

WINCHESTER CONFERENCE

MAY 27th to 30th, 1939

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

Hymn sung : 262.

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

Hymns sung : 22, 5, 334, Glory, honour, etc.

Breaking of Bread, 11 a.m.

Hymns sung : 228, 188, 143, 345, 92, 194, 200, 330.

Scriptures read : Zech. xi. 12-13, xiii. 6 ; Matt. xxvii.

1-10, 34-56 ; John xix. 28-30, 32-37 ; Rev. i. 5-6 ; John xii. 23-32, xvii. 1-5, 24.

W.H.N. 1 Cor. xi. 23-26 : “ *This do in remembrance of Me*”.

To break the bread and drink the cup together is to do what the Lord desires and is precious to Him until He comes. The cup is mentioned first in x. 16, because it is there a question of fellowship, and if our sins are to be put away and if we are to have our part with Him, His precious blood must be first. But in the remembrance of Him we take the bread first because He *laid down* His life that we might live. The blood was shed from a Christ already dead, and in the cup we show His deity.

The Lord's word, “ *This do in remembrance of Me*”, reminds us of David's longing in 2 Sam. xxiii. 15. The Lord desires that we should do something for Him, personally, until He comes.

The separate memorials of Him, the bread and the cup, remind us that death has come in. The holy body prepared for Him was given for us on the cross :

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but without the shedding of blood there is no remission, and so, contrary to all that might be expected, when the soldier pierced His side the blood flowed from a Christ already dead.

It rejoices His heart when His own in this world answer His request and remember Him until He comes. We shall not need to do it in heaven, for we shall see in His hands the print of the nails and, falling in worship before Him, sing for ever, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain". But in heaven nothing will be more sweet than the remembrance that in spite of all earthly difficulties we remembered Him Whom we love and Who is worthy.

LORD'S DAY AFTERNOON. *Young People's Meeting*,
2 p.m. Address by Mr. W. H. Nutter.

Hymns 237, 135.

Phil. iv. 1-7 : "*Rejoice in the Lord alway*" (ver. 4).

Joy is the desire of every young soul, and for this happiness God has made provision which is not affected by outward circumstances, and increases as time goes on. The scriptures give solid ground for the happiness of believers. It bids us rejoice in the Lord, not in circumstances. Throughout scripture we find men and women of God specially tried, and yet happy. "The joy of the Lord" is your great standby, as it was theirs.

Your great example is the Lord Jesus, Who, though the cities wherein He had laboured much had not repented, could rejoice in spirit, and say, "I thank Thee, O Father, . . . because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father : for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. xi. 25, 26). So also Habakkuk, when everything outwardly was wrong, could say, "Yet . . . I will joy in the God of my salvation". The treasury of heaven is open to believers, and the Lord is over it, to give you whatever He knows you need.

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You may rejoice, too, though compelled to be in the company of ungodly persons, enduring their sneers and gibes (Luke vi. 22, 23). You need not fear what men may do to you ; trust the strong arm of Christ, Who will never fail you. If in prison, you may sing praises to God at midnight : " the joy of the Lord is your strength ". The pierced hand of the Saviour holds a crown for the head of those who bear the reproach and persecution of the cross to-day.

There is joy, too, in sacrifice. Paul said, " If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all " (Phil. ii. 17). Freely you have received, may you freely give up what you would like to keep.

Then there is joy in prayer (Phil. iv. 6) when you ask definitely for what you need. You should not be careless, but neither should you be careworn : God will meet your needs. Your prayer must be coupled with thanksgiving.

The result of trusting in Him is peace. If we come to the prayer meeting with a burden and cast it on the Lord, He gives in exchange His peace that passes all understanding. What a blessing to have such a resource in God ! Do not take your care away with you and bring it back again and again : " He careth for you ". He is not a God that cannot save : He has a heart for you, and knows you through and through.

In Ps. xxxix. 6, three classes of persons are described : (1) those who walk " in a vain shew ", who live butterfly lives, careless about everything ; (2) those who " are disquieted in vain ", not enjoying life as they should, careful about everything, and (3) those who " heap up riches ", but do not know who will gather them. But from all these he turns his eyes to heaven, and declares (*ver.* 7) that the real object of his heart, his hope, is " in Thee ".

God grant that you may increase in joy as you go along, looking off unto Jesus, your feet down here, but your hearts in heaven. Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together—the Lord has

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promised to be in the midst. Do not let His things take a second place.

Following the Lord is a happy pathway. He gives us always to rejoice in Him, because He has gone to the Father and lives there for us: and soon He is coming for us that we may be with Him for ever and ever.

Hymn 300.

Open Meeting, 3.15 p.m.

Hymn 208.

W.J.H. Psalm xlii. 1-4; Luke xix. 41-44; John xi. 33-36; Heb. v. 5-8: "*Strong crying and tears*".

While joy is a great part of Christian life and experience, sorrow and grief are never long absent. Psalms xlii. and xliii. express particularly the feelings of pious Israelites unable, through separation from the house of God, to carry on their worship there. They long to be in His courts, but enemies are in the way, and this privation causes them to be filled with sighing and sadness. These Psalms also point to the Lord Jesus, in whom many feelings proper to the pious Jewish remnant were displayed in perfection. Ps. xlii. 3 is an echo of the taunts uttered before our Lord on the cross, based upon His well-known piety; "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him" (Matt. xxvii. 43). They had called Him a deceiver and one possessed with an unclean spirit, but this mockery at Calvary was the climax of what the Lord had to endure as the faithful and obedient One. Our Lord's feelings towards this continual opposition and those cruel words were expressed in His tears. The tears of a strong man are the most convincing proof of the feelings within, and our Lord in this world was a tearful Man, as we find in this verse.

Unlike ourselves, the tears and the antagonism causing them came to our Lord entirely from without.

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Within Himself there was nothing to cause Him grief; all within was holy and pure, and He was filled with a spirit of continual joy. Even in the hour when He was called Beelzebub and knew His nation had rejected Him as their King, He said, "I thank Thee, O Father" (Matt. xi. 25). So we should ever carry within us a spirit of contentment and happiness, though the whole world is filled with evil and opposes us. Passing through its troubled scenes, we may rightfully be untroubled, even though violent storms threaten to wreck the church's testimony here below, for the One Who slept calmly while the waves were dashing around the boat said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you" (John xiv. 27). But there are also the tears for us, as there were for Him.

Every jibe and sneer brought tears to His blessed eyes. They were strong evidence to Him of the power and corruption of sin. We may weep less, because of our blunted sensibilities. But shall we expect no sorrow nor crying in our Christian pathway? The Lord said, "If any man will come after Me, let him . . . take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matt. xvi. 24). No resting-place from his cross is promised to the disciple until his pathway here ends.

Our Lord wept over Jerusalem from Olivet as the memories of its past privileges and the knowledge of its future doom came before His mind. When He first went to Jerusalem in His ministry, He found His Father's house a house of merchandise, and now, at the close of His ministry, He foresaw the Roman armies encompassing the city, the massacre of tens of thousands of its inhabitants and the destruction of the temple and the city; and He wept.

We have been exhorted at this conference to cry to God for the world in its terrible perplexities and fear of devastating wars. We can only do this rightly if, like the Lord, we look at the situation with the eyes of God, as scripture describes it. The world is being rapidly organised against God and Christ. It will

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speedily become an arena for the display of evil's power of destruction on its widest scale. If we think of these coming events, and of the doom of those who, refusing the gospel, will fall under the terrible outpouring of God's wrath, surely our tears will come.

We might rightly pray for the preservation of ourselves and our neighbours from the perils that threaten: but our Lord was not thinking of self-preservation when He wept, but of the fate of Jerusalem. His tears were for others, real tears, falling to the ground, seen by His disciples, and precious to His Father: and if our tears come as we intercede for the world around us, they will surely be precious too to God.

At Bethany, also, it was what was around our Lord that touched His deepest emotions. He knew the multitude of tears caused by the early death of the beloved Lazarus, the sorrow of the Jews for the non-fulfilment in his case of God's promise that the godly man should have long days in the land, and the grief of the sisters, particularly Mary. It was part of our Lord's obedience to His Father's will that He came to Bethany at that moment, and not earlier. He now learned by actual observation the cruel power of sin and death in all its hideousness and corruption, and He wept that sin had wrought such sorrow in those He loved much.

We are called to sympathise with similar feelings with our brethren who are tried in bereavement, but we can only do so if we have learned obedience to God's will. We can only comfort others if God has first comforted us in sorrow and trial. It was so in perfection with His Son. By nature, we desire to be prominent in some self-chosen service for God, but that was not the Lord's way. He would not of His own wish, so to speak, have allowed the sisters to remain for some days in sorrow, but in obedience to His Father, He delayed His coming, and when He came His comfort was perfect. He wept with the mourners, and He wiped the tears from every eye.

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In Heb. v. we have the preparation of our Lord not only for the Melchisedec priesthood, but for the Aaronic too, for He was to have compassion on the ignorant as well as bless the victorious. And His education was "strong crying and tears"; no doubt this phrase has particular reference to Gethsemane, but it applied, too, throughout His life. Were there no tears during those lonely night-long prayers on the mountain side? Surely; the Lord in love was there bearing the burdens of the needy, of the weak and sorrowful, and learning Himself the lesson of obedience, so that He might take from men what filled them with sorrow and trial.

Sometimes a man's patience was tried, like that of the father of the boy possessed with the demon, who had to wait for relief till the Lord came down from the mountain. Our Lord's heart of love made Him always eager to help any in affliction. But there was a stronger call than sympathy, and He never moved except in obedience to the Father on high; and so sometimes He seemed slow to go.

In Gethsemane the Lord's grief came to a climax, but again the cause was from without. He was prostrate in the garden, contemplating in its minutest details what was immediately before Him. He saw not only the mocking crowds and the sarcastic Pharisees, not only the unseen hosts of evil, but the sacrificial load of sin and the sufferings of atonement. And He gave Himself up to strong crying and tears, with sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And all the while in this suffering He was learning obedience, as His words testified, "Not My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke xxii. 42).

And we too must learn by suffering. If we fail to obey in the hour of trial, we cannot help others similarly placed to obey. The wonder of scripture is that our Lord should have learned this lesson of obedience, and therefore is such a perfect High Priest now. He comes with gracious hand, to give strength in weakness and comfort in the hour of woe.

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The learning of this lesson of mingled joy and grief does not mean a gloomy disposition. Down here the Lord, the Man of sorrows, was filled with the inward joy of constant communion with His Father on high, and this intense personal enjoyment increased the influence of His testimony when He spoke of Him. But there is the other side. While we may wish we were in heaven, where there are "no jarring notes", it is needful for our development that contrary and difficult things should befall us, both in the world and in the things of God, and should even drive us to tears. Thereby, we are schooled in lessons of obedience and submission to God. It is part of God's way of blessing for us, proved by the scriptures that show it was true of our Lord, and must be true of us, if we follow His steps.

Hymns 366, 248.

G.S.P. Phil. iv. 5 : "*Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand*".

The word "moderation" here means yieldingness, absence of insistence on our own way and standing up for our own rights. In this our great Exemplar is the Lord, of Whom it is written, "Reproach hath broken My heart" (Ps. lxxix. 20), and Who looked for comforters but there were none.

"The Lord is at hand" refers, not to His coming, but to His personal presence in our midst, which we can realise only in the power of the Holy Spirit, Who is here to glorify the One Who so humbled Himself and to take of His things and show them unto us.

We have not looked with our natural eyes upon the nail-prints and the spear-mark, but we realise the truth of them in the power of the Spirit, and so enter into the blessing of those "that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The presence of the Lord to faith may give place to sight at any moment, and then we shall see Him and be with Him and like Him for ever. Three times in

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Rev. xxii. the Lord says, "I come quickly". What prevents His coming? Over a world fast going to destruction He is lingering in mercy, because there are still some to be saved. We can hasten His coming only by working for His honour and glory to bring them into the blessed position of saved ones, ready to reply, with us, to the Lord's words with those the Holy Spirit teaches, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus".

Hymn 29.

LORD'S DAY EVENING. *Preaching of the Gospel*, 6.30 p.m. Mr. John Weston.

Hymns: "Come, every soul by sin oppressed", "Jesu, Lover of my soul", "A ruler once came to Jesus by night".

Luke ix. 51-62. "*And they did not receive Him because*". . . . (ver. 53).

"They did not receive *Him*." To Whom does the text refer? It refers to the One so spoken of nearly one hundred times in this chapter, Jesus the Son of God, Whom God sent to be the Saviour of the world. The villagers, we are told, "did not receive Him". Have *you* received Him?

"They did not receive *Him*." True Christianity is about a *Person*. The great question is, not whether we accept a creed or even a doctrine, however sound, but whether we have received Christ. Again, our salvation does not depend upon our giving, or doing, or being anything, but upon our reception of Christ. If you reject *Him*, it matters little what good you do, or what you believe. You cannot do, or be, or give anything acceptable to God until as a sinner you have received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. "As many as *received Him*, to them gave He power to become the children of God" (John i. 12). "They did not receive Him, *because*". . . . These persons had a reason for not receiving Christ. What is *your* reason for not receiving Him? It probably is not the

reason you may allege, but God knows what it is. Some persons say they have an intellectual difficulty, but the real difficulty is in the heart. Fallen man is naturally opposed to Christ, and refuses to submit to Him.

It is sad to think that the Saviour was passing that way for the last time. He was on His way to Calvary, and these villagers refused to receive Him when He knocked at their gates. So, to everyone, there comes a last time of listening to the gospel appeal. This may be your last time. "Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation " (2 Cor. vi. 2).

The Lord, we are told, had "sent messengers before His face". This is His usual method. His coming to earth was heralded by a long line of prophets. Then there was His immediate fore-runner, John the Baptist. Later, He sent His disciples, two by two "before His face" (Luke x. 1). To-day, He usually sends His messengers before He comes to the sons of men. It pleases God "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21). His messengers are but poor mortals whom God in His mercy has brought to Christ. Have you responded to the message, even though you may think little of the messengers?

The responsibility of these villagers commenced the day when the messengers came to their gates seeking admission for Jesus. Your responsibility dates from the day you first heard the gospel.

The people appear to have received the messengers, for we read that they "entered into" the village. Ah, friends, it is of no value to respect or receive God's ministers, if you refuse Christ. God wants to know what you have done with Christ. He is the only One Who can cleanse you from your sins. He has proved His unutterable love for sinners at Calvary.

The messengers were sent to "make ready for *Him*". The best of preachers can but tell of Him. Christ alone can save. The true messenger says, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ;

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and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake " (2 Cor. iv. 5). These villagers must have heard of the Lord's wonderful works of mercy, yet they would not receive Him. It would have been a wonder enough if Jesus had allowed them to come to Him, but, wonder of wonders, He came to them, and yet "they did not receive Him".

Samaritans were despised by Jews, who would go a longer way round to Jerusalem rather than pass through their villages. The Lord, then as now, goes to the despised and unwanted. You cannot be too low or sinful for Him. "All the fitness He requireth is to feel your need of Him".

They would not receive Him because "His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem": yet He was going there to suffer and die for men's sins.

Some in that village probably pleaded ignorance as to Him. "Who is this Jesus, that we should receive Him?" And so, many otherwise well-informed persons profess to be unable to understand God's way of salvation. It is a bad excuse, for "The way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isa. xxxv. 8), where there is a real desire to know. We cannot fully understand this infinite Book, but we can understand that we are sinners and that God has sent Jesus to save us. We would not insist on understanding all the railway company's by-laws before taking a train to a place we wished to visit!

"They did not receive Him because"—but there is no good reason for not receiving Jesus.

James and John wanted to bring down fire from heaven on these Samaritans, but the Lord would not permit it. You may defy Him, but He will still plead with you, until you finally refuse Him. He will not go where He is not wanted.

"They went to another village." He says not a word, He utters no complaint. He went elsewhere. There is no punishment more awful than for Christ to turn away from one who refuses Him, never to return. Behold, He stands at your door and knocks.

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Weigh the claims of Christ against whatever is keeping you from receiving Him. May it not be said of any of you, "He would not receive Him". Heaven records the decision of each one to Christ's offer of Himself. May you accept Him as your Saviour to-night. Amen.

Hymn : " Just as I am, without one plea ".

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

Hymns sung : 58, 318, 397, 62 (*ver.* 4).

Meeting for Prayer and Humiliation, 10.30 a.m.

Scriptures read : Rev. i. 12-18, iii. 18-19 ; Dan. ix. 3-19 ; Ezra viii. 21-23 ; James v. 16.

Hymns sung : 124, 174, 369.

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

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

Hymns 432, 92.

Mark ix. 14-29 : " *This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting* ".

This story of the child possessed with the dumb spirit comes between two passages in which the Lord Jesus speaks of His sufferings on the cross, and the point of the incident is that unless He had so suffered we should still be under Satan's power.

The foul spirit in the child showed its power not only by keeping him dumb throughout the story, but also by causing the child much suffering under its control. How true this is of all of us before we trusted in the Lord Jesus ! An unsaved person may sing hymns with his lips, but how can his heart sing about his Redeemer ? The world to-day is very evidently under the control of Satan, man preparing to destroy his fellow men.

The child had everything done for him that his father could do : he could not deliver him from the foul spirit, but he brought him where the Lord was ; and this is all that our friends and loved ones can do for us if we are unsaved.

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The disciples were unable to cast out this foul spirit : it is a mistake to rely on the help of any man or woman for salvation : we need to come into the presence of the Lord Himself. And in this case, the failure of the disciples led to their humiliation before the unbelieving scribes who were disputing with them.

When the Lord arrived and asked about the dispute, the father did not wait for others to reply, but told the Lord Jesus how really the boy was under the evil spirit's power, and of the disciples' failure. The Lord's reply was, " Bring him unto Me " : in Him is the only possibility of salvation.

The father told the Lord Jesus that the boy had been afflicted since childhood. Children are not born innocent ; sin soon shows itself in temper, lying, etc. It is solemn to think how much power Satan has. The father cast himself on the Lord in his need, saying, " If Thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us ", and no such cry in faith is unheeded. " Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out " (John vi. 37).

The Lord Jesus pointed out to the father that the question was not of His own power, but of the man's faith—" If thou canst believe, all things are possible ". Then, to the father's cry, " Lord, I believe ", the Lord responded by setting the child free. And to-day those who confess themselves sinners and believe that Jesus died on the cross for their sins are delivered from the power of Satan.

The disciples, who had been much used by the Lord in preaching and doing wonderful works, could not cast out this unclean spirit because they had not learned that there was no deliverance from Satan's power apart from Christ's death on the cross. We find this truth in the words, " that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage " (Heb. ii. 14-15). And if you are not able to help unsaved friends or relations, if your Sunday school

teaching or gospel preaching is unfruitful, if there are difficulties and disagreements between Christians which are not settled, what is the reason? The Lord's reply was, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting".

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. v. 16). But if you hurry through your prayers, if you get into a form of words, if your minds wander to other subjects, there is not that reality that God can approve. In the prayer meeting, you must pray to God or the Lord Jesus, not to your brethren, nor seek to instruct them. Pray with all seriousness, carefulness, and exercise of heart. Sisters can be a great help in the prayer meetings, pouring out their hearts in silent prayer.

Fasting may mean going without natural food, but it more often involves denying yourselves worldly pleasures, such as books, games, etc., not in order to acquire merit in the sight of God or your brethren, but because they interfere with your communion with the Lord. To be able to lead souls to Christ, and to be a help to our brethren, we need both prayer and fasting more and more. And in these (as in all things) we have One Who was a model for us: prayer, fasting, everything that is perfect were found in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, when here below.

Hymn 249 (*ver.* 1).

Open Meeting, 3.15 p.m.

Hymn 274.

W.J.H. John iv. 13-14, 20-24: "*The Father seeketh such to worship Him*".

It is striking that the Lord should make this major communication concerning the exceeding importance of worship of God the Father to this Samaritan woman. The Father's will was to receive from men's hearts devotional uprisings of adoration. The natural world reflects the Creator's glory, but man has come short

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of it, and uses God's greatest gift to curse his fellows and God. The effect of Christ's redeeming work is that now there are those on earth who can, and who must, worship in spirit and in truth. This is our fundamental and continuous duty as believers.

From John ii. we learn that the Lord found the temple in Jerusalem defiled, and that no more real worship could be expected from God's earthly people, the Jews. So in John iii. we find set forth the preparation by new birth of those who can worship God. He implants within them a new spirit, born of the Holy Spirit, superior to that breathed into Adam's nostrils at the beginning. There we have the medium for true worship to God.

Then in John iv. the Lord shows how this new nature is wrought upon by God Himself to produce worship in spirit. The Lord was there at Jacob's well to give what could be obtained from no one else—a well of water springing up into everlasting life. This was more than He had told Nicodemus. It was the Spirit of life, living and active, rising upwards towards its heavenly source.

So the Lord taught the Samaritan woman that He would not only give a new nature to every believer, but that it would be under the power of the Spirit of life which was in Christ Jesus, which is satisfied only with what comes from God, and which only finds its proper expression in giving that sacrifice of praise to God, with which He is well pleased. Though such praise may, like the bubbling of a well, be inarticulate, it is the evidence of an active life which God has implanted in our hearts, and which is actuated by His Spirit in upward movement toward Himself.

Though not in *ver.* 14, in John vii. 38, 39, the Holy Spirit is spoken of separately as the river of living water that should flow from the believer to the world: but He did not come down to be the power of testimony till Pentecost.

Jerusalem would soon be utterly destroyed by the Romans, and there could be no songs of praise in

Zion then. But the gospel was about to go to the ends of the world, and Gentiles, though with stammering tongues, would worship not only Jehovah but the Father. This worship should not be rendered at Jerusalem nor in Mount Gerizim, but where the worshipper was. He should carry within him that which could express itself by the Spirit in real out-flowing of thanksgiving to God beyond what ordinary words could utter. Where the Holy Spirit rules the emotions of the heart there will be worship acceptable to God.

"The Father *seeketh* such to worship Him." It is a strong expression. In Luke xv. we see the Son and the Spirit seeking the lost, but the Father waiting for the return of His prodigal son: here the Father is seeking worshippers. He is "stretching out" towards the hearts of His children to find there worship in spirit and in truth. Do we render what He seeks? In an open meeting of believers where the Holy Spirit leads we should expect to find praise and worship to the Father taking precedence of other exercises. We are very conscious of our hunger and distress, and of our need to be guided by suitable ministry and set forward on our journey: but the claims of God must come first.

Who can praise God as we? The Son is with us to disclose to us the Father, and as we see the Father's glory in His face, if this does not move us to worship, what will? We shall not have a greater incentive to worship, even in heaven. Then we with the whole church shall gather around the same Person, Who will move us (then being perfect, like Himself) to unite in ascriptions of worthiness to the Father's name: but is He not here now? Also, we have all the essentials of worship in spirit and in truth, and if we hold our peace, the very stones might cry out, to shame us who have tasted of the riches of His grace and received the best gift of His love.

If we have the Lord before us whenever we are together, without effort on our part the Holy Spirit

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will lead in praise and worship to God and the Father. The only proviso is that our worship should spring from the spirit born in us by the Holy Spirit and be according to the truth revealed in God's holy word. So when we are together as an assembly, representing the church of God in which the Spirit is sovereign and moves all things for the glory of God and Christ, we should expect our hearts to be moved to give to God the Father what He is seeking. May we be ever ready to respond to the call.

Hymn 191.

T.D. 2 Thess. i. and ii.

There are dangers on either hand of us to-day. Some of us light-heartedly ignore the meaning of current events, though signs of the Lord's appearing, such as the return of the Jews to their land, are already taking place, and though events are assuming a shape so close to the prophetic outline, in preparation for the appearance of the man of sin (ii. 3). These things should make us realise that the Lord is at hand, and that we may have to suffer persecution, even as our brethren elsewhere are suffering to-day. On the other hand, some of us may be oppressed by fears. The Thessalonians, being sorely persecuted, were affected by the latter danger. Nevertheless the apostle in these verses, before dealing with their fears, leads their hearts and ours in a strain of thanksgiving.

Like Paul, Silas and Timothy, we are *bound* to give thanks to God for every newly-converted soul, because God has chosen them (ii. 13). Even though they should not go on well, a miracle—an intervention of God—has taken place: the idolater, the sinner, whether outwardly bad or good, has been saved from his sin and doom. If the angels rejoice over a sinner repenting, surely we are bound to give thanks to God. But Paul says also (i. 3) that it is *fitting* (meet) that he should rejoice. They were not walking badly; on the contrary, their faith, for which he had given thanks in the first

Epistle (i. 2, 3), was growing "exceedingly". What a joy it is to see young believers growing! It is all "of God". Oh, that we appreciated more the wonder of conversion and the growth of the new-born soul! Then our joy would overflow; restraints would be broken through and the gospel more widely and gladly proclaimed.

Paul adds, "*The charity (love) of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth*". The fruit tree that gave joy by its growing may bear beyond its strength and die; but faith, though it grows exceedingly, cannot grow excessively, and love cannot abound too much. Oh, that both might grow exceedingly among us!

"*So that we ourselves glory (boast) in you in the churches.*" Their first love was not chilled; they maintained faith and patience through all the persecutions and tribulations they endured. For this, such an one as the apostle Paul boasted to men, to other believers, as he had given thanks to God.

To be ill-treated for what is good, and to bear it patiently, with joy in the soul, is contrary to nature. Therefore, in order to meet the misgivings and fears which they had, Paul tells them these things are "*a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer*". The enemy was bringing to bear on them a great temptation, namely, to persuade them that they were suffering the penalty of disobedience, attributing the severity of their sufferings to the hand of the Lord in judgment. That is a terribly fiery dart, weakening and destroying all Christian testimony. The truth was that to those whom God had called to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ He gave, in the day of Christ's rejection, the privilege of suffering as Christ suffered for the kingdom of God (*ver. 5*).

God will recompense tribulation on the evildoers who troubled them (*ver. 6*), and in that day rest will be the reward of all who so suffer now. We meditate

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upon the Lord Jesus: we see Him crucified and buried: we hear the angels say, "He is risen": we see Him show His hands and feet and say, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. i. 18): we see Him seated at God's right hand and hear the angels acclaim Him worthy: with John we behold Him coming on the white horse, His name the Word of God, and with the armies of heaven taking His power and reigning, and we say, "Lord, Thou art worthy". And our destiny is bound up with His (*vers.* 7-10) in a oneness that eternity will not sever. He Who suffered reigns. The glory of ii. 14 cannot fail us, though we suffer. Furthermore, it all fits in with the righteous ways of God, Who will reverse present conditions, but only at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Here is the medicine to make us strong to face all the enemy may bring upon us.

"*We pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling.*" How is this worthiness reconciled with grace? The Lord is putting us through a training. Before us is the Leader and Completer of our faith. Do we grudge one step of the bitter way He trod? All who gladly follow Him He doubtless counts worthy of the calling. They share the sufferings of Him Who has saved them, accepting with understanding and joy all that faithfulness to Him amid His enemies may bring.

"*And fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness.*" His goodness has had the beginning of its good pleasure in our redemption. What may be ordained for its fulfilment, who knows? But who doubts its divine excellence and would not pray with the apostle and seek not to frustrate its full completion?

"*And the work of faith with power*", that is, God's power. Is it the power in which Christ comes to judge? Nay, rather that whereby God raised Him from the dead. By this power God works in those who are saved and chosen, that nothing of the whole work of faith may fall short of the blessed possibilities.

"That the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul, in writing "the name", is thinking about Christ's being glorified in us while He is absent, though doubtless "ye in Him" is in the day of glory.

The apostle then turns to their fear that they were paying a penalty instead of suffering for the kingdom of God. Charts and chronological tables of future events deduced from scripture never satisfy the strictly mathematical mind, because the truth is presented with predominantly moral purpose. But Paul says here (ii. 1-12) very clearly that the day of the Lord, far from having arrived, cannot come until the man of sin is revealed and in the height of iniquity sits in God's temple. Then the Lord will be revealed from heaven and slay him with the brightness of His coming. He tells the Thessalonians, "You are suffering for the kingdom of God's sake, and will rest in glory when it comes. The day of the Lord cannot come until you have been gathered to Himself, though false messengers have told you it is already present" (*ver.* 1, 2). We may be alarmed at the working of the spirit of apostasy, but in its full development, the entire abandonment of the worship of God and Christ, it has not yet come. So much the Lord has told us, but how near it may approach before we are gathered to Him no one knows. We may hear men claiming to be Messiahs, but we need not be afraid: our portion is clearly with Christ. He is coming to gather us to Himself, and we shall be with Him when He comes to judge iniquity. May these thoughts comfort our hearts (ii. 16, 17).

Hymn 388.

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

Hymn 165.

Exodus xxxiii. 1-11 ; 2 Tim. ii. 16-22. "*Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp*" (Ex. xxxiii. 7) : "*Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness*" (2 Tim. ii. 19).

Both these passages contain divine instruction for those who seek to do God's will in a day of apostasy. Apostasy implies departure from what was formerly believed, and both the children of Israel and the church of God have departed very seriously from their first standing, and exposed themselves to God's judgment. But God was pleased to withhold immediate judgment and to indicate a course of conduct which He would not only reward in the future but which would receive His compensations at the present time.

In Exodus, we read that Jehovah had recently brought the people of Israel out of the house of bondage in a wonderful way. They were purchased in figure by the blood of the lamb, and sheltered in the hour of judgment on their enemies by the pillar of cloud and fire, the symbol of God's presence. His purpose in redeeming them was to commit to them His honour and glory in the world as the one God. If they were a witness for this, they should be His peculiar treasure as a people. At Sinai they were told this, and in pride and self-confidence they lightly accepted the ten words of the law as the condition of this privilege. The penalty of death was imposed for a breach of the covenant by disobedience to this law. Though they trembled at the voice of Jehovah with its thunderings, they said, "We will keep the law," and the covenant of death was sealed with the blood of the victim sprinkled on the book and on themselves (Heb. ix. 19).

Moses went up into the Mount to receive from God these ten words written with His finger. During his absence the trouble arose. The people said to Aaron, "That man who brought us out of Egypt has

disappeared: make us gods. We want some visible image to worship as our redeemer from Egypt".

It would be a terrible delusion, and a breach of their promise to have no other gods beside Jehovah. Poor, weak-minded Aaron could not resist the clamouring mob. They were in earnest enough to break off their ear-rings at Aaron's bidding. These he melted and fashioned into the form of a calf, which the people worshipped as their deliverer from Egypt. They coupled Jehovah's name with the idol, making a feast to Him. They not only dishonoured God and worshipped "the similitude of an ox that eateth grass" (Ps. cvi. 20), but they lusted one against another. So they despised the blood of the covenant, and broke both the tables of the law.

In the mountain the eyes of Jehovah saw what was taking place at its foot, and in His anger He said, "I will sweep them from the face of the earth. The penalty of the law they undertook to keep shall fall upon them". Why did not that wrath at once break forth upon them? Because Moses was there, and took upon himself the new office of mediator interceding for his sinful people. He said, "It is not my people, but Thy people", reminding Jehovah of His promises to their fathers that He would make their seed a nation in the promised land as His witnesses to the whole earth. This mediation of Moses, based on God's promises, stayed the outpourings of the vials of judgment. Jehovah could not gainsay His own word, even if the people fell into idolatry.

But as Moses came down from the Mount with the two tables, he saw the glittering idol in the camp and the feast of wicked merriment around it. And he who had interceded with his whole heart for the guilty people was consumed with zeal for God's honour, and he smashed the tables in the presence of the people because they were breaking the law before they received it.

To this painful history of Israel there is an analogy in the church of God. The Holy Spirit came down at Pentecost and consolidated all believers then on earth

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into one company, not by ties of blood or by similarity of opinions or rank, but by His own power, uniting them all to Christ on high because they had been redeemed by Christ's precious blood. They were made one in heart and purpose, not as a human brotherhood, but as those bound to Christ, the Head in heaven.

The Lord had said, before He went on high, "Ye shall be My witnesses. The Holy Spirit shall be your Teacher, and open your hearts to receive My words. I want your hearts loyal to Me, united as those who love Me, love one another, and keep My commandments". In the Acts we have the account of the formation of the church by gospel preaching, and in the Epistles the exhortations addressed to the church. From these books we learn that in the church, as in Israel, there was failure and apostasy at once. The holy assembly of Christ was early disfigured by sin. Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Ghost. Corinthians, Galatians and Colossians all speak of wrong teaching and practice sully the honour and glory of Christ and contradicting His word. Why then is the church which has sinned so grievously for nearly two thousand years still on the earth to-day? Why has not the judicial glory of Christ wiped out that unfaithful company? Because, as in Exodus, there is now a Mediator at the right hand of God, to plead for His church and to save His assembly from destruction.

Christ pleads His own love, Who "gave Himself for it". He went beneath the waters of judgment to make the church His own: He cleanses it daily with the washing of the word: and He has before Him the bright vision of the day when He will take it to Himself without a spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. In Ephesians we have the ground upon which the church stands and upon which Christ's mediation is based. In Exodus it is the promise of God; in Ephesians it is the purpose of God. The church could not righteously be here to-day without Christ's mediation: but because it is predestinated to share His glory, long-suffering patience has been shown to the church.

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Israel was spared, but Moses showed God's mind about their idolatry. He ground the golden calf to powder, strewed it upon the waters, and made the people drink the bitter draught, condemning themselves thereby. Some refused and were stubborn, and for the glory of Jehovah the sons of Levi slew the unrepentant ones who were poisoning the camp with their idolatry and licentiousness. Then Moses took the tent that preceded the construction of the tabernacle and went afar off outside the camp. The dust of the idol was defiling the camp, and Moses stood apart from it, as being under Jehovah's ban.

Moses was jealous for the honour of Jehovah's name. He called the tent "the tabernacle of the congregation", the tent of meeting. This was the name for Jehovah's tent when it should be set up in the midst of the camp, according to the instructions Moses received in the Mount. It was as though he said, "O Jehovah, I know Thou dost require a tabernacle erected according to Thine own specifications, where nothing shall be contrary to Thy will. The ideal cannot be carried out now because of the defilement in the camp, but I set up this tent away from the camp and call it by the name Thou gavest me. I am going there; what wilt Thou do for Thy great name?" And Jehovah heard the unspoken prayer of Moses and signified His approval. The pillar of cloud and fire associated itself visibly with that tent where Moses was.

The people were astonished to see Moses there: they said, "We nearly lost Moses in the Mount: shall we lose him again?" But there Jehovah talked with Moses, not now with that terrible voice that made him "exceedingly fear and quake", but in His mercy "*face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend*". The tent was a place of intimate communion; and every man who had similar feelings to Moses for God's honour went out where the pillar of fire was, outside the camp. Was it not better to be with Moses, where

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Jehovah was, than in the defiled camp? It was the approved place in the time of Israel's apostasy.

An analogy to this place outside the camp we have in 2 Tim. ii. The correspondence is not exact, for in the Old Testament the people were under law, even when spared: it was still a ministry of death and condemnation (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9), law and mercy mixed. There was mercy, but only for some, when Jehovah proclaimed His name to Moses, who was hidden in the cleft of the rock (Ex. xxxiii. 19). Christendom to-day mistakenly tries to fit in the words of mercy with the inexorable law: but the truth is, we have the ministry of life and glory, and the liberty that Christ gives in the gospel.

The instructions in 2 Timothy apply to us in these days of ever-increasing departure from the truth. Even in the apostle's day evil doctrine was in the church which was the guardian of the truth. This responsibility remains on the church, just as Moses brought down the second edition of the law for Israel to maintain through the wilderness and in the land. The second set of tablets were encased in the ark of shittim wood, which speaks of Christ, in Whom the law's integrity was fully maintained.

So we are to hold fast the form of sound words given in the scriptures. The difficulties in doing so must increase, but we are responsible to keep His precepts. Because we are under grace, we cannot excuse ourselves from obedience to God's word: at Christ's judgment seat we shall be examined as to our integrity. Because the huge burden of our sins has been rolled away in a moment, our evil hearts are apt to say, "Sin does not matter. We are not under law: we can please ourselves, and we shall be forgiven". Are we absolutely true to the word of our Master? Do we desire God's word to be our guide for every step of the way? If not, we shall have to give account to the Lord for our laxity.

In 2 Tim. ii. 19 Paul declares that, in spite of all the apostasy and the ruined condition of Christendom,

"*the foundation of God stands firm*". The church itself is erected upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone ; and all the sinfulness of men and the strategy of the evil one cannot overthrow this structure. To-day the infallibility of God's word is widely disowned and its importance to Christianity denied. The complete picture of the grace and truth of God in the blessed features of Christ is mutilated by the rejection of one part and another at the will of the critics. But God's word is as true now as when it was written in imperishable characters with the finger of God as the tables of stone in Sinai. Let us hold fast to that word.

In the figure of the seal, two sentences occur, as if written on the obverse and reverse, "*The Lord knoweth them that are His*", and "*Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness*". A common seal has only one side, but the English Great Seal has two, and both are necessary to the validity of the State document ; such a seal seems to be implied here.

The seal attached to the inspired document written by Paul on the eve of his departure to glory, as well as to other scriptures, tells us two things. The first is that divine omniscience discerns those that are His, even in a state of ecclesiastical confusion where professors and possessors are mixed up : the other is our personal responsibility to withdraw from unrighteousness. God's greatest blessings are given us without money and without price, but then our responsibility begins with their possession.

The apostle speaks of naming the name of the Lord (not Christ, the term of affection and privilege). We are His servants and are responsible to render an account to the Master of all we possess, whether goods or abilities. None can have salvation without confessing Him as Lord, but after confession a person may abuse his fellow-servants and please himself.

We are to depart not merely from iniquity (A.V.), but from unrighteousness (W.K.), which is specially

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hateful to God. One of the main truths in the gospel even is that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. i. 18). We often pride ourselves on holding the truth, but are we holding it in unrighteousness? "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness" (Ps. xi. 7), and contact with that which is evil will defile us in His sight.

Paul then takes the figure of the "*great house*". Unlike the first Epistle (1 Tim. iii. 15), the name of God is not attached to the house. It is great rather than holy. A great house is built by a man of substance in order to reflect his honour and glory. In the metaphor there is no invidious distinction drawn between the "*vessels of gold and of silver*" and those "*of wood and of earth*": they are for different uses, and either may be used to the Master's honour. But either may be misused, like the consecrated vessels of Jehovah's temple which Belshazzar used for libations to his gods at his great banquet (Dan. v. 2, 3). The criterion of value lies in the honour due to the Owner, which is either given or withheld. To withhold that honour is sinful abuse.

Our Master is on high: we are here in the great house of Christendom, lying in moral ruin and spiritual desolation. We are to "*purge ourselves from vessels* (not here, from sinful acts) *of dishonour*", and this purging reflects honour upon the Master's name, because His glory is given the pre-eminence. We stand aloof from vessels of dishonour, in loyalty to the Master Whose honour and glory we are responsible to maintain. And if a man so stands for his Master's glory, "*he shall be a vessel sanctified* (separated practically from what is defiling) *and made serviceable to the Master*". The man who in his Master's absence acts as if He were present is the servant serviceable to the Master, because he puts his Master's honour above everything else. He is "*prepared unto every good work*"; he is one to be trusted and can be used for anything his Master's will may decide.

Further, we are to "*flee also youthful lusts : but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart*". We are not called to a place of isolation, but of insulation : if we depart from unrighteousness there will be others who do likewise. Our place is with them. But first we are told to flee youthful lusts. There may be pride of heart because you have purged yourselves from vessels unto dishonour, saying, "I am holier than thou", disdainfully gathering up your garments lest you should be defiled. From this superior feeling that we stand head and shoulders above others and that every eye looks upon us as those separated from evil, we are to flee. Pride is an abomination to the Lord. You can only worship rightly with your face in the dust, seeing neither yourself nor any one else.

Certain moral qualities mark those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. As we are bidden to look for them in others, so we must maintain them in ourselves. Righteousness should characterise the assemblies in financial matters, in care for the widows, in all assembly affairs, in the absence of slandering and backbiting. If you depart from a company on the ground of departing from iniquity, beware of being a carrier of infection yourself.

The "faith" that is to be followed is not personal belief, but the faith once delivered to the saints, the doctrines of scripture. We must believe and act on what is revealed in God's word. "Love" may be spontaneous towards certain amiable brethren, but here love includes the effort not to "seek its own", and all the varieties of unselfish conduct set out in 1 Cor. xiii. We are not to sow discord in a company "that call on the Lord out of a pure heart", but seek "peace". Let us not strive to get our own way in the meeting, but follow peace and the things that make for peace and edify. Our Lord often refrained from rebuking what was wrong, and suffered, waiting patiently on Jehovah : and this is the way to bring about peace. If we really have the Lord's mind about

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any matter, we know that it is because He has taught us ; and this He can also do for others. We were a long time learning His will, and others may even be longer, but the Lord has patience with all.

It is comparatively easy to see that Christendom is wrong, and to turn away from its ruin, but not so easy to avoid taking with us the very elements of self-will that have caused such widespread ruin and deviation from the truth. Let us not be guilty of spreading infection among those that call on the Lord " out of a pure heart ". Let us hold fast to the word of the Lord, for His coming draws nigh. We do not look for signs ; He will come for the church at the earliest possible moment. He is testing our patience a little, but so long as He waits, let us covet earnestly to do and be those things that will be well-pleasing in His sight in a day of confusion and apostasy.

Hymn 365.

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

Hymns sung : 25, 35, 270, 100.

Scriptures read : Psalms xcii, xciii.

Worship Meeting, 11 a.m.

Hymns sung : 130, 225, 269, 101, 201, 256, 202, 287
(*ver.* 3).

Scriptures read : 1 Chron. xxix. 1-2, 10-14, 20 ;
2 Cor. ix. 15 ; Col. i. 12-22 ; Heb. xiii. 12-16.

W.G.T. Ps. l. 23 ; Heb. xiii. 16.

To the scriptures read this morning we may add the one often partly quoted, "*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God*" (Ps. l. 23). In this connection let us recall the last scripture read (Heb. xiii. 15, 16). We have been privileged to spend the whole morning in worship, the highest spiritual exercise of which a creature is capable. To bow in adoring worship, praising God for His excellent

greatness and thanking Him for His wonderful goodness, gives both the Creator and the creature their right places. It has been a holy privilege to be engaged thus in "*offering the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, confessing Christ's holy name*" before Him Who alone perfectly knows the dignity of His person and the value of His atoning work. Presenting ourselves before the Holy One Who inhabiteth eternity, giving thanks unto Him as our Father, making all our boast in His beloved Son, our blessed Lord and Redeemer, our hearts have been filled with joy and praise indeed.

But how does He, Who is high above our highest thought, and holy beyond our utmost conception, view our offering of praise and worship? Can it matter to Him? To this question the assuring answer is given in both these Old and New Testament scriptures. How gracious, yet how wonderful, that what we have been doing can so matter to the King Eternal, Invisible, the only God, that He is both glorified and pleased by our worship! How this throws into relief the importance of worship, and makes us see that ministry, however much needed by ourselves, is not to be compared with giving unto the Lord the glory due unto His name!

But joined with these assurances we read, "*And to him that ordereth his conversation (his manner of life) aright will I shew the salvation of God*": and, "*But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased*". Here is the perfect balance, a heart poured out in praise and worship for His greatness and goodness, and a life expressing in practical ways the lessons learned of this goodness to us. Spiritual exercises before God must never be permitted to degenerate into pious emotion, but on the contrary to generate practical piety. The words of our lips need to be backed by the deeds of our lives, the communication of our substance, to give cheerfully as the apostle says, for "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. ix. 7). He is good and doeth good; He is the great Giver of all good; and those

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who are the children of such a Father are expected to exhibit the family traits. The sacrifice of praise and the sacrifice of good works are what glorify God and please Him well. May we be not forgetful hearers, but doers of the work, for "this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. i. 25).

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

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

Hymns 394, 377.

Mark xiv. 1-17: "*The Master saith, Where is My guestchamber?*" (ver. 14).

I notice that J.N.D's translation reads "*My guest-chamber*", not "*the guestchamber*", as in the authorised version. You will find it helpful to read translations of the original Hebrew and Greek by good men well acquainted with those languages. These words remind us of the depths of our Lord's poverty,— "*The Son of man hath not where to lay His head*" (Matt. viii. 20). His guestchamber somebody gave Him. Love had put aside a room for the Master's use whenever He needed it, and the Lord accepted the gift.

I want to use the incident as an illustration of the surrender of our lives to Him. The guestchamber was a room set apart by Jewish householders, in accordance with God's injunction (Lev. xix. 33, 34; Deut. x. 18, 19, etc.) for the use of guests and strangers. This man had reserved his for the heavenly Guest, the divine Stranger. Our Lord has nothing on earth to-day save what His people give Him. Are we keeping the "room" of our lives for Him? Conversion should be followed by consecration, the setting apart of our lives for the Master's use.

This devoted man had set apart this room for Christ, and kept it for Him to use when He pleased. Are you keeping your life for Him to use as He wills, or

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have you taken back what you gave Him years ago at your conversion, when you gave *yourself* to Him?

This beloved disciple gave the Lord, not a small ante-room, nor a room merely, but a "*large*" room, the best he had. It was not some room for which he had no other use. Some give Christ only what is left after they have taken the best for their own use. The best should be given to the Lord, and kept for Him.

It was a large room "*furnished*". He did not give an empty room to Christ. Are we giving our lives to the Lord furnished with all our natural powers and abilities? Do save your strength for Him. Furnish your life for His use.

It was a large room, furnished and "*prepared*". The offer may have been made months earlier, and the Teacher had not been, but the room was kept dusted, the chairs in their place and the table ready, against Christ's coming. The room was not filled up with lumber, nor was it covered with dirt; it was "*prepared*". This is the secret of being used of God. He cannot use a disordered or dirty life. Is your life a vessel meet for the Master's use and "*prepared*"?

The owner may have been disappointed that the Master had not made use earlier of the room he had given Him: but one day the Lord said to Peter and John, "Now I am ready for that room", and the room was ready for Him. You may have dedicated your life to the Lord's service in a particular direction, and nothing has happened: but do not get restless, or discouraged. You would do more harm than good if you went forward without His bidding. In His own time He will use you. Just think how Christ used this man's consecrated gift. It was used for the greatest words that ever fell from the Lord's blessed lips (John xiii.-xvii.), for the washing of the disciples' feet, for His last Passover, for the institution of the Lord's supper—it was the most God-used room the world has ever known!

The owner of that room was not a well-known
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disciple—neither Peter nor John appear to have known him, but had to be directed to him by the man bearing the pitcher of water. But this unknown disciple had kept this room for Christ, and the Master signally honoured him by using it on that last night of His upon earth.

Will you say, "Lord, take my life. I could use it for selfish purposes, for my friends, or to get on in the world, but I give it to Thee. If it does not please Thee to use me now, I will keep my life for Thee until Thou art ready. Employing my mind to study Thy word, and my memory to retain² it, I will furnish my life as best I can for Thee and by God's help always keep it prepared". If you do this, one day the Lord will take you and make great use of you.

Hymn 384.

Open Meeting, 3.15 p.m.

Hymns 139, 246.

T.H. 2 Kings vi. 1-7.

Not long before this, Elijah had said, "I, even I only, am left" (1 Kings xix. 10), but now Elisha is publicly surrounded by a company that cared for him. So are we given the company of others on the way; let us thank God for this fellowship.

The sons of the prophets were not satisfied to remain as they began, nor should we remain merely as saved sinners, but should seek a place where there is room for all that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart, with Himself in the midst. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" says scripture (Ps. cxxxiii. 1).

"Let us go"; Christian work should not be selfishly individual. "And take thence every man a beam"; there is no talk of comparing, each is to take a part, none is unimportant, the thought of fellowship is uppermost.

One said, "Go with thy servants". One or another

leads in seeking to have us in the Lord's company. Let us "know" such, remembering Mark vi. 4.

He answered, "I will go". So our Lord will, in the case of all who want Him, though "fools, and slow of heart to believe", like those on the way to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 25). He appeared to comfort Paul in prison when, rejected by his nation, he had appealed to Caesar (2 Tim. iv. 16, 17).

"The axe head fell into the water." The axe head is the power to do His service amongst, and in fellowship with, His own. In this service there is given us a sense of our own powerlessness and the reminder that every gift is given us by One Who went down into death, but now is risen and gone on high.

"Where fell it?" is a searching question when we go to the Lord with a sense of weakness. It brings back to us all our blameworthiness at the moment when we let go the axe head. Still, should it fall again, He is ever the same, unfailing in patience, bringing us again to see the end of self in the cross. Let us praise Him Who died for us. This we shall do as we learn His lessons, and rely only on the strength He gives.

Hymn 137.

H.C.M. Gal. ii. 20, i. 4; Eph. v. 25-27.

"*I am crucified with Christ.*" The apostle makes the statement as an individual. So in 1 Tim. i. 15 he says, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am (not was) chief". We were, like others, dead in trespasses and sins, and it is only by God's grace and Christ's atoning death that any difference has come in. A crucified man is a dead man, and so the old man in us is placed in the position of death.

"*Nevertheless I live*": though dead, we are alive, but we have *a new life*, for Paul says, "*Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*". The Lord said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it

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more abundantly" (John x. 10). We have life in resurrection because we have Him. How wonderful that "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John v. 11)!

"*The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.*" It is a new life, a new nature: thank God, we have finished with the old life and its fruits. Our hope and trust is given to the Son of God, and the very faith to believe on Him was given by God Himself, for, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Tit. iii. 5). It is "not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 9). Peter had this *God-given faith* (though he so signally failed), and so even when he denied the Lord, he did not cease to be a child of God. The Lord therefore said, "I have prayed for thee, that thy *faith* fail not: and when thou art *restored*, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32). And we are on our way to glory, and are expecting our blessed Redeemer to return for us at any moment.

"*Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.*" It is a personal matter: how can we fully appreciate that *He gave Himself* for guilty sinners like ourselves? It was a death, not of martyrdom, but of atonement: that precious blood has removed every particle of our sins, and we have peace through His death. How wonderful is the gospel of our salvation!

"*Who gave Himself for our sins*" (Gal. i. 4). In this first chapter the apostle is less personal: he brings in others, and points out that the Chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely One, so loved us as to give Himself for our sins. What shame should cover us, as we remember (though God has forgiven and forgotten) what we were—"without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. ii. 12)! How this love should humble us!

"*That He might deliver us from this present evil world.*" Now comes exhortation, and responsibility. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in

the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him " (1 John ii. 15). What a joy to walk with the Lord and those who call upon His Name out of a pure heart ! How we should prize the place to which He has called us, " without the camp, bearing His reproach " (Heb. xiii. 13). We are going to be in that city whose Builder and Maker is God, *but here we are strangers and pilgrims*, in a foreign country, but on our way to heavenly glory. And it is " *according to the will of God and our Father* " that we should be delivered—to Him be glory !

So also in Eph. v. 25 we have, " *Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it* "—that is past—and present (ver. 26), " *that He might sanctify (set apart) and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word* ". We have been purged from our guilt through His precious blood, and now for our moral cleansing as we journey home we have the water of His holy word. Then the blessed Lord speaks of the future (ver. 27), " *That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish* ". This is the fulness of the blessing, when (the wilderness past) we are with Him in glory. How He is longing for that moment when there will be no disfigurement nor failure, but everything will be perfect and according to His mind !

Hymn 431.

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

Hymns 383, 392.

Isaiah lvii. 15, lviii. 1-12, lxvi. 1, 2.

In Isa. lxvi. 2 and lvii. 15 respectively, we find that there is a communion with God which may be fully enjoyed (upon certain conditions being observed), something over and above what many are satisfied with. " *To this man will I look, even to him that is*

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poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word."
"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

This is the gracious assurance to such as fulfil the accompanying conditions. How necessary these are is seen from the fact that one great danger besetting the people of God in all ages is that of unconscious hypocrisy, of formalism in spiritual things. God desires truth in the inward parts, and in the outward expression also. To speak in prayer without realising that we are speaking to God; to sing hymns without making melody in the heart to the Lord; to read God's word and not hear the voice of God speaking in it; to essay to minister the word and be dealing only in unfelt truth; to preach the gospel without any passion for souls; to give money without any real sense of obligation or sacrifice—all this is but to draw near with the mouth, to honour with the lips, while the heart is far off, and should be abhorred of all God's people. Against this danger there are many warnings in the word of God.

In the verses cited above is shown the way, not only of avoiding this danger, but of walking in true spiritual satisfaction whatever our present circumstances. These timeless words in Isaiah are very timely. Any saint in any age may take hold upon them and come into the special blessings offered.

"Look" in Isa. lxvi. 2 has the sense of a fixed attention given, of a deep interest in. It might be rendered, "To this man will I look *attentively*". "Dwell" in Isa. lvii. 15 means abide, stay, tabernacle, and is reminiscent of our Lord's own word in John xiv. 23. Clearly something above the average disciple's experience is there suggested. It is, as in the verses in Isaiah, conditional, however; though in each case even then entirely of free grace on our Lord's part.

Four attributes of the one to whom the Lord will

look and with whom He will dwell are mentioned : (1) " Him that is poor ", not in financial matters, but in spirit, " afflicted " (N.Tr.), oppressed spiritually by the conditions prevailing in the world and among the people of God : (2) " Of a contrite spirit "—bruised in spirit on account of his own part in the general failure and the dishonour done thereby to God : (3) " Of a humble spirit "—making nothing of self, lowly minded : (4) " That trembleth at My word "—one that is deeply exercised in spirit by the word, and so affected by it that he troubles himself and moulds his life thereby.

As an illustration of " him that is poor "—a business man once said of another, " He is a strange man ; he is a millionaire, single, generous to a fault, living in a very modest way, but spending his whole time sympathising with God over the bad state of things in the church and the world ",—and the appraisal was a pretty accurate one. Undoubtedly, though in the world's eyes a millionaire, he was one of the " poor " referred to in our scripture. The history of the family of faith is a record of the lives of many such, men to whom God looked attentively, and who had the inexpressible joy of realised communion with Him in their varied circumstances. Time would fail to mention them all, but the names of Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Job, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Ezra, and apostles like Peter, Paul and John may suffice to stir our hearts, as we consider men of like passions with ourselves, living in days of gross failure both among God's people and in the world, yet who, being humble-hearted and deeply afflicted spiritually, were at one and the same time conscious of that fellowship with God of which we talk so much, and alas, know so very little.

The consolations of this conditional fellowship are neither few nor small. Comfort in extraordinary measure ; courage to an amazing degree ; and continuance spite of hardships, handicaps, desertions by others, and opposition of the enemy, are some of the consolations of God which they possessed, and which

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we also may enjoy on certain conditions. Some questions may be useful. Are we really of a humble spirit in private as well as perhaps in the presence of others? Are we of a contrite spirit, feeling with shame the dishonour done to the Lord, towards which we have surely each contributed either by our sins of omission or commission? Are we so conscious of the abounding evils that we are really afflicted or oppressed by them? Do we tremble at God's word, allowing it so to trouble ourselves, that we are convicted, corrected and instructed by it? Not do our brethren do this, but do I myself know what it is thus to live and feel and act? Are we prepared so to embrace this high privilege of intimate communion with God, that, feeling our deep need of comfort, courage and continuance, we humbly say, "No more of this spiritual formalism and unconscious hypocrisy, but rather unsparing judgment of ourselves and dependence on Him Whose we are"?

Thus may we enjoy the abiding presence of the Father and the Son with us, for, "If a man love Me, he will keep My word (the whole of it): and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our *abode* with him" (John xiv. 23).

Hymn 168.

Hymns 23, 334.

Greetings were received from Mr. A. Carpos, Athens (referring to Heb. x. 37; 1 Thess. i. 10; Rev. iii. 10, vi. 3, 4), Mr. J. Siegelhaar, Holland (quoting Jude 20, 21, 24, 25), Egypt, Spain and British Guiana, and were exhibited on the notice board.

A message was sent from the saints assembled to our esteemed brother Mr. G. J. Hengeveld, Ghent, Belgium,

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who at the time was extremely weak and in great suffering. He asked that his grateful thanks might be sent in acknowledgment of the words of love. Since then the Lord has been pleased to take His child and faithful servant to be with Himself.

The full text of some of the above addresses has appeared or will, God willing, appear in the *Words of Help*, the *Bible Monthly*, or *Gospel Gleanings*. It is proposed to publish the address on Monday evening as a separate booklet.