

# FOOD

AND

## The Outlook of the Heavenly.

Notes of Addresses at Belfast, 1916.

REVISED BY E. J. McB.



### **Publishing Offices:**

BELFAST: 21 Bridge Street.

LONDON: 20 Paternoster Square.

NEW YORK: 168 Greenwich Street.

SYDNEY: Bible and Tract Depot.

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**THREEPENCE.**

## “FOOD.”

Gen. xiv. 18-23; Exod. xii. 3-10; Jeshua v. 10-11;  
I. Kings xix. 4-7; John vi. 47-50;  
I. Cor. xi. 23-26.

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What I wanted to say a few words about to-night is perhaps one of the most important subjects for thought in connection with the support of the heavenly man there can be, and that is the question of spiritual food. I wish to speak of the kinds of food that God supplies to His people and the intention He has in supplying them. It will greatly help us if we learn to distinguish the different kinds of food made available to us, for this will indicate the character of the journey which has to be taken (*i.e.*, in our souls) to reach what God has for us in blessing. Speaking practically, the Spirit of God gives just the kind of food that is exactly suitable for the journey that has to be taken by the people of God.

In dealing with this subject I would like, in the first place, to make a remark or two as to God's thought in supplying food to His people. I understand in Scripture there are two great thoughts connected with food or with our being fed—one is development or growth, and the other is strength for pressure. If things were normal everyone would be fed with a view to development; but things are not normal, and hence, in consideration of this, food is provided in view of pressure.

Now I go back to the beginning to show you what God's thought was when He planted the garden. There were in the garden trees and every kind of food that was good; that is, God's thought was that man should develop in the sense of the blessedness of the God that had created him. That is a normal thought. He was placed in the garden of delights, and it was filled with the kind of food that would have developed the delight in his soul of the God that had placed him there. I believe that John, in the Book of Revelation, chap x., gives the climax to that thought. It shows how John, who had come into the heavenly idea, recognised that God had created nothing but what was good, but that the solution of the things in which good and evil had become entangled must be left in the hands of the Lamb. This is too large a subject to pursue, but I just make one remark in regard to it. It involves the eating of the little book, which was sweet to the mouth but bitter to the inward parts. The moral force of this must be given. Now I go a step further, and shall show you what unwholesome food is. Unwholesome food is not necessarily bad in itself, but it is food that does not suit a person's constitution. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was unwholesome food to an innocent man. It is only suitable to a man of God, and when the innocent man took it he found himself face to face with a problem that he was not great enough to solve. It was never intended that he should take that food; but we know he did, and the consequence was that confusion was brought in. God graciously considered

the confusion, and He provided food; so animal food comes in with Noah—that is, God makes a way out of the confusion in a two-fold manner. He takes one man—Enoch—out of the confusion by way of translation, and He carries another man—Noah—through the confusion by way of baptism (in figure, of course). The latter was left in a scene where the confusion had been brought in, and he required a totally different kind of food. Why? Because government was put into his hands, and he had to slay. It was not then a question merely of everything being fruitful, but some things had to be cut off. The consequence is that Noah was to feed on animal food. The power of government was put into his hand, and he had to cut off the lawless man. You find in Abraham the call, and in the call you come back to the original idea. The heavenly idea was that everything should be good, and you see in the first incident I have read in Gen. xiv. the recovery of what was good. Abraham heard that his brother was involved in the brawls of the lawless scene, and he puts his whole household into armed activity to save his brother from this situation. He returns in great victory, with the brother recovered, and Satan comes on the scene with the intention of destroying this beautiful recovery. It is at that particular juncture that we get the kind of food that Melchizedek gives; it says that “Melchizedek was the priest of the most high God,” and he “brought forth bread and wine.” What did he bring out the bread and wine for? To strengthen Abraham. God foresaw that the King of Sodom would become the

instrument of the enemy to destroy this heavenly thought seen in Abram's love of his brother Lot ; and he strengthened Abraham in view of this by a certain kind of food—simple food—it was bread and wine. I would like to show you the kind of person who gave it.

It was not a priest on man's side that after the order of Aaron could be touched with the feeling of infirmities. It was not a person in that sense who had consideration for man, but one who had consideration for God, and he knew very well that if brotherly love were wiped off the earth, the heavenly idea would go, and so he came out a beautiful figure of the Man who is going to come out and deal with the problem of good and evil in power, and to wipe off the earth everything that has the character of the King of Sodom ; in that way Melchizedek strengthened and encouraged Abraham with bread and wine. Abraham refused to touch anything from a thread to a shoe latchet from the King of Sodom. In applying this to ourselves, I would say that the effect of the heavenly calling in our souls would be this, that you would instinctively appreciate the brethren. Now when you do so, the King of Sodom would like to suggest to you that you take the stuff and give him the brethren. That is the King of Sodom's idea. You take the material, but give him the brethren. In other words, he does not want the continuation of the heavenly idea ; but what Melchizedek does is, he strengthens the divine principle in the soul of Abraham. So that Abraham says, "You take the goods and give me the persons."

The enemy would try and bring in material ideas and material thoughts to rob us of brotherly love. The important thing is that we should love one another with a pure heart fervently, and the kind of food which produces this is the sincere milk of the Word; that is what you were first fed on—the first nutriment you get—the mental milk of the Word. God would give His people an impression that there is no one in the world like Christ. He would have that blessed Person filling your souls; and then we begin to recognise others like Him. That is the idea of the brethren—they are like Christ, and God gives an impression of the coming day of glory to strengthen that in our souls. That is the bread and wine—it is the prospect of the millennial day. The light of what is coming holds us so that we do not give up the divine idea.

Now I come to the second Scripture I read—Exodus xii. Here it is the question of leaving in your affections the scene that refuses the brother. I make one remark in regard to Egypt, and it is a solemn one, but you will see the force of it. Shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians. The first brother in Scripture was a shepherd, and shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians. This being so, it is high time that we had left Egypt. If the heavenly idea is distasteful to Egypt, the sooner we leave Egypt the better. Now in view of this, note the kind of food that strengthened them to come out. God anticipated the forty years in the wilderness, and He gave them the right kind of food—they could have gone 40 years God gave them

such strengthening food. What did He give them? The Lamb roast with fire. Think of it! The Scripture says, "If the house be too little for the lamb."

God has before Him your soul travelling from the scene that the shepherd was distasteful to, to the scene where the shepherd is going to lead you—*i.e.*, "beside the still waters"; and He anticipates all the pressure of the journey—all the ups and downs of the way—and He fed them with a view to taking the journey. I would like to say this in regard to the history of the children of Israel, that you will find that God in His consideration for them gives them provisional food. But, beloved brethren, if they had appreciated the Lamb they would have gone in the strength of that meat many days. Do you know the length of the journey? Eleven days. The Lamb presents Christ coming into this scene to carry out the will of God. It is not a question of the nature of His pathway; it is the fact of His coming into the scene to carry out the will of God; and nothing will fit your soul for the pathway of the wilderness like the sense of that Man coming under the searching rays of the judgment of God and bringing forth the fragrance that satisfied Him. God saw the blood outside; but they have the Lamb inside. "And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it." It is a very solemn passage to my mind; you have to eat the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread. These things will help you. The unleavened bread is that I am free from leaven.

What are the bitter herbs? Anything that grows of myself. I am going out of Egypt. I am leaving that scene. Every true believer who answers to the heavenly calling in spirit leaves Egypt; but look, have you eaten the bitter herbs, or have you got something growing in yourself of the Egyptian character? Now if we eat the food which God gives us, we shall feel that while God has brought us out of Egypt we have to maintain the spirit of the land which we belong to, and we must not allow any Egyptian growth. We used to do this and that and the other thing. Yes, that is Egyptian. It is very solemn; Moses had to learn it experimentally, for when he went to do something that was very good—standing up and helping the daughters of the priest of Midian to water the flocks against the shepherds who came to drive them away—they said, “An Egyptian delivered us.” He was not an Egyptian; he was a brother, but he looked like an Egyptian. That is the value of eating bitter herbs; you do not get mistaken for an Egyptian. If you ate bitter herbs you would have the spirit of a brother.

I turn now to Joshua v. Here it is the food that will help you to enter into privilege. I understand the book of Joshua to refer to spiritual privilege. The people come for the first time in their history into the presence of the old corn of the land; the strength from partaking of the Lamb roast with fire; the separation from eating of the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs are seen in the fact that they had crossed the desert sands, had gone over the Jordan, and were on the confines of the promised

land. And if we are to enter into heavenly things now in the way of inheritance, we cannot do it with our minds or intellects; we must be strengthened for it by spiritual food. A certain kind of food is required to enable us to take that journey experimentally, and so we get the old corn of the land. I think that expression—the old corn of the land—is very beautiful. It indicates what God thought of Christ long before we knew Him, and the effect of it is that we begin to get enlarged thoughts of Him. We realise that there is a great deal more in Christ than the forgiveness of sins and freedom from the pressure in the wilderness, and that in that blessed Man are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; that is the old corn of the land. But you may say you have to go back to business, and you have to take up the duties of daily life. Well, that is not forgotten; do not make any mistake—for we read they had manna on the *self-same* day. What does the manna belong to? It belongs to the wilderness. God is so considerate. His purpose for them was to give them an inheritance; and God's thought for every one of His people now is that they should grow and increase in the knowledge of the blessedness of Christ, so that they become more and more like Him. He fed them with the old corn of the land, but He did not overlook the fact that they had to touch things here and to take them up practically. They had manna on the self-same day. Here it is not a question of coming out of Egypt, nor of the King of Sodom coming to us, but that you have been professedly cut off, and have parted company with

all the glory of the man that is here ; and now you want to enter into and know more of the glory of the Man that is there. God says : I will feed you for it with the rich impressions of that blessed Man before I brought Him into view. You begin to realise then that before God established the clouds above He was by Him—as One brought up with Him—daily His delight—rejoicing always before Him. He was an object of delight and purpose to God, and the heart begins to realise that there is more in Christ than we thought there was, and that a Christian is not a person with a long face waiting to die to go to heaven, but he is a person who is inheriting substance and has his treasures filled and whom God feeds with the “ finest of the wheat and honey out of the rock.”

But perhaps a person may turn round and say : It's all very well to talk like that, but we are not in the days of the apostles ; we are not in the days when there were twelve apostles, and when Paul was going about the country filling the saints with delight as he opened up the position of the glorified Man. Well, what are we in ? The last days, and God has not forgotten it, and I would like to ask you what you are doing in the last days ? Are you, like Elijah (I. Kings xix.), underneath the juniper tree ? Are you requesting for yourself that you might die ? Because things are so bad, and everything seems to be going to pieces, and before very long Jezebel will wipe you off the face of the earth ! Do you know God's thoughts for a person like that ? I would like to give a little light about the counsels, beloved friends,

but counsels are not entered into on the earth; you have to reach the mount of God to understand counsel; and the way is long, "As the heavens are higher than the earth." An angel came and touched Elijah and said, "Arise and eat," and he looked and saw a cake baken and a cruse of water. It is a beautiful picture. The cake baken suggests the meat offering, which brings before us a Man who could tread the pathway here and in the most adverse circumstances that could come across any man could rise in the spirit of His soul to the very highest point of enjoyment. Just contemplate Christ when He views all His mighty works come to naught—all His energies spent in vain—at that time saying, "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." That is the meat-offering. And Elijah woke up and saw the cake baken and a cruse of water, and he "did eat and drink and laid him down again." And the angel of the Lord touched him a second time and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee," and he arose and did eat and drink, and he went in the strength of that meat till he came to Horeb—the mount of God. He was fed to climb that mountain and to get an outlook from the top. And what do you think he saw? He saw the final destruction of Jezebel. He saw the complete overthrow of all her principles and ways; and I tell you something else he saw—he saw the rise of a better man than himself. He saw looming before his soul

a man that was going to have a double portion of his spirit, and he came down from the mount and anointed Elisha. I wish we could get to the mount of God! The effect would be that all the spiritual enjoyment of what we have would be passed on to someone else to be carried on with increasing measure after we have gone home. I should like to see the Lord raising up amongst His people those who enter into the heavenly position and who carry it out in the spirit and power of Elijah. But, remember this, you have to reach Horeb to do that, for in the mount of God you marvel that God ever took you up at all, and are delighted to discover that what you thought was going to pieces when you crept under your juniper tree—the testimony that you thought was failing—is going to fill the earth with the glory of a man that is better than yourself.

Now let me come to the New Testament. John vi. is the crucial point. The Lord contemplates there what I might speak of as our great difficulty. See verse 62: "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before." The point here is ascension. The manna was very good for the wilderness, but you could not ascend if you had fed only on the manna and had enjoyed it and appreciated it every day. What sort of food do you think you can ascend on? The strength of the life of the Man that has gone up. He says, "I am the bread of God that came down from heaven." Now I would like to say this: It is a long ascent. Do not be discouraged. I love that passage in the Old Testament—when Abraham and Isaac his son went

up the mountain, we read, "And they went both of them together"; and the lad enquiring on the way to the top, "My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" He would see that at the top—but it is a long way up. The Bread of God is the life of the Man that came down, and which when appropriated gives you strength in your soul to take the journey to join Him in spirit where He is. We are going to be with Him. We are going to ascend and to join the Man who is at the top. But look, He has not forgotten the journey, He has not forgotten the way home, nor that His people need consolation and consideration on the way home. This brings me to what I want to speak of—the Supper. In I. Corinthians you have got the food. Do you know the kind of food contemplated there? You are fed on the affections of the Man who is at the top. And do you know the object of feeding on the affections of the Man who is at the top? It is that before you consummate the journey and join Him actually where He is, you might reach Him in His affections and give Him the pleasure of your company before you are with Him for ever.

Now just let me touch on the incident for a moment. It says that "the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed" took bread. Allow me to say a word in regard to this. What is the idea of betrayed? Is it the thought of Christ dying for me? No, He did die for me; but it does not say the same night that He died for me; it is the same night in which He was betrayed. You do not mean

to say anyone ever betrayed Him? Yes, and someone, too, who had companied with Him and knew the secret longings of His soul as He had been free to express them. "His own familiar friend" betrayed Him. What made him betray Him? That he might make a little money out of it, and he sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. Christendom has betrayed Christ. All the vast outward show and splendour and glory around us and which appeals to people is bought at the expense of Christ. Oh, that the spirit of God might call us out of it; and the only road out of it is to enter into His affections now.

Well, it was the *same* night—it was while the pressure of it was on His spirit that He took bread. Why? Was the Lord going back to the Melchizedek idea who brought forth bread? No, that was not before His mind. Melchizedek strengthened Abraham in *body*; but the Lord wants to strengthen His people in *affection*. So He says, "This is My body." Think of the blessed Lord with that little company—it is not that He has the slightest shadow of a doubt as to their joining Him at the top, but He craved the company of their affection before He had them physically with Himself, and He touches them and says, "My body for you." He says, as it were, "I want to get you in your affections near enough to Me—to be so identified with Me in your affections—that you are consciously with Me." Oh, it is very fine! And then He says, "For as often." I like that. It does not matter if you do it forty million times it is never going to change in its sweet-

ness. "As often as ye eat this bread." People say sometimes familiarity spoils a thing. Not so with the Supper; it develops affections; you cannot do it too often, and every time afresh you come into the presence of a love that in the most trying moment is active in relation to the saints. I think of these words, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." Beloved, when He comes again He will, like Melchizedek of old, strengthen the love of the brethren. But before He returns He is going to be joined by a company at the top. That is the rapture. They are going to make the ascent. They are not afraid of it; they have the Bread of God which is the present portion and food of the heavenly company. They have been fed by the love of the Man to whom they were the special objects of affection, and the effect of that food is that they join Him in affection there. That is Christ's portion till He comes back again. I would be quite satisfied if the spirit of God would awaken an exercise in our hearts that there might be a commensurate answer in the responsive love of His people, for His Name's sake.

## THE OUTLOOK OF THE HEAVENLY.

Rev. i., 9-18; iv., 1; xiii., 1-2; xvii., 1-3;  
xxi., 9-11.

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One of the proper effects of being nourished spiritually is seen in ability to distinguish things that differ. You will find from experience, if you like to pursue the moral history of people defective in spiritual vision, that at some time in their history they have not been properly nurtured, and as a consequence there is a lack in power to perceive or see things according to God. Now what I dwelt on last night was the question of food, and you cannot very well deal with a more important question, but what I want to speak of to-night is the vision of the heavenly man. I take it that we know something of what it is to be nurtured by the affections of Christ, and the proper effect of that nourishment is clear spiritual perception is developed. There is nothing one would covet more for the people of God than this—having their eyes open to see the vision of the Almighty. We sometimes sing, "To look beyond the long dark night and hail the coming day." Well, it is a great thing if we are able to look beyond the long dark night and to hail the coming day—not only hail it, but to distinguish its features and to recognise what is coming. If you let your eye drop from viewing such a blessed scene, then you will be able to take a spiritual account of all here in this scene. Let me say one word in regard to

sight: It is a very interesting thing. The first heavenly man we read of in Scripture was told to lift up his eyes and to take a survey. "Look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward." Beautiful it was. God called him to look, and promised him that he should possess all that he saw—the whole outlook. That is one of the greatest principles in Scripture in regard to sight. God never calls His people to see anything but He intends them to possess it. If you have ever been encouraged to take account of something in that way, do not rest content till you have it. It is His pleasure not only to bring things before the range of our spiritual vision, but to bring us into the things we have seen. "All the land which thou seest to thee will I give it (Gen. xiii., 15). You may say it is a strong statement, because we are called to see Jesus; but God is never going to stop till every beloved saint is like that Blessed One. "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," and hence in the Epistle to the Hebrews the spirit of God records the fact that "we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour." That is God's great end for His people—we are to be conformed to the image of His Son—we are going to bear the image of the heavenly—to be like that blessed Man who brought the light of heavenly things to our soul. Now that is the first outlook. Abraham's outlook was due to the heavenly calling having a place in his heart. Abraham says to Lot: You can choose whichever place you like as far as I am concerned. It is of very little moment

to me where I am located on earth. I am looking for a city which hath foundation whose builder and maker is God. And when the conversation was over God said to Abraham: Come here, I will give you an outlook; just you take a look round. And he looked over everything Lot had, and far beyond it, miles beyond the wealthiest earthly man that ever lived.

I take you now a point further, and come to Moses on Pisgah, from which mountain God gave him a view of the promised land. It is not a question of the heavenly calling with him. Here you come to a man who nurses in his affections the *glory* that the heavenly was going to bring to God. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter because he saw glory connected with the heavenly that never could be reached by the earthly. God said to him, "Get thee up unto the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward and southward and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes." "The Lord shewed him all the land . . . unto the utmost sea." He gave him a sight of the inheritance and its wealth, and of His ability to establish His people and to place them there for ever. I give you one other instance. It was a man of God in difficult days; I refer to Daniel. The pressure of things was great; the failure of God's people had led to their being carried captive; the Babylonish power had risen and controlled things, and the remnant of that glorious people who came out of Egypt were a few slaves in Babylon: They had conducted themselves so well that some of them had been put into places

of prominence : they had been submissive and respectful ; they had adorned the doctrines of the God of Israel to such an extent that they had been promoted to honourable positions in Babylon ; and one of these was Daniel ! What filled the vision of his soul do you think ? He saw Jerusalem in all its glory. Three times a day did that man of God bend his knee at an open window, towards a heap of stones ! It is true Jerusalem was then but a ruin, but if you had asked him why—he would have said, “ I look beyond these stones to that which God will yet establish, when that city will become the joy of the whole earth—the city of the great thing—when the stone cut out without hands will break in pieces all the kingdoms of men, and itself shall stand for ever.”

These are the outlooks of Old Testament men, and I might multiply instances, but these three will suffice to illustrate my thoughts.

Will you be surprised if I tell you that none of these got a glimpse of what the heavenly man sees now. Do not undervalue what they saw, but we in Christianity are privileged to see what stands related to what is behind all that they saw. Such is the heavenly man's vision, and there are two sides to it recorded in scripture. One side, whilst it is recorded, we are incapable in our present condition of entering into. A “ man in Christ,” we read in II. Cor. xii., was caught up to the third heaven, and he saw and heard things—which it is not allowed to man to utter—it was an absolute impossibility to frame language to express them. They were, as another has said, “ communications not suited to this lower world and

our mortal condition." If you were to go to the best dictionary on earth to try to get the meaning of such expressions as "into your affections" or "coming together," you would fail to find it. Out of poor earthly language we try to frame the things that belong to the heavenly—we speak of "coming in touch with the thing," and the Professor of languages says, "What a monstrous expression!" Yes, but he does not understand the language because he does not know the thing. Spiritual realities cannot be conveyed by human language. By and by we shall learn the heavenly language. We cannot find words now to express them. "Bringing the Lord into presence" is another expression we sometimes use. Look up the dictionary meaning of the words one after the other, and you are in blank dismay. Ah, but I say—get the *thing* itself; that gives the key to the language. Just think of a condition of things that is so thoroughly in accord with the affections of Christ that He can say I am at home there. Paul is the great vessel of the "in Christ" idea, but remember when the apostle refers to that side he says, "Whether in the body I know not or out of the body I know not."

I turn now to another side of the heavenly vision that is connected with being in the body, and it is that side I had before me in reading the passages in the book of Revelation, for that is what Revelation deals with. It says, "I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation." There it is not a question of not knowing whether in the body or out of the body. John was not on that line then. He

was a prisoner in the island of Patmos, under a power that would only have been too glad to submerge all that was of God. What brought him there? He was there for the testimony of Jesus Christ and the word of God. John speaks in the course of the book of various standpoints from which he took a view of things. There are five standpoints that govern the book of Revelation. This book is the most interesting one to me in the New Testament, because it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him to shew unto His servants—that there should not be a single thing occur or a single incident arise that His servants would not have the end as well as the beginning of it—a complete solution of it before them. The Lord sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John. Why to John? Because he was nearest to Him in affection, and that is what we covet. He was the one privileged to have these things shown to him. The first view he gets is a view of Christ officially. But note first, and it is of great importance, John says, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice.” I wish to make this remark in regard to the expression “behind me.” I believe it has reference to what is past—not to what is coming but to what is past. It is a past review that is in the mind of the writer. But the most important expression in that verse in regard to the heavenly is this (it is difficult to render), “I became in Spirit.” It is the normal condition of a heavenly man. If a heavenly man were brought down to this earth he would touch earthly things as abnormal, but if you allow him to be free, he will be

“in Spirit.” The Lord revealed Himself to him as “I am He that liveth and was dead.” That blessed Man is the One who will live or ever and ever. Speaking reverently, it was abnormal for that Man to become dead; but that is the standpoint from which the book is written, so that when John looks back the past is all the past, and he gets a view of Christ as the One who became dead but now arrayed in such majesty and glory that he can deal with every moral question with unerring judgment, and in a way absolutely suitable to the glory of God. But the view is too much for John, he fell at his feet as dead, but Jesus laid his right hand upon him. If I may use the illustration without abusing it, John might have been like a four-footed beast in the presence of that majesty and glory, but the moment the right hand of Jesus was put upon him, there was found in John something that was in sympathy with the One walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. There was the heavenly in John, and so he takes a right account of himself in the presence of the judicial glory of Christ. Which one of us could stand in the majesty of such a presence, and view our past history with anything but shame? I should be sorry for the person who stood in the presence of Christ judging officially and said, I am fit for it. We have to be in the presence of such majesty to regret the deviations from the heavenly path, the petty jealousies, the failures and earthly pride we have allowed, but the moment we touch Him we know there is a resource, for He is the One who says, “I am He that liveth and *became dead.*” He

“became dead” in order that all that is unsuitable to Him in us might be removed for ever. He “became dead” to that end. That is one view of the heavenly man. If we took thus a true account of ourselves, then Church history would be a very simple thing to us. We could view its failures and its breakdowns, but I tell you what would impress you in the view—the overwhelming importance of what is precious to Christ. “I will,” “I will,” “I will”; every time He says “I will” it is in relation to something He loves. We look over the history of the ruin and the failure, but we can value His “I will.” It is the vision of the Heavenly Man. We see what He values in the midst of the general breakdown, and if we are true to that line we are humble enough to accept the position. You would hear “a great voice”—as it were of a “trumpet talking” (chap. iv., 1)—a call like a trumpet, and the call would be to take your place in the heaven—a voice which said: “Come up hither.” Think of being called to “Come up hither.” Have you ever heard the call? People talk to me sometimes about hearing the Gospel call. Thank God for the Gospel call. “Come unto Me all ye that labour.” Very blessed! but there are other calls. Have you ever heard a voice saying, “Come up hither?”—an invitation to rise in your affections to the spot where that blessed Man is and to get a view from that vantage point. From that spot do you know what you would see? You would see the whole history of God’s ways as Creator and Redeemer, the solution of the question of good and evil, the rapture

of the man-child, the delivery of Israel and the temple measured and the worshippers measured—everything secured that is for the pleasure of God. You could not see that from earth. If you were connected with the present conflict and confusion, you would only get a confused view and be perplexed; but if you go up thither the first thing that would impress you would be the Person on the throne, then the 24 elders, the living creatures, and next to these their movements. We need to see these things if we are to be preserved from mixing up things that differ and intermingling things that run on separate lines. We are called to “Set our affections on things above.” If we have the Heavenly Man in our affections, the Spirit will carry them to the place they belong to and give us to see things from the divine standpoint.

Turn now to chapter xiii.: “I stood upon the sand of the sea.” A most suggestive scripture! We were speaking on another occasion of national spirit—an Irishman, a Frenchman, etc. If we are on that ground we are *in* the sea. The heavenly man is to be on the seashore. You remember the beautiful incident in Luke v.—The first time in the history of the known world when there was a Man on this earth outside of every nationality. (He was out of Heaven.) Jesus stood on the seashore. He looked over the vista of nations, as it were, and claimed every man for God. John says, “I stood upon the sand of the sea.” There was absolute refusal of any national right, or position, or place. Do you know what he saw? He saw the effect of

national spirit on nations. What is the national spirit going to produce? The beast! He saw a beast rise up out of the sea, and he gives you a description of it: "having seven heads and ten horns and upon his horns ten crowns. . . The beast which I saw was like unto a leopard." I tell you what I understand by the leopard—just as well to keep to Scripture for your interpretations of figures or symbols—it cannot change its spots. I will tell you how you will distinguish the beast. It has spots on it. I know they have tried to rub them off—Socialism, infidelity, and every other "ism" have tried to wipe them off and to invent a soap that would remove them. The beast came out of the sea, and it is distinguished because of its spots. Its movements are subtle—it walked like a bear. If you were to watch its influence it is satanic—it has power like a lion. If you get behind it you will find Satan himself. "The dragon gave him his power." That is the movements of nations. They will become the battle-ground for the development of what is satanic. The Lord deliver us from the national spirit. We little think when we take these things up in the pride of the flesh what is behind them. But if we have stood upon the seashore, upon the sand of the sea, and got a clear and undisguised view of the waters and something rising out of them which presently takes distinct form, we shall be able to discern its moral character—it is a leopardess. John beheld another beast coming up out of the earth. The earth comes into view, and we get something that takes a religious form, which

looks like Christ—"he had two horns like a lamb." But what does it speak like? It speaks like a dragon. I do not wish to detain you on that point. It is an important thing that the heavenly man should have his view of things from the right standpoint. He is called to get out of his country and his kindred and his father's house, and remembering his heavenly calling, like his blessed Master, standing on the seashore while watching the rise of the beast, is moved by the evangelical spirit, and, entering into a boat, sat down and taught the people out of the ship. You may use the boat if you do not get into it out of the sea. If you get into the boat from the seashore, then let the evangelical idea come out and teach the heavenly idea, not to any special nation but to all men.

I pass on to chapter xvii. Here we come to a fresh scene of view—perhaps the most serious in the book. That is in the wilderness. "So he carried me away in spirit into the wilderness." The wilderness is a moral thought that is of very great importance. It is the spot where the devil tries to divert the heavenly man from the heavenly idea. That is where Satan tempted the One whom the spirit of God led into the wilderness. As I understand, the thought of the wilderness in Scripture is that there is nothing grows there for heaven. It is not that people do not prosper there; but there is nothing for heaven there. Are you surprised that the Scripture says that the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness? So it is recorded in Mark's Gospel, "The Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness . . .

and He was with the wild beasts. You need not be surprised. The Spirit of that heavenly Man was loth to take that road, but it was essential in the ways of God. And now He having been there before us, we need not fear if the Spirit takes us there to give us a sight of the rise and fall and complete destruction of the whole Babylonish system. You see we must admit this, that the national spirit is controlled by a spirit of pride, and in Babylon you have the spirit of pride—"I sit a queen and am no widow"; I have produced the race of kings; I have produced riches; "I have never known sorrow." That is the spirit of pride, and you could not see it unless you have got into the wilderness. And the Spirit took him into the wilderness, and he looked out and saw this monstrosity. And the Spirit of God gives you the thing in its whole hideousness. I would not like to discourage you, but I would seriously warn you to keep free from the spirit of pride that builds up a religious system that is going to take a place on this earth that is positively monstrous, that is obnoxious to God, and destructive to mankind.

I pass on to chapter xxi., where we get a beautiful picture—the heavenly city. In chapter xvii. we see that it was one of the seven angels which had the seven vials who talked with John. In verse 9 of this chapter it is also one of these, but an addition is made—"vials full of the seven last plagues." I think that is very fine. When He is talking in relation to the woman who sat upon the scarlet-coloured beast and going to give the heavenly man

the view of destruction, he has got the woman in his mind, but when He is going to talk of the heavenly system He wants the woman obliterated from our minds, and therefore it is added "full of the *seven last plagues*." That question is over. The system is judged—let it be out of your mind; let the Spirit of God have the system up, judged and done with in your history. It will be some little time before the thing will be up and done with in the ways of God; that will come in its due time; but I like the words of the Lord Jesus as He views the system from a spiritual standpoint—"Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." That is the platform of the heavenly man. Now while this is going on and while you have these two views, what would be the Spirit's activity? The Spirit's activity would be to carry you away from the whole thing to a great and high mountain. You get light there. The first time that the Lord took His people to the top of a mountain it was to instruct them—"Blessed are the poor in spirit." Here John is carried away in the Spirit to a mountain to be shewn the bride—the Lamb's wife. It was not now to be shewn the unsuitable things. No, but—the Lamb's wife. "And He carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem," etc. Just think of the words of Scripture, "That great city!" The heavenly man belongs to a great city. He does not belong to it by having paid a great sum. He belongs to it by birth. He is born in connection with the greatest city in the whole

universe of God. "He showed me that great city."

God in His ways has been teaching us as heavenly citizens what separation from evil is, what holiness is, because this great city is not an earthly Jerusalem but the *holy* Jerusalem—a Jerusalem that is absolutely in accord with the love of God. The history of the heavenly man on earth is a suffering history, because the city of which he is a citizen has to supply all the needs of a world that has departed from Him and to touch it with the sympathetic hand of the Creator by Whom it has never for one moment been forgotten. Beloved friends, do you know what gives her the right and ability to do it? There are two simple words which answer that question: She comes down *from God*. I wish I had spiritual power to convey to you what I understand by these words, "from God." People are impressed sometimes when they meet a man who has come from the King, or from the lieutenant, but this city comes down *from God*. What has she been doing there? She has been hearing the things that it is not lawful for a man to utter. She has been in the secret of the divine mind and in the supreme pleasure of heaven, in spite of all the ruin and chaos that Satan had brought about. But out of it all has come the material for the heavenly company.

What a dignity, what a pleasure, what a privilege to belong to the Man who "became dead" that He might teach our hearts that as we have borne the image of the earthly we shall bear the image of the heavenly. The Lord encourage our hearts to the end that we may get His views of all things.