

Readings in 1 Corinthians

by John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby's sermon on 1 Corinthians emphasizes the transformative power of the cross and the necessity of divine wisdom in understanding spiritual truths.

Scripture: Romans 7:18, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 2:2, 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, 1 John 2:20

Topics: "The Power of the Cross", "Spiritual Maturity"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the apostle Paul's approach in 1 Corinthians, where he sets aside human wisdom and focuses solely on the message of the cross. Paul acknowledges his own weakness and fear, yet he preaches Christ crucified, which appears as foolishness to the wise. Darby highlights that the cross dismantles human pride and wisdom, revealing God's divine wisdom and righteousness. He explains that true understanding comes through the Holy Spirit, who reveals the mysteries of God to believers, contrasting the spiritual state of those who are mature in faith with those who remain carnal. Ultimately, Darby calls for a recognition of the power of the cross and the necessity of living in accordance with the new creation in Christ.

Transcript

*These are verbatim notes of Readings in Belfast some years ago. Condensations of these have already appeared, but hitherto the full report has never been printed. It is hoped to give others as opportunity offers. -- ED.

A Reading on 1 Corinthians 2.

Well now, we get the apostle's use of all this, and it is remarkable how he sets man aside altogether, and then takes this ground, that when he came to this wise people, he knew nothing but the cross, and not only that, but that, looked at as a man, he was in weakness himself, and in fear, and in much trembling. He has only this foolishness of the cross, and his speech and preaching not with man's wisdom, that their faith might stand in the power of God. (vv. 4, 5.) In those first five verses you get Paul coming to sinners; his way to these wiseacres. There was neither excellency of speech nor wisdom to man's eyes. It is not strictly the cross of Christ, but Jesus Christ, the positive fact of preaching Christ; and then he takes Christ, as men would think, in the lowest and most degraded way -- "Christ, and Him crucified." The preaching of the cross is not exactly the same thing; but the point is, he was not reasoning philosophy with them, but was preaching Christ; and then if you take up Christ, it is in this way -- as a crucified man. It is difficult for

us, used as we are to look upon the cross as redemption, to feel what the effect was on a parcel of philosophers, what it was to go and say, "There was a man gibbeted in Belfast; trust him." To man it was the grossest folly that could possibly be. And see, it is Jesus Christ, His person here, Him crucified.

He adds that "which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Because He was that, you get His person, and not merely the fact of the cross. And it is a very strong thing to put before men; it is what brought folly on their wisdom, and on the grandeur of this world. The moment man was a sinner it is another thing altogether, and the infinite love of God coming in and speaking to man as man. What comes of all grandeur, and of all wisdom, and of all else? The whole of man in flesh is swept away by it. All that flesh could glory in is there totally put to an end and to death. There is no kind of fleshly glory in the cross whatever. It was God's wisdom to do this; no dignity, no heroism, but shame, reproach, ignominy, and death. It is all of man brought down to where nothing could be found; no, not a stone to put his foot on to keep it out of the water. None but slaves were put on that cross, and that is what God takes up to 'ring the world to nothing -- first to nothing in judgment, and to nothing too where we know He is in glory. Then it brings forth God, man put out and God in, and the moment I get that side I get the "Lord of glory."

Divine righteousness, divine wisdom. "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery." First he brings the cross to man in every shape and way, and when he has done that he says, "I have judged you in the cross, and am coming to tell you what God is in doing so."

Q. What is the "perfect" there?

A. When they are brought by the cross into this new condition with God, it really is in resurrection; if you come to examine it, they are grown men in that condition.

Q. Is it a moral state?

A. What he is looking at here is a person who had the flesh put down with death written on all -- all brought into God's presence, and all the world put an end to; then a new state of things altogether, the beginning of the new creation, what the Holy Ghost reveals, and the Lord of glory. It is that the person is brought into the state that the cross brings into. You do not begin expounding blessedness and glory to a person who wants his conscience reached; but the contrast here is, the world and the man who has got out of the flesh into God's place of blessing in the new creation.

Q. Is the word in contrast with nepios (babe)?

A. Well, it is the full-grown man. Judaism was flesh in that sense of the word; "As unto babes in Christ" is another thing. (3:1.) You get three things -- carnal men, natural, and spiritual men. You may get a person you cannot deal with, though having the Holy Ghost, because his practical state is "carnal" yet not "natural."

Q. Is a Jew saved always "carnal"?

A. It is not a question of the Jew here at all. In Galatians he says, "The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all." (Gal. 4:1.) But here he is talking of Christians in so low a standing that he could not talk with them of certain things.

Q. Could "carnal" people be said to be "perfect"?

A. As to knowledge they were, but in practical state he could not deal with them as such. I believe there are real Christians who are not teleioi (perfect). If one did not know the forgiveness of his sins, he has not got into the consciousness of his new standing, and is not teleios.

Q. Here where he says, "Among them that are perfect," he is speaking of their standing, is he not?

A. Yes, because he is taking up the question of those who had got God's wisdom instead of man's. When he came to sinners he preached Christ crucified, and when he had got people in a Christian state he speaks of all the fruits in glory. He is speaking of those who have got into the Christian standing; but when he says, "Ye are carnal," that is the particular state of certain Christians who ought to be up to the measure of their standing, but are not.

Q. What is "the wisdom of God in a mystery?"

A. All that is unveiled of His counsels in Christ.

Q. Is it an allusion to Christ?

A. Everything that God has done in Christ. If they had seen all the glory of God in Christ, they would not have hanged Him on the cross. They went and crucified the Lord of glory, but they would not have done it had they known. You get it contrasted in verses 9 and 10 with the Jewish state of things -- "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." There you get the Jew, the prophet declaring that it had not entered into man's heart, but that God hath revealed these things unto us; that is, I get in the Old Testament not a nepios, but that these things were not revealed, and now they are. He is speaking of the whole Christian condition, and not of the state of the individual; and he takes up the Christian therefore in his full character, and not in his gradual progress, or in his faulty want of development either.

Verses 9 and 10 are striking; they are often quoted as of present application, but the apostle is quoting them to show what is not the Christian state; for to us God hath revealed these things by His Spirit.

Q. Is the last clause of verse 10 the Spirit in us?

A. Yes, you get three distinct steps here: the Spirit of God revealing, whether to Paul or others; then the Spirit of God communicating what was revealed; and then receiving by the Spirit. The Holy Ghost in us searches all things; there is nothing hid. In a man, what man knoweth the things passing in his mind? only the spirit of the man knows. Now we have got the Spirit of God, and He knows the things of God, and therefore we know them. And then Paul goes on to the unfolding of this. It was revelation to Paul, and communication by Paul in the words of the Spirit, and the reception spiritually by spiritual men.

Q. Would you add a fourth, the mind capable of receiving them?

A. That is true, but it is not exactly the fourth thing. It is not I who know what a man thinks, but the mind of Christ we have here.

Q. Would it not be common to all Christians to have the mind of Christ?

A. It should be. Here is what I have somewhere lately called the intelligent and the intelligible. The intelligent is capacity without a thought; but add the intelligible, and you have the thought as well as the mind.

Q. Does nous (mind, v. 16) take in both?

A. Yes, I think it does here.

Q. In verse 15, "Yet he himself is judged of no man," is that a natural man?

A. It is man as man in contrast with the Holy Ghost.

Q. What is the "comparing" in verse 13?

A. I don't think "comparing" is right at all; it is communicating "spiritual" by "spiritual." He gets the Holy Ghost's words, and communicates the Holy Ghost's words. And that is whether it be writing or preaching.

Q. Would it not be even to the present day that our preaching or teaching should communicate what we have to say in the words of the Holy Ghost?

A. If we can. There may be things I am quite sure of which I may put in a way that is not the Holy Ghost's way.

Q. What authority have you for "comparing" Paul's preaching?

A. "Comparing" when Paul was preaching was not comparing at all. "We speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

Q. With preachers now, then, there ought to be carefulness that the words used should compare with the words of the Holy Ghost?

A. Well, I speak as from God, or else I ought to hold my tongue. "If any man speak; as oracles of God." (1 Peter 4:11.) That does not mean according to Scripture, but as from God. Of course, it will be according to Scripture, but that is not the thing here.

Q. Would not that strike at all the intellectual preaching of the day?

A. It strikes at everything that is of man. And so you have revelation first, then the words were adequate, and then the third thing, that through the Spirit I receive it. It is the rhema as well as the logos, both.

I know they talk about inspiration, and of Shakespeare being inspired, and so on; it is all very well, but did such men get a revelation, a positive new thing, from God? The first thing is revelation; what you call inspiration is not so clear. It is possible I may get a revelation from God, and never say a word about it. Paul got a revelation, and told us nothing of it. Inspiration is an ambiguous word altogether, and you may deceive by it; but when it comes to a positive revelation, men know they have no place at all in that. Then the Holy Ghost forms the communication too. It is like a fountain; the water is all the same; it comes out as it went in. You may deceive people by inspiration, but no one talks about revelation in Shakespeare. It is a most important chapter. You see we have the Spirit, that we may know the things that are freely given to us, and we have to learn them as revealed, and the revelation is prior to the communication. In the last verse we have the same contrast with the Old Testament. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that

he may instruct Him?" And in answer to the challenge of the prophet, "But we have the mind of Christ."

Q. You spoke of the intelligent and intelligible, which is this?

A. If I have got Christ's mind, I have the thoughts that are in it, and all that is included. We have not got the divine mind abstractedly, but we have by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; and then comes all this revelation of the mystery. I must bring the cross to a poor sinner, whoever he is. Say you are a clever person; can you answer in the day of judgment? No; the cross is the answer of divine wisdom. Suppose he has made all the telegraphs in the country, when he is dead what becomes of them to him? Well, now, God will give you, not cleverness in your mind, but the Holy Ghost, and the truth of God, and the mind of Christ. John says, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." (1 John 2:20.) And there is no part of God's counsels that is not now brought out into light. As to this the intelligent and the intelligible go together; with us creatures you can't get the capacity without the thoughts.

Q. Is that before a man knows his sins are forgiven?

A. Well, he could not receive that without it being imparted to him through the Word.

Q. In verse 10. If a man has the Spirit of God, how can the Spirit of God in him search the mind of God? Does not the Spirit know it?

A. Ah! but not working in us. They searched "what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify." (1 Peter 1:11.) Having the Spirit they began searching out. It is the Spirit in us who searches.

Q. Is it the renewed intelligence that does that?

A. I don't know what you mean by the renewed intelligence.

Q. Well, is it the Spirit of God?

A. Yes, of course. People may spend their time or words to little purpose; but it simply is, there is a power of the Holy Ghost to give all the counsels of God. That's all. You find the Spirit of God is identified with the person He is in elsewhere. (Rom. 8.) He maketh intercession for the saints according to God. I have got the Word, the mind of the Spirit in my heart, and the mind of the Spirit according to God,

Q. How can I say the Holy Ghost according to God, when He is God?

A. phronema is what the desires are on. Their mind is set on them, and therefore you get, "The mind of the flesh is death." That is what the flesh is after.

Q. Is there any difference between "spiritual" here and Gal. 6:1?

A. Oh, no; only that it is more practical!

A Reading on 1 Corinthians.

The next chapter (4) is a remarkably beautiful working of the apostle's heart, but with no particular subject in it. "Ye are full, ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us," and so on, all of exceeding interest. (Read vv. 8-13.)

Q. What is, "I know nothing by myself"?

A. I know nothing against myself, as an accusation. It is an old English form, which was familiar enough two hundred years ago. You will find it in Bishop Hall's writings, though quite obsolete now.

Q. Then what is, "Yet am I not hereby justified"?

A. That does not clear me, for the Lord judges me. Then, from verse 14, though he bears everything, yet he has power and warns them. Some said he was not coming, but he was, and he would know the value of their speech. He does assert his power, though very gently, and indeed was afterwards afraid he had said too much.

Q. What is the "kingdom of God"? (v. 20.)

A. He preached "the kingdom of God." "You all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God." He was the minister of the gospel, the minister of the kingdom of God, the minister of the new covenant, and the minister of the Church.

Q. Why does he say, "We are made a spectacle"?

A. It is an allusion, I suppose, to the grand day
of the games.

Q. Why "unto the world, and to angels, and to men"?

A. Oh, it is a division of the thought, the developing of it!

Q. What is the meaning of "making to differ"? (v. 7.)

A. Suppose you have more gift than I have, where did it come from? It all came from God. One was saying, "I of Paul;" another, "I of Apollos." And he says to such, "It is all yours. And if one is greater than another, who made him to differ?" Just as John says, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." (John 3:27.)

Q. What are "My ways which be in Christ"? (v. 17.)

A. The ways in which he conducted himself among the saints. "As I teach everywhere in every church."

Q. What is, "Then shall every man have praise of God"?

A. It does not mean that every man shall have praise, but that praise would be of God. They were praising this and that; and Paul says, "Go on with God, and you will have praise of God."

Q. Was verse 10 written in irony?

A. Well, in a sense it was. (Read vv. 8-10.) When God makes manifest the counsels of the heart, people will get praise that will be worth something, but now it is all a mere nothing.

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1 Corinthians 9.

In verse 18 of this chapter you get the word "abuse" again. It would not have been abusing his power in the gospel, but he did not use that power as something to which he had title of possession; he only thought about it as a thing which he could use for the gospel. There is really no thought of abusing in it. It would not be abusing to take a salary, or whatever you call it; that is a bad word.

Q. What word would you use instead of "abuse"?

A. It is difficult to give one word; no single English word suits. In the other passage, "Using this world as not abusing it," you hear people quote that who are up to their neck in it, and it is perhaps more important to notice it there than here -- using this world as not having it in possession, simply handling it therefore, and that not as property. The general subject is ministry. False teachers had gone to Corinth Judaizing and seeking their own, and by way of getting a great credit took nothing. Paul finding it out would not take anything either, not that he had not the title -- he was an apostle, and the Lord had so ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel -- but he would not use the power.

Q. How far are we responsible to maintain those who are labouring within?

A. Well, these are more evangelists.

Q. Yes; but others?

A. All are just as responsible to love, to serve the Lord in this way as in any other. But this living of the gospel is not having a kind of missionary in India as G-- and R-- tried, and many of you know. I do not admit the assembly as the assembly to have anything to do as such with missions.

Q. You said "salary" just now?

A. Well, I do not like the word; but whatever it was, Paul would not take it, and the assembly as an assembly has nothing to do with it. Community and fellowship in the act is all very nice, yet if they do it together it is not as an assembly, though in fellowship. If I go to preach and teach, it is as sent of the Lord, though of course it is always happy to do so in fellowship.

Q. Is there anything of that in the Philippians sending to Paul?

A. Yes; but it was done to the Lord, and it was their privilege to do it in that way.

Q. You do not alter anything existing by what you say?

A. Not at all; no.

Q. But would not an assembly be to blame if they knew an evangelist brother labouring, but did not assist him?

A. Well, yes; they would be losing one of their privileges. The Philippians were very forward to do it, and so it is now.

Q. Perhaps it might be to help some other gift, and in another place?

A. Just so. I think it is a most happy thing to find.

Q. Not only blessing on the one side, but on the other?

A. Yes, quite so. Locality makes no difference. An evangelist is servant of Christ, not of an assembly. R--'s idea was merely to keep up communication with him, and so far it was all right. In Philippians, "Now at the last your care of me" (chap. 4:10), is a beautiful expression of the delicacy of the feeling of the apostle. They had left him a long while, and he says so, and then adds, "But ye lacked opportunity."

Q. If things were right in an assembly, all this would be done happily and nicely?

A. Oh, yes! I remember at N-- a brother went down and gave them a good scolding for their neglect, and they mended. In many places there are collections at times for brothers at work at home and abroad, and all very right too. As to times, just what is wisest and best. Anyone in whom there is confidence may be a sort of medium for making communications. In France they are very generous in this way, and in Switzerland they gathered some £-- I think one year for the purpose -- and more than £-- in

England. That is besides what may be done in an individual and private way. Nobody is hindered from sending to any particular person, of course.

A Reading on 1 Corinthians 9.

Q. Is it one of the apostle's qualifications to have seen the Lord?

A. He could not be a witness otherwise.

Q. What is the force of "free"?

A. Not under the yoke to anybody in his service; only the Lord of course.

Q. Why "forbear working"?

A. He was free in that sense; it is what he calls willingly and unwillingly further on. "I did it not for my own will;" but still he was free from man -- it was not Peter that sent him. That was what they charged against him; he had not seen the apostles; did not come from Jerusalem, and so on.

Q. What is "willingly"?

A. Our word does not quite convey the thought; it means of his own will.

Q. Then "to lead about a sister, a wife"?

A. That is against "forbidding to marry;" it is the Gnostics and their error.

Q. Is Barnabas working in fellowship with Paul here? is it not after he left him at Antioch?

A. They had gone together in fellowship, and they had separated, and Barnabas had gone on to Cyprus. The nineteenth verse gives you what "free" is, "though I be free from all, yet have I made myself servant unto all."

Q. Where do you gather that there were false teachers who had gone out, and had not taken anything? A. In 2 Cor. 11:12 he says, no one shall stop him of his boasting, and he will do as he had done, that he might cut off occasion from others that "wherein they glory, they may be found even as we." In 1 Cor. 9:20, 21, he sought to win Jews, not to Judaize. Judaizing was very common. In itself Judaism was God's dealing with human nature to see if good could be got out of flesh. God dealt with Adam, and then with the

Jew (promises came in between); but Judaism was God taking up man on his responsibility, and giving him a rule or law, and with it all appliances to help -- a priesthood and temple -- every kind of help to man as man, to see if any good could be got from him. It was the orderly assaying and proving whether man could be on terms with God. He could not please God, but yet it is the constant tendency of human nature to go back and try again; for it does not bow and own there is no good in it, and so it is always talking about keeping the law and so on. Really man's responsibility is not in question at all. There is such a thing; but Christ came "to seek and to save that which was lost." "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." (Romans 7:18.) Now that is what has been brought into the light and condemned, and I have therefore now a right to say I am dead. "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." (Gal. 2:19.) I am dead and finished as a child of Adam. Because this is not apprehended there are always some remains of Judaism. "When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." (Romans 7:5.) And the result is we discover we are lost. Take the whole system of setting up law in any form, and the moving of men's hearts by it, it all owns man still alive in the flesh. You get it gross in a self-righteous person, and in a mixed shape in those who try to put law and grace together; but in each and all it is just human nature thinking it can be something. There is something terrible in putting a man under law after grace has come in; it is setting him under responsibility after flesh has been proved unable to meet it.

Q. How did Paul put himself under law?

A. Ah, there is a line left out, which is, "Not being myself under law," and which comes in in verse 20, after the second word "law." It is recognised as in the text by all who have examined it. He put subjection to Christ in the place of being hypo nomon (under law); he is ennomos Christo. All that he means by, "To them that are under the law, as under law" (v. 20), is, he would not eat pork if sitting with a Jew.

Q. Is that how Timothy was circumcised?

A. It is the same in principle. He had no right to be circumcised; it was an arbitrary act, for his father was a Greek; that is, unless he wished himself to be a Jew. Paul yielded to the Jewish Christians in that case, and did it to please them; but you notice the moment he got into a scrape about it not one of those he sought to please showed his face to help him. In dealing with Jews, he adapted himself to them; but the moment the Jews made the law necessary he withstood them. He would not yield about Titus, because there they were making it necessary. But in Paul's own case here there was no necessity; it was his own adapting himself to them. Just what we all ought to do. His action at Jerusalem was a further case. The Spirit had told him not to go up, and he could not do anything right there, though nothing wrong either. It was merely to please himself, and under other people's advice, doing this and that after he had left all such things entirely.

Q. Does not verse 14 look like compulsion on those who preach?

A. No; if the preacher gives it up for the Lord's sake, of course he may.

Q. How could he "live of the gospel"?

A. By being maintained and fed; getting food, raiment, and what he wanted. He may, if he have energy, work like Paul all night, and so support his house, and to prevent selfish people, like at Corinth, from saying, "He is doing it for his pay." Not many have energy enough to do the two things, and do them well. If you have a man preaching, supply him while he preaches. "He that plougheth should plough in hope" of

getting the fruit of his ploughing.

Q. What do you think is the meaning of the passage 2 Timothy 2:6: "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits"?

A. He tells Timothy he must work, or else he will not get his pay. I do not mean pay in a bad sense.

Q. Some have thought souls were the fruits?

A. I have no objection. There is a question of translation, whether it is "first labouring," or "first partaking." It is a mere comparison like the other. "If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." (2 Timothy 2:5.) Only he must first labour to be a partaker. The verses before show that he is to endure hardness as a good soldier, and he is not to entangle himself with the affairs of this life. You get something of the same kind in 1 Cor. 9:24: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?"

Q. Better for him to die, he says, than that any man should make his glorying void?

A. Well, that is about the same thing. Even what Christ has sent me, I do not take it for His sake. I glory in this, that I have given up everything I had a title to for the gospel's sake. It is a very strong expression. Better for me to die, than for me to do anything that would hinder the gospel. He was ashamed of the Corinthians:

Q. Is there any change in translating (v. 5) "sister" as "wife"?

A. It is, "Why should I not have a sister as a wife?" It would not do for him to have an unconverted person. He was at liberty to marry, though an apostle. Cephas had a wife, we know; for Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever. That is one of the things that puzzle Roman Catholics. In A.D. 324 it began that they were not allowed to have wives -- that is, the priests -- so that it came in early.

Q. When would you say the primitive Church ceased?

A. There is no limit for the early primitive Church but the death of the apostles. "I know that after my decease," Peter says, pointing to a change. But what we get in principle for ourselves is, "That which is from the beginning." If it is not from the beginning, it has no claim of authority over me at all. "If ye hold fast that which is from the beginning, ye shall abide in the Father and in the Son." They had wanted at the council at Nice to establish the celibacy of the clergy, but one old bishop got up and told them they would only be putting a snare to their feet. That was about nine years before. Some tried at the first so-called general council to lay it down as a rule, but they were hindered, though the spirit of asceticism had come in. A century afterwards you find the strongest denouncement of these notions. Chrysostom has two treatises against them.

Q. How far is Alford's translation to be depended upon?

A. Not at all. It may be useful to a person who can judge for himself. He was a rash man, who got a little soberer afterwards and very useful, with an active mind in raising questions, but I never trusted his judgment. His was not a sober judgment, and not therefore one to be trusted. What I dread in these new translations is, that there is a kind of conservatism of an old doctrine governing them; as, for instance, Alford retaining "sin is the transgression of the law." You find him keeping to the old thing, because it is

there. They none of them know Scripture, or have got truth from Scripture, but they bring their thoughts to Scripture.

Q. Are there any modern scholars who change that text?

A. Oh, yes! Besides, it is clear enough in other passages, as Romans 2:12, "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." That is in contrast with those that have sinned under law. It is clear contrast there, and that in the English translation itself. Now they had a doctrine which was that the transgression of the law was sin. And so in John they put it, "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4); but where their doctrine was not in question they translated it as lawless. In John it is positively contrary to Scripture; for when it says, "As many as have sinned without law," how can that be if sin is the transgression of the law? And again, How then could sin, by the commandment, become exceeding sinful? And again, "For until the law sin was in the world." (Rom. 5: 13.) How could that be if sin was but the transgression of the law?

Q. What is "sin is not imputed when there is no law"?

A. It is not the word elsewhere rendered "impute," but it means the particular sin is not put to account. You are a sinner and lawless when you have no law; but I cannot then say to you such and such a thing is forbidden. As, if my child runs into the street instead of doing its lessons, I cannot say in a particular sense, "You have been disobedient;" but if I have told him not to go out into the street, then it is not a general question of his idleness, but I say, "I am going to punish you for that particular thing." In that passage, Rom. 5:13, what the apostle is reasoning on is, that lie has death as a proof that sin was there before there was a law. You cannot confine grace to the Jews, for then you make it narrower than sin, for death and sin were there, and all had sinned; and if you go on and shut up grace to those under law, and don't let in the Gentiles, you are making sin a more powerful thing than the grace of God. Death was reigning there before ever Moses's law came in; and that is the meaning of the expression, "Them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression" (Rom. 5:14), a quotation from Hosea 6:7, "But they like men" -- Adam -- "have transgressed the covenant." These Gentiles never did that. The Jews did; they transgressed it; and Adam too transgressed the commandment he had. Yet these Gentiles were under sin and death, though they had no law at all. You must now take up Christ as answering to Adam in Headship, though first he adds more, that the law entered that the offence might abound; "but where sin" -- not offence -- "abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. 5:20.)

Q. What is the difference between "impute" in chapter 4 and chapter 5?

A. In chapter 4 it is reckoning a man to be something; in chapter 5 it is putting so much to his account. It occurs again in Philemon, "Put that on mine account." In reading the verse in 1 John 3, "Sin is lawlessness," it would not have the same effect if you reverse the words while they stand as in our version; but as in the Greek with the two articles it is a reciprocal proposition. A blow is sin; but you could not say sin is a blow. But lawlessness is sin, and sin is lawlessness, and he who does sin also does lawlessness. It is kai -- "for" -- that is used to connect the sentence, not hoti or gar, and I think that brings it back an abstract proposition. In Romans 5 Adam had a law and Moses had a law, and sin was in between and death too. I think you see at once that law is in contemplation. Not so lawlessness. It is parabasis nomon Anomia is an abstract word.

Q. What is sin?

A. Sin I believe to be man having a will of his own. It so far takes in law that the moment you have got a creature of God there is some rule or will of God that that creature ought to obey; but if he does not he is lawless. Hamartia is to err, to miss anything; as not to hit when shooting at a mark, to reel off when you ought to keep on -- to leave a straight right path is the etymological meaning of hamartia. But it is a very different thing to bring in the thought of law. If I say "them that have sinned without law," it makes me think of a law, though they have had none. You cannot, in the abstract sense, think of a creature that has to say to God, without thinking of God's authority expressed somehow, and that would be a law to him; and that was true in the garden of Eden. But when a fruit was particularly forbidden, it was a legal covenant. "If you eat that you shall die" -- a positive rule. Well, man eats it, and gets a conscience, and so on. Afterwards Moses's law was a perfect rule for man in that state -- for a child of Adam that had got away from God. There are no means in it of bringing him back to God, and therefore it says, "The carnal mind . . . is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom, 8:7.) It has got a will of its own. That state you get brought out in the chapter we were reading, where you get Paul "ennomos Christo;" i.e., under law to Christ, and yet not being "hypo nomon;" i.e. under law. "Ennomos Christo is the abstract idea of being subject to the rule of Christ, and so on. Yet he states at the same time that he is not under law; he will not hear of that in any way. But he adds, not without law to God, nor lawless therefore as regards God; and yet he is not -- hypo nomon -- under law, while he is -- ennomos Christo -- rightly subject to Christ. The mischief of maintaining law is, that it sets up flesh, treats man as alive. Now the doctrine of Christianity is, that man is not alive. "The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth." (Rom. 7:1.) Well, if I am alive, I am a responsible man in the flesh, and lost and condemned. But now we are delivered from the law, having died in that in which we were held, and that is where there is no allowance of sin, and he brings in a nature to which the power of Christ is added. He does not set about to leave the man alive, and then bring the law to a man that will not bow to it; He did that once of old. But now in Christ I get a new life with power in it, and in that respect the Christian scheme is as plain as possible. It is not the folly of bringing a law to a nature that cannot be subject to it, but the bringing in a new nature that delights to do the will of God.

Q. What is Rom. 8:10 -- "The body is dead because of sin"?

A. If my body is alive, in the scriptural sense of evil, it is flesh; of course, this body is a mere instrument. The Jesuits said a body ought to be a mere carcase and obey.

Q. What is "on account of sin"?

A. It is the practice. The only source of life to the Christian that he owns is the Spirit. I hold my body dead, because if it is alive it will be a fountain of sin.

Q. And people sometimes ask, What is flesh?

A. Sin in the flesh is clear in Scripture. You never get flesh alone, unless merely as the body. "The life I live in the flesh."

Q. What is the difference between the "body of sin" (Rom. 6:6) and the "body of his flesh"? (Col. 1:22.)

A. The body of sin is taking it as a whole; it is merely, as I might say, the "body of leaven," the whole of it. In Colossians it is "body of the flesh" (1:22), and in Romans it is "body of sin" (6:6). It is the idea of the whole thing going as one lump. I do not doubt there is an allusion to the body, but the thought is the whole thing. This body is looked at as the seat of sin, I have no doubt.

Q. What is "condemned sin in the flesh"? (Rom. 8:3.)

A. You have the two parts of the thing we get from being dead with Christ -- dead and "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (6:11.) Then follows,

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (8:2.) In the Spirit of life I get power. Then comes the other side, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (v. 3.) The law could not do that. It might curse, but it could get nothing good out of me. Where I was Christ came there to die, and there and then God condemned sin in the flesh. Christ was made sin for me, and that which was tormenting my mind God has condemned altogether, and there is an end of it for faith.

Q. Is that like "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"? (Hebrews 9:26.)

A. Yes; only it goes further. First, as to sins, the Lord bore them and put them away. Then I find there is a tree of evil in me, and what of that? It is all condemned upon the cross where Christ died, and I am consequently to reckon myself dead. I have done with it -- sin in the flesh -- that is, faith has. I know it is more difficult for us to get hold of that than to get hold of the forgiveness of sins, because it contradicts our experience. If a man comes and tells me my debts are all paid, I believe that; but if he says, "You are dead to sin," "How do you mean that?" I say, "for I was in a passion this morning," and in that way experience contradicts it. But it did die in Christ's death. It is all dead and gone, because I am in Christ, and Christ is my life; and when the flesh comes and shows its face to me, I say, "You have had your day, and have been ended." I have a right to say that, knowing that Christ has died and God condemned sin in the flesh there. I have a perfect title to do so, and, also, I have Christ as my power.

Well, now we come to one of those verses some are afraid of looking in the face -- "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." "Castaway" is the trouble. People have tried to make out that a castaway is not a castaway. I see no difficulty in it at all. He supposes a case, that one is preaching to others and yet perishes himself.

Q. The difficulty with people is that Paul is speaking in the first person.

A. Paul was perfectly well assured as to himself, but he says if he had been merely preaching he would have been falsely assured; but if not merely beating the air, he was rightly assured.

Q. What was it he wanted to "obtain"?

A. It is the general idea of the incorruptible crown of glory. He has got salvation in his mind -- "That I might by all means save some," and so on. He is not thinking only of the reward of service, but he takes it all in the most general way. Scripture is plain enough -- "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." (1 Cor. 3:8.) "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." (Luke 18:29, 30.) There is what characterizes the faith of the Christian and makes eternal life the reward. There is the keeping of the body down, that is the contrary to preaching. I am not merely a preacher, but a liver, "lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." You must run lawfully as a Christian, not merely preach, or you may have all the sacraments, as you call them, and yet fall in the wilderness. There must be reality, whatever else -- that.

Q. What is he "partaker" of in verse 23?

A. It is in the joy of seeing souls saved and in being saved himself.

Q. Many weaken the force of the word "castaway."

A. Yes, but, it is done right in the teeth of the passage. It has no reference to the quality of the preaching, for he says, "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." "I myself" is not my service, not my preaching.

Q. How far does "castaway" go?

A. All the way, right away. "Punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." (2 Thess. 1:9.) What Paul means is, he is not only a believer, but is living like a believer, or else "I" might be cast away as well as other people. I have not the most distant doubt that God will keep His people; they shall never perish.

Q. The difficulty people have is that Paul might perish?

A. Well, suppose I say, "If such a person stayed in such a room, he will never have consumption at all;" so if Paul himself had been preaching only, not living, he would have been a castaway; but he was not, and he was stating how he was living that he might not be a castaway.

Q. Is the thought that of continuous effort?

A. The point is that you must strive lawfully and according to the rules. Now the rule of Christ is, you must live as well as talk, or else be afraid of the consequences: "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." (Romans 8: 13.)

Q. In Revelation 22:14 it says, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life"?

A. Yes, I have no doubt that should be, "Blessed are they that wash their robes," and so on. We ought to be clear on this. I believe the book of life is final, and all the devils cannot blot a name out of it.

Q. Then what is the "blotting out"?

A. It is like a registry of voters; if it is proved that a certain name has no right there, it is blotted out.

Q. Is that so of the five foolish virgins?

A. Every professor's name is in the book of life; but if God wrote it, it will never be blotted out.

Q. Who has written his name in the book of life, if he is a mere professor?

A. He has written it himself.

Q. Is not the name written there the privilege conferred on a man, rather than the profession he makes?

A. I get his name written in the book of life, and

if he has no right to be there -- unless God has written his name there -- it will be blotted out.

Q. Is the "book of life" in Revelation 20:12 the same as Revelation 3:5?

A. Though it is a question of works in Revelation 3; no overcomer there who was not written in the book of life.

Q. Does not Revelation 22:19 show that God does take away from the book of life?

A. It is tree of life, not book of life, in that passage. He takes away no name that He has written.

Q. In Revelation 13:8 it should be "written from the foundation of the world," should it not, not the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"?

A. I have no doubt it should, and such a name will not be blotted out. I suppose the "book of life" in chapter 20 is after the names are blotted out; for verse 15, is, "And if any man was not found written in the book of life he was cast into the lake of fire." Although they are there judged for their works, their names were not there. Blotting out is, a man has got there, and had no right to be there.

Q. But is every baptized infant written there?

A. You will not get Scripture to put itself into your shape.

Q. Have we all got our names written in the book of life -- in the registry in heaven?

A. I did not say anything about registry in heaven. God was not thinking of infants in particular. If they are written in heaven they will not be blotted out, but there they will be.

Q. What grounds are there for supposing professors' names are in the book of life?

A. Because it talks about blotting out. Moses has the same thought; he says, "Blot me out." (Exodus 32:32.) In Rev. 20 not one of those who were there had his name in the book of life. "Life" and "living" in Scripture, when God uses it, is always the thought of, not merely "O that Ishmael might [not die, but] live before Thee." (Gen. 17:18.) It is divine favour also. This is one of those cases in which I do not see that those who make difficulties have gained anything in the least. I do not think that the idea of blotting out is all; there is the reality, though it would stop a mere caviller to say, None are blotted out. God puts absolute principles which lead to certain consequences; and if the cap fits, let a man wear it. People try to torture passages to make them consistent with doctrines, instead of taking the doctrine from the passages. Take "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." (Romans 8:13.) I am not going to weaken that. Again, "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." (Romans 2:7-9.) "Then," says one, "a man is saved by his works; eternal life is dependent on patient continuance," etc. It is practical Christianity brought in at once.

Q. Would "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12) be temporal?

A. No, not a bit. I resist altogether the attempts to enfeeble that pressure on the conscience which I see in Scripture. "Work out your own salvation" is in contrast with Paul's working, as he might say, "I was labouring for your salvation when I was with you, and now you must do it for yourselves, because I am here in prison; but you have not lost God by losing me. God is working in you both to will and to do." That is what I mean, otherwise you torture the Scripture.

Q. What is "salvation" here?

A. Always in Philippians salvation is looked at as with glory at the end. It was not the mere salvation of Paul's body in chapter 1:19. We always have that truth in that epistle founded on redemption; the cross has laid hold of me for the glory, but I have not yet laid hold of it, and what I ought to apprehend is that for which I have been apprehended. And God's way was when He laid hold of Paul to put him through the wilderness, and make him work out his salvation to the end. When I say God is keeping His people, I ask too, Why has He got to keep them? Because they want keeping, or they would fall. You have the two things in John 10: "They shall never perish" inwardly, nor be "plucked out of my hand." But this is not to weaken the plain positive passages which are given as warning, and meant to be as warning. You get the "ifs" in Hebrews and in Colossians 1: "If ye continue," and so on. Now suppose I believe that God is keeping His saints, and still I say to you, "If you continue to the end you will be saved." I get a Methodist who thinks and will say the same, but he thinks such an one might be lost after all, while I am perfectly certain that he will never perish, that is if he really has life at all.

Q. Which would be calculated to give a young Christian the greatest amount of comfort, to read him this in Colossians or part of John 10?

A. I must give him meat in due season. This might help him on or might puff him up. That is a question of spiritual wisdom in dealing with souls. All that I feel anxious about is the maintenance of the positive dealing of Scripture with conscience. Take that passage in Romans we referred to, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance," etc. (2:6, 7.) Well, a man says, "There may be good people; and if they work good they will get glory and honour and peace." But I say to him, "You are all wrong entirely -- 'there is none good but God.'" There is plenty of Scripture to meet such a case; but I do not go to weaken this sentence in Romans in order to do it. It is the necessity of God's nature that there must be a certain life and character in a man for him to be with God. I get a scripture that God has given that nature, and that He will keep it to the end; but the latter does not enfeeble the fact that the nature is such as it is. You must have that life, and walk in that life, or you will not be in heaven. So I get broad dealing with conscience; and that is what I do not want to weaken. I get it plain enough, unmitigated and unenfeebled. Consciences want it, they are slippery enough. If I go and use it to weaken a person's faith in God's fidelity I use it wrongly; but I want to give it all its force as it stands, but giving meat in due season. Suppose I found a person slipping into sin, and I say to him, "Well, never mind, God is faithful;" though that is abstractly true, that is not what I should use to him then, but just the opposite. Yet, if God did not keep me, I know I should be off somewhere soon.

Q. A man may have life and be for many years a backslider?

A. I suppose so; but these Scriptures do not justify that.

Q. When Paul says, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18), would that have to do with it?

A. Now I do not believe such persons have got that at all; that is, experimental and conscious knowledge.

Q. Would not verse 12 of the next chapter apply, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"? Would that be eternal life lost?

A. Well, both standing and falling are put in opposition. The next verse shows God is faithful.

A Reading on 1 Corinthians 10.

Q. Would not verse 12 of chapter 10 apply? "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Would that be eternal life lost?

A. Well, both standing and falling are put in opposition. The next verse shows "God is faithful." This chapter is a continuation of the same subject. Israel "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." They were, as you may say, in the Christian profession and standing in this world.

Q. Why does he say, "Our fathers"?

A. Fathers: It was so; fathers of us -- Jews.

Q. Would chapter 10 show that a person might persist in the outward observances of Christianity and yet be lost?

A. Of course; that is just what he is proving. But there may be such a thing as God permitting the shield of faith to be down as a chastisement perhaps, but that would be the only case I can recognize of loss of assurance where it has been really known; that is, I mean where a man is given up to it and to the fiery darts as a kind of chastisement.

Q. What is "He which stablisheth us with you"? (2 Cor. 1:21.)

A. It is general; it is the whole thing.

Q. What is Peter's -- "Forgotten that he was purged from his old sins"? (2 Peter 1:9.)

A. I have got clean and gone back to the mire.

Q. I have known a person talking of his assurance when away from fellowship?

A. I remember one who was away fourteen years, and a high Calvinist spoke to him as a child of God, and that was the means of bringing him in again. He had got puffed up; was a kind of prophet, Irvingite, and so on, and the devil had blown him over. Very solemn indeed! But I do not want a soul to lose the assurance; it may be the power for bringing him back. I do not say of a child who is naughty that he is not a child, neither do I wish him to think he is not.

Q. You spoke of God giving a man up to the fiery darts?

A. Well, God may let Peter fall, though Peter ought not to fall. If you find a person in despair, you may feel it is the divine nature there.

Q. Would it be meat in due season to say to such a one, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die"? (Romans 8:13.)

A. Well, you must judge. I might say it and awaken conscience by it.

Q. But you could not settle beforehand how you would deal with any case?

A. No, of course not. God reconciles absolutely His holiness, and His faithfulness, and all else. We may be taking them apart, but He never does.

Q. Why does the apostle change from "ye" to "us" in verses 7, 8, 9, 10?

A. Only that he had them specially in mind, I suppose. He was thinking of the heathen, and when he thinks of saints he takes them all in together. You get here certain great truths typically presented -- the keeping of Israel as a whole on to the end, as well as the fall of these individuals. If you go to Numbers 15, you get the security of God's purpose most beautifully set out. Numbers 14, He says their carcasses shall fall in the wilderness; He pronounces judgment on the whole nation, save two persons. The entire people refuse to go up and take possession of the land; and the Lord says, "Doubtless ye shall not come into the land" (chap. 14:30) -- save Caleb and Joshua. Then chap. 15: "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land" do so-and-so, and goes on with His own intentions just as quietly as if nothing of chap. 14 had happened.

Q. What is the meaning of being "baptized unto Moses"?

A. It is what we call being associated with him in these ordinances. "Baptized with the baptism of John" was objectively the thing to which they were brought, so it was baptized unto instead of into.

Q. Was not Mount Hor in the land?

A. It was in the west side of what they call Akaba, and was outside the land as much as all the rest of the wilderness. Eis refers to the object you are going to, unless hindered. I might say I am going to (eis) Rome, but robbers might come in and stop me. But eis has that force. Pros is "towards" with the accusative; with the dative it is rather "there;" but with the accusative it is distinctly objective. "This sickness is not unto [pros] death, but for the glory of God;" i.e., it was with that object in view, In Eph. 4 ministers were given eis the edifying of the body, and pros the perfecting of the saints. The prominent thought is the perfecting of the saints; the more immediate point is eis, the object in view. That is an eternal thing, but the work of the ministry was a present thing, and what they were at then. The perfecting is a definite result in view. In the middle of this chapter we go from the outward thing to the inward thing. We have had not merely those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus, but those who were baptized to Moses, and did eat the same spiritual meat, and so on. These really partook of the privileges, and yet were lost. You may have really Christ, and yet God be not well pleased with you.

Q. Is that because he is living after the flesh?

A. A person who is living after the flesh shall die. He therefore cannot have the real thing. This passage is not a warning against having a thing and in any way perishing, but against having the signs of the thing and then perishing.

Q. But it was written to the Corinthians?

A. It is addressed to saints, with all those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus, however bad they might be at Corinth. It would be a very dangerous thing to say that people were outside warnings and dangers, because they themselves are so bad. We have now a kind of Sardis; and a terrible thing it is to have a name to live, and yet be responsible. "I gave her space to repent . . . and she repented not." (Rev. 2:21.) The whole professing Church will be cut off. They have left their first love, and go on worse and worse, but still the responsibility is there. To the Thessalonians Paul had written, "Ye . . . are not in darkness, that that

day should overtake you as a thief." (1 Thess. 5:4.) It will overtake the world so. And then the Lord writes to Sardis, "Lest I come as a thief" (Rev. 3:3); that is, treat you as the world.

Q. Is there any difference between the opening of Corinthians and the close of Timothy?

A. You must take each passage in its own place and force. There will be a testing-time, and then some will be cut off: In the beginning of all, "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47.) But when you get as far as Jude you get apostasy coming in, creeping in unawares.

Q. I suppose the way in which the Corinthians might be idolaters would be by eating in idols' temples?

A. Yes. We now get from the outer to the inner circle.

Q. Why do you get the cup first here, and not the bread?

A. He was going to make use of the bread in connection with the unity of the body, and so puts the other first.

Q. Does he refer to spiritual fornication? (v. 8.)

A. I don't think he does particularly. Here, I take it, it is just the particular danger they were in, all their relatives around them going on in that kind of thing, and themselves therefore in danger of slipping into it. Fornication was not a type; these were the things that happened then in Israel. Not the figures of things for us, but the judgments that came from them, are our warnings. As to their idolatry, I doubt if a single sacrifice, unless an official one, was offered to God all through the wilderness. In Acts 7:42, 43, Stephen says, "Have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them." The official ones probably were maintained, or might be; and at large what they did offer might be professedly to the Lord; for when they made the golden calf Aaron made proclamation -- "Tomorrow is a feast to Jehovah." God had ordered them to bring the blood of every beast they slew to the tabernacle, or rather the beast itself.

Q. What is the "ends of the world"? (v. 11.)

A. The completion of the ages. To me the world now is not under any dispensation, but the whole course of God's dealings with it are over until He comes to judgment. I get man under responsibility from Adam to Christ, and then our Lord says, "Now is the judgment of this world." (John 12:31.) Historically I see this: Up to the flood, no dealings of God, but a testimony in Enoch. You get a man turned out of paradise, and presently God comes in by a solemn act and puts that world all aside. Then after the flood you get various ways of God with the world. He begins with putting it under Noah; gave promises to Abraham. Then law raised the question of righteousness, which promise did not. Law was brought in to test flesh, and see whether righteousness could be got from man for God. Then God sent prophets until there was no remedy; and then He says, There is one thing yet I may still do -- I will send My Son. And when they saw the Son they said, "This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours." (Mark 12:7.) And then, so far as responsibility went, God was turned out of the world. Then comes the cross and atonement for sin, and a foundation for a new state of things altogether; and that was the completion of the ages. God is not now dealing with man to try if he is lost or not, and so in John's gospel man is gone from the first chapter. The first three gospels present Christ to man, and then He is rejected; but in John 1: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He

power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." There I get God's power coming into the world, and the Jews all done with, only some receive Him who have been born of God; and so John's gospel is what you call thoroughly Calvinistic.

Q. Is it correct to say to an unconverted man, "Come to Jesus"?

A. Oh, no not incorrect at all. Go further. "God did beseech you by us . . . be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:20.) God is obliged to have ambassadors for Christ now that Christ is gone. Beseeching is more than saying "Come," so to speak.

Q. When Christ said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden" (Matt. 11:28), was He still supposing man responsible?

A. Not exactly. It is stated in this chapter where He has said already, "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." And then He began to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, declaring woe unto them; and then comes, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." And then comes, "Come unto Me," etc. He speaks of the judgment as already come upon them; then there is nothing for it; for "no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son." He bows to His Father completely in rejection, and it is consequent upon that rejection that, like Noah's (love, He finds there is no single place for Him to put His foot upon; and so now, if you want to get to heaven, come to me outside the world.

Q. Is it correct to say, "Accept Christ"?

A. Simple souls may say it all rightly, but all are not simple; it is much as the Catholics say, "If you have got the right faith." The gospel tests, and people will not receive the gospel any more than they would receive the law.

Q. "No man can know the Son save the Father." In what sense does 1 John 2:13 say, "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning"?

A. Because they know Christ has come into this world. They know a great deal about Him, but no man can fathom the Son but the Father.

Q. Is "Son" the mystery of His incarnation?

A. "Son" is that being in the form of God. Christ made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and so on; but if you ask, How can God be a servant? there is the difficulty, if you get into the reasonings of men. Well, you get identification with the table here; they are koinonoi -- partakers of the altar; in eating of it you identify yourself with the body of Christ, "for we are all partakers of that one bread." brought a difficulty to me. Someone wrote to ask him what the proof was that it was the body of Christ. Then I found from another that it was understood only to speak of the unity of those who were actually partaking. But what the apostle is saying is, "If you go and eat of these idolatrous altars, you identify yourself with them." As Israel after the flesh, if they ate of the altar, they identified themselves with it. So if you are partakers of this table of the Lord, you are koinonoi with it. It is not itself identity with the body, but that which is the sign of it. You cannot partake of Christ and of devils at the same time.

Q. Is that "cannot," in verse 21, "You shall not"?

A. You cannot morally. The peace-offering gives the understanding of it. Some was burned on the altar; but of the flesh the priest ate the part offered to God, and they themselves, the offerers, ate the rest. The principle was, the eaters were identified with the altar. If it were a thanksgiving, it must be eaten the same day; but two days were allowed in the ease of a vow, because there was a stronger energy in it, and none might be eaten on the third day at all. And so, if they were at table at a feast, he says, Eat what is set before you, unless it is given you as having been offered at an idol's temple, and then -- no. Of course, you could do the act of eating of idols' sacrifices, but you cannot to God and to the devil together. Then comes the question whether it is only those who are eating who are identified; and I get the local Church spoken of as the body of Christ. I must take in all Christians when I go out into the mystic body. The metochos is merely the external act of partaking; but if it is Christ, it is the whole body. I cannot call an assembly the body of Christ, except so far as it may represent the whole body. At the altar it is identification; I am koinonos with it. You do not get the Lord's table and "koinonos." There is a distinction; the Lord is somebody over me. I do not think Christ is ever called the Lord of the assembly; He is Lord of the individual, but not of the assembly.

Q. Is "Head of the Church" used to imply union?

A. Yes. "Head of the body" is not the same thought as the Head of every man; that includes wicked men as well as good. The head of my body is head, and therein is union; but when I speak of Head of every man, it is lordship over.

Q. In Ephesians 5:29 the Lord and the Church occur together.

A. Yes; though it should be Christ and the Church in that verse.

Q. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (Chap. 6:17.) Is it right to speak so of us?

A. Oh, yes; because He is a glorious Person, and I am one with Him who is such by the Holy Ghost But that is very different from the thought of Lord of the assembly as such. That thought destroyed the unity of the body, and that was the use that was made of it. He is Lord

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