

Notes of Addresses 22-24 October, 1868 at Edinburgh

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon explores the themes of God's governance, grace, and the believer's identity and responsibility in Christ.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:8, John 1:12, Romans 6:4, Ephesians 1:4, Philippians 3:20, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 2 Timothy 1:9, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 9:12, 1 Peter 1:10-14

Topics: "Identity in Christ", "Sovereign Grace"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the two great subjects in Scripture: God's government of the world centered around the Jews and the sovereign grace that gives believers a place in God's counsel through Christ. He explains that while Israel is central to God's earthly governance, the Church, as the body of Christ, is central to His grace. Darby highlights the importance of understanding our identity in Christ, the significance of His atoning work, and the believer's responsibility to manifest Christ in their lives. He encourages believers to embrace their position as children of God, living in the light of His grace and awaiting the return of Christ.

Transcript

There are two great subjects in Scripture (when once the great thing salvation is settled,) in the ways of God, namely, the government of this world and the sovereign grace that gives people a place according to God's counsels: the Jews are the centre of the one, and the Church of the other, after Christ, of course, He is the great centre - (there is a special government of God even over the children of God now) - but speaking generally, the Jews are the centre of all God's government of this world. You will see what I mean in Deut. 32:8, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the peoples (not people) according to the number of the children of Israel." "Most High" is the name of God in connection with the Melchisedec - (Psalm 91) - that is, he who has the secret of who this Most High is, shall have the care of Abraham's God - the Almighty - Jehovah, the God of the Jews. Verse 9 is the Jewish people speaking; verse 14 is Jehovah speaking. First, you get this riddle as it were put: He that knows who this Most High is shall get the blessings of Abraham's God, then they say, Jehovah is this Most High; and then Jehovah puts His seal upon it (v. 14).

He is The Almighty to Abraham: "I am the Almighty God, walk before Me, and be thou perfect." He is "Jehovah" to the Jews: "I am Jehovah and I appeared unto Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, by the name of

God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah, was I not known unto them."

He is Father to us: "Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (the name Most High is not yet fulfilled). Our responsibility is to manifest what our Father is. We are the Epistle of Christ, and He was the display of the grace of God amongst men.

We see by Deut. 32:8, that Israel is the centre of the government of this world, but then I get another thing, I get the sovereign grace of God, associating man with the second Adam, just as he was connected with the first Adam. I get the failing responsible man, and the one who glorified God in everything. It is associating us with the Second Man in glory - we are to be like Him, "The glory Thou hast given Me I have given them," &c. The thought and purpose of God is to have us with Christ and like Christ, His own blessed Son, for ever. We have this place now, though we are not in the glory yet. People think it humility to doubt of God's grace. It's no such thing. It's thinking your own thoughts when God has spoken. When God puts the best robe on you, the greatest humility is to set to, and wear it. If you say, I am not fit, it shows you think it possible you could be fit. True lowliness is to accept God's thought. We have no business to think when God has spoken; our business is to believe. If He says we shall be like Him, we know we shall, for God has spoken it. That is the only true humility - giving up thinking what we are for God, and thinking only of what He is for us. The Prodigal spoke before he came to the Father, of being made like a hired servant. That seemed lowly. It only showed he did not know the Father's heart. He did not say it when the Father's arms were round him; he could not then.

I do not get the counsels of God, properly speaking, till Christ had died, (Eph 1:1-4). God's choosing us before the world has nothing to do with the sovereignty of it. The grace would be as sovereign that chose today, this moment, any time, but it is that before the world was, He had His thoughts and counsels about a set of people. This shows they are not of the world, though in it of course. (2 Tim. 1:9, 10), this saving and calling given us in Christ before the world began, but now made manifest, &c. (Titus 1:2), here I get this counsel of God, given before the world existed, but which did not come out till after Christ had died.

This is the first thing. Next thing when I come to creation, I find a different thing, a responsible man born into this world. The first thing he does, all through his history is, that he fails; the first thing we hear of Adam is that he fails; the first thing we hear of Noah after the flood is he gets drunk; the first thing we hear of the law after it is given it is broken; the priesthood is set up, and Aaron makes the golden calf; he never puts on his garments of glory and beauty except the day he was consecrated.

Adam is created in innocence and beauty, total failure comes in, and judgment executed, he distrusted God, and listened to the devil, then lust comes in - then transgression, and it is all gone - he is turned out of paradise - the world goes on, brings on the flood - after that Noah fails directly, and so all through. In every place of responsibility, the first thing we hear is man's utter failure. In Paradise you see side by side the two principles about which men have been fighting ever since - man's responsibility and God's communicable grace - the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life.

Then the law comes and raises the question of righteousness: Do, this and thou shalt live. Here are the two trees again, but I get the tree of righteousness before life. Man fails again, of course. God still tries. He sends prophets, &c. They called back to obedience as the way of man's happiness. After man had been proved a total sinner, God sends the law and the prophets to bring His words and mind before them. This too failed. Then He says, I have yet one Son, perhaps they will reverence Him.

first Adam's moral history was closed. It was in that sense the end of the world. ἡ πρώτη αἰὶς ἐκλήθη ὁ κόσμος, as the Apostle speaks. He came to seek fruit, and they had none for Him.

He came to make a feast, and they would not sit at it (Matt. 20, 21). We must learn that there is no good in us. The three first Gospels present Christ to man to be received. John's Gospel is testifying that he was not received, and bringing in the grace. John's Gospel all through is election and grace. No such language in the three first Gospels. "Ye are of your father the devil," He says, but I'll have my own sheep for all that. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God, even to as many," &c.

There I get the people. Man's responsibility is closed - he is a lost sinner. Man has been in a state of probation, and it's over. As to moral dealing with each individual the responsibility is there to the full; but what he has to find out is that he's lost already; the result of the principle of responsibility is to find out he's lost, that the responsibility is over because he's lost and ruined. Then I come to the Second Man. It's no mending of the first man, but a substitution of the Second Man (there will be a mending of the first, practically, if I see Christ, of course).

I get both the trees of Paradise fulfilled in grace. I am brought to the discovery of what I am, and then I see Christ has died on the cross, and taken the whole thing on Himself. Here's the Son of God dying on the cross. Well, if that is not righteousness - judgment against sin - I don't know what is. But who is it for? - the guilty sinner. Well, if that isn't love, I don't know what is. He was there making atonement for sin, that the Gospel might go out to all the world; and as to believers, bearing their every sin, the whole thing is met there, and the believer's responsibility cleared away - the tree itself - this evil tree of responsibility cut down by the roots - the responsibility met by the atonement, and He Himself is the tree of life. (Of course when I say responsibility is gone, I don't mean to touch the believer's responsibility to Christ, that comes in on a different ground.)

Now the counsels of God come out, because He could now bring them out. Righteousness is accomplished, and my standing is not on responsibility as a child of Adam, but on redemption as a child of God (admitting all my sinfulness, of course). It is a new footing and foundation. Not only my sins are put away, but that which has put them away, has so vindicated the righteousness of God, and glorified Him, that man has a place at the right hand of God in the glory. He says, "I have glorified thee - now glorify Me," and Jehovah answers, "Sit thou on my right hand, &c."

This has put the Son of Man in the glory of God, and He sends the Holy Ghost to form the members into union with the Head who has gone to take His place as Man in Heaven, and this is the Church. Now comes the responsibility of a Christian. A man's responsibility flows from the place he is in. You are not responsible to me as my children, or my servants, because you are not my children, or my servants. If I am a believer, God says, I am a child of God. Well, now, let us see you walking as a child of God in all your ways.

Here comes our responsibility; let me see Christ in you, so that he that runs may read. If you are in Christ, Christ is in you. Christ is before God for us, and we are before the world for Christ. There is your responsibility. You are God's child; well, I must see that the life of Jesus be manifested in your mortal bodies, that is individual. You will see the individual put always first in Scripture, because the individual

must be put right before there can be any Church.

Our relationship with the Father is that of children; our relationship with Christ is members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, the Holy Ghost uniting us with Him, the Head, and that is the Church. Our ground is Christ's work. The Church of God is, those whom, when the Head has been glorified in Heaven as man, the Holy Ghost coming down unites to Christ, the Head. The Holy Ghost never came before that, and could not come. All immediate action from creation is the Holy Ghost; He is the direct agent, but He never came till the day of Pentecost. You must not confound the action of a divine person, with the coming of a divine person. All things were created by and for the Son, yet He did not come till the Incarnation. Why this is of special importance is, that the Holy Ghost dwells in the believer, and in the assembly. The Holy Ghost came to dwell down here. There is no such thing as God's dwelling with us, except in redemption. He visited Adam, but never dwelt with him. He talked with Abraham often, but never dwelt with him; but when He redeems Israel, though only figuratively and outwardly, He came down in the cloud and dwelt with them.

The dwelling of the Holy Ghost is distinct from being born of God. It is founded on being perfectly washed and spotless by the blood of Christ. He must have a clean house to dwell in. Take an Old Testament figure - a man was washed with water, sprinkled with blood, and anointed with oil. So we are quickened, brought under the blood of sprinkling, and then the Holy Ghost seals us, by coming to dwell in us. He can't seal an unbeliever. "Because ye are sons, He hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts," &c. By the coming of the Holy Ghost, I get the Church associated with Christ in Heaven; but it was in consequence of His ascension, He could not have come before. The Holy Ghost in the Church could not exist as an actual thing on earth, till Christ had died and risen. The Jewish system was formed by the keeping of the middle wall of partition up. The Church is the breaking of the middle wall of partition down. You can't take Scripture and not see that the idea of the Church even could not be revealed until Christ had gone up on high, and the middle wall of partition broken up. You can get before, "Rejoice ye Gentiles with His people;" but there's His people - the distinction kept up. The Jews had promises; and the one in whom all the promises centred came; they refused Him, and crucified Him. So then they came under mercy the same as the Gentiles, there was no difference - both had sinned - God fulfilled His promise; but the Jews rejected it. So then the middle wall of partition could be broken down, for both came alike under mercy.

Deuteronomy eighth chapter. So we, in a spiritual sense, are put through the wilderness. God took care of the wearing out of their coats even all the time. We are left here to find out what we are and what God is. Being children of God, our home, the Father's house, Christ has gone to prepare us a place, that where He is we may be also. This leads at once to the coming of Christ. We are identified with Christ. He comes first to put us in our place beside Himself. This is our hope. The Jew is the centre of prophecy, the world too has to do with prophecy, but we were in the counsels of God before ever the world was, and so we are not of the world at all. I must wait till He comes to be fully identified with Christ. What rests on Paul's mind in Philippians is to depart and be with Christ - not to go to heaven, though it is heaven. I am not conformed to the image of Christ till I am raised. Christ is the first fruits. The resurrection of the saints is the fullest seal put on the righteousness of God. We are all to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, but we shall be glorified when we get there. We shall give account of everything to God, from the time we were born, but we shall be in glory when we give it. It's the saved that give this account (the others at the Day of Judgment, of course,) how they have glorified Him who saved them. This is our hope. I am to be like Christ when He raises me and glorifies me. I am to be conformed to His image when He comes; and, as regards the Church, the marriage of the Lamb does not come till then. The only proper hope of the Christian is to

wait for His Son from heaven. No one knows when that will be. When the last member of the Church has been gathered in, He will come; but whether at midnight, in the first watch, or in the second watch, or at cock-crow, neither you nor I know. It may be to-night!

THURSDAY EVENING.

ROMANS 6 - We have been speaking to-day of the ways of God, and the blessing we have in connection with the Lord Jesus. My thought now is to speak a little more of the foundation on which we walk in conscious relationship with God, out of which our duties and service to God flow, and examine a little in detail how it is a soul can walk in peace. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Many a soul has to say, "No, they could not say they have peace." There is one thing that tests the heart, whether it really has peace, what I often use with souls - what effect the Day of Judgment has on the soul. Some have peace if you speak to them of the cross, but if you speak to them of the Judgment-seat, they have not peace. God would not have His children thus trembling and uncertain before Him. We have a certain knowledge of our relationship with God. Some have a vague sense of the goodness of God, by which they just mean that they hope He will not think worse of their sin than they do themselves. But that is not it at all. He is good, but it is in the giving His Son. All is settled, past, present, and future. We have peace by the work of the Lord on the cross - comfort and strength in the present, and hope of glory in the future.

There are two points Scripture treats of: putting away sin entirely, and purging the conscience. He thoroughly deals with my whole condition as a sinner, so as to bring me into a known relationship with Himself before the Day of Judgment comes. He has gone down into the depths of my heart, and shown me the depths of His - so that I know all my own sin and all His grace: I know what I have done, and what I am; and I know what He has done, and what He is. For this there are two things necessary: I must know the ways of God touching sin; I must know that all my guilt has been cleared away before the Day of Judgment - deals with me as a child of Adam. But I want more; there is another thing, putting me into an entirely new place - I have got all the flesh produces cleared away, and I am not in the flesh but in Christ - taken out of the first Adam, and put in the Second Adam.

In Romans I get, first, the clearing away of our sins; then that we are dead with Christ and alive with Christ, but no farther. In Colossians we get a step farther: Not only have we died and are alive, but we are risen with Christ. In Ephesians the Apostle drops the first of this, and holds entirely to the second, and therefore goes on farther - makes us sit together in heavenly places in Christ. We do not get justification in Ephesians, but sitting in heavenly places in Christ, and with the whole range of the privileges of the Church of God, as a present consciousness by the Holy Ghost. You get these blessed steps in the three Epistles. I turn back now to see how we get into this relationship with God. It is not an innocent Paradise - that's lost; and I cannot be with God in a sinful condition. I must be in the light, as He is in the light. If we cannot be that, we cannot be with Him. In Israel the veil was there. The Holy Ghost thus signifying [that] the way into the Holiest was not yet made manifest; there was no question of getting into God's own presence then, there is no question of getting out of it now. You must be in it according to it, or condemned, and cast out of it for ever. He begins all that by coming to us as we are in our wretchedness. If I call myself a Christian, I say I belong to a race who, when He was on earth, crucified and spit upon Him. The extremest act of sin met the highest act of love. In the life of Christ we get the power of perfect goodness in the midst of evil - a thing never known elsewhere. We have to follow it for a pattern. It was God in the midst of evil, to show He was greater than the evil. There He began His direct dealings with man, when man was a sinner without law, and a sinner with law. There He was dealing with Publicans and sinners, despised by the Pharisee, revealing the heart of God - revealing men's hearts, too, as He did to

the Pharisee Simon - shows him He is a prophet, by telling him what he is thinking of. Shows He is more than a prophet by telling him this woman's sins are all forgiven her - her sins which are many. He knew them all - knew her heart, and revealed to her His own. He detected the whited sepulchres, and laid them bare. "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone at her"; and they went out one by one. Why did not they own it, and go out all in a lump? Because they were trying to save their characters. I get in His life on earth man's sin perfectly detected, and God's heart perfectly revealed.

The first great truth is, that instead of putting me away because of my sins, He comes in love and puts my sins away. That is the first half - perfectly clears away my sins, so as to give me a perfect conscience before God. Christ is the accomplishment of promise, and He is declared to be the Son of God, with power by the resurrection from the dead; that is, that God had done what He had spoken of; and, besides that, I get a great power come into the place of death, and declared to be the Son of God. . . . Christ bore my sins - every one of them. They never can be mentioned again any more; and, having borne them, His blood makes me as white as snow, and His blood IS shed, so that if you are coming to God by Him, and your sins are not put away, all of them, once for all, they never can be, because Christ cannot die over again. "For when He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down," &c. For by one offering He had perfected for ever them that are sanctified. This showed the righteousness of God in bearing with the sins of the Old Testament saints. When Christ's blood was shed, the proof of the righteousness of God came out in forbearing with the Old Testament saints. On this righteousness I rest, as on a rock. Sin has been imputed to Christ, and therefore it is impossible God can impute sin to me, because God has dealt with it, Christ has borne it, and it is all completely cleared away; and, therefore, when it comes to judgment, there is nothing to do with it. To those that look for Him, there is no sin to judge when He comes for them. Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God, &c. And God was perfectly glorified in the cross - perfectly glorified about the sin, and so I can tell the sinner, you come - God has been glorified about sin, and if you come the Father will throw His arms round you, and be glad to have you. When I get Christ on the cross I get perfect righteousness about sin, and perfect love to the sinner. Not only my sins have been perfectly put away, but God perfectly glorified; death destroyed; Satan's power destroyed - and I can rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

There is another thing comes in now, not sins, but sin. The difference is very simple; when we talk of sins; you have committed yours, and I mine; but when we speak of sin, "By one man's transgression many were made sinners," &c., there we are all alike. You get this division between the 11th and 12th verses of Romans 5. I cannot have a nature forgiven, I want to be delivered from it. "Who shall deliver me," &c. It is not now that He has died for my sins, but that I died with Him. This is another application of the death of Christ: that I am entitled to say I died in the death of Christ. By one man's obedience many were made righteous. Oh then, you say, if it is by one man's obedience, I can live on in sin. Ah! but how have you part in this obedience? By being dead with Him. Then, if you are dead, how can you be living on? I died with Christ, and thus I get free from the nature, and not only get rid of my sins which He has borne. Therefore there is now no condemnation. Your place is changed. As Christ died on your account, and is risen again, He died to sin for you there, and you are in Him now, and not in the first Adam at all. The law provokes the sin, and does not help me: while it curses me for breaking it; it does not help me to keep it. The law makes me discover I want deliverance. Well, then, I find I have died to that which held me - I died in Christ. Not merely He bore my sins. The work of Christ on the cross is not merely that He has borne my sins and put them away, but I am not in the flesh at all, I am in the Second Adam, before God, righteous as He is righteous. He having become my life, I treat the whole thing as a dead man. Practically I am not always consistent - I have to humble myself, but I have always the title to say I am dead. This is different from

merely my sins being borne and my debt paid: as, for example, to use an illustration I have often used in other places - supposing a son gets terribly into debt - has nothing to do - no means of support - no means of paying his debt. Well, then, suppose his father comes forward and pays his debts. Well, he is as badly off as ever - he has nothing to live upon, and soon he will be in just the same case again. But if his father not only says, "I will pay your debts," but also, "I will take you into partnership with me." That is quite a different thing. He realizes he is a partner in the firm: he is on quite a different footing. You hear him talking about our capital, and our customers, and our business, and the like.

Now, I have got the believer in Christ before God, in chapter 8, and I look at all the full blessing that belongs to me, and I have peace before God, and I am accepted in the beloved.

You may get a person with the forgiveness of the third chapter, but he may not have learnt what he is, and the full provision made in Christ, and he must learn it sooner or later, and till he does he will not have full, settled peace. When our souls have really learnt that He loved us, when we were mere sinners, but cleansed us in His holiness, and accepted us in the beloved because of what Christ has done, we get full peace. The Lord give you to know thoroughly what you are; and that Christ, having died and given Himself for our sins, they are never mentioned again. We are chastened by the way - that is a different thing - but I say again, if our sins are not put away they never can be. And now, beloved friends, do you know your place in Christ? Know you are in Him and He in you. If not, the Lord give you to know He has once and for ever put away your sins, and also that second truth that you have died with Him, and are risen with Him, and sat down in Him in the heavenlies, and the whole thing is settled.

FRIDAY EVENING.

Heb. 9 - It is very striking in this and the following chapter, the way in which the Spirit of God has brought out the effect of the atoning work of Christ; and refers the heart at the end to His coming again as that which makes perfect His first coming, in contrast with the natural condition of man, death, and judgment. I press, first, the purging of the conscience once for all. When once it is known, the question of imputation of sin can never rise again: that is what is contrasted with the Jewish sacrifices which were often offered. Another contrast, too, under the Jewish system the veil was there - they could not go to God. He gave them promises, etc., but they could not go direct to God. When Christ died, the veil was rent from top to bottom - this signifying that the way into the Holiest was made manifest. In chapter 10 He applies it: "Having boldness, therefore," etc. The blow that rent the veil and gave us possession of the Holiest, took away the sins which would have prevented my going in there.

"Now once in the end of the world," etc. That was the end of the world morally. After that it was what Christ did for the lost. If that one sacrifice did not complete the whole work of putting away sin, then He must often have suffered. You must have blood shed again if it is not all done already, and that cannot be. He has made eternal redemption, an eternal inheritance; and He has sat down, having finished His work - put away the sins of those who had believed on Him from all time, and of those who should believe in Him.

The intercession of Christ is founded on redemption. By the work of Christ I have a place in the Holiest; and how can I reconcile that with me, poor failing creature down here. There the Intercessor comes in. Christ is always there as a propitiation. He is there, and He is our righteousness. Repentance is the effect of His advocacy. He says to Simon, "Satan hath desired to have thee, &c., but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." He prayed for him before the sin was committed. Then He looked on Peter at the right moment, and Peter repented, and went out and wept bitterly; but He had prayed for him before he

repented. Intercession is founded on the double truth that He is my righteousness, and that He is ever there as my propitiation for every sin I could commit. I hate myself doubly for the sin, because I have sinned against grace as well as holiness. Peter wept bitterly, but our faith is not to fail. Christ did not pray Peter might not be sifted, but that his faith might not fail. He needed the sifting, and it was good for him, but how it proves the value of the intercession.

I have the good will of God to do it for me - a divine work done; and then the testimony of the Holy Ghost to it. So it is all a divine thing throughout. Upon that the Holy Ghost is given; after we believe we are sealed with the Spirit. It is a believer that is sealed. Three-fold character of the Holy Ghost - that He has sealed them, that the Holy Ghost is shed abroad in their hearts, and that He is the earnest of the glory. The one only true hope of the saint of God is the coming of the Lord.

Death is not our hope, though to go and be with the Lord is gain to me; but the proper hope is that He will come and receive me to Himself. There is a bright and blessed truth given to us, that death is gain. The thief on the cross: "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." "To depart and be with Christ is far better," the Apostle says. Stephen says - "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." "Absent from the body, present with the Lord": all those passages show it is blessed to drop this tabernacle, and know we are to be with Him, but it is not the proper hope of the Church.

We look for the bright and morning star. People take the Sun of Righteousness to mean the Gospel. It is judgment He is talking of there. When the Sun of Righteousness arises, the wicked are like ashes. The Morning Star is the heavenly hope of Christ before the day comes. Prophecy tells me of the Sun of Righteousness, but the saints who are waiting for Him watch in the night, and they see the Morning Star. You get the whole circuit of the Church's place in that one verse, "The Spirit and the Bride say come," etc.

The saints say to the Bridegroom, come; press on the saints to join in saying come; then they turn to those who are athirst, and say, we have got the water of life, come and drink; and then to the world at large, to come and take of the water of life freely. This is the place of every Christian down here now. There are two Epistles only in which the coming of the Lord is not spoken of. In Galatians, where they were getting off the ground, and where he is writing to them in an agony, crying, "who has bewitched you?"

He does not even salute them; his whole soul is absorbed with their danger. In Ephesians you get the fullest blessings of the Church; but why you do not get the coming of the Lord in Ephesians is that they are looked at as with Christ already in heavenly places, and so He has no need to talk to them of His coming. I might say the one Epistle is too high, and the other too low, to bring it in. Everywhere else it is mixed with every thought and feeling of the Christian; and with the giving up of this hope began the decay of the Church.

It is said, How is it good men, years ago, were not waiting for Christ? Why the wise virgins as well as the foolish all slumbered and slept. The difference was, the wise had oil in their vessels - they had grace, and the others had not, but they all slumbered and slept. You get for service the inheritance, and for watching, the heavenly blessedness that Christ gives. When He went away He comforted them by telling them He would come again and take them to Himself. When, in Acts 1, the angels see them gazing up into heaven, they say, He shall come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.

And this is no spiritual coming (Acts. 3:19). Spiritually He was with them, therefore it could be no spiritual coming that is meant here. The Holy Ghost being come, and speaking with divine power, says Jesus shall come. Therefore it is nonsense to say it means the Holy Ghost coming down (Romans 11:26, 1 Cor.

15:23).

The coming of the Lord is intimately connected with the first resurrection of the saints. The value of resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:21, is that it is the resurrection from among the dead. If all are raised together, what is the meaning of the resurrection of the just? and what is the meaning of "If so be that I may attain unto the resurrection from among the dead"? If all were to be raised together, what is there to attain unto? Paul coins a Greek word there to explain his meaning: ἀνάστασις ἐκ νεκρῶν. There is not a trace of such a thing as a general resurrection in the Scriptures, but a resurrection of the saints, of which Christ is the first fruits, is everywhere clearly preached. "Recompensed at the resurrection of the just": what else can that mean? When Christ appears we shall appear with Him, because we shall have gone up to be with Him before He appears at all. 1 Thess. 1 - The Thessalonians were converted, to wait for God's Son from heaven. Have you been converted to wait for God's Son from heaven? Giving up idols - the idols of the heart, and just waiting. 1 Thess. 2:19. - There they are to be his hope, and joy, and crown, at the Lord's coming. Then, if it were a question of holiness, that too is referred to His coming (3:13). Then if death happened among them, it was just the same (4:13). If I were to say of a saint in this town who had died in Jesus, "Do not sorrow as one without hope, God will bring him with Him when He comes," they would think me mad - perhaps would turn me out of the house; and yet it is what the Holy Ghost gave as a comfort. How different are the thoughts of the Church now from then. That was given for a comfort, and if I used it to almost any now, they would call me a Spiritualist. The dead saints rise, the living are changed, and all go up in the same cloud of glory. In 2 Thess. the coming of the Lord is referred to judgment on sinners; but whether it is holiness, or conversion, or the joy of the saints, or a person's dying, in everything, every thought and feeling, this coming of the Lord was mixed up.

Wherever you get the responsibility of a Christian you get the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever you get positive blessing, it is caught up to be with Himself (1 Tim. 6:13, 14; Tit. 2:12). In this last (Tit. 2:12), the Apostle takes Christianity in these three elements - it has appeared and it teaches us to walk soberly, self-restrained, righteously towards men, with piety towards God. Hebrews 9, James 5:7, and 1 John 3:1. - When He appears we shall be like Him. I am looking to be like Christ glorified. When He appears we shall be like Him - never before, (we may be with Him - be happy) and then the practical effect here is: I am going to be like Him in glory, let me be as much like Him as possible down here; and to this end I purify myself. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."

1 Peter 1:10-14 - We get here three steps. First, the prophets prophesying of the glory to come; second, the Holy Ghost sent down giving the report; and then the things they prophesy of brought to us at the appearing of Christ. Jude, again, is full of the coming. All the Epistles and Gospels are full of it, excepting the two Epistles I have mentioned.

The Church is in eternity, and does not count time. All computations as to the time of His coming, are false in their very thought. I get these four things in Scripture. I get revealed that what made the Church go wrong, was "My Lord delayeth His coming" - that He has told us we are to be "like men waiting for their Lord"; that "while the Bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." They went out to meet the Bridegroom, but they turned in somewhere and went comfortably to sleep. Any way, they had to be called out again; and then they are roused by the midnight cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh," rousing the Church at the midnight time - the time when He was least expected. It is not heaven, though I shall be in heaven: it is Christ I am to get - the blessedest of all, Christ. Am I waiting for Christ? He will find a people waiting for Him when He comes. How long the midnight cry goes forth, we know not. It may do its work in a moment, of rousing the hearts of the sleeping Church. Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! Scripture does

not talk of going to heaven, but of being with the Lord. The nearest approach to any thought about heaven is to the thief on the cross - "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." But there it is with Me. In closing, are you waiting for His Son from heaven? If not, oh, do bow to the Word of God. Take the Scriptures and see if they do not speak of it as the one hope of the Church.

SATURDAY MORNING. - READING MEETING.

PHILIPPIANS. - What characterises Philippians is, Christian experience - not doctrine. The Apostle looks at salvation as the end of the race always here. Another thing peculiar to Philippians - you never get sin mentioned in it. And when he is looking at righteousness, it is righteousness in contrast with righteousness, and not in contrast with sin. No 7th Romans in Philippians; he is always above going through the wilderness, walking in the power of the Spirit, above all the circumstances, looking on to the end for the full salvation. It is the walk of the Christian in the power of the Spirit of God, triumphing over Satan. What is the difference between Philippians and Timothy? 1 Timothy is Church order; 2 Timothy, what to do in Church disorder. Philippians has to do with individuals; Timothy with the Church, first in order, and then in disorder.

Verse 9. - Not content with a Christian not doing wrong, he wants him to have spiritual discernment to know which are the best things, to have the positive desire to glorify Christ, not merely the not doing wrong.

What is the difference between this Epistle and Galatians 5:16? The difference is, he is walking in the power of the Spirit of God, and is not thinking about the flesh at all. It is as if I locked up a man who would do mischief in a house, in the cupboard. It is not that the man is changed, or that if he were free he would not do the same mischief as before; he is unchanged, but he is locked up, and we do not trouble about him. It is not Christian experience, as some think, the leaving the door of the cupboard unlocked and letting him get out.

Verse 20 shows such a total setting aside of self. The Apostle decides his own case before Nero. He knows the love of Christ for His Church, and "knowing it was better for the Church, I should stay," he says, "I know I shall be acquitted." Such a wonderful putting away of self and trusting in Christ.

(Verse 19.) - Instead of being cowed by this great leader being in prison, many were encouraged to go on with the things in which he was interested, and even those who were full of themselves, and thought that the sun being down the stars might shine, still they preached Christ, and so he says, it shall all turn to my salvation - always looking at salvation as the final thing at the end. "Waiting for the Saviour," in chapter 3, is not merely a title, but looking for Him as a Saviour. Then too, he might have thought - if I had not gone up to Jerusalem about that money, I should not have got into this mess. If I had taken the Spirit's warning, that they would not receive my testimony in Jerusalem, I might have been free now to be doing the Lord's work. But no such doubts disturbed him. There was a total putting aside of self and thoughts of self. And he says it will all turn to his salvation in the end, by the supply of the Spirit. It was not present deliverance then? - surely not. All through the Epistle he only looks on salvation as at the very end, when the body is redeemed, and Satan finally vanquished. This salvation does not imply any doubt as to the final safety of the believer. You are quite safe, but you have to be kept. I am put through a process where I need to be kept every moment in dependence on God. That is His way with us. I have no doubt He will keep His sheep; but if He did not, we should all fall in the wilderness. You get the practical care of God leading them on every day till the end. "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." But

then, if He did not keep us, Satan is ever ready to pluck us out of His hand. We must be every moment in dependence on Him.

No one could say (verse 20,) except in entire dependence on God, otherwise, he would, like Peter, soon fall into the ditch.

Dependence and obedience the two characteristics of a Christian. Prayer and the Word the two expressions of them. Prayer, dependence, and obedience TO the word.

What is the difference between Psalm 16 and Psalm 23? You get a little difference. In 16th Psalm you specially get the nothingness of man. Christ though God, took that place as man. In 23rd Psalm you have the psalmist not looking at himself at all, but just in dependence on Jehovah.

You get in John's Gospel the divine side of Christ. No crying in Gethsemane in John. When they come to take Him you get Him saying, "I am He"; and they all go backward and fall to the ground. Then again He says, "I am He. If ye seek Me, let these go their way," asserting His care over them, and His complete giving of Himself up. "No man taketh it from Me, I lay it down of Myself." He puts Himself forward, and the disciples run away quite safe. On the cross it is not "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" - He delivered up His own spirit, as God to God. In Luke you get Him as man - going through the thing. There you get the agony in Gethsemane. But on the cross in Luke, you get Him above the circumstances as Son of Man, thinking of others - "Father forgive them they know not what they do." "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." There is no cry of agony, His thought is all for others.

He was Son of God, and they rejected Him. He was Son of David, and they would not have Him. But to be glorified as Son of Man He must pass through death, and then He finds that, what even His soul shrank from, was to be the very means of glorifying Him. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Before we turn back to Philippians, I would say, in Psalm 16 you get the dependence on Jehovah. In Psalm 17 you get the righteousness of the one who called, "Hear the right, O Lord," &c. You get "In Thy presence is fulness of joy," as answer to the trust; "I shall wake up in Thy likeness," as answer to the righteousness.

In Philippians 2 you get the graciousness of Christian life in connection with the humiliation of Christ. In chapter 3 you get the energy of Christian life in connection with Christ in the glory, and running after Him. In chapter 4 you get superiority over all circumstances. Chapter 1 is absence of self, and dependence on the Lord. Chapter 4 - result of experience. Yet he must have had it all along the way, or would not have had it then. In chapter 2 you get the way of getting at self being done with. You get Christ going from glory to death in contrast with the first Adam. Adam tried, in the form of man, to be equal with God - by robbery. The devil said "Ye shall be as Gods." He, being in the form of God, took on Him the form of man, and became obedient to death. There you get the pattern of all graciousness of walk. He always goes down as far as man, and leaves it to God to exalt Him. He is the great example of "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"; as Adam is the example of "he that exalteth himself shall be abased." He tried to exalt himself, and by that act fell into all sorts of evil and sin.

A person who walks in the power of the Spirit of God thinks every one better than himself, because he sees the faults in himself, and he sees Christ in his brother. The Lord in His own path always went down, just what the devil wanted Him not to do - he wanted Him not to take this place of low dependence, but to act as Son of God. But He knew it was not God's will, and He would not. First step of humiliation - He comes to be a man. Second step of humiliation - being a man, He comes down to death.

Let the same mind be in you, i.e., always going down. Emptying yourself and going down, leaving it to God to exalt. He never used His Godhead to save Himself from suffering, but to feel it the more. There are three things - "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"; "It is my Father that doeth the work"; and, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils," etc. The whole Trinity is in the work. You must be careful about dividing them. No man knoweth the Son, because there I get Godhead mixed with manhood, and that is unfathomable.

It is not, no man knows the Father - His is simple Godhead - but it is, no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him. I get His manhood brought out as an example for me, only it is the perfectness of what is divine, brought out in a man. I know that all the fulness of the Godhead is in Him, and I know that He offered strong crying and tears, in dependence upon God as a man, and that is unfathomable. The very fact of His humiliation is a proof that He is God, because if any creature keeps not his first estate he goes into sin, a moral proof of His Godhead.

Christ comes down by His own right to take upon Himself the form of a servant. Chapter 2:12: "Work out your own salvation." Here, is THEIR working in contrast with Paul's working, not in contrast with God, for it is God that worketh in you. They had lost an able servant, and we have not got such a help either, and now, He says, have dependence on God instead of Paul, work out your own salvation, looking at salvation as the final thing at the end. If I am not walking close to God, He cannot put out His strength to help what is evil.

V. 15, that is being like Christ. Chapter 2 is Christ coming down as a pattern - meekness. In chapter 3 it is energy. You will see in the end of chapter 2 such little proofs of consideration. When love is powerful it reckons on love (though it is not disappointed if it does not get it). "Though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." It is a beautiful picture, chapter 2, of the graciousness of a Christian. He is keeping back Timothy for a time, whose return would have been a comfort to himself; but he sends Epaphroditus, because he is in a fidget to get to them, because they had heard of his being ill, and he had thought they would be anxious about him.

Verse 17, he is looking on the Philippians as an offering going up to God, and so he says that if he himself is killed, it is only a libation on their offering, perhaps signifying the willingness of the sacrifice, as the wine was poured on the head of the sacrifice. Wine, we know, typifies joy. Self-sacrifice is always joy where there is grace in it. There is no such joy as self-devotedness. Enduring is not self-sacrifice, but if I give myself up to God there is joy in it.

Chapter 3 - First, fleshly religiousness set aside. It is the sacrifice of self in another sense (verse 7).

Chapter 3 is the energy of Christian life, no matter what is in the way. Oh, but you will have death in the way. That is nothing. I have seen Christ in the glory, and I want to get to Him, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead. No uncertainty about it, but he is so anxious for it, and so you get Christ in glory as the end, not now a Christ down here. It is not "merely suffered the loss of all these things," but "I count them but dross and dung" - not have counted, but do count. The thing is to keep Christ so in the heart, that all else really is as dross and dung - and it is not hard to throw away dross and dung. If I am running for a prize, and anxious to gain it, I may have a very beautiful cloak on, but I shall throw it off to run in. If my heart is filled with Christ - full, full of Christ - I shall go through the streets and see nothing; but if my mind is not fixed on Christ I shall be thinking - "that is a nice engraving," or, "that is a very pretty ribbon." If I am a man, it will be politics, business, or the like. If I am a woman, it will be dress,

or the like. If my heart is filled full of Christ, everything will seem as dross and dung. But then if I am not altogether taken up with Him, they will not seem dross and dung to me at all. I was sitting by the bedside of a sick sister the other day, and after talking to her as long as I thought she ought to bear, I turned to her daughter, a nice, modest girl about seventeen, a good daughter too, and I said to her, " Well, now, I daresay, you think more about a pretty bit of ribbon than about all Christ has done for our souls." She looked at me as if she thought it very queer, and I repeated it, and then she said, "Well, I never thought of it like that, but I cannot say but what I do." These things are not dross and dung unless Christ is everything. It is "win Christ" - not glory, but Christ. First, to be found in Him, then know Him. He is looking not merely to be found in Him at the end, but to know Him here, so that he may be above everything. Paul had seen Christ in the glory, and he sets out to be with Him. Does not even know Christ after the flesh - goes along the road in the power of Christ's resurrection. If death is in the road it is all nothing, if he gets this glory that is in Christ. If he gets death it is no matter, Christ will raise him. He looks at the resurrection state. There are two points here, first, Christ Himself that he wants to win, and then this prize of the high calling in Christ.

It is getting a glorious Christ in heaven, who had gone through death on earth. It is His path. Christ had life in Himself, and He went through death. I must get resurrection before I can look death in the face. In verse 19, in the French translation, they have got stuck in, "Mind only earthly things"; that shows the state of mind.

In Geneva once they began talking to me about perfection in the flesh. I said, oh, I want a great deal more than that - I want Christ's perfection. It was a Methodist minister. And afterwards, the world around called them the Perfects, and us the Plu-Perfects. There are three classes of people here. Those who had, and those who had not got hold of this power in which He was walking, - the power of resurrection, and the enemies of the cross.

Chapter 4 - Superiority to earthly things, in the midst of them, but above them. I will not insist on my rights, the Lord is at hand. Then, if we have cares, we are to be careful for nothing. The more Paul was beaten about and imprisoned, the more Christ became to him. No matter how evils bustle about me, God is in peace. Joy is an effect produced by circumstances, in Christ of course. Peace is a thing that is never disturbed, and so God is never called the God of joy, but the God of peace. Instead of worrying in your own heart about the things, go and carry all your requests to God. I do not say you will get them, it might not be good for you, but you will get God's peace; because, though the things may worry you, He is always in peace. His peace keeps the heart. That is not a question of getting what we ask. Now, there is another thing - he had learnt to be content, v. 11. It is very striking to see a soul living above everything, as this Epistle shows. The very energy that made Christ everything to him, carried him into trial. Chapter 4:19 - "MY God" - that is very beautiful, "I will answer for God," Paul says, "I know Him, I have been through ups and downs and have known Him. And this God that I have known, I can answer for - He will supply all you need."

It is the snare of some minds to be meddling with evil, to go dabbling in it, desiring to mend it, but still, the evil drawing out their energies. The simple Christian rule is to be simple concerning the evil, wise concerning the good. To be meddling with evil gives unconsciously an appetite for strife.

Questions about music, painting, dress-making &c. - how far one could carry them on with Christ? If a thing is a snare to ME, I must give it up entirely. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Different things are snares to different people. If I can go on simply with God with my calling, all well. If I cannot, I must give it

up. It is an individual thing with God. I cannot judge what may be a snare to you. If it is a snare, let it go.

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