time of bearing it, having a personal excellency. The end could not have been obtained without death. Many have received the gospel as far as that Christ died; but they are not in liberty. They are saved, but have not peace. "By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." I desire to keep very distinctly before you the nature of the distance. If you turn to Genesis 3:1-24 you find there, when God's voice was heard in the garden, Adam hid himself, and as soon as God came near him he was conscious that he had lost his body in the sight of God; that is, that he was naked. Adam tried to hide himself among the trees of the garden. God said, "Who told thee that thou wast naked?" I believe that is the first sense of the soul near to God - fear. As the thief said, "Dost not thou fear God?" Why did he fear? Man has the sense that he is under the judgment of God. "I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself." "Who told thee that thou wast naked?" The devil did not. Nearness to God made him sensible of it, and then he tried to hide himself among the trees of the garden. Man likes to conceal himself from God amidst the glories of this world. The judgment is, "The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." That man in whom sin is must go in death. It is not enough that another should die for sin, there must be also resurrection from the dead. I trust that you understand the nature of the distance.

Now I come to the fact that you could not remove God's judgment yourself. It is impossible for a man to save himself. "Ah!" you say, "now you put me in a corner." I am very glad of it. Is there no door open for you? Yes, mercy. Mercy is your only door. I do not know whether you remember that there were four lepers at the siege of Samaria, and they said, "If we stay here we shall die here, and if we go into the city we shall die there." Is there no door then open for these wretched men? Yes, there is - mercy. Mercy from their enemies. "Let us go to the Syrians," they say. "If they save

us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die." Only mercy is open. They trusted to mercy, and what did they find? When they came to the camp of the Syrians no one was there. The Syrians had left their tents and their horses and asses in the camp, and fled for their life. The lepers ate and drank and made a fortune, and then became evangelists. They went back to the city and told what they had found. Mercy is the door for you the moment you see that your distance is irretrievable, for I need not go into works of supererogation in Romanism, doing good works to make up for bad ones. Generally a man will own himself to be a sinner, but he is not aware that death is on him, that he has lost his body in the sight of God. Hence, we read in 2 Corinthians 5:1-21, "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked," that is, without a body. That is the judgment of God, "the wages of sin is death." It is not made a question of bad works. Some pious people think that Christ's righteousness can be a set-off for their unrighteousness. You have not met the judgment of God there. You must be found before God in another Man, and not in the one who offended God. It is plain that death is the judgment of God on man. "The wrath of God" abides on the unbeliever. It is on him.

Next I come to the fact that you cannot save yourself, but God tells you in His Word that His own arm hath brought salvation. How has it come? "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He came to do the will of God, He says. "A body hast Thou prepared Me," and "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." Now I come to most marvellous grace; that is, that God, the One who was offended, is the One who removes the offence from His own side. He is offended by man's sin. Your body must go in judgment. You have lost it as it is for ever. It is consistent with the holiness of God that you should lose it. The creature who sets up his own will against God cannot continue now in grace. God undertakes to remove the distance. In John 1:29 we read, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Do you think a pious Jew would understand that? He would not see that God could require a Lamb, appropriate the Lamb; he would be himself thinking of his salvation, but not of the One who was offended. The One who was offended is the One first relieved, to His own infinite satisfaction and glory. You have offended against God, and God Himself (for you could not have removed the distance), God in His most marvellous grace Himself removes it. I sometimes explain it by the example of a child who has broken a clock. He has to go to his room, and stay there till the clock is mended. He stays there for weeks. At last the father says, "He frets so much, I will mend it myself." See the effect on the child. If he has any sense he is deeply touched with the father's love, and also with respect to the removal of the offence. If the father mends it himself he cannot find fault with the way it is done. God has provided a Lamb Himself, and He has removed the distance Himself.

Now I turn to Matthew 27:50, and what do you get there? "Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost." "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." As we read in Genesis 3:1-24, the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Christ dies. He has borne the judgment. "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it? "He cried" with a loud voice." His strength was unimpaired. It was not that He was worn out. He gave up His life of Himself. What was the effect? "The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." The distance is gone from

God's side. God has found the Man who was typified by the golden ark in the Holiest. Nothing could be more marvellous. The offence is gone from God's eye in Christ. He had found a Man who could remove it, and hence we read, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." The testimony is that the distance on God's side is gone, and He can "be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." How wonderful grace is, that God can come forth, the distance having been removed, and embrace the returning prodigal. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Now I turn you to Luke 15:1-32, which I also read, and you see how the One who was offended receives the offender. Nothing can be plainer. If I read a gospel sermon, I am told how a man finds relief. I say, and insist on it, that the One offended has been first relieved. The God whom sin hath offended has been relieved. The offence has been removed from His side by Christ. As He says, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." When did He say it? When Judas had gone out; when man was at his worst. Man then, as Judas, was at his worst, and "now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." Where? In the most distant spot - in death. As another has said, and truly, "God was indebted to a man for glory, but that man was His own Son." "If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him."

Now I want you to understand what grace is. It is wonderful that when the sinner turns, God is for him. He has been relieved of all the offence, and He can receive him joyfully. Is it to put him back to the place he had before the fall? A man in innocence in the garden of Eden? No; but something infinitely higher. People say the need is the measure of the grace. It is not true. The grace is infinitely beyond the need. The greatness of the grace roused the jealousy of the elder brother. "Thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends"; but your son, who has spent all you gave him in riotous living, you welcomed to the highest festivity. He did not begrudge that his brother should be forgiven, but that he should be feasted in this great way. The fatted calf was kept for the chosen guest. The guest had come, and that guest was the prodigal son. Many do not believe it, but here it is. Because God's heart has been relieved, and now He can satisfy His breast, because the MAN who removed the judgment at the same time glorified Him. I will not add much more, but I just turn to Luke 15:1-32 : There are three parables in the chapter. One was the shepherd. If Christ had riot died God could not have come out in righteousness to receive the prodigal, and the prodigal could not have turned to God. The light works in his soul, and he comes to himself. He is led to go and see what he can get from his father. "The goodness of God" leads him to repentance." It is important to bear in mind that he goes the contrary road to his mother Eve. She said in act, "I can do better for myself than God acts." She took of the tree, and did eat it. She walked in independence. Now this poor prodigal son, when brought to the lowest point, is reduced to a state of misery. Everyone is in a state of misery before he is converted. I know it, because I was there myself. Saul of Tarsus, who thought that he was the pink of everything good, had to fall to the ground.

Now it is here where the sinner is. The prodigal comes to himself. He says, "I will arise, and go to my father." He believes that there is good in his father. There is good in God; and, believe me, it will be terrible misery to the lost when they find out for the first time that there is goodness in God. "Make me as one of thy hired servants" was the prodigal's gospel. Now he comes, and what is his surprise when his father falls upon his neck and covers him with kisses! Most unexpectedly, the prodigal found his father was on the best of terms with him. How could he be so? If you turn to

Matthew 27:1-66 you will understand how God can "be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." Here we get the feelings of the Father, the joy of the finder. How little we take in the fact that God has removed the distance by His Son, and that there is delight of heart in God in receiving the returning sinner. Christ said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." God has an interest in the gospel. Hence our need is not the measure of His grace. God's heart is the measure of it. The prodigal knows that he is not fit for his father. The father replies, "I will make you fit." The moment the best robe was on him he was fit, and he went in. The father says, "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." I do not dwell on it. The Lord alone can fix it in your heart.

If I speak to one thoughtless person here tonight, I ask you, When you are brought to God what will you find? You will find that God has to His own infinite and entire satisfaction removed all that was against you in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He will never revive it, because man under judgment has been judicially terminated there, and He delights to receive you returning to Him. You are brought back to share in the festivities of the Father's house. The one fact I desire to lay upon every heart in this room tonight is, that God can "be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus"; that is, that He has removed the distance on His own side. He has removed in the cross the man under judgment, and now He has the Man who bore the judgment risen from the dead. There is only one passage more - Luke 23:39 - that I will say a word about. The thief goes into paradise from the most degraded position in which a man could be found in this world. "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Not a paradise of man, but the paradise of God - in the same nearness as Christ - in company with Him. If you look at Matthew 27:1-66 there is the point. The door to God Himself is thrown open. And now the thief by divine grace goes in with the Son of God into the paradise of God. Nothing can be more marvellous. J. B. Stoney.

S. A Gospel Address

A Gospel Address Exodus 14:1-31; Luke 15:1-32. The grace of God as brought to us in the gospel may be divided into two parts: first, what we are brought out from, and secondly, what we are brought into. Many converted souls know something about what they are brought out of, but very few have the least idea of what God has brought them to, and no soul is entirely off the old ground until he knows what it is to be on the new. Moses' commission was to bring the people out of Egypt and into the good land. As soon as a soul knows he is on the new ground, he is out of the old. The gospel is that God has brought you out of the land of darkness and shadow of death into the land of light and glory. The defect in many souls is that they do not know the nature of the distance between God and the sinner. Only one Man ever knew that, and that was the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone, even a pagan, knows that there is a distance between the Creator and the creature, but how few comparatively speaking, understand the nature of the distance. Cain did not know it; he, like a bad physician, tried to cure the disease not knowing what it was, not understanding the nature of it, and there are a great many people who do likewise. The gospel from God's side shows us how God has removed the distance! Abel had faith in God, and knew that nothing could remove the distance but a victim not personally chargeable with the sins for which he suffered, and he offered of the firstlings of the flock and the fat thereof, but there was no resurrection in that type. The victim dies, and the sins are gone.

Here nine-tenths of those who preach the gospel stop. The gospel usually preached is forgiveness of sins, but not resurrection. There is no resurrection in the sacrifices of the Old Testament. No victim that was offered was ever raised again. And if resurrection is not preached there can be no real sense in the soul of the distance being removed. Death alone could remove the distance, the victim must be one not chargeable with the offence at the time of death, that is, there must be personal excellency in the victim; but it is in apprehending the resurrection that the soul gets the sense that that which caused the distance is removed. The thought of some is that the sinner can do good works, so as to please God, and that Christ's righteousness comes in as a set-off for his unrighteousness. But there is no victim there; you must come to own that you cannot remove the distance yourself, and when you take that ground you find that God has removed the distance, and from His own side too: "His own arm hath brought salvation." To illustrate this, suppose a child broke a clock and was told to go to his room until he mended it. Could he mend it? How long would he try to do so? Why, the more he tried the more he would injure it. Then his father comes in and says, "I will mend it myself." Now, this brings out two things: first, the love of the father, who does not like the distance to continue; and secondly, that as the father has mended it himself, he must be satisfied as to the way in which it is done. Thus the grace of God has come in, and God has removed the distance from His own side. He has done it. Every sinner is under the righteous judgment of God, because he has the nature of a sinner. You see it in a baby, the nature shows itself. When God addressed Adam, what did He say? Not "What hast thou done?" but "Where art thou?" Adam hid himself because of what he was; he said, "I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself." God said to the woman, "What is this that thou hast done?" She had believed the lie

of the devil when he told her, "Thou shalt not surely die." To man's eye they did not die, but in God's sight from that moment man was morally dead. How slow all our hearts are to accept the place of death!

We will now read Luke 15:24 : "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." You see, it was not only that he was lost, but he was dead too. "The wages of sin is death." The man that is lost and dead must go from before God's sight. Let me ask, Are you going to keep that man, are you going to dress him up and make him important? Never. Christ gave up His life that He might blot out that man from before the eye of God. That man is morally dead, and in the cross of Christ he has come to an end judicially before God. When the children of Israel walked through the Red Sea they were out of the place of judgment. The first part was done, they were brought out, but not yet in. A person who is not out knows that Christ has died for him, but he is occupied with the difficulties of the way, though he knows that as to the past all is settled for him. But when he is out he is occupied with God, he is able to take up the song in Exodus 15:1-27, which is all about God, and it could not be otherwise: "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed." To return to Luke 15:1-32. We have there a parable in three parts, and each one is all about the joy of the finder. The shepherd goes out and seeks his sheep up and down upon the mountains until he finds it; and when he hath found it he bears it in triumph on his shoulders and carries it to the house (not home) rejoicing. The point is not so much the safety of the sheep, but his own joy in finding it: "He calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost." Then you get the woman sweeping the house, and seeking diligently for the lost piece of silver. This is the Spirit of God in the evangelist seeking for everything that belongs to Christ in the world. She too rejoices, and we read, "Likewise I say unto you, there is joy" (not of the angels) but "in the presence of the angels." Now we come to the third. A father has two sons. One of them gathers up all that belongs to him and goes into a far country, and you know the rest.

We find this continually in the history of man, his soul starves, and he tries to satisfy himself with husks. Every man who is saved has been converted against his will. In Exodus 14:1-31 you find God sending out His servant to compel them to come in, that His house may be filled. Suppose a sovereign saying, "I throw open my gates to the needy," and not only so but he sends out his soldiers to compel them to come in, you would say that is very fine; but the gospel surpasses all this because the spring of all is Love. What makes a man turn to God? The fact that death stares him in the face. No man ever got saved till he knew he was lost. The thief found this out, he turned to the Lord and went to paradise; his body did not go there, the old thing was left on the cross. Of course we get redemption of the body through the work of Christ, but that had not come out yet. When Adam sinned he felt the difference in himself and hid himself among the trees of the garden; he knew what taking the fruit of the tree of good and evil involved. Death came in. What then? God says you must put the blood on, and "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." This we get in Exodus 12:1-51. It is a great thing to get hold of the fact as to how God looks at the blood - not how you look at it, but how God looks at it. It is a wonderful thing when a soul learns that God has His eye on the blood of Christ. That gives you shelter, but you are still in the doomed place; you are safe, you can say, "I know I shall not be lost," but you are not happy, you are still in the place of death, and what occupies you is the power of evil. You are not out of Egypt. Now, in Exodus 14:1-31 you will find that the children of Israel had to walk through the Red Sea before they

enjoyed assurance. I do not say acceptance, but the assurance of salvation. You must get assurance before you get acceptance. A man might preach the word of God for years, and study what is called divinity, and yet he may never have learned acceptance. He may have assurance without having acceptance. You will not find acceptance in any book of divinity. You say, Where then can I find it? Where God finds it - in Christ. There is a great difference between assurance and acceptance. God says to Moses, Open the way through the Red Sea, let the waters become a wall on the one side and on the other! It was a wonderful way, but they walked right through, and they could look back upon it as a journey they had taken. I do not believe that anyone can understand what acceptance is unless he possesses it. God Himself has made the way through; I must travel that road. I had death on me, therefore Christ died for me. The fear of death is a right feeling. Look at Hezekiah, how he feared it; he was afraid to lose his body. We all shrink from death. What is to be done? The Lord comes. One born of a woman removes the sin. He bruises the serpent's head. Through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Hebrews 2:14-15.) The Lord died. What followed? He "hath abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility [not immortality] to light through the gospel." (2 Timothy 1:10.) Do not think you can slip easily unto these things. I never knew a bright light shining for God yet without there being previously what I would call a severe conversion. God always begins with the bass note, and He never asks you to sing till you learn that note. Then you get higher. The real practical difficulty with souls is to find out that they have not only got shelter and enjoy a measure of relief, but that God has something infinitely more for them. The ten lepers (Luke 17:1-37) were all cured - converted, if you will - but only one of them got to the Curer. The other nine were satisfied with the blessing, and they never reached the Blessor. Immediately the prodigal turns his eyes towards the father's house the father sees him. Now, what I want to know is, not how I feel, but how the Father feels. When the prodigal said, "I will arise and go to my father," he was not far away, he had only to turn the corner. The prodigal felt it a great way off it was the far country to him - but the father quickly ran over the distance. "He ran, and fell on his neck, and covered him with kisses." Now this is a pattern of the grace of God.

"Returning sons He kisses, And with His robe invests; His perfect love dismisses All terror from our breasts."

We have to learn what is in the heart of God for us. In Matthew 27:50-51, we read that the veil was rent the very moment Christ died. God rent it. God's heart was relieved, so to speak, and could come out to man in all the riches of His grace. If you have not got hold of that you can never be really happy. You must see that God can now be just and the Justifier of those who believe in Jesus. What did the prodigal learn when the father ran, and fell on his neck, and covered him with kisses? That his father was on the very best terms with him. And I can tell you here tonight that everything which stood against us has been so removed from God's side that the Father can come out and embrace His son in all his rags. In Matthew 27:1-66 God rends the veil and comes out. In Luke 23:1-56 the thief goes in. People speak of the thief as if he had something like a death-bed repentance. It was not that at all: he went straight from the cross into paradise. "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." What I desire to press is that God's heart is set upon blessing us, and how the Father can receive the sheep on the ground of what the One who brought it back has done. And Christ's work on the cross has so removed everything from the eye of God that caused

the distance, that He can receive the prodigal, fall upon his neck, and cover him with kisses. That is really what is stated in the original. The translators have given it "kissed him." The elder brother knew nothing of grace, either as to salvation or restoration. I never saw a man yet who was truly restored after a fall who did not get a step higher. No one ever understood fully the heart of God but the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore He meets the poor woman at the well, gives her the living water, and says, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." Not her work, but His. God grant that we may all take a deeper interest in the gospel, that we may know more of His grace, which is bringing many sons to glory, and that each one here may see the nature of acceptance. You may say that you do not enjoy it - that is another thing. Well, if you do not enjoy it, you are entitled to it, and you cannot deny that there are many who do. God has removed everything to His own satisfaction, and you learn in the first eleven verses of Romans 5:1-21 the terms He is on with you. It is a great delight to the heart of a sinner saved by grace to know that he is received on the ground of another Man who perfectly glorified God. We are accepted in Him, the Beloved. In Romans 5:1-21, from Romans 5:12, it is no longer Adam, but Christ. The gospel is that God has sent His own Son, and He came and bore the judgment in such a way that man in the flesh is terminated. One man has gone out, and another Man has come in. May God give each heart here to understand the greatness of His grace for His name's sake. J. B. Stoney.

Nothing but what is of Christ can go into heaven, but He is the measure as to everything down here in this world; we are to be like Christ in heaven, and the judgment-seat can approve nothing less down here. J. H. R.

S. Christ Formed In You.

Christ Formed In You.

Readings at Croydon. No. 2.

Galatians 2:20; Galatians 4:28-31; Galatians 5:1.

We have to bear in mind that both the Corinthians and Galatians had departed from the simple teaching of Romans, yet they are not turned back to it, but they are corrected by a fuller apprehension of the truth from which they had departed. They had both received the Holy Ghost, and the marvel is, that they should have wandered from the simplicity of the truth. The Corinthians made their own minds the arbiter of their acts. The Spirit of God is grieved if you supersede Him. They had fallen into disorder in every circle - Church, family, everywhere.

Now the Galatians were trying to improve themselves by keeping the law. It is very important for us to see how they are corrected. In both cases it is by giving Christ His true place. The Corinthians are reminded that they were brought to God, and hence beholding the Lord's glory there was no place for the natural man, but they would be transformed into the same image. Our subject now is, how a Christian is delivered from trying to improve the flesh. Would you kindly tell us the teaching of Romans from which they had departed? The two great things in Romans are acceptance and liberty. Romans 5:1-21 is, God cannot be on better terms with me. I do not doubt that people try to get Romans 8:1-39 before Romans 5:1-21. The prodigal did not get Romans 8:1-39 before Romans 5:1-21.

It is as much a departure from Christianity to fall into the evils that we find in Corinth as it is to improve the flesh as in Galatians?

Quite so. There are two great subjects, acceptance and liberty. Our acceptance with God was accomplished on the cross. If you believe on Him that raised up Christ from the dead, you are justified. It is summed up in Romans 5:11 - "We . . . joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." Our translators could not get beyond atonement, because they did not understand reconciliation. These eleven verses set forth the terms on which God is with you, and how God feels toward you. Then comes another thing, and that is where the trial is, and where it was with the prodigal - I am not fit for God. How is that to be met? God has removed everything from His own eye in the cross, and as you have simple faith you see it is all gone. Now He gives you the Holy Ghost. Hence Romans 8:1-39 begins with "In Christ," "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." You cannot believe the number of Christians who are damaged, because they seek their freedom from sin by faith, instead of by the Spirit of God. It is faith in Romans 5:1-21, but it is the Spirit of God in Romans 8:1-39. Why? Because it is true to God always that the man under judgment has gone in the cross; but it is only true to me when I am walking in the Spirit.

Then is the flesh set aside in Romans 8:1-39?

There are four operations there. In Romans 8:1-13 the Spirit is master of the flesh. Romans 8:39 is, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." It is not by resolution. Do you understand now? Do you understand the difference between the Spirit of God and resolution? Resolution is the work of your own will. The Spirit of God is God's will. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." It is not the mortification of the body, but of the deeds of the body. The Spirit in you is master of the flesh.

I cannot use the Spirit except faith is in activity?

You have to accept in faith that you are committed to death. Therefore Romans 6:1-23; Romans 7:1-25 is the battle-ground. You are committed to the death of Christ by baptism. You accept this first, and then it is carried out by the Spirit of God. In Romans 6:1-23 faith could say the old man is crucified.

Quite true in the eye of God, but you cannot carry it out but by the Spirit. Galatians 2:20 is the carrying it out. So "I am crucified with Christ" would not apply to everybody?

It is experimental.

Paul is speaking for himself?

Yes; it is experimental. "Our old man is crucified with Him," that is the thing for your faith to see with God. But when you come to enter into the reality of it you can say, "I am crucified with Christ."

It is always true for faith? When you lose your temper is it true to you? Is it true then, that you are not in the flesh? It is true to God, but not true to you. If you were walking in the Spirit it would be true to you. Therefore in Romans 5:1-21 it is faith, because God never alters. You cannot improve your acceptance with Him. He never deviates from His acceptance. He never reverts to the old man. Now come to your side. If you could be in keeping with Him you would be all right. You have received the Holy Ghost that you may be so. In Romans 8:1-39 you are in Christ. There is no condemnation there. You have changed your man. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the "righteous requirement" of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." That is liberty. There is first acceptance, then liberty.

What are the four sections? The first is, the Spirit is master of the flesh; the second, your dignity here as a son; third, you are in a groaning creation, but you will have a glorified body; fourth, you have a Friend - the Spirit of God - and He knows what you want. You know not what to pray for as you ought, but He makes intercession for you, and you get many things you never prayed for at all. Therefore we read, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" But now the apostle labours that Christ might be formed in them. Many Christians have gone to the law to try and correct themselves, and many of us have. For years after I knew everything was gone from the eye of God, when I looked at myself it was not gone from me, because I was trying to improve it. It is a great thing to see that God has not only cleared everything away from His eye, but He says, "I have given you the Holy Ghost, and in the Holy Ghost you are as free from it as I am, but you must walk in the Spirit."

I suppose that is why it says, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Exactly. If the flesh be resisted, it is by the Spirit. I think we don't make enough of the Spirit. Many a one speaks of the work of Christ, but little of the work of the Spirit. He is your Friend. Be sure neither the flesh, nor the world is your friend. Who is your friend down here? You have only One. Do you know how to find out the good of a friend? Use him.

Well now, it is interesting to see how the apostle corrects the Galatians. He takes the type of the weaning of Isaac. Isaac and Ishmael were in the house together - one was born after the flesh, the other after the Spirit. The Galatians were like this. There was the legal man, born after the flesh, and Christ was there also, but He was not given His right place. That is the state of many a Christian. It is a wonderful day, the coronation-day, when Christ gets His place. Do you connect it with Romans 8:19?

Yes, because the apostle is showing the way it comes to you. He wants to get them to this point, and the way to get to it is to give Christ His place. The marvellous grace is that Christ lives in you. It is a Person lives in you. One person has gone, another has come in.

What is the difference between Christ living in us and Christ being formed in us?

He could not live in you if He were not formed in you. You see in the type that when Isaac was weaned there was a great feast; he was to have a recognised position. Ishmael and Isaac had been going on together as is the case with many believers. Ishmael born after the flesh, Abraham's son, brought up in his house, was there. While all the 318 servants were acknowledging Isaac as the heir, this Ishmael, a youth of fourteen, mocked. That is, the cultivated man does not like Christ. It is a terrible fact - the legal man does not like Christ. Isaac was acknowledged. I believe it is a wonderful moment when Christ gets His place. The great good of it is this. Once you have acknowledged Him, you will not have a good conscience if you do not continue doing so. There is a moment when you have done it, but if tomorrow you are drawn away by Ishmael, until Christ be restored to His right place in your heart you will not be happy, you will be like a bird with a wounded wing. Is not that the secret of holiness?

Unquestionably. That is the coronation day. Christ has not got His right place in the world, but, thank God, He has it in your hearts. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." There is not a word here about your sins - the old man has gone. Christ only is left. It is very simple. You acknowledge Him. If you are not true to Christ you cannot be true to anybody. I have seen it in Christians, when they were not faithful to God they were not faithful to anybody. You see, it depends upon acknowledgment. I acknowledge Him in His right place. The moment you acknowledge Him in His right place, you cannot tolerate Ishmael. If Christ has His place, Ishmael has no place.

Then the coronation day is to go on continually? By the Spirit of God. You are always happy when He keeps you up to your highest point. You never see a Christian unhappy, but he has let go the top round of the ladder. Mark the Scripture, "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Souls who are declining lose first the top shoot; a gardener knows that if the top shoot is checked the plant is not doing well. The top shoot always suffers first. You never saw a Christian declining who did not give up the best bit of truth he had. It is the very opposite to the man of the world. If there is a fire or any danger, he makes every effort to save the best. The Christian loses his best first.

What is the secret of keeping on the top round? CHRIST. Christ has got His right place, and the intruder is turned out. Oh, you say, the intruder can come in, for he knows the house well! If I put him out at the door, he will come in at the window. The word to you is, "Stand fast . . . in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

Read Galatians 5:17 : "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Is that translated rightly? It should be "that ye may not." This has been a great light to me. Our translators preferred their conscience to their learning. I wish they had kept to the meaning of the original. It is the very reverse. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh. I have got a Friend in me now. I used to say that I believed the flesh was stronger than grace. I dare not say so now, because I have this verse to prove that if the Spirit of God is there, He is stronger than the flesh.

It is very important, that remark about losing the best bit of truth. Is the reason this - that the best truth needs full spiritual power to retain it?

Quite so. You know it in natural things. If the extremities are cold, there is a lack of vitality. Is that why we have the warning, "hold fast"?

Exactly, and therefore you will often find a believer with less light more vigorous than one with more light, because he is walking up to his light. The Spirit of God has no check; He is not grieved with the latter, for he is walking up to the measure of what he has got. The Spirit's object is always Christ. Are all prepared to make the start? Sometimes it is grievous to us to cast out Ishmael.

I want righteousness first. I am not uneasy about Ishmael if I give Christ His right place. I shall not make Ishmael first if I am making Isaac first, for then Ishmael must go, I cannot tolerate him. Is it not a common snare to attempt to make Ishmael subject to Isaac?

Yes, and they think that Isaac will improve Ishmael. No! Ishmael must be cast out; you are doing an act of simple righteousness when you acknowledge Christ's right to all. He has the right to you, and hence Paul says, "Christ liveth in me." People speak of eternal life as if they had received it independently for themselves, whereas it is the Person who is the life who lives in you, What prevents me from turning Ishmael out?

Because you do not really desire to give Isaac his place. Ishmael was in the house fourteen years, Isaac only one year; but he was not weaned, he was not yet acknowledged. You never can displace Ishmael until you see that Christ has the right to you. He died for you. You cannot keep Ishmael out but by the Spirit of God. If we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Do you call that conflict?

Yes, there is conflict to continue here practically. This experience surpasses that of Romans 7:1-25. There you learned your inability to keep the law. Here you find that the most cultivated sentiment man has does not like Christ. The greatest effort all around us is to make Adam love Christ. It is impossible.

You said that there was no use in armour if you are not in battle. There are many Christians, who are not engaged in battle, who would be in Galatians 5:1-26 : This is different to Ephesians 6:1-24. There it is heavenly conflict with Satan, while here it is with the flesh. I don't say Satan is not at the bottom of it; but you are not on heavenly ground here, and therefore not opposed by the seven

nations. There are Amalek and Balaam and the seven nations.

Many Christians know nothing of the conflict of Ephesians 6:1-24. Could we say they do not know this?

I do not believe any Christian is exempted from this who has given Christ His place. I believe this conflict goes on, but it is a victorious conflict, because you must succeed if you walk in the Spirit. You cannot succeed in Romans 7:1-25. You find out your own incompetence there. "In me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing." Would this be a good answer to give to anyone who says, "I am so often defeated." You have not given Christ His right place? I believe it would. It is a never-to-be-forgotten moment. I think the great question to be asked is, "What is walking in the Spirit?" I give the answer a sailor gave when asked, "How do you get on in rough weather?" He said, "I don't mind so long as I can see the sun." Where is your eye? Is it on Christ? Keep your eye on Him, and there is no fear for you. Perhaps you intend to visit some one. Keep your eye on Christ, and you will get on very well. The next visit you pay may be quite different. Your eye is not on Christ. You are thinking of being useful. The Spirit of God occupies you with nothing but Christ.

Exactly. He testifies not of Himself, but of Christ. Is walking in the Spirit the result of Christ having His right place?

You see that you are in liberty when Christ has His right place, therefore we read, "Stand fast . . . in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." The Spirit of God will never maintain liberty in you until He has put Christ in His right place. Is Galatians 2:20 Jordan?

No, I do not think you touch Jordan in it. In Romans you do not go over Jordan. Is the coronation-day when Christ is formed in you?

Yes; He is formed in you when He gets His place. If you study Galatians 2:20 you will see that nothing is plainer. The old man is gone. On the cross "I am crucified with Christ." You have changed from Adam to Christ. You do not appear in Adam before God. You appear in Christ. Is it the same as leaving your first love?

It is leaving your first love, if after you have known Him you do not give Him His place. You are like the Bride in Song of Solomon 5:1-16, and the way you are restored is by dwelling upon the beauties of His person. (See Song of Solomon 5:10-16) Can you not say a word more about restoration? You said, I think, it was by dwelling on the beauties of Christ one gets right?

You recover your lost footing. It will come out. You cannot know when there is a reserve between yourself and another, but in proportion to your intimacy. If you have only a passing acquaintance with a person, you do not feel casual reserve. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." The day comes when Ishmael is cast out. Is it not an important thing to bear in mind that he has to be kept out? That is where the Spirit of God acts for you. A person might say, "But Ishmael knows the way in." I say, If you are walking in the Spirit, he will not come in. You have One dwelling in you who is greater than the flesh. The body is the Lord's, and He directs its course throughout. If you want a sample of a man who is dead, you get it in Jonah in the whale. He was alive, but he had no will of his own. I am quite alive, but it is His will I am governed by. Is that living "by the faith of the Son of God"?

It comes down to this, you are living as He lived down here. Is that the faith that has Christ for its object?

Quite so. He is the object, and the example, and the power to carry you into His path. It will come out when we come to the wilderness. Practically, you have not the man who is crucified living in you, but Christ living in you, and until you learn this step you will not get on to the next, "the life which I now live in the flesh," etc. No person will get on until Christ gets His place. You never make any progress whatever till then. You cannot have part with Him if you have not given Him His place in you. If you do not take this step we are on tonight you will never make the least progress. Could this be called practical deliverance?

I was trying to get a word to convey it. A Galatian is one who has begun rightly, and has seen by faith the work of Christ for him, but is seeking perfection in the flesh by the law, holiness by faith, etc. Hence it is in advance of the deliverance in Romans 8:2. It is not merely the law of the Spirit, but you can say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Did I understand you to say that we do not walk in the Spirit by trying to, but by being occupied with Christ?

Quite right, but we do not defer enough to the Spirit. A person who has received the Spirit has a new power. I think the more you understand what it is to be helped by the Spirit, the more you feel that you want help. Could you say that a person who knows this is practically delivered?

I think he could not be delivered otherwise. Still I can understand that a soul may be in Romans 8:1-39 and saying I am free, but your self is not personally displaced, and Christ superseding you until you come to Galatians 2:20. It is the most absolute deliverance.

Must it be a continuous thing?

It is; it is not merely that I am free from the flesh, but the Person who has made me free lives in me.

"If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin."

Yes, and that is the same word as in Colossians - "Christ in you, the hope of glory," and yet it is a different side altogether.

Then you would say that Galatians 2:20 is the same thing as Romans 8:2, only more advanced?

Yes. Here Christ liveth in you. Could one call the one deliverance, the other liberty?

Romans was the groundwork, but the Corinthians and the Galatians had departed from it. And in our day we can see how restoration can be effected. Restoration always sets you morally higher than you were before departure.

If this practical deliverance were going on Ishmael could not get in again.

If you walk in the Spirit you are free from the flesh, though the flesh is always trying to get a place. Can we say deliverance is practically known in the measure in which Christ is given His right place?

I should say so. Does not Galatians 2:20 start with death?

Yes. Until the old man is displaced Christ cannot get His place. It is by the Spirit of God that you appropriate the death of Christ. No one could put himself to death. Have you noticed that, in the first edition of the Synopsis, Mr. Darby makes Romans 6:1-23 standing, while in the last he makes it experimental? People try to accept death with respect to the old man by faith. If it were always true of you, you could. It is always true of you in the eye of God - hold that by faith.

There is a positive side in Romans 6:1-23 - alive unto God.

Certainly, because it is in the same Person, by whose death you are severed from the old man, that you now live. You are to reckon yourself to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. You are committed to death in Romans 6:1-23. In Romans 8:13 you carry it out. You must believe it though first?

I quite agree that you believe you are committed to it; but you must have the Spirit to carry it out. Is "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus" connected with it?

Yes, it is the practical consequence. Is Christ being formed in you progressive?

If you say growing in you, that is, getting a larger place in you, I admit it; but being formed in you is not. No doubt He does get more place. If we had another reading on this subject we should probably get more. Yet "if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." The very thing I know best is the thing I feel that I do not know well. If you hear one speaking of the love of God you think, - Do I know it? Perhaps it is the very truth you know most of, but it is so great to you, you think you hardly know it. J. B. Stoney.

S. Contemplating Him.

Contemplating Him. Do you contemplate Him? I have heard people talk of reading some biography, and express themselves with the greatest delight over the lovely life of the person written of. Well, I am studying Christ; I am contemplating His excellency, learning to see Him as God saw Him. But you can never get up to it. No, I cannot; but I can contemplate it, and as I do so be "changed into the same image from glory to glory."

J. B. Stoney.

S. Crucified with Christ

Crucified with Christ

I believe the great hindrance to divine joy in the soul arises from the imperfect way the crucifixion of the old man is apprehended. The believer at first, for full peace, believes that God has raised from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, who bore the judgment which lay on him, so that the man that was under judgment is really gone from the eye of God in judgment. The believer is now before God, not in the man who was under judgment, but in the Man who has glorified God in bearing the judgment; and, consequently, there is not a cloud between his soul and God, because the man who caused the distance has been removed in judgment.

Often a believer, though tasting of peace with God, when he finds the working of sin in him, tries to correct it as if he could alter himself, overlooking the great and stupendous fact that God Himself has removed the man in judgment in the death of His own Son; He has laid help upon One that is mighty - His own arm brought salvation - and if a believer is really at peace with God, it is because his old man has been crucified with Christ, and altogether set aside in judgment on the cross. If he were clear as to the fact of our old man being crucified with Christ, instead of trying to correct himself, he would look to Christ to set him free from the intrusion of the flesh "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord." What becomes us now is to have Christ before us, and not the correction of the old man. The snare of trying to improve oneself is very common, and it is important to see that, however well-meaning it may be, it is really a denial that our old man has been crucified, and a revival of that which has been set aside in the cross. It is plain that if you are clear of the old man you can have no man before you but Christ. "If Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin"; and the more sensible you are of how ready the flesh is to intrude, the more you are cast upon Him.

It is inconceivable that one could have any just apprehension of God's grace, and yet continue to expect anything from the flesh, or in any way to deal with it. It shows how little the revelation of His grace is really accepted in its greatness; because if I know that God Himself has in the cross removed the man who offended, how gladly should I accept His grace! What fruitless sorrow has one known for months and years in the attempt to improve oneself, until wearied out we cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then we find there is only one relief, and that is found where we ought to have sought it at first. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our lord." Nothing can be more certain for the believer than that one man is gone in judgment, and that Christ alone remains. When I have put on Christ - the best robe - the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Not only does the blessed God see me on this ground - one from which He never can change or be diverted - but I now, by the Spirit of God, see myself on that ground, and I can say, not only "our old man is crucified," but "I am crucified with Christ"; and if I am crucified, how can I refer to myself in any sense? If we observe the history of Christians, we see them trying to improve themselves - their tempers and their evil tendencies - plainly showing that they do not believe in the absolute and

simple revelation that "our old man is crucified with Him."

Nothing is of deeper importance at the commencement of our Christian history than that we should accept, with some apprehension of its greatness, that the man that was under judgment is removed from the eye of God in judgment. We have to ponder, in order to realize the magnitude of it, and when we do believe it as a truth, another thing of equal importance is made known to us - that not only is the old man completely removed from the eye of God, but that by the Holy Ghost we are in Christ a new creation by the power of God. If we keep these two together we have a great start; one man is gone and Another is brought in, and this is established to us by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Now we enter on our new history. Properly, we are not occupied with the flesh; though the flesh is still in us, "we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit"; and our attention is largely given to walking in the Spirit. We have now a new exercise, even to sow to the Spirit, and of the Spirit to reap life everlasting. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." This shows us how intent our eye must be on Christ; we have nothing to do with the man that is gone; and the more we realize this the happier we are - judicially freed of the one, and by the Spirit of God established in Christ. Everything we do now is done with reference to Christ; and not only is the body the Lord's, but "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" - we have to act according to His pleasure in the very management of the body, just as a slave would use his body according to the wishes of his owner.

It is remarkable that Romans 12:2 refers to the body: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." But in 2 Corinthians 3:18, We all beholding the glory of the Lord - are transformed; it is the same word (transformed) as in Romans 12:1-21, and is only used twice in Scripture in reference to us - once as to the body, and secondly as to what is imparted to us - what is received from Christ; we are "transformed into the same image." This I might call the exercise of our daily life; our history here is not merely seeking to glorify Him in our bodies, but we should be growing in moral correspondence to Himself, and that by association with Himself; so that the two great truths we started with would be confirmed to us more and more every day - the old man gone from the eye of God completely and for ever, and we established in Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost for ever and ever. J. B. Stoney.

S. Dead and Risen With Christ

Dead and Risen With Christ I begin by stating that no one is in power for Christ here who does not come from Him at the other side of Jordan.

I do not mean that each one really knows all that is involved in having crossed over, that is, that they have so fully entered into what it is to have died with Christ experimentally, that they are severed from everything in this scene by His death; but I say that when we are established in grace, and are not only in peace with God but in deliverance, knowing that we are in Christ before Him, "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" making me "free from the law of sin and death," we begin to realize that this world is a wilderness, and that our life is not here.

Now this is a great moment in our history. Nothing here can conduce to our life in Christ: it is only by the Spirit we can enjoy it, or enjoy Him where He is. I admit it is very faintly and feebly we do so as a rule, but if it is so precious and valuable when we know it even a little, how much more so when we know it in its fulness. At any rate I think it is of deep moment that each of us should experience that we have died to things here, and that we are alive to His things in His life. There is no other road to heaven but through the wilderness, and when we have learned by the Spirit of God dwelling in us that He is our life in the sphere where He now is, it is our joy and strength to taste even a little that things here are closed to us; but being severed by association with Himself from a scene where He is not, we enter a scene where everything is according to Him, and though we have to resume the links here, we do so as knowing something of the scene beyond, which is properly ours through His grace.

First, as is typified in the Red Sea, we are freed from the judgment of God on us, and rejoice in the Saviour raised from the dead. Then we begin our journey according to God's appointment. There is nothing for us in the wilderness but Marah and manna; Marah - bitter water. We are free of the judgment of death, but we have to accept death, we are still in the mortal body, the body of death, and we have to learn in our connection with this world that we have no living link with it; but death becomes sweet to us because Christ has gone through it, and as we are dependent on Him, we receive of His grace, and walk here according to His pleasure. But often it is a long and painful exercise before we learn (as in Numbers 21:1-35) that all is ruin here and in us also, but that as risen with Christ our life is with Him outside of it all, and the Holy Ghost is in us; then the one thought is not how to get on in the world which has become to us the wilderness, but how to live with Christ outside it. We learn, as in the Epistle to the Colossians, that we have "died with Christ from the rudiments of the world," the reproach of Egypt is rolled off "in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" - then, as risen with Him, we are over Jordan; and a new scene, the sphere of His life, opens before us, it is then we know Him as Head, and are able to carry out His pleasure in relation to His interests here. We do not enjoy union till we know Him as Head, hence, as I said at the beginning, no one is in power until he knows that he is over Jordan with Christ: he has to return here, for he has to work here, but he gets his support and his direction from the Lord where He is.

Now, as we are in service for the Lord, we find it is only as we walk practically "bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus," that the life of Jesus is manifested here. God, in His discipline, allows trials to help to cut us off from attractions here, that we might be efficient servants for Him. "We who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." This is more our daily path here; our enjoyment with Christ over Jordan is in the Spirit; the former is more connected with our walk. The Lord give us all to realize more the blessedness of being with Him where He is! We lose nothing by being severed from present things, which only the mortal man could enjoy, for we are brought into the things which Christ enjoys, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." J. B. Stoney.

S. Discipline in the House of God.

Discipline in the House of God.

1876 47 The real object in every act in the long run will transpire, however concealed or disguised it may be at first. Hence the more important the act, the more conspicuously will the object come out as the course of the act proceeds. The object of Balaam is more and more evident, and Jehu's is disclosed at last, while the object of every faithful servant must eventually be owned. The object of discipline is to free the church from leaven. "Not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you." To clear of leaven is the end and object of discipline. This can be effected in one of two ways; either by pastoral service, or when this is unavailing, by putting away from among ourselves the wicked person. In the latter case, as has been said, the assembly must feel that it is guilty of the sin; and hence to clear themselves they put away from among themselves that wicked person. If they do not feel that they are guilty of the evil for which they excommunicate, they are merely a criminal jury, giving a verdict against the guilty person, and there is really no clearing at all.

Hence conviction of the guilt of any one is not produced by any overstrained interpretation and strong statement of probabilities, but by the irresistible persuasiveness of clear positive testimony — simply manifestation of the evil, as with Judas; and as light which works conviction by expelling darkness.

I must not go beyond what I see and know, nor can I charge myself with more than is manifested, for if I cannot charge myself and all the assembly with it, I ought not to excommunicate.

It is also essential as ensuring the Lord's support that the elder or bishop, who is prominent in his care of the church of God in the place, be "not a novice," lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the snare of the devil; and again, that his own house and all believers be so well ordered and ruled that he has given proof of his ability to care for the church of God, for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Again, he should feel to the assembly as the father of a large family, and after making every effort to restore the erring one, he leads the rest of the family, in deep sorrow of heart and feeling the family slur, to refuse to eat with the wicked one; but if he have any ill-feeling or vindictiveness towards any, he actually produces in the assembly a worse state of things than that which he attempts to correct, for where there is a root of bitterness springing up many are defiled, and where envy and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work. A father would take care how he would corrupt his family.

If I see an evil, and feel I am not the one to act prominently in it, I can at least pray to God to raise up an instrument according to His own mind, lest in my unholy zeal like Uzzah I perpetrate a great grievance.

Finally, the church of God is a nursery and not an inquisition, and if I am a true leader I warn the unruly, I do not subject them because of their unruliness to church or family censure; I comfort the feeble-minded and I support the weak: otherwise I should deserve the censure in Ezekiel. "The

diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up the broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost, but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them." J. B. Stoney.

S. Favour and Power

Favour and Power Genesis 8:20-22; Luke 14:15-23.

After Noah and his family had been in the ark (the ark being at that time the only safe place, and a figure of Christ - when they came out Noah offered unto the Lord burnt-offerings) Noah found himself on new ground in favour and power. Those two words are an immense help in enabling us to ascertain what is the character of the new ground God has brought us on to favour and power. You may say Noah failed on this new ground. True, he did. We cannot count upon self for anything, especially when set for Christ here. Noah got drunk, and miserably failed. A man who cannot rule himself will never be able to rule anyone else. Noah failed; he lost the place of favour in which God set him, and he failed in power. In Luke 14:1-35 the Lord speaks of the real way of having a feast, when one present, no doubt a pious Jew, exclaimed, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." It was a great supper, a figure which sets forth the present large enjoyment of the believer, and where the food of the believer is - it is neither from earth, neither is it on earth. There is a festival prepared by God Himself for the believer, which is neither on nor from earth. Judgment is removed, and we are in favour and power. "All things are ready; come." What characterises the grace of God is favour and power. What the chapter sets forth is that God has made a great provision, a great feast, and He invites you to it. The Jews had it here, but you cannot enjoy it where they did; and if you look for anything here you will not get it. You may build a house, and buy a piece of land, but it is in the wrong place. How could you expect the favour of God in a place where the Lord was crucified? What is the meaning of showing forth the Lord's death till He come?

I cannot accept. any favour in the place where Jesus was crucified. If it had been last Friday that the Lord was crucified it could not be forgotten, but the fact remains. The invitation went out to the Jews first: "Come; for all things are now ready." They refused it. Then it is sent to the poor of the flock and the Gentiles who never got a place here, and the servant is sent forth and told to compel them to come in. Now you must not make that the gospel; it is the finish of the gospel, if you like, because the invitation is to come into the house. Luke 14:1-35 is our side; Luke 15:1-32 is God's side. You have the joy of the finder there. The business of the Servant (the Spirit of God here) is to bring them into the house; and the work of the Servant is not done till He has got them in. The question is, What is this supper, and how is it to be enjoyed? You must start with this - it is not from earth, or on earth. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Romans 14:17.) In simple language this is what is called the great supper. The Holy Ghost is the feast, and He conducts the guests to it. I might say a great deal about that, while I quite admit that the invitation is to go forth over all the earth. In John 4:1-54 we have a guest found in the woman of Samaria. The Lord meets her there in the most desperate circumstances in which anyone could be found as to character and position, and He tells her, Whosoever drinks of the water which I shall give him shall never thirst for ever. It is the strongest figure that can be used. It means shall never thirst again, either here or hereafter. Your soul is conducted by the Spirit of God into the region of satisfied desire. The philosopher will say that is

an absolute impossibility. The Spirit of God comes and takes up a poor outcast woman in the most degraded circumstances as to character and condition, and brings her into the enjoyment of a life outside, and entirely outside everything here. "Shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Then in John 7:1-53 we have the Feast of Tabernacles, and man found in the most blessed position in which he could be found upon earth. He had seven days of it too; but on the eighth day, when they had come to the end of the seventh, the Lord stands up and cries, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." (John 7:37-39.) In the first case (the woman in John 4:1-54) the Lord begins at the bottom and lifts her up to the top; in John 7:1-53 He begins at the top, and fills you so full that you cannot contain all you get from above. The idea is, that if a man is full he becomes a giver, not a receiver. And where do you get it? From above. John 4:1-54; John 7:1-53 refer to the individual believer - what he gets, and not to service at all. If you want to know about service you must go to Luke 14:1-35. If you ask me to explain what the great supper is, well, the Holy Ghost is the one who conducts you to it, and no matter what your surroundings on earth are, the believer has something far beyond anything that can be found below.

Romans 5:1-11 describe the terms on which God can be with me, and Romans 8:1-39 the terms on which I can be with Him; then you go back to Romans 5:1-21. You joy in God, you are reconciled; and being justified by faith, we have peace with God, stand now in the favour of God, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. That is what the prodigal could say when he was brought in, Now I am in favour; and then we go on to find ourselves in acceptance with Him too, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which He has given us. The prodigal had the sense of reconciliation first, and then of enjoyment. Many know the terms on which God can be with them (Romans 5:1-21) who have not been conducted to the other side (Romans 8:1-39), where they learn the terms on which they can be with God; that brings us enjoyment. The first thing you learn is that God could not be on better terms with me than He is. "Well," you say, "I know that, and can always feel happy when I look up, but immediately I look at myself I am miserable." Then you are not at the feast, you are not making merry, you are not really in the power of the Holy Ghost. I will try to make myself simple. You may have a very clear idea of the gospel as to what God is to you, and you begin to try to improve self. A man will do anything and suffer anything in his efforts to improve self, so as not to put self out; he wants a corner for self somewhere, but until you give Christ His place self will not go out. It was what I call the coronation day in Abraham's house when Isaac got his true place there, and that he might have that Ishmael must go out. It is a wonderful day in the history of a soul when Christ gets His true place. Now Romans 8:1-39 comes in, and what feasting there is! The prodigal, if he looks at himself, says, I am not fit for my Father's house. But the Father calls to the servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him. And what is the best robe? Christ. In Romans 5:1-21 you get the secret as to how God can do this. It is not Adam before Him now but Christ, and He does not expect anything from Adam. The end of Romans 5:1-21 hooks on with Romans 8:1-39. In Romans 6:1-23 you are committed to death if you do not accept it; then Romans 7:1-25 proves what Israel found in the wilderness, that they could not keep the law, and I know what the anguish of such a state is. When I found the flesh too strong for me I said, I must try by faith to master it. I do not say that now, because I have learned that the Holy Ghost alone can master the flesh. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." The

moment the best robe is on, that is that you know yourself as "in Christ," what follows? "Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry" - figure of the great enjoyment you have in the presence of God. It is not so much here that you know it, but now you enjoy it, and that verse is fulfilled: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Romans 14:17.) You are free of self. There is a class of religionists who say the prodigal kept on his old clothes under the best robe, that he might look at them occasionally in order to keep him humble. No teaching or reading will displace self, a Person only can do it. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Again I say it was the most festal day in Abraham's house when Isaac got his true place there, when the 318 servants all bowed before and acknowledged him. Then Ishmael must go. You ask, Who is that? Ishmael is descriptive of the most accomplished in nature. He had been brought up, too, in Abraham's house, but he mocked Isaac. So now the natural man will never accept Christ. A great many see that God has removed the first man, but they do not come to Romans 6:1-23. They are not prepared to part with self. We have all travelled the road; we know it. All are counted as dead by God. Now "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here the most unaccountable mistake takes place., People think that "baptized unto Jesus Christ" means the mere formal act of baptism, and that their acceptance of baptism is an act of obedience, an expression of their being dead and risen with Christ; but we do not become dead by the reckoning of faith, neither do we obtain holiness by faith. These are not scriptural statements. "He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

We cannot be too simple about it, cannot deviate from it, that God never sees me in the flesh. He knows I am in it, but He does not see me there. If there is anyone here today not clear about it, let me say that there is no more offering for sin. And how can you improve anything that is gone from the eye of God? The Corinthians and Galatians had got the Spirit of God, but were not walking in it; and many now have the Spirit of God, but are not walking in it. I could not say that any man has the Spirit of God as long as he tries to improve the flesh. God says, I have removed everything from My eyes in order to be on the very best terms with you, and I want you to be in moral correspondence with that. The Holy Ghost is the witness to me that I am as clean as God can make me. I would say to the young believers especially that I believe it to be most mischievous looking at baptism as in Romans 6:1-23 as a mere ordinance. Let me tell you that it is a real experimental thing. In the first edition of the Synopsis it is not made experimental, but in the second it is. How is it accomplished? You find that in Romans 8:13 : "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Holiness by faith does not go beyond the ten commandments. To put it simply, these things are not in correspondence with the mind of God. You might know the gospel, and yet not be walking in the Spirit of God; and He always occupies you with Christ, not with your usefulness. "Walk in the Spirit," and He will not let the other man in. If Christ is not living in you, then you are not at God's side of things. When you are there you will find yourself in the unclouded enjoyment with God of Christ and heavenly things. The natural man says, What an impossibility, because you cannot know anything about it until you are in it. Let me ask, Do you want it? Are you ready for it? God never gives anything till the soul is ready to receive it. When you are ready you will long for it. You may say, Where do I start? You never start till you reach Romans 8:1-39. Again I repeat, If you

only know the work of Christ you are prepared to make sacrifices; but if you know Him as your life, then you are ready to suffer for Him. The Lord give us to know not only our acceptance in Christ, but also how the Holy Ghost can give us to enjoy that acceptance.

J. B. Stoney. 1894.

S. Intimacy with Christ

Intimacy with Christ.

"Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." It is not any particular truth He brings in; He brings in Himself. He says: I will make you know Me in the intimacies of daily life; I will come and sup with you, and then you shall learn what it is to sup with Me. I will throw myself into all your circumstances, and then you will come to mine. J. B. Stoney.

S. My Name

"My Name." A Meditation.

"Where two or three are gathered together to My Name, there am I in the midst of them" Matthew 18:20.

"He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad" Matthew 12:30.

"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the Name of the Lord depart from iniquity" 2 Timothy 2:19.

"Name above every name Thy praise Shall fill yon courts through endless days."

Jesus our Lord is not here. Well we know it. He has gone to the Father, but He has left us His Name; and the Name of a person conveys to the heart all that the person is. The next best thing to having and loving a person, is to have and to love and to honour that person's name. My Mother may be in heaven, but the name of my Mother is loved, cherished, and honoured, as long as I remain in the world to love and honour it. So with the believer's Saviour and Lord. He is in heaven: He is not here. He is risen, He is glorified with the Father; but He has left us His Name.

"We love the Name of Jesus, the Christ of God, the Lord, Like fragrance on the breezes, His Name is spread abroad."

He is the true and living Centre, God's Centre; and all God's counsels find their centre in Him. Man's world revolves round man in sin, but God's world revolves round Man in righteousness and glory: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of His kingdom. Of Him it is said, "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."

Now as Christ is the true centre of union, though in heaven, we assemble together in His Name on earth. No other Name should ever have been named, or ever have been heard in connection with the gathering together of His saints for prayer and praise and worship. The Lord Jesus told the disciples that whatsoever they should ask the Father in His Name He would give it them. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My Name. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full!" "At that day ye shall ask in My Name." This refers to the saints' day, when the Lord is with the Father and the Comforter is here. It supposes that the saints are here below, by redemption, in the place which the Lord as Man occupied when on earth, so that the full value and power of His Name avails with the Father.

Then we are exhorted in Colossians 3:17, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus; and our testimony in the world is that "There is none other Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." J. S. Oliphant.

Fruits of the Spirit.

There is this difference between the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit: that in bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit you are always happy, whereas, in doing the works of the flesh there is always bitterness. Even if you are successful in what you aim at, it leaves a taint of its own bitterness behind it. J. B. Stoney.

S. Nearness to Christ.

Nearness to Christ. When we get hold of a glorified Christ (and the Holy Ghost has come down to tell us of Him) one does not know how, but things drop off, like old leaves pushed off by new. One gets clear of things almost unconsciously. Natural things lose their attraction and interest. A careful historian of his own soul knows his different besetments, and he does not know how to get free from them. But if he gets near Christ, he is set free without knowing how. Not only am I in the closest relationship to Him, but it is a character of union of a wondrous order; He is the source of all my supplies; I have no head but Christ; I have Christ's part; I have Christ's mind; I have Christ's wisdom; and nothing else will suit me but His place.

J. B. Stoney.

S. Part with me

"Part with me."

John 13:8. The subject before us this evening is "Part with me." It is not that I seek to get to the extent of it, but to know the beginning of it. We have considered "Christ formed in you" - "not I, but Christ liveth in me" - and the more you enter into the reality of this, the more you necessarily know that you are in a new range of thoughts, tastes, interests, everything. Here Christ is going away, and He says to His disciples, Unless I wash your feet, passing through this world of defilement, you will not have part with me. If you look at the history of grace in John it is very interesting, because you get Christ living in you morally. When you come to "I know my sheep, and am known of mine," there is now an intimacy subsisting between Christ and His own of the same character, I do not say measure, as that between the Father and the Son. That is where grace ends with relation to us. If you have not this intimacy, you cannot know a shade of reserve. Are defilements necessary in passing through the world?

Because of our natural susceptibility they are unavoidable. A very small thing will divert you from the Lord. You have entered on His line of things. It is not your duties, or business. The very air you breathe is not a help to you. Is it moral darkness that we come in contact with? Yes. You are often not aware how the defilement occurred. He knows; He washes your feet. It is plain to any one who knows that Christ lives in him that then you like to be in the range of His ways and pleasure.

It would not be possible to have part with Him unless He washed our feet?

No; not possible. Do you mean by part with Him intimacy with Him where He is?

Exactly; and I propose to touch the first step in it. One might say, Why not have the wilderness first? Because I believe you are better prepared to understand the wilderness path if you know what Christ is to you. I have before me now the book of Hebrews, first, that you have part with Christ touching the infirmities which press on you while here; and, secondly, part with Him as to His place in the assembly, on the earth. Is it that which makes this scene a wilderness? The teaching of Hebrews is, that Christ, the Person, who is not here, is so necessary to you that you are drawn away from this place unto Him, and the consequence is that Christ endears Himself so much to you that you run to Him - that is the race. It is not the place in Hebrews, but the Person - I run to Him. How does He bear you above the pressure here? By His sympathy. How do I find Him here on earth? In the assembly. The two lines are outside of man. I do not want to go farther than that now - outside of man. I do not say outside of the world. I am only touching upon "Part with me." Do you mean you must be outside man to have part with Him? Yes. Where shall I get sympathy from Him? Where is He? Not here.

Very well, you must go to Him where He is. There is a great deal in that. He is not only an Advocate, but our Priest. A priest is to maintain you with God. Christendom has placed the priest between the congregation and God. You want to know that Christ would so maintain you above the pressure of circumstances, that you can come boldly to the throne of grace. Let us look at

Hebrews 2:1-18. The first point is, that "both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Now follow up the subject we had last evening - He lives in me. Therefore you are of another order of being. "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." If you do not start there you cannot know sympathy. The general thought about sympathy is that the Lord will shew you consideration. "He stayeth His rough wind in the day of the east wind." That is not sympathy. The sympathy in Hebrews is, that Christ is out of the pressure, and if you are with Him who is out of it, you are borne above it; but if you part company with Him you are under the pressure again. While you are with Him He so absorbs your heart that you are above the pressure. Is that by associating you with Himself where He is?

Yes; in His company you are borne above the pressure. Does He not reach down His hand to me?

He draws you to Himself; He brings you into association with Himself He is ministering to one of His brethren. Is the sympathy of Christ the same as His support?

It becomes support because you are with Him. Mary of Bethany gives you a good idea of it. Martha got relief from the pressure, but no sympathy. Mary discovered during that walk with the Lord more than she knew before. While she was mourning for the loss of Lazarus, she found out that she had a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, and I believe that He so endeared Himself to her then that when she heard He was going to die she anointed Him. What was anything to her if He died? "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." I am not sure that it is in terms preached. It is not only that Christ loves the sinner, but He makes the sinner love Him. In addition to His support you have One who can enter into your pressure. "In all their affliction He was afflicted." You know He feels with you, but He is out of it, and He so soothes you by His company that you are more occupied with your gain in Him than with your bereavement. With Him you are borne above it, and you can come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace. Paul and Silas are a good example. They were in suffering, but they were most wonderfully supported above it. They were borne above it first, then mercy was vouchsafed. There was a great earthquake, and every one's bands were loosed. That is, He changes us morally?

Exactly. But it is by Himself. If you expect sympathy, you don't look for anything else. This is because you know the solace He can be to you. When I lose the support and sympathy, how am I restored? By finding Him again. One great difficulty in dealing with divine things is, that some put a human interpretation on the word of God. They call kindness and consideration sympathy. Do I understand that you are using Hebrews to lead up to what "part with me" is in John?

I am using it as the first step. There are two steps scripturally concurrent. I am relieved of the pressure by being in company with Christ, and I find Him in His place here, that is, the assembly. Do you come to the throne of grace because you have got sympathy or to get it?

Because you have got it. You are not distracted. There are three kinds of pressure - 1. circumstances, 2. bad health, and

3. bereavement.

If you are so overwhelmed by pressure that you cannot pray, you cannot enjoy your place in the assembly.

You will be occupied with your pressure?

Quite so. I believe the great practical difficulty is to come to Christ's side. That is the object of Hebrews?

Yes, you see the teaching most popular is that which sets forth Christ as He was down here; but the moment you press that you are to join Him where He is; people say, "Oh! that is too high." But it is Christianity.

It is where Christianity is known. Do I ever get to His side until I have known Him with me?

Certainly not; but you have come to that if you can say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." Isaac has His right place. You cannot have sympathy unless you are of His brethren - unless you are in His company.

Then "all of one" you take to be of one stock?

Exactly. But if you add a noun to it you limit it. Do you take this to be an advance upon the other?

I take it to be the fruition of the other - the very first step of one who knows that Christ is formed in him. I am presenting how you are really drawn away from this place by knowing all Christ will be to you where He is.

Strictly, the saint in John is not a wilderness man at all. True, he has a power outside of it; but as to position, we are in the wilderness. In Hebrews you don't get to heaven; but Christ, who is not here, is indispensable to you. If you get with Him when under pressure, He so absorbs you that for the time you are borne above the pressure. Would you say that is the intention of the pressure?

Sometimes it may be sent for that very purpose. When we speak of the Lord coming to us in our circumstances - "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" - we are in wilderness circumstances.

Yes. You are to be content with such things as ye have. That is wilderness circumstances.

Then the other side is that we are out of wilderness circumstances when we have part with Him where He is.

I know nothing more difficult than to take our proper place in the wilderness, because the wilderness is Marah. How do you get out of Egypt? Through death, What do you get then? Experimental death. That is Marah. I don't mean practical death, I mean moral death. You are not out of the wilderness yet. The 3rd of John brings us to the end of the wilderness, does it not?

You come out in a new way before you leave it.

Well, I hope now that we all understand sympathy. You cannot know Christ as Priest unless you have known Him as your Saviour first - your salvation must be a settled thing. That is, the priest's work is not in connection with sins?

Yes; not with sins, it is with respect to infirmity. Infirmity may degenerate into sin, but it is not the same thing. But He makes propitiation?

He now maintains you in the virtue of all He has effected. "This He did once, when He offered up Himself." The testament is of no force while the testator liveth.

If I bring myself under pressure through sin, do I get sympathy?

You must first come to the Advocate. You must judge yourself. If you do not judge yourself God judges you. A great deal of discipline is because a man has not judged himself for sin, and God is judging him for it. "Our God is a consuming fire."

What are infirmities generally?

There are three kinds. Pressure of circumstances. A man might be too rich, or too poor. He might suffer from ill health, a very great pressure like a ship waterlogged. Then there is bereavement, the greatest of all, because there is no repairing it. It is that which makes it such a terrible thing.

Then the present state in which we are is one of weakness?

We are liable to these things, and in ourselves we have no resource. The disciples immediately turned to the Lord to remove the storm, and He did remove it. But if you want His sympathy you say, No, I come to the Lord, and He will bear me up to where He is Himself. It is a wonderfully practical question, how far we have got to that. It is not only that He bears you above the circumstances, but He is a great Priest over the house of God, and He maintains you in the place where He is, in the holiest of all.

There could not be much complaining if He were known in this way?

You must begin where we were last night - with Christ living in you. Suppose tomorrow you find you are under pressure, and you say, How can I be maintained with God under this pressure? If Christ is your life, if Christ lives in you, you have part with Him - you get sympathy - you are borne above the pressure. Is it not a great hindrance to getting sympathy that we have unbroken wills?

Oh! Then Christ is not living in you - your old man is not crucified. Do you want us to learn that it is better to be in pressure than to be relieved of it?

I do. If you are relieved, this place is more attractive. If you get sympathy, Christ is endeared to you; and instead of looking for anything in this place you are drawn to Christ, who is not here - He becomes more and more indispensable to you. In Paul you get infirmity of the highest order; and yet he says, I count it all joy. The disciples lost something by awakening the Lord to calm the storm. Of course. I have often asked the Lord to remove a storm, but I should have known Him better if it had remained.

Still, it is better to turn to the Lord in that way than not at all?

Oh, yes! but it is for relief. I think the Lord does sometimes vouchsafe relief to young believers to encourage them. Mr. Wigram used to say, if he wanted a thing done in a hurry he would ask a young believer to pray for it. . . . Now we come to another thing. I am trying to trace our course historically. The first step is that He bears you above the pressure, and you are so undistracted that you pray. But that is not all. He is a great High Priest over the house of God. Now we come to the step which every true heart would like to know. You would like to know where the Lord will be found on earth. A great deal of the weakness of souls is because they have not taken this step. I do not say that they have not sought fellowship, but they have not come to where the Lord is. "Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, precious." First, you know Him as bearing you

above the pressure here; next you join Him in His place on earth.

You cannot know Him in the second place if you do not in the first?

I agree, I do not think you can. The first is with reference to the pressure here, the second is the only place for the heart. If you know the first you will not stop there. Both are outside of man. The Lord came to His disciples on the water. Peter from affection says, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And He said, Come." I do not put it before the young believer (but he has not "part" with Christ if he has not taken that step), but I put before him the affection which would join the Lord where He is. You cannot join Him except outside of man - where there is nothing for man at all. To walk on water was no path for a man. Nothing save affection can induce you to take this step; it is the only true way to enter the assembly.

I must expect to find Him in an outside place?

Exactly. It is in that connection in Matthew 14:1-36 John the Baptist is beheaded.

You say this is the true way to enter the assembly?

If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious you are converted. Now there is another step - "To whom coming."

"To whom coming," then, is not a sinner coming to Christ?

No. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, precious." You must come to Him outside of man. You say, Oh, I came to the room. What did you find? Well, there was a very poor meeting. You do not know what the step is. It was not the Lord you went to. I believe when you are gathered to the person of Christ you get more from His presence than from the nicest speaking. Thus in 2 Corinthians 3:1-18 "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." You are transformed. This is morally the same to the Gentile as Hebrews 10:1-39 is to the Jew - the holiest of all. But you would not have us insensible to the bad condition that produces a bad meeting?

No. On the contrary, we have known instances of saints who were not able to hear, being conscious of the Lord's presence. And they could tell you whether it was a good meeting or a bad one.

If they are near the Lord, they know where He is?

Exactly. I think Christians are not set for joining the Lord outside of man. I say, the difference between me and Peter is that I have the power and Peter had the affection. Peter had not the power, but everyone who has the Holy Ghost has the power. But you have not used your power. Still, it is a great thing to know where the Lord is.

If Christ lives in me, shall not I necessarily find out where Christ is on earth? Of course, but you will find that you are borne above the pressure before you can find Him in His place, which is the assembly, Do you say it is only in the assembly that a soul can behold the glory of the Lord? Not exactly. I believe an individual can behold the Lord's glory, but it would only affect him in his individual path; but in the assembly he beholds the Lord's glory in relation to His own affairs. Some

say, I had the Lord with me at home. No doubt; but He was only in relation to yourself. He is helping you. No doubt, you need it. But if you come into the assembly, it is like the Queen of Sheba coming to Solomon. She got into his house and into his circle. Might a person find this out without learning that he is a member of the body?

I think he might. I do not think there is anything here about the unity of the body. There was nothing about it in Acts 2:1-47. It had not been revealed. The Lord has got a place upon earth - it is really His house. The first thing a truly converted soul thinks about is - Where shall I worship? You get it in Exodus 15:1-27. It necessarily follows that if you are relieved of judgment, you want to know - has God got a place here?

I was going to ask how would you connect the "beholding the Lord's glory" with the priesthood of Christ? Where did Aaron and his sons go when they were consecrated?

Into the Holy Place.

Very well. Then if there is no veil, where are they? In the Holiest.

Very well, that is where you are. The Holiest is the glory of the Lord. To a Gentile it is beholding the Lord's glory. To a Jew it is, that a Man has met all that was typified by the ark. The antitype is Christ Himself.

Why is it Son over His own house, and great priest over the house of God?

Because one is His right - Son over God's house. In a word, What do we learn from the high priest over the house of God in Hebrews 10:1-39? That not only you come into the presence of Himself in glory, but He maintains you there. Aaron's sons went in with him. You come into the Holiest so that you find Him in His glory. You have not yet come to the Father, but to the place where the Father is. You cannot come to the Father unless you come to the place where He is. But you do not get inside in Hebrews 10:1-39?

You get the right to go in. It is not going in and out at all. I do not say you may not soil your feet and lose it.

Then "Let us draw near" is once for all?

Once for all. We have always the right to go in, but if you soil your feet you have to judge yourself. There is no new consecration. Practically speaking at the Lord's supper we are remembering the preliminary to consecration. The consecration did not take place until all the offerings had been offered up. Hebrews 2:1-18 takes you up at the twenty-second verse of Psalms 22:1-31, but the first twenty-one verses must have been fulfilled. Is responsibility connected with "to whom coming"?

It is calling more than responsibility. I would not press the Lord's supper on a young believer; but I should say, Would you like to join the Lord? Would you like to be where the Lord is? Yes. Well, the Lord is outside of man. The truer a heart is the less will anything satisfy it, except His presence. Would the effect then be that the assembly would become our absorbing interest here?

Certainly you are brought into His interests. Hence the Holy Ghost is known to you in a different way from what He is in John 4:1-54; John 7:1-53 He is first for yourself. In John 14:1-31 He is

called "the Comforter," because He takes the place of Christ; but if you do not take the place of a servant, you do not know the Comforter.

All this supposes that the will is not at work. Of course we start with "I am crucified with Christ." You must keep Galatians 2:20 in your mind. This is all leading up to "part with me" in John?

It is the beginning of it. What we arrive at eventually is that He is Head over everything, and you are united to Him.

We are only at the beginning now. May I ask what the ship was?

It was what suited water. The Jewish system if you like. You are outside of what suits man. Nothing has enfeebled us so much as what people call joining the brethren - not understanding the ground of the assembly. I put before a young believer nothing but affection for Christ.

You do not expect him to see that the Lord is in one place and nowhere else?

No, I do not. I want him to join the Lord. You get an illustration of it in the young birds in the autumn. The parent birds want their young ones to know that they can fly. They go about two feet above them, and the young ones try to get to the parents, and then they find they can fly.

I believe many a Christian, if he really wanted to join the Lord, would find out he had wings - the power. J. B. Stoney.

S. Prayer

Prayer The inestimable grace of praying is the peculiar privilege of the church on earth.

We see in the beginning of the new company in Luke 10:39; Luke 11:1, the first trait - the Word of God and prayer - literally, what God says to us and what we say to Him. The disciples say, in Luke 11:1-54, "Lord, teach us to pray," and the Lord figuratively sets forth in the man who went to his friend at midnight how prayer begins with the sense that my friend has what I want. It is not so much a question of what the want is, but I know my friend has what I want, and that he is my friend; and I repair to him to relieve me of my want, without taking into account the various things which might intervene. One thing is fixed in my mind - that he has what I want, and that I have nowhere else to get it; this is the first great sense of prayer - absolute dependence on God, and His infinite ability to meet what I require. The sense so peculiar to real prayer is that the greater our need, and the more we need, the nearer we get to Him, as if the only chance and the only hope of relief is our being with Him. The circumstances we are in generally impart a character to our prayers; so you will find that if you begin with the troubles about you, and keep on praying, you are getting more free of the trouble, and really getting more occupied with Himself; just as in the parable in Luke 11:1-54 the man succeeds at last, and gets more than he asked for - an intimation of what the Lord says in the end - "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

If we were to hear the prayers which are uttered we should have an idea of the circumstances which gave rise to them; but the nearer we get to the Lord the more we feel dependent on Him, and the more we get occupied with Him instead of with the circumstances.

We get an interesting illustration of this in 1 Corinthians 14:14, the man praying with his spirit. Though he does not know what he is praying for, he is in spirit impressed by the association he is found in; in spirit he speaks mysteries (1 Corinthians 14:2), because of his nearness to the Lord. The nearer we come to the Lord the more spiritual our desires are; we can account for prayers which take in our circumstances being suggested by the circumstances, and not by our association with the Lord. Here we learn a truth of deep importance (where many wishing to be spiritual have failed, not having entered into the magnitude of the truth) - that we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, and we cannot be in both at the same time. If you are in the Spirit you (by the Spirit) mortify the deeds of the body; you are not only preserved from the deeds, but you are dead to the desires of the flesh. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh, "so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Hence we see the great advance in the character of prayer; the more you are apart from the flesh and from the natural man, the more you are occupied exclusively with and derive from Christ Himself. Anyone may notice in a prayer-meeting the difference between the two. The prayer that is occupied with things suits the mass, but it is a happy day when one learns that the nearer he is to Christ the less he wants anything but Christ, that though still in human circumstances he can thank God that he is not only free from the man that is contrary to God, but that he is in the Spirit, and as he walks in the Spirit he is absolutely free from the old way. When

Paul was severed from Jerusalem he had to learn in the ship (Acts 27:1-44) that he was not to be directed by any providence or human influence, but by God Himself, outside everything here.

Another thing has to be noted, that when prayer reaches to this, your dependence on Christ becomes more and more necessary to you, like the infant that cannot bear to leave its mother, not only because its wants are met, but she is the source of its supply. Now He so absorbs your heart that it is true of you that to God you are beside yourself, and, like the Queen of Sheba in the presence of Solomon, you have no more spirit left in you; and as to prayer, you have the double blessing - the peace of God in coming to Him as touching things here, as we read in Php 4:7; and you have also what we get in 1 John 5:14, the sense of what His present will is - the sense of His will, as one in constant intimacy with a friend gets his mind without being directly instructed in it. This necessarily gives a peculiar and intense spirituality, and as union is realized it deepens, so that the one great desire of the soul is the prayer in Ephesians 3:1-21. Like Rebekah, your one desire is that you might be a comfort to Him who has brought you to Himself.

I cannot conceive anything greater to a heart that knows union with Christ than to be ever seeking to be in keeping with His pleasure, and though occupied with His glory on the earth you rise, as you see in Habakkuk 3:1-19, from "Shigionoth" (variable notes) to "Neginoth" (stringed instruments). J. B. Stoney.

S. Readings at Croydon.

Readings at Croydon.

4. The Wilderness.

Exodus 15:22-27; Numbers 21:4-9; Numbers 21:16-18. Our subject this evening is the wilderness. The first thing we have to learn is at the end of Exodus 14:1-31, that the only way out of Egypt was through the Red Sea, figuratively the death of Christ. Israel are out of the ruin and misery of Egypt through death, and now they go three days' journey in the wilderness, and they find nothing but bitter water. It was a great disappointment to them. Hence they called it Marah. I think we talk of the wilderness and of wilderness truth, but for my part I know but little of the wilderness. We have to learn it experimentally. These three chapters, Exodus 15:1-27, Exodus 16:1-36, Exodus 17:1-16, set forth the grace of God for the wilderness. There is nothing there for you but God. Then after thirty-nine years Israel came to Numbers 21:1-35, and now they find that they are unmendably bad. That is the great experience of the wilderness on our side. Then there is entrance on a new order of things. The Son of man, typified by the brazen serpent, must be lifted up, and every believer in Him now finds life in Christ, and the Spirit of God is given to him. Is there any relation between the law and the wilderness? The law does not come in till after Exodus 17:1-16, it comes in to expose our natural state. It is added because of transgression. You now come practically to Romans 7:1-25. You find out that you are unimprovable. A man who knew that would be prepared for death here. The apostle can say, "Death works in us."

You said at the end of thirty-nine years they found they were unmendably bad, is that what the wilderness is for? My impression is, you are not in your true path in the wilderness until you learn "that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." The three chapters here set forth how God is for you in the wilderness, but I do not think you are a dependent man till you know yourself as a "wretched man." Would you say that again, please?

I think until you have learned the nothingness of yourself you do not take your true place in the wilderness; you see that Israel after Numbers 21:1-35 had no other support than the manna which they had at the beginning, but until then they were not really dependent on God.

There is this difference, that with them the first part of the wilderness was a test to man in the flesh, but we begin with the flesh judged.

Yes; but though you may have accepted the doctrine, you have practically to learn it. You are thoroughly in the wilderness if you are wholly dependent on God. There is nothing for a Christian from the earth.

He is not dependent on God until he has judged the flesh?

No. Yet we very often accept the truth, but circumstances disclose how much of the truth we have. Would you say that when Israel had learned that lesson they were at the end?

They come out now in a new light, they are standing for God, and yet they had no other food than the manna, and they encounter a new enemy - Balaam.

There is no spiritual conflict, is there, until a man has learned dependence?

It is when you are dependent on God that you are assailed. I do not see that you are truly dependent except manna is your food. I think, practically speaking, there is nothing one knows so little about as manna. Will you tell us what manna is?

Well, I will put another question to you. There was no manna in the ark in the temple, it was only in the tabernacle. Why? When Israel are in the land, God's requirements of man will be fully carried out. I understand living by manna to be living in complete dependence upon God.

What does it typify?

Christ in humiliation. Now, will you explain what that is? I cannot. I see what it is. I think one has little idea of what it is to do everything in dependence. But the manna was given before the law? The law was to test.

I think it shows that God's provision for His people in the wilderness was there before the law was given at all.

Yes; but when they came to Numbers 21:1-35 they did not get more than the manna. When a man is tested he does not get any more than manna.

I think you do not enter into the wilderness properly until you get to Numbers 21:1-35.

Still, it is not all in a minute that you come to that. The expression has been used "in the land." What does it mean?

It means in Canaan. There Israel will enjoy earthly blessings - not living simply in dependence on God where there was nothing else for them. Many would like to live now, as surrounded with favours from the earth. There is abundance for you on the earth, but not from it.

Then we still need the manna because we are in the wilderness?

It is your only support. The question is how much you use it. The manna and the old corn of the land overlap, do they not?

Practically in our experience they do. If you do not know John 6:1-71 and feed upon Him as your life you cannot know Him as manna. You could not begin at manna and go up to the other. If you do not know what it is to have fed upon Christ in death you cannot learn what His grace was here as man. You must go that way to learn it. That is, we begin with Him in death. But I think most have connected John 6:1-71 with manna. That has hindered a great many. You must learn John 6:1-71 in order to arrive at the manna. It is the contrast to the manna.

You mean we begin with Christ in death?

How do you get out of Egypt? By death - by walking through the Red Sea. You have fed upon Christ's death, you are in Christ now. Now the point is how you are to go on here. If you are true, you accept death. The highest place a Christian can come to is typified in these chapters. The way

before you is death. I have not met many who like that path, have you? But I believe it is a path of great blessing. Instead of getting something more to interest you here, you find that things are fading away. We see Paul in prison and John in Patmos at the end of their course. I know I am in the wilderness when I have nothing from man, but everything from God. "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content." I think it is a great thing for a Christian to learn that there is nothing for him in the wilderness but God. The wilderness does not typify a place.

No, it does not, it is moral, it is not a place to stop in, it is to pass through. And it is not any part of God's counsels? No.

What is the difference between John 6:1-71 and manna?

John 6:1-71 is, You have "passed out of death into life."

How can you get out of death but by death? You cannot act on a thing that is dead. Therefore the truth applies. A Christian according to Romans 6:1-23 reckons himself "dead to sin, but alive unto God" - not "through," but "in Christ Jesus our Lord." Now you are going to begin a new history upon earth. What do you expect? Something pleasing to the flesh? No, but bitter water. "Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." You do not get that till you get to Numbers 21:1-35. Would you say a word more on "always delivered unto death"? Is it the same as "reckon yourselves dead?"

No; death is on everything. Everything is gone for Paul, even Jerusalem is gone. Paul could not always say he longed to depart, for he was full of Jerusalem.

There is great gain in accepting death. The apostle says to the Corinthians, "Death works in us, but life in you." But there is a great difference when we accept that.

If I had accepted it years ago I should have been saved many a trial. You are sure to be disappointed when you expect smooth times in the wilderness. The gourd comes up in a night, and withers in a night. This I call bitter water. In Peter it is "ceased from sinning."

Quite so. He begins at the fact of sinning. "Arm yourselves therefore," etc. The flesh must suffer to do it. You do not gratify the flesh. You suffer; the sin is stopped. If you gratify the flesh you commit a sin.

I suppose the basis for carrying it out is Romans 6:1-23; Romans 7:1-25?

Yes; those chapters give you the basis for learning the wilderness, and every day you learn more and more what is to be refused. I think Deuteronomy 8:1-20 will help us. He "led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no." The first temptation Satan presents to Christ is to use His own power. The Lord, as a dependent man, says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

It is a pity we do not begin with manna.

I quite agree to that, but we have to learn dependence. We are learning it, I hope. Nothing gives me such a sense of what the devil is as that he should ask the Lord to use His own power to turn a stone into bread. If I look around I say, Where is there a dependent man? No one as a rule is

dependent when he has independent means. Mr. Wigram has said he would know a rich man, if he met him, by his self-reliance. A self-reliant man is not dead to sin.

He certainly is not bearing about in his body the dying of Jesus. Often we think a poor man is the only one who needs faith, but it is the rich man who needs it most. Is that why it says, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God"?

Exactly. If God does not direct you to do a thing, you have gone outside Him - it is your own will. When you can say, I can do it if I like, I say, Take care what you do.

I do not think we sufficiently recognize that independence is sin. It is so touching, the Lord saying, I will act only by the word of God. The man who gives way to the first temptation will fall under the second. He will accept a slice of the world, and then he will look for God to show him some proof of His favour.

Casting Himself down from the pinnacle you mean?

Yes. I do not seek proofs of His care when I know He is for me.

What does "death worketh in us, but life in you" mean?

It means you must be in life first, because you have been dead, and then you are ready to accept death here. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." There are three classes of believers. One does not know how to be dead to sin. Another does know, but is not always there. Another, the apostle Paul, was always there. He was truly in the wilderness. Hence God rolls in death. When anything is in the way, and you are trying to turn from it, you will find that death is rolled in upon it.

Power is given for the action?

Quite so. The stone does not go from before the wheel till the wheel comes to it.

Rolling in death is God dealing with things I have to pass through?

Yes; but He comes in to help you. I said to a young man once, "Are you in that position for the Lord's service?" He said "No," but that he would give it up in three months. Shortly after his horse rolled on him in the park, and he had to give it up there and then. Perhaps if he had never felt his position, he would not have been helped to give it up. God thus helps a man in a way he cannot help himself. A Christian who is not progressing has an easier path.

Always being delivered is not what we do, but what God does for us?

Yes. He is not pressing you beyond your measure. Paul was cast into prison. You might think this too severe discipline, but he had better times there than he had before; he had such revelations from the Lord. If you progress you are opposed. Amalek would prevent you from being in the wilderness a dependent man; he would drive Israel back to Egypt. On the other hand Balaam represents the corrupting influence of society; he comes after Numbers 21:1-35; from him the Corinthians suffered. Not necessarily religious?

No. You get infected in worldly society. One sees it in one's children. But Balaam's aim was to turn them away from God?

Quite so; but, first, it is Amalek - to hinder you being truly in the wilderness. Now that you know John 3:1-36; John 4:1-54 - life in Christ, and the Spirit of God in you - you begin to stand for the Lord; you are leaving the wilderness for the land. Now Balaam confronts you.

What is the object of Balaam?

Balaam's opposition is a contrast to Amalek's. Amalek comes forth to fight openly to resist you, while Balaam seeks to corrupt you by social intercourse.

Those are the two ordinary forms of evil - violence and corruption.

What Amalek seeks is to prevent you from taking the place of dependence. But now you have power. Would the purpose of Balaam be to prevent your entering into life?

You have entered it.

I mean the associations of life.

I quite agree, because in them you would eventually cross over Jordan.

Amalek is the first power of the enemy?

Yes, the first on entering the wilderness. There were four. 1st, Pharaoh. He has been destroyed, Satan annulled. Next, Amalek, to prevent you from being a dependent man. When you have learned to have no confidence in the flesh, when you have experimentally accepted Romans 6:1-23; Romans 7:1-25, then you are on new ground. Thirdly, you are opposed by Balaam. There is an interval between Balaam and the last, which is the seven nations of Canaan. You confront these where you are, in the power of your heavenly position. Who are the four then?

Pharaoh; he is gone in death. Then Amalek, then Balaam, and then the seven nations, as in Ephesians 6:1-24. If one realized the true nature of the opposition to us on the earth, what a time should we have here! Will you go back to the manna as to its application to us?

It is your only support here - even after you are over Jordan. You can, as a Christian, get nothing from this scene; hence it is a wilderness to you. But God gives you manna. The manna adapts itself to our daily circumstances. It is given to the Christian in the wilderness.

You limit it then to our wilderness-path, not to what we had last night?

Yes, I limit it to the wilderness. "Part with me" is as He is now. Would that be the old corn of the land?

Yes. The manna is the grace of Christ as He walked here, as we read, Galatians 2:20, "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God."

It is the responsible life in the wilderness?

Exactly. I think one knows very little about manna. I think the idea of our blessed Lord, the Son of God, being a dependent man is too wonderful to compass. One could understand it better during the three years of his ministry, because then, if you understand me, it was His own side of things - declaring the Father. To us His thirty years in private life, when He acted in everything in dependence on God, is incomprehensible. What a life of beauty in a man! It was not anything He

found here, for He brought all here. Of course that is not the whole truth of His life.

Oh! He had communion with the Father always. But at the end of the thirty years the voice from heaven declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

We are told so little about those thirty years. Would it be the hidden manna?

Oh! I think there is something in His life that we do not understand. But we shall learn it probably.

Quite so. But the more you think of it the more you marvel. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

How do we get manna?

Christ gives it. "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." If you have Christ as your life you are living in His grace down here, the grace of a dependent man. Is it Php 2:1-30?

There He is our example. Do we get it through the Scriptures? The Scriptures tell you what you are to get. People think it is by reading the Scriptures that you obtain grace. Scripture tells you what you are to get. Do you mean you get it by occupation with Christ?

Yes, certainly, I get grace from the Lord Himself - "By the faith of the Son of God." Is it the contemplation of Christ in the gospels? As I understand, it is actually imparted to you from Himself, as the Spirit of God occupies you with Him. I said once to a sister, "When you were in the storm at sea, what were you thinking of?" She replied, "I was thinking of the Lord in the storm." "Ah," I returned, "if you had been occupied with Him where He is, you would have been like Him where He was."

Then manna is support?

It always is. Do you mean that if we get occupied with Him where He is, we can act as He did?

Yes, we can act as He did, but you must gather it before the sun is up. It has led to morning prayers, I daresay. I ought to begin everything, assured that His grace is sufficient to carry me through. If you have the manna for the day you may start, you are sure to be brought to the desired haven whatever you undertake.

It is not simply by meditating you get it?

You feed on Christ's death to enjoy His life. If you abide in Him you will walk here as He walked. He left us an example that we should follow His steps.

I should think that if we were occupied with the Lord we should feed on Him as the manna. But you must begin above with Him where He is. You cannot begin with Him here - He is not here.

I thought the manna was Christ in humiliation.

Yes, but you must be in the life of Christ outside of everything first. Then He leads you out according to the grace in which He lived here, even in the smallest details. May we take Stephen as an example? He expressed himself as the Lord did.

Exactly, and no doubt he came out like Him. What is the old corn of the land?

It is life in heaven. It is where it grew. If you had said then you must eat the old corn of the land before the manna, I should have agreed with you. Christ ministers His grace to you in your circumstances down here; that is manna. Galatians 2:20 includes both. Christ liveth in me, and I am living down here. "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."

I did not connect the words "faith of the Son of God" with earth before. I connected it with Him where He is; but it says, "who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Quite so, that confirms it.

You say the wilderness is necessary for us?

Yes; I think the trials and sorrows make Christ nearer and dearer to us. He is the manna, the smitten rock, and the intercessor, your true provision in the wilderness. The testing supervenes in order that you may know yourself, and thus be in happy dependence. To me it is a new thought that we do not feed on the manna morally till after we have passed through Numbers 21:1-35.

You are not ready for it till then. Israel was not ready for it. We read, "Our soul loatheth this light bread."

I always thought that the food of our souls here was manna, but many Christians have never really fed on it. That is just what I said to the sister when in a storm. If you are only thinking of the Lord in the storm you are not like Him. You would be like Him where He was if you were living in Him where He is.

What is "our soul loatheth this light bread"?

They could not brook dependence. If you want a picture of a Christian in the wilderness read Romans 12:1-21; Romans 13:1-14 - responsibility to Christ, the church and the world. You are in the wilderness, but God is for you. Do we get manna apart from meditating upon the Scriptures? Do you get the Holy Ghost from the Scriptures?

No.

Well, the Scriptures give you nothing, they tell you what you are to get. The Scriptures reveal to you the blessings given to you, but you have to enjoy them. There are two classes of readers. One reads to get the meaning of the words, and the other in order to be in the mind of God. In the Scriptures you get the Lord. They set you longing then.

They satisfy the longing then?

Oh! except you are exercised you do not get anything. First you receive the light of the word, then there is exercise, then prayer, and then the Spirit makes it good to you. In regard to the manna, a great many people think it is a sort of recalling what Christ was here; but I think it is daily grace for daily need. To be sure it is - the grace in which He walked here. But does not that come to us very much in the way of reminiscence?

There is no store in you. Yesterday's manna is worse than useless. All grace must come fresh from Christ. Do we all understand that meditation is not feeding? A cow furnishes a good pattern -

it first takes in, then ruminates, then assimilates it. That is getting the good of what you have taken in. Now you have it. That is the next step. You get the good first, and you then are in keeping with it. J. B. Stoney.

S. Readings at Croydon.

Readings at Croydon.

5. The Head.

Colossians 1:24-27. At the second reading we had, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Until Christ be formed in you there is no real progress. Now you start from Christ living in you, and necessarily you are interested in His interests. In Romans 6:1-23 you touch life in Christ for relief, and now you learn that He has His place in you, He lives in you, and now you enter into the circle of His interests. It is not now your own side - His grace to you. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin" - that is your side. Here it is His side - "Christ in you, the hope of glory." It is not the hope of going to heaven, but of appearing with Him in glory. As you see in chapter 3, "Then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." This is His side of things. The difficulty is to pass from our own side to Christ's side. Some of the most earnest Christians do not pass from their side to Christ's side. They like to hear of Christ in the ship - not on the water - though the latter is the place for the true heart, because it is where He is, the former is where He was. If you love Him you would like to be where He is. Look at Mary Magdalene. She says, "Tell me where thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away." She was not thinking of the difficulties. You may say she was ignorant. Affection is not always enlightened, but it is always ready for enlightenment. Enlightenment does not give you affection, it tells you how to use it. It is very important to us to see where the Colossians were. The apostle writes, he "had heard of their faith in Christ Jesus, and the love which they had to all the saints," and yet they did not know the mystery - Christ's side.

Then we must know Galatians 2:20 before we come to this?

Certainly. I believe we do not make any advance till we know Galatians 2:20.

There may be some here who were not present at our reading on that. Do you make it experimental?

Yes. I have lost the old man and got a better. Not Adam, but Christ. Therefore I am not trying to improve Adam, because he is gone. Is that Christ formed in you? That is Christ formed in you. You get it in the type. Isaac gets his right place. There is a moment in the history of the believer when Christ gets His right place in his soul, and there is a great advance in him from that time. I do not say that he is altered. The flesh is like Jack-in-the-box, the same as ever, but it is kept down. Are we to understand that Galatians 2:20 is the starting point for progress?

Yes. When the truth came out first, it was shown that a great work had been effected which could not be improved. That is, your standing was effected by the work of Christ upon the cross; and then that there was also a new state; but though it was brought out most distinctly by the one used of God to bring it out, many contented themselves with the standing without the state. And they practically put standing for state. Would standing without state be like a well-found vessel without ballast?

It is like the prodigal before he was clothed and brought into the house. He could not be in a better standing with his father, but he did not enjoy it till he was fitted for it. You don't enjoy acceptance if you are not in the state for it. It is true of you, but your state is not according to it.

You are not in the enjoyment of the love of God unless you are in a spiritual state? I have found it so.

It is the right way to prove all truth in yourself. If you put the left shoe on the right foot you soon find your mistake. In Galatians 2:20 then I give up all confidence in myself as of Adam?

You have done with Adam. Practically "I am crucified," it does not say we. If you take the standing side, it is "our old man is crucified." (Romans 6:1-23) But your state is to be "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." No one gets any blessing but through death. Some say that John 6:1-71 is once for ever. I do not agree.

You mean we must accept death?

I mean you must feed on the death of Christ. It is not merely feeding on Scripture, but on Christ's death. That is John 6:1-71. The type is walking through the Red Sea.

I suppose Paul proved that Galatians 2:20 was his normal condition?

Yes; he could say, "Always bearing about in my body the dying of Jesus." Would you say a word about the state?

If you believe what God has done you have peace.

God has raised Christ from the dead. You are justified. That is your standing. Your state consequently is described in Romans 5:1-11. Is Colossians 3:3 standing or state? In Col. there is another subject. We shall come to that presently. Your state is that you are practically accepting what grace has accomplished for you. In Colossians you have died with Christ from the rudiments of the world. In Romans 6:1-23 you are dead to sin. In Colossians you are dead to the world. The great point here is Christ's side of things. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." It is not the hope of salvation. If you turn to Colossians 2:1-2 you see your gain. "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God. . . . in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." You see the Colossians had not come to this. They were on the ground of Acts 2:1-47. They were a godly company, but they did not know the mystery. There is no revelation of the head in Acts 2:1-47. They had the Holy Ghost, who could make them acquainted with Christ, but they did not know Christ as head. Would you explain the order of the apprehension of the mystery?

I am coming to it. The first step is that you are brought into a new circle of things. That is Christ's glory. It is not about your side, it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Now we come to the great advantages. The apostle writes, "I have great conflict for you." He would not have had great conflict if there had not been great opposition. He knew that there was a very dangerous snare impending. It was a combination of man's intellect and man's religion. The two evils we have already seen with the Corinthians and the Galatians have now taken another form - with the

Galatians it was human religion, with the Corinthians it was human wisdom. Now with the Colossians they combine under the plea of contributing to Christ, to help in His service. We see this described in Christendom. No one would be accepted as a minister who had not both learning and religion. I said to a brother once, "Do you see the Colossian snare among us?" "Yes," he said, "I do. The moment you see sanctimoniousness or learning prominent then the Colossian snare is at work." Or any kind of mental activity?

Yes. Here the apostle was thinking of the gain, not of the loss. If you are occupied with the loss you have not seen the gain. "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Is there any one with any divine sense who would not say, I should like to know Him? It is not some, it is all. Now you will know what "Christ in you" is.

Now would you like to know how you get it? Turn to Colossians 2:10, "And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power." Here you get the grace in which you are set. As you are complete in Him you cannot ADD to what is complete. What can you add to it? How can my religion or my learning add to it? This you must first and firmly receive.

What is the force of in Him? That it is standing. You are complete in Him. You may not realise it, but you are. Does it bring in union?

You do not properly get union in this book. Only once the body is alluded to. In union you must reach the Person where the Person is. Here you are only outside of the world. Life is the great subject here, it is Christ's life, and what His life leads you into. The first point is, you are complete in Him. If you are seeking the Head what must you learn? That you are complete in Him without any learning or religion of your own. Is it faith laying hold of this?

Yes, first you believe it, but if Christ is your life, if He is living in you, it must be so, for He is the head of all principality and power.

You mean that one is conscious of it?

Yes, I trust many would be able to say we are complete in Him. It is a Christian axiom.

We receive it in faith, I suppose, but we have the consciousness of it in the power of the Holy Ghost. Standing, I always receive in faith, but it is made true in me by the Spirit of God. Our brother's question was, How are we to realise it? Only in Christ's life. We began with "Christ in you." Are those the two points in John 14:1-31, "Ye in me, and I in you," and, "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you"?

It is John's way of putting union.

How do we draw from these treasures? In living his life, being directed by Him. The more He lives in you the more you enjoy His things. There is no difficulty when you see that you belong to another man, and that you are to do everything by Christ. The more fully Christ rules you the better you will be in all your relations here. There is nothing about your family in the law. But when you are in Christ your household is ordered by Him.

There are only two epistles where you get this family circle. There is nothing about your family in Romans. You are to love your neighbour as yourself. That is the way to transact business. You do

not attempt to alter the order of things here, you render honour to whom honour is due, you are not a citizen but a subject, you obey the powers that be. That is Romans. Here you are on different ground.

You are across Jordan in Colossians? That will come out. Now if you read verse eleven you get the second point. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." You see our translators put in the words "of the sins." You can understand a pious monk saying, "Well, if that means the flesh, all my penance is worthless." So that probably he put "the sins" in the margin. The next transcriber put it into the text. The fact is you are complete in Christ. Now you find that the old man is put away, the reproach of Egypt is rolled off. It is "putting off the body of the flesh." You do not require any of it, neither its learning nor its religion. We may say, "Would not Christ use the body and mind?" Yes, when He controls them. I have no doubt Paul was an accomplished speaker, but he was so reduced "that his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible," and yet doubtless he did more good than ever before. The power of God was with him. Paul was showing the Corinthians that what they were boasting in was not necessary for the Lord's service. Is that why we do not get beyond Gilgal in Colossians?

Circumcision is different from crucifixion. In the latter the man is judicially ended before God, in the other he is put away.

What do you mean by not getting beyond Gilgal?

You are across the Jordan, and the body of the flesh is put away. You are not in Canaan, the heavenly places yet, you are only preparing for it. I remember Mr. Darby asking me once where I put Colossians, and I said "entering." He did not agree with me. I wrote to him afterwards and said "preparing to enter," and with this he agreed. There are three things - entering, possessing, and dwelling. Here you are preparing to enter. Does verse 11 mean I am cut off from the flesh as much as Christ is?

Yes. It is in His death. The body of the flesh is put off.

I do not see the difference between this and Romans 6:1-23. In the latter it is crucified judicially ended. In the other it is put away. You cannot use it.

You mean practically put away.

It is no longer acknowledged.

It is the same death in both cases - the death of Christ.

Yes. Therefore it is "in whom," risen in Christ. The real thing is, that the body of the flesh is put away. You can no longer use it.

You may now read Colossians 2:19 for another step. "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." You see one can be puffed up by his fleshly mind - "not holding the Head." You get hold of the Head individually. By two things you are prepared for this - one is, "You are complete in Him," and the other is to put "off the body of the flesh." I illustrate it in this way: A man

emigrated with his friends, and as soon as they landed he said, "Now, let us burn the ship so that there cannot be any retrogression." Now you see the force of "in whom" ye are risen. You must hold the Head. Presently you will see when you hold the Head. In Colossians 2:19 verse you have, "Not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." All your resources come from the Head. I could understand a philosophic man being charmed with all this if he had not to set aside his own head. Then in Colossians 2:20 you read, "Wherefore if ye have died with Christ from the rudiments of the world." You see in Romans you do not get beyond death with Christ from the man. Now, it is the same death but it is over Jordan. You are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world. This would include the two forms you were speaking about?

Yes, you are outside of the world condition. You have not come to the heavenly places yet. If you are not apart from man, you certainly are not outside of the world.

Then you cannot hold the Head unless you are outside of the world?

Certainly not. You could not know Christ as Head but at His own side. If you knew Him, you would be sure to know Him there.

Now you see that you are dead with Him from the rudiments of the world. Next turn to Colossians 3:1-25. Read four verses.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

Now, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." This shows that you are not there. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." It is more correctly "but ye have died," but you have to learn it. You have to take that ground practically, and realise that you are outside of all here through the death of Christ. Hence we read "If ye then be risen." If you be dead with Him, you must be risen with Him, and "if ye be risen with Him, seek those things which are above." Are the rudiments of the world in Colossians 2:20 all the mental and sentimental things?

It includes everything. You are clear of all belonging to this order of things. Does "if" imply a doubt?

No, it implies responsibility, because you see, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Your life is in Christ. Christ is in you, and He is your life. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Would you say Romans 6:1-23 is privilege and this responsibility?

Well, I do not know how it is privilege. You start with the fact, but you have to carry it out. But it is the reckoning of faith.

You can hardly call it the reckoning of faith. We are committed to death in baptism. The two things are very distinct. One is, you are to reckon yourself dead, and the other is, He has given you the Spirit of God so that you can mortify the deeds of the body. You may try to count yourself dead, but you are not.

What does it mean, then, in Romans 6:1-23?

Well, it is the same word as for imputing righteousness. It is imputed to you. You have to carry it out. How do you effect it? You first touch life in Christ for relief - "alive unto God, in (not through) Jesus Christ our Lord."

You would not consider it correct to speak of the reckoning of faith?

No, I would not, because it is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Nothing gives such laxity as people thinking they can reckon themselves dead by faith. If you walk in the Spirit, you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. If you reckon that you are dead in the sight of God by faith, I agree with you, but it is not true in your own sight by faith. But then I reckon as God reckons.

Sad work if God saw you as you see yourself. Romans 6:1-23 is only a treatise. Romans 8:1-39 is your state, not Romans 6:1-23. You believe that the old man has gone in the sight of God, but you now want that the man should be gone to you practically.

I was talking of the step before that. That it is gone in the sight of God. That is God's side. I want to come to your side. How are you free? "He that is dead is justified from sin." That is God's side?

No, it is your side. You cannot be practically dead to sin but by the Spirit of God. God has effected for us in the cross of Christ. You are justified by faith. Romans 5:1-21 is faith, but Romans 8:1-39 is by the Spirit of God. God has cleared away everything from His eye in the cross. You say it has not gone from you practically. Well, yes; but God gives you the Holy Ghost, and now you can say "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

I once said to a young man, "Do you believe that the old man is gone in the cross?" "Yes," he replied. I then said, "If you were walking in the Spirit, would he be gone to you?" He had to say "Yes," or he would have put the Holy Ghost contrary to God. That makes it plain. Faith lays hold of that which is true to God, and then the Spirit of God makes it true to you.

You would not get the Spirit except you had believed in Christ risen. But you accept it on God's side. It is true for you, but it is also to be true to you. Therefore we read, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh"; and, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." There is death to sin.

Then it is true to me? Yes. So that we can say we begin with faith, but the power for continuance is by the Spirit?

You never lose the efficacy of the work of Christ. It is always true with God, and always true for you, but it is not always true to you but as you walk in the Spirit. Do I understand that it is not by faith that I am in the power of Romans 8:2, but by the Spirit of God?

Certainly. Now if you turn to Colossians 3:1-25 you will see that you are in Christ's life. Now you accept circumcision. Read from Colossians 3:5, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth. . . . But now, ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, etc. . . . And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but

Christ is all (every thing), and in all." Now you come to the Head. When you get there are you holding the Head? You are. Christ is every thing then. Is that union? Not exactly. Union is not realized until you are brought to Christ where He is. Here it is the knowledge of the Head. It is a great thing to hold the Head, the source from which all grace comes. You practically accept circumcision, the whole body of the flesh is to be put off. Do you understand? A great many read this for practice, but it is more - that you practically accept all which has been done for you on the cross. The best illustration is Elisha's act when he got the power, he took up his own clothes and rent them in two. He not merely threw them off, but rendered them useless. There are two parts in the body of the flesh - "lusts" which you must mortify, and "habits" which you must put off. You have put off the old man and put on the new - where there is neither Greek, learned man, nor Jew, religious man, nor man of any kind. The apostle enumerates all kinds of men to show that you are outside of all. You have reached where "Christ is every thing and in all." I know a great many to whom Christ is chief, but it is far more to be able to say He is every thing. Does the "where" take you into the new place?

It is not so much place here as that Christ is your life. Now you derive from the Head. When you speak of a new place you mean morally? In a way you are on new ground. You have not come to heaven yet. Is it the practical realizing of Colossians 3:11-12 of chapter if.?

Yes, circumcision is accomplished for you. You have to accept what has been done for you. You accept it whole, not in detail. The body of the flesh must be put off, as Elisha rent his clothes. You refuse everything of the old man. I am timid in speaking of it, but my impression is that you do not get direction from Christ as Head, except you are apart from everything connected with the old man. I used to look to the Lord to give me a word before I went to the meeting. I do not approve of this now. Very often I am like a blank sheet of paper. I have got nothing to say, and often when a word does come it is something I know very little about. Some ask, What is the difference between being led of the Spirit and being dictated to by the Head? I do not think the Spirit ever leads any one beyond his knowledge. One effective in speaking, never advances anything he does not know. But if Christ is known as Head, the effect is that you get an idea of it at the moment. The fact that it suits the company shows that it is the Head. If the Head was directing; there the right hymn would be given out - a hymn is leading the assembly in praise. A hymn that would suit yourself would not suit the company. If you take part in the assembly, you are supposed to be the organ or the expression of the assembly at the time. Would it be possible to have a single eye unless we were in this place, outside of man?

I suppose not. In His light we see light. If you were directed by the Head to a hymn you would be assured of His support. So we must not give out even a hymn without the Head?

Certainly not. Why do you say "even a hymn"? The hymns are the most important part. I can often pray when I could not give out a hymn, because a hymn is praise for grace you have received. But if the Head directs you?

Then He supports you. This applies to prayer too? Of course. If you have any pressure on your mind, you will not pray, because you are not free.

You have been speaking of guidance or direction. Do you mean in the assembly, or in general?

I mean in Christ's own circle. Christ is the Head in relation to His own. Of course, but "the Lord" would cover the whole of my life.

Quite so.

You draw a distinction between "the Head and the Lord" To be sure I do.

There is one verse more you may read (Colossians 3:12-16).

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Now you see what you derive from the Head. You will come out in quite a new way; all comes from the Head. First, sensibilities, then charity, then "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" - then you are called to one body necessarily - and then the word of Christ. These three verses tell you all you get from the Head.

You said "necessarily.". Would you explain?

It takes in the whole company. So this chapter is not individual?

It now becomes collective for the first time. But you learn it individually. But in view of the assembly? In view of the whole Christian circle. As someone has said, "He is the Head of all the Gentile family." If you believe the fact that Christ is the Head, a wonderful course will open out to you. He is Head, though you do not know it. How great a company we should be here tonight if we all had lost our own heads and Christ was our common Head.

Then if I hold the Head, I must take in all the Church of God?

Yes. The body of Christ. J. B. Stoney.

S. Readings at Croydon.

Readings at Croydon.

6. Union with Christ and the result.

Ephesians 2:1-6. Our subject this evening is union with Christ and the result of union. We start with the fact that everyone is united, though everyone does not know it. Every Christian who has received the Spirit of God is united to Christ. "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him." We cannot alter our position, though we all do not know it. The epistle to the Ephesians was written that you may know it. Some are not looking for conscious union, because they think that there will be no union till the ceremony takes place, namely, the marriage of the Lamb. (Revelation 19:1-21.) You are not a confidential servant if you do not know union with Christ. Do you connect the knowledge of union with the Head?

You never understand union if you do not hold the Head. It is remarkable that when the truth was recovered, Mr. Darby woke up to the fact, - I have a Head in heaven; and if I have a Head in heaven, every Christian has the same Head in heaven; and one Head involves one body. That is how he got it. He began with the Head, not with the House. This is important, because the House is in ruins, the body is not.

Then you would connect union with our subject last evening?

Certainly. I think if you do not hold the Head you cannot understand the unity of the Spirit. My foot moves to the spot that my head indicates. Does union now go beyond the body? That is, that we are united to Christ as Head and to one another by the Spirit?

You will find that it is by the Spirit you are brought into union. The difference between this and Colossians is, it is life in Colossians, not the power of the Spirit as it is here.

I was thinking, with regard to the marriage of the Lamb, would that be union in another form? The Bride will be in heaven before the marriage takes place. It is to establish her position before she comes with Christ to reign. In all the types there is nothing said about the ceremony. All the types refer to her place here on earth. Take Abigail. She is the wife of Nabal, and she ministers of his substance to the rejected king. That is the last type of the Bride. In the last churches of the Revelation it is occupied with the kingdom. Laodicea gets the lowest place. The youngest believer will get a place on the throne. So reigning is beyond sitting on the throne? To be sure it is. Philadelphia goes immensely beyond that. The first great thing is that there is union. The first fourteen verses of Ephesians 1:1-23 is FITNESS. It is individual. That is the first point - you must be fit. I think the great lack of souls is fitness. You are not ready for union if you have not fitness.

Fitness for what?

Fitness for the Bridegroom. It is not salvation, but it is fitness. The type will make it plain. The only thing Abram's steward was sworn to was kindred. You must be of His kindred. The flesh is not of

Christ's kindred. It is very beautiful to see how he found out her kindred. How did he find it out? He asked the Lord that he might find her by her grace - the steward finds out her kindred by her grace. Many would have said, "I shall be very happy to give you a drink of water"; but she says, "I will give your camels drink also." It was grace. "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers." Therefore, I say, that though every Christian is united to Christ, I do not think every Christian is fit for conscious union, ready to be conducted to where Isaac is. There is no knowledge of union till you come to the Person.

You have already said we are united. You are speaking now of the conscious enjoyment of it?

Yes. You are to have the conscious enjoyment of it. Do you agree that every Christian is not ready for the conscious enjoyment of it?

Oh, quite! The great thing is fitness. You are of the same stock. You do not get union in Hebrews, but fitness for companionship. You are His brother. You cannot speak of Christ's brethren sinning. I believe some would like the divine nature to sin sometimes, because they do not like to think it is the old man. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." The flesh and the Spirit are distinct, and when one is in the ascendant the other is not.

Then do you mean that being conducted to Isaac is farther than fitness?

Yes. You are not ready to be conducted until you have fitness. The steward delivers his message; he wants to conduct Rebekah to Isaac.

Now from Ephesians 2:15-22 is the counsel of God. Here you are ready to go. Ephesians 2:19 is "that ye may know [conscious knowledge] . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power." We all were raised up together, but we do not all know it. I remember Mr. Darby used to say, Christ would not be complete without His body. I used to mutter to myself, He would be complete without anything. Who was right, he or I? He was. I imagined that the body was an addition to Him; but no, it came from Him. It is no addition, it is a development. We all come from Himself. This is the secret of God. A great many who are well up in Ephesians do not understand God's counsel. Someone has said it is not only that you have to be enlightened, but you have to get the "spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" before you are enlightened.

You began with the knowledge of Him,

Exactly. But if you have not a conception of God's mind you will never take in Ephesians. It is not studying Ephesians that will do it. Suppose I was talking to a builder about a building, he would say - "I could do it if I knew the plan. I have bricks and timber in plenty, and good workmen, but I do not understand the plan." Nothing but the "spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" can give you an idea of the plan. Do I understand you that as a preliminary to our understanding Ephesians we must have the "spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him"?

Yes.

What is the plan?

You must get the "spirit of wisdom and revelation," and then you will find out the plan. You will be a good architect. You will comprehend God's mind. Can anyone form a conception of the mass of people required to form the complement to Christ?

It includes all the saints; the weakest is necessary.

I do not understand the Church coming out of Him. If His body does not come from Himself where does it come from? Where did Eve come from?

Out of Adam.

There you have it. Of whose flesh is His body? Do you mean of His origin?

Yes; you are of Him. Either He is of you, or you are of Him. We read, "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Put a noun to "one" and you limit it. Therefore Abraham's servant was sworn as to kindred. Souls must first learn that they are of one kindred with Christ. He is not your "elder brother," as is sometimes said, but through grace you are His brother, and that makes a very great difference.

Now that we have seen our fitness, and have apprehended the counsel of God, we will turn to the passage read, and there we get the realization of union. You are raised up together, and made to sit together. You must come to Him, like Rebekah. She was conducted all the way to Isaac, and then there is the realisation of union. I do not say the journey was accomplished in a minute. She had to encounter two great obstacles. Nine-tenths of saints, though true, are stopped by the first hindrance - family influence. Rebekah's family proposed that she should remain "ten days." The steward said, "Hinder me not." Rebekah was called, and she said, "I will go." She is decided now. There is great decision - purpose of heart before you will be conducted to Him.

God's purpose for us is the greatest distinction ever vouchsafed to any, even that every believer now should be united to Christ in heaven, and should realise it now while on the earth. In all the types we find the Bride a comfort in a day of trial.

Then the Church ministers to the heart of Christ?

Quite so. Next, consequent on decision, having overcome family influence (nothing baulks a man like family influence), you have to encounter another obstacle. Rebekah had to go through the wilderness to get to Isaac. Every step she took in the wilderness was a step away from her family. There is no way to heaven but through the wilderness. She did not realise union until she saw Isaac. Now she is united to him.

Now that we have come as far as realisation, you might read from Ephesians 3:14, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Well, there you have what I may call the endowment; that is, your gain from union. I heard a man once say that the youngest believer could understand this. Surely he had no conception of the magnitude of the truth here. There are three great things which no one can know until he is united to Christ.

What are they? The first, "That the Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." This is not the same as Christ living in you. You have now a new set of interests. There is in your hearts by faith "the Christ" - all His. You never saw a good wife yet whose individuality was not merged in her husband. Would you say a word about the Christ?

It means, all that belongs to Him.

Himself and His interests? But they are one. God never separates the body from the Head.

You take it then to be "the Christ" of God's counsels?

Quite so. Now it is by the power of the Spirit, who has conducted you into the realisation of union, like Rebekah coming to Isaac, that your individuality is merged in Christ. You have a new circle of interests. Next, you are made acquainted with the scope of His glory. "The breadth and length and depth and height." Thirdly, that you may know His love which passeth knowledge. Now you are to know it. No one ever knows what is the fulness of Christ's love until he knows union. Do you understand me?

Yes; I think you mean that there is no question here of the love of Christ in salvation, but you know His love when you realise union. Is it the truth that the Holy Spirit conducts me to Christ where He is?

Yes. You could not know union otherwise. Now you are enjoying the good of it - the endowment. We know in the type it was on earth, but now the Spirit of God conducts the soul to where He is.

Certainly. How could you know union if you were not where He is? If you had the sense of union, you would have the sense of being "in His pavilion free from the strife of tongues."

What you said about being outside of man.

Here it is outside of the world. Christ has gone to another place. Many would read "heavenly things" here, but no, it is a place. In a word, What are the three things? The endowment?

First, His interests are your interests. Next, the scope of His glory occupies your vision; and lastly, the knowledge of His love crowns all. You are filled "into [not with] all the fulness of God." The more I know the love of Christ the better I know Christ. Would you say that you cannot apprehend the love of Christ unless Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith?

I think the order is; first, the Christ dwelling in your heart by faith. Rebekah first lost her individuality because of Isaac, then she could survey his property, and she knew his love. But inasmuch as this follows upon union, why did the apostle pray for it?

He prayed that the Spirit might work, and that He might give the endowment. They could not be entitled to it otherwise. Is the Christ dwelling in your heart continuous? Yes. It is by faith you have it.

If faith is in exercise?

Yes. Christ lives in you by the grace of God for your own comfort. Here it is the calling of the saints - "your hearts." It is plural.

Then it is not individual?

No. It is collective, though known individually.

I think it is important to see that, because some consider that it refers to your individual state.

It is only consequent on union. Now you can understand how a believer united to Christ is endowed. Christ's interests are yours, the scope of His glory is your scope, and you know His love.

What answers now to Rebekah's crossing the wilderness? No one gets to heaven without realising that this world is a wilderness. Are you ready for it?

When? At any time. She had to break with her family and to travel through the wilderness unto Isaac.

You mean, "in spirit there already?"

Yes, you come to that; but I say that if you do not accept the wilderness, you will not get to heaven - while here.

Then domestic happiness might be a great hindrance at times? In one way, but not in another.

I mean to the realisation of the wilderness.

If you are contenting yourself with any natural blessing you have not accepted the wilderness. When you make too much of anything here you are hindered by it. But as you accept the wilderness you will find nothing here.

"A dry and thirsty land where no water is?"

Yes. - "This world is a wilderness wide, I have nothing to seek or to choose."

I can say that much, but the next lines embrace more. - "No thought in the waste to abide, I have nought to regret nor to lose."

You can sing it as desiring it? Are we up to it? Do we not know joy until we realise heaven? Is there none in the wilderness? The moment you have Christ formed in you you have joy. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." "Joy unspeakable, and full of glory," is not union. Union realised is that. you belong to Christ, and when you know that, you will come out in quite a new way. The one who knows union with Christ, though once active in natural things, will now have a new set of interests, and will come out in a new way. Would such an one realise crossing the desert? You wish to bring before us what we should by grace do.

Yes; you never can get to heaven without accepting the desert. You must break with your family and also with the world. That is; the "young man" who has "overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:1-29) has to overcome the world. The general interpretation is that we are all on the way.

Exactly, and that when you come to Jordan you - "Stand shivering on the brink, And fear to launch away!"

It is making it gospel that has hindered the perception of this chapter.

Quite true. But it is not the gospel.

It is only the Spirit who can make this world a wilderness?

Naturally, we are looking for something to suit us in it. We have to learn that there is not a green thing in all the land of Egypt. Look at Paul and John. Where did they end their days? In some happy retreat? No. One in prison, and the other in exile. That is a great help to me, because as you are here for Christ natural things do not improve, and yet you never were happier.

If we are in the right place I suppose?

Yes. Would you like to be there? Would you say, What is the object of the Church? That is the next step. Read verse 20 again.

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end."

There is your answer. The church is to be always the display of Christ to the glory of God.

"According to the power that worketh in us." Is that resurrection power? The power that raised up Christ. The same power that raised up the bird, so to speak, raised up every feather in the bird. That is our comfort!

Now you come to Ephesians 4:1-32, and there are two great circles of testimony. One is the church, and the other your own family. The first circle is the church?

Yes. If a man does not behave well in the church, he never will in his own family. You must begin at the top; it is a great mistake to begin at the bottom. Men try to work from man to God. Work from God down, and you will soon see where you are.

Now in the first circle the great thing is "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" - a full-grown man.

It is simply the object of the ministry?

Yes. You have not done your work until you bring every saint to that. The gifts are given for that purpose. This we see in a remarkable way in John 15:26. The Holy Ghost was to be sent to the disciples to testify of Christ-" He shall testify of Me." Then we get "ye" afterwards - "Ye also shall bear witness." That refers to the twelve. That was only up to the resurrection. The other applies to us all.

Yes; the testimony of the heavenly Man. It is Ephesian ground. We should be descriptive of the exalted Man at God's right hand; you a part and I a part. It is the calling of the whole body. Is that the ministration of the mystery?

It would come out that way. This testimony of Christ (see John 16:1-33) would be very effective. The brethren at first gave up their position in the world in order to be in this testimony. No man holding a position in this world can be a witness of Christ exalted. It is possible to be a servant, but not a witness.

What do you mean by a position in this world?

Any recognized position. A postman's badge will not help him to be a witness of Christ. To receive a testimony from the world would destroy your testimony of Christ?

Yes; surely such an one could not be a witness of Christ because he has a position in the world. Do you understand me? Do you agree?

I do indeed.

Well, next, the heavenly man is to be described in your own family. You get nothing about your family under law. I have not seen many fathers who have brought up their own children. Some allege that because of circumstances they could not do so. The Scripture makes no exception, and therefore I cannot.

You have to state the truth.

You would not get this information under the law. Now that you are united to Christ in heaven you are able to carry out every ordinance of God in the fullest way. Under the law you only get, "Children, obey your parents." The heavenly man would not delegate it?

He would keep his children under his own eye. But if man and wife are one, could you not delegate them to her?

Scripture does not tell the mother to bring them up, because she would naturally do so. The fathers are responsible.

There is one subject more, and that is in Ephesians 6:1-24. Read Ephesians 6:10-13.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Now you see that in the circle of testimony we have to confront the combined force of Satan. If you seek an easy life on earth you will not touch the heavenly side of truth. But it would not be good to seek that?

No, certainly not. If you suffer with Christ you will reign with Him; and if you do not realise union with Him you are not a confidential servant. I might say to a civil engineer, Can you do that work? Yes, he would reply, if the money is forthcoming. If you are in the power of the heavenly Man you can overcome everything. Difficulties are only opportunities to display the power of Christ. You may have seen a child cry at a fly. But by-and-by he gets power, and he kills the fly. The difficulty has vanished. Some think that because they are interested in this scripture they are experimentally in it. There are, I should say, but few who know this conflict. You lose the power of

scripture if you misapply it. Here you encounter the full force of Satan. Satan has worked up man to cast Christ out of this world, and now he cannot tolerate that anyone should be descriptive of Him here as the exalted Man. Satan always throws something in your way to allure you from the heavenly path. Do you make a distinction between the power of the enemy and his wiles?

Yes; I think he begins by wiles. If he can get you into a bye-path he is satisfied. It is well to remember your history, what you did, and how you got turned off, and how you came back again.

Only histories never tell you how you got turned off. As a rule they always recount the best things. But we read, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee," and when you look back there is enough to cast you down - how you have been hindered and turned aside. Satan has only two barrels to his gun. He will allure you if he can, and if that will not do he will try the other, that is, he will crush you. With the blessed Lord, he came to allure Him, and then in Gethsemane he came to crush Him. If you refuse the allurement which Satan throws in your way, so surely will he subject you to persecution. As was said to Mr. Darby, "You would not mind if the newspapers abused you, but for God's people to disparage you, that is very painful."

It is a great mercy we always have the power of God.

You will never enjoy it until you know union with Christ.

What is "as thy days, so shall thy strength be"? That is where you put yourself.

How does "crushing" come to us now? By persecution. If you step out as a heavenly man, the first thing will be Satan will throw something in your way to allure you, and if you do not take the bait, he will subject you to the opposition and enmity of even Christians.

It will not take a moment, if you would just go over the headings to gather it together.

Fitness, counsel, realization, endowment, result in the Church, testimony, and opposition - conflict with the enemy. J. B. Stoney.

S. Resurrection.

Resurrection.

Readings at Croydon. No. 1.

John 20:1-20. The subject before us is the resurrection, and I think it would be a help to open out the subject, if we divided it into sections.

1. What the resurrection is to God;
2. what the resurrection is to the Lord Jesus Himself;
3. what it is from God to man, to the sinner;
4. what it is for the sinner turned to God;
5. what it is to the power of evil;
6. what it is to all things.

We will take them in order, but our subject is, the resurrection. The first is, what the resurrection is to God. It is very interesting for us to understand what it is to God, because it has changed everything. Perhaps there is no subject that we are more practically unacquainted with than the consequences of the resurrection. Nothing can be simpler when you come to look at it. Up to the resurrection God was dealing with man as he was; it was from man to God. Now, from the resurrection, God has got a Man to His own satisfaction. That Man is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; and now God is acting downward from Him to man.

You said, I think, that before the resurrection God was acting with man according to what man was.

Yes, but now He has a Man to His pleasure. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. God is working downward now, from that Man. He is not working from man upward. Do I understand that Christ in resurrection is the beginning of the creation of God?

Exactly. It is the first day of the week. In the Old Testament the seventh day was the day of rest; now it is the first day. The first great thing (and it will have a great effect upon every soul that really understands it) is, what the resurrection is to God. Would you just develop it a little?

Instead of dealing with man, or having him under trial, He has a Man to His entire satisfaction at His right hand, so that He can work from that Man down. Would you connect that with the cross? Of course. You see the first man was under the judgment of God. God had him under trial. Then comes the Lord Jesus Christ, born of a woman. He takes man's place, He bore the judgment that was upon man; but not only that, He glorified God in doing it. Would John 13:31-32, come in there?

Exactly. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." As another has said, God was indebted to a Man for glory. But that Man was His own Son! Still, it was a Man, because none but a man could suffer for men. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." Does not that help us to understand what the resurrection is to God?

It does. As we read, "I have both glorified, and will glorify again." He was glorified in raising Lazarus, but He was glorified again in being raised Himself. That is the first consequence of the resurrection, and what all our blessings date from. What a wonderful alteration it makes. Infidelity springs from trying to work from man up to God. Evolution works that way. So that, from God's side, we understand that the resurrection is a new start altogether?

Quite so. In Matthew 27:1-66, the moment Christ died the veil was rent. God got the answer to the golden box - the ark. He rent the veil because He had got a Man on the earth who answered to the golden box. He had got the antitype to the ark. People talk of going into the Holiest as if they were going to a place. They are going into the presence of Christ, because He is the antitype to the golden box. God has got all He wanted. Can we say that God will have all He wants because the first-fruits are before Him?

He has got it. But He will have more when the end comes. How?

"Afterward they that are Christ's at His coming."

Oh! I see, that is the body raised. Nothing is complete till Christ comes back. Can we say all is made sure because Christ is there? No doubt of it. The thief goes into Paradise because Christ is there, though he had lost his body. You see resurrection alters everything. If I look at current thoughts, resurrection is frequently called a receipt. Quite true; but that is not all, and there is nothing that so hinders truth as a limitation of truth. God has got a Man to His own pleasure at His right hand. The other is part of the truth; but the danger is, you put a part for the whole, and do great damage.

God has satisfied His love as well as His righteousness.

Quite so. The parable of the prodigal son illustrates it. The elder brother says to his father, in terms, "Your conduct is most incongruous. I never transgressed your commandment, and yet you never even gave me a kid; you never showed me such consideration, yet here is a scapegrace who has been a scandal to your house, and you kill for him the fatted calf." Now you solve that incongruity.

What you have stated before is the secret. God has found a Man that suits Him.

Exactly. It is on the ground of that Man that He receives him. He is accepted in the Beloved. It was the Shepherd that brought him back, and it was on the ground of the Man who brought him back that the Father receives him. He is bringing many sons to glory. If Adam had never done anything wrong, he never could be in the same position as one brought to God by Christ. The second section is what the resurrection is to Christ. The first great thing is that He has opened a way for God's heart to reach man. Therefore He says, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." He had come to remove everything, so that God's heart could come forth in all its mighty volume, and meet the returning sinner here on earth. So that the prodigal finds he is received with love.

Goodness brought him, and love meets him. But that is not all. He has also found a company for Himself. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He has opened a way for God's heart to flow out, and He has found a company for Himself. The rent veil would signify the first, and here (John 20:1-31) we get the second, "My Father and your Father."

Yes, and you get it in Hebrews. "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." People try to make Adam love Christ. No such thing. What is Christianity? It is that we belong to another race altogether.

Thomas a Kempis proceeds on those lines.

Yes. Thomas a Kempis and all those did. What was the only thing the steward was sworn to in seeking a wife for Isaac?

She must be of his kindred. That is the difficulty with souls. They have not got hold of the fact that they are Christ's kindred. How can you be His companions if you are not of His kindred? Would John 12:24 illustrate it?

Exactly. Does not that difficulty spring from souls not seeing the new kind of man?

Altogether. Would you say a little, please, as to the new kind of man? As the Christian is now, as the fruit of Christ, so to speak.

Well, that properly will be our subject tomorrow evening - Christ formed in you. The great thing is now, that the resurrection has opened the way for it. If He had not died, He would have been alone; but if He die, He brings forth many grains of His own order. Christ lives in you. Most people think they get eternal life. Quite true; but they do not know that Christ personally lives in them. What has happened to the old "I"? Crucified. "I am crucified with Christ." Well, if that man is gone, what sort of person are you now? "Christ liveth in me." That is, Christ formed in you.

You spoke of trying to make Adam love Christ. Is it impossible?

Don't draw me out on that subject. I might shock you. The finest quality in your nature dislikes Christ. Do you understand that now? Do you like it? The most amiable trait in your character doesn't like Christ. Christ and Adam can't go together. I know Romans 7:1-25, but Galatians 4:1-31 is far deeper experience to me than Romans 7:1-25. Christ has got brethren of His own order. The first was a natural man; of the earth, earthy; the second Man is out of heaven.

I think we might go on to the third section now.

Before we proceed, might I ask if, when we speak of this new company, we can apply the words "out of heaven"? That is what it is. I am not saying how far your heavenly origin comes out, because that is as you grow. Therefore the great effect of ministry is "till we all come . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Some people get out of it very easily by saying it is future. Is it not rather the object of the ministry?

Yes.

Here on earth? No man can say he has finished his work.

Quite so; but it is not a question as to whether you have reached it.

Certainly not. If you had reached it you might go home.

Now, the third section is how God is to the returning sinner because of resurrection. You see it well described in Saul's conversion. The light shines from God. God begins the work. Many think man begins and God goes on. A light out of heaven met Saul of Tarsus. God has a Man at His own right hand, and He works from that Man. God begins from the finish. We think He ought to begin at the beginning, but He begins at the finish. The light comes first. It comes down from a glorified Christ. Is that conveyed by the preaching of the word now?

I believe it is the great power of the evangelist - the light to open their eyes. Look at the woman who searched for the silver piece. She sweeps diligently; but if she had not had a very bright light she would not have found it. Is it light as to His love?

God's nature is light. Fear is always the first result of the light. Fear is the beginning of wisdom. You see it in the thief on the cross. He says, "We receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." You see grace there. Light shows us the good as well as the bad. Is conscience the only doorway for the light? God works on it.

I suppose we learn the love in the light.

Yes. Look at the woman of Samaria. She doesn't say a word about the love. She says, "He told me all that ever I did." He is a purchaser with notice. Do you understand that? You purchase an article knowing that there is a flaw in it. He knows all about you. Does God always act as light before He reveals Himself as love?

He must do so. It is His nature. Look at Saul. When the light shone on him he fell to the ground, because the light exposed him. He had thought he was a perfect man. Is the conscience always reached first?

I think it is.

You are speaking of an unconverted person? Not only. The great thing with the most advanced Christian is, he is distressed that he is not according to the light. But is not the saint drawn through the heart?

Well, he gets drawn to the Lord, but his senses are exercised. It is remarkable that the word there is a very strong one - it means gymnastics.

What would you call the drawing of the Father?

It is His work to do it. And John uses heart for conscience. "If our heart condemn us." Peter's conscience (John 21:1-25) was clear, but his heart was not. There is the affection connected with the conscience.

But, with the woman, she had conscience.

Christ begins with the way He could set her up in Samaria? When she did not take in the spiritual meaning of His word, He touched her conscience. She could not have got it without. She thought it was spring-water. It is the same word in the original. What a wonderful thing, that God can come

out and take the prodigal in His arms. He can say. It is because I am glorified by a Man, and I work from that Man downwards. What Christians find out after perhaps 20 years God begins with. It may be a very long day before you find it out; still, God begins there.

I suppose really we learn the truth in the reverse order to which God works.

We have to learn it from our own side. I think that, as a rule, you are thinking of how the sinner feels instead of how God feels. But the prodigal says, It is my father I have offended, and I want to see how he stands with me. I count upon his goodness. And he comes, having made up a speech (make me as one of thy hired servants), but he finds his father is full of affection, and he doesn't venture to propose it. Not a word of it. I once said to a brother, Do you know how God feels about you? I never was asked that question in my life, he said. So that the true gospel is, that God works down to the sinner?

Yes. In the Old Testament you brought an offering to Him; and as you had faith, your offering was accepted. But there was no resurrection. Now God has removed the man that offended Him, and however you may try to bring him back into favour you never will. That is what people are trying to do. The prodigal felt that he was not fit; but we are looking at the resurrection - how God can take the prodigal in His arms, and let out all His love, because He works from the Man who has glorified Him, and, therefore, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." It is not only that He has forgiven all your offences, but He has transferred you to new ground. You are changed from Adam to Christ, and now "they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" And, therefore, the chapter winds up with, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Can we find all the prodigal's blessings in Romans? I think so. I think he has got as far as the fifth. He is accepted, but he doesn't enjoy it. Is not he in the Father's house?

It is the joys of the Father's house - the Holy Ghost. The great supper is the present enjoyment, when "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Could you put it in other words, so as to let us all be clear? You say at the end of Romans 5:1-21 you have a man changed from Adam to Christ.

Yes; the first eleven verses are the terms upon which God can be with you.

Now we turn to what the resurrection is to the believer himself. I can explain it better by the type than anything else. In Exodus 12:1-51 Christ is the perfect sacrifice. I may say, every Christian upon the face of the earth knows that. But what is the state of that Christian? He is occupied with Pharaoh, that is Satan; and the Egyptians, that is the flesh. He is not out of Egypt. Next he learns another thing. Not only was Christ "delivered for our offences," but He "was raised again for our justification." Now that is what the Red Sea is. Moses has to make a way through the Red Sea, and they are to walk it. I believe in walking it that you appropriate the death of Christ, and then you are out of it.

Then deliverance will be connected with that?

Deliverance must come after. I am speaking of how you stand with God. You are through the Red Sea, what Paul learnt in those three days when he appropriated the death of Christ, as the only

way out of himself. You are then free with God.

I refer to the type. You are out of Egypt and clear of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. That is the Red Sea. But I don't believe a person is there unless he has gone through it experimentally. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

You make walking then appropriation?

Yes. I use the type to make it plain. You are passed "out of death into life," not "from death." It is a great help to see that if I am out of it I must have been in it. Every man on the face of the earth is in death. John 5:24 is "passed out of death into life."

John 6:1-71 is not the Lord's supper then?

Oh! no. That is where Romanism comes in. A Christian in the present day may say, "I am very happy; all my sins are gone." The next day he is very depressed. He doesn't know resurrection as it is with God. Do you mean that the resurrection is the demonstration of the putting away of sins?

It is the putting away of all that is not of God. There must be death or there could not be resurrection. If you accept resurrection you must accept death. The comfort of the saint is that he knows that the old man is gone from the eye of God to His infinite glory. It is gone from Him whom I have offended. I knew it was gone from the eye of God for years before I saw it was gone from myself - because I was trying to improve myself. The first great thing is to understand acceptance. There are two great steps; first acceptance, then liberty. Acceptance is that God can accept me without a cloud.

Then liberty can only follow upon the experimental acceptance of resurrection?

Quite so, and if the acceptance is not full, the liberty will never be so.

I think we might go on now to the next section. The power of evil is destroyed. He entered into death that "He might destroy him that had the power of death." The more you study it, the more you see how it affects everything you have to do with. Would you explain in what way He destroyed him that had the power of death?

He let him expend all his power, and came out of it. He annulled it.

Set aside his claims?

Yes, abolished death. Pharaoh is gone. That character of power is over.

What power did Satan exercise over man?

You get the thought all along the line with Israel - Pharaoh, Amalek, Balaam, and the seven nations. Pharaoh is over for the Christian. He begins with resurrection. "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I do not say you are free of the others, but I say you are free of Pharaoh.

What are the seven nations? When you come into it you will find out. Ephesians 6:1-24 - the combined forces of Satan. I think very few know what the sixth of Ephesians is. You must be on the ground before you can find out. You must be over Jordan before you can fight the seven

nations. What is the good of armour to a man if he is not in battle? It is the man who is in battle who knows the good of it.

We cannot say that Satan is destroyed, can we? His power of death is gone. It is taken out of his hands. A man has come out of it. . . . Israel suffered eventually from the nations. I don't believe Satan is cast out of heaven till the Church goes up. If you want to have an easy path here, don't touch heavenly things. There is nothing that Satan hates more than a heavenly man. He will do all he can to oppose you, and he knows what will oppose you. He has only two barrels to his gun. The first is, he will allure you; and if that does not do, he will crush you if he can. Look at the children of the captivity. The enemy says "If you won't eat the king's meat I will put you into the fire." Well, the same God that delivered from the one will deliver from the other. Nothing shows the terrible nature of Satan like his trying to tempt the Lord. First he tried to allure Him, and then he attempted to crush Him. In Gethsemane he brings death before Him.

I suppose every man who takes that ground has to meet Satan? No doubt of it. If he found you were making advance, he would use it. But you would find you have the power of the Lord with you. As an engineer would say if you ask him, "Can you execute that work?" "Yes, if I have means." Ah! that will do.

You mean the more a man takes that ground, the more he has God with him.

He cannot take it unless he belongs to the heavenly Man. Some try to be heavenly men by themselves. By union with Him I am a heavenly man, but not otherwise . . . I am united to a Man in the glory.

Then in union I am on resurrection ground.

You are united to the Man in heaven. You never know union till you are brought to where the person is. Rebekah has to go all the way to Isaac. She has to encounter two things; first, family influence; and then she has to go through the wilderness, and every step she takes is a step further away from her family. Does she give up her family?

She gives up its influence. She has a higher influence.

Quite so. The more right a thing is the more dangerous it is.

What does Balaam mean?

Balaam is the worst influence that you can possibly be subjected to. The lowest society you keep is that which colours you. Many a person I have no doubt gets into low society, and he is leavened and damaged before he knows where he is. The Corinthians suffered from Balaam, the Thessalonians from Amalek. Woe betide you when you get into Balaam's company. He invited them out. You get into society, you get under its influence. If you read Revelation 2:1-29; Revelation 3:1-22 you will see it. A man or woman is spoilt by the company he or she keeps. I do not mean in business. There is no notion of company in business. That is not company. You are then on the qui vive. I mean social company, where you can unbutton your coat; do you understand? In business you keep your eyes open. Do you mean unconverted people?

No. A Christian on low ground is worse than an unconverted person, he damages you more, because you say, "Oh! he can do so-and-so." But how can you keep company with a worldling if you have really the motives and tastes of Christ - how can you find any pleasure in his society? Duties and business are very different from society. Look at the Corinthians, what they came to; they went into an idol's temple to eat.

Well, the last section is, that in resurrection everything comes out new, and therefore Christ begins. It begins with a new day - the first day of the week. Everything comes out new. He says, "Behold, I make all things new." Our subject for tomorrow is "Christ formed in you." J. B. Stoney.

S. The Atonement

The Atonement

THERE can, in one sense, be no true understanding of the nature and value of atonement, but as there is a knowledge of the state of man needing it. If the need be fully seen, then the remedy must be according to it; if only partially seen, the remedy needed will be estimated amiss. Hence, the first point for us to examine is the state and condition of man, in the eye of God; for we may rest assured, that it is an imperfect apprehension of man's state which lies at the root of the general indifference to this subject.

Adam was set in the garden of Eden, in innocence, subject to God; and while he remained in the subjection due from the creature to the Creator, he enjoyed the goodness with which he was surrounded. Against insubjection he was warned, and told that an infraction of the divine restriction (for it was not an exaction but a restriction, one which demanded nothing from him -merely described the line which he must not pass over), would be followed by the penalty of death. His life would be forfeited if he acted in self-will. Adam did not remain subject to the will of God. He acted for himself, Satan being the tempter to the transgression; and the penalty fell upon him. Now death is the penalty, it is the wages of sin; but it is not a penalty which is only endured while passing through it, as would be the case with one inflicted by man; but, because it is inflicted by God, its full extent is not known till after it has been realized, as it is written, " after death the judgment." The sense in my soul, that I die because of a penalty laid on me, in itself, places me under a sense of God's judgment and that for eternity; hence, it is not so much death itself which the sinner shrinks from, as the after-consequences; even judgment from which there is no hope or possibility of extrication. The life is forfeited, and when the forfeit is paid man is then conscious of the nature of the penalty. The suffering is not merely the act of dying, but the consciousness of being under judgment, to which dying consigns one.

Adam's life was forfeited in the state and condition in which he was set here, and dying, he must die; not to escape all suffering afterward, but as a penalty introducing him into a state of suffering. He is now without a life, at least without any real possession of one that he can call his own; for he is insecure and uncertain as to the moment when judgment may begin. His life is forfeited. The forfeit has not been paid, but over a thing forfeited, I have really no claim or power; it is the property of the one to whom it is forfeited. Man cannot count upon his life now for anything; according to God's will it is forfeited, and when the forfeit is paid, the soul enters into judgment. Man's state and condition is now that of having a forfeited life awaiting judgment. God's righteousness demands this, it could not exact less. Man set upon the earth in blessing dependent on the Creator, acts contrary to Him, at the suggestion, of another. This moral anomaly exists. A creature of the highest and most perfect order, setting up a will-a line of action, contrary to God's will. Hence the question, whether man is to be suppressed; or whether God will be indifferent to him as a creature, made in His own likeness, acting in spirit and deed in contravention to His will. If God's will is righteous, man is unrighteous, and can God in righteousness, suffer man to continue

in that condition in which he can contravene the righteous will of God? The answer is simple, if it could be so, there would be an end to righteousness. Hence, God forewarned him, that if he should do what He had told him not to do, the penalty would be death, and the penalty of death, as we find by Hebrews 9:27, reduces him to a state in which he is conscious of the extent of his loss, and his distance, in judgment, from God. Death for the lost, is only the prison door of one eternal night of misery, where the sense of distance from God is ever maintained in weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We shall now better comprehend the nature of the atonement, which could enable the Holy God to set up man on another footing. To meet, the righteousness of God, there must be a victim, not, in himself, chargeable with our offense, in any way, bearing the penalty of death. But not only this, there must be a personal excellency, over and above the life offered up. The life is offered up, in substitution, and the perfection elicited in the time of offering is that basis, which forms the ground for the re-establishment of man, in another condition. It is evident that man could find nothing of this kind in himself-he could not offer up a life, for he had none to offer, it was forfeited; and there was nothing to be found in him, but what would aggravate the judgment under which he had fallen. Once overtaken by the penalty, he could not be released from it; he had fallen under it. If a sinner has no soul, he is neither conscious of being under judgment nor of being delivered from it; but, if he has, and is to be released from it, the release must take place before the judgment overtakes him.

Abel's offering through faith sets forth the main points of the atonement. It is the primitive offering, and we may conclude that it was the one appointed of God. Abel offered of the firstling of his flock, and of the fat thereof. A. victim not chargeable with its offense, giving up its life, and not only this, but it is added, " and the fat thereof" The blood was the life given in substitution for one who had forfeited his life, and the fat, the acceptable thing on which God could deal anew with the lost one. Now, the sense first awakened in the sinner's soul, is, that there must be something offered between him and God. Even Pagans attest this in their propitiatory sacrifices, and the like; and the law is distinctly on this ground, for it does not simply exact obedience to "a code, which in God's mind is only worthy of man, as His creature, but it insists on the need of the intervention of sacrifices, of many and various kinds, to meet the many and various states of the old man. And this was consistent with the law, for the law addressed man as still alive; but while it did so, it could not over look the sense on the conscience of distance from God and of impending judgment; hence sacrifices and rituals were imposed-until the time of reformation, which could not purge the conscience. On it, there was the sense of judgment before God from which there could be no relief until there was an atonement which would perfectly answer for the life under forfeiture, and judgment, and open out a new way for appearing before God. The law dealt with man as still alive, and hence offerings were repeated, as expressing that there was need for intervention, because that which needed it was still in existence, or recognized as so. If the being under judgment had been superseded by an atonement having been offered, then there must be an end of that which required the atonement. Either the being continues waiting for an atonement and consequently remaining in the state that needs it, as was the case under the law, or the atonement has come and the state of the being needing it no longer remains. Both cannot stand together. If the atonement be a perfect one, it supersedes in the eye of God the being needing it. If it has been accepted, the state of the being needing it does not remain before God for any one connected with

the substitute. The law could' not propose that man should be superseded; for if he were, there would be no occupation for the law; and hence while it suffered man to remain in his state, it demanded from the worshipper continual sacrifices which never purged the conscience; because, if they had, they would have ceased to be tiered. The moment the sacrifices effected the end desired, they ceased to be required. The error abroad is, that the atonement is not seen, as setting aside the being under judgment, and consequently there is a sense of needing something expiatory still; which, as I have said, involves two things-one, that the sacrifice is not a satisfactory one, and the other that the state of the being needing atonement still continues before God. The sacrifice is properly the substitution for the being needing it and if a true and sufficient one, then that for which it has been a substitute is not dealt with but the substitute. The substitute must have a life like that of the being to be atoned for, only guiltless, and unchangeable in any way with his offense; and must after proving its faithfulness, in every way, give up this unforfeited life, for the forfeited one, which exposed man to eternal judgment; and not only so but the substitute must be one who has life in Himself, in order that he may rise again as perfectly acceptable to God-as it is said, "raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father."

Christ having so perfectly answered every demand of God, and having borne the judgment on man, pours out His life, at the bottom of the altar, and from thence is quickened by the Spirit, to establish man in His own life forever. In His blood, there is for every believer a substitution for the forfeited life;-for death-that door into the eternal prison;-for man in Christ has no longer a forfeited life, but life in Him who has atoned for him and who has risen out of death and judgment; and hence the life atoned for, does not exist as needing atonement. The great points for us to see are that the state of man, because of the fall was not remediable because the, life which was forfeited was the very life of the condition in which man was set on earth; and this forfeit was the penalty, only really known after it was paid, and not in the mere act of dying; and hence the substitute for this state cannot repair this forfeited life. The first terms of atonement are that a man's life, sinless, unchangeable, and meeting every demand of God under His judgment is to be given up, before He can do aught else in the way of blessing us. If the life were under probation (and probation could never atone for a state of offense) it would be open to man to repair it. This was the course observed under law. Man is there under trial, and the life is prolonged, judgment is staved off while it is kept. It did not propose to atone, but offered a continuance of life, while its demands were observed, and fir the obedient, it through the sacrifices, intimated that the life was not an acceptable one with God; even though, through obedience, its doom might be respited, as will be fully manifested in the Millennium. But atonement must meet the state as it is. Atonement is positive, and no tentative measure could be atonement. Hence in the paschal lamb, which was an offering instituted before the law, the blood is poured out. This is the first and great thing. This satisfies the eye of God; and He says, " When I see the blood I will pass over." The state of man as he is, is met by that blood, typical of Christ's blood-" Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." The blood, meeting the eye of the Judge, atones for man's state. Man's life is forfeited, and here is a life poured out for it. It does not remove the forfeiture, but it removes the consequences of it. The forfeiture has been incurred, and there can be no removal of what has been incurred but there is removal of the consequences; and this removal is effected by the substitute taking the man's place, and being to his judgment bearing the whole weight of it, in man's nature; and then, giving up the life, in substitution, for the forfeited life. One with an unforfeited life, bears all the distance and agony due to the forfeited one, and having perfectly done so, gives the life up. He not only

endures all that was due to man for his offense—all the suffering which a forfeited life eternally entailed; but having perfectly and righteously met all this, He gave up the life which was not forfeited; and hence, having answered, not only for the forfeited life, but for its consequences, neither the one nor the other remain to the one who is in Christ. A new path, a new position, is opened out. He has cleared off the old, and now risen, is the head and founder of another race. In the passover, the people of God were safe through the blood shed, but more than this, they were inside, feeding on the very lamb whose blood had saved them. The victim's place exposed the substitute to the judgment resting on man. For man, death itself was but the door to the state of judgment. Christ bears the judgment, is made sin, put in the sinner's place. He who had no sin, is treated as if He had; and freely, and of His own accord, gives up His unforfeited life. Substitutionally He should die, "not for that nation only, but that he should gather together in one the children of God which are scattered abroad." He gives the unforfeited for the forfeited, after he had endured in Himself before God every agony due to the forfeited life; thus perfecting the atonement. Having been put in the sinner's place, treated as the sinner in suffering, He resigns that life by which He was able to connect Himself with man's state of suffering. He shed His blood and then closed forever the history of man for whom He had atoned. The blood righteously sets free the being who is sheltered in a new life, because he trusts in it, and not in the state which required it, but in that of the Substitute now risen from the dead. As the paschal lamb, I feed on Him, roast with fire. My entire engagement is with Him, and He supports me, as before by His blood He saved me from a judgment due to my life and state.

Under the law we get properly four kinds of offerings, which in their various ways set forth what God required of man. In all but the meat offering the blood was shed. In the burnt offering which set forth the devotedness of Christ offering himself to God, we have the blood sprinkled all round about the altar, and then the offering is offered up. The victim is first accepted as an atonement, the hands of man being laid on it, and then the life is given up. This was necessary even in the case of a burnt sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord. In like manner in the peace-offering the blood was sprinkled round about the altar; and it too was an offering made by fire of a sweet savor unto the Lord. The excellency of the victim being the special thing offered, as setting forth the ground and basis of all blessing, and hence giving full rest and peace to the soul before God. Christ's own personal excellence is the food of all the offerings, and the sure guarantee for eternal peace.

Now it is evident, that if God required those under law to meet' the demands of righteousness the first thing is the surrender of life. Even in the burnt and peace offerings, where there is no notice taken of actual sin, the blood was given up,—that is the life of the substitute must be surrendered previous to the acceptance and sweetness of savor accorded to the offering; and this atonement and sprinkling of blood was consequent on the laying on of hands of the man needing it. I understand the laying on of hands to imply the attributing of man's state to the substitute. The substitute's life was poured out itself without blemish, but having been charged with man's state, previous to death it surrenders its unblemished life for his, and is accepted in perfect sweetness before God, as outside, and apart from, that life, for which it had atoned. Hence it is, as I understand, that when in Exodus 24:5, the blood of burnt offerings and peace offerings was sprinkled, there was an open way for the Elders of Israel into the presence of God. The atonement is in the blood Leviticus 17:11; but it is plain that when the hands were laid on the victim the penalty and the consequences of that which rested on him who laid his hands thereon were made

over to the substitute, Thus Christ was placed under all the weight of man's state. before He died. He suffered because of what was placed to His account. He was made sin, and then poured out His life; and 'presented Himself in His offering capacity in every acceptable way a sweet savor in the very highest degree to God. In the sin offering the blood was not only sprinkled but all of it was poured out at the bottom of the altar; and besides the fat being burnt on the altar the carcass was burnt in a clean place without the camp. That is to say, there was to be no longer an admission of the existence of the being substitutionally represented, in the carcass.

There was the excellency of the victim and the giving up of the life of the victim; but with Christ there was also, the suffering of being made sin, the just for the unjust. His death ended before God that order of being which had sinned. He was justified in the spirit, and not in the flesh. He was put to death in the flesh-but quickened-made alive (that is the opposite to death) in the spirit. In the fullness of time, God sent His 'Son, in a body prepared for Him. He was made flesh. and dwelt among us. After thirty years of patient growth, passing through every phase of man's life here below, and fully conversant with it, He comes forth into public ministry, satisfying the long restrained desire of His heart to be about His Father's business; and then, as is recorded in the three first gospels, He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil-He set forth that there 'was no state or infirmity of man in this present life, which He could not relieve or remove. He raised the dead, expelled devils, healed the leper, gave sight to the blind, cured every disease; and yet with all this, He was not able, in the days of His flesh, to place man in likeness to Himself as God's man on earth. For this He must die; hence He says: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone." It can never produce one like unto itself, unless it dies; but if' it die, it brings forth much fruit. Sad and sorrowful as was His walk and pilgrimage here for thirty three years, He now (John 12:24-28), foresees the terrible season when as the sin-bearer He would enter into the suffering of a sinner's. distance from God. Hence He adds: " Father save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour." He now a man, in man's life, undertakes to bear in Himself from God-all that was due to man. He has walked in every circumstance here well pleasing to God. He has been the Father's delight, in all the ways of a man; and now, as the burnt offering He offers Himself freely without spot to God; surrendering every privilege and power to' which He was entitled, as the Holy One on earth. Unprotected, and unguarded, He is open to all the attacks of men; and exposed to all the malice of Satan; and not only this, but when He takes the place of the victim-in giving up His life,-His unforfeited life,-for man, then the consequences of this falls upon Him on the cross. He endures, trusting in God, bearing in His soul, for a season, the suffering and agony of one consigned by death unto eternal distance from God.

Then He trusts, and then He prays; and then is succored, because He had done no wrong, neither was sin found in His mouth. He, in conscious and restored favor gives up the ghost, pours out His life, sheds His blood at the bottom of the altar, but being holy throughout, yea the most perfect sweet savor to God in it all, He does not see corruption; He is not holden of death; He is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; He is quickened in the spirit,-man, alive again, but after a new order; and now the fountain, and source of eternal life, to as many as come unto Him. And in proof of this, He breathes on His disciples, and says, " Receive ye the Holy Ghost." He can now impart to us His own life, by and in the power of the Holy Ghost. While He walked here for thirty-three years, however close His contact, however He imparted of His virtues to man, He had never placed man on a level with Himself, as a man here. He still abode alone. The corn of wheat

by no amount of contact with men here, had brought any to His own order. The greatest miracle did not effect conversion apart from the word. "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" (Luke 17:17). The one who returns to give glory to God, is the converted one, and the one in whom the word of Christ creates rest and assurance. There was no meeting or remedying the state of man, until the man Jesus Christ placed Himself under the hand of God, as one in Himself utterly and entirely irresponsible for man's state, having first proved in every stage and circumstance of life, that He could walk in the flesh, in every way well pleasing to God, to undergo all that was due to man, and in the searching agony of it, to be proved to the utmost, as to whether any thought for Himself, could arise apart from God. Nothing but self renunciation and simple subjection to God marked Him throughout; and His perfect life-He then pours out. It is not that He pours out the life merely; but He does so, after having exposed Himself to the judgment which the deprivation of life entails. He surrendered the life in which He had thus exposed Himself to judgment; and then, though the one holy perfect man, born of a woman in man's estate, who had been in every way well pleasing to God, having been made sin,-treated as the guilty, offers Himself; sheds His blood, surrenders an existence which righteously He had held, and lived in, and on which there was no claim, as substitution -for that which had been forfeited by man. He had a life which had not been forfeited; but which had endured, in the hour of forsaking, more than any man had endured, in suffering and distance from God.

He had a life which was perfect in every way; most pleasing to God; but He gave it up, and before giving it up, endured in it all that was on man-because of his evil and sin. " Now is the Son of man glorified." Having so endured, having glorified God as a man, He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. The life in which He, as a man, had glorified God, and in which He had endured man's judgment, He does not retain-He pours it out. The atonement is in the blood. We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. The reconciliation is effected. The sinless one has been made sin, and has given up a life which He might have retained, in substitution for a life which was forfeited. But He has glorified God in it all, and hence, He is raised from the dead; we are saved by His life. " If Christ be not risen, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins." The resurrection is the proof of acceptance, but it is for our justification. That which represented the resurrection in the typical offerings was, I suppose, the fire feeding on the fat. At any rate the fat was the excellency of the animal, and the fire consuming it indicated its acceptance. Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and the resurrection is the proof and evidence that He has indeed offered Himself without spot to God, and that it was impossible that He should be holden of death. But then, having destroyed the power of death and abolished it, He has brought to light life and incorruptibility. In His resurrection, He is the quickening Spirit. He can impart life, His life, to those whose death He has borne. Being reconciled to God by the death of His Son, how much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. He shed His blood for us, and now risen, He is the second man, able to communicate of His life to those, for whom, before He died for them, He could do nothing but relieve. He must die for them where they were, in order to set them in the life in which He is. He must bear their death and its consequences, before He could share with them His life which, is eternal. The resurrection is the proof that Christ had in everything glorified God, and hence it is for the glory of God that He should rise from the dead. It would have compromised the glory if He had not risen. Having given up His sinless life for man's sinful life, He is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and also declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. The resurrection is the proof that there was life outside of death. The

atonement required a life, not liable to death, and this, being delivered up, His life, as the Son of God, asserts its place; and it is for the glory of the Father, to raise Him from among the dead; manifesting the mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places. The penalty incurred by man is not only borne, but borne by one in no way liable to it, as the substitute for man. He gives the life which in every step and walk here, was so honoring to God, sacrificially, and more than this-He rises not only because He has life in Himself; but the glory of the Father requires that One so perfect here as a man, and so glorifying God, in submitting fully to all His righteousness, with the end and aim of unlocking the heart of God; giving Him full liberty to deal on new and eternal ground with His people once under condemnation;-the glory of the Father requires, I repeat, that such an one, should be in life again, as a man; though not in the life which He had poured out, but should, without seeing corruption, be raised up in the eternity of His own life. The first man being under sentence, has received sentence in the cross of Christ, and not only this-a sinless life is offered for the sinful one;. and He the substitute, being raised from the dead is the source and founder of a new race in eternal life, and perfect holiness. We are cleansed from all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ His Son. We are made nigh by His blood. Nothing remains to interfere, or interpose, seeing that the life in which all the offense has been committed has been judged in Christ, and that He has given up His perfect unforfeited life, for our sinful forfeited one. But He is raised from being the dead man, into a living man by the spirit of God, in the power of an endless life and the man is on the highest ground, and in the highest connection, glorified now, in the Son who has done all the Father's will, and finished His work. The first man is set aside judicially in righteousness; and the Son of God, who as man met the righteousness of God, and bowed to it in judgment, is the one to express in fullness the love of God. He bore the righteous judgment fully. He when here, in a region where sin abounded, answered to God's nature in righteousness; and He expresses in fullness, and perfection, that nature which is love, when sin has been forever put away.

Blessed Mission I Blessed Missionary to our heart of all the grace and goodness of the living God. As we live by Him, may we live to Him, in joy and purpose of heart. Amen! J. B. S.

S. The Christian Race

The Christian Race

Hebrews 12:1-2.

(This is, as far as possible, a verbatim report of a lecture given by our beloved brother [who has recently departed to be with Christ] in 1888. Our readers will be much interested in it at the present moment.)

Anyone who has carefully read the Epistle to the Hebrews will remark that Christ is connected with the throne in three different ways. Turn to Hebrews 1:1-14; it is in the end of Hebrews 1:3 we read, "when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Here sins are purged. Another phase is opened out in Hebrews 1:8, Hebrews 1:1 : "We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Then we have the third phase in the scripture that I have read. I have read this that we may see what is our peculiar course here on earth; it is a race! What a character it gives us! What a style to be running a race! Looking out unto Jesus!

Now I will trace how we come to it. It is a race to heaven, no matter what the difficulties are. In Ephesians you are in heaven, but here you are racers, and you are racing to heaven. Plenty of difficulties along the road, but I am "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith." He gives us the power to carry on the race. In Ephesians 4:11 it says: "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Now I have to start here; I am out of Egypt, now where am I going to? It is this which determines a great deal more than we think. The "rest" is future, of course. He was warning those Hebrew saints; they were Jews, and he was warning them not to get frightened at the difficulties. We are like them often; we are out of Egypt, but many of us have got as far as Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites. What stops you? The apostle warns them of the day of temptation in the wilderness. I would not believe a man who said he did not like a nice prospect and a nice place on the earth; but we are going on, and we get three great experiences along the way. The first is infirmity. Infirmity is not sin. You might be too poor, or you might be too rich, and either would be a pressure. An infirmity may lead to a sin. Sarah was afraid, and she laughed; then she told a lie. Fear or timidity is weakness, infirmity; telling a lie is sin. So we read, "whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement." If you are afraid you are overcome. Infirmity is weakness, and a man is weak when he cannot rise over a thing; a great contrast to a man who is a racer - he leaps over all the obstacles. It is trying, not trial. The first great hindrance is your circumstances; the second is your health. Ill-health is a terrible pressure; you are like a ship waterlogged. The third is sorrow; and this is the worst of all. Now I want to point out to you how you are to go on in the infirmities. We are going on to heaven, and we first are met with infirmities. What will help me in them? We have both the Word and the sympathy of the Lord. Every believer is addressed by the Word, but very few enjoy the sympathy. The Word penetrates the motives, and I am found out. The point is actually to press you to get on the right road. There may be a hundred roads, and ninety-nine are

wrong. The Lord uses the Word to bring me on to the right one. The Word has done its work when it puts me on the right road, the road to heaven. The Lord has gone that one road, and He will help me along that road. Every believer has a sense that the Lord has spoken to him. But does he mind His words? If Peter had minded the words of the Lord he would not have gone into danger.

Next to the Word is the sympathy of the Lord, and I find in Canticles the bride coming from the wilderness, leaning on the arm of her Beloved. I have a wonderful thing on the road; I have the company of the Lord, and His sympathy! He is out of the weakness of man, and right up from the top He can look down and say, "I went along the same path, and I never diverged from it." Now turn to John 11:1-57 for an example of sympathy. Here we have two sisters, both suffering from the same cause - the death of their brother. How differently He deals with each! Martha gets no sympathy. She gets instruction, and in a way passes Him over to Mary. And see Mary! You find the Lord walking beside her, and she can say, "Here is a heart that cares for me, and if I have lost a brother, I have someone greater than a brother." She gets the sense of grace in His company. The grace is how I bear the trial, the mercy is the relief. If I take the storm easily as He did, that is the grace; when He rebukes the wind, that is mercy. When Paul was in prison, then he had the grace, and grace made him sing in the prison; but it was the mercy that let him out. I have not only mercy in my infirmities, but having sympathy I am supported, and I turn to the Supporter. I am not occupied with the trouble, but with the Person who got me out of it. Turn to John 12:1-50 : "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus." She is occupied now with the Supporter. I am out of my infirmity now, and I am in the company of the One who got me out of it. But that is not all. I come to how I am occupied with Him, and I turn you to Hebrews 8:2; Hebrews 10:19. Now this is an entirely new experience. It is not getting relief from infirmity, but it is being in the company of the One who relieved me. The great thought of the Lord in getting you out of pressure is that you may be in company with Him. I am out of my infirmity, and now I am found in company with Him. Mary of Bethany was in company with the Lord. I get a fuller thing in Hebrews. The great point there is companionship. "Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy companions." Nothing can have the same satisfaction for a heart here on earth as the company of the Lord. You would then not be soured by infirmity and trials; you would be mellowed by them. You would feel you were so helped by Him that you would be more attracted to Him than ever.

There are three great stages in a Christian's history, Hebrews is the second. The first is before Hebrews; it is what Jonathan knew of David. He has cleared the ground, Goliath is gone, and the One who cleared the ground occupies the ground. That is the first stage. I know that my Saviour has completely removed all the darkness, He has abolished death; now every cloud is gone! "Jonathan . . . loved him as his own soul." You cannot have a divine acquisition without a result. Your face will shine, it must come out. Jonathan stripped himself, and look what a sight it was! He takes off his royal habiliments and puts them on a shepherd-boy, and says he is entitled to them! He is like the woman in Luke 7:1-50; she went home, and then she says, "I will give the very best thing I have, to make much of Him at my own expense." Next I find that blessed One is indispensable to me every step of the way. That blessed One I love now for Himself, not only for His work. Now I am like Ruth, I am so attached to Him I cannot do without Him. "Where thou goest, there I will go." Now in this new stage it is not giving your property, but it is giving yourself. Peter gave up his ship and followed Him, for company is better than property. Company with Himself!

The Lord would rather have us follow Him than anything, therefore He says to Peter, "Follow Me." Now, how do I begin to follow Him? I have been borne over my infirmity by Him, and I have found that my heart is only bound the more to Him as He came down to me in my infirmity, so I am now with Him in the brightest spot, the holiest of all. Like Aaron's sons in a common fragrance, He has helped me out of my trouble to be in company with Himself. I press this, because I feel a great many are praying to the Lord to get out of the pressure, and the only object in getting out of it should be that you may be more in company with the One who brought you out. You are now so attached to Him that you cannot do without Him. You cannot understand the third stage unless you know the second. The third is union, and if you do not enjoy His company, you cannot enjoy union. In Canticles you get the reciprocity of affection, in spite of fickleness of the bride, which shows what we are. Nothing can give me a greater idea of the blessedness of heaven than the company of the Lord. You get the taste of heaven then. You are in company with the Minister of the sanctuary. The Lord lead us to see what a wonderful thing it is to be entranced with His company. We read in the Psalms, "To see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary." And again in Corinthians, To God we are beside ourselves. It is being in an ecstasy! How different our meetings would be if I felt "I am coming here to be entranced in His presence." I am not thinking of myself, but I am delighted in His company. If you do not get to this you will never understand what union is. Mary Magdalene says, as it were, "I will never stir till I get hold of Him." John was intelligent, but he went home! Some have said that a woman brought in the first trouble, and a woman got the highest privilege ever given, and was the bearer of the most wonderful truth. The Lord said, as it were, "I will reward you, Mary!"

I found He was the One who could stretch out His hand to me in the darkness, and now He is indispensable to me. "Where thou goest will I go." Turn now to Hebrews 12:1. There are two things that mark a person in a race. You are running and you are going to the same point where Jesus is! You have tasted of the spot where He is. Now for the race. Where are you racing to? To heaven, and the One who has drawn my heart up to Himself is there. But how did you reach to this? It is beautiful when you look into it. I have tasted of heaven in the sanctuary, and the man who has had a taste of heaven likes nothing so well as the race to get there! It is not contending with infirmities, but with difficulties, and you will find plenty of them, and it is for this the eleventh of Hebrews comes in. It is misunderstood at times, it is spoken of as examples of faith, but I think it is the traits of faith. It is like one telling me what faith can do. The Lord is the author, the source of it; He starts with telling us that without faith it is impossible to please Him. He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him out. I have got an idea of His nature, and He will reward me if I seek Him out, if I choose Him. What marked Enoch was that he pleased God, and I can conceive of nothing higher than to be pleasing to Him. Supposing I know a great man who could do all I want - will I go to him? No, I will go to God. I count upon Him because He is the rewarder of those who seek Him out. In Luke 11:1-54 you learn to pray; you have no back door, and you are not going to anyone else but the One who can help you. . . . "Laying aside every weight." One hindrance is outside you, the other inside you. A man says, "I am fond of music, or politics." Does it help me on the race? No! Then I lay it down. Sin is what works in you, and there is opposition. You will find plenty of it, but you must be well mounted to ride over the difficulties. It is like a steeplechase, and you must be well mounted. You have the author and finisher of faith, and He has gone to the top. May the Lord interest you with His company, and in His own house. I have His power to help me on the road as I go along; Israel left the wilderness and went on to Canaan, and in between comes the

Epistle to the Hebrews. You are not in heaven, but you are going on to get possession of it. The Holy Ghost is down here, and you are highly favoured. You must be captivated by Him. He is not One who will not attend to your small matters. No, He comes down to the smallest thing, and helps me out that I may be in company with Him, and now I shrink from anything that would hinder my communion with Him. People say in Christendom, "When will you get acquainted with the Lord? When He comes?" No, I am acquainted with Him now, and having got the taste of heaven, then I come out in a new way to face every obstruction between me and heaven, and the only thing I dread is myself; therefore I have to lay aside every weight and sin which doth so easily beset. I do not doubt the power. The Lord grant that we may be as attached to Him as Peter was. (Matthew 14:1-36) He left the ship, the safe place, and went to the most perilous place, the water, to go to Him. Peter had not the power, but we have, only we have not the affection. What I want to present to you is that it is no trouble to do a thing for the person I love. "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned." We all know what this is. May the effect of our meditation this evening be to attract our hearts more to our blessed Lord, for His name's sake! Amen. J. B. Stoney. When the Lord becomes our absorbing object, this world is felt to be a dry and thirsty land where no water is. The reason is, that we have then learned that all our springs are in Him.

S. The Coming of the Lord

The Coming of the Lord Revelation 22:16-17. A Reading. In the closing testimony the Church, as in the remnant character, is characterized by the brightest trait of the original. Do you understand that? A remnant now is characterized by fidelity to Christ, the brightest trait at the beginning. Many think that a remnant is only the fag end, but it is not so in Scripture. The scripture I give you is Isaiah 6:13 : "In it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them." Would Simeon and Anna be the remnant?

Yes.

What did you say the tenth was? The tenth is God's right. He has a right to the tenth. The tenth was called the best of the spoil. That which Abraham gave to Melchisedec he was entitled to as conqueror. Thus tithes came in. The royal priest received the tithes. Is the Lord's coming the hope of the Church?

Yes. "This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." The Thessalonians were waiting for God's Son from heaven. The Lord said of John that he was to tarry until He came, and as soon as the book of Revelation was given this was fulfilled, because everything was in its place preparatory to His coming. Things may have developed since, but there is nothing new.

Then you overleap the rapture?

Oh, no, I do not! The rapture is before the dawn of the day; it is not the day. The rapture occupies some too exclusively. They are thinking only of being taken out of everything here.

Many hold that everything has been fulfilled, and that we are on the eve of the appearing, and that it may take place at any moment. What is the effect of that? That the Church has passed through the tribulation already. Of course that is not true! The Church could not be in the tribulation. Many cannot see that the Church and Christ are one. Some speak of the coming of the Lord as if it were only to take them out of their present trouble. That is not the idea here. As far as I understand, John revives the truth entrusted to Paul. He begins with the Church at Ephesus. The whole book is written to the seven churches, and he begins at the chief one. It had lost its first love; Christ was no longer the absorbing object. The one attractive object to the heart of the bride is Christ. The candlestick has been taken away. If you look around you see many trying to recover the candlestick, to be acknowledged by the world.

What would you say when we speak of being a testimony? To be acknowledged by the world is at the bottom of that saying. Do you take the morning star to be a substitution for the candlestick?

Yes. To Thyatira was given the morning star. From Thyatira down to Laodicea the rewards, for the most part, are connected with the kingdom. The great thing is to have the Lord as the object of your heart. That is the point here. You must take in the whole passage - "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

What do you understand by "the root and the offspring of David"?

He is the rightful King. In Philadelphia you find He has the key of David. What does that mean? He, though the rejected King, has opened the way through everything, notwithstanding all the opposition. He is coming to reign. The last type of the Church in the Old Testament is Abigail, and she ministers of the substance of Nabal to the rejected king. That is what you and I ought to do. Would you mind telling us what that means - the substance of Nabal ministered to David?

Whatever would meet his necessity. She was thinking of the rejected king. The application today is, that instead of spending your time and means for your own benefit, you are engrossed with Christ and His saints. A type is but a shadow. Would you explain the two things - the "root" and the "star"?

He (Christ) is the King, but besides being the King you get concurrently that He is coming. This the morning star indicates. If in natural life you were to hear, "There's the morning star," you would know that the day was at hand. If you were weary with a long night of travel, you would be glad to see the morning star. It is the harbinger of the coming day. I was glad to see a remark of Mr. Darby's the other day, that the rapture was only spoken of in Thessalonians, and possibly referred to in John 14:3. No one can deny that if you have the coming you must have the rapture. But might we not, with regard to the rapture, have communion with the joy of Christ in receiving His people?

I have no doubt it is lovely in its order. The Thessalonians were in trouble because they thought their Christian friends would not be in the kingdom because they had died. They were waiting for God's Son from heaven, but they knew nothing of the rapture. They thought that those who died would not be in the kingdom. The rapture shows the Lord's tender love. "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds." We shall all go up together. The beginning of His power - the first demonstration of it - is for us. There is no allusion to the Lord's coming in Ephesians. Philippians is the experience of a heavenly man. We are united to Christ in the brightest spot, but down here in the wilderness we have a body of humiliation. If the Lord should come we should have a glorious body. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." He has taken to Himself His great power. The rapture is the first wave of His power. Do you see? We cannot limit the power to that event. It is a most touching mark of His love, and He will have us to share with Him at once. That is, it is the application to our bodies, of the same power that He will use afterwards to subdue all things unto Himself?

Exactly. But one has very little heart for Christ if he does not look beyond the rapture. That is mainly our own part. The great fact of the Lord's coming is lost sight of, if it is only to take us out of trouble. The Bride has "made herself ready." No one is ready to say "come," but the Bride. No one else is ready for the Lord.

There is no responsibility in the rapture?

Exactly. Now you use the right word; the Lord's coming is to reign. He is the King. We are looking for Christ to reign. Hence the prayer, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." I do not think I can explain it, but the way you are found when the Lord comes affects your

position with the Lord when He reigns. That is, during the kingdom only? Your place never alters in the new Jerusalem. Your place in the kingdom is distinct from your place in heaven. The youngest babe is as well off in heaven as Paul. Suppose a man could say "I have been living for the Lord for forty years - all except these last six months." Well, I am afraid the last six months will tell against him. I do not say he will lose the forty years, but we read, "That . . . we may . . . not be ashamed before Him at His coming." The coming there is the Lord's appearing. Do I understand you that the great point is, how the Lord finds you when He comes?

Yes, that you are expecting Him. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord. . . . Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching." Who is the good servant? The one who is watching and giving his fellows "their portion of meat in due season." He is expecting the Lord, and paying every attention to His own. So that (that we may all follow and understand) in this verse in Revelation 22:1-21, there is a reference to the King?

Yes. Can we say then that we delight in the thought of the coming of the King, being absorbed in His interests?

Quite so; and therefore no one can say, "Come," but the Spirit and the Bride. As I said before, it is not merely the rapture when you will be taken out of the trouble here - but you are to be full of Christ's interests, because He is coming. What brought about the state of Christendom? They began to say, "My lord delayeth his coming." Of course there is a danger of losing sight of the rapture. The whole boast of the natural man is, as you say, to teach that there is no rapture at all? That is a grievous error. You might as well say there is no morning star before the morning. I believe the very first flash of the morning star is the rapture. Is that when I get it in my soul?

Yes.

Besides, is it not responsibility that comes in in this verse?

Yes, certainly. You never find responsibility connected with the rapture. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom." That is responsibility. But if the Church is not known, can the rapture be known?

I think the rapture might be looked for, but not the appearing. The Bride only could enter into Christ's interest.

Then does the morning star speak of the heavenly beauty of Christ?

It is the harbinger of day: "Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." The day star comes before the day dawns.

Then only the watchers will see it? The watchers are not only looking out for it, but they are diligent in caring for Christ's things; hence the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come," and the effect of this said truly is that the hearers say, "Come." You say, "I heard brother So-and-so saying 'Come,' and it had a great effect upon me. I say, 'Come,' too." When this truth was revived it had a great effect upon souls.

What produced the effect, the lives of those that held it? The reality of their desire for it. I knew a young man, (he was younger than I was - then 17 or 18), and the verse he gave me for the Lord's coming was, "The meek shall inherit the earth." Do they? No. "Then," he said, "there is something coming." Is not the appearing of the Lord very much lost sight of?

Yes, very much. I hope we shall improve. Is it right to speak of the Lord as our King?

No, it is not. Some imagine that He is King now. It is not true.

I suppose when we speak of the Lord as King it is always in connection with the earth?

Yes. The moment He takes to Himself His great power and reigns, there is joy in heaven. The moment the rapture takes place His power has begun. Nothing can exceed it. I could dwell on the rapture, but I am afraid of saints dwelling too exclusively on it. It is very touching to our hearts that the first use of His power will be with regard to His own.

Still, we hear very little of the appearing of the Lord and of the wonderful reality of what it will be to reign with Him.

If the Lord were to walk, this minute, into this room, no one would take any position for Him. greater than he has now. I mean as to reigning with Him. Whatever interest you take in the Lord's affairs now, that is the interest which qualifies you for a place in the kingdom. The overcomer in Laodicea only sits on the throne, he does not get any power. In Thyatira he rules. In Philadelphia he is a pillar.

If the rapture were to take place this moment, we should all be equally glorified.

Yes, certainly. We should all go up together to the Father's house, and all know unclouded happiness there. As I have sometimes said, the holidays will have come and we shall have gone home, but the examination follows. At school, the examination comes before the holidays; in God's grace, we go home first, before the judgment seat. (2 Corinthians 5:10.) Everything will come out there from our infancy onward - as it were in two columns: one as to what you have been, and the other, God's grace to you all the way. Grace has abounded, and you get the good of it.

We shall all be glorified together at the rapture and all in heaven.

Yes, truly, but consequent on that "His wife hath made herself ready," she has passed the judgment seat. White linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.

All responsibility is connected with the appearing?

Yes. It is connected with your righteousness here. A Wesleyan will tell you that you cannot get to heaven without good works; he will quote, "that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God." But, I say, the kingdom of God there does not mean heaven. You get a place in the kingdom on the earth according to your works. The kingdom is founded on righteousness.

Then it will be a result of the judgment seat, at the appearing?

Yes. You come out in righteousness then. The Father's house comes after the rapture, and then the judgment seat?

Precisely. When Babylon has been destroyed there is the greatest joy in heaven. Then the Bride passes in review before the Lord, and each one gets his own place in the kingdom. Does the marriage supper take place after that?

Yes; it is then celebrated. All the Old Testament saints are guests.

Before we appear with Him in glory?

Yes; we should be looking for this, to "appear with Him in glory." It is important to bear in mind that you could not be in the mind of the Bride if you did not know union with Christ.

It is not individual then?

No; the Bride is the remnant seeking for the others. "Let him that heareth say, Come." Who is that, a Christian?

Yes; to be sure. The remnant is true. Anna, the prophetess, was a remnant at the time. She "departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." You cannot look for the Lord according to His mind, unless you are identified with His interests. The Spirit and the Bride look for Him to come. You must know 2 Timothy 3:1-17 in order to be a man of God for this day. There are two things in that chapter. The one is, you know the state of things in Christendom. It is different from 2 Timothy 2:1-26. There they "erred" from the truth. Now they "resist the truth"; they have the form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. You have the same sins as in Romans 1:1-32, only here there is a cloak. Now comes the most important point. No one is alive to the difficulty of this day who does not see that the truth is resisted by an imitation of it. The most effectual opposition to a reality is to imitate it. The more precious it is, the more the deceiver gains by imitating it. Many imitate gold, few imitate copper. Diamonds are imitated because of their value. Thus Jannes and Jambres neutralized the power of God by imitation. How were they checked? The dust was turned into living creatures, and they could not imitate that. Life marks the power of God. You confound imitation by life. Here the ministry of John comes in. If a diamond and a glass imitation were in this room together, you would not discern the difference. But take them both into the dark, and you would soon see the difference. In the dark there is no light in the glass, but there is in the diamond. It is a great moment for you when you see that imitation is the greatest hindrance to the truth. Suppose a Christian leaves system, and says, "I am looking for the true way of gathering," and he goes on with you for a while and then breaks away and sets up an imitation. He is a greater hindrance to the truth than if he had remained in system.

How are we to take their rods becoming serpents? Was there life in them?

No; I should say they became devils. Life was not brought in. The water turned into blood was the same, significant of judgment. So what we have in Christendom is a multitude of counterfeits?

Yes; show me anything that is not a counterfeit. One minister reads aloud a written sermon; another speaks extempore - the latter is more talented than the other. Natural ability is not spiritual gift. The better the counterfeits the more dangerous?

Yes. There are two qualities in a good physician. One is, he knows what is the matter with you; the other is, he knows the remedy to cure you. You have both in this chapter. First, the state of Christendom; a perfect diagnosis. Next the remedy; "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of

life, purpose, faith, etc." First, Paul's teaching must be thoroughly known, not only as to the Church, but also as to the Gospel. You will never understand the Church until you understand Paul's Gospel.

What do you mean by Paul's Gospel? A Gospel which connects the believer with a Saviour in glory. Paul calls it his Gospel - the Gospel of God.

(See Acts 8:1-40) The eunuch was reading Isaiah 53:1-12 : "His life is taken from the earth." Now, in Acts 9:1-43 we read of a "light out of heaven." That is Paul's Gospel.

We sometimes hear people say, "So-and-so preaches nothing but Jesus Christ crucified."

They must go another step. Paul writes, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, AND Him crucified." In Christendom they often leave out the "and." There are two distinct points in that passage - one, "Jesus Christ," and the other, "Him crucified." It is generally quoted "Jesus Christ crucified." The force of "and" in Scripture is a disjunctive one. It separates two ideas; "and" leads to a new idea. But to resume. The man of God must not only be a proficient in Paul's teaching, but he must know the Old Testament, because there God's ways with man are fully brought out. You will never know what man is in relation to God till you are master of the Old Testament; yet a man who confines himself to the Old Testament is legal. From Abraham down to the present day the man whom God supports is the man who is set for God's object at the time. When Daniel knew that he was sentenced to the lions' den he prayed in his house three times a day, his window being open towards Jerusalem. Jerusalem was then a heap of ruins, but he was set for God's object. I have illustrated this by the trade winds. The trade winds blow always the same way, and every ship is thus wafted along by them; and thus it is with every one who is in the line of God's present object. Is that what you meant by a man for the day?

Yes, a man who is fully acquainted with Paul's Gospel and the mystery, and also with the Old Testament. He is a man of God. A man of God means really, A man for the crisis. And the effect will be that he comes out as of the remnant, and will answer to the faithful servant, giving the household "their portion of meat in due season." Every one can help. Each one may be in heart so set for Christ that His interests are ever paramount - not only looking for Him to come, but as you do so, being more and more devoted to His treasure here. Amen. J. B. Stoney.

S. The Gospel

The Gospel Exodus 15:12; John 7:37-38; Acts 7:55. The gospel, the good tidings from God, sets forth that by the work of Christ the believer is delivered from the judgment of God which rests on everyone in this world, so that there is peace with God. Next, that the Holy Ghost is given that the believer should be here in this world without any lack, never thirsting - but more, out of his belly should flow rivers of living water. And, thirdly, that by the Holy Ghost he could anticipate his portion with Christ in glory. First, like Israel in Egypt, everyone in the world is involved in the judgment of God. As the blood of the lamb sheltered Israel from judgment, so now everyone believing that the blood of Christ is before the eye of God is sheltered from the judgment; but as Israel was oppressed by Pharaoh and the Egyptians after they were sheltered from the judgment, so is the believer oppressed by the power of Satan and the flesh, for there is no peace until he appropriates the death and resurrection of Christ typified by the passage through the Red Sea. The only way out of death, which is the judgment on man, is by the death of Christ. God made the way for Israel through the Red Sea, and God gave them the light to see the way; and when they had walked through it, they not only knew that they were out of it, but they could sing, "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." Now there is peace with God. When you believe that God raised Christ from the dead you are justified by faith, and then you know that you have peace with God. Next, believing on Christ risen, you come to Him, and you receive the Holy Ghost. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us you are in the power of God. Who can describe the magnificence of the grace of God, made free from all that is against you, and now in the Spirit fully according to God! Vividly, by the Holy Ghost, you can see Christ in the glory of God. When the glory was departing from Israel, Ezekiel saw it, and in the brightest spot there was the figure of a Man. Though the wickedness of man was driving away the glory from the earth, yet, in the grace of God, there would be a Man in the glory. From that day the glory did not return to the earth until it came to the shepherds in Luke 2:1-52, to announce the good tidings of great joy. "This day is born to you a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." J. B. Stoney.

S. The Gospel

The Gospel

Romans 1:1-32. The apostle Paul was a separated man. He tells us here not what he was separated from, but what he was separated to, if we omit the parentheses. He was "separated unto the gospel of God concerning His Son."

God has spoken in this world, and He is still speaking. He has spoken of the Son, and He still speaks only of Him. This had an ENTRANCING effect on the apostle. We may not be up to it, but in our measure we also should know what we are separated to. The word saint which we bear is the statement that we are separated, and we are separated by the same grace that separated the apostle. He was, he says, a called and separated apostle, and those to whom he wrote were also called and separated ones - 1:e., saints.

There is a system of things (connected with which all that God testifies is its badness) of which the first man makes himself the centre, and there is no end of what is said about him in this world. That is, the world has its man. A separated one is separated from all that, but he is separated to something. He is separated to God's centre, and to what God has to say about His Son. That is, there is a second Man, and there is a vast system of blessing connected with Him. As we are separated to, and instructed in what it is to, the separation from is seen in us; but do not try to reverse them. If you do, you will become legal. It is deep joy to see what you are separated to. The from side then becomes easy and but "dross and dung."

It is an immense thing when the soul realises that it is separated to this new order of things, wherein "all things are of God," which begins in the gospel, and which God is going to establish in power. No wonder that the apostle can say in view of it, and knowing that he now belonged to it, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Power is now only connected with it. It is "the power of God unto salvation." Anyone may see today that power is connected with the gospel, while only weakness is connected with man apart from it, because death is on everything here. There is nothing that so proves man's weakness as death. He is absolutely powerless as to it. But there is no weakness in connection with the gospel. It is "God's power" for the deliverance of man from everything in this world, wherein, without it, he is but a miserable slave! It is the declaration of the triumph of God, and the proof of the triumph is seen in the Son of God - the victor over every effort of the enemy. He is seated now "far beyond all principality, and power, and might, and dominion." It is seen in His resurrection, and this is why "declared to be the Son of God in power by the resurrection of the dead" is introduced. It is because resurrection is the display of power.

"Declared Son of God by power." He was "crucified in weakness," but, as the saints will be, He was raised in power. Paul was a called apostle (his special ministry is in question here), and he was writing to called saints, that is to separated ones. The call had separated him, and it had separated them, to be henceforth associated with God's power - a power "by which he is able to subdue all things unto Himself." As to us, it will be displayed at the coming of the Lord.

Then there is another thing connected with the gospel (or rather, revealed in it), and that is God's righteousness. (Romans 1:17) In all that God has done, and in all that He is, He is right, and this is so with regard to all His ways with man. Since God is righteous, He must measure out to sin its deserts. This He has done in the cross, but in doing it He has terminated that side of things for Himself. The gospel is the announcement of this. It is good news, made good to us on the principle of faith. It is "to everyone that believeth." (Romans 1:16) By contrast another thing comes before us. If righteousness now consists only in association with the gospel, all unrighteousness must come into and abide under the wrath of God. This he touches in Romans 1:18. There is no doubt about what God will do with every form of unrighteousness. Saints cannot afford to be unrighteous. (See 2 Timothy 2:22.) Saints come under the discipline of God now for unrighteousness, and this proves what God will do with it when the whole mass of unrighteousness comes before Him. "Wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness," and this is because righteousness is established for God. But unrighteousness and nothing else is the natural state of all men before God! Read the close of the chapter from Romans 1:29-32 to end, and you will see this. The first charge is unrighteousness. Even the creation must, if considered, have taught men that there was a God. (Man did not like this, because it put a restraint upon his lusts. Then he cast off God, and idolatry came in. This is in reference to Gentiles, and the Romans knew very well all about what lie was writing, for Rome was full of idols. They knew it was true, for their idols allowed them the gratification of their lusts.) But God was not revealed in creation. His existence was demonstrated in it - "His eternal power and Godhead." But now He is revealed as acting in power in behalf of man, and He is revealed thus in the gospel, which is His power in favour of man when in this state of Romans 1:19-32.

I delight to think that I am (as seen in the good of the gospel) connected now and for eternity with power, and that I am connected also with righteousness, and with both now from the outset. All outside this sphere is weakness and unrighteousness. Moreover, it is all passing away to make room for these things "which cannot be shaken," but I am sure it is a great matter for saints to see that they are separated to all these things by their calling, and hence their name - saints. H. C. Anstey.

I have had a beautiful meditation. I saw the old man completely set aside by God in judgment, and the Holy Ghost setting up Christ here on earth. I got such a view of it - that God should have totally disposed of the man under judgment, and brought in a Man after His own pleasure - the totality - the completeness of it! Not an atom of the old man left before Him. You must ponder it to see its immensity. J. B. Stoney.

S. The Knowledge of Christ in Glory.

The Knowledge of Christ in Glory.

Paul says, "that I may know Him," that is as He is now. And I ask, would you not like to know Him as He is now? Do you think it would content a devoted wife or child, to be able to say, I knew my husband or my father ten years ago, but I do not know him now? Why, we never heard of such a thing. Yet that is really the way some think of Christ. They know Him as the Saviour who died here, but they do not know Him as He is now — the glorified Man. But you ask, who is up to it? I go with you there. I know how little I am up to it; but I cannot shrink from Php 3:10 "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings . . . for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

J. B. Stoney.

S. The Presence of Christ.

The Presence of Christ.

Now you never can become suitable to Christ but by being in His company. It is the bridegroom that makes the bride; and you must acquire from Himself what best suits Himself. As I may say, it is company that teaches manners. If you are not in His company you may read the Scriptures as much as you like, be able to describe to me the dispensations and so on, but it will all end in affectation, and not in Christ's ways. I want you to accustom yourself to being in the presence of Christ and the effect of that presence is to demand the entire removal of every-thing that is not of Him. There I am with Him in a scene where nothing can interrupt my communion with Him. It was in the glory that the ten commandments were written upon the tables of stone; and it is in the glory that Christ can be written upon the heart. And the reason we see so little of it in people is that they have been so little beholding the glory of Christ. This was just what made the difference between Martha and Mary — Martha was occupied with the human good thing; Mary was learning, by being in company with Himself, what suited Him. Children are often very like their parents, because they keep their company so much.

J. B. Stoney.

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