

Philip Wallis

LECTURES ON THE SECOND COMING.

LECTURE II.

EPHESIANS I.

By J. N. D.

LONDON:
G. MORRISH, 24, WARWICK LANE,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

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NOTES OF A LECTURE

ON EPHESIANS I.

At the last lecture I mentioned that the two Epistles in which the second coming of the Lord is not spoken of are the Galatians and the Ephesians. It may seem strange that, this being the case, I should have selected on this occasion the chapter we have just read. But I have done so, (and shall refer to other passages with the same intention, desiring to found all I say upon Scripture) because that chapter gives us a general view of the whole scheme and plan that will be fully accomplished at the second coming of our Lord. It does not speak of the fact of Christ's coming, but it does tell of the purpose which God has, and that will then be accomplished. And not only that, but it shows us the way in which the church of God (I mean all true saints gathered to Christ by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven) at the coming of Christ have a portion or part in it—what their place in this great plan of God is, that plan having necessarily for its centre the exaltation of the Son, "the brightness of God's glory." He was humbled to be exalted.

The way in which God has dealt with us, beloved friends, is this—He has brought us completely to Himself, having respect to the whole value of Christ's work; and, in doing that, He has given us a place with Christ makes us like Christ; and, having thus made us near to Himself, He then unfolds to us all His plans. It is not merely being made safe, but, being brought as children to God: "all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." But then, having done that, He treats you—as His expression is to Abraham, and as Christ's expression is to His disciples—as friends.

The Lord says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" And what He then told Him was not merely that he personally was in His favour—that He told him long before. He does not merely show him the promises which belonged to him and his seed. But He told him too what concerned the world, and did not immediately concern himself. This was the special mark of friendship.

If I am dealing with a man with whom I am on good terms, but not on terms of friendship, I tell him whatever is needed with regard to the business between us, according to the common courtesies of life; and there it ends. But if I have a friend, I tell him what is in my heart. This is what God does with His children—as Christ said to His disciples, "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what His Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

And there is not a greater proof of the extent to which the church has lost its conscious identity with Christ, than its giving up its expectation of the coming of Christ. And why is that, but because there are so many whose hearts do not enter into this thought, that God has brought them so near to Himself that they are considered as having been taken into His family? "Sons and daughters," the expression is, and sons and daughters too of full age. That was not their position under the law. Therefore it is said that "the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant though he be lord of all. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father." And, because you have the Spirit, because you have an unction from the Holy one, you know all things, having the consciousness of being sons of God, sons of full age, so as to possess the confidence of the Father,

And the same Spirit, who is the Spirit of adoption, unfolds to us all the things which are freely given to us of God. "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." And there people generally stop; whereas the apostle goes on to say, in order to show the difference between that and our state, "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God." Now is it not a strange thing that people should quote that passage which declares that man's heart hath not conceived the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, and should pass over the declaration which follows, and which contrasts the position of Christians, saying God had revealed them unto them, and given them the Spirit to enable them to understand them? And is it not a sorrowful thing, when the Lord hath put us in such a place that He confides to us, (poor creatures as we are,) in a certain sense, the glory of Christ, having confided to us all His thoughts about Christ, that we should say, "Oh! we cannot pretend to such things as that?" I will not say it is ingratitude—it is worse, it is dishonouring the love God has shown to us. Suppose a child were to say, "I do not pretend to the confidence of my father; I do not want that; I am simply willing to obey him," I would say to such a one, "you are a very unhappy child, extremely unhappy; you do not know what a child's place is."

It is just that which the apostle brings out in this chapter. He first speaks (although I do not dwell upon that now—not that it is not precious: I thought, while reading, how sweet it was) he speaks in the early part of the chapter of the place in which we are set before God—"that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto

the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." You are brought into God's likeness of righteousness and holiness before God—"holy and without blame before him in love." You are brought into the place of sons, having the adoption of children, and you have got the forgiveness of your sins and are accepted in the beloved Himself. That is the place you are brought into: there is no other place for a christian. And now, says the Lord, having put you there, I am going to tell you what my plan is for Christ's glory and your glory along with him. He says, wherein—that is, in "the riches of his grace"—"he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times" He hath not only given us this redemption, so that we know where we are in our relationship to God, but, being in this relationship, has shewn us all this of his plan—"that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him."

Mark where we are connected with it: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance." We are heirs, as the apostle says to the Romans,—“ heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” That is, God says, I am going to give all to Christ; I am to gather together in one all things which are in heaven and on earth in Him; and with Him you are joint heirs—with Him you have got the inheritance. That is the way in which the chapter presents to us the purpose and thought of God.

Now just look at various passages which show how He brings this about, and the way in which, beloved friends, He will take us to put us into the inheritance. For it is for this we are waiting. We are not waiting

to be heirs, but we are waiting for the inheritance. We are not waiting to be sons—we are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus; but we are waiting to get what belongs to the sons. Poor earthen vessels that we are here, in the wilderness, we are waiting for that. He has given us “the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.” That is, the glory of His grace we have got, the redemption; but the glory we have not got—this we are waiting for.

Such is the order of his prayer withal: our calling our nearness to God; our inheritance, that is, everything of which we are heirs along with Christ; and, then, there is the power which brings us into it—that is, the very same power which raised Christ from the dead has raised every believer out of his state of death in sin to the same place with Christ. And, having brought them into one, at the end he shows us the place to which Christ is raised—“at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

This enables us to see a little of the way in which God accomplishes His plan, and it was to show what that plan is that I read this chapter—“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth”—under Christ as the Head. But when Christ takes this place as man—of course as God He is over all always—but when He takes this place as man, we take the inheritance along with Him. We are joint-heirs—“in whom also we have obtained an inheritance.” And, again in Romans, “if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”

Now the principle of that is what many Christians are sadly unmindful of, having lost the consciousness of the way in which they have been brought by God into the same place as Christ, who became a man on purpose to bring us into the same place with Himself. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." If He is a Son, so are we. He is our life, our righteousness; and we share His glory, the fruit of righteousness. When He was transfigured, Moses and Elias appeared in the same glory, talking familiarly with Him. And we should consider that the Lord has come down in lowliness and humiliation amongst us, that our hearts might get near enough to Him to understand that.

Having got the plan then, we shall now go through some passages of Scripture to show how the Lord brings it about. If you will turn to Psalm ii. you will see the way in which the Lord was first presented on earth to have the earthly dominion, and was rejected,* we shall see immediately how the two things are connected. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed." This is quoted by Peter with reference to Herod and Pilate, &c. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision." That is, Christ Himself shall have them in derision. "Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure." This is not come yet. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion"—in spite of all this rejection—"I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possessions. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." These judgments, of course, are not come yet.

* The words are quoted in the New Testament, but do not give our portion of the inheritance at all.

And now, as confirmatory of what I have just said, let me ask you to turn to the Book of Revelation, at the end of the second chapter, to show the way in which we are connected with Christ. He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father." I refer to this now for the purpose of showing that even in such things the saints are connected with Christ, although these, of course, are not the most blessed things in which they are connected with Him. It is said immediately afterwards, "and I will give him the morning star"—Christ Himself; and this is infinitely more precious. But still He associates them with Himself in all His glory. He receives these heathen for His inheritance and breaks them in pieces; and so shall you with Him, if you are faithful.

It is strange to see how the Church of God has lost the sense of all things; and I refer to these passages to show how the saints are associated with Christ, even with reference to those extreme cases. "Do ye not know," says Paul to the Corinthians, "that the saints shall judge the world." He tells them just to think of that, and then to consider whether they were not worthy "to judge the smallest matter," (speaking of saints going to law with one another.) Are you not able, any of you, to settle the commonest things between yourselves—"know ye not that we shall judge angels?" It was necessary to tell them this, because they had not got hold of a right understanding of the place in which Christ has put the saints, because they did not see their association with Christ, in all the fullness of its meaning. I have referred to this association with Christ in judgment, not at all because it is the most blessed part of it, but as confirmatory of what I have said about the association of the saints with Christ.

Observe that the second Psalm speaks of Christ's coming and being rejected. Peter quotes it in that

view and Paul also the words, "Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee." And, being rejected, the Lord (that is, Christ) is there represented as laughing—which is of course a figure—at all the raging of the nations ; and it is said that the time will come when He will sit in Zion in spite of them all, and have all the world given Him for His inheritance. This, however, does not present Him in the place, in which the New Testament largely represents Him. Here He is only connected with the fate of the Jews, and the judgment of the heathen and rebels at the time of the end.

At His first coming, He was rejected as Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed. And mark what light this throws even upon the Gospel. We find Christ charging His disciples strictly that they should no more say He was the Christ, because He was to be rejected, for "the son of man," He says, "shall suffer many things." It was, as if He had said—"I am not now to take my place as King of Zion. I come in another way. I come to be the suffering Son of man, in order that I may afterwards take a far higher place of glory." You find accordingly in Luke and the other gospels, that He strictly charges His disciples not to say that He was the Christ, because that was really over, in consequence of His being rejected. Now take the eighth Psalm—"O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth ! who has set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies ; that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." This, you know, was fulfilled, when He rode upon the ass's colt into Jerusalem. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man that thou visitest him ? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands : thou hast put all things under his feet." It is there intimated that, though as Christ He was rejected, the consequence of His being rejected

was that He takes His place as Son of man, in which He was to have everything put under His feet. You will see how the apostle reasons on that in the New Testament.

These two Psalms show His coming among the Jews, and being rejected, and yet His taking His place over these rebels in spite of them at the end. But the present consequence of His rejection is that He takes the place which he always gives Himself in the Gospels of being the Son of Man. Coming to the New Testament, you will find this eight Psalm is quoted in the chapter I have just read from the Ephesians, "He hath put things under His feet" and, being in that place, "gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body." The church is His body, making the complete man, and is therefore said to be "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."—Christ is a divine person, though a man, and fills all things, but it is the church which makes Him, as the Son of man, complete, makes up what is called the mystical Christ of which He is the head, all the members of the church making up His body.

The church, therefore, is as closely associated with Him, as a man's own flesh is with himself. This is the comparison employed in Ephesians v., "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church; for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." And in this body there being but one Spirit, the Church is associated with Christ as taking the headship over everything. We see Christ, the Son of Man, in the counsels of God set over everything in heaven and on earth; and we, as being close to Him, His redeemed ones, His brethren, joint-heirs, and members of His body, are completely identified with Him in His place of headship. You thus see the connection of the Church with Christ's glory at His second coming.

You find the same thing in the second of the Hebrews, where the apostle, referring to the eight Psalm, shows how far it is accomplished. "But one, in a certain

place, testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him." That time is not yet come. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." Mark what we have got here. Here is God's purpose of putting everything in subjection under Christ without any exception—there is nothing excepted that is not put under Him. In fact He created it all, and therefore is heir of it all. But the point is this, that what He created as God, He takes for an inheritance as man, in order that we might take it with Him; but that time is not come yet. We do not see all things put under Him, but we do see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour; we see that half accomplished, but not the other half; we do not see all things put under him. This is what the apostle states, and the reason of it we get in Psalm cx. which the apostle also quotes in the Hebrews, and to which the Lord Himself appealed in reasoning with the Pharisees on this very matter. "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And therefore in Hebrews x. the apostle says, "He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"—that is, the work of their redemption—"from henceforth expecting till his enemies he made his footstool," till they are all put under his feet by God.

I shall have another opportunity of referring to that. But I am speaking now of the blessed assurance it is to the saints, that Christ is sitting at the right hand of God until, and expecting till, His enemies are made His footstool. They are not made His footstool yet.

If they were, He would not allow matters to go on in the world as they do now. It is another thing which God is doing now. He is gathering out His joint-heirs, and, having this purpose, He says—Sit thou at my right hand until the time when thine enemies shall be made thy footstool. As to the question when that time shall be, “that day and hour knoweth no man, not even the Son.” But it is said to the Son—Sit thou at my right hand till that time is revealed.

We have the plan then as clearly set forth as language can put it. We see Jesus, when He has by Himself purged our sins, “set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens,” and then by the gospel, gathering out His joint heirs. And we are associated with Him, while He is there at the right hand of God, associated with Him as united to Him by the one Spirit.

If you will turn now to another passage, 1 Corinthians xv., you will see the way in which we get this place of glory at the resurrection, all things being under His feet. “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ’s at his coming”—those that are His heirs, they and nobody else. “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him.” That is, God the Father is not put under him, but that very exception proves in the strongest way that everything else is—God the Father being alone excepted.

But it is said, we do not see that yet. Do you think that all the oppression and wars and wickedness and horrors which now mark the history of the earth, would go on if everything was now put under Him?

It is Satan, and not Christ, who is now the prince and God of this world. It is strange how many people fancy that the cross put an end to that. It was exactly the contrary. The cross was the one grand demonstration—and there never was such a demonstration before—that Satan is the prince and God of this world. “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me,” said our Saviour. Until Christ had been rejected, Satan was never called the prince of this world. Before that, Jehovah was on the earth, and in the temple was the Shekinah of glory. But when at last He came into this world in the person of Christ, and the world rejected Him, then from that time Satan is the prince of this world. And it is after that, that the apostle says, “In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.” When the Lord comes again, He will be the prince of the world, but, till He comes again, Satan is that prince.

If you will now look to Luke xix. you will see how the Lord Himself puts it, when He speaks of going into a far country to get the kingdom, and there receiving it, and then returning and executing the judgments to which he refers. “As they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.” They were looking for this, and fancied that, instead of His being rejected as He was, they would get the kingdom with Him in an earthly way directly. “He said therefore, a certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.” That is the service of christians, while the Lord is away. He has gone away to receive the kingdom, and has not returned yet. Then He judged the servants when he came back. “And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded those servants to be

called unto him," and begins to take account of their service. And then, that being finished, he says, "But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." This is after He has received the kingdom and come back again.

He does not judge while He is away. It is said, "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son ; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father." But, if He was to begin to judge now, He would have to close the time of grace and the gathering in of the church. The Father judges the saints, but it is in the way of discipline—"If ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work." But, as regards definite judgment, it is said in John, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the son." When the Son returns, He will take notice of His enemies and execute judgment upon them. But meanwhile He has gone away to receive the kingdom, and has not returned. When He does, He will not allow all this wickedness which we now see, to go on. But for the present, this is the time when we must watch in faithfulness, occupying till He come, and trading properly with those talents, the spiritual gifts He has given us.

You will find this remarkably brought out, if you turn to Colossians i. I wish to dwell a little on this, that we may get to as full an understanding as possible of the thoughts and scope and plan of God, which seem to me to be very plainly set forth in Scripture. Begin at the 12th verse, which shows where we, (I mean all believers) are "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet." *He hath* made us meet—that is all settled. You will always find this in Scripture ; you will not find anything there about growing to be meet ; it speaks about growing up to Christ in everything, but this is a different thing. "Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered

us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son ; who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature ; for by him"—this is the reason why He is set over all things—"by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by him and for him." He is to take them all under subjection, but not in this state of wickedness in which they are now. "We see not yet all things put under Him."

And how does He take them? He takes them as a man—"whom he hath appointed heir of all things," (Hebrew i. 2), and we are appointed joint heirs with Him, as the Scripture tells us. You will see, therefore, how the second part comes in. "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist"—that is, because He is a divine person—"And he is the head of the body, the church ; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead ; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." He has this double headship, which is also brought together in the chapter of Ephesians I was reading—head over all things, and head to the church. "By him to reconcile all things unto himself ; by him, I say, whether they be things, in earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death." "Hath reconciled,"—it is always *hath*, as regards the saints. It is not said "He will reconcile," but "hath reconciled."

But the reconciliation of all things in heaven and earth is future, because Satan is not yet bound. Even Christianity itself has been corrupted in the most awful way, because Satan is not bound ; and the corruptest thing in the whole universe is corrupted Christianity. The apostle says—"by him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven," or, as it is in the Ephesians, "to gather together in one all things in Christ"—but he does not

say he has done that yet. Nor does he speak at all of those who are under the earth. When he talks of subjection, of everything bowing to Him, it is said, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Of these things he does not say "reconcile" but "bow;" "but you," he says "hath He reconciled."

You thus see the truth about the double headship of Christ, His being Head of the Church, and His being Head over all things; and then the double reconciliation, the present reconciliation and redemption of the Church through grace, and then the reconciliation of all things in heaven and in earth. Now we see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Him by faith, sitting at the right hand of God, until His enemies are made His footstool. And when that time comes, and they are all put under Him, He will take possession, according to the character given to God in the appellation used by Melchisedek when he came out to bless Abraham—"The most High God, possessor of heaven and earth;" and when Christ becomes in all its fullness the King and Priest upon His throne, God will have that title.

We come then to the next thing, which I will just state—I do not know how far we may be able to go through it this evening. Taking these two statements, that He is to reconcile everything in heaven and earth, and again, that He is to gather together, in one, all things which are both in heaven and on earth, we also see, in several of the passages which I have quoted, that the Church, or the saints who compose it, are joint-heirs with Him. What I have been seeking to show you, is, that the Church of God (all the saints whom in this present time God is gathering by His grace in the Gospel) are being associated with Christ, as the centre of blessing, that they get the central place with Himself; under whom all possible existences are to be placed. But the time for this which the Scripture speaks of is when Christ receives the kingdom and returns,

when the dispensation of the fulness of times comes. Then everything will be brought into order and blessedness under the authority of Christ. When God the Father has put everything under His feet, He will bring everything into order, and will then deliver up His kingdom. But the central thing during the dispensation of the fulness of times in the heavenly places will be the Church, and the central thing in earthly places will be the Jews.

This brings in what are the two great subjects of Holy Scripture, after personal redemption. The Church is that in which He displays sovereign grace, bringing its members to share the glory of Christ. The Jews are those in whom He reveals as a centre, the government of this world. These are the two great subjects in Scripture, after personal salvation. The Scripture speaks of the Church of God, as those who are associated with Christ, who are the heirs of Christ's glory. But the moment we say that, we cannot but think how wondrous it is that poor wretched creatures like us should be brought into the same glory with Christ—should be brought into the same place with Himself. And the work of reconciliation is to embrace all things in heaven and on earth.

This world is not to remain for ever the sporting place and play-ground of the devil. That will not be allowed for ever. The Son of David will yet have His place in it, and His glory too, as its ruler, and the world will then be altered. "None shall hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain." There is a time coming when Christ will be the Prince of Peace. He has declared positively that this is not at the present time. "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth; I tell you nay; but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, &c." That is, this is the time when the bringing in the light awakens the

passions of men, and, until Christ's second coming puts them down, they continue their raging.

And christians now have to take up the cross and follow Him. Do you think if Christ was reigning, His followers would only have the cross? Why, they would have the crown. We are positively told that our part is the cross. We must now take it up every day.—But, when Christ reigns, that will not be the part of His people. He will “come to be glorified in His saints,” and a glorious place they will get, when He comes to reign.

When this time comes, to gather together all things in one, the Church of God will be the centre of all things in heavenly places, and the Jews the centre of all things on earth, Christ being the head over all. That is what we find stated in the chapter of Ephesians which we have read—“That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world but in that which is to come”—the time namely of which we are speaking —“And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body.”

It is the same power which raises the saints, and so, in the next chapter, he says, speaking of it now as already got spiritually—“and hath raised up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”—God, in setting us over angels and principalities and powers in the world to come, showing the exceeding riches of His grace in the place he has given to us, in His kindness towards us. This, beloved friends, is what I have been anxious to shew you, by bringing before you these various passages,

that thus in the ages to come God is going to shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward you. Angels are going to learn the immense riches of God's grace—and how? By our being made partakers of the glory of Christ, in God's kindness to us through Christ Jesus—so that, when they see Mary Magdalene, the thief on the cross, the woman of the city that was a sinner, any one of us, in the same place of glory with Christ, they may admire the exceeding riches of His grace. Laying hold of this even now by faith in the teaching of God's Spirit, although we have not got all the fruits of it as yet, we may find our present place very profitable in the way of discipline, and exercise, and spiritual education, still its full development is in the future, when God's kindness to us shall be shown to the angels.

And now let me try to show you a little the way in which the Lord brings us into this place of association with Himself. And first I will refer you to the passage in ch. xvii. of John's Gospel, where the Saviour states the fact, that the saints share with Him His glory, and the love of the Father. A wonderful passage it is, as showing that love of Christ which passeth knowledge. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." This refers to the present time, or at least to what ought to be the case in the present time. And then He goes on to the time to come. "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may [not *believe*, but may] know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." All the glory Thou hast given me, He says—that is, the glory He takes as man, for as a divine person His glory was eternal—I have given them, and this, that the world, when they see My people like Me, and having

the same glory as Myself, may *know* that Thou hast sent Me. It is not *believe*; this is spoken with reference to the present time. Saints should be one now, as a testimony that there is a power in the Spirit of God which overcomes all fleshly differences. Alas! that is not so. This too is a precious subject, but I must pass it over just now, confining myself to the one I am more immediately dealing with. Of the present time it is said, "that the world may *believe*;" of the future, "that the world may *know*." "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that the world may *know* that Thou hast sent Me." They will know it plainly enough for their condemnation, for the condemnation of those who are rebels, when they see those whom they have been accustomed to despise, coming with Christ in glory.

Now do you believe this, beloved friends? Our hearts ought to know and recognize that love. Not fathom it, for that they cannot do, but confide in it, and to that extent know it, although it passes knowledge. And, as you see, the time is coming when the world too will know that love of God to us. We pass on to verse 25—"O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that Thou has sent Me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." That is the present good we enjoy—that the love wherewith Christ is loved should be in us—that we should have it in our souls. No one can fathom it: it passes knowledge; but still we are to have it and to know it, and that by Christ being in us. I am not to wait, till the world sees I am with Christ in glory, to know it myself; for the Father now loves me as He has loved Christ.

If you turn again to the Corinthians xv., you will see this same truth brought out in its relation to the resurrection. The point I am now to impress upon you is, that Scripture shows us these two things—that we are to be like Him, completely like Him, save that

He is a divine person ; and that the time we shall be like Him is when we shall be raised from the dead. It is then we shall appear with Him.—We are not of the world now, but it is said that the world will only know that we have been loved as Christ was loved, when they see us in the same place of glory with Him, when the Lord takes us up to be with Him and to put us in this glory ; so that when He appears to the world we shall appear along with Him in the same glory.

The fact that it is so that we shall so appear with Him in the same glory, we have seen already from various passages which I quoted on the last occasion, but I shall refer you to some more particularly. At the forty-seventh verse of 1 Corinthians xv., it is said, “the first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy”—all like to their father Adam ; “and, as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly,” that is like what Christ is, not speaking of His divinity—“and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” We shall be like Him, we shall be just the same as Himself. He does not say merely that we shall be there, in heaven, but like Him. But first, “as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy”—that is, like Adam, poor, wretched sinners, mortal creatures, like him ; whereas, “as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” This is the full absolute statement of the fact. Then he adds, with respect to the fact of the glory—putting it of course as in the future, not having yet come—“as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly ;” and he goes on, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” As it is said before, “it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.”

Now let us refer to some of the passages which show

how Christ receives us to Himself. I follow the teachings of scripture throughout, that we may get solidly grounded in what Christ communicates to us. He says, "In my Father's house are many mansions ; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." He has gone into His Father's house, but He will come again and receive us to Himself, that where He is there we may be also. He was going up then with a body, going up glorious, not as yet having all things under His feet, but crowned with glory and honour, and He says to His disciples—you must wait and occupy till I come again. But now, before He comes, we see what He is to do with us who are in the same glory—"I will come again and receive you unto myself," as He said in the previous chapter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no *part with me*." It was as if he had said—I cannot stay with you, as King and Messiah now, but I am washing you that ye may be fit to reign with Me when I come again. I am, therefore, still your servant in the sense of intercession and the like, and by my all-prevailing intercession, I will wash you daily, because if you are to have a part with Me in my kingdom, you must be made like myself.

In like manner, we get what may be called the public announcement of this in the fourth chapter of 1st Thessalonians—"Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." See how the apostle constantly expected the coming of the Lord. Some people have boldly dared to say that Paul made a mistake in expecting the coming of the Lord in his day. It is they who are making an awful mistake. It was never revealed when Christ would come, and Paul did not pretend to know it. But he knew that that time had come when we should always be expecting Him, instead of saying my Lord delayeth

His coming, and beginning therefore to eat and drink with the drunken, and to beat the men-servants and the maid-servants. It was, therefore, that Paul put himself in this class, "*we* which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." And what was the effect of that? He lived like a man who expected Christ every day, and when Christ comes, he will get the fruit of that, while those people who put off the expectation of Christ's coming, and do not wait for it, allowing their hearts to go out after covetousness and such like things, will also get the fruit of their so doing.

The time of the second coming of Christ is declared not to be revealed. Paul got a revelation that he should soon die, and he knew it. Peter also got a revelation that he must shortly put off this tabernacle, and of course knew it. But it was not revealed to them when Christ should come. Therefore Paul says, "*we* shall not all sleep, but *we* shall all be changed," Christ having overcome death. We may all die before Christ's coming—no one knows the moment of it; still we may use the language—"we who are alive and remain at the coming of the Lord." It is said of the man who thinks Christ is delaying his coming, that he turns to what is bad, smiting his fellow-servants, and eating and drinking with the drunken. And it is said, that while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept, the wise virgins as well as the foolish; that is, the Church lost a sense of the present expectation of Christ. Even the wise servants had to be waked up again, and it was a mercy to them to rouse them up in time, because to His people Christ is ever faithful. But it is the characteristic of the faithful servant that he is expecting. The church of Philadelphia was expecting the coming of Christ, and it is called the word of *His* patience—"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience,"

The passage in Thessalonians goes on—"We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,

with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first,"—nobody else; I shall dwell upon that at another time, but I just notice it now in passing. The shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, are not to be taken as the voice of God to all the world to raise the righteous and the wicked. "The shout" is a military term; whatever the precise term now equivalent to it, it is that which follows "stand at ease." It was first used with reference to calling rowers in the trireme, and afterwards as a military term. When soldiers are left to go about at their ease, and are then all suddenly called back into the ranks, it is the command given them for that purpose, to which the word "shout" here used is equivalent. But the only persons who hear it are "the dead in Christ," Christ being represented as in this way gathering together His own troops. "The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Here, then, we have the details of it. The Lord hath declared that he will come and receive us unto Himself; and now the apostle, by the revelation given unto him, explains how it will be. He will come and call us up to meet the Lord in the air. The passage in 1 Corinthians, which I have already read, refers to the same thing, when it says, "afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." "But every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits." The specific thing here is that it is not a resurrection of the dead, but a resurrection *from among* the dead. The raising of Christ was not a resurrection "of the dead," simply, but a resurrection "from among the dead." This was its whole character, a taking up from among the dead, and why? Because the Father's delight was in Him. And why are we in like manner taken up from among the dead? Because His delight is in us. And therefore at the proper time the Lord comes—(it is not said,

appears)—and calls us up to be for ever with the Lord, to take our place associated with Christ, partaking of that glory which you have already seen referred to in the words “as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

But what we are called to expect is not to die—we *may* die, and a blessed thing it is too, to die ; but what we are to look for and expect, is, as it is expressed in Corinthians v., “not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” That Christ’s power over death may be fully shown, He takes to Himself mortal men, whether alive or dead: if alive, He changes them into glory without dying ; if they are dead, He raises them. This is the first thing He does. He raises the dead first, and then the living are changed ; and they go to meet the Lord in the air. He has predestinated us “to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren.” And, as we have seen, “the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.” This then is our portion of heavenly things.

And, if you turn to Colossians iii. you will see that, when Christ appears, we shall appear in this glory along with Himself and like Him. He will have already come and taken us up to Himself ; and then He comes manifesting Himself to the world, and we appear with Him. You will remember what I have before quoted, that the glory which was given Him, He hath given to us, that the world might know, &c. Now turning to Colossians iii., and you will see how thoroughly the apostle identifies us with Christ. Look first at chapter ii. 20, “If ye be dead with Christ.” Then, at the beginning of the third chapter, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.” He is hid in God ; He is your life, and your life therefore is hid there. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear

with Him in glory." When He appears, we shall appear with Him. There can be no separation. If He is hid in God, our life is hid in God. If he appears, we appear. If He appears in glory, we must appear in glory with Him. We are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

You will see the same thing in the 1st Epistle of John—only the same truth comes out in different shapes—"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God"—this, that we should get Christ's own name (what wonder of love is this that we should get Christ's own title of relationship)—"therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not"—showing that we have got the same place with Him. He says, "I go to my Father, and your Father, to my God and your God"—I have accomplished your redemption and the effect of that is, that I have put you in the same place with Myself. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." It is no wonder that it does not recognise us, if it did not recognise Him. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God"—this is the present time—"and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

Further, as to this appearing with Him, I shall now refer to the Book of Revelation; but, before doing that, you may turn for a moment to Zechariah xiv., where it is said the Lord shall come and all His saints with Him, and his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives. This is referred to by the angel, when, after Christ's ascension from Mount Olivet, he said to the disciples, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Again in verse 14 of the epistle of Jude, you find—"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying,

Behold, the Lord cometh with myriads of his saints, to execute judgment upon all." Here they are associated with Christ in the executing of judgments. "The Lord cometh with ten thousands"—properly myriads, that is, an immense number,—"of his saints to execute judgment." This shows how entirely we are associated with Christ. And what a place does not that put us in! Yet Scripture is so simple and plain upon the point, that it cannot be misinterpreted.

You will find the same truth in Thessalonians i. I prefer quoting many passages to enlarging upon them, that our faith may stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. The Thessalonians were suffering dreadful persecutions; and the apostle told them—"we glory in you in the Churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure; which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer; seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you. And to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taken vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." He comes with these ten thousands or myriads of His saints.

You find a distinct statement of their coming given in figure in the Revelation. At chap. xvii. it is said—"These shall make war with the Lamb." All the kings of the earth shall be found, not in blessing, joined with Christ, but in open war with the Lamb, joined with the beast. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is the Lord of lords, and the King of kings; and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and

faithful." Other passages show us that angels will be with Him, but it is not angels that are here spoken of as being with Him. The angels may be described as "faithful," and "chosen," because the Scripture speaks of the "elect" angels, but these that are with Him are the "called," and it is the saints who are "called by the grace of God." These "called" persons then who are with Him are the saints. Having seen who they are, turn now to chapter xix—"And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war."

You have seen all through that He is coming to judge the wicked on the earth—a thing greatly forgotten, that there is a judgment of the quick as well as the dead. "As in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not, until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean"—which, he says elsewhere, is the righteousness of the saints. I close now, as regards the quotation of passages.

On the last occasion we found, running through the whole series of passages quoted, that the Lord's coming was the one thing kept before the Church as its hope in the Scripture, and that it connected itself with every kind of thought and feeling the saints had, that they were even looked upon as being converted to wait for the Son of God, that every other doctrine of Scripture was connected with it—that what marked a decaying church was the thought that "the Lord delayeth His coming," and that what woke them up was the cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh."

Then to-night we have found that the Lord reveals to us with wisdom and prudence His plan, namely, "that he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth"—reconciling them all in Christ—not merely for their own selfish good, but as a plan for Christ's glory; and with this view He has associated us with Christ in the place He takes as head over all, so that being associated with Him as heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, we have the inheritance with Him; that when He takes it we shall have it with Him; that, when He comes, we shall come with Him; that, whereas he was presented to the earth among the Jews, according to the promise of God, and they would not have Him, He then took another place, that of Son of Man, that place He will take in his resurrection and in His glory, and will raise us up to have it with Him when the time comes; and not we alone, but all saints will have it with Him; that we see not yet all things put under Him, but we do see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, and are waiting, as He is, till His enemies are made His footstool; that when that time comes—when it will be, nobody knows; God has not revealed it—the first thing He will do will be to have His body; He is not to be head without the body, but will catch us up to meet Him in the air; that, if dead, He will raise us, if alive He will change us, and take us up to meet the Lord in the air; that He will come and take us to His Father's house; that this is our place, and that he will have everything there in order for us—only He must have His heirs with Him; that He cannot take a step in entering on the possession of His inheritance, without having His heirs, His body, His bride with Him.

In the Revelation you first have the marriage of the Lamb, and then you see the Lamb coming out with His armies following Him. They are the bride—that is what they are—for the Lamb must have an associate with Him, a help-meet to share His inheritance. He has not yet taken to Himself His great power and

reign. We see not yet all things put under Him. But when He comes He will take us up to be with Him, because we are perfectly associated with Him. When he appears, we shall appear with him. When He executes judgment, we shall accompany Him—that is, when He executes judgment on the world, breaking them with a rod of iron, and dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel. That is anything but the blesseddest part of our sharing His inheritance. The blesseddest part is being with Him. But when He does appear, the world will see us with Him. He comes to raise the dead saints, and take them up to be with Himself, then when He appears we shall all appear with Him, and “shall bear” the image of the heavenly, as we have borne the image of the earthy.”

But meantime, while Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, He hath sent down the Holy Ghost to gather His heirs together. They must now carry the cross—when the kingdom comes, they will have the kingdom and the glory. But, until that time, while He is sitting at the right hand of God, His people must bear the cross, and it is only by the power of the Spirit of God that any one will follow him. Whatever glory He has, in the time of glory He associates us in it with Himself, and, as a consequence, we shall reign with Him—we who are now reconciled in Him. And when He comes again, He comes but not to judgment as regards us. “As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.”

And now, beloved friends, I would only ask, with whom are you associated? Are you associated with Christ, rejected by the world, and now sitting at the right hand of God? Are you by the Holy Ghost in spirit associated with Christ? or are you associated with the world which He is coming again to judge, and all His saints with Him? With which are you associated, while Christ is away, having been rejected,

and says, Occupy till I come, having gone to receive a kingdom and a glory far better than that from which He was rejected? With whom are you associated? You have to go through the world, you must go through it; do you really believe that Satan is the prince and god of this world, which has rejected Christ, and do you really live as if you believed this? Do you believe that Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and that He will come again to receive you to Himself, to share with Him the same blessings as Himself in His Father's house, and to witness His Father's glory and to share His love? Are we doing anything to recommend Him? Is there that in our hearts, which is like the confiding love of a child to his father, that which shows we are sons by adoption? Is there anything in us which identifies us with those who are the heirs of that blessedness and glory? The world knew Him not; the world knows us not. Can we say that! Are we like Him in our place in the world? When Christ was in the world, they saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. How is it with us? Is it the things that are not seen, or the things that are seen, that have power in our hearts? Christ is not seen; does He dwell in our hearts by faith, so as to be our portion? If He does, then when he appears, we shall appear with him in glory, and better than that, shall be taken up to be for ever with Him. Lord, give us to be able to wait for Him, and to be ever saying, "Even so come, Lord Jesus." May we have all our treasure, and heart, and portion, associated and identified with Himself. A little while, yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. He only knows how long will last the gathering of the saints to be with Him.

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