

LONDON CONFERENCE.

MAY 30th to June 2nd, 1936.

SATURDAY EVENING. *Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.*

Hymns sung : 262, 116, 200, 296, 23, 5.

Scriptures read : Heb. xiii. 6-8, 13-21.

LORD'S DAY MORNING. *Prayer Meeting, 7.30 a.m.*

Hymns sung : 22, 280, 207.

Breaking of Bread, 11 a.m.

Hymns sung : 217, 139, 384 (vv. 4, 5), 286, 147, 1, 321, 5, 189.

Scriptures read : Song of Solomon i. 1-5, ii. 1-4, vi. 3 ;
John xiii. 1 ; Luke xxii. 7-20 ; 1 Pet. iii. 18-22 ;
1 Cor. xi. 23-26 ; Is. xxvi. 8 ; 1 John iv. 19.

LORD'S DAY AFTERNOON. *Bible Reading, 3 p.m.*

Hymn 392. John xvii. Hymn 200. Heb. i.

In this Epistle our eyes are directed to the glories of the Person of Christ as God and as Man.

The order of the Epistles in the New Testament, as of the Gospels, is a divine arrangement, and they lead up to the presentation of the Lord as Son of God in this Epistle. Hebrews tells us we must begin with heaven, and look above to see Jesus, through Whom we have acceptance there. He was rejected, and we shall be too. His glory is before us in heaven, and He will bring

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us there. We have completeness there, in and with Christ Jesus our Lord.

Christ the Son is the great theme of the Epistle, the Son Who displaces Judaism, which had proved a failure. But pious Jews who believed the gospel found it difficult to shake off their associations with the temple sacrifices, and so they tried to supplement their allegiance to Christ by obedience to the ceremonies of the law of Moses. This Epistle is written to show how needless and impossible this is.

The apostle begins, not by showing the valuelessness of the ceremonies of the law, but the excellence of Christ; what more than what He is and has done can be necessary? The Son is set forth in a way that eclipses all that had been written before in the Old Testament. God has now come to us in the Person of His Son, and has thus made known His mind. Hence the past ways of His revelation become comparatively insignificant.

In the first two chapters the Lord is contrasted with angels, the intermediaries in past days: the law was received "by the disposition of angels" (Acts vii. 53), but Christ is infinitely above them. His glory is set forth in the first chapter as Son of God (*ver.* 2), as God (*ver.* 8), and as Jehovah (*ver.* 10)—yet He became man and suffered (*ver.* 3). In the second chapter He is presented as Man, the Son of man of Psalm viii. Then in the third and fourth chapters we have the Son of God contrasted with Moses as a mediator and declared to be the Head of God's house. The next contrast is with Aaron, who was the only means of approach to God in the tabernacle in the wilderness, the only one who could go into the Most Holy Place. It is noticeable how the apostle uses the Old Testament scriptures, showing how they provide for the introduction of something better than the law and foretell the superiority of the Messiah. When unfolding Church truth in the earlier Epistles, the apostle speaks by a special revelation of the Spirit, but here the Old Testament is

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brought forward by the same Spirit to show that Jesus is the Christ, and Christ the Son of God.

Ver. 1. The Epistle opens in a unique way, with "God," not "Paul," as in other Epistles. The object is to cause the reader to listen as in God's presence. Apostolic authority is not mentioned. Paul was almost certainly the author. Peter refers to Paul's Epistle to the Jews (2 Pet. iii. 15). But Paul knew his place as a servant: he was the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 9), so he does not speak to the Hebrews as an apostle, but says they have an Apostle and High Priest of their profession, Christ Jesus (Heb. iii. 1).

Ver. 2. God has communicated His mind to us by a Person: not only "through," but "in" Him. We are not called upon to worship the scriptures, but Christ, the living embodiment and final presentation of all that had been written in former days. Do we, in our daily Christian intercourse, realise that we have to do with a Person? When He is before our hearts, difficulties disappear, and pride is humbled. We all, not only Jews, become proud of our dead works when our eyes are off the Lord. Let us forget the things that are behind, and look forward to Christ in glory. God is jealous of Christ's honour, as we see in Mark ix. 7, where He calls on all to hear Him Whom He has sent. Then the heavens were opened, and the Father looked down upon the Son on earth; here, we on earth are called to look to the Son in the heavens.

We may contrast the phrase "appointed heir of all things," with the cry of the wicked husbandmen, "This is the *heir* . . . the *inheritance* shall be ours" (Mark xii. 7). Here is the answer: He is *heir*, not only of the vineyard, but of all things, on earth and in the heavens.

Ver. 3. Again Christ's Person is brought before us in glory: He is one with God in glory and in power, not only having made all things, but upholding them.

Vers. 8-10. Christ is addressed as God and as Jehovah by God Himself. The quotations are from Psalms xlv. and cii., but in Hebrews we get the Spirit's

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application of the Old Testament scripture, and not literal quotations. Ps. xlv. 7 ("Therefore, O God, Thy God hath anointed Thee," marginal reading) makes it clear that God is addressing His Son as God. Psalm cii. deals with Messiah being cut off in the midst of His days; Heb. i. 10 is a combination of *vers.* 12 and 25 of the Psalm.

Chapter ii. ver. 9. We have an illustration of seeing Jesus in Stephen, who reflected the glory he beheld. After Stephen's death the Hebrew Christians were scattered abroad from Jerusalem as homeless strangers, and so they are given Christ in heaven as the Centre to look to. A similar sentiment appears in iii. 1 and xii. 2. It was a specific message by the apostle to them.

ii. ver. 17. The high priest is the one by whom the worshipper is represented in the presence of God. He stands between him and the Most Holy Place, and undertakes all that is necessary to fit the worshipper for God and to present God to the worshipper. The fact that Christ comes out from God involves judgment for refusal to hear Him (ii. 3): "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh" (Heb. xii. 25).

Hymn 150.

LORD'S DAY EVENING. *Preaching of the Gospel, 7 p.m.*

Mr. G. Koll.

Hymns: "Oh, what a Saviour, that He died for me," "I heard the voice of Jesus say."

Luke xix. 1-10: "*The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*"

It is well known that in the four Gospels the precious Person of our blessed Saviour is represented to us from four different points of view. In Matthew we see Him as the King of the Jews, in Mark as God's humble Servant, in Luke as the Son of man and in John as the Eternal Son of God, the Word Who was without a beginning, God blessed for ever, the Only-Begotten of the Father.

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In Luke, on the other hand, He is presented as very Man. We read how He was laid as a babe in the manger, and how He first went to Jerusalem at twelve years of age. Just as, when Adam and Eve sinned, fled from God, and hid amongst the trees of the garden, God in His infinite grace did not leave them to their fate but came and sought them, so in Luke we see God taking upon Him the form of man, in Christ Jesus, and seeking men.

In this Gospel man's lost condition is put forward in a special way. We have the story of the great sinner who wept at the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her hair (vii. 36-50). Then we read the parable of the Good Samaritan (x. 30-37). A certain man (we may say, mankind as a whole) went from Jerusalem, the place where God's name was, where He was worshipped, down to Jericho, away from God to the place of a curse. Even to this day the road winds, ever farther down, and by the roadside are many caves, the haunt until a few years ago of Arab robbers who attacked people coming down that way. Just as the man in the parable was stripped by thieves, who left him half-dead by the wayside, so man's condition to-day is helpless, unable to save himself.

Again, we have the parable of the prodigal son, peculiar to this Gospel. There, too, we see man's condition by nature, far away from his Father, amongst the swine. We read also of the conversion of the thief on the cross. All this shows, against the dark background of man's ruin, the message in shining letters that the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Jericho is an oasis in the barren wilderness of the Dead Sea borders: it is like a garden with date palms and olive trees, because Elisha's well is there. After Jericho had been destroyed by Joshua, because the measure of its inhabitants' sins had become full, Joshua pronounced a curse on anyone who should rebuild the city. But in Ahab's days, when people did not care for

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God's word, Hiel rebuilt Jericho, and was smitten by the curse. When Elisha came to the city, he threw salt into the waters and they were healed, so that the ground was no longer barren.

Jericho is thus a type of the world. It seems a beautiful place, a city of palm trees, but the curse of sin, misery, sickness and death is resting on it: for God said to Adam, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." Yet the Lord Jesus came down to this cursed place and passed through it, doing good, and healing those oppressed of the devil.

Zacchæus, too, is typical of many in the world. He was in a good position, and rich, but he was unhappy. The world cannot satisfy the human heart, for there are empty corners, as when you put a ball into a triangular space. His name signified pure, but he felt he was a great sinner: so though many are outwardly virtuous, all have sinned and come short of God's glory.

Perhaps Zacchæus had heard John the Baptist preaching, telling the people, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none," "Exact no more than that which is appointed," and "Do violence to no man" (Luke iii. 10-14). Possibly he reformed his life, repented of his sins, and tried to keep the law: for example, Exodus xxii. 1 says that if a man has stolen a sheep, he must restore four; so Zacchæus restored fourfold, and gave half his possessions to the poor: and yet he did not get peace that way. Salvation had not yet come to his house.

A soul under conviction, anxious about salvation, must repent, confess to the Lord Jesus, and make it up to any man he has wronged, but that is only the first step. Sins cannot be washed away by repentance and tears, but only by the precious blood of Christ. He must look away from his wretched self to Him Who bore his sins on the cross.

Zacchæus had probably heard about Jesus of Nazareth healing the sick, and wished to see Him, perhaps to tell Him his misery: and one day he heard

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the glad tidings that He was passing through Jericho. But there were obstacles : he could not see Him, because he was a little man : but he did not give in in despair. Satan will try to hinder a soul seeking peace, but he must conquer the obstacles.

Zacchæus, though a high official, did not mind appearing ridiculous in the eyes of the multitude, who hated him as a traitor, by climbing into the sycamore tree. He was not ashamed, for he had but one desire—to see Jesus. How his heart must have throbbed when he saw the Lord looking up ! And the Lord Jesus had not only seen him, but knew his name. So the Lord knows all about every sinner, all his secrets, all his sins : and yet He loves and seeks him.

So we find a seeking Saviour and a seeking sinner, perfectly suited to each other. Zacchæus ran ahead in his hurry to see Jesus, but the Lord is in a still greater hurry to save him—"Come *quickly* down." And he bestowed a much greater blessing than Zacchæus expected ; He condescended to become his guest. What a wonderful Saviour we have !

The self-righteous Pharisees murmured, but Zacchæus did not quarrel with them. He knew that they were right in saying that the Lord had become the guest of a sinner. He did not try to justify himself, but told the Lord that he had a truly repentant heart. The Lord did not say "Because you are giving half of your goods to the poor, you will be saved," but "This day is salvation come to this house." Salvation came with the Lord Jesus.

An anxious soul, longing for peace and salvation, has only to open the door of his heart to the Lord Jesus, and he will be saved. When He cried on the cross, "It is finished," all the waves of God's wrath had gone over His guiltless head, and He had been punished for the iniquity of all who will believe in Him. The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.

Hymn : "Come, thou weary ! Jesus calls thee."

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MONDAY MORNING. *Prayer Meeting*, 7.30 a.m.

Hymns sung : 434, 174, 128.

Scriptures read : Col. iii. 1-4, 12-17 ; Heb. xiii. 12-15.

Open Meeting, 11 a.m.

Hymn 172.

Greetings from Mr. Matta Behnam (Egypt)—Ps. cxxxiii. ; the assembly in Cairo—Phil. iv. 21 ; Mr. A. Carpos and the assembly at Athens ; Mr. Muller (Paris)—Ps. cxxxiii. ; Mr. Tapernoux (Switzerland) ; Mr. E. Brockhaus (Germany)—Phil. ii. 1, 2 ; Mr. Augustin (Spain) ; Mr. Flower and the assembly at Melbourne—Eph. vi. 23, 24 ; Mr. Bentley and the assemblies in Sydney ; the brethren in Holland.

J.N.V. Phil. ii. 1, 2. "*Fellowship of the Spirit.*"

Fellowship is a precious thing, which we know best by experience, whether it be with the Father and with the Son (1 John i. 3), with Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. i. 9), or with one another, walking in the light (1 John i. 7), knowing that we are of one family in Christ. It is the one Spirit that keeps it alive.

Fellowship and communion are words of the same sense. Fellowship, or communion, is a state or condition, but one of activity. It is not only having common thoughts and common works and objects, but also, as "fellows," being united with one Person, and together looking for Him. We are in fellowship with the King of kings : how happy we should be ! If we were always full of it, and rejoicing in it, we should have no time for quarrelling and for thinking evil of our brethren. We should not need the apostle's exhortation in Phil. ii. 2 and 1 Cor. i. 10 : "Be of one mind," "all speak the same thing . . . be perfectly joined together in the same mind." Having the same love, and thinking and speaking the same thing, we should sustain each other, glorifying our Lord.

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It is striking that the expression, "called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord," is not in Ephesians, but in Corinthians, where the saints were not in a good spiritual state (1 Cor. i. 9). It is true of all believers: but we must walk in accordance with it, in humility and one-mindedness, loving one another. In 1 John i. 3 we are told that we have fellowship with the Father as well, that we may be full of joy because of the place we have by His grace. We have communion, or fellowship, also in 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, where we read, "We, being many, are one bread, one body." By the work of Christ we are all one with Him. Then, in Heb. i. 9, we have "God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." How wonderful that He Who came as Son of man has fellows, or brethren, and through Him we have fellowship with the Father!

The Epistle to the Philippians expresses Christian experience, joy and walk. In the first chapter we have, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain": not only is Christ my life, but He is my Object: my whole life consists of Christ. In the second chapter, Jesus Christ is our Pattern or Example, showing how humble and loving we should be in our daily walk. In the third, He is the believer's expectation; looking for Him, to be with Him for ever. And in the fourth chapter, He is the believer's strength. Without Him we can do nothing, but by His strength we can do all things.

Some time ago, my attention was drawn to the apostle's use of the word, fellowship, in each chapter of this Epistle. The first occurrence of the word is in i. 5, "your fellowship in the gospel." There must be the gospel message and the preachers of it; but this is not enough; there must also be fellowship with the gospel by all believers helping and praying. The Philippians thought of, and prayed for, the apostle and sent him money. So he knew that he was not alone, but that many were behind him, helping him. The

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preacher has his personal calling from the Lord, but we must help him by our deeds and words. Of course, if he says or does anything wrong, we must correct him, but in a loving way ; not speaking about him to others, but going to him personally. This would be real fellowship with him as a labourer.

The second thing is the fellowship of the Spirit (ii. 1). At Philippi there were " comfort of love " and " fellowship of the Spirit " exhibited practically, but they were not all of the same mind ; even two well-known, active sisters were quarrelling (iv. 2) ; and so the apostle adds, " Be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." They were not to be jealous, but to have something of the humility of Christ. They would fulfil the joy of the apostle if to all they had they added this real fellowship.

The third fellowship is more difficult—" the fellowship of His sufferings " (iii. 10). The apostle desired from the heart to experience the same life of suffering and death as his Lord had. We could not endure this alone, but we can do all things through Christ Who strengthens us.

Fourthly, we read, " Ye have well done, that ye did communicate (have fellowship) with my affliction " (iv. 14). It is a blessed thing to be a means in God's hands of help to others. The apostle rejoiced that the little meeting at Philippi was praying for him. So now the Lord's servants must use their gift, but we may pray for them, help them in every way, and think of them when they are in trouble ; so partaking of (having fellowship with) their sufferings. We must walk in the light, and do the will of the Lord, and then we can go on together in joy, and be a help to each other. What beautiful fellowship !

From Acts ii. 42 we see that the first thing for us is to hold fast the doctrine, but then we must go on in fellowship—not doing what we like, but having fellowship with one another. It is not enough to hold fast the doctrine and to continue attending the worship and

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prayer meetings ; we must also persevere in the fellowship of the apostles, seek the fellowship of our brothers and sisters, looking at them in Christ, and so losing sight of all their unlovable qualities. We should continue in fellowship, every day, not only on the Lord's day ; loving, visiting, praying, giving to each other.

In 2 Cor. xiii. 14 we read " the communion (fellowship) of the Holy Ghost be with you all." This is especially precious for us, because we are often weak like the Corinthians were. This word is preceded by " the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," without which there could be no fellowship for us with the Father and the Son ; and by " the love of God," proceeding from His heart, the source of all our blessings. The Holy Ghost has brought us together, united us with Christ, and God is dwelling amongst and in us.

There was not much of the grace of Christ in the hearts of the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi.), not much of the love of God (1 Cor. xiii.), not much of the fellowship of the Spirit (1 Cor. xiv.), but the apostle desired it for them. May we not use the prayer for ourselves, " The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with *us* all. Amen " ?

Hymn 192 : " Glory, honour, etc."

MONDAY AFTERNOON. *Brothers' Meeting*, 2 p.m.

Young People's Meeting, 2 p.m. *Address* by Mr. W. G. Turner.

Hymn 226. Matt. x. 1-4.

Among the followers of our Lord were many of whom we know scarcely anything. Even in the immediate circle of the apostles chosen specially by Him there are three of whom little more than their names is recorded : James the Less, Judas surnamed Thaddeus and Simon Zelotes.

Of the first of these we read that he was sometimes known as James the Less or rather James the Little

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(Mk. xv. 40), possibly because of his shortness of stature. Otherwise, so far as we can judge, he is entirely unknown, having no connexion with any of the other men of this name mentioned in the New Testament. He is a short man, like some other "big" men. Of the second of the trio a little more is given. His curious surname Thaddeus, being perhaps derived from a Hebrew word meaning praise, seems to point to the heartiness of his character. It was not his real name, but evidently tacked on to that of Judas as descriptive. So he is a hearty man. One sentence, a question to our Lord on the night of the betrayal (John xiv. 22), comprises the sole record of his utterances in the Gospels.

The final member of this obscure band, "Simon the Canaanite," "the Zealot," is quite unknown save for this name and reference. But as the Zealots are usually understood to be the fanatical party headed by Judas of Galilee (Acts v. 37), we may assume that this earnest man had his loyalty weaned from the Galilean revolutionary party and transferred to our Lord, probably through the preaching of the forerunner. He is a zealous, a strict man. Be this as it may, the very obscurity of the three obscure apostles enhances their interest for ourselves. We are not all "chief men among the brethren"; we are not all eloquent in speech. The lowlier lot of insignificance and obscurity both in the church and the world has been assigned to us. This is no cause for desponding, repining or complaining. The Lord's own path—He Who *was* the highest—was of His own choice a very lowly one, and "it is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master."

To these three, James, Judas (not Iscariot) and Simon, were not given the brilliant abilities and opportunities afforded to others of the apostolic band. Not for them the great occasions to which the other James with Peter and John was introduced by the Master. No, theirs was a place of comparative obscurity in the company of even those specially called to be with Him and to be sent forth by Him.

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But five priceless possessions were theirs :—

1. Companionship with Him—chosen to be with Him (Mk. iii. 14).
2. Grace to continue to the end (Lk. xxii. 28).
3. Benefit of His personal care and interest.
4. Promise of glory with Him hereafter in the regeneration (Mt. xix. 28).
5. Power to witness for Him by the Spirit when He came on each of them at Pentecost (Acts ii. 4).

We too, however lowly and insignificant, may rejoice in these same possessions : daily companionship with our Lord ; grace sufficient for all needs ; benefit of His unfailing interest and care for us ; promise of glory with Himself according to His own word in John xiv. ; xvii. ; and power to witness for Him now, since the Spirit has come and indwells us for this very purpose. Further, these three obscure apostles shared equally with the prominent members of the apostolic band in being alike princes in the kingdom of God (Mt. xix. 28) ; the foundation of the church of God (Ephes. ii. 20) ; and destined to have their names engraved in the city of God (Rev. xxi. 14). What encouragement the consideration of these characters affords all quiet workers in obscure places ; all who in God's providence are called to live and labour in the patient routine of daily duty to the Lord ; in tiny hamlets far removed from the hives of industry and centres of intellectual activities ; who seldom know the inspiration of fellowship in such gatherings as are here to-day.

Yet all true disciples have been chosen by the Lord to be with Him, to know His daily, life-long companionship ; they have been all called by Him to serve where, when and how He appoints ; and all are expected to be faithful to Him in days of growing unfaithfulness and difficulty.

There were the women “ who ministered to Him of their substance,” some highly placed and wealthy

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whose names are recorded : but there were also " many other women which came up with Him unto Jerusalem" (Mr. xv. 41). These are unnamed, but they loved Him, they followed Him, and they were known, loved and their service valued by Him.

In Phil. iv. 3, the apostle mentions some unnamed workers as " those women which laboured with me in the gospel . . . whose names are in the book of life." May our gracious Lord give us grace to gird up the loins of our minds, and from the consideration of these obscure servants of His to step forward cheerfully, hopefully to face our duty in the lowly, maybe lonely, spheres to which He has appointed us, never losing heart as we remember we have His daily companionship to cultivate and enjoy ; His sufficient grace to enable us to continue faithful to the end ; His unfailing interest and tender care ; His sure promise of glory with Himself hereafter ; and the present power of the Holy Spirit to witness for Him now.

Chosen—called—faithful. Short of stature, hearty and exuberant, or zealous and strict, there was a place for James the Less, Judas surnamed Thaddeus and Simon the Zealot, in the band of those whom He called in the days of His flesh to be His servants ; and so there remains to-day.

Hymn 224.

Meeting concerning the Lord's work abroad, 3 p.m.

Hymns 106, 436.

Letters were read from Mr. *Carpos*, giving an account of his visit to *Crete*, from Mrs. *Carpos*, telling of the distribution of flowers and texts in hospitals in *Athens*, and from Miss *Nutter*, regarding the sisters' work in *Egypt*.

Mr. *Voorhoeve* read John xv. 11 and spoke of Mr. Hengeveld's house-to-house work in *Flanders*, and of his restoration from a critical illness, of the continued blessing through the Bible Kiosk in *Brussels*, and of the

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blessing resulting from the distribution by a Dutch Roman Catholic lady of a book exhorting her co-religionists to read the Bible. He also spoke of the work of the tent missions in *Holland*.

Mr. *Bender* spoke of the work of the younger brethren and sisters at *the Hague* in distributing flowers and tracts to their neighbours' houses, singing hymns in the streets, sending tracts into the prisons, and visiting the ships in *Rotterdam* harbour and gipsy encampments.

Mr. *Koll* read Acts xiv. 26, 27 ; xv. 3 and gave a short account of his work in *China*, where he went as a missionary in 1912.

Mr. *Dolamore* spoke of his visit to the *West Indies*, reading Acts xiv. 26-28, xv. 36 and John iv. 35-39, and mentioning his calls at Barbados, St. Vincent, Dominica, St. Kitts and Trinidad.

Young People's Meeting, 6.15 p.m. Address by Mr. J. Weston.

Hymn 78.

Rom. xiv. 10, " *We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ* " ; 2 Cor. v. 10, " *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.* "

These words were addressed to " the saints, " but they do not mean that believers are to come into judgment, for the Son, to Whom the Father has committed all judgment, has said, " He that heareth My word . . . shall *not come into judgment* " (John v. 24). Nor is it a question of the Christian's sins : they were dealt with completely long ago, when Christ answered for them, and they will be remembered no more for ever. The knowledge of this gives settled peace. The grace and goodness of God, which have drowned all our sins in the sea of His forgetfulness through the work of Christ on the cross, will be our theme of wonder throughout all eternity.

At the great white throne God will deal with men about their sins : each will be judged according to his

works and cast into the lake of fire: that is "the second death," the final condemnation of the persons who rejected Christ. But here, not persons, but the *works* of believers, are referred to. The whole course will pass under review before Christ's judgment seat. Within a very short period after Christ comes, we shall be arraigned before Him and each one will have to give an account of "that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." It is a comfort to know that the Judge will be our Eternal Lover.

That no great time will elapse between the coming of the Lord and our appearing before Him may be gathered from Rev. xxii. 12, "I come quickly; and *My reward is with Me*, to give every man according as his work shall be," and also from Luke xiv. 14, "Thou shalt be recompensed *at the resurrection* of the just." The judgment seat of Christ seems to precede the marriage of the Lamb, according to Rev. xix. 7, 8. It will be the first event after our arrival in heaven, and our introduction to the Father and the Father's House.

"For we *must* all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." "Must" is not often used concerning us in this dispensation, for we are under grace, not law. But here the apostle says, "We *must* all appear." We are here in responsibility, and are accountable to God for our service, for every Sunday School class we have taken, for each time we have preached, for every day we have lived, for all we have done. It will go hard with those who have been unfaithful, who have pleased others instead of the Lord. Everyone *must* give account of himself to God.

Let us not care for man's frown or smile, but remember our responsibility to answer to Christ for every day. Let us remember in our preaching that we are dealing with souls who are going into eternity, and that we shall be called to answer before Christ for our testimony to them. Whether we receive praise or blame now matters little; "the day shall declare it"

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(1 Cor. iii. 13). Let us not think about rewards here, but, like the apostle, about the crown "which the Lord shall give in that day" (2 Tim. iv. 8). Our meetings would be different if all who ministered had the judgment seat of Christ before them. It seemed Paul's goal, on which he kept his eye. It affected his whole life, and governed his service. He was like a student living for the examination day and putting all distractions aside, or like a swimmer straining every muscle, with his eye upon the cup or prize.

"We must all *appear* before the judgment seat of Christ." "Appear" should rather be rendered "be made manifest." We all appear here, but we are not *manifested* here; but before the judgment seat of Christ we shall not only be present, but what we really were shall be made manifest.

The apostle goes on to say, "That every one may receive . . . according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Believers are saved eternally, but what an impetus here to do something for Him Who has done *all* for us! In Col. iii. 24 we read, "Of *the Lord* ye shall receive." His pierced hand will hold out the reward. As Moses had respect unto the recompense of the reward (Heb. xi. 26), let us have it continually before us for His glory, so that we may have a crown to cast at His feet, for He is worthy.

"Whether good or bad": if we have done badly, there will be loss, that is, loss of reward. The apostle John speaks of being "ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John ii. 28), and Paul speaks of suffering loss (1 Cor. iii. 15). What a dishonour this would be to Him and what shame to us! Much remains to be done. What might not we accomplish if we were living wholly for the Lord! Now, not in eternity, is our opportunity to prove our love to Him. "The night cometh, when no man can work" (John ix. 4). "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly" (2 Cor. ix. 6): let nothing hinder you in your devotion to the Lord's service.

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Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. Then will come the reaper's reward, the harvest home. Many will be bowed down with the weight of their sheaves. They have laboured much for their Lord; they now stand before Him, to receive a reward from His hands.

We have a great opportunity before us: the world is thirsting for it knows not what, and men's hearts are "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke xxi. 26). We carry with us the secret of true happiness and peace and can help them: let us bring the gospel to them. The saints of God are hungry for food: let us feed them. The Lord help us to go and do exploits for Him Who has done so much for us.

MONDAY EVENING. *Address* by Mr. W. J. Hocking,
7 p.m.

Hymns 222, 48.

Rev. iii. 1-14, 21, 22.

I should like to call your attention to the way in which our Lord presents Himself to the assembly in these verses, and to the rewards He promises to the overcomers. The figures of the seven stars and the seven candlesticks indicate special features of the churches as light-bearers in the world, with accompanying responsibility.

Earlier in the New Testament, we have the church presented from God's point of view, and as the workmanship of Christ. In Matthew xvi., the Lord declared He would build His church, and in the Acts there is the historical record of its formation. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, but it still remains in the world as a witness for God. The Book of Revelation, however, shows that God will eventually deliver the world from the powers of evil, and introduce righteousness and peace.

In the beginning of this Book, the Lord visits His

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assemblies, and examines their behaviour as representing Him, the Faithful and True Witness. He walks among them arrayed as the Judge, with eyes of flame, and with the sword of His mouth, searching the hearts of those that bear His name. The result of His visit is contained in the seven epistles. Therein is a picture of the declension of the church from the purity and perfection of Pentecost to the loathsome condition of Laodicea, which will be finally rejected by Him as worthless and corrupt.

But we to-night commence with *Sardis*, a state externally of active works and diligent procedure, but inwardly of death—dead at the core. They had a name to live, but were dead. Historically, this epistle refers to the time when Protestantism sprang up in the days of Luther. There was then a great revival of human learning. The intellect awoke from sleep, a good thing from man's point of view, but evil in its effect upon the church's testimony for God. Rationalism has led to blasphemy of God and His Son, and to a denial of the Bible as a divine revelation of truth.

To the failing church in *Sardis* the Lord exhibits His sevenfold perfections. He speaks to them as "*He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars.*" He is thus competent to supply all the deficiencies of His church. *Sardis* is outwardly decent, but really dead. But the Lord has the seven Spirits for fullness of life in the exercise of wisdom and righteousness. In the administration of the coming kingdom, the Son of man will act in the power of the seven spirits enumerated in Isa. xi. 2.

The Lord possesses this power for His assembly now. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" is a word for the professing church (1 Tim. v. 6). But "the Spirit is life," and here is One Who has the seven Spirits. In Him is the fullness of life and power to meet the need of *Sardis*, and of ourselves also. It is not enough for us to bemoan our weakness and failure, we must at the same time draw help from

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the blessed Lord, Who is at hand in the fullness of His grace and power.

He also has the seven stars, the angels or representatives of the seven churches. They are His by ransom, and set in the world to shine for His glory before the great day of His appearing, when He Himself will come to the earth as the Sun of Righteousness.

But in order to shine in the darkness, there must be life, according to what we read of Christ, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John i. 4). But Sardis, in spite of works, was dead. "*I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*" Dare we say that these words do not apply to any of us present? It is easy to be zealous of good works, but they do not count before God unless they spring from the new life in Christ. Paul said, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20). To live otherwise is but to have a name to live and to be dead.

The Lord calls Sardis to "*be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.*" This watchfulness is with regard to our own conduct, and not to watching for the Lord's coming especially. When the Lord told sleeping Peter to "watch and pray" (Matt. xxvi. 41), He called him to vigilance in the presence of temptation, in contrast with the carelessness of sleep. If Sardis did not watch, but continued in their dead works, the Lord said, "*I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee*" (ver. 3).

Sardis is a place of death, and also of defilement, resulting from contact with the dead. The Israelites were warned against touching a dead bone, or dead body, even with their garments (Num. xix. 11-22; Hagg. ii. 12, 13; Zech. iii.). Sardis had a name to live, but was dead; individual care was needed to avoid contact, and consequent defilement. Some were watchful there, for the Lord said, "*Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.*"

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Moreover, the Lord added, "*They shall walk with Me in white.*" This will be fulfilled when the saints, after the marriage supper of the Lamb, come forth with Christ, arrayed in fine linen, white and clean (Rev. xix.). But these words apply to the present day, for the future reward to the overcomer follows in the next verse. The Lord will not walk with those whose garments and ways are defiled. But those who walk with Him in white are a testimony to the world.

Further, He says, "*For they are worthy.*" How can we live so as to be worthy of honourable companionship with our blessed Lord? We all, no doubt, feel how unworthy we are. This is true, but the mere confession of unworthiness does not constitute us worthy. If you have wronged the name of the Lord in your neighbourhood, the Lord will not walk the streets with you. Your garments are not white; they are defiled. In the public eye, as His witnesses, it is the worthy ones who, like Enoch, walk with God.

The special promise to the overcomer is that he "*shall be clothed in white raiment.*" There is a correspondence between the reward and the service. Those who testify faithfully for our Lord in the day of dead works will come to the front in the day of reckoning. Those in the "cemetery" of Sardis who keep their garments unspotted from the world and from lifeless Christendom, walking apart from its semi-religious organisations, are the overcomers, and they shall be manifested in white robes in the coming day.

The Lord "*will not blot out of the book of life*" the name of the overcomer. Some in Sardis had a name to live, but were dead. Their names might be in earthly registers as professors of Christ's name; but they were not written in heaven, and would be blotted out of the book of life, because they were dead. They are like some who came from Babylon with Ezra, and claimed to be priests of the house of Aaron, but their names were not found in the official records (Ezra ii. 62).

Philadelphia is quite different from Sardis. Instead

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of death and defilement there is feebleness but faithfulness. Philadelphia means "brotherly love," and in the epistle there is, no doubt, an historical reference to the awakening in recent times, when there was a revival of the truth concerning the family of God, the body of Christ, and the present action of the Spirit of God. It was not a company marked off by a creed or a formal confession of faith, but by a real love for Christ and for those that are Christ's.

In the presentation of Himself to Philadelphia, the Lord says nothing about the seven stars or the seven Spirits. He shows how able He is to meet individual need amid assembly weakness. First, there is the need for holiness and truth, and these virtues are in Him Who is writing: "*These things saith He that is holy, He that is true.*" A company can only be holy and true corporately so far as each one is so. Holiness and truth are not found in myself or in my brethren, but they are in the Lord Who is in the midst, and by looking in faith to Him I grow into His character.

The Lord is also "*He that hath the key of David.*" The sword of David is the emblem of His power to be exercised in this wicked world in subduing His enemies, but the key is the emblem of His power in the administration in His own house, as David had in his palace and his kingdom. Christ is the Lord in His church, and has absolute authority in the great house of Christendom.

The key of David is a reminder to Sardis that the Lord retains His sovereign authority among those who profess His name. All doors are under His control. Though the power of the state exercises its secular rule so widely in the ecclesiastical affairs of Christendom, the key of David is on the shoulder of the Lord Who walks in the midst of Philadelphia.

Accordingly, the knowledge that the Lord is "*He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth*" is a blessed assurance for those that have little or no strength. What can an infant do before a

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closed door? But if the master comes with the key, even the infant can go through. On the other hand, if there is danger outside, the master locks the door, and the little one cannot pass.

So in the great house of Christendom, we need not force doors open for ourselves, as some of the Lord's servants are so ready to do. It is better to wait for the Lord to open. If there is an open door, we ought not to neglect it. The apostle saw an open door in Ephesus, and he continued his labour there, though there were adversaries (1 Cor. xvi. 9); the Lord had opened it (see 2 Cor. ii. 12).

"*Thou hast a little strength.*" This is not a word of reproach, but of encouragement. He knows exactly the extent of our abilities. It is useless to pretend to be giants.

"*Thou hast kept My word.*" This is the particular task of the church to-day. In His absence, He expects His own to keep His word, whatever the ecclesiastical association or position in the church or service for Him. This is the hour of His rejection in the world, and we are called to keep His word. Obedience to Christ's word is needful for all, and especially for the young, because they are beginning the Christian life. If they do not start right, there will be the difficulty of retracing their steps, and getting into the right way.

"*Thou hast not denied My name*" is the third item of the Lord's commendation. It is sad to think that in this twentieth century so many Christians do deny His name. They refuse to believe that He is the Eternal Son of God, the Word made flesh, Who dwelled among men. To be in Philadelphia we must not deny His name.

Then, in verse 10, we have a special promise: "*Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation (or, trial), which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*" The first phrase does not mean exhibiting the gentle, long-suffering character of the Lord Jesus.

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" My patience " means that the Lord Himself is waiting for something ; and He wants us to wait for the same thing. All the glories of the Son of man are centred in Christ on high, but for nearly two thousand years He has been sitting on His Father's throne, waiting till His enemies are made His footstool, and His glories are displayed. Those in Philadelphia keep the word of His patience, suffering for His name because it is the waiting time.

The Lord recognises this faithfulness, and promises exemption from the coming hour of trial. When the hour comes to "*try them that dwell upon the earth,*" the church will have been already removed out of the world. When the hour of the Lord's suffering came in the days of His flesh, He exempted His disciples from it. Of them He said, " Let these go their way." In the time for smiting the Shepherd, He put His hand upon the little ones, and sheltered them from it (Zech. xiii. 7).

Those who " dwell upon the earth " are a class often mentioned in this book (Rev. iii. 10 ; vi. 10 ; viii. 13 ; xi. 10 ; xii. 12 ; xiii. 8, 12, 14 ; xiv. 6 ; xvii. 2, 8). They are the earthly-minded, and have abandoned the heavenly calling of the church. Occupied with present pleasures and pursuits, they do not keep the word of Christ's patience, and upon them the trial will come.

The Lord will also reward the overcomer : "*Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God.*" A pillar is an emblem of strength and permanence. The lowly and loyal victor in Philadelphia will be established for ever in the place of heavenly worship, where the continual occupation of those present will be the power and majesty of Him Who fills that place.

There each pillar will bear a triple inscription. The Lord will write on the overcomer (1) the name of His God ; (2) the name of the city of His God ; and (3) His own new name. Note the emphatic recurrence of " My " in the Lord's promise to the overcomer. Seven

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times the first personal pronoun (or adjective) is used. The hearts of those who overcome are wholly devoted to the Lord, and they will value most, as a reward, what is the Lord's. They have abandoned all the organisations of Christendom to be occupied with the Lord alone, to be dependent on Him alone, to love, serve, follow, and wait for Him only. In the day of reward, the whole universe will know that they are His peculiar treasure, for He will write on them, as we do upon a prized book, His name as a mark of ownership.

The subject of the epistle to *Laodicea* is not a happy one, but it is necessary for us to know that Christendom in its last state becomes so entirely contrary to the Lord's mind that He must remove it from Himself as loathsome and disgusting. In perfect contrast with *Laodicea* as a faithless witness, the Lord reveals Himself as "*the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness.*" As the Amen He established, verified, and confirmed all that God had spoken. Every moment of His ministry He was faithful and true to Him Who sent Him, so that He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). How far from Him *Laodicea* had departed!

Even in *Laodicea* there are faithful ones. The Lord comes to the door of the individual heart, and says, "*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.*" In *Philadelphia*, the Lord opens doors, but here is a closed door He cannot open; it is held fast against Him, and He knocks for admittance. Someone or something is shutting Him out, though He desires to enter and sup. How hard the heart that shuts out the blessed Lord! Can it be true of any of us? Oh, the grace of the Lord Who seeks to come in! Oh, the disgrace of those who shut Him out!

The Lord says to the one who gains the victory in *Laodicea*, "*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne.*" The prospect of a throne is grand and glorious. The overcomer will sit with Christ in (not "on") His throne. Sharing the reign

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of Christ is the reward of sharing His suffering. In Philadelphia, love for Christ is made prominent, and the reward is to bear the name of Christ as His own in the blissful regions of glory on high, and over the earth.

John is fond of speaking of overcoming. In his Gospel, he records that the Lord said He had overcome the world (John xvi. 33), and in his Epistles, he exhorts the family of God to overcome the world and the evil one (1 John ii. 13 ; v. 4, 5). In these seven epistles, overcoming recurs in each of them.

Remember that it is possible for us to miss the overcomer's reward. The powers of evil are seeking to defeat us. Violent persecution has not yet broken out in this land, but in ten thousand ways the enemy is setting snares for God's people so that they shall not be overcomers, and take their crown. Hence the Lord's word, "*Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*" To be overcomers, we must closely follow the Lord, Who Himself overcame ; and if we keep our eyes upon Him we shall most assuredly overcome. There is no reason why all the company in this hall should not stand as victors in the day of reward, having, according to the word of testimony and through following Christ, overcome by the power He has given them.

Hymns 427, 20.

TUESDAY MORNING. *Prayer Meeting*, 7.30 a.m.

Hymns sung : 274, 133, 397, 403.

Scriptures read : Psalms xix., cxxxiii.

Open Meeting, 10 a.m.

Hymn 52.

W.J.H. Heb. xiii. 9, 10 : Joshua xxii. 1-16, 31-34.

There is a strong contrast between the true altar and the one man builds for his own pleasure. Jewish believers were accustomed to an earthly altar, meats, washing of hands, and so on, and were in danger of

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being drawn away from pure spiritual worship after fleshly ordinances. The apostle therefore enjoined them not to be "carried about with divers and strange doctrines" as to the new way of worshipping God.

Our hearts need to be established with grace, and not by the law and its ceremonies. Our natural disposition leads us to welcome anything that is legal and formal. The ten commandments were suited to man as he was naturally : but man broke down under them. The law was given by Moses, but the apostle emphasises that the heart will never be established apart from grace, and we cannot find grace anywhere except in the Person of our Lord : Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

The way of obedience and blessing is therefore made easy for us while we recognise Him. The burden of the law is too heavy to be borne, but Christ's yoke and burden are easy and pleasant to the new nature.

The apostle says, "We (believers) have an altar." The sacrifice was offered on the altar for God's acceptance. Now we have an altar, to which we can bring our sacrifice of praise. This altar has no prescribed geographical situation. As we come together for worship, our altar is the Lord Jesus Christ. By Him our adoration ascends to our God and Father. The Lord Himself clothes our poor thoughts with His own excellences, and they become fragrant to the heart of the Father.

But anything in our hearts against our brother would defile our sacrifice of praise. This must be remedied. The jealousy, or whatever it may be, must be removed and cleansed, and then the gift will rise acceptably. Amidst the present ruin of the church, this altar remains intact, because it consists of the One Who is also our Mediator and High Priest.

The Levitical priests, who "serve the tabernacle," could not eat of the sacrifice if its blood was taken in beyond the veil : the sin-offering (body and blood) was exclusively for God (*ver. 11*). But we may, and must,

eat of that Sin-offering which satisfies God's holy nature with respect to sin ; and when by so doing we make His sacrifice a part of ourselves, then our worship at the altar is acceptable to God.

When we come together, the Father, as well as the Son, must be worshipped. The Lord, at His table, if we let Him, will lead our hearts to the Father, just as He did when on earth. It is the joy and life of our souls to bless the Father in the presence of His Son.

In Joshua's time, God had brought the people of Israel into the promised land that their hearts might rise to Him in praise, and there was the visible token in Shiloh that He had come to dwell in their midst. The twelve tribes constituted one nation. This unity was shown in the holy place by the twelve loaves on the table of shewbread. But two and a half tribes, their compelling motives being much cattle and good pasture in the land of Jazer and Gilead, separated themselves from their brethren, and elected to remain outside the land of Canaan (Num. xxxii. 1-5).

In making this choice, the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not weigh with them : God, however, did not forcibly overrule the desires of their hearts. Moses, in effect, said to them, " You will not be in the place where God has set His name ; nevertheless, if you will come across Jordan with the others, you shall have this land."

Thus these tribes got their land under the law, through Moses, and not by lot under Joshua, a type of the risen Lord. With the other tribes, however, they crossed the river of death, which was miraculously divided. *Twelve* stones were buried in the bed of Jordan, and *twelve* stones were erected as a memorial on the Canaan side of Jordan, as a memorial to every generation that God had brought all the twelve tribes into the land of His possession and given it them for their inheritance. Reuben, Gad and Manasseh continued with the other tribes until the conquest of the land was completed, and then Joshua said, " Return

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to the place Moses gave you." He did not urge them to change their minds because they were leaving the land of promise for Gilead.

But they themselves had a conscience about it. They said, "It looks as if we are forsaking God, and our children may say, 'We do not belong to Israel, the river Jordan rolls between us.'" So they set up an altar on the eastern bank of Jordan, to show their regard for Jehovah, and to be their link with the people of God.

The children of Israel were angry with their brethren. They thought the two and a half tribes had set up this magnificent altar to eclipse the one at Shiloh, seeking by their own works, since they were rich and increased with goods, to satisfy their consciences and please God.

This spirit of satisfying the flesh in religious matters prevails in the world to-day, among those who have departed from the truth given in the scriptures. They compose their confessions of faith so that men shall know they are Christians, and they erect great and costly buildings of a religious character that strike the observer with awe and admiration.

Phinehas, whose javelin was a landmark in Israel's history (Num. xxv. 7), thought they were trespassing against Jehovah. He reminded them how the religion of the flesh had prevailed at Peor, and God had smitten the Israelites because of their idolatry. Also he reminded them of the sin of Achan, which defiled the whole congregation of Israel.

But they gave their explanation. "We are not setting up a rival altar for sacrifices. It is a witness that we have not forsaken God, and that we still belong to the twelve tribes." So they satisfied Phinehas and those with him that they had no desire to be rivals in the worship of Jehovah.

The altar of Ed was a symbol of their nominal connexion with the nation. But when Israel was in difficulties, Reuben did nothing to help (Judg. v. 15, 16). But in the end they had to suffer for their choice.

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From 1 Chron. v. 25, 26 we see that these two and a half tribes were the first to be carried into captivity.

They had forsaken the land that God had promised their fathers and chosen an easier and more pleasant place, but one from which it was more difficult for them to get to Shiloh and to Jerusalem. It is a solemn thing to settle down with no river of Jordan between us and the world. There we are exposed to the assaults of the enemy; and whose fault is it if he brings us into his power?

Let us avoid the intrusion of the flesh into our holy things. Remember "we have an altar." May God enable us to cleave to it, and offer upon it continually the sacrifice of praise, confessing the name of the Lord Jesus.

J.N.V. Joshua xxii.

The example of Phinehas shows us that even if we are delivered from the religion of the flesh, and by God's grace are in the right place, the flesh in us may work, especially through haste. He was a good man, full of zeal, but in saying "What trespass is this that ye have committed?" (*ver.* 16) he was misjudging the motive in erecting the altar, as we see from *ver.* 27.

If we see in others something of the flesh, we must warn and judge it—but how? We must be sure of the facts and careful of our manner. If the Reubenites had answered Phinehas as he spoke, there would have been a battle (*ver.* 33). How often in our zeal we lack wisdom, kindness and longsuffering! Phinehas in his zeal for the Lord spoke of rebellion and of a sin like that of Achan, but afterwards was satisfied that it was not true. What a blessing that the two and a half tribes gave a soft answer! We must always try and avoid that terrible thing, a battle between children of the same heavenly Father. Think of Gideon's wise reply, when the Ephraimites accused him wrongfully (*Judg.* viii. 1-3). His heart was right in seeking a way of peace to prevent further war.

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We thank the Lord that He has given us the religion of the Spirit, and not of the flesh ; but we must have our hearts centred in Christ. We must also endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in *peace* with longsuffering, our hearts full of the mercies of our Lord (Eph. iv. 2, 3). So when Phinehas found the two and a half tribes were not so guilty as he thought, he, and afterwards the people of Israel, thanked God for it, and there was *peace*.

A.W.R. 1 Chron. xii. 31-40.

" Men . . . that could keep rank . . . with a perfect heart . . . to make David king " (ver. 38).

This is a very happy description of the condition of the people when they came to make David king. They were not of a double mind, especially those of Zebulun (*ver. 33*), one of the tribes that came to Israel's rescue in the time of Deborah (Judg. iv. 10 ; v. 18). And though to-day we are but a remnant of a remnant of God's church, we must keep rank, to maintain its unity as the Lord desires. Scattering is the devil's work (John x. 12) : but the Lord gathers.

The difficulty in Josh. xxii. was an ecclesiastical one, as it was with Dan in Judg. xviii., but in Judg. xix. to xxi. there was moral evil. Without waiting on Jehovah, the tribes sent some to ask the Benjamites to judge the evil (xx. 12, 13), but they would not do so, and prepared to fight their brethren. Three times the children of Israel went to God to ask whether they should fight (xx. 18, 23, 28) : but at first they only wanted to know which was to go up first, and it was not until they all wept and fasted and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings before Jehovah that He could use them in discipline. It is a very serious thing to deal with our brethren—the true way to carry out discipline is to eat the sin-offering with them, showing that we know we are no better than those we attempt to judge.

Moreover, not only when we have something against

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our brethren, but when our brethren have something against us, we should endeavour to settle the grievance with them so that the Lord's name may not be dishonoured when we present our service to the Lord (Matt. v. 23, 24). The difficulties in our small gatherings are usually either personal ones, or else because God's word is not accepted simply. Let us allow the Lord to have His place in our midst, and wait patiently for His mind on every matter, and difficulties will be quickly settled.

In 1 Chron. xii. we find that the two and a half tribes came up with their brethren to crown David—oh, the abounding grace of God! So we look forward to the time when every redeemed one will be present, to crown the true David king.

The children of Issachar "knew what Israel ought to do" (*ver.* 32). So we, who are gathered to the Lord's Name, should know His mind, and have "understanding of the times." In His wondrous grace, the Lord has called us to be a testimony to Him, so there should not be "divisions of heart" among us. Then, too, we read that "all their brethren were at their commandment" (*ver.* 32): their brethren acknowledged their leadership: so we are exhorted to note those who are leaders over us (Heb. xiii. 7).

The men of Zebulun "kept rank" and "were not of double heart" (*ver.* 33). What a spectacle it would be if this were true of us! Many times during this conference we have been turned back entirely to Him, Who in this world was absolutely dependent on His Father. So He says, "Take My yoke . . . and ye shall find rest," as He found rest in His Father, just after His loving heart had had to proclaim woe upon those who refused Him (Matt. xi. 20-30). May we confide in Him, and find rest amidst all our difficulties.

Hymn 410.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON. *Brothers' Meeting*, 2 p.m.
Sisters' Meeting, 2 p.m.

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Young People's Meeting, 2 p.m. Address by Mr. J. Weston.

Hymn 356. 2 Chron. v. 1-14. Hymn 128. 2 Chronicles xxxv. 15. "*And the singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their place.*"

Asaph means "gather," or "to gather together." Christ came to "gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi. 52). How our Lord loved to gather His own about Himself when He was here! In John xviii. 2 we read, "Judas . . . knew the place; for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples." Perhaps few things give more joy to Christ than to see His people gathered together now, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name," He says, "there am I in the midst of them."

"The singers, the sons of Asaph, were in *their place*." We, too, have "a place" in God's assembly. "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor. xii. 18). We are not there accidentally. God had His eye on us, saved us and brought us into the assembly. Every Christian ought to have a spiritual home, where he is expected, and where he has obligations. If we will let Him, God will decide for us even where we shall live and what meeting we shall attend. We should not be uncertain whether we are in the right place or not, but look to Him until we are satisfied He has put us where we are.

"The sons of Asaph were in their place." We should not be in the meeting merely because our parents were there, nor simply because we followed others. Pray the Lord to guide and direct you, if you have not done so already. There is no knowing what the Lord would do if we were all in our proper places. We read that "those that be *planted* in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God" (Ps. xcii. 13). The house of God to-day is the assembly—"Whose house are we." Are you *planted* in the assembly? Every

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Christian should be planted in some assembly. Find where your place is, and be there.

"The singers, the sons of Asaph, *were in their place.*" There are some folk who seem to have *no* place: you cannot say they are planted anywhere. Like Noah's dove, they have found no rest for the soles of their feet. I have never known such flourish. Our earnest advice to such is, get planted somewhere, but be sure of God's guidance in the matter. There are others who *have* been planted, but they have become discontented and are always transplanting themselves to different places. A tree that is continually being transplanted never grows. These hear a great deal through gadding about but do not seem to benefit much from it. The *servant* of God goes where he is sent by the Lord, but the rest of us should find our home in the assembly, where we show both our fellowship and our love. This is absolutely essential if the work of God is to prosper. The sons of Asaph kept in their appointed place, and then the blessing of the Lord came down, and His glory filled the house of God (2 Chron. v. 13, 14).

"The singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their place." I have "a place" and a service which no one else can perform, like members of the body, which each have their own particular work. In Col. ii. 19, we read, "The Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." I am one of these "joints" or "bands," and there is therefore some responsibility resting upon me to pass on to others the nourishment ministered to me. How many of us think only of being served and cared for, instead of serving and caring for others. We must be ready to give as well as to get—to strengthen one another's faith in the word of God or to seek to stir into a flame another's affection for Christ, at the same time seeking blessing and help and spiritual food for ourselves. This is God's way of blessing.

We read here of the porters, as well as the singers ;

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“and the porters waited at every gate”—or “ushers,” so some read it. “The position of usher,” some one has said, “ought to be in the hands of men who are sensitive and responsive to the Spirit’s guidance.” Both classes seem to have made it a matter of conscience to be in their place. Let us imitate them and always be in “our place.” Why are the singers and the porters mentioned? Because there is nothing unimportant in God’s work. Some had voices, and they had to feel a responsibility to be there and use them.

“*They might not depart from their service.*” There was no leave of absence. We have not the daily sacrifices, rituals and washings imposed by the old Jewish economy. Is it not sad then that we are often so careless about the little that we are called upon to do in these days of grace? If God wants us as singers or as porters, there we must be, in “our place,” and “not depart from our service.” Under grace, should we not be more diligent than under law? Wherever there is revival, it will be noticed that there is a revival first in the interest in the meetings.

If we look around us, we find among other bodies of professing Christians disloyalty to Christ, flagrant unbelief, and the giving up of the Scriptures and Christianity, even among those gathered to the Lord’s name. Though there may be amongst us weakness, and lack of gift and of heart, there is much we may do in ministering to both saints and sinners and in strengthening what remains.

The end of this dispensation is at hand. Let us be in our places, where the Lord has put us, doing what He has given us to do. Then, may be, as in the days of the sons of Asaph (2 Chron. v. 12–14), the cloud will again come down and the glory of the Lord again fill the place. The Lord revive us, help us and use us, for His name’s sake.

Hymn 187.

Bible Reading, 3 p.m.

Hymn 278.

Mr. Bubenzer spoke a few words of greeting and fellowship on behalf of the brethren in Germany.

Hebrews ii.

In chapter i. Jesus is presented as God Himself in the Son on this earth, the outshining of God's very glory, the One Who made all things, Who has purged our sins, and as Eternal Son now has set Himself down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. John vi. 62 speaks of the Son of man ascending up where He was before: and in Acts vii. 56, as a last appeal to Israel to believe, and also to welcome Stephen, He is seen standing on the right hand of God. But in connection with His work Christ is always seen sitting, conveying the thought of God giving Him the place of honour as a token of His victory. In Heb. viii. 1, as the great High Priest, He is set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; in x. 12, in view of His finished work as Man, He is sat down on the right hand of God; and in xii. 2, as His reward, Christ is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

"The things which we have heard" (ii. 1) are not the words of angels in O.T. times, but the Lord's own words, confirmed by those that heard Him (*ver.* 3). The apostle emphasises that Christ's personal glory exceeds the angels' (i. 4-14), and this excellence characterises His work also. The Hebrews were dependent for the truth upon those who brought it by word of mouth, but Paul emphasises that these are not his words, but those of God's Son, so they must listen. The warning to take heed is given because we are in danger of slipping away from the immovable rock of God's word, spoken to us by His Son (i. 2).

Ver. 2. The law was given by the disposition of angels (Acts vii. 53), that is, in their presence (Deut. xxxiii. 2). From Gal. iii. 19 we learn that the law was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to Whom the promise was made; and it was ordained in the hands of a mediator,

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The expression in *ver.* 9, "We see Jesus," might form the title of this Epistle. The Hebrews were in danger of being drawn aside into Judaism; but gazing on Jesus, Who was made lower than the angels when He became Man on earth, but is now at God's right hand, we find Him to be our joy. Christ tasted death for all men (1 Tim. ii. 6) as well as for every thing.

Ver. 10. The sufferings of Christ were a necessary preliminary to His glory (Luke xxiv. 26). In Heb. v. 9 we read of His being made perfect in connexion with His office of priesthood.

Hymns 132, 53.

TUESDAY EVENING. Address by Mr. W. G. Turner,
7 p.m.

Hymns 297, 284. 2 Samuel vii. 18-29. Hymn 312.

"*Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord.*" The person, posture and position are all significant: "king David—sat—before the Lord." In the earlier verses of the chapter we find "the king sat in his house," the Lord having given him rest. He is not alone but in deep converse with Nathan the prophet, and the subject engrossing them concerns the things of God. Can a better picture be imagined than here presented to the reader? To be sitting at peace, in conference with a like-minded man over the things of God; surely this is ideal. Yet the opening verse of our reading introduces us to something incomparably better. To sit before the Lord stirs deeper depths than to sit with others in the house, even though speaking of holy things. In the earlier verses the subject of his speech is really, "What I can do for God"; in the latter it is, "What Thou hast done, and Who Thou art." The sweetest Christian fellowship enjoyed amongst us, as during our conference, is as nothing compared with real fellowship with Christ. To "sit before the Lord" fills the soul at once with a sense of the amazing grace that brings such a person into such a posture in such a Presence. As the grace of God begins to be realised in this way, the soul is constrained to

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echo David's first word. "*And he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?*" We too, overwhelmed by a sense of the grace and goodness of our God, exclaim, "Why was I made to hear Thy voice, To enter while there's room, While thousands make the wretched choice, And rather starve than come?"

In this attitude of heart, sitting before the Lord, the past comes vividly again before us, and we recognise the goodness and mercy which have followed us all the days of our life. "When all Thy mercies, O my God, My rising soul surveys, Transported with the view I'm lost In wonder, love and praise." What prompted David's outburst of humility, thanksgiving, praise and prayer was the gracious reminder of the earlier verses. The shepherd boy had become the ruler over God's people, and this of God's own choice and appointment. "I took thee from the sheep-cote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel: and I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest . . . and have made thee a great name . . . in the earth" (vv. 8, 9). So as he sits before the Lord, the goodness and grace of the Lord leads him to sink lower and lower in his own sight, as God is magnified before his soul. How great! how good! how gracious! "Thy gentleness hath made me great." "Hitherto,"—the backward look along the road strewn with the blessings of providential mercies and redeeming grace.

We, too, may find healthy spiritual exercise, leading to more vigorous outbursts of intelligent praise, if we will review the way the Lord has led us; how He has protected, provided for, and persevered with us; and covered our lives with His hand of blessing. In infancy, childhood, youth and maturity, He has blessed and borne with us; and in His presence when sitting before the Lord we gratefully acknowledge that goodness and mercy have followed us all our days. Blessed be the Lord; for "*is this the manner of man?*" So while king David sat before the Lord, the Lord Who had given him rest, he reviews the grace that has

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made him what he is, and brought him into such a position of peace and blessing. Then turning from the past he looks onward to the future.

"Hitherto. . . . And this was yet a small thing in Thy sight, O Lord God; but Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a great while to come." The "hitherto" is always the promise of the "henceforth." Where once the Lord His love bestows, He loves unto the end. So as David sits before the Lord, not only do the goodness and mercy of God which have been already enjoyed prompt his heart to grateful praise, but the promises of the Lord, so rich in future blessing, the mercies of a covenant ordered in all things and sure lead him to exclaim, *"Do as Thou hast said."* He continues in prayer with thanksgiving, and rises again to praising, blessing and magnifying the great name of the God Who blesses because He will.

We may briefly note, in *ver.* 20, David seems speechless with wonder. Human speech at its best is too poor a vehicle to utter all His praise. This is sometimes our experience at these holy sittings before the Lord, and we then long for the time when "no more with lisping, stammering tongues," but like Christ and with Him in the great gathering in the Father's house, we shall praise Him as we would. What a prospect indeed! What a future lies before us! Not the mere fulfilment of the prayers of David the son of Jesse, great and glorious as this will be, but the fulfilment of the prayer of great David's greater Son, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." We miss faces from our gatherings, dearly loved and remembered, with whom we had enjoyed sweet fellowship here when sitting before the Lord, but there will be none missing there. And as we sometimes sing, when anticipating that great gathering, "Not one will be a stranger, though never seen before."

"And let Thy Name be magnified for ever." While we cannot in any way add to the glory, majesty and greatness of God, yet the desire of the heart overwhelmed by a sense of God's grace, goodness and mercy

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is always, "Let the Lord be magnified." Not made greater, for that is impossible; but made to be more clearly recognised, more fully known because of us. We are the epistles of Christ, known and read of all men. "My soul doth magnify the Lord," but while praising and glorifying Him, giving thanks with heart and voice, it is equally essential that conduct, character and conversation should confirm by the life what is uttered by the lip.

We review the past with its gracious record of His goodness and mercy; we rejoice in the glorious promises for the future; we render our praises to Him Whose Name is above all praise; and we take warning of the dangers of reaction from times of spiritual exaltation as we note in the following chapter how David, even after such experiences and outpourings of genuine praises and thanksgivings accompanied by so deep a sense of God's grace, is seen treating his vanquished foes much as one of his contemporary kings would who knew nothing of the mercy of Jehovah.

We always need our Lord's injunction to "watch and pray," and perhaps never more than after sitting before the Lord. He has given us rest; we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; and it is our privilege, not only as David and Nathan to sit at rest in the house in mutual fellowship, but also to sit before the Lord in His own immediate presence, recounting His goodness and greatness. But from the summit of the holy mount, the path led down into the valley of humiliation, where impotent disciples were face to face with the power of evil. Some of us have discovered the dangers lurking in unguarded moments following hard upon times of great spiritual experience. May we both "sit before the Lord" and also "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

Hymns 312, "Glory, honour," 316, "Christian's Good Night."