

'Christ Jesus, Our Hope'

by H.J. Vine

The sermon emphasizes the importance of Scripture, the glory of Christ and the Church, and the universality of the name of Jesus, highlighting the hope of Christ Jesus for believers.

Scripture: Matthew 16:16, Acts 4:12, Ephesians 5:32, Philippians 2:10, 2 Timothy 2:10, 2 Peter 1:16, Revelation 22:7

Topics: "Eschatology", "Christology"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches about the importance of sticking to the Scriptures and the themes revealed by the Spirit of God, focusing on the near return of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes the significance of understanding and sharing the prophetic Scriptures, highlighting the glory of Christ's relationship with the Father and the Church. Vine draws parallels from Genesis to Revelation, showcasing how Christ and the Church are beautifully intertwined in God's eternal plan, culminating in the Bride, the Lamb's wife, sharing in His supremacy and glory.

Transcript

When you pray, dear brethren, about a meeting, and in the presence of God, are led to read and consider the very two Scriptures that have already been read in your hearing, and unknown to yourself, the other servant labouring with you has also been led to the same Scriptures, would you then allow yourself to be turned away to some other Word to speak from, or would you conclude that the Spirit of God desires to have these themes specially brought before us tonight? I feel it is to be the latter, so I will read from the same chapters and present them perhaps from another aspect.

First of all, 2 Peter 1:16-21; Revelation 22:7, 12, 20 to end. When speaking of a theme like this, beloved brethren, conscious as we are of the near return of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is necessary for us to have the Scriptures themselves as the basis of all we say concerning our blessed Lord and His coming again, and not that which might rise in our own imagination. We find Peter is conscious of what men would say in the latter days,--that many of these things are fables--that many of these things are invented by pious-minded men--but the apostle here assures us that they had not followed "cunningly devised fables." They had given to them a vision of the kingdom glory, as well as the glory of Christ's relationship with the Father. This confirmed to them the prophetic Scriptures. But he desired us to understand there is nothing fabulous about it at all. Moreover, beloved brethren, in these last days how good it is for us to be brought back to the inspired Volume, and discern what we can speak of so surely, as that which the Spirit says. Having the Spirit of God dwelling in us we can reverently approach the writings of the Spirit, and having the capability

given by the Spirit to understand these writings, we shall not be shaken by the attacks of men against them. I thought as the closing words of the Book were brought before us tonight, what an encouragement it is to all true believers to see the golden threads of divine truth appearing all through, from Genesis to Revelation. We have the thoughts of God in connection with Christ and the Church set forth in that marvellous type of Adam going into the deep sleep and the rib taken from his side. Then we behold the woman who is to share with him in his supremacy over all. Thus we see in Adam and Eve a type of Christ and the Assembly! the "great mystery" (Eph. 5:32)! bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh! And then, as we pass through the marvellous Volume and come to the close of Revelation, we see Christ and the Church in glory. There she is--the Bride, the Lamb's wife; and she is the outcome of His own death, of His going into the deep sleep, but now sharing in His supremacy.

But if you look again at the Genesis of the Book of Inspiration, and behold Isaac with his father, a type of Christ risen, who had been received back from the altar, in figure from death, and now there he is with his father! The nameless servant goes to the distant land, between the two rivers (after having taken counsel with the father of Isaac, swearing with his hand under his thigh) faithfully carrying out his mission, bring back one who was to share in the position, wealth, and love of Isaac. Isaac did nothing save receive her as the result of the father's counsel and as the result of the work of the nameless servant, prefiguring the Holy Spirit. And, as we travel on in the Book, we find at the close the Bride of Christ, not only as the outcome of His death, but also of eternal counsel and of the Spirit's mission on earth.

Now let us observe another fact in Genesis. Look at Jacob, the servant. For the one who was to share with him, he serves; but the seven years of toil were only as a few days to him for the great love he bore to her, and, oh! brethren, let us be careful when we speak of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, or His death, and not speak of it simply as tasting the article of death. He had to toil, He had to suffer, and oh! what He endured tongue cannot tell. He even died to make us His own. He served that He might have us with Him, but He went through it with a heart full of love for us, and all His toil, we may reverently say, was undertaken willingly for the great love He had to us, and for the joy which was set before Him. And so we see the Church sharing with Him in the glory as shown in Revelation 21, where John is taken up to a great and high mountain to behold the heavenly City, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

But, beloved brethren, there are other aspects. Let us go a little further back. Let us begin where we did this afternoon. God causes the light to shine out of the darkness, when the Spirit had moved upon the face of the deep,--God said, "Let there be light," and light was. Then when you follow the light right through to the end of the Bible in Revelation, again you find the glorious day reached when the light will be that of the glory of God, and the Church, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, will be fully capable then of radiating that light to the nations on the earth, so that all the nations will walk by that light which streams from the Church in glory. It should not read quite "the nations of them which are saved," but simply, "the nations shall walk by its light," because it will be a question of the millennial blessing, and the nations set up in proper governmental order. God will cause the light for guidance and government, to shine from the glorified Church in heaven. We, brethren, have a wonderful day before us! Would to God, while rejoicing in the marvellous grace that has taken us up to be the associates of the Lord in His glory, that meanwhile, it might take such a hold on us that we might go through this little time of schooling here as diligent scholars, learning our lessons well, knowing that the trial of our faith will be found in that day to praise and honour and glory. Oh, that we might keep so near the Lord, that we might not lose the lessons we should learn in our present pathway in view of the glory to come.

Again let us return to Genesis. God made Paradise, where Adam and Eve were placed, but soon to that Paradise sin and death came, and the whole thing was spoiled; on the other hand, the thoughts of God are not going to fall to the ground. Travel again to the close of the Book. There is the Church in glory, and there the Tree of Life is seen in the midst of the Paradise of God. No sceptical scholar need come and tell me that the Book is not inspired. We find out by the Spirit what God has before His mind and as we read through the Bible we find that everything eventually comes out in magnificence and glory in "Christ and the Church."

A river flowed out in four main streams from the Paradise in Eden, but sin spoiled it. Those flowing waters were soon tainted through man's corruption and fall. But come once more to the last chapter of God's Book and there is "Christ and the Church." The City, the Paradise and the Tree of Life are there, and the water of life is seen flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb, which is now set in the heavenly Jerusalem, there firmly and stably fixed for ever, and forth flows the river of the Water of Life, blessed be God, as pure and bright as crystal. Not one thought of God will ever fail. All will come out in abiding glory and splendour, and, praise God for His grace, we are going to be there! As the outcome of His death; Christ shall have His Body and His Bride with Him in glory. As the outcome of the Father's counsel, the Son's completed service, and the Holy Spirit's coming. Christ shall have us there with Him. It is a grand thing to look onward in faith.

Nothing cheers my heart so much as the precious word which comes after. In that day of glory His servants shall still serve Jesus. There will be no weariness in it and we shall not be groaning in bodies of humiliation then. We shall be like Him, and to serve Him will be the joy of our hearts. His servants will still serve Him, but it is this which is so cheering, "We shall see His face." What a sight--To see the face of Jesus. That Name is sweeter to us tonight, I am sure, after what we have heard than ever it was! "I, Jesus." Jesus! Did it not bring the knowledge of forgiveness of sins to us at the beginning? Why was He called Jesus, Jehovah-Saviour? Because He should save His people from their sins; and, thank God, before He saves His own people, Jehovah's people, before He saves Israel, He has saved us! "It is a faithful saying," says Paul to Timothy, and don't let us lose sight of it,--"and worthy of all acceptance," that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Through that Name, blessed be God, is preached the forgiveness of sins; and we love that word where He does not say, "your sins are forgiven you because you believe, or because you trusted in the Lord,"--but, "Your sins are forgiven you for his Name's sake." For the Name's sake of Jesus: Just as if God said, "I could not but forgive your sins for the Name's sake of Him who has glorified Me.

Some of us tried all sorts of things to get salvation--religion, reformation, good works, etc,--but one day we discovered the fact that God's Word is true when it says, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). I heard of a man teaching that salvation is in the Church. There may be preservation in some measure for those already saved, but salvation is in none other than Jesus, as this Scripture tells us. Paul said, "Salvation is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:10).

How sweet is the name of Jesus! Right at the close we hear Him say to our hearts--to the heart of the Assembly--"I Jesus," recalling us to Himself and assuring us of His great, present, personal care of us. That name is our standard, too, for service. It is good to meet servants who go forth for the Name, taking nothing of the Gentiles (3 John 7). There are some away in South America, in Africa, and in other lands; some in Spain, in Portugal, and other countries; aye, and some in Britain, going forth "for the Name." Not lowering the standard, not begging from the unconverted. It is their honour, and joy too, to honour "the

Name." They reverence and love it. They think too much of it to use it for begging from unconverted men! If one is here unconverted, my advice is, get saved tonight! Trust Jesus now! Then you can put your hand as deep in your pocket as you wish, and you will have the honour of "giving to the Lord"--of giving to Him through whose Name forgiveness and salvation are received! The Name to be owned by all eventually.

The knees of all the intelligences in heaven and on earth shall yet bow at the Name of Jesus, and of the intelligences in the infernal regions too--in the realms of the lost--yea, of all the intelligences in the universe. At the mention of the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow! And then, for "the glory of God the Father," every tongue shall confess the universal lordship of JESUS! Through grace we have already confessed Jesus as Lord.

As we have seen, it is near the close of God's Book we read, "I Jesus, have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things,"--not in the world quite--but "in the assemblies"--that there might be maintained in the assemblies the truth concerning Himself--His official and personal glories, for He says I Jesus "am the Root"--before David,--David's Offspring--after David,--the one involving His deity, the other His humanity: Then we have the Morning Star, as we have so helpfully heard, in connection with the Assembly.

If you studied the present matters of world government you might lose heart as well as communion with God. You would say, Things are going all wrong! But, as we see Jesus, as we know Him, we have the key to the whole situation, because as Son of David and Son of Man He will take up all government questions as well as those relating to the Assembly. The Son of God, the Bright and Morning Star, is the Assembly's hope, and He will settle all our difficulties. But, meanwhile, let us grow in the knowledge of the One who can do it!

If I were looking for His assembly which He is building today, I would look for those who have the revelation from the Father of Himself--those who confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, for He, as the Son of Man, builds His assembly on this, the Father's revelation to the soul and this confession of Himself. Where Jesus is thus known and owned, His Assembly is. It is being built by Himself upon the revealed truth concerning Himself, as Peter confessed Him in Matthew 16:16.

It was Peter, too who wrote, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables: we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:16). He and others were "eyewitnesses." They saw in the Holy Mount the shining forth of His glory--of His Majesty! They saw Him in His humiliation--His lowly life; the gentle and meek One, walking here, but says Peter, too, "We beheld His majesty!" It shone above the brightness of the sun. His garments more white and glistening.

On Monday evening, brethren, we were praying that He would show Himself to us in his glory so that we might be strengthened and fitted to meet rightly what obtains here in this world at the present time. In regard to kingdom and government His majesty was shown--they beheld His glory. It was a divinely given foresight of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," the Root and Offspring of David. Peter, however, speaks of Him here also (as nowhere else, except in the confession of Matthew 16) as God's Son.

He says, we heard such a voice when He received honour and glory from God, the Father, and the voice came from heaven on the Holy Mount, it was uttered by the excellent glory and said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight!" On the one hand we have His kingdom glory, and on the other His personal glory with God the Father; the second being indicated in the voice from "the excellent glory." You remember the bright cloud came upon them and the voice came from the bright cloud.

If He be David's Son in connection with kingdom glory, He is also God's Son; and He who will take the government upon His shoulders is revealed to us in His own personal glory as Son of God. By the excellent glory He is there singled out, so Peter can say, "The prophetic Word"--the Old Testament, was "made surer"--for so the Scripture should read. It is not that it was not always sure, but having seen Christ's glory shining in the miraculous way we have spoken of, and having heard God the Father's voice distinguishing Him so wonderfully, the Old Testament which points on to Him, was made surer to them by this manifestation of His glories--both kingdom and personal.

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, when He rose from the dead, made the hearts of those who heard Him burn within them when, out of all the Scriptures, He expounded unto them the things concerning Himself. And so here, "the prophetic Word" is "made surer" by the sight of His glory. It might be said, we have seen the King; we have seen His glory; His majesty; and we have heard Him distinguished personally as the Son of God by the excellent glory. Now, therefore, you do well to give good heed to the "prophetic Word," because as we heard already, it is as a lamp that shines where obscurity is.

Up to a certain point. Take heed that is, until the One who is the great theme of that Word rises before you, and oh how glorious when that One fills our hearts--when His beauty shines before us! And though we are in the midst of the darkness--the great apostasy which is reaching its culmination, but which we should not dwell on--we are led to the glory side, to the positive side of the truth by the Spirit--to the good. In passing, just a word as to this. We are told to be wise concerning what is good.

We greatly need, in these days when men think they are clever if they know about something evil, to heed Paul's word, "Be simple concerning that which is evil, and wise concerning that which is good." Those who help are those who show us the good, and all the good of our God is in Christ for us and we are in Him.

We have spoken of the Bride, the Light, the Paradise, the Tree of Life, and the River of the Water of Life. We have seen how all is to be established in abiding glory. Genesis is fruitful in Revelation! Foreshadowed in the beginning, the substance is at the end. Now when we come to Exodus, God sets up a Tabernacle on the ground of redemption from Egypt, and He is in the midst. But it failed at Shiloh through man's sin. Nevertheless, when we come to Revelation 21, we behold on the very verge of Eternity the Tabernacle of God with men! His thoughts will not fail! Not one design of His shall fall to the ground! They will be carried out and established "in Christ and the Assembly" when the full glory of eternal redemption is displayed.

Just one more step, to encourage us as to the perfections of the inspired Volume and as to the One who designed all. Over Jordan, in the land, the city was set up,--Jerusalem, the place of Jehovah's Name was built! But there was no river. Failure and breakdown overtook this earthly Jerusalem. But in Revelation 21, the holy city, new Jerusalem, shines forth as a Bride adorned for her husband, and the river of the Water of Life flows out in eternal blessing! God Himself will carry out all that He has counselled, therefore, Christ and the Assembly are seen in everlasting blessedness and glory, and the river of God's pleasure flows on for evermore.

God grant, then, we may be cheered and encouraged, and that we may grow in the knowledge of the Bridegroom, our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we may understand Him better! He is David's Son, but also David's Lord. He is Israel's hope, the world's hope and the hope of the Assembly,--"CHRIST JESUS, OUR HOPE!"

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