

LONDON CONFERENCE

JUNE 4th to 7th, 1938

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

Hymns sung : 184, 9, 174, 321, 274, 273, 1, 339.

Scriptures read : Psalm lxxxiv. ; John xiii. 1-15 ;
Phil. ii. 2, 4.

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

Hymns sung : 273, 388, 13, 5.

Breaking of Bread, 11 a.m.

Hymns sung : 232, 238, 227, 194, 216, 195, 321.

Scriptures read : Phil. ii. 5-11 ; Is. xxxii. 2 ; John x.
17, 18 ; Rev. i. 5, 6 ; 2 Thess. ii. 1.

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

Hymns 396, 386. Rev. iii. 7-22.

The main object of the Spirit of God in the epistles to the seven assemblies is to show what God will do through the Lord Jesus Christ in dealing with evil in the assemblies—in the professing church. This object is maintained throughout Revelation, the Book of wonderful imagery. God is seen working in judgment with Israel and the nations of the world till evil is put away and all is consummated in eternal blessedness.

The great problem throughout the ages has been why evil is apparently such a preponderating force in the world, influencing even believers, and all that is holy and righteous. John himself was suffering under the tyranny of the world ; his ministry was hindered, and reports of declension and departure among the saints came to him in his island prison. But then the Lord revealed Himself to him, gave him the messages to the

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seven churches, containing an outline of what would take place up to His coming. The subsequent visions (after chap. iii.) show that in the end the glory of the Lord would triumph, evil would be banished, and righteousness and peace would reign for evermore.

The epistles to the churches deal with seven phases, or conditions, found among them in their assembly character as lamp-stands of testimony. Not one is perfect; in each there is something to rebuke, and something to commend in some. As we pass onward from Ephesus, throughout the series evil increases and finally culminates in the terrible condition of Laodicea, which the Lord will expel from His mouth; He cannot speak through them any longer. But it is noticeable that "he that hath an ear" is exhorted to "hear what the Spirit says" to each of "the *assemblies*," so that what is said to the saints collectively has a personal application to each believer.

The synagogue of Satan (*ver.* 9) is not necessarily inside the assembly; it is rather what Satan gathers as the counterpart of the assembly of Christ to deceive the hearts of the simple. The synagogue was a national assembly of the Jews; in Christendom it may take the form of ritualism, so attractive to the æsthetically-minded, or of a church claiming dominion over the world on Jewish ground. They adopt the institutions of Jewish worship, but not the obligations consequent on that position under the law. From ii. 9, 10 we see that they were a persecuting body. They may be compared with the faction dealt with in Galatians, who preached another gospel, mingling Jewish works with Christian faith, and glorying in the flesh. This evil teaching was the leaven that the apostle bade the Galatians cast out, and we see here how the leaven develops into the abominably corrupt condition of Laodicea, while afterwards it is headed up in Antichrist himself. In Col. ii. 16-23 we also see that this combination of Judaizing teaching and worldly wisdom

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was showing itself among the saints in Paul's day. Whatever exalts man, whether law or mysticism, makes him become an easy prey to the devil. The true Christ was cast out by His brethren, being undesirable in their eyes ; the false Christ will be such an embodiment of all man admires that all the world will go after him.

Philadelphia was weak, and insignificant in external spiritual attainments : on the other hand, the synagogue of Satan was powerful, having many external attractions which appealed to men generally. The Lord says He will deal with this state : He will show that He loves the faithful, and will even make the others bow down to them. His object is to encourage the little flock in the presence of their enemies. He presents Himself in His own holiness, purity and power (*ver. 7*) ; so that it is easy to see the antithesis in the Philadelphian state.

Vers. 10 to 12 are an encouragement to the faithful. Waiting for the Lord does not mean the entire neglect of the ordinary duties of their life ; but that those called out from the world which is under the power of Satan are waiting for His coming (*Heb. ix. 28*) to receive them to Himself in that place prepared for us outside the world. Keeping the word of His patience involves having our habits shaped by the patience of Christ, whereby that hope has a moral and spiritual bearing on our conduct. So as we wait, we insensibly keep our house in order, seeking only and always His good pleasure. We have not a kingdom in glory at present, but in patience (*cf. ver. 21*). *Cf. also 2 Thess. iii. 5 and Rev. i. 9.*

The remnant in Philadelphia seek to be faithful, but they presume nothing, and these the Lord commends.

Those that dwell upon the earth (*ver. 10*), frequently named in this Book, are those who, content with worldly things around them, have no hopes outside of

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the earth, and it is upon these the temptation and trial will come. There is a difference between the trial of believers to bring out the fine gold, developing their spiritual properties (cf. "the trial of your faith") and that of mere professors to reveal their hollow hypocrisy. The Lord alone can judge the hearts of others, and in *vers.* 10 to 12 we have His encouraging answer to the fears of a humble spirit in the midst of prevailing evil, the fear of participating in the downfall of all around. The One with the eyes of fire promises that such a one will be kept from the judicial trial to come, as He lifted up John, who fell at His feet as dead, and said to him, *Fear not.*

Hymn 392.

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

Hymns: "He left the brightness of His home";
"Come, thou weary, Jesus calls thee," "I heard
the voice of Jesus say."

Genesis vi. 12—vii. 1: "*Come thou and all thy
house into the ark.*"

The preacher called attention to the striking analogy between the "world that then was" and the present day. To-day, sinners are multiplied, judgment is threatening, salvation is provided, and God's Spirit is pleading with men. So it was in Noah's day. He considered the flood one of the most solemn incidents in the Bible (apart from the crucifixion of Christ), a warning of impending doom. But though the story is so solemn, there is abundant grace in it, and Peter warrants us in finding in the ark a figure of the Saviour.

The speaker pointed out that the first and last invitations to "come" in the Bible are calls to the sinner to accept salvation (Gen. vii. 1, Rev. xxii. 17). Even amid the stupendous events spoken of in

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Revelation, the Spirit of God makes one last appeal to the sinner to come, so opening to us the heart of God.

To begin with, there was but one way of escape in Noah's day, one place where men could find salvation—inside the ark. So to-day there is but one way of escape from the coming wrath, one place of safety—Christ, the Ark of God's salvation.

Then again, "Noah found grace," and by grace alone he found refuge in the ark. So salvation to-day is all of grace, and not of works or merit. No mere orthodox belief of the scriptures, nor constant attendance at a place of worship, nor generous liberality to gospel or missionary work, etc., will secure salvation, but personal faith in Christ alone.

Again, salvation then was, in figure, by substitution. The ark passed through all the storm of judgment for Noah; it bore the storm for him. And so, at Calvary, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the fierce wrath of Almighty God fell upon our blest Substitute that we might escape. All God's waves and billows went over Him.

The covering of the ark within and without with pitch was explained as typifying the atoning aspect of the death of Christ as satisfying both God and the sinner; and the one door in the side of the ark as setting forth the one way of salvation, through the pierced side of the Saviour.

While the door of the ark was open, none were refused admittance, not even the creeping things. And so all are welcome to Christ, however vile—"Whosoever will, may come." Again when "the Lord shut him (Noah) in," no human, angelic, nor diabolical power could burst the door open. Nor can the devil take the feeblest sheep out of Christ's hand.

The speaker noted the parallel between the call from the Lord to Noah and his family:—"Come thou *and all thy house* into the ark," and the gospel call

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“ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house* ” (Acts xvi. 31) : but each one must come personally.

It was noticed, also, that God not only sent an invitation, but gave long warning. Through Noah's preaching, men were warned by God, in long-suffering grace, for a hundred and twenty years about the coming of the flood, so that those who died were lost through their own folly in refusing to heed the warning. And God is equally patient to-day in warning and pleading with men, yet His “ Spirit will not always strive ” (plead), and when He does strike, how terrible will be His wrath ! It is blind unbelief to say, “ I see no sign of coming judgment : I cannot imagine the Son of man taking vengeance on those that . . . obey not the gospel ” : God's threatenings will surely come to pass.

The speaker pictured the awful remorse, during the forty days before the ark rose on the waters, and the hundred and fifty days before the mountains were covered, of those outside the ark, but said that their terrible fate was as nothing compared with the coming judgment. “ Noah was moved with fear ” said the preacher, “ and would that you were too.” The coming judgment is described as the judgment and perdition of ungodly men (2 Peter iii. 7), the wrath of Almighty God (Rev. xix. 15), the terror of the Lord (2 Cor. v. 11), the blackness of darkness for ever (Jude 13) : and the loving lips of the Saviour declared, “ These shall go away into everlasting punishment ” (Matt. xxv. 46). James tells us that even the devils tremble (Jas. ii. 19).

“ And Noah went . . . into the ark.” He did not merely admire the ark, but went inside. Admiration for Christ will not save : His work must be implicitly relied on and He Himself received by faith. Noah went in willingly. The Lord does not drive, but draws men to Himself (John xii. 32). The people probably jeered at and taunted Noah as he went in, but he

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believed God, and though there was not a cloud in the sky, he went in, followed by his six-hundred-year-old wife, his sons and their wives. Have our effectual prayers and pleadings as Christian parents induced our children also to come to Christ?

The speaker referred to Luke xvii. 26, "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man," and said that the great sin, then as now, was turning a deaf ear to the entreaties and warnings of the Spirit of God.

Many a prayer was probably made as the ark rose on the waters; but the awful answer was, "Too late: God has shut the door." And so it will be when the Master shuts the door in the day that is coming (Luke xiii. 25). Some may even have helped to build the ark: but outward works are of no avail. It is possible to be used in the saving of others and perish oneself.

Only those who are Christ's will be caught up at His coming. Those who waited till they saw the signs of the coming flood were shut outside the ark: so to-day there will be no sign of impending judgment till the door of mercy is closed.

It was a great moment in Noah's life when he stepped into the ark. Yet it was but a step. The speaker appealed to his audience to take the step to the Saviour, and find in Him salvation from the coming wrath.

Hymn: "Just as I am."

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

Hymns sung: 22, 79 (last three verses), 351, 261 (verses 2, 3).

Scriptures read: Ps. xxiii. 1-3; John x. 9, xxi. 15-17; Rev. vii. 17; Jude 24, 25.

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Open Meeting, 11 a.m.

Hymns 273, 13.

W.J.R. Col. i. 12-22. "*Giving thanks unto the Father.*"

Attention was called to the absolute statements of Scripture, in which no other object of worship was presented than the Person of God's own Son. The speaker said that it was useless to think only of our own unfaithfulness in the past: we must look forward to Him, forgetting what is behind, like a racer recovering from a stumble. We must learn that we were and are without strength, but that Christ died for the ungodly.

The speaker remarked that a theme often overlooked by us is the Father's heart. There is a tendency, in our consciousness of weakness, to come to the Lord as a priest to help our deficiencies. But the Lord Himself said "I say not . . . that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you" (John xvi. 26, 27). In Luke xv. it is noteworthy that the prodigal said, "I am *no more* worthy . . ." indicating that he once thought himself worthy, but was now conscious of the Father's never-changing love.

It was pointed out that there are five words in scripture expressing thoughts and truths of God—love, light (without which we cannot know His love), grace (His love in activity), mercy (suiting His love to our need), and peace (the result).

The exhortation was given as a reminder that we cannot do anything for the Lord unless He gives us the power. If we are disappointed through not seeing the fruit of our labour, is it because we are expecting something for ourselves? David, when driven out of Jerusalem by Absalom, said, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety" (Ps. iv. 8); and Jeremiah says, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lam. iii. 27). Let us not be occupied with

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the past, but "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Hymn 115.

C.A.H. Ps. lxii. 11; Matt. xxviii. 18. "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God."

The speaker drew attention to the fact that power belongeth unto God. We have been reminded of the love, light, grace and mercy of God, but do we think sufficiently of His power?

Power is intimately connected with the gospel. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel . . . it is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16). If we realised more the truth of this, we should not be so half-hearted in the spread of the gospel. We need to have that power in operation in our own hearts.

The speaker referred to the fact that much is said in the world to-day about the power of man, but the Psalmist heard that "power belongeth unto God." God entrusts power to man, but the manner of using it is man's own responsibility. This trust also applies to the believer, and we should exercise all our powers to one end, that is, to the glory of God.

In 2 Cor. xiii., we find that "Christ . . . liveth by the power of God." His accusers said, "By our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (John xix. 7), but God's answer to that charge was "Jesus Christ . . . declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 3, 4). Christ lives on high, and we can worship Him. What more blessed occupation could there be in such a day as this?

The exercise of the power of Christ is also associated with His coming for His own. Men laugh at the mention of this "blessed hope." They cannot understand it, because they seek to bring their own puny reason to bear upon the wonderful truth of God.

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The Lord will fashion our bodies like unto His own glorious body, and do it "according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 21).

After His resurrection, the Lord declared that all power is His (Matt. xxviii. 18). We readily admit that He has all power in heaven, but do we really believe that, in spite of outward appearances, He has all power in earth as well? It is true to-day, and it will be manifested to all when He comes forth "with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30).

It may be said that there is not much comfort in power. Power may oppress, condemn and crush, but power accompanied with love is a wonderful thought. I may love someone very much, but when that one is in need, unless I have power to help, my love will not avail for relief. With the Lord, there is both love and power, and there is no limit to either!

The speaker referred to Rev. iv. 11, v. 12, where in the heavenly scene there are the universal ascriptions of power to the Lord Jesus Christ; the answer of all things to the Lord's statement in Matt. xxviii. 18. Men do not heed this power, but the redeemed own it not only while on earth but throughout eternity.

In chapter iv., where the Lord Jesus is acclaimed as Creator, it is "glory and honour and power," but in chapter v. 12, where He is praised as Redeemer, "power" is mentioned first. Power in creation is apparent, but we know it is a greater thing to save a soul than to create worlds. The Triune God is concerned in the salvation of a soul. It is well to remember individually that the soul's need was so dreadful that nothing but the power, love, mercy, grace and compassion of the Triune God could avail to redeem it.

The speaker mentioned that light and love had been referred to, and added that God, Who is light, knowing all, yet being God Who is love, exercised His loving grace towards us. We may be mistaken about a

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person and, in ignorance of his real circumstances, help him, afterwards having to confess that had we known all we should not have given that help. But God knew all sinners and all sin and yet He had compassion and sent His Son to die for us.

The power of God combined with His love, what does it not do? It regenerates the hardest and most hopeless, through faith in Christ; and it leads our hearts to worship and praise.

May our faith in the power of the gospel be strengthened, our confidence in the verities of God's word be confirmed, and our hearts be drawn out in worship to Him Who is the altogether lovely One, and the chiefest of ten thousand to our souls.

Hymns 269, 248.

W.J.H. Phil. ii. 5, iii. 15. "*Let this mind be in you. . . . Be thus minded.*"

The speaker pointed out that the Epistle to the Philippians provides certain principles necessary for guidance in the spiritual life of the assembly. In the second chapter we have guidance as to the sort of mind that should be in us, viz., that "which was also in Christ Jesus." This exhortation, which is followed by the description of His humiliation, written as our example, is preceded by the exhortation, "Look not every man on his own things, but . . . also on the things of others." Such is the high standard set for every assembly—the complete obliteration of self and the implicit obedience to God, both being exemplified in the Lord Jesus. The Lord Himself expects to see His own lowliness of mind in all of us, that our life may correspond in measure to His, and thus grace His assembly where He is in the midst.

In the third chapter, the speaker said, Christian energy and purpose are set forth, not in service for the well-being of ourselves or of those around us directly. They are awakened and sustained by the

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animating power of Christ Himself in glory, by His exceeding excellency at God's right hand, which is seen by faith. The risen and glorified Lord here provides an object for the eye, as in the second chapter we have the lowly Christ as an object for the heart. This heavenly view of Christ enables us to press forward unceasingly, for we have not yet attained His likeness in resurrection and glory.

The speaker suggested that the appropriation of these two principles would relieve the despairing spirit of those who saw the numbers in their little companies diminishing. Let us look back to Christ Who walked, without despair and to the glory of God, amongst His little flock of "two or three" in the world, and also look forward to Christ in glory, Who beckons us onward and upward to that exalted place where He is.

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

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

Hymns 346, 347.

Ezra i. I-II. "*Then rose up the chief of the fathers . . . and the priests and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised . . . to build the house of the Lord.*"

The speaker urged the great need of revival among us, that we might be used more for the good of the Lord's people. Faith in the Bible as God's word is being given up all around us, and many believers know not where to turn, for we have failed in our collective testimony, though, thank God, we remain true to His word. Assemblies should not be gradually dying out; the Lord should be adding to them daily such as are being saved.

The speaker contended that the responsibility must now largely rest upon the younger people: the older ones have done their part, sometimes amid

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persecution and contempt, and should be highly honoured for their works' sake.

He pointed out that in the grand revival in Ezra's day the people stirred themselves, not to get, but to give. We are living stones, and our presence should be felt as a power in the assembly, even though we may be silent in the meetings. Though young, a member of an assembly may either help to build it up or to wreck it. We may feel we cannot do much, but let us rise up to build and be ready to give ourselves to the work, filled with God's Spirit, and actuated by love to Christ.

The call came in Ezra's day to all God's people—"Who is there among you of all His people?" There was no command: it was a call upon their love. "His God be with him, and let him go up." The choice had to be made between their own houses and God's house. So to-day there are amongst us those who seek their own things and those who seek the things of Jesus Christ. Are we minding the things of the Spirit, and building God's house? Those who give up most for Christ's sake are most blessed. Alas, there are many Demases to-day, loving this present evil age, and going with the crowd.

The speaker urged his hearers to ask themselves how much time they spend in seeking the things of Jesus Christ; leaving out in their reckoning the Lord's day, because the general habit influences all of us a good deal, so far as that day is concerned. After earning our livelihood, do we give the rest of our time and talents and thoughts to the things of the Lord? Some start well, regularly attending the meetings, etc.: but after a few years they marry and settle down and are scarcely ever seen. The choice must be made continually between the things of the Lord and our own things.

The speaker pointed out that the "chief of the fathers" were the first to respond to Ezra's call.

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These should always set an example to their younger brethren, and should be held in esteem by them. The modern doctrine that all men are equal should have no place in the church. "Ye younger, be subject to the elder" (1 Pet. v. 5). "Obey them that have the rule over you" (Heb. xiii. 17).

The next class mentioned is the priests. Those who worship well make the Lord's best servants. Our worship and remembrance of the Lord, at His own table, is a magnificent preparation for service. Then after the priests, the Levites, who took down the tabernacle and put it up again, got stirred up. All were stirred up, and how much we too need to be!

The speaker pointed out that the revival began with one man—Cyrus, and that ultimately God stirred up 49,897 of the children of Judah—including servants and maids, and singing men and women—to go back to Jerusalem to build the house of God (ii. 64, 65). The exact number is recorded, for not one is unnoticed by Him. The names of many are preserved in God's word, reminding us that the names of those who put the things of God first are written in heaven (Luke x. 20). He is mindful of all those who devote themselves to Him.

The speaker drew attention to the mention of the servants and maids, saying that often the sisters are the best saints in the assembly; and to that of the singing men and women, for God takes notice of those who sing for Him; and to the mention even of the porters (ii. 70). But none save His people were allowed to take any part (ii. 62).

The speaker exhorted his hearers to pray to God to be stirred up. It may mean a humbling process, for God has to grind us sometimes almost to powder because of inward corruption before He can use us. Let our prayer not be, "I am a hindrance, Lord: take me home": but rather, "Lord, stir me up for

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Thy service, to build Thy house." May God stir up the spirit of each one of us, for His glory's sake.

Hymn 52.

Open Meeting, 3.15 p.m.

Hymn 343.

Messages of greeting were read from brethren at *Cairo*, quoting Ps. cxxxiii., Jude 24, 25; from a conference at *Wausau* and *Philadelphia*, U.S.A., quoting 1 Cor. xvi. 13, 14, 2 Thess. iii. 5, 18; from *Cape Town*, South Africa, signed by Bros. S. H. Smith, F. S. Browning, and four others, quoting Ps. cxxxiii; from Mr. S. Muller, *Paris*; from *Maitland*, S. Africa, signed by E. C. Douglas, and eight others, quoting Ps. cxxxiii., Eph. i. 17-19; from Mr. A. D. Carpos, *Athens*, and twelve others, quoting 1 Thess. iv. 13-17; from Mr. J. Sarjeant, *Christchurch*, New Zealand, referring to Luke xxiv. 27; and from Mr. Gustav Koll, *Kwang Ping Hsien*, Hopei, China.

(A letter of greeting from Mr. and Mrs. W. Koll had also been received from *Wuppertal-Barmen* (Germany), saying that they hope to be able to return to *Hinghwa*, China, in the autumn.)

Hymn 270.

W.H.N. John xii. 1-3. "*There they made Him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair.*"

The speaker recalled the question raised by God in James iv. 14, "What is your life?" as a challenge to all our hearts. The natural life, James tell us, is only "a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away": but the believer's life is linked

with Christ in resurrection. Paul says, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). God has put an end to the old Adam life in the cross of Christ, and now that He is raised again, our lives are bound up with His. So, too, in Col. ii. 13 we read, "You, being dead . . . hath He quickened together with Him": we were dead together with Him, though He was dead *for* our sins and we *in* our sins. But now we are alive in Christ, and "when Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). This Christ-life should settle the nature of our associations down here.

The speaker called attention to the "I that is not I" in connection with service in 1 Cor. xv. 10, "I laboured more abundantly . . . yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." There is a great danger of spoiling good service because we do not realise this. At the judgment seat of Christ all we have done is to come under review, and its value to be assessed in the balances of the sanctuary. All the praise and glory are due to Him, though He is "not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love" (Heb. vi. 10). Service may be of the simplest, but the danger of spoiling it is in the coming in of the world.

The speaker pointed out that in John xii. there was real worship on the part of Mary at the Lord's feet, though she may not have said much. It was a resurrection scene (for death had come into the family); and the blessed Lord Who wrought it was with them. If we wish to "make Him a supper," we must realise, not merely intellectually, but by power and love in our souls, what He has done for us. He loves the response to His love, and is pleased to receive it.

The speaker remarked that, at this feast, Martha served, in loving labour, not in busy anxiety for notice as in Luke x. May the Lord enable us to serve Him out of real love! "The love of Christ constraineth us; . . . they which live should not henceforth live

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unto themselves, but unto Him Who died for them, and rose again " (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). Service, unless it comes from love to Christ, will become irksome and soon be given up.

The speaker exhorted his hearers to learn how to sit quietly " at the table " with the Lord, as Lazarus did: they were just talking together. When the disciples buried John's headless body, they went and told Jesus; where else could they go with their sorrow? He added that, when they returned from their joyous mission, they told Him what they had done and taught. May we learn to tell Him everything at His table, like a child talks to its mother. This intercourse need not be audible: in the pauses between the giving of thanks, sisters may tell Him of His wondrous love and power in bringing up from the dead their loved ones, and may say for themselves, " I was dead, but am alive in Thee." It is " sweet to tell Him all He knoweth."

Mary, said the speaker, found her place at His feet. Her anointing of them with the alabaster box of ointment may have seemed a waste to others. But what can we bring to the Lord? He will value nothing from us so much as when we place ourselves at His feet saying, " Thou hast bought me with Thy blood." How thankful Mary must have been that she anointed those blessed feet before they were pierced with the cruel nails so shortly after! The opportunity could not have recurred. May we seize any opportunity that offers to pour our precious ointment at His feet. Then, as " the house was filled with the odour of the ointment," we shall refresh all around us.

As Mary wiped the Lord's feet with her hair (her glory), so may we know what is our mite to give Him. May our answer rise from the depths of our heart as we remember His deep sufferings on the cross, which no human mind can grasp. He cried, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? " May we say,

individually, "For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died, And I have died with Thee; Thou'rt risen, my bands are all untied, and now Thou liv'st in me. The Father's face of radiant grace Shines now in light on me," and "For to me to live is Christ."

Hymn 318.

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

Hymns 25, 225. Matt. xiii. 44-46; Col. ii. 1-3; Eph. i. 3-11, v. 25-27, 32.

"Treasure hid in a field"; "One pearl of great price"; "The mystery of God"; "The mystery of His will"; "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it . . . a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing"; "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

The speaker said that these scriptures set before us the remarkable fact that the church in its unique association with Christ will be the medium for the display of God's own peculiar glory to the universe. We may think this theme is too lofty for our hearts, but God has revealed it to us that it may shed its glorious light on the dark valley through which we are passing, enabling us to step forward with animated courage and confidence.

The speaker attributed Abraham's journeyings throughout Canaan to God's desire that he should understand its beauties and value as the metropolitan country from which blessing should spread throughout the earth: and this survey kept the patriarch faithful, obeying God and dwelling in tents, assured that God in His time would fulfil His promise. And so we have in the word of God the delineation of our heavenly possession, which, as it is studied, will fill us with hope and assurance during our perilous journey.

The speaker pointed out that the seven parables

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in Matt. xiii. occur after the practical rejection of the Lord Jesus as the King of Israel; they would not receive Him as a prophet, nor even as a good man; they called Him a servant of Beelzebub (Matt. xii. 24). The Lord therefore showed the people what God had in reserve. By the first similitude, that of the sower and his work, the Lord taught that God had something entirely new to reveal to them by Himself. He was the Sower, and preached the word concerning the kingdom and the altered form it would assume because of His coming death. The second, third and fourth parables speak of the kingdom of the heavens on earth, when the King is not present and reigning. It would have a mixed character, like tares with the wheat, leaven in the meal, evil birds sheltering in the tree.

The remaining parables were not spoken to the people, but to His disciples privately in the house. The Lord disclosed to them that the kingdom had another aspect, apart from the evil. There was *something precious, with a special character of unity, without mixture, and unaffected as time passed.* The treasure and the pearl present the divine side of the kingdom, and a truth hitherto kept secret from the foundation of the world.

The man in the first of the twin-parables is the Lord Jesus Christ, Who found the treasure hidden in the field of this world, where Satan rules and evil has laid its despoiling and polluting hand on every department of human life. But amid the rank growth of wickedness Christ has found His treasure, secured it safely, and will eventually take it for His own good pleasure. The treasure is the whole assemblage of God's people from Pentecost onward until the day of Christ, when He will make manifest the value and usefulness of His church.

The speaker drew attention to the unity and homogeneity of the pearl, which is spherical, perfect in form and appearance, its surface unpuncturable,

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and any deformity or superficial defilement such as a spot or wrinkle removable by the owner. The unique relation of the church to Christ was in God's mind from the beginning and expressed in figure. Adam was formed by the Creator's hand out of the dust of the ground, while his spirit was imparted by the breath of the Almighty; but Eve was builded, not out of the ground, but out of Adam's side. When Adam awoke, his bride was before him in all her perfect beauty and excellency, flesh of his flesh. In the headship of God's sinless creation Adam and Eve were one, a figure of Christ and His pearl, His treasure, that which is His own possession exclusively.

The speaker pointed out Satan's counterfeit of this unity. The imperial unity of worldly power was typified in the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream (Dan. ii.). Its form was brilliant, but terrible and forbidding; gold, silver, brass, iron and clay were in its composition, but it needed only a little stone, divinely directed, to smite it, and it crumbled to pieces and vanished. It was a figure of human unity in imperial government, exercised by the Gentiles. This rule, being animated by the god of this world, will utterly fail, and its ultimate doom will be extinction by God's own hand, and Jehovah's King.

The speaker said that the mystery spoken of in Colossians and Ephesians was the truth hidden in Old Testament times, but now made known in the New Testament scriptures. Paul says, "*I speak concerning Christ and the church*" (Eph. v. 32). The mystery is not the truth about the church only. What is the church without Christ? Apart from Him, it has no form, beauty or value, and degenerates into the mystery of evil, Babylon, a woman associated with a beast, the apostate church in alliance with the kings of this world, having fallen into the utmost depths of depravity. But the great mystery of the Epistles is the inseparability of the church from Christ, just as

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not even the power of death could dissolve the unique unity of Eve and Adam. God by His Holy Spirit unites those that believe with the Lord Jesus Christ in glory; and the union is so intimate that it is expressed in the Epistles by the figure of the human body, the Head being Christ and the church the members. From the Head the church derives life, direction and maintenance; without Him the body becomes a corpse, a mass of corruption; but with the Head it is a living organism, of power and value even now in the world.

The enemy seeks to nullify the truth of the body of Christ by insinuating that it does not affect practical Christian life now. But Ephesians shows how it counteracts the natural desires of the flesh and of the mind. The union of the church with its Head was formed at Pentecost and this unity will continue to be the spring of its normal activity until Christ displays the church in glory by and by, the medium of His rule over the heavens and the earth.

From Col. ii. 2, 3, we learn that God has been pleased to hide in the mystery, that is, the church in Christ, "*all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*" Wisdom is the power to exercise knowledge, which without it is either useless or mischievous. Sceptics say that God is asleep, the world is awry, and man has no wisdom to correct it. But this is untrue. God by His Son has found the treasure in the field, has hidden it and bought the field, even the false prophets who deny His name (2 Pet. ii. 1). The world is His not only because He made it, but also because He purchased it. As God secreted the body of Moses, so He has buried the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in the church of Christ, where it lies hidden and dormant, waiting His coming. Then He will rule this world in righteousness and peace, and the heavenlies too, where Satan, the principalities and powers of darkness, and wicked spirits have their way. The kingdom of Christ will

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be ruled in power according to that perfect wisdom and knowledge that belong to God's exalted and anointed Man, the Second and the Last Adam.

The speaker said that Eph. i. 6 shows how God originally marked out believers for His own, that they might be "*to the praise of the glory of His grace.*" This is far beyond the feeble praises of our worship meetings or our private devotions. As the heavens are to the praise of the Creator's handiwork, so, when the church is displayed in glory, all the heavenly host will admire the grace and glory of God displayed in that wonderful mystery, Christ and the church one, in the centre of that scene of untarnishable excellence.

The speaker referred to the unity in heaven and earth mentioned in Eph. i. 10. All things will be gathered together (or headed up) in the One Who, rising from the sleep of death, found His bride presented to Him by God the Father. Then, when in the appointed time, Christ and the church administer God's governmental glory, when all things have come to fullness and perfection, the church will be by the side of Christ, associated with Him in the dignity of His rule and in the excellency of His power. We do not understand how this will be, but we trust His word. And Christ on high looks down into this world where He shed His precious blood and slept the sleep of death, and He beholds His treasure hidden in the field.

The speaker took up next Eph. v. 25-27 and showed how the historical circumstances of the union of Adam and Eve as husband and wife were figurative of Christ and the church. "*Christ loved the church*": when? Before the cross of Calvary, before the mount of transfiguration, before Jordan, before Bethlehem. Eph. i. 4, shows that love was acting in purpose and choice of us in the council chambers of the Trinity before the worlds were. Then it was that Christ appropriated the church for Himself. He foresaw, in the field of the world, the treasure, the single pearl of

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great price. He procured the church for Himself because of His own special love which pursues and acquires not only the individual but the church as a whole. Does not the knowledge of such a fact as this awaken and deepen our love to Christ?

As a pearl is made up of many thousands of atoms, each arranged in its particular position to form its incomparable symmetry, so the whole church that Christ loved and purchased is composed of its multitudinous parts. Hence also, every Lord's day we have upon the table, the loaf, which is the emblem of Christ's body, the church, as well as of Christ Himself Who went into death. The one loaf expresses the unity of the many members. Only two or three may be meeting together, but the one loaf represents the whole church of God. The Lord ordained that this truth of unity should be before our very eyes in the memorial of His death. Christ "*delivered Himself up for it,*" the church in its entirety. There was no reserve in His sacrifice. His was the whole burnt offering: all that He was ascended up in the smoke of the sacrifice, making it a sweet-smelling savour to God: and we remember it was for the church He gave Himself.

Moreover, Christ is caring for this pearl, because it has a beauty found nowhere else. He has made it His own "*that he might sanctify and cleanse it.*" He sets it apart for Himself: He is jealous lest our affections should be estranged from Him through worldly things assuming a commanding interest in our lives. He is continually saying to each, "My son, give Me thine heart. I gave My all for thee; what wilt thou not give for Me?" Each of us, as members of the body of Christ, have a responsibility to answer to this care of His love.

The Lord uses the scripture for our cleansing; "*with the washing of water by the word.*" But we are responsible to submit ourselves under His attentions

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for the removal of superficial impurities unperceived by us ; the pearl does not know what is on its surface. The Lord sees and makes it His service to take away what does not please Him, as, unsolicited, He washed His disciples' feet. Let us, however, offer ourselves for His ministrations, asking Him to remove everything offensive in His sight and to show us daily from the scriptures what is well-pleasing to Him. He will continue to do this until the whole church is complete, clean and fit for Himself, "*a church in glory, not having spot (anything foreign upon its surface), or wrinkle (any deformity spoiling its perfect uniformity), or any such thing.*" The lustre and glow of the pearl must not be dimmed in any respect in the day when Christ presents it to Himself.

The speaker exhorted his hearers to meditate upon this truth of Christ's love for the church, typified by the fullness of Adam's love for Eve, his perfect spotless bride, as he took her to his heart, to be the object of his love and the companion of his life. How little we realise the love of Christ ! But when Christ comes for the church He will lavish upon it all that love of His which passeth knowledge.

We have seen that the church is the vehicle through which God will display the treasures of His wisdom and knowledge in the coming day, and also the medium through which the Lord will display His love to His bride. Communion in the presence of the Lord by the Holy Spirit thrills our hearts even now with an indefinable glow of spiritual satisfaction, the love of Christ filling our hearts ; but the church will never have such a joyful experience as it will when all are together for the first time, perfect and complete in the presence of the Lord in glory. But down here we have only to put Christ first in our hearts and to unite our hearts in praise and worship to Him and we shall feel something of this binding together of heart to heart, of this unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is

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not an outward and agreed conformity to a law, nor a united confession of faith, but the uniting bond of love and loyalty to our Lord by the Spirit, which can fill every heart and cause the outbreak of acceptable worship and praise to Him Who is worthy.

How sad when the Spirit is thwarted in our meetings ! We come away feeling sad because, for us, the Lord was not there ; the Spirit was quenched, and unable to make us feel the power and joy of that presence. It is the fact of Christ's presence which makes it worth while for even two or three to be gathered to His name. There He unfolds His secrets, saying, " I loved you before the worlds were. I gave Myself for you. I am attending to your well-being day by day, and by and by, My treasure, My bride, I will present you to Myself in the heavens above. Then you will know all the fullness of that love which shone out when I gave Myself for you." May the Lord give us to prize the truth concerning Himself and the church so fully set forth in the New Testament.

Hymn 115.

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

Hymns sung : 29, 223, 81.

Scriptures read : Is. xl. 27-31 ; Prov. xxvii. 18 ; Phil. iv. 4-9 ; Jude 20, 21.

Open Meeting, 10.15 a.m.

Hymns 223, 321, 98.

W.G.T. Gen. xxiv. 63-65 ; 1 Thess. iv. 16-18 ; 1 Pet. i. 6-9. " *Rebekah lifted up her eyes and . . . saw Isaac* " ; " *So shall we ever be with the Lord* " ; " *Whom having not seen, ye love.* "

The speaker said that we readily recognise the story of Rebekah's journey across the desert to be the bride of one of whom she had heard but as yet had not seen

as a picture of those to whom Peter refers. He, Who in grace now takes the place of a Servant sent from the Father to bring from the distant land those who shall form a bride for the Son, has brought us to know Him "Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

He pointed out that, whatever human voice brought the message to our ears, the Holy Spirit Himself spoke to our hearts and led us to believe in the Lord Jesus, and to rejoice with a joy, at times unspeakable, as we pursue our way till we see Him face to face. In Rebekah's case the journey was long, and would have been both tedious and irksome but for the companionship of the servant who could speak of the son as "My Master." But there *was* a goal, a home, and the long journey came to an end when she for the first time beheld him to whom she was to be linked in love and companionship for the rest of her life.

So with ourselves, the wilderness journey is long, and we would be often in heaviness through the manifold trials of our faith, were it not for that Guide and Companion Who makes it His gracious concern so to speak to our hearts of Him Whom having not seen we love; though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The speaker drew attention to the frequency with which hymns expressive of this very thing had been sung during the meetings, and said that we go on our way by the merciful help of the gracious Spirit, making melody in our hearts to the Lord, confessing—"Jesus, how much Thy Name unfolds To every opened ear; The pardoned sinner's memory holds None other half so dear"—for our ears, through infinite mercy, have been opened to hear His voice, and we *are* "pardoned sinners." Solely and absolutely we rest upon Him and His finished work on the cross; we see Him not, but

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we believe in Him, and rejoice in Him as the Lord of our life and the God of our salvation.

But, it was pointed out, the journey will end, whether we sleep in Jesus or wake to greet His coming, for as the bride of Isaac met him at eventide in the field, so we "shall be caught up together with them (who have fallen asleep) to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17).

Year by year, the speaker added, we miss the faces of those with whom we mingled our songs of praise and worship, who are no longer with us, but with Christ in the paradise of God. When the journey really ends and we together with them in the clouds meet the Lord in the air, we shall be ever with the Lord. What rapture indeed, face to face with Him that loved us and with all who know and share that love! "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

It was stated that real ministry is good, but worship is better; and the mention of Christ's blessed Name and the contemplation of His most holy Person, and of that tremendous sacrifice when He bore all there was to bear, accomplished all there was to do, and paid all there was to pay, for God's glory and our blessing, bows our hearts in acceptable worship and adoration before our God and Father at the feet of our blessed Lord and Saviour.

The speaker asserted that it was not of us alone, nor those only with whom it is our privilege to walk in Christian fellowship, but of the vast company of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth from Pentecost onward that we can truly say, "The Holy Ghost is leading Home to the Lamb His bride."

It was remarked that the last scripture carried us yet farther to the "appearing of Jesus Christ," *that* day on which *this* day has so much bearing. It is ours, as we travel on through the wilderness of this world, to remember that this is the place of trial and temptation.

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It is here that our hearts are put to the test, so to speak. Weakness, carelessness, unfaithfulness, lightness of mind and the total unreliability of our hearts come, alas, into evidence too frequently here. It is here therefore we need to remember constantly that, while the coming of the Lord to receive us to Himself and take us to the Father's house is all pure grace, at His appearing faithfulness now will be appraised and rewarded. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him," and "How will recompense His smile The suffering of this little while!"

So, the speaker concluded, we would go on our journey carefully, prayerfully, cheerfully, and hopefully, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, Who is leading us on till we see Him Whom having not seen, we love, to Whom be glory and praise now and for ever.

Hymns 151, 105.

S. R. Prov. xxx. 4. "*What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell?*"

The speaker pointed out that after the flood, when the world had fallen again into idolatry, God called Abraham out, and Abraham builded an altar and called on the name of *the Lord*. By and by God brought Abraham's seed out of Egypt, made a covenant with them (partly of works), and revealed Himself to Israel as *Jehovah* throughout their generations. Three times a year they were to appear before Him in Jerusalem, the earthly centre where He had placed *His name*.

The speaker said that none could answer Agur's question in Prov. xxx., but God unveiled the name of His Son at Jordan: "*This is My beloved Son*" (Matt. iii. 17). The Father's voice spoke, too, through Peter, when shortly after the Lord's question, "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" he answered, without knowing intelligently what he said, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (Matt. xvi. 16).

Israel rejected and crucified Him, but at Calvary He

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was the Lamb, slain to meet God's righteous requirements. John writes, "Your sins are forgiven *for His name's sake*" (1 John ii. 12), and the angel told Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name *Jesus*, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21).

Now God has raised Him from the dead and given Him the same name of *Jesus* (Phil. ii. 10), ratified in heaven by the Father (Heb. ii. 9). In that name we gather together and bring our prayers and praises to the Father, for He is in our midst (Matt. xviii. 20): and He will bear that name to all eternity.

The speaker called attention to Rev. iii. 12, and said that His is the only name through which we can overcome the opposition of the world. By and by we shall be associated with the glorious name of the risen Christ: "His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face" (Rev. xxii. 3, 4). What a joy, to see the glorified face of Christ! What satisfaction will be His, when He presents us to Himself with exceeding joy! Let us respond to His "Surely I come quickly" with our "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Hymn 141.

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

Young People's Meeting, 2 p.m. Address by Mr. W. H. Nutter.

Hymns 231, 277.

Hab. ii. 1-4; Rom. i. 16, 17; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 35-39. "*The just shall live by faith.*"

The speaker said that the Book of Habakkuk seems fitted to the present day, for God's people then, as now, were in sore straits. Opposition to true faith is growing, more openly perhaps in other countries than in our own. But even here it is found in business associations and in home and school life, where the word of God is discredited and denied, and those who will not repeat these denials fail in their examinations.

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The only safeguard is to close our ears as far as possible to what is untrue, and if in doubt about anything, search God's word and ask those who can be trusted to tell the truth. In business life, too, we may not get on, because we will not take part in worldly amusements. We must be prepared to bear reproach, to be despised and set aside for Christ's sake: but a record of each life is kept in heaven, and faithfulness will have its reward in "that day."

The speaker reminded his hearers that, in Peter's walk of faith across the waters, he cried, "Lord, save me": when he was "*beginning* to sink": if you feel temptation assailing your faith, cry to the Lord at once, and He will save you from defeat. If you delay, it may be too late. Get back to the word; believe it, even if you do not understand it at the time; you will understand it later, in time or in eternity. We read, "For ever Thy word is settled in heaven" (Ps. cxix. 89), and "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee" (Deut. viii. 2).

Habakkuk's first chapter shows, the speaker said, that he very much felt the condition of things around him, the oppression of the enemy at the gates, and the distress of God's people. He prayed, and was impatient because he was not answered at once (i. 2). But then (chap. ii.) he stands upon his watch tower to hear what God would say to him. We can expect to hear God speaking to us when, and only when, we read or remember His word.

Habakkuk appears to have been a little fearful, for he wondered what he would answer when he was reproved. But the Lord did not reprove him. We can tell the Lord about anything: if we see something not quite right in a fellow-believer, we should not expose the failure to someone else, but tell the Lord Himself. We may find we are quite as guilty ourselves.

The Lord did not reprove Habakkuk, but gave him

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a beautiful vision of blessing to Israel in an "appointed time." The Chaldean host at the gates would not be there for ever. So for us a time of freedom from all oppression and every care is coming, when we shall be launched on a boundless ocean of love, where there are no storms.

The speaker pointed out that Israel was told to wait for the blessing, "though it tarry . . . it will surely come." It has not come yet ; but "they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me" (Is. xlix. 23).

But while we, like Israel, are waiting for the Lord, the promise is given to us, as to the prophet, "The just shall live by his faith." Faith is like the simple trust of a child who takes the hand of an older person to cross a narrow bridge where it would fear to go alone. The Lord promises to carry us through and to give us needed strength and courage for every day. Do we live by faith in Him ?

The promise is repeated three times in the Epistles, the emphasis being on a different word in each passage.

(1) Rom. i. 17 emphasises "the just," showing that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God from faith to faith. The love of God in John iii. 16 is the source of it all, but God is righteous in pardoning us because of what Christ has done. Salvation is not accomplished by the response of the heart to His wonderful love, but by what Christ did on the cross for us, taking our place and bearing our punishment. Those who are *just* live by faith.

(2) Gal. iii. 11 emphasises "by faith," showing clearly that we cannot do anything to be saved. The just live *by faith*, not by works. The law cannot justify : the rebellious son had to be stoned (Deut. xxi. 21), the man being put away as well as his sin. But in Luke xv. the Father can embrace the prodigal son, because of Christ's precious sacrifice.

(3) Heb. x. 38 emphasises "shall live," as in 2 Tim. iii. 14, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast

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learned." Patience is needed : the way, though happy, may be thorny : " in the world ye shall have tribulation " (John xvi. 33). Take the will of God, not self-interest or pleasure, as a maxim for life, in home and business. Then you will " receive the promise " of the coming of the Lord Jesus and an abundant entrance into His everlasting kingdom. The just *shall live* by faith, not merely look.

May we all be like Moses, who had respect unto the recompense of the reward, looking for the prize of a crown in that day, that then we may have something to cast at His feet, and say, " Thou art worthy."

Hymn 208.

Open Meeting, 3.30 p.m.

Hymns 182, 150.

T.R. Jude 1-4, 14-25. "*It was needful for me to . . . exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*"

The speaker remarked that this short Epistle is deeply interesting because of its solemn subjects. Whereas Jude had intended to write about the " common salvation," he treats of the special need due to ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness (*ver.* 4). He refers to several departures from the faith not mentioned in other scriptures. He speaks of the doom of the angels who kept not their first estate, and are reserved to everlasting judgment ; of the dispute between Michael the archangel and Satan over the body of Moses; and of Enoch's prophecy as to the judgment of the ungodly, yet to come.

We need to-day, said the speaker, the exhortation in verses 20 and 21. We should be building ourselves up on our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, and keeping ourselves in the love of God in all its extent and perfection. This has brought us out of

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the power of all the sin and darkness around us to rejoice in all the excellencies of Christ.

The Lord keeps us, but here we are exhorted to keep ourselves and to look for the mercy of our Lord unto eternal life.

The speaker also called attention to the exhortations that follow (*vers. 22, 23*). We are to have compassion for those trapped in religious errors, and to save others with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Jude then concludes with an ascription of praise to God our Saviour Who is the One able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

E.B. Gen. xii. 1-10, xiii. 1-9, 14-18; 1 Tim. iv. 11-16. *"The Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him . . . Arise, walk through the land . . . for I will give it unto thee."*

The speaker pointed out that when God called Abram to leave the idolatry of Chaldea for Canaan, his father Terah took the first step, but they got only as far as Haran. After his death, Abram went into Canaan and built an altar. In the famine, he turned to Egypt, but the Lord brought him back to the place where he stepped out of the path of faith. We have to be treated similarly if we go wrong, like Abram.

The speaker remarked that the Lord did not tell Abram to take Lot with him, and soon there was disagreement, resulting in separation. Abram allowed his nephew Lot to make his choice, letting God choose for himself. Then Lot started on the downward road. He "beheld," "chose," "journeyed east," "dwelled in the cities of the plain," "pitched his tent toward Sodom"—and eventually was found in the gate of Sodom, and had to escape for his life.

Meanwhile, Abram was on a mountain (Gen. xiii. 14). The speaker pointed out that after "Lot was separated

from him" the Lord opened His mind to Abram. He recalled that, when the Lord communed with Moses on the mount, with Paul in Arabia, John in Patmos, and Daniel, they were walking in separation. Abram was exhorted by God to arise and walk through the land to take possession of it. May the whole word of God sink into our hearts, that we may walk by faith and be separated to the Lord from all that is contrary to Him.

The speaker illustrated, from the supper at Bethany, the varied blessings that flow from communion with the Lord (John xii. 2, 3, 11). All benefited from Martha's service: the house was filled with the odour of Mary's ointment, and many of the Jews came to see Lazarus and believed on Jesus.

He drew attention to the last words of 1 Tim. iv. 16, "them that hear thee," and said that we do not realise our influence on each other. The result of David's saying in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul," was that he took six hundred men with him on the wrong path (1 Sam. xxvii. 1, 2).

Hymn 388.

T.H. 2 Pet. i. 5-8. "*Add to your faith,*" or "*In your faith have——.*"

The speaker said that in faith we have a diamond of the very first water. The facets of the diamond are best ground with diamond powder; so will the Lord, its Author and Finisher, polish our faith to reflect His own character, by means of the daily exercises of faith, if we take it to Him. Two on the way to Emmaus were occupied with Him and He went with them to encourage them. Thus will He do with you and me.

In Ps. cxxxix., the Psalmist saw from the beginning of creation the character of Him Who shaped his faith, and cried, "Search me, O God . . . try me . . . see if there be any wicked way in me." So we, seeing His

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beauties from *before* the foundation of the earth, shall eagerly desire no less than the Psalmist; and our faith shall set forth our Lord.

Even one who has reason to repent may come to Him about his faith. Like the fir tree, he sees no hope of fruit, but such a one converses with the Lord in Hos. xiv. 8, and the answer comes: "From Me is thy fruit found." Commune with the Lord about your faith, and you "shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Hymns 383, 23.

TUESDAY EVENING. Address by Mr. T. Davis, 7 p.m.

Hymns 343, 233.

John xiii. 18, 19, xiv. 28, 29, xvi. 1-4.

"He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me. Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He."—"If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe."—"The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service . . . these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them."

The speaker said that the gathering in that upper room was a very quiet one. Though they had come through a dense, hurrying crowd in the narrow streets of Jerusalem at feast time, the doors were closed, supper was ended, and the disciples' feet had been washed by their Lord and Master. Only the serenity of His Person marked Him out—His unclouded face, as, on the night in which He was betrayed, He looked back to the glory He had with the Father before the worlds were, and surveyed present events, in full consciousness that everything for those about Him

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and for all that should believe through their word depended upon what He was about to do. The blessed Saviour was in the calm of knowing He was perfectly in the path of His Father's will.

But it must have been very sorrowful for the Lord to have to say that one of that company was excluded from the blessing He had bestowed. If ever a rite could have had spiritual efficacy, surely it was this one: but the feet of Judas were washed like the rest. Its lesson was rather in the future—"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me."

The character of Judas was not new knowledge to the Saviour (John vi. 70). So that the scripture might be fulfilled (Ps. xli. 9, John xiii. 18), He did not use His omniscience to pick twelve faithful disciples. But it troubled His spirit (John xiii. 21), and even on the solemn occasion of His audience with the Father, He mentions the traitor and the fulfilment of the scripture (John xvii. 12).

But the Lord was looking forward to the time when He would be absent, and the world would regard Him as an impostor and a failure. How vulnerable might appear the cause of One Who was declared to be the Lord of all, but Who was the victim of sordid treachery, One Whose Name alone was given whereby men might be saved, yet (men would say) Who could not prevent one of His called apostles from being lost! But the safeguard is, "I tell you before it come." It was written in the scripture, it was the will of the Father, and the obedient Servant drank the whole of His bitter cup. Surveying this, He communicates it in advance to His disciples, so that when it happens their faith may be not weakened, but strengthened. He is like no other; and the same challenge is sounded out in the Old Testament (Is. xlv. 7). The One sitting in the disciples' midst was calmly tracing beforehand the events of that dreadful night, of which the eleven had no inkling, though less than twenty-four hours ahead.

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These are the roots of our faith : it is because we find these things only in the Lord of truth that we are so sure. He told us beforehand so that we should believe : and we do.

So the disciples' faith in the word and the Christ of God stood through all that looked like catastrophe : their faith was mightily confirmed : they had the word of prophecy and the living word of the Son of God ; and though the event might be difficult, like the hard sayings of the Lord Jesus in His life, to whom could they go ? He not only had the words of eternal life (John vi. 68), but had done the great work which secured it to them ; and when the Spirit later brought back these words to them, they believed. Let us hold fast the foundation of our faith, the words that the Lord Jesus has communicated to us in this precious book.

The speaker pointed out that in John xiv. 28 the Lord said that if the disciples loved Him they would rejoice because He said He was going to the Father ; not, as we might expect, because He was coming again, which was a cause of rejoicing to them, as to us. But the Lord stressed their lack of interest in the place to which He was going again, in John xvi. 5. At first this indifference seems contradicted by Thomas's question in xiv. 5, and Peter's in xiii. 36, but they were concerned with the way, so that they might go too. But when the ark went over Jordan, there was a distance between it and the people. The Lord wanted the disciples to know that while they were in the world and He was apart from them, He would occupy a place of authority and blessedness in its results for them. Their hearts were troubled because their Comforter was going away, but they might have reasoned, " He has been here to do every whit the will of God, what is the purpose of His going to heaven ? " His very last words to them were of victory, " Be of good cheer ; I have overcome the

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world" (xvi. 33). We need to have sharp eyes to see victory where the world sees betrayal, reviling, rejection by the people to whom He presented Himself as Messiah, and crucifixion, with God to see One worthy of sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high: but this is our faith.

The Lord added, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice . . . for My Father is greater than I" (xiv. 28). His Father was greater, because the Lord came out from, and went to, Him. He sought the Father's will in all things: He had a task committed to Him in the world—"to save sinners" (I Tim. i. 15). Now He was leaving the world completely victorious, the work of salvation finished, and the Father's name declared to the men given Him out of the world. He was going into the Father's presence to maintain our cause, as Advocate above and through the Comforter, the Holy Spirit below. How could we abide in perfect peace and rest, or go forward in victorious energy, did we not know that the crucified Saviour, acting as our Advocate in the Father's presence, was sustaining us? In our own strength we cannot follow Him at any time, as Peter proved (John xiii. 37, xviii. 25). If we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more we shall be saved by His life. We are justified, accepted, the sons of God; and our destined place is represented in the glorified Lord on high just as perfectly as the Father was manifested by Him in all His words and actions in the days of His flesh.

The Lord continued, "Now I have told you before . . . that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." Here there is no appeal to the prophecy (Ps. cx. 1, 4), but we have the bare word of Jesus Christ. How precious it must have been to the disciples to recall it when He ascended from Olivet! They did not seek for Him as did the sons of the prophets for Elijah. So we do not need to argue from the "many infallible proofs" of His resurrection: His word about His

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place with the Father before it happened is enough. There are no words like His to found our souls upon the rock of truth and to awaken the music of our joy. So we believe that the Lord Jesus is not merely in heaven but with the Father.

In connection with the Lord's prophecy of persecution in John xvi. 1-4, the speaker recalled that the Lord's talk opened with the exhortation, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me" (xiv. 1), and pointed out that nowadays men's minds, as well as their bodies, were being increasingly dragooned to keep step with those of their rulers, and that our faith may be tested at any time now. Satan's great purpose, pursued with slight variations and adaptations, is to get rid of Christ; and those who are faithful to Him have no more bitter persecutors than the believers in a god of their own imagination, not in the God Whom Jesus Christ declared. Hence the importance of doctrine, the statement of truth regarding the very essence of our faith.

The Jews doubtless thought the disciples deluded fools to believe in One as Son of God Who was head of twelve disciples, one of whom sold Him for thirty pieces of silver, Who was unable to defend Himself, Who made great pretensions to divinity, but Who was held to the cross by the nails just like any other felon (so they would reason). Yet that is our faith: are we ready to be counted fools for His sake by modern infidels?

The speaker exhorted his hearers that those who thought they stood should take heed lest they fell (1 Cor. x. 12). It is very blessed, but very solemn to witness for Christ in this world, and He honours faithful witness (1 Sam. ii. 30). The world is not averse to religion, but it is to the faith of the Christian.

The speaker pointed to the persecution by Saul of Tarsus as an illustration of John xvi. 2: he "lived in all good conscience before God" (Acts xxiii. 1),

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haling men and women to prison and holding the clothes of Stephen's murderers. The world's hatred, led by those who have a "zeal of God, but not according to knowledge," is very awful. But faith in the true God is inseparable from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as He Himself stated in John xvii. 3. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by Him (John xiv. 6).

Again the Lord said, "These things have I told you, that . . . ye may remember" (John xvi. 4). He was preparing His disciples for their troubles, anticipating the circumstances, and viewing beforehand the conclusion of their faithfulness to Him: like Him, they would be hated by the world. He set out before their gaze the world—those who, whatever their profession, know neither the Father nor the Son—and those it persecuted, the servants of God: so their faith should be built up.

The Lord added, "These things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you." Perhaps they could not have borne it then, but it was necessary to tell them now, and they could bear it. Other things they could not bear even then, and these He revealed afterwards by His Spirit. What a blessed Teacher the Lord is—line upon line, precept upon precept! With the onward march of His life, death, resurrection and ascension comes the gradual unfolding of the truth—and how precious it is in our eyes!

Hymns 421, 111, "Glory, honour," etc., Christian's Goodnight, Doxology.