

THE BELIEVER & RESURRECTION

1 Corinthians 15: 35-50.

C.A.C.: I thought we might consider what is going to be gathered up in resurrection, and the glory that God is going to clothe His saints with in that world. It would be a very good thing for us to have more the faith of resurrection.

Ques.: Why do you emphasise the faith?

C.A.C.: We all believe, as Martha did, that the dead will be raised, but has the moral force and import of it got hold of our souls so as to exert an influence on our everyday lives? If so, we should be ordering our lives, not in view of this world, but of the resurrection world. A great deal depends on whether we are living in view of this world or the age to come. You cannot live for the age to come except in the faith of resurrection. Certainly one who is living a self-indulgent life has not the faith of resurrection; he is on the line of: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." We may say, as all Christendom does: "I believe in the resurrection of the dead," but it is quite another thing to have the faith of resurrection. Those who have that faith want to live on the line that there should be something God can raise for His world.

The Corinthians had not the faith of resurrection; they were living vain-glorious, self-indulgent lives, occupied with their own desires, ambitions, and private objects. What the Apostle brings before them as to resurrection was not merely to correct a doctrinal

error, but to put them right in the centre of their moral being, to put the faith of the light of resurrection in their souls, in order that they should live, not in view of this age, but in view of the coming age. It would transform the lives of the people of God if they had the faith of resurrection.

Ques.: Would you say what there is to raise?

C.A.C.: Resurrection is presented in Scripture in a moral connection; that is to say, it is those who have done good who come forth to the resurrection unto life. They have so lived that though they have gone down in death it is impossible they should disappear. They must be raised for God's world; there was a moral beauty and excellence about them that must come up for God's world. We have been looking lately at the subject of incorruptibility. That which is morally incorruptible is suited to be clothed upon with incorruptibility, even as to bodily condition.

Ques.: Does the thought of resurrection refer to the body?

C.A.C.: It refers to saints viewed as having been buried, not as having gone to heaven; it is "all that are in the graves." We may look at the saints in two different connections. When a brother or sister has departed this life, we say he or she is with the Lord—his spirit is with the Lord. Then again, we say we bury him. Sometimes we identify the person with his spirit, and sometimes with his body. It was said of the Lord: "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." It was His dead body, but it was the Lord. We read that pious persons carried Stephen to his burial. The person is identified with his body; that is the key to the subject of resurrection. But there is another side of things. We are going to be clothed with our

house from heaven. That comes down, not up.

The person, as identified with his body, is buried. But when you bury the body of a saint, you bury something very wonderful, because you bury that which has been for years a temple of the Holy Spirit—a sanctified vessel dedicated as a living sacrifice to God. When you bury a saint you sow a suitable seed for resurrection unto life. Something has been identified with that body that is morally suitable and indispensable for God's world; and if God did not bring it up again, and give it a place in His world, there would be a divine element missing in that world. Think what a powerful effect the consideration of this would have on us in our daily lives. Resurrection comes in on the moral line in connection with all God can approve in the life of His saints here; all the beautiful spiritual elements that God must have for His world. God's grace produced them by divine teaching and formation, and such features have been brought about in the saints that they are worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from among the dead. We might well ask ourselves: "Am I worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from among the dead?" Nothing will go into that world but what is suitable, and my concern is that I should be acquiring now, and displaying morally, the qualities suitable to God's world, so that if I come to be buried there might be something sown so suitable to God that He must bring it up in resurrection for His world.

Ques.: What is the house from heaven?

C.A.C.: That I should connect with the condition of purpose. We were singing just now about the Father as the Spring and Source of blessing, and how His purpose has taken form in a glorified Man. God has His

purpose before Him in a glorified Man; and in His world He is going to clothe His saints with the blessedness of it. Resurrection is connected with what God is gathering up here to put in His world, but purpose is connected with what God is going to bring out of heaven and put on His saints. That is His purpose. There are these two lines: The moral line ends in resurrection when all that has been wrought of God in His saints will be brought forth for His world.

It is inconceivable that what has been seen here in the saints who have lived for six thousand years, sorrowing, suffering, rejected, and finally gone into the grave, should be lost. God is going to raise His saints and secure it all in resurrection for His world; it is too good for God to lose. Resurrection comes in on that line. We can understand the exercise of the Apostle: He tells us in Philippians 3 how earnestly and untiringly He is seeking to arrive at the resurrection from among the dead.

Ques.: Did God give a testimony in those whose graves were opened?

C.A.C.: I think that was a testimony to the fact that the power of death was completely broken, and not only in Christ, but in regard to the saints. Wonderful things happened. The veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom the moment Christ died—the course was clear for God to come out in the blessedness of His love to men. And as soon as Christ arose from the dead, many of the saints who slept arose and went into the holy city, and appeared to many. They were approved for God's world. The moment Christ arose, it came to light that he had companions. Christ was approved for God's world: no one would have any difficulty about that. How could the preciousness

seen in Christ be left in death? It could not be holden of death, it was all wanted for God's world. But the same thing in principle was seen in application to saints. I do not think they ever died again.

There was no proper setting forth of resurrection in Scripture until Christ arose. The power of God who could raise was exhibited in the damsel brought to life, and the young man and Lazarus; it was resurrection power that did it, but they were not brought into the resurrection state or incorruptibility then. It was properly resuscitation rather than resurrection; but if God could bring back a dead man into his life of flesh and blood, it was clear proof that He could set aside the power of death—the power of God was there.

The Old Testament saints had the faith of resurrection; we are told of some that they were tormented, afflicted, and how they died, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Two things will eventually be brought together. What God effects by His grace in His saints; the moral fruits of His grace and working are all suitable for His world. But there is something else: He is going to clothe His saints with the glory He has gathered up in a glorified Christ—that is on the line of His eternal purpose. He thought of that before ever sin came in. Resurrection stands in reference to that condition of things where death had come in; if death had not come in, there would be no need to talk of resurrection.

Ques.: What about Moses and Elias in the transfiguration?

C.A.C.: The two were conspicuous examples of men who were approved for God's world. It has often been said that Moses represents the dead. We know he died and God buried



him, but he had to be raised for God's world. Elijah represents the changed saints. He did not pass through death, but was changed—taken to heaven in a chariot of fire.

God will infallibly fulfil His purpose and clothe His saints with glory. In this chapter we get the thought of what is sown, and what is raised; and then the thought of the heavenly One, and our bearing His image, 2 Corinthians 5: "Clothed upon with our house from heaven." There is a heavenly character in what God brings out in His people through His working in their souls, which leads them to live in the light of His world.

Ques.: Would not that dispel all natural thoughts of resurrection?

C.A.C.: Yes; we should have in our minds the thought of moral features. People lose sight of that, and think of meeting their relatives in heaven; but, in the sphere of spiritual things, it is a question of moral kindred and likeness; we shall recognise the brethren by what they are morally, not by their photographs.

Ques.: What came out in the Lord could not possibly remain in death; so you mean we should desire to be on that line?

C.A.C.: Yes, that is it. If we have the faith of resurrection, it would transform our practical lives. We should not want to cherish or maintain a single feature that God could not secure for His world. If there is that about me which is not suitable for God's world, the sooner I drop it the better.

At the present time everything for God comes out in the bodies of the saints. The body of a saint is a vessel capable of being filled with divine light; one longs that the light should shine out.

Ques.: What is death swallowed up in victory?

C.A.C.: That is when every trace of the power of death has been removed; when saints are brought forth as invested with all that is glorious; death eternally annulled. Death is swallowed up—it is a remarkable word: “Mortality swallowed up of life.” The Apostle longed for that rather than for resurrection: “Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” The Apostle had the most extraordinary sense of the blessedness of being here in his body, and he did not want to be removed from the scene of testimony until the whole company should go together. He had an extraordinary sense of the glory and dignity of occupying a body here, in which what is delightful to God, and what has the fragrance of Christ, could be exhibited.

Ques.: What is the thought of Christ being magnified in the body whether by life or death?

C.A.C.: There (Phil. 1) Paul is saying he does not know which to choose; whether to depart or remain. The only thing before him is Christ being magnified. He had been moving about the country preaching Christ to magnify Christ. He was the minister of Christ wherever he went—a sweet odor of Christ; but now he is locked up in prison, and he says: “I do not mind. The only thing I am set for is that Christ may be magnified. He was magnified when I was moving about preaching, and now when locked up in prison I desire that He should still be magnified.” Paul was living for God’s world.

Ques.: The weakest saint has an opportunity to display this?

C.A.C.: Yes; it is a wonderful thing to have a vessel you can hold in honor and sanctification for God. The most gifted man in the world has not more than his body, and we each have one too.

Ques.: What is the power of His resurrection?

C.A.C.: The Apostle was set to reach the spot Christ had reached, and to reach it the same way Christ had gone. Christ had trodden a pathway of suffering and death, and it had led in the power of resurrection to His being placed in glory, approved of God for His world. Paul says: "That is what I am after, I will go the same way." The faith of resurrection puts you on the line of suffering and death instead of aiming at something high—honor and position in this world. We do not know much of this, but Paul did. I do not think the outward man of Paul perished in a natural way, but in the service of love. It was not merely that Paul was getting old, or the earthen vessel breaking up by inherent weakness, but his was a Christ-devoted life that caused even his body to bear the marks of the dying of the Lord Jesus. If you had stripped the clothes off Paul, you would have seen the marks he bore in his body of his devotion to Christ in the service of love here. The dying of Jesus was seen in evidence there; you could see how he had expended himself in the service of love; that is the life of Jesus—a life of suffering love that goes down to death here, but that claims resurrection as its divine answer. It would be impossible for God to leave the moral elements of such a life out of His world. Death worked in Paul, but life in the saints. Could a man be scourged, and not bear the marks?

Ques.: The Lord's visage was more marred than any man's: is that the same thought?

C.A.C.: Yes, I think there is nothing more touching than that people should say: "Thou art not yet fifty years old." That was said to One who was not much more than thirty years of age. His very Person carried the evidence of a suffering love that had never spared itself. That blessed One moved through this world at every step in the full light of God's world. Psalm 16 is the divine portrait of the life in which that blessed One walked through this world. His trust was in God; He was separate from the idolatrous world; He loved the saints. He said: "Thou wilt not leave My soul in Sheol, neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt make known to Me the path of life, Thy countenance is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." He moved in a path that was morally bound to end in resurrection—it was a necessity. Who can say that is not the path for the saint?

Ques.: Is there a connection between His sufferings and what we get in Revelation: "A Lamb as it had been slain"?

C.A.C.: I think the marks on the Lamb will be the sweetest and most affecting feature of His glory forever. He will never lose in the eyes of His saints the attractiveness of what He suffered in the service of His love—it must all come out in resurrection. Nothing in the Lord Jesus could be missed from God's world. He went into death, but all His excellence must be brought out of death. At the end of each Gospel, we find that God shows how the features that marked Him in the days of His flesh—the wonderful beauty, perfection, and grace seen in Him—have been carried through into resurrection. It raises the question with us: How much is there

about me that it is absolutely necessary that God should carry through into resurrection for His world? To get that before us, and keep it before us, would have a sound, practical effect on our lives.

The Apostle introduces in chapter 15 the thought of sowing. What is sown is only bare grain, and God will give it a body as it pleases Him. Think of the saints as marked by the features of Christ—features coming out in sorrow, persecution and trial, until at last the saint dies, and is buried. What have you sown? God has valued every feature of Christ that has come out in that saint. Sometimes we can tell the Lord with great pleasure as we bury a saint, that we have seen imperishable features in that saint—features that it is not possible should be left out of God's world. Outwardly there is sowing in corruption, dishonor and weakness, but the saint is going to be raised in power and glory and incorruptibility. God is going to give that seed a body as it pleases Him. God is going to bring it up in all the splendor of His own appreciation of what came out in that body. God's system of glory is a very diversified one, there is every kind of glory in that system. We see everywhere, even in God's material universe, variety and diversity—some particular touch of glory about everything God does. In a corresponding way we may see some particular feature of glory about every saint. Saints are not duplicated; there is some distinctive feature of moral glory about every saint. It is all coming out for God's world. The glory that comes out in the saints now is the shining of the features of Christ; and that renders resurrection necessary—we ought to think more of it. It raises an exercise as to whether we are living and moving, and thinking and feeling in the

light and faith of resurrection. If we were we should not want to cultivate the natural, but the spiritual, because the natural will not appear in God's world; those who appear there are the sons of God, the sons of resurrection. Let us cultivate the spiritual, and, if we do, even the natural will become the vehicle for the spiritual to come out—an opportunity for the will of God to be worked out so that there will be a moral element connected with the natural, which God can treasure up for His world. I do not think you can bring out the features of Christ without overcoming the natural and carnal element that is opposed to them. Every bit of victory for God means a conflict.

The power by which the saints live to God now is resurrection power. Romans 6 comes in there. The saints now live morally in resurrection power. They account themselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus—"Buried with Christ by baptism unto death, in order that, even as Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life." A saint walks in newness of life by resurrection power; it is the same power by which God will eventually raise the dead. As long as we are here we are in mortal bodies, and subject to corruption; but, by and by, we shall be placed in incorruptible conditions. It is necessary the saints should be raised, because, in the mind of God, they all live to Him—"I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." The Sadducees might say: "They have been dead hundreds of years," but God says: "I *am* the God, etc."—not "I was." They are living men for God. If they live for Him, they must be raised—it is an absolute necessity. What has come out in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were necessary ele-

ments for God's world. There was the calling of God in Abraham, leading to the refusal of the world; the breaking away from his country and kindred, and father's house. What a blessed feature for God's world! Isaac was the child of resurrection; in him we have seen resurrection power, by which everything for God is truly brought forth. In Jacob we see the result of God's discipline. These three elements make up the life of faith: The call of God, resurrection power, and the fruit of the discipline of God in practically setting aside the crooked perversities of the flesh. When that is all reduced the saints are brought to the point of worship—Jacob ends as a worshipper. When we get such features in saints we have what is necessary for God's world. He must raise it.

On the other hand, God has His own eternal thoughts, which have been His delight, treasured up in Christ before the foundation of the world. It was the greatest delight to God when Christ went back to Him in the condition of purpose—not as a risen Man only, but in the condition of purpose. That condition of man was before the heart of God before ever sin came into the universe. God has now that which was the darling of His purpose before the ages of time; He has it realised in His beloved Son as a risen and glorified Man; and He is going to clothe His saints with that.

There are the two lines: What God effects in the saints by His work, so that in result He raises them for His world; and then God brings down the glory of His eternal purpose, and clothes His saints with it for the satisfaction of His own love. It is beautiful to put the two lines together.

June 1, 1925.

THE HOLY CITY

Scriptures.—Gen. 2: 18-25; Acts 7: 54-60,
9: 1-5; Rev. 21: 9-27, 22: 1-6.

One is impressed with the importance of the present moment. I do not think there can be anything more important for our souls than to realise what God is doing here. We have, I feel, sometimes read a Scripture, such as the 21st and 22nd of Revelation, and felt a sense of relief that somehow or other God is going to have a wonderful end in relation to His work. We have read about this wonderful City that comes down from God, and we have noted that it is pure gold, that there is not a bit of dross in it, that everything there is perfect, answering to the measurement which God lays upon it. We have thought how blessed that that should be the end, without realising sufficiently that our part in it is just the measure in which we have been subject to the work of the Spirit of God now; that there is nothing going to come out in the future, but what is being formed now; that the Holy City comes down out of Heaven with all the blessed features which we have read of, because the Spirit of God has wrought them in our souls now. This is the meaning of the presence of the Spirit of God here. His work is as great as the work of Christ. We all have rightly a true sense of the exceeding greatness of the work of Christ. Who can compass the immensity of His work on the cross? The foundation of all blessing in eternity rests on it. But another divine Person has come to earth to do another work, and that is to form in our

souls that which will be for ever for the pleasure of God.

I would like to go over these Scriptures a little in order that we might see how it comes to pass that all the features which are described are true in the City. What I want particularly to impress upon all our hearts is that there is nothing there but what was first in Christ. All the saints of the Christian dispensation, all the work of God in their souls, all put together perfectly, do not present one single thing but was first of all here in the Lord Jesus Christ. Not a single thing additional is there. That is the bearing of Genesis 2. When Adam opens his eyes after his deep sleep, he sees what God has wrought during his sleep. He sees one formed that came out of himself. He says: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." All that was in Eve, the whole of her being, came out of Adam. She was taken out of the Man; she shall be called Woman. Eve is a divinely given figure of the Church. The word in Revelation 21 is: "Come hither—I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife" (verse 9). She is the true Eve. Everything seen in the Lamb's wife was first of all in the Lamb. It was first of all in Christ. God could, by His mighty wonderful work, take material out of Adam, and, with that material, He builded the woman. That is what is going on to-day. This is the period of the sleep of the true, the last, Adam. Publicly the Lord Jesus Christ is not active. He is hidden in the heavens. There is not a single movement on earth publicly of the Lord Jesus, but the Spirit of God is working, taking material from Christ, and using it to build in the souls of God's people what will be seen in its display as the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

The Lord Jesus is shortly to wake up; He is shortly to begin His activities again in relation to this scene, and, when He does, He presents the Church to Himself a "glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5: 27), and He sees in it His own blessed features—nothing whatever there but what was first of all in Him, and He says, in effect: "This time . . . she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Gen. 2: 23). Let us enquire as to how this is going on.

The Gospel of John greatly helps. The Lord says of the Spirit of God: "He shall take of Mine" (John 16: 15). That is the rib. It is material out of Christ. "And shall shew it unto you." The effect in us as that goes on is that there is formed in our souls that which corresponds to Christ. The mighty work of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the saints to-day is to bring before us that which is of Christ, in such a way that it becomes formative in our souls, and the end of which is the Holy City, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

I would like to dwell upon a few of the main features of the Holy City as seen here in Christ. It is not something which has developed apart from Christ. There is nothing going into the City but that which came out of Him. I would like to portray the Holy City moving about in the person of Jesus. Every single thing in the 21st and 22nd Revelation was all here in the person of Jesus. One cannot touch all the detail, but one would like to deal with a few of the main features of the City.

First of all, we see that the City is the means of the administration of the grace of God—of all blessing which is in the heart of God. It is administered to men through the City. That City was here in the person of

Jesus. It was all here. The first feature of it is that it is seen descending out of heaven from God (Rev. 21: 10). How true that was of the Lord Jesus! Was there ever such a descent as His? Ever such a coming down of what was in heaven, as when the Lord Jesus descended? He says: "I came down from heaven" (John 6: 38). What a difference from all that came in at the beginning! Satan says: "I will go up," and man says: "I will go up," but the Lord Jesus descended. "He that descended" (Eph. 4: 10). What a wonderful coming down that was! "I came down from heaven." How? With the glory of God. He brought into this scene the glory of God—the outshining of what God is. One would like to read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John like that, and see that there was in the life of Jesus the blessed outshining of all that God was. Everything which distinguishes God was all shining out in the Lord Jesus. It says: "Her shining was like a most precious stone;" (verse 11). What a blessed light it was. Look at that ray—that blessed ray at the Cross when the Lord said: "Father forgive them" (Luke 23: 31). What precious light!

Then it says: "Having a wall great and high" (verse 12). That "wall great and high" is seen in the Lord Jesus. If the Church has a wall great and high, it is only because it got it from Christ. If it has the glory of God, it is only because it received it from Christ. If the Church knows how to come down, it is only because it learnt it from Christ. How has the Church a wall great and high? It is for the keeping out of that which is evil, and for the protection of that which is good. How great and high it was in the Person of the Lord Jesus! How the enemy sought to scale that wall: He brought

against the Lord Jesus every principle of evil which has ever been presented to a human heart. The powers of evil had no access to the Lord Jesus Christ. Later on, other attempts were made to scale that wall. There came to the Lord those who said: "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man; for Thou regardest not the person of men" (Matthew 22: 16). They bring to the Lord the evil principle of flattery, but the Lord, perceiving their evil, says: "Why tempt ye me?" There is no access. They cannot get in with their evil. He is impervious to the principles of evil, whether they be in connection with lust or pride, or on the lines of flattery. Again, Peter is used of Satan to attempt to break down that wall. Peter says: "Pity Thyself, Lord." That is no principle for the Holy City, and the Lord says: "Get thee behind me, Satan." The wall great and high is there, and Satan cannot get in.

Then we read that the City has twelve gates—"on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates" (verse 12). That is what the City has. If the Church has three gates on every side, and is approachable from all points, it is only because she learned how to be so from the Lord Jesus.

Just look at all the gates! Always open. There is no night there. "The gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there" (verse 25). How blessed that is in the Lord! Always wide open—the access to the blessed administration of the grace of God. No night ever there! Never closed! One can see how they came from all quarters to the gates when Jesus was here. Just think of those wise men of the east. They come in to the eastern gates, and find the

Lord Jesus, and the star; the glory of heaven is there, and they find the gates wide open, and they go in and kneel down and worship Him. Look at the north. There is that woman of Tyre and Sidon, who has her daughter tormented with the devil, and she comes up to the gates on the north, and it looks as if they are shut. She cries after him: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David." The Lord does not answer her. One would think for a moment that the gates were shut. The Lord says to her afterwards: "Oh, woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." The northern gates are wide open for her to receive the bounty of that City. The Lord administers from the northern gate to that woman's soul. On the south side, you can see Zacchaeus coming up from the south. He was prosperous and rich, and he would like to have access to all the bounty of heaven there in the person of Jesus. He gets up into a tree, and the Lord says to him: "Make haste, and come down." The gates are open, come along in! And look at the west, where the sun sets. The day is closing, but the gates are open. How blessedly the thief found that. The night was beginning to come for his soul, but just as the day ended for him, the western gates are wide open, and the Lord brought him in. It says: "Blessed are they that wash their robes." That is what happened there. He washed his robe, and entered through the gates of the City, where the tree of life is. On the western side, the gates were not shut. If the City is marked by these features, it is so as receiving them from Christ. He is the source of them.

Then it passes on to speak of the various precious stones in the foundation. The foundation is adorned with all manner of precious stones. This speaks of every divine

grace, every moral excellence that the City is going to have--faithfulness, mercy, kindness, compassion, stability, endurance. Every excellence that there is, is all in the foundation of the City. There is no moral excellence, but what shines out first in Christ. If it is faithfulness, He is faithful to death. If it is mercy, He has it for thousands; and so you can pass on to every moral excellence. They all shine out there.

Another feature is the street of that City. "The street of the City was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (verse 21). The Church has a street like that, but it received it from Christ. That is where it came from. It is the same street that the Lord was in when He was here. He was only in one street. He never went to any other. He was in one straight path from Bethlehem to the Cross. It says: "Make His path straight" (Matt. 3: 3). That is the street of the City. Not a single divergence. He says: "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John 6: 38). Every bit of that street is pure gold. You can look where you will, and every step the Lord took was like transparent glass. There was nothing hidden. It was all open and manifest. They came to Him as He was walking down that street, and said: "Who are Thou?" And He said: "Exactly what I say." What He said and what He did were exactly the same. John the Baptist greatly rejoiced to see the Lord walking down that golden street. He *stood*. He had never seen such a path before. "John stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he walked" (John 1: 35-36). There never were such footsteps. Peter speaks of His steps: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2: 22). "We

should follow in His steps." If any feature is found in the City in the world to come, the way it came into the City was that the saints appreciated it in Christ.

Another feature is the river—the river that flowed from the throne of God, and of the Lamb (Rev. 22: 1)—a river of water of life flowing out of the throne of God and the Lamb. Cannot you see that blessed river flowing out world-wide when Jesus was here? Wherever there was a soul prepared to bow before the throne of God and the Lamb, it came into contact with that river. See that blessed Man in John 4 coming near in such grace that not even that woman was afraid. He brings the authority of God home to her soul, and then He says: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee: 'Give me to drink,' thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given Thee living water" (John 4: 10). The river of water of life flows out from the Throne of God and the Lamb. In the 7th John, the Lord says: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink" (verse 37). Let him come! That is the river of the water of life flowing out of the throne of God and the Lamb. If the Church has that, it only has it because it got it from Christ.

I would like to leave that. I hope we see that the woman was taken out of the man. All that is for the pleasure of Christ—that help meet for Him—can only come out of Him.

In the first nine chapters of the Acts, we have the same thing over again. We have in the 9th chapter the Lord, in a sense, waking up out of sleep. He had gone into death, and had disappeared from this world, and was up in heaven, but, in the 9th chapter, we have a kind of rehearsal of the Holy City, and the Lord wakens up and begins to be active again

in relation to the earth. He looks down from heaven upon earth, and He sees those that love Him, and He identifies them. He says: "This time . . . she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." He does not actually say those words, but as He looks down on the hearts that love Him on earth, "He says: "That is *Me*." He says to Saul: "That is *Me* that you are touching on earth." It is the Woman. This is the burden of the ministry of the Apostle Paul after that. He received light there as to what the saints were. The Lord identified them. Every feature of the Holy City is in the first nine chapters. It was all here in the beginning of the Acts. It was not in display from heaven as men say, but, morally, it was all here. See them coming down out of heaven, having the glory of God! They were up in the upper room. They were in touch with heaven. In a spiritual sense they had been to heaven. The Spirit of God came down to that upper room, and linked them with heaven. Thus they descended. They descended to men. They descended with the glory of God to where there were people from all parts of the earth gathered together. They brought the light of what God is. It shone "most precious." Look at that glorious ray of the precious light in the case of Stephen, when he kneeled down and said: "Lay not this sin to their charge." It was the same light that shone in the Person of Christ shining out in the Holy City in Stephen. It is the glory of God in the City, not now in Christ personally, but in the Holy City here on earth.

Then look at the "wall great and high." Ananias and Sapphira hurl against that wall the principles of deception, but they cannot get' in. They meet a wall great and high. That wall is jasper. As they come up to the

wall, the whole thing is exposed. They come up to the "wall great and high." Simon sought to do the same thing. He gave out that he was some great one, but there is only room for one great One in the Holy City, and that is Christ. Peter says: "Thy money go with thee to perdition."

Then look at the twelve gates. They are all there. You see them open as Peter preaches to men from all parts of the known world. They say: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" He says: "Come in through the gates." "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." He brings them in through all these gates open on every side. Afterwards it says Philip went down to Samaria and opened the gates there. Afterwards he opened the gates on the south to the eunuch. The Spirit of God sent Philip to open the gates, and in comes the eunuch. And so you see it all there. The Apostle Paul carries on the idea. There is no night. Ananias brings "Saul brother" in through the gates. He is part of the gates after that. With Paul there is never any night. There was never a time when the gates were closed for him. You see him at Philippi at midnight. The gates are not closed. It is daytime for Paul. The jailor is ushered in through the gates at midnight. So, in the prison, Onesimus turns up, and Paul brings him in. All these things were here when the Church was in its first estate. It could be seen and taken account of. The gates were wide open, and every moral excellence shone out. What precious stones shone in Stephen's face. It shone as the face of an angel. Look at Peter. He was going to be executed in the morning, but it says he slept. That is

just like the Lord. Going over the lake the Lord slept. In His confidence in God he was not disturbed. So they all shine out.

Then in regard to that street as it was seen in the first chapters of the Acts; it is a most important street for our souls to be in—to be walking in always. Peter and John went up together. They were in that street. They “went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer.” You can always go together if you are in that street. That street is quite transparent. In Peter’s soul there is nothing that John cannot see, and in John’s soul there is nothing that Peter cannot see. They go up together, and they can pray together. You can always pray together in the street of that City. The secret of walking together is to be in that street. Paul was there. It is the same street as is spoken of from heaven as the street called Straight. Paul always lived there. Right near his end he said: “We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully” (2 Cor. 4: 2). Those are the by-ways of the will of man, and the human heart. The street to be in is the street called Straight—walking transparently, not walking in craftiness. It is desired that that street should be seen here, and that we should be in it. Not hiding in our hearts certain things. If we do that, then we leave that street. What is normal in Christianity is that all the people of God go up and down that one street called Straight.

Then how the river of water of life flowed out in the beginning of the Acts. How the blessed, life-giving influence of the knowledge of God flowed down first of all into their hearts in the coming of the Spirit, as they were before the throne of God and the Lamb.

That river flowed first of all into the hearts of the one hundred and twenty, then into all those that came up to Jerusalem who heard the word. Then it flowed down to Samaria, and to Cornelius. Wherever the saints were in the beginning, the river of the water of life was flowing out, and the tree of life was available. How they fed upon it! You can see from his writings that the Apostle Paul fed upon the tree of life, getting fresh impressions of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not things that were written two hundred years ago. Not doctrines laid down in writings that we study, but fresh impressions of the greatness of Christ, always. The saints in the early days were living and feeding upon Christ as the Tree of Life, and the leaves they carried to the nations for their healing.

What I want to show is that the Holy City of God is not something that is going to be seen some day in the future, but it was here in the person of Jesus, and in the saints by the work of the Spirit of God. The foundations bear the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb (verse 14). That City which is going to be built upon the foundations of the Apostles is going to love Christ for ever. It is going to be true to Him for eternity. It is going to be the Bride, the Lamb's wife. Judas could not be in the foundation. He was guide to them that took Jesus. He was not in the foundation. The foundations must be right. So they say: "The Lord knoweth the hearts of all." They want one chosen for the foundation whose heart is right towards Christ.

One would just like to bring these few thoughts before us, that we might carry in our souls continually the sense of what God is doing. There is undoubtedly a dis-

ting return morally to the beginning. That is the burden of the recovery of our day. The Lord is bringing things at the end morally to where they were at the beginning. He is giving the ministry of His Spirit. There is a taking of the things of Christ, and bringing them before our hearts, with a view to this—that there should be found those who love Him because of what He is Himself, and then, on the other hand, there should be those here to administer the grace of heaven to one another, and to those outside, with a wall "great and high" that refuses the entrance of evil, and yet, with gates that are never shut for the entrance of what is right; with the excellencies of Christ coming out of the precious stones; with their feet set in the golden street that is transparent; and with the river of the water of life (the blessed knowledge of God) being made available through the saints.

May the Lord grant that we might be continually exercised to listen to the voice of Christ, so that, by our appreciation of Him, these things might be in living evidence amongst the people of God, for His Name's sake.

—W.J.H.

Adelaide, August 25, 1924.

APPRECIATION OF CHRIST

Scriptures.—Matthew 2: 1-12, 26: 1-13.

J.S.T.: Would you say what was the thought you had in suggesting these Scriptures?

E.J.H.: The Gospel seems to be written to produce wise men, whose wisdom consists in the appreciation of the greatness of God's King, and God's Christ; an appreciation of Him, however, in His surroundings on earth, and not what He is in heaven; and the feature about the surroundings on earth is that things are outwardly small but inwardly very precious. That appreciation, therefore, is all the more dear to God in that it is produced in a world where there is nothing but murder and hatred towards Christ. The incoming of the Lord Jesus is marked by hatred and an attempt to get rid of Him, and the wise men come forward in such conditions as those; but they move in relation to light from heaven. I thought the Gospel is written to make the greatness of Christ come before our hearts so much that we come out as the wise woman at the end of the Gospel, who, when there is hatred around and misunderstanding within, is prepared to put her all on God's Christ.

J.S.T.: Do you suggest then that each Gospel has a distinctive character in that way?

E.J.H.: Yes. Then in the second chapter you see what moves the wise men is light from heaven. It is not a great light; it is only a star, but the value of it is that, although it is small it is an indication of something on

earth that is exceedingly precious to heaven.

J.S.T.: There was light before the sun, was there not, as of old?

E.J.H.: That is right. The star is small in outward appearance, but it is connected with the rising of the sun. "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4: 2). Things will be outwardly great then; but, at present, they are outwardly small, though intensely precious.

J.D.U.: How do you say that heavenly light comes to us?

E.J.H.: Well, I suppose it is that which is in the control of God to bring before His people at any time. These wise men evidently were looking to heaven; they were observant with regard to God's movements so that, when the star appears, they recognise that the light in heaven has relation to something that has actually come to pass upon earth.

R.G.D.: Would you follow it up with the angels and their communications in giving direction as to the young child?

E.J.H.: Yes, quite so. The moment God's Christ is here upon the earth, all heaven is interested in what is going on and all the care of heaven is manifested to preserve that which is so intensely precious on earth. And it is remarkable how much the chapter makes of divine instruction.

J.D.U.: It is a marvellous thing to our hearts that there should have been such a visitor here from heaven—Immanuel, God Himself with us.

E.J.H.: Yes. I thought the first exercises with regard to any move forward in the appreciation of Christ would be that our eyes are upon heaven and *not upon earth*. The wise men were really looking to God, wishing to get light from Himself with regard to

what was dear to Him on earth. If we are occupied with earthly things, we shall not discern the light of heaven. It was only a star, but these wise men had before them heavenly things so that they could appreciate the smallest light from heaven.

J.D.U.: That seems to be a matter for very grave concern in these days, when the things of earth are claiming so much of our attention, and we are naturally so prone to take account of them.

E.J.H.: The first mistake that the wise men made was to connect the greatness of the Person with outward greatness, and so they move up to Jerusalem, and they have to learn to turn their backs upon Jerusalem, and to be prepared through help received from the Scriptures to look for Christ in outwardly insignificant circumstances. I thought that was a good exercise for all our hearts; if we are really desiring to find Christ, and to come to a greater appreciation of Him, we must be prepared to find Him NOT associated with the great things of this world.

T.H.G.: What do you mean by that—that they were diverted? The wise men were diverted by looking at the accredited system of things. Would you say that Jerusalem was the ordered or accredited system of things?

E.J.H.: Yes.

E.T.: The shepherds in 2nd Luke escaped that pitfall—the pitfall that you were speaking of in connection with the Lord and the greatness on earth. They escaped it, and went straight back without any obstruction.

E.J.H.: That is good. They got a message from heaven to tell them that Jesus was born, and it says they went to see what they heard. The message comes to them. They are not content until they have seen with their eyes

the subject of the message. Having seen Him with their eyes they return, and give account of what they themselves had experienced.

E.T.: I suppose you would say that comes out of private instruction from the Lord Himself. They get the instruction alone.

E.J.H.: Yes. You see they themselves, as you suggest, were outside the greatness of this world. They were just shepherds separated from the city and all its influences, and it is as being in that condition that heaven is prepared to disclose its mind to them.

J.S.T.: The epistle to the Hebrews goes very much on that line—the saints get away from what is outwardly great, and what is ordained of God, to something apparently insignificant.

R.G.D.: I suppose the wise men had to find out their littleness if they were ever to have Christ discovered to them. They could only come to the acquaintanceship of this Person as resigning all their own greatness. Some suppose they were kings, come from Persia.

E.J.H.: Yes. I thought what is presented in the second chapter of Matthew is very much concerned with the light that had come to the wise men, and you see they respond to the light. In the 26th chapter of Matthew, you have the thing divinely wrought out in the soul of one woman.

E.T.: Have you any thought of what made them divinely intelligent as to the star?

E.J.H.: Not particularly; except that they were evidently those who were prepared to be occupied with what was going on in heaven, and it was more to them than anything transpiring on earth, so that as being occupied with heaven they are able to discern the least

movement in heaven. It speaks in the chapter of divine communications and instructions. No doubt the wise men had been on this line before they came out.

J.D.U.: That line would preserve us from looking for anything great here.

E.J.H.: That is really a good deal what I had before me. What is presented here is not the appreciation of the greatness of Christ in glory on the throne, but it is connected with what is here upon earth that is precious to Himself, that you cannot find in human greatness and glory. You have to be prepared for the obscurity of it. They were prepared to think of God's greatness as being connected with greatness that was already upon the earth, whereas when God brings in greatness on the earth, He separates it from all existing greatness.

J.D.U.: The Lord Himself later on, in instructing His own, speaks of these influences as leaven. He tells them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod (Mark 8: 15). They were both big things on the earth.

E.J.H.: Yes; and we have to understand the hatred that really is abroad in relation to Christ. It must have been quite a surprise to the wise men to find that one who appeared to be so very interested in God's Christ was only a murderer.

R.G.D.: I suppose the hatred very much consists of this, that Christ's things contribute nothing to us, and make nothing of us. We have to be reduced, rather, to come into contact with this Person at all.

E.J.H.: Yes; and together with that a feeling that, if God brings in His Man, then I have to go out. That is what Herod found. He recognised if there was One coming in to be King of the Jews, he had to go out.

J.D.U.: Herod came of a line that was traditionally opposed to God's people—the line of Edom, was it not? So that which speaks of the greatness and the glory here is just the opposite, as it were, to what is of Christ.

E.J.H.: Yes. And then you get the Scribes and Pharisees and the Chief Priests; they were acquainted with the letter of Scripture, but they had no living touch with the Person of whom the Scripture spoke. That is another lesson. We find Christ is not connected with human glory or political greatness of any kind, and even those who are connected with the letter of Scripture do not necessarily know where He is.

J.D.U.: Do you think that was because they had not their eyes on the heavens as the wise men had?

E.J.H.: Exactly. They had become wholly absorbed in material things even in connection with divine service.

J.D.U.: Like the Lord Himself as He says to the Jews (John 5: 39): "Ye search the Scriptures, for ye think that in them ye have life eternal, and they it is which bear witness concerning me, and ye will not come to me." (N.T.)

J.S.T.: And they are able to make you wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3: 15) through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Ques.: Is that what the Apostle Paul was seeking to set before the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 2: 13—teaching spiritual things by spiritual means?

E.J.H.: Yes. I am sure that is so. He wanted to get their thoughts detached from all material and natural things in order that spiritual things should be uppermost. You see how God had His hand over these wise men, although they made a mistake, as we should say; yet He took account of the desires

of their hearts and He put them on the right path. It is remarkable that God should use the people who could not help them with regard to the Person of Christ. He could give them light from the Scriptures or indicate certain things from the Scriptures to them, showing that if our desires are right (and we may be in associations that are not really pleasing to the Lord) the Lord, being above all, can give us help even in those associations that are not right, that we might get clear of them.

Ques.: Is there a present indication as to where Christ is to be found?

E.J.H.: I am sure there is, and the first thing is, you have light from heaven that He is here somewhere. Then, if you read the Scriptures, you find He is not to be found in connection with earthly greatness, but in obscurity—not in the city of Jerusalem, but in the village of Bethlehem. When they are prepared to accept the truth of the Scriptures, when they got the light of the Scriptures definitely before them, they were prepared to part with their own ideas, and to find the Lord in outwardly insignificant circumstances. They went to look for Him in obscurity.

B.H.: Is that why they go back by another way?

E.J.H.: They have learned that everything touched with human greatness is not going to be a help to them. They go back to their own land another way.

J.S.T.: Do you mean the result of these meetings would be that we all go back another way?

B.H.: I think so.

J.D.U.: It has often struck me that if the Lord wanted to make an impression of greatness as man views it, He would have chosen

His entry into this scene at Jerusalem, but here is a little village—Bethlehem.

E.J.H.: I am sure that is most important, because we have to remember that the surroundings of the Lord on coming to this world were not an accident. He chose His own circumstances before He came. It was not an accident that He was born in a manger. They were the circumstances that the Lord Himself chose for His own entry into the world, so that He would be available at the outset to the lowliest and the humblest.

J.D.U.: So that any who wish to have a proper appreciation of this blessed Person, and what is for Him on this earth, will not look at the reproach that is connected with His name here now in the light of the path He has taken.

W.G.: Would you not say that the majority of Christians in the present day do not see that Christ is still in rejection—that He is still the disallowed stone?

E.J.H.: Yes. That is so, and the preparedness to accept the truth of the Scriptures is a great help to us in that connection. We may form our own opinions as to where He is likely to be found, but if you read the Scriptures carefully, the Scriptures say He shall be called a Nazarene—that is, everything connected with Himself personally and His interests on earth is in reproach and obscurity.

Ques.: Is it an indication that we have found Him that we go back another way?

E.J.H.: When you have really found God's Christ—the Centre of all His thoughts and purposes—you never can have any more contact with the political and the religious elements of the world; you cut clear from it all.

D.S.H.: So that the wise men move rightly in relation to the star, and, though they turn

aside, as getting help from the Scriptures, they are on the right path again.

E.J.H.: Yes. And immediately they are prepared to act upon the Scriptures they see the star that they had lost sight of. The star never directed them to Jerusalem.

E.T.: I thought that was the important incident in this case. You spoke just now about having our eyes turned upward. Their eyes must have been turned downward, and they, therefore, lost sight of things. It was not until they got on right lines that they had the right sight.

E.J.H.: Yes. So that when they are prepared to move according to the Scriptures, they find they have the Lord's approval. The star they had seen in the East appears again, and they rejoice with exceeding great joy. There is no rejoicing when they go to Jerusalem. They were never divinely instructed to go to Jerusalem. Once on the right path, and when they are prepared to act according to the Scriptures, they have a sense of divine approval.

E.T.: It shows us the consistency and faithfulness of the guide in remaining until they were right again. Had they recognised the faithfulness of the guide they would not have lost sight of it.

R.G.D.: All that is around us to-day religiously, is the building up of an accredited centre—Christ is not there. He is outside of all man's arrangements, and does not design to build up anything in this world.

E.J.H.: So that if one really desires to find Christ, he should be prepared to accept what the Scriptures say: "He is despised and rejected of men," for instance: "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." Then we would not expect to find Him in human centres.

We would not expect to find Christ in a cathedral in the way in which we are able to approach Him, appreciate Him, and worship Him. Other people do the worship for you in a cathedral—such as the worship is.

T.H.G.: What is the thought of the “young child”? It seems to come in very much in this chapter.

E.J.H.: I thought that was a principle for us that everything is small. All the greatness of the Person is there, and all His interests are here upon earth to-day, but we do not find them in conditions of greatness.

T.H.G.: I was wondering whether there was a moral condition with us so that we can appreciate what is set forth in the young child. The commencement of Christianity is linked up with the child.

E.J.H.: Yes.

J.D.U.: What is spoken of as great in connection with the earth in the end is going to be overthrown—Babylon the Great.

T.H.G.: And all the accredited system of things is linked up with that?

J.S.T.: So when the Lord wants to show someone who is really great He takes a little child.

E.J.H.: All in keeping with the thought of divine greatness, but upon earth in the present period of faith, the dispensation of faith, it is all connected with what is small.

T.H.G.: So the great things we get in the end of Hebrews are going to be shaken, and that which is small which we get here is going to remain.

E.J.H.: The four exceedingly wise things in Proverbs are little upon the earth (Prov. 30: 24).

J.D.U.: Would you say something about the treasures?

E.J.H.: Well, the wise men have come under the thought of divine guidance, and divine approval, and now they are able to stay where the light is prepared to rest. They come to a point where the light is prepared to rest. The star is over the place where the young child lay, so that now in their own souls there is a permanent link between heaven and earth, and the link is the Babe. When they recognise that, they open their treasures. They could not open them in the presence of Herod or the Scribes.

J.S.T.: As they had had some dealings with God, and known something of the Scriptures, they would not come empty handed by any means.

E.J.H.: If we are prepared to go on in secret with the Lord, and watch the movement of heaven in ministry, we shall be able to get such help that, when we come in contact with what is of Christ, we shall be able to appreciate it at once. They had not to go and find their treasures. They had them with them. They had them enclosed.

J.S.T.: Many have precious things in their hearts, but they do not bring them out.

D.S.H.: Would you say that the treasures are not dependent upon the surroundings in which they find Christ? Do you not get that in the woman in the house of Simon, the leper?

E.J.H.: Yes, that is right; they do not have to pick up their treasures on the way. It is something they bring from their own circle, where heavenly influences have been at work.

T.H.G.: It shows that they must have passed through soul exercises in preparing or accumulating these treasures, so that, when the hour came, it was acceptable and suitable to the occasion.

J.S.T.: What about the distinctiveness in the treasures—the gold, the frankincense, and the myrrh?

E.J.H.: I think, simply, the gold is their appreciation of *who* He was—a divine Person; the frankincense is their appreciation of *what He was*, as here for God; and the myrrh spoke of what He was *going to do*. He was going to suffer, and that really constitutes the whole appreciation of Christ—who He was, what He was, and what He came to do. He came to suffer and to die.

R.G.D.: Frankincense then would be the life of Christ; myrrh, the death of Christ; gold, His divine origin.

E.J.H.: Yes. They appreciated, although they saw only a little child, that that Person was no less a Person than God Himself, manifested in flesh. Then they could look upon what there was now on earth for God—the sweet savor of Christ going up to God as frankincense.

R.G.D.: I suppose you would say that nothing could go up as savor to God, but what was of heaven.

E.J.H.: That must be so.

J.D.U.: It is good for us to realise that there is One on whom we can bestow the very best.

E.J.H.: It is very suggestive and very encouraging to think that these wise men *had* their treasures, and their treasures are only kept for the opportunity when they can bestow them on One Who is infinitely greater than they are, so that whatever treasure we may have, we hold it in relation to Christ.

J.D.U.: It has cost us something, too, has it not, the thought of the treasure—the ointment was very precious?

E. J. H.: Yes, and you cannot cast your pearls before swine. You have to wait till there is a sympathetic atmosphere, and a sympathetic atmosphere is in the house where the mother of the child is; where those small things that are so precious are cared for in a motherly spirit—that is a sympathetic atmosphere where you feel free to unburden your heart.

J.D.U.: That can come out in a good many ways, can it not? The young ones can be encouraged to bestow that which is precious to their hearts, even if they have it very simply. In that sympathetic atmosphere of which you speak in the house, it is appreciated.

J.S.T.: Not merely by what is said, but by what is done. Many do godly acts and gracious things in that way.

J.D.U.: He is not here in Person, Himself, but those who are very dear to His heart are here.

E.J.H.: Yes. In those circumstances in which there is a sympathetic atmosphere that seeks to foster what is so small, we find the child grows.

E.T.: Would you suggest that the opening of their treasures and presenting gifts out of them would be that they held all in common? I thought that they opened their treasures. It does not say they *gave all* their treasures, but they held them in common. Do we not hold things in common?

E.J.H.: In that house on that day, they all learned that there was one Person who was the Centre of all offering, and that everything that was presented was presented so that each could share the common appreciation of the Person.

E.T.: The thought before my mind was that they went away with as much as they brought.

J.S.T.: They went away with more than they brought. They received an addition—divine instruction as to going back another way.

W.G.: Would you say that it is in the Holiest we acquire these treasures which we present to the Lord; on the Lord's Day morning we should have treasures in our hands. We should have something gathered.

E.J.H.: I am sure as you come into personal touch with the Lord Himself as the ark typifies, you will not be able to keep back your appreciation. It is there in the secret of His own presence, and in the sense of the blessedness and the greatness of His Person that you really have something to give.

J.D.U.: Would you give us a little on the 26th chapter now?

E.J.H.: In the 26th chapter we find the world is not changed. What it was when Christ came in, it was all the way through, and it has not changed to-day. The lesson for us is, that if Herod sought to get rid of the child when He came in, the same attitude would be kept up all the way through—and it is true to-day. There is a murderous spirit around, and even a good deal of misunderstanding and failure to appreciate Christ, even amongst those who bear His name. And in such an atmosphere without, and misunderstanding within, as the disciples failed to discern the greatness of the Person, their eyes being more occupied with the service than they were with the Person, a woman was able to come forward. She was not deterred by the eyes about her, and what they thought of her.

W.G.: Would you say that her intelligent devotedness was acquired as the result of being at His feet?

E.J.H.: I think she would be one who had gathered up the instruction of what you get in the Gospel. She had gathered it herself from the Lord at His feet, and in company with Him.

T.H.G.: Would you say she represented one of the wise men?

E.J.H.: Yes. I thought she is seen in the same surroundings as the wise men at the beginning. She makes no mistake. She understands the true state of affairs on the earth as having been divinely instructed in the Lord's company so that, without making any mistakes, she could open her treasures in the presence of the King.

J.S.T.: What was your thought about it being in the house of Simon, the leper?

D.S.H.: A remark was made earlier in connection with the Lord's entry. It was not where one would have thought to find Him, and perhaps we would not have expected to find the Lord in the house of Simon, the leper.

J.S.T.: A most untoward place to be found in, we would say.

J.D.U.: That was the place where the royalty of His Person was appreciated.

E.J.H.: It is interesting that you get a little child and His mother in the house at the beginning; no doubt it was a very obscure house in Bethlehem. And here is a house equally obscure, equally under reproach—a leper's house; but, in that, there is all the appreciation for Christ that is dear to His heart.

J.D.U.: It must have been a severe test for the woman to endure the criticism of those who were outwardly, at any rate, nearer to the Lord than she.

E.J.H.: Is not the instruction for us in that, that she had learned the truth of the Scripture—that He was to be a Man of reproach,

a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. She was prepared for the outward position of reproach herself, prepared to be found fault with. How many of us are prepared for that?

J.S.T.: Did you have any special thought about the alabaster box?

E.J.H.: She comes with it from her own house—her own circumstances. She *brings* the alabaster box. She pours the ointment on *His head*, not on *His feet*. That is the anointing of God's King.

J.S.T.: We are told these spices were only obtainable on very lofty hills. They could not be got anywhere else. The spices from which this ointment was compounded were very rare. There are fruits of the valley and fruits of the plain, but this particular ointment was obtained from plants which grew on lofty mountains.

J.D.U.: What does that indicate—heavenly appreciation?

J.S.T.: Yes. You were speaking about exercises just now. And it is a good Scriptural term, is it not?

E.J.H.: The appreciation of the woman is not according to what He had done for her—that would have been *His feet*. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace" (Is. 52: 7). In Luke 7, it is *His feet*, because the thought is what He did for the sinner. Here it is the appreciation of what He is to God. She brings forward the gold, frankincense and myrrh; the gold is what He was; the frankincense was what He had been under the eye of God; and the myrrh—He was about to go into death. So the Lord takes it up in that way. She had done that for His burial.

W.G.: Would you say that, though she had a sense of the fact that the Lord Jesus

was the disallowed stone—disallowed by the religious rulers of the day—she had a deep sense that He was chosen of God, and precious to God.

E.J.H.: Yes. And willing to bestow her affection, no matter what anybody else thought about her. She is one soul secured by the teaching of the Gospel. The teaching of the Gospel is open to everyone of us. How good it would be if one further worshipper were secured as the result of what we have been speaking of to-day!

Ques.: Why is it linked with the preaching of the glad tidings?

E.J.H.: That shews the Lord's appreciation of her action. He was willing to associate the action of the woman with the glad tidings of God, so that there is the revelation going out, and the response that goes with it.

Rem.: Really a pattern for us.

J.S.T.: He really ennobles it. You were speaking about the wise men. Our brother says they might be kings. Here the woman is ennobled.

J.D.U.: What a cheer to His heart—murderous hatred outside, and the utter lack of appreciation from inside—this woman comes along and His heart is delighted. That privilege is open to us now.

E.J.H.: Yes. And it brings us back to the centre in relation to what He is to us irrespective of what we can be for Him. The disciples estimated it—it might have been sold for much. There was a definite estimate on their side of the good work that could have been for other people. But the Lord puts His approval on the action of the woman.

J.S.T.: He does not make light of that. He says they could do that at any other time. What it says of the wise men is that they could not help it—they opened their treasures.

W.D.: I suppose He really knew what was in their hearts that they did not have the poor in their hearts at all.

E.J.H.: I think the Lord would bring things back to the source, the centre, so that *good* works, according to God, would spring from affection to Himself. They had put the good works before the Lord. That was the wrong way. If you put the Lord first, the good works will follow.

J.D.U.: We must not think that putting Him first in any way is on the line of waste—whether it be energy or time or thought, or whatever it may be.

E.J.H.: I am sure that is so, because you find that spirit abroad even in that day. There is a definite laying down to-day that we are making more of the Person than of good works. You hear Christians say: "You do not do any good works. You are not engaged in any social work at all." You have to learn to accept the reproach. It does not mean that you do not do good works. They all spring from affection to Christ.

J.D.U.: You are rightly directed.

E.J.H.: The principle is that your light so shines before men that they glorify your Father. Good works that spring from affection to Christ have an atmosphere of heaven about them, and direct the persons to whom they are done, up to the source of them.

R.G.D.: That is this Gospel. Paul warns us against "another Gospel." But this is really the appreciation of Christ, and necessarily brings the woman into remembrance wherever it is preached.

J.D.U.: In the midst of all misunderstanding and misdirected energy in Christendom around us, how sweet it is that the Lord should open the way for us to be a real joy

to His heart. In the outer circle, the murderous state is still in existence.

E.J.H.: Yes, and how instructive it is to us to see that the Lord puts this one woman as a pattern of what is secured in the Gospel.

J.D.U.: That is why she is not definitely named.

J.S.T.: Why a woman?

E.J.H.: Do you not think it suggests the subjective side? One in whom the truth of the Gospel has truly been wrought out.

D.S.H.: Is it not fitting that that should accompany the announcement of the glad tidings?

E.J.H.: The subjective result?

D.S.H.: Yes. I thought that would be an exercise with us as to whether that did always accompany the Gospel.

E.J.H.: Yes.

J.D.U.: That is God's intention, that there should be that behind the word of mouth—that there should be a word of testimony. There should be that behind it to start with.

E.J.H.: When you preach the gospel you would like to be able to present this woman as a pattern result. It is appreciating Christ on earth, when there is murder without, and misunderstanding within. You see how the woman comes forward. It is a deliberate movement on her part. She might well have stayed at home if she considered what lay between her and the Lord. She felt what there was—hatred for Christ. She may have known that the disciples would not be sympathetic with her.

Ques.: Is that where Jonathan came short? He seemed to reach a point where he loved David as his own soul, but was not prepared to identify himself with David.

E.J.H.: There are two things definitely said of Jonathan that really were his downfall—

on one occasion he goes to David, but returned *to the city*; on the next occasion he returned *to his own house*. He falls with his own house.

T.H.G.: He was not prepared to take up the fellowship of his sufferings.

E.J.H.: The city and his own house were more to him than sharing the reproach of the rejected king.

T.H.G.: In that way would you say that he was linked up with the accredited system of things suggestive of what we find in the world around us to-day, and (I am sorry to say) many of God's dear people are linked up with it.

E.W.: I suppose you would say the appreciation of Christ is in the house. The house is filled with the odor of the ointment.

E.J.H.: Yes. That is so; and we would like to be prepared for the conditions of the house, no matter how few saints were walking together in the light of this. Two or three can walk together in the light of the house where Christ is appreciated.

E.W.: The Psalmist tells us (Ps. 133: 1) "How pleasant . . . unity." If saints are set together there should be that appreciation of Christ. The woman in Matthew was one, but she is only a pattern of many more. Those who are dwelling in His house continually praise Him.

E.J.H.: To go back to the house at the beginning—it is so good to see the young child and His mother. It was in that house where things were so very very small, but the atmosphere sympathetic that things grew larger and larger; so, although our impressions of the Lord may be very small, yet, if we have a desire that they should be in-

creased, they will definitely grow. But for that we must be prepared for reproach, and remember that hatred is within our own hearts—really unbelief against Christ. So we want to shut out the earthly things, and earthly thoughts, and be so open to the influences of heaven, that we cherish the right things.

R.G.D.: This alabaster box is soul acquaintance with Christ, because when Mary, in the 12th chapter of John, anointed His feet, the whole house is filled with the odor of the ointment.

E.J.H.: Yes. It is presented in a different setting in John's Gospel, and Mary comes forward there really as expressive of the affection of the whole house for the Lord. It is a sample family, and every member of the family has been separately educated, and Mary represents that feature where the whole house is filled with the odor of the ointment.

W.C.B.: Would you connect this with what we had on Saturday night—divine possibilities? You spoke of divine possibilities. I was wondering whether they were secured by appreciation for Christ.

E.J.H.: Yes; I am sure that is right. The woman in the 4th chapter John has no name. *This* woman has no name. It is left open for our names to be put in. Can we put our own name here as one who has so come under the Lord's hand and instruction, and so governed by heavenly things that we act like this?

J.S.T.: We know the name of the one who says: "To what purpose is this waste?" We do not want to go in for that.

W.G.: The one who has this wonderful appreciation of Christ is spoken of as being at

the feet of Jesus, first as a learner, then a sympathiser, and then as a worshipper.

E.J.H.: It connects her at all times with His own Person.

F.P.: She has divine estimation.

E.J.H.: Yes. If she had been swayed by the influences without or the influences within she never would have done this. She has a divine estimate of Who that Person is. So she pours the ointment on His head. I have connected this particular passage with 1 Cor. 11, where it says: "This do for a remembrance of Me." The thought of doing in the world is connected with something great always. When men do things, and when they give things, they are connected with greatness. You could not have anything more outwardly insignificant than the Supper, yet the Lord says: "This do for a remembrance of Me." The Lord lays emphasis on this. The Lord says here, not that she has *said* anything, but that she has *done* this.

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