

1 Corinthians 11

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon on 1 Corinthians 11 explores the divine order of authority, the roles of men and women in worship, and the significance of the Lord's Supper in maintaining church unity.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:3

Topics: "Authority in the Church", "Order in Worship"

Description

John Nelson Darby discusses 1 Corinthians 11, emphasizing the connection between spiritual truths and everyday practices, such as a woman's head covering during prayer and prophesying. He explains that women have a role in the church but must recognize the authority of men, and he stresses the importance of order and modesty in worship. Darby also addresses the significance of the Lord's Supper, warning against disorder and emphasizing the need for self-examination among believers. He highlights the distinction between preaching and teaching, asserting that women should not take on teaching roles in the assembly. Ultimately, he calls for a proper understanding of authority and the divine order within the church.

Transcript

Here we have another instance of how the greatest truths are brought into connection with commonplace subjects. Here is a question, whether a woman is to have a covering on or not. The whole ordering of God is brought in to say whether a woman is to wear a cap on her head (v. 3-16). It was the custom there with women inspired by demons to have their hair flowing out wild, and this was not the order for a woman. They were to recognise the authority of man if they prayed or prophesied. Women did prophesy, for Philip had four daughters that did. The woman had her place for praying and prophesying, but not in the assembly. Men are to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands. If a woman's husband were unconverted, it would not be right for her to pray with him if other men were there.

In nominal Christianity we have to take things as we find them. I have known a converted husband, when he went from home, tell his wife to pray with the household, including unconverted men; but I do not believe it was right. The woman's head was to be covered. The apostle shews by her hair that God had covered her, and her mind and will are put on the same ground. A woman ought to be covered at family prayers, or as one of Philip's daughters prophesying in her father's house. The principle applies to both praying and prophesying. The man is the head of the woman, and she puts a covering on her physical head to shew that there is authority over her. The apostle takes the state of the head of the body as a sign

of the condition of the man or woman in respect of their moral head. The woman's head - the man - is her head really, and she must cover her own head in sign of her subjection; and so she says in effect, I have no head myself; the man is my head, and I am in subjection. The man could not do that, or there would be no visible head. A woman's gift ought to be confined to women, or to her own family.

As to the difference between preaching and teaching (v. 4), in point of fact, all preaching is teaching now. At first they went and announced the fact - "Jesus is risen from the dead." I have not to do that so much now; I have rather to describe the efficacy of the effect; though I believe the more these things are set out as facts the better, although they are now all admitted. The more we make our preaching the history of a fact, the more powerful it will be. You do bring facts before people if you say, This was God's Son, and so on; otherwise it is teaching, except so far as we press the facts.

255 I do not accept a woman's going out to evangelise. I never saw a woman meddle in teaching and church matters, but she brought mischief upon herself and everyone else. If she sits down with a company before her to teach them, she has got out of her place altogether. We read of Tryphena and Tryphosa, who laboured in the Lord, and the beloved Persis too - each in her own place of service. You find all honour done to women in the Gospels; but the Lord never sent out a woman to preach; neither did a man ever go and anoint Christ for His burial. The women's prophesying was not preaching. There came an inspired teaching, to which they gave utterance. I believe it was in an extraordinary way, as Philip's daughters. Women can be used, as Mary Magdalene was sent by Christ to His disciples. If Christ sent a woman to carry a message, the best she could do would be to go and carry it. It was a mere message; it is no place of teaching; no matter what the message is, it is but a message. Suppose it was written down and was special instruction, the teaching then was in the message, not in Mary Magdalene's place. Scripture says, "I suffer not a woman to teach." She was not to teach at all. She can lead on those who are converted without setting up to be a teacher. Teaching is expounding to people put under you to receive certain doctrines.

The apostle is not speaking of wearing the sign of subjection at all times, but I believe it would be very comely. "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels," v. 10. She is therein a spectacle with all present to the angels, and angels ought not to see disorder among Christians. The whole subject is modesty, and order, and comeliness, and things in their right place. Therefore the woman ought to have power on her head on account of the angels, that is, the sign of subjection to her husband. Angels should learn something in the church.

As to the "image of God," in verse 7, "image" is something that represents another, and so a man represents God, though certainly he has failed to fill it up. The image of Jupiter was not necessarily like Jupiter, but it was made to represent him. So man keeps the place, though he has fallen in it - the same place in which God put him. He was made sinless, but beside that he stood as the centre of an immense system: no angel was that, no angel was the one single centre of a system all around him. Adam was. And indeed to be that is just what men are driving at in one form or other in the world, and in the church, and in Christendom. If Adam had remained, all his family would have been looking up to him. Here man is spoken of as "the image and glory of God" and in James "made after the similitude of God." But he is not in likeness now.

256 The first Adam was the image of him that was to come; the last Adam takes the place of the first: only the last Adam was in counsel before the first was in responsibility. The last Adam was first before God, and when the first has failed, the counsels are brought out in the last Adam. You get the first man put in

responsibility after the counsel, and then the second Man was brought out in the accomplishment of counsel. That settles all Calvinism and Arminianism and such like systems. All the responsibility goes on until it has been thoroughly brought to an issue at the cross, and man will not have God at all: but in that cross God does a work that lays the foundation of everlasting glory; and then as soon as that is done, all these counsels are revealed, not accomplished yet, but revealed. Thus since the cross man's responsibility, as such, is over; it is not that he has not debts and sins, or that he was not responsible: all that is true, but God was rejected finally, and God comes and works His own work all alone by Himself. When that is done, He tells out His counsels and what He is going to do. At the beginning of Titus, we read "the acknowledging of the truth" - the gospel comes and man is responsible to own his ruin - "in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began, but hath in due time manifested His word through preaching which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour."

First, He begins with Adam, and that is all ruin. 2 Timothy 1:9 gives us "who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel; whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles." It was all in God's counsels settled in Christ, but when Christ came, it all came out to us. It is a mistake to think predestination in itself has anything to do with the counsels of God. If God came down now and chose fifteen of us who are here, it would be just the same as if He had done it before the world began. It would be just as arbitrary, as the world would call it, to take fifteen now, as to take fifteen before the world began. But He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.

257 "Incorruptibility" refers to the body. "Mortal" is never applied to anything but the body. The corruptible mortal is that which goes to dust; incorruptible and mortal alike have only to do with the body. So we see in 1 Corinthians 15. It is not necessary that the body should go to corruption: the incorruptibility of the body is brought to light by the gospel. We do not find it in the Old Testament, having little hints here and there and that is all; eternal life is mentioned twice in the Old Testament; "life for evermore" in Psalm 133, and "some to everlasting life" in Daniel 12:3. You may perhaps spell it out, and some of them did, the Pharisees for instance. Hezekiah says "the living shall praise thee" in contrast with the dead in Isaiah 38. When we are raised and changed, the "incorruptible" will be made apparent; when the dead are raised in incorruption, they will not corrupt any more. Immortality may refer to the soul; there is no difficulty about it.

At verse 17 we have the assembly, and in terrible disorder. "Heresies" and "sects" are the same. It is no use taking up words in an exclusive way; as, for instance, to distinguish worship and homage. We use "worship" now for worshipping God; but when our version was made, it was not at all so. It says "they worshipped God and the king" in the same sentence, and so in the church of England marriage service the man says, "with my body I thee worship." It did not mean worshipping God at all. Here we have three words, heresies, divisions, and sects. Schism is a positive division; heretic is merely a man being at the head of a school of doctrine, as that of the Epicureans. There were many schools of doctrines, or heresies. In modern language the word has come to mean false doctrine. If we were all breaking bread together, I might make a party and yet no schism, but it might go on to that. "Damnable heresies" means bad doctrine. We are to reject a party school in the church: "a man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject." Have no more to do with him.

258 In our chapter the apostle says, "First of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you." I do not suppose they had openly divided, but they were making parties; and he says there must be heresies among you, though no division yet, but that came from the setting up of these schools. Heresies and sects are not exactly the same. There are only two words in this text; "divisions" is the word schismata (v. 18), and the word heresies (hairesis) (v. 19), is often translated "sects."

In verse 18 "the" church would not do at all. It is not the church, but in that character of meeting, whenever the church met as such, not restricted to the breaking of bread on the Lord's day (for so the first day of the week was called): when the assembly met together the apostle taught the people. They might not have broken bread whenever they came together. If notice was given that the assembly would meet for a particular purpose, it would still be the assembly, though all did not come; it is the assembly when they come together as such. A reading meeting would not be such though all were there, because that is not the character of the meeting. A meeting for prayer is an assembly, but hardly the assembly of the place. Meetings are meetings of the assembly if it is understood that they meet as such, but the meeting must be accepted by the assembly. What I look for is the consciousness of meeting together in the Lord's name as one.

It will be observed that Paul received his instruction concerning the Lord's supper by revelation. The church and the unity of the body was the very thing entrusted to Paul. It is the local assembly here - the saints at Corinth, but what is wanted for action is that the whole assembly should come together for the purpose and with the intention of coming as such. Sometimes the Lord's supper is taken in a private house when a person is sick, and if it is done in unity, it is all well and very nice, but when a person is sick, I might not do it for other reasons. In the early church they used to send out a piece of bread dipped in the wine, to shew that they were one. If I were ill for two or three weeks, I should bow to the chastening. A few might go to an isolated one, and break bread with him, if it is done in the spirit of unity; but if done in a party feeling, it would be wrong. It need not be named first if there is confidence; but if there is distrust, it should be named. We have no rule as to breaking bread oftener than every Lord's day. But I took the Lord's supper with the young men who were reading with me, every day for a whole year. So the early church did.

259 The words "take, eat" (v. 24) should be omitted: I suppose he expresses what is weighing on his mind, and "take, eat" does not come into his mind. To "be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (v. 27) is disrespect to it. Suppose I spat upon my mother's picture, in spirit I should be spitting upon my mother; it would be doing scorn to my mother, and so it would be in this case; to be guilty of it means to be guilty in the way you are dealing with the body and blood of Christ. Some leave out the word "unworthily" in verse 29, but it has been used before, and the sense is all right: it is in verse 27, and therefore it means so eating and drinking, that is, unworthily. The eater and drinker in verse 29 is the same as in verse 27. "Not discerning the Lord's body" is that a person takes it as his own or common bread and wine, perhaps drinks and gets tipsy. Carousing would not be discerning the Lord's body. It has nothing to do with being unworthy to eat or drink, but is the manner of doing it: in Christ, he is worthy; out of Christ, he is unworthy, which is another thing.

There is another principle at the end of the chapter which is not without its importance, and that is the government of God over His saints. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep; for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world." It is nothing difficult, but very important. We are chastened that we should not be condemned. "Come not together unto condemnation"

(v. 34), is to judgment, it is your own fault that you should have to be accused and judged. The word "condemned" (v. 32) is distinctly in contrast with "judged" as well as in contrast with "chastened." "Condemned" is right in verse 32; but he eats and drinks judgment, or fault, or crime; for it is the thing a man is accused of to himself. "Condemnation" is not right in verse 34; "If any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto condemnation," judgment or fault. Our word "crime" is from the Greek word: it is the judgment that is passed, but it comes to be used also for the fault itself.

260 They were told to "tarry one for another," because each had been eating his own supper before his neighbour's came, making a pic-nic, as it were, as they pleased. I do not know that they became actually drunk, but some were what one calls carousing. It is all readily understood, if you remember that they were taking a meal before the Supper. It is "the table of the Lord" in chapter 10, and "the supper of the Lord" in our chapter. We must keep each in its own connection. In chapter 10 it is the table of the Lord in contrast with the table of demons. There is no thought of that here, but the apostle is on another point, and with those who had nothing to do with demons. There was that which represented the body of Christ, and they were carousing, and getting tipsy or very near it; it was now the abuse of what was on the table.

In general the weakness and sickness would fall upon those doing wrong, but God might take away one righteous man to chastise the assembly, though it was not the case here: this applies only to the persons, the individuals who were guilty of the disorder. I think that the assembly ought to have judged it, and restored order: there was guilt in the assembly too. If an assembly is in a bad state, the Lord can combine the two, and wake up the conscience of the assembly. If the Lord take anyone so, it may be to his glory: in such a case he would be a martyr. When God deals in this way with individuals, we are outside of all dispensations.

There are two principles in Job, chapters 33 and 36. In chapter 33 God deals with men "in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man." There God stops him. Then, in chapter 36, we have more; not that God only deals with man in His own sovereign way, but "He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous, but with kings are they on the throne, yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted." There we have the special fact, beyond the general care of God; just as in the case of Laban and Jacob, God is also always looking at the righteous, blessing them, as a rule. "As kings are they on a throne"; that is, figuratively. They are righteous people that God owns, and that God also chastens. We find it more distinctly when there is a particular government of God, as in Ezekiel 18; and sometimes the sins of the fathers were visited on the children. Then, in the church of God, we have it definitely and little known. The apostle can tell them why this chastening came, "and if he have committed sins, they shall pray for him, and they shall be forgiven him," that is, unless it is a "sin unto death." Only, observe, the assembly ought to know why they are in such and such a condition. I do not doubt there are now quantities of discipline and sorrows that come upon the saints as discipline; I do not say all: you may find a man born blind who neither sinned, nor his parents; or, again, "this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God"; or God may unite both. He might have chastened Lazarus, and yet used it for His own glory.

261 Discipline may be to check a tendency. Paul had a thorn in the flesh, that he might not be puffed up. The order is, we are chastened for a fault, but there may be much more. Paul meets with a messenger from Satan to buffet him. If a godly person were taken aside from an assembly, the assembly ought to inquire why it was so. It might be because they did not give heed to him; but that becomes a question of spiritual discernment. In Job the righteous are in contrast to believers. The value of the Book of Job is, that

you get the great principles of God in connection with man. God was using everything for the purpose of helping the righteous man, and Satan was bringing in all that he could against him; and that before there was either law or gospel. As I observed just now, all sickness need not be discipline. Suppose God saw some evil among the saints: He will take means, in various ways, to arouse them to a sense of it. In nature you find a quantity of hidden caloric constantly, that comes out the moment there is something to call it out. It is a wonderful thing, when we think of God, that God not merely has saved us, but never withdraws His eyes from us. In a way it is as wonderful as is the salvation. Those who did not bow were cut off - "shall perish by the sword" - "Hypocrites in heart," "cry not when he bindeth them," goes further still. Notice, it was not the devil who began with Job, but God set Satan at work. The devil did not know what God was doing. "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" It was a great conflict between God and Satan, with a man between them. Satan's object, of course, is all mischief, but God allows him.

There is a difference between chastening and scourging. Chastening is a general word (as, for instance, the education of children) and the same word is used for "teaching," and a certain correction and discipline, and even punishing too; but when you come to scourging, it is the positive action and punishment. As a general rule, if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged of the Lord. All will come out at the judgment-seat of Christ; it will make no difference, whether we have been chastened for it or not. It will all appear. I cannot know as I am known. I cannot give account of myself to God, if I do not give account of everything. And that, I believe, is a great blessing.

262 None of my sins will come up in that day as a question of judgment on myself. As to imputation, "He hath not seen iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel," when they were iniquitous and perverse all the while. But at that day I shall see all God's ways to me, and His dealings with me all through. If I look back now, I can see faults before I was converted, and nothing else; and after that, faults that I have to be humbled for, and I say, How could I do so? Yet it does not rest on my conscience as though it was there. And then I shall see the goodness of God, with a blessed sense of how He has brought me through all, and what God has been to me in it all, with no question of judgment, or thought of it, for I have not then a nature that sins, even as to my body; I am a new creature.

There should be fear of one kind in connection with the government of the Father, but it is not servile dread; "Blessed is the man that feareth always." "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear," 1 Pet. 1:17. And that is connected with the Father, and he continues as to the cost of redemption for motive: you know what it cost to redeem you out of your sins, and now, upon that ground, you think of your Father upon whom you call. There is no fear of God when I am going to meet Him, but now is the time to walk in His fear. If a Christian sins, it brings down a dealing of God with him, unless he confess it at once, and then God has no pleasure in afflicting. We find plenty about it in James 5:14-16, and in 1 John 5:16: such as, "God shall give him life for them that sin not unto death," and so on. I remember once saying to a person, "If you do not bow and break off that particular thing, you will not get well of your affliction." And three days before he died, he said, "I would not bow to the will of God; now it is too late." I have no doubt he went to heaven.

263 I could not say that, according as we love Christ here, we shall enjoy Him hereafter. Reward is for our labour: as to our place, we all get the same glory as Christ, "when he shall appear, we" - that is, all Christians - "shall appear with him in glory." And Paul cannot have anything better than that; but when you come to labour, it is a very different thing, and reward is accordingly. The Thessalonians will be Paul's crown, but they will not be ours; that is clear. We know not how this will be accomplished, but in glory Paul will have them as his crown, yet he will not take away Christ's crown; for it was all grace that did it, though

Christ is pleased to reward the labour when it is faithfully done, owning, not me, but the grace of God that is in me. The reward has nothing to do with motive, and never is the motive for action in scripture; it is the encouragement in the service, when the person gets into trial by the motive.

Well, it is a great thing to see that there is this present government of God. There are cases where evil is the fruit of sin, believing or not believing; evil is in the world, but much is positive discipline, where, if there were faith to deal with God about it, the discipline would be removed. James 5 can be acted upon where there is faith to do it. I have known it acted on, and the use of oil also, in two cases where they asked for it themselves. In one case the doctor had said nothing could be done for her, and she had better go home to die. She recovered, and was walking about that week, and taking care of the poor. She had three daughters after that. In the other case I remember, the one prayed for was out in the street, and at a place where there was a very broad crossing; but a boy had placed a barrow across the path, and she stumbled against it. Her own brother who was passing ran to help her, and found it was his own sister, whom he supposed to be dying at home. Another case was that of J - , who was ordered not to speak or stir by the doctor; but he rode over to a place some twenty-five miles. When the brethren went in, he was vomiting blood, but he rode back the twenty-five miles; afterwards he walked fifteen miles. It was a prayer-meeting in his case, but he was not anointed with oil. He was twice married afterwards. Other cases I have had myself, having laid my hands on a baby once. Such things have generally been at the beginning of an awakening: there is an energy of faith that brings in God more directly. It is a question of faith very much, but this necessarily in the sick person. Some have professed to have the faith constantly, but I do not put much confidence in that. I believe God would answer the prayer of anybody that cried to Him.

264 Discipline would not go on after the prayer of faith. James refers to a case of discipline distinctly. Paul was sick, and the Lord had mercy upon him, but we do not know that he was prayed for at that time. He could perhaps have raised himself, but the apostles never wrought a miracle for their own comfort. Paul left Trophimus at Miletum sick. The words, "And if he committed sins," shew that James refers to discipline. And the forgiveness is a question of present government, as the church can also forgive. I do not think we lay to heart enough the fact of government in that way. There is many a case, I am satisfied, which is real chastening, and all the doctors are of no use. It may sometimes be without any specific sin. I used, at one time, to be ill every year, and I laid it to this, that I did not keep close enough to the Lord in service. But you must take care that such a thought as that does not become legal. We read, "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." This is not always for discipline; it may be for instruction. The Lord can combine the two. When Paul had a thorn in the flesh, whatever it was, it made him contemptible in his preaching, and was discipline, lest he should be puffed up; and so it was his glory and his discipline. The Lord can unite these things, but we cannot. Yet in His hands it may be our honour and our discipline at the same time.

Paul did not fail in asking the Lord to take away his thorn, though he may have failed in spiritual discernment: it is not the granting of a thing that proves whether it is right or wrong. Our Lord asked that the cup might pass away, and it did not, though the asking was in perfect submission, and He had His answer in resurrection. Yet "for this cause came I unto this hour." A person losing his mind may be in discipline; for "Affliction does not spring out of the dust" in any way. Take Job: he had elephantiasis, or whatever you call it; and when he had a house, there were plenty of winds to blow it down, and plenty of people to sweep away his cattle; but it was a particular use of these by Satan, and all within God's limits.

To return to our chapter: - we come now to spiritual manifestation. This is all the true order of the church. You do not get a hint that there were any elders, nor a suggestion to make them; either there were none or

they disappear from view. And it was the Lord's goodness to give us here divine instruction how to go on, and give it in a way that suits us now. There may have been elders, but if so, seeing that they are not mentioned here, it is all the more strong for us now. In the action of the assembly the conscience of the assembly must be cleared: elders by authority could not do that. They could not put out. I remember a terrible hubbub in Geneva on this. I said only engineers can make a good road, but, when made, all the carters in the country can use it, and their elders - wise and godly brethren - were of immense value; but the action in actual discipline, publicly, must be made by the assembly; for the assembly has to clear itself, and no other way will do. As he says, "You have proved yourselves clear in this matter." Suppose the elders had put a person out rightly, this would not clear the conscience of the assembly. It would only lead ultimately to sorrow that they had to put him out. A brothers' meeting can only deliberate and take counsel, and perhaps the matter will be better weighed there than with a whole body of people.

265 The first thing here in chapter 12 is to distinguish the Holy Ghost from demons. The Corinthians were very fond of gifts, and so were liable perhaps to be ensnared by satanic manifestations; but no demon would say "Lord." If any spirit said "Lord," that was by the Holy Ghost. The point here was to distinguish between a good spirit and a bad one. It should be "no one can say." Sometimes the use of "man" is mischievous. It may be spirit, angel, devil, or anything else; it is merely a being, and "man" in English is wrong. Evil spirits are at work now, and in the same way exactly. When the apostle was preaching, there came one and said, These men shew us the way of salvation. Now, apart from experience, you would not expect a demon to say that. How were they to distinguish? Mormonites used to go and preach the Lord's coming and baptise, and then when they had so laid hold of people, they would preach other things altogether. False doctrine may not always be the direct action of an evil spirit, but often it is. There is more the action of Satan in certain cases than people suspect. I do not doubt that in Irvingism there was much of it. And then if they were treated as Satan they would have no power at all. I was told at - - they had a great deal more charity than I had; I really have no charity for the devil. When asked in Somersetshire to meet certain people, I would not go. Prince (of the Agapemone) stated publicly in the town of Bridgewater, that they could not preach or do anything because of the brethren who were there. And I believe he said the truth. So in W - 's case, I said that I would not go near, unless the Lord led me there, and then He would give me strength. S. wanted me to go, and I said no. H. came and I went with him, and the first night, I said, "I cannot say, but I think it is of the devil." W had stopped them from breaking bread; he said that "whenever there was any evil and nobody knew it, they were all contaminated, and they ought not to break bread, as they were all of one body," and so he stopped them. His wife could hardly contain herself against me. The next night I thought over it and cried over it before the Lord, and the following day I said it was the devil. The whole thing passed, and they have gone on happily there ever since. I believe he was puffed up, and that his wife was the real secret of it, and the devil was there. He had been much used, five hundred being converted in one year: it is said nine hundred, but an opponent said there were not more than five hundred. All are going on happily now, though they were very angry with me then. "Anathema Jesus" was the utterance of a man. The spirit said it, but by the man's mouth, of course. Anathema is a curse. It is never used in a good sense in the New Testament. The anathema among the heathen was a thing devoted to the gods and was killed. "Anathema maranatha" is a curse on him when the Lord comes.

266 We have then "gifts," "administrations," and "operations"; the Spirit, the Lord, and God. There are diversities of gifts, but one Spirit. If they were demons, they were diversities of spirits; you might have a legion of spirits in a person, or "seven demons." But here it is one Spirit. "Administrations" were by one Lord, so that anyone in any service is the Lord's servant. We have the unity of the Spirit in contrast with these demons; next various administrations, but one Lord; and then these operations, which were a

secondary and narrower thing, but one God. One God worketh everything; it was divine, one Spirit giving gifts; one Lord with administrations under Him: and then it is God that is working everything. "The administrations" may be wider than "the gifts," if we take in elders; but in Romans 12 they all run together.

267 The manifestation of the Spirit was not given to every man. If I work a miracle, or speak with a tongue, that is a manifestation of the Spirit, but it does not say that a manifestation was given to every man. The point was, that these Corinthians who were fond of gifts were using them wrongly, speaking with tongues that were of no use to anybody; but the apostle says the tongues were given you to profit with. If it is not to profit, you are not to use it, whether the Holy Ghost is there or not, that is, in the gift. The order and moral rule of the Spirit is paramount to mere power by Him. There may be power, but a person is not to use it else; "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." I may have a real moving of the Spirit, and am yet to hold my tongue for all that. If three have spoken, and I have five prophecies to tell, I must hold my tongue. The church suffers both from presumption and unused gifts - it varies in places. I believe there are many gifts repressed. The principle here is distinctly stated, that power is not to guide us. The rule for my using it is that it profits those to whom I speak. If one spoke not to profit, the others are to judge; and if they tell him of it, to do it as gently as they can. It is not the prophets only who are to judge. It leaves it open to those who had the capacity to do it.

In the Old Testament prophets, the relation between power and exercise of gift may have been different, though there is something like it in "while I was musing the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue." We now have the Holy Ghost, but then a man was like a tube or a pipe to carry a thing, and they began to search "what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." But now all that the Holy Ghost gives He gives to the person who receives it, and that makes a difference in the nature of the thing. As to ourselves, whatever the Holy Ghost reveals to any of us, of course we have it in the word, but the Corinthians received it for themselves. When God shone into Paul's heart to make him an apostle, He shone into his heart the things he was to be an apostle about, and we have them in the written word - words, as we were seeing, given by the Spirit for the purpose. So I now drink for myself, and then communicate it; rivers of living water flow from me. So God shined into Paul's heart for him to give out. He had it to use in the consciousness of the possession of the thing itself for himself.

268 In John 3 we read, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen"; but it is Christ who is speaking there who says, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." It was Christ telling them heavenly things, and that a man must be born again, or else he could not have them. The point was that man, as a man, was gone and done with, and Christ had brought in what was heavenly. The "lifting up" was the cross, not the ascension. "We have heard out of the law," they said, "that Christ abideth for ever, and how sayest thou, the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" John 12:34. And in John 8:28, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man." Clearly it is Christ rejected from the earth, and not yet in heaven. But a Christ rejected from the earth is a total breach between God and this world. It was alone between God and Christ. The whole question of sin was settled when Christ was lifted up from the earth before He went to heaven. Everything in this world was shut out; even the disciples were shut out. He said to them "ye cannot follow me" now; and then God is glorified as the consequence of the cross. We have it in the tabernacle; when a man went into the court, he met the altar first. The first thing we meet is the cross. Christ was lifted up in view of the

world; but He is neither on earth nor in heaven, and the grand question is, when man turns Christ out of the world, can He do such a work that God can take Him to heaven? "I will draw all men unto me" is in contrast with the Jews who rejected Christ. He will draw all men unto Himself. In John 3 it is not merely that man is a sinner, but "we speak that we do know and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" He brings down heavenly things which no one receives at all; and so in the next chapter He goes to Samaria, and grace comes out in God giving from Himself without expecting anything of man. "God giveth not the Spirit by measure" is there spoken of the Lord. I believe it is an abstract principle that the Holy Ghost comes, and is not a mere influence of which you may have more or less.

269 Remark in our chapter that we have an intimation of the deity of the Holy Ghost as well as of His personality. "It is the same God which worketh all in all," and then "all these worketh that one and self-same Spirit." And then you have what is more often practically lost sight of, the personality of the Holy Ghost. "He divideth to every man severally as He will." You cannot say this of an influence, for it is He worketh and He wills; which is the most distinct expression of the action of a person. I think the place in which we find the Holy Ghost in scripture is striking, I mean as acting in us. In the order of God's dealings - He is not the object, but as a divine power, He is the agent. The Father and Son are objects, but the Holy Ghost is the agent, and so is more mixed up with things in us, because acting in us; so that there is a natural liability to lose sight of His personality. The Father and Son are objects of faith. "We have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ"; through Christ "we have access by one Spirit unto the Father"; so that the Spirit is working in us. The Father sent the Son, and He went back to God; but the Holy Ghost's being in us is mixed up with the workings of our minds.

We have three things in Romans 8:27, He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; then the Holy Ghost Himself also; and that in us, for our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. This is not a mere influence, which is a very common idea. You find persons when you speak of "the Spirit of Christ" take it as a term of Christ's character. It may include that, but also very much more. Scripture is plain enough: only we are apt to get confounded in our minds. The Spirit is life, and He is the spring and power, and power of life in us. It is from Him the life comes; "the body is dead . . . but the Spirit is life"; it is the Holy Ghost in us. He is the power of the life, and characterises it, and righteousness is the effect.

In chapter 8 of Romans we read of Him both as working in life in us, and also a distinct Person. First as a nature and character; and then (for we cannot separate a spring from its stream) after verse 14, we have Him as a Person in us and with us: "the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit," and there He is distinct. The Spirit is life, and then He bears witness, which separates the two. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" is the indwelling of the Spirit, but it is characteristic there. An unsealed soul is not Christ's in the sense of being a Christian, as God owns a Christian to be. It is not that he does not belong to Him, for He belonged to Him before, but I cannot call a person a Christian who is not sealed. He may really be Christ's in the sense that God is bringing him into it all; but he has not got into Christian place and standing. "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba Father." And "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," refers to that. It is a person who is not an unbeliever. There was no verse in Scripture so difficult as that to me for years, until I saw that the whole chapter refers to the Christian position as such. It is not merely life: we receive the Spirit as life, and as a Person. The two are true.

270 In Romans 8:14 He is a distinct person from us; in verses 12, 13, it is transitional. Chapter 7 closes with "Who shall deliver me?" and we get the deliverance up to the resurrection of the body in chapter

8:1-11. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" comes first, then the body is dead; as I said it is spring and stream; neither one is the other; the spring is not the stream, nor the stream the spring: yet if you stop the spring, there is no stream at all; but beside that, there is a divine Person who makes my body a temple; the same Holy Ghost, but in a distinct character. In "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," it is the flesh contrasted with the Spirit, as you have in Galatians. He is the Spirit of life; we are in the Spirit; the Spirit of God dwells in us; and then we have the same Spirit in His formative character; then, "if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin"; and then, "the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead." The Spirit is first, the opposite of the flesh; next, He is formative of the new man; and then I find Him raising up the body into glory.

The Spirit dwells in me. He is called the Spirit of Christ, because He expresses Christ in me. The opening of Romans 8 is closely connected with chapter 7: "The law of the Spirit of life," etc., sums up chapter 7 with the character of the deliverance. By the body being dead is meant that there is no life, it has no life, but is a corpse, and the Spirit is life. As to the words - "is none of his," though I may be sure that God is working, yet I cannot say such an one is His until he is sealed. I cannot say till then, as an absolute fact, that he belongs to Christ. Then he would know it himself, for God has given to us the earnest of the Spirit. The man is wrought by God for it, but that is not the same thing as his being in the place.

271 "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" means that where the Spirit is, the man is free. Redemption sets a man at liberty, and then, when he has the Holy Ghost, he knows the liberty and enjoys it. A person is sealed when he can say, Abba Father: only there are some who say, "Father" in prayer, and yet have unbelieving thoughts about themselves. It may be such an one from bad teaching is afraid of acknowledging what he is, but he has the Spirit of adoption. He has liberty too with God, and there is the important place to have it. He has a consciousness that God is his Father; it would be much better to be able to tell other people so. A man in Romans 7 has not that liberty, which in type comes in with Israel, before they had crossed the Red Sea. It precedes sometimes the first part of Romans 5, though not always, but it is modified if it come after. It is connected with our dying with Christ, not with Christ's dying for our sins. The fact in Romans 5 that I am forgiven, when I know that, modifies it. Forgiveness is not death with Christ, but the knowledge of forgiveness brings in a character of love and mercy and non-imputation; which greatly modifies the remainder. The deliverance by the doctrine of the death is in chapter 5, whilst chapter 7 comes in to shew the bearing of the doctrine of death on law; but the knowledge of forgiveness modifies the power of the law. Chapter 7 might be a person who has the Holy Ghost, but only in a certain sense. In that chapter he takes the thing in itself completely, in its full actual character, and this does not touch the question of forgiveness at all. The sealing comes upon the knowledge of the work by which we are forgiven, not upon the knowledge that we are dead. But one may be in a legal state though knowing forgiveness. The full character of Romans 6 is Jordan, not the Red Sea. The Red Sea is that Christ died and rose, Jordan is my dying and being risen with Christ; but when I look back with clearness, I see that I died and rose with Christ, and then I get Jordan. We get the consciousness consequent upon Jordan.

272 Marah throws in the bitters of the way. Circumcision is not in the wilderness, which so far complicates it; they have to drink death in the wilderness - the bitter water - for they have been saved through it; and they have to get it applied; but when I have the full consciousness of liberty, I must go through Jordan, and then circumcision comes; the reproach of Egypt was never rolled away until then. It was not, of course, that they were not out of Egypt, for they were, and in the wilderness; and there we have the two parts of the Christian life: the going through the world as a wilderness, and that distinguished from sitting in

heavenly places, or the land. We must have death and resurrection for both; but if it is in Christ only, I am but in the wilderness; but if I get Jordan, then I have the realisation of my having myself died and risen. Then I get circumcision, and never till then. Those who had only a place in the wilderness, and its character, were not circumcised, and therefore they had nothing heavenly, unless it is said that any one tasted of it from Eshcol. I think we have something of this in John 3.

We must have Christ's resurrection even to get the earthly blessings of Israel, and therefore, in Acts 13 Paul says, God raised Christ "up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption"; and "I will give unto you the sure mercies of David," Isa. 55. Israel could not have them without death and resurrection, and therefore the sure mercies of David are proof of resurrection; there was nothing sure till that. If they trusted to a living man, all failed. Then only I have them so, and a master of Israel ought to have known that. Therefore when I have heavenly things brought in, I have the cross to bring them in. I do not merely have the death and resurrection of Christ as that which delivers me from Egypt - "by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit," which is true - but I have also all things brought to me, as risen with Christ, through the Jordan.

Circumcision, in the end of Romans 2, is looked at as a real thing, and all is the work of the Spirit, when you come to the actual application of it. I have forgiveness of sins, and deliverance from flesh; and not only practically mortify my members, but I say, I am dead; for I have died with Christ, and that is Jordan; then we have liberty, and what is heavenly. Romans 3 to 5 I link with the Red Sea, and chapter 6 with Jordan. I am dead, only I am looking back: first, I must have Christ entirely alone - lifted up; then I must, so to say, put myself in Christ by faith. I died then, and then I myself am actually dead also, across the Jordan; and then I get into this heavenly standing: not merely am brought into a wilderness, for there it is that flesh is tested, but into the land where I am fighting, so the Lord's host in Canaan, and have nothing to do with flesh, but am risen, and only that, and therefore I am simply the vessel of God's power against God's enemies. Notice, that the beginning of the wilderness is a little picture of grace, which stands by itself entirely: for the things Israel were chastened for afterwards, they then had blessing about. If they wanted flesh, quails were sent at even; but afterwards; in Numbers 11, the Lord smote them with a very great plague for the same murmuring for flesh.

273 Strictly speaking, Jordan is connected with Ephesians only. Colossians may be in advance of Romans, introducing resurrection; but it is only partial in Colossians. You are there risen with Christ, but not sitting in the heavenly places; you are risen, but still on earth, and that is more like the Red Sea than Jordan. If ye be risen, seek the things above. It does not say you are sitting in the midst of them. In Romans you are not risen; in Ephesians, both risen and seated; in Colossians it is rather between the two. You do not get the Holy Ghost in Colossians at all, save once the "love of the Spirit." We have death with Christ in Romans, resurrection with Christ in Colossians, and sitting in heavenly places added in Ephesians. Not that it is all the apostle is teaching; he takes much for granted also, as "in Christ," for instance: such an one had title to everything, and he speaks so in Romans. You are alive in Christ, but he does not there speak of with Christ. With Christ I have come out of death, which is different from receiving life. If I have come out of death, and am risen with Christ, that is very different from simply receiving life. If I look at Christ as having given life, it is a divine person quickening me; but if, as risen with Him, I look at Him as the one who has gone into death, and with whom I have risen, then I have gone through death; and so it is that risen with Christ is so much more than life through Him simply.

In Romans 7 the experience is that of a man quickened but not dead. In the early part of the chapter we have the doctrine that we have died, and so we cannot have the two husbands; and the law cannot have

power over us, because we have died. It will be seen therefore that chapter 7 is the application of the doctrine of chapter 6 to the question of law, and there the experience is given of a man that is under law who cannot say he is dead. There it is not "risen with Christ," but married to another who has risen. You cannot have law and Christ together. Then the figure is changed; for it is we that have died, though it is the same in principle. And in the end of the chapter we have the experience of a man that is under law, and not delivered; he has the life given, but he is not dead and risen. It is the fullest expression of a man under law, and having life. And as such we are delivered by finding out, not merely that Christ died for our sins, but also that we have died with Christ. And this is the doctrine of chapter 6.

274 In Ephesians the principle of the body is brought in. We are in sins, and Christ dies, and in the coming down to that, He put away all our sins, and then God comes and raises us all up together, and this involves union in one body. In Colossians it is only just brought to the edge of what is called "one body" (Col. 3:15), but in Ephesians the body is the great subject - Jews and Gentiles all one body - and then "quickened together with Christ," and "raised up together" (that second "together" is Jew and Gentile), sitting in Christ, but not with Him.

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