

Lectures on the Epistle to the Ephesians
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Part Fourth. LATER MINISTRY.

Lecture 1. Ephesians 1.

If you look at the 3rd verse, and down to the end of the 6th, it gives in a simple way the key of the epistle. If you attend to the superscription in the 1st and 2nd verses, you will find that you have the key-note of the whole epistle. A man when going to write on any subject will just drop in the beginning what he is going to enlarge on. The 3rd and 6th verses bring out to light the peculiar aspects of truth in this epistle.

Remark, before the apostle can get on he stops; his heart bubbles up with, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Blessing that his heart has laid hold of by faith, and which has been substantiated to his own soul. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Man gropes through the world without a bit of evidence of these things till, like Paul, he has a ray of light from heaven, and his faith becomes a reality, and he acts on it. "Blessed be the God and Father," etc.

Observe, first, the *God* of the Lord Jesus Christ; and, second, the *Father*. If I say, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, I could also say He was the God of Israel, or He is my God; but here it is God and *Father* of the Son — not a Son by adoption or creation, but the Only Begotten in the bosom of the Father, before all worlds, possessor of a being that never had any commencement. Next, there is the display of His glory as the "*God* of our Lord Jesus Christ, the *Father* of *glory*." (Read 17th to 23rd.) I get there the person of the Lord Jesus presented in the place where He is distinctly able to call God, "God." When on earth He called God His Father, but never, save on the cross, "My God." If all He said down here is gathered up, you will find a guardedness until where there could be no question of using the term, "My God," as if He were only like Paul or John. The forsaking of Him was as wonderful as the honouring; He, the only One who could possibly be in that place, standing between God and Satan, bearing the whole wrath of God, carrying out the perfect mind of God. There could be no mistake *there*, as to who He was when He said, "My God, My God." When He rose He again used it, saying, I go "to My God and your God." He was going where all in heaven and on earth would know Him, not only as the Servant, but as the One (because having been such a *Servant*) seated at God's right hand. A Man in glory, not a glory of subserviency, but of government; every knee to bow to Him, "of things in heaven, things in earth, and things under the earth," etc. If all up there see none but this Lamb on the throne, as the only One from whom blessing can flow, we know Him not only as that, but as Head of a body — "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." If you compare all the displays the divine Being has made of Himself, you will find no glory anywhere in the old creation like *this*; this throws all the rest into the shade. If He has power, where am I to look for the mightiest display of it? Ah! His Power and wisdom shine nowhere as in this scene where the Lord Jesus Christ is raised up from the dead, and is sitting in glory at the right-hand of God as *Man*.

This title, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," is needful here; it is the relationship that is presented. God is presented associating Himself with that very Person, *that Man* who down here was God manifest in the flesh. If I say, "God," I get into a scene either of the old creation or the new. In

Adam I am in the old scene, and I get the new in Him who is up there, Head of the new creation; but if I say, "Father," that title brings me into God's own proper eternity, into infinitude, into what the Father was with the Son before all worlds. A creature mind cannot lay hold of the thought of a Being whose existence never had a beginning. I can only receive it on the credit of another. The end of the third chapter brings out infinitude which the mind cannot grasp. The *heart* can lay hold of it, but only because of the Lord Jesus Christ being there. If I turn my mind to the breadth and length and depth and height in connection with the infinitude of the divine Being, my mind cannot grasp it; but when I see the central object is *Christ*, *Christ loving me*, love presented in a human heart, and He Himself *mine*, He in the very centre of the infinitude of God, able as Man then to fill me with all the fulness of God, I can lay hold of it; and it is the only way that a creature could have to do with infinitude. I am brought by the Father to this Lord Jesus Christ, blessed in Him, and the love in His heart is made to bear on my heart. He has got a people down here, and He is filling them with all the divine infinitude, "all the fulness of God." Can we say He is filling us? How He has to empty me to get the heart filled with it! Wondrous to look up there and say, There is He, my eternal Lover; I cannot grasp the infinitude of God, but I can say, *He* does love me. He has gone up there as the communicator of eternal life. He can communicate life to you and bring you into connection with every blessing in Himself. He can touch your eyes to make you see Him the centre of all the infinitude of God, the only One from whom all the fulness of God flows out.

Remark the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is something so sweet in putting in our. You can say, He, is yours, as I can, He is mine; as much yours as mine. Observe the distinction between putting an object before the soul and the soul adopting it. Look at the Lord Jesus seated at the right hand of God, and hear God saying to Him of Saul of Tarsus, when on his way to Damascus, "That one is your property." Saul could not admit as a Jew that he was the property of some one else, much less of the Nazarene; but when the ray of light shines into his heart he says, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" He was no longer his own, but Another's, and in the keeping of Another who could say, "Now I have made you mine, I shall watch over you as one of My sheep, and when you get into thorny ways I must have My eye everywhere looking after you." He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. He is the universal Master of everything. Faith says, "I own Him Lord of all, I mean to be His servant, not taking a step till I know what He would have me to do."

There is peculiar sweetness in being able to say, "Our Lord," to Him of whom God says, "That is My only begotten Son, the One in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead." And to think that He can love a poor thing like me, and I can love Him! Our Lord, the one to whom we belong; our Proprietor who can do just as He pleases with us.

The word Lord has two meanings. In the Old Testament it almost always means Jehovah when printed in capital letters, and in the New, "Lord" is often applied to the Lord Jesus because of His being Jehovah, God manifest in flesh, the self-existent One. It would mortify a Jew beyond measure to apply this title to any but the divine Being. As Peter said, "God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." All was to be given into His hands, to be recognised by all as the anointed servant — the Man who has all power everywhere. They did not know why they were to call the babe Jesus, but God knew. He was the only one to whom that name could be given; He was to be the exponent of what God is (names were always given thus in the Old Testament). God knew that He was the only One who could settle the whole question of sin. God must find One, holy and undefiled; *He* alone could go and stand in the gap, He alone in redemption could bring them into a new place, breaking the power of Egypt.

We never find in Scripture the term "anointed Son." It was the anointed Son of man, the One who

alone could settle everything. God gave Him the Spirit without measure; He was anointed with the Holy Ghost. Here it is the relationship of this anointed Man with Him, who quickened and raised us up together with Him who is now at His own right hand in the glory. Unless we see this we cannot get hold of all the glories connected with the Lord Jesus, and put them in their right place. God must have the first place, and He will be first. He must display Himself in His own sphere. He could not by coming into my little circumstances to express all that He is; He must take me into a scene where the Son of His love opens out to me the sphere where His glory is all displayed, and there I see the largeness of it. This Son is in circumstances quite large enough to bring it all out.

The thing that makes it so difficult with us to deal with God is, that the root of sin is within us, and it always wants to bring in something of *self*, and God will not have it. If you want blessing you must let God be first, and get into the second place yourself. It is a most blessed place — God saying, "I have got you there to fill you with all the fulness of blessings in Christ." If you do not keep in the second place you will not get a continuous flow of blessing. If you watch you will find yourself continually slipping out of the second place, and beginning with "I," instead of Christ — saying, "What am I to have?" God says, "What is Christ to have?" He can pick you up as a stone for the temple, but for nothing in yourself, only as the fruit of what the Son of His love has done. Selfishness is awful for a creature. If you say God has put the Son of His love for Himself in glory, to fill up the hearts of His people with all His own fulness, having raised them up and seated them in heavenly places in Him, what place is there for *self* there? It is not only the broad fact of our blessing in Christ brought out; but, what has He left out? Nothing; "all spiritual blessings," everything He can fill us up with. You are wrong in speaking of God as if He cared for nothing but the rod. Ought not He to be well spoken of, to have brought you to this place, to be filled up with blessings? The want of speaking well of God comes from the want of faith in Him as the Blessor.

Whatever God says, it is done. He said, "Let there be light," and it was done; and God said, "I shall be the Blessor of a people chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world," and it is done. What could they who are in heaven understand by it? No angel now can understand it as a poor sinner who believes can. They are not ruined creatures saved by grace, and identified with the Man at God's right hand. When He spake the word it stood. Not merely was choosing us in Christ the act of One who could speak the word, and it was done; but the act of One who remains, and is, the Blessor of that people for ever. First, filled with all spiritual blessings, then in heavenly places, then in Christ. What an amazing thought, ALL blessing ours in Christ. If one single thing in Christ is not mine I have not all. God says ALL. A Jew began with earthly blessings, getting his store houses filled. God begins with filling us with spiritual blessings in Christ. It is blessing connected with the working of the Spirit in us.

In what sense is Christ connected with the Spirit of God? Not only did He send the Holy Ghost down, but with one little word He converted Saul, and gave him the Spirit of life. If I belong to Christ, I may find myself a sheep of slaughter; but I think not of that, but of my Lord Jesus up there, Head of a body vitally united with me. I may be a sheep of slaughter down here perhaps; but Christ my portion is up there, and He is saying, "I am the only begotten Son of my Father; I who have been in His bosom from all eternity know the heart of love and infinite fulness of that Father, and if you are a son, I want you to have the full idea of the blessedness of believing in My name, because His heart's delight is to fill you up with blessings in Me." And has the eternal Lover of our souls such thoughts towards us? I cannot get a more blessed thought than that *I am His* and *He is mine*; that this anointed Man, the centre of all the divine fulness, loves me, saying, "I have loved, and shall love you unto the end." It was in Christ God's choice was made Christ having done the work to make those chosen fit for the Father's house. He is up there without a veil, a living Person, and people who believe in Him can look up and

feel the affections of the Father flowing through His bosom to them.

Man handles what he calls "high doctrine," making *himself* the centre. God's doctrine is making Christ the centre. What a God this is, having in His own proper eternity proposed a plan that should bring forth all His glory, bring it forth for us poor sinners to be sharers of it as being one with Christ. It is important to see the personality of God and of Jesus of Nazareth. People have got their own range of thought and habits: man has got his ways, and God has His. Adam in the garden of Eden could not be compared with the last Adam. The first Adam was told to take care not to do what God told him not. The last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, came down, in obedience to the Father's will, to empty Himself and go to the death of the cross. He was to be the display of all that God is.

When people speak of the sovereignty of God, they think that He is arbitrary. Here God says, "I have taken My own line; I have taken My own Son and made Him head of a people chosen in Him before the foundation of the world." It is arbitrary; but, oh! the largeness of the grace that thought about such desperately evil and ruined things; and, long before you ever existed, knew all about you and wanted you to be one with that Son of His love, and the expression of what He is. Do you begin with yourself or with God? Have not we served that apprenticeship long enough — continually looking at what *we are*, and what we can do? The place to begin at it is, to see God first, having given you that Son of His love as a free gift, having chosen you in Him before the world was.

Lecture 2. Ephesians 2: 4.

It is in my heart to speak to you a few words upon the mercy of God. One of the great difficulties in connection with such a subject is its exceeding fulness. One hardly knows where to begin. God is *rich in mercy*. It is not only the wealth of the mercy of God, but that mercy is part of His character, a part of His very nature of which He cannot divest Himself. The very context illustrates what God's *rich* mercy is. In Ephesians 1: 20-23, we are shown the Lord Jesus Christ raised up to His own right hand, now sitting there, and in everything God marking all His delight being found in that *Man* who is with Him on the throne. A mere man could not sit on the throne of God, but this One is such an One that He is placed there on the throne, raised up by God Himself, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Go all through the present age, and you will find nothing to be compared with what that Man has got. There is nothing in this age, or in the age to come, that is not His, and all things must be put under His feet. And not only so, but there is new glory. The earth-rejected One — God has seated Him at His own right hand as Head of the body. And while He sits there, a body is being formed down here which, to the mind of God, will be a body proper to such a Head in the glory.

But if we follow Him, we shall find more glories still put on Him. He created all things. If the character of God is to be shown forth down here, who but *that Son* could show it, so that all who saw Him, saw the Father? If it were redemption, none could touch it save that Son; if it be the setting up of a kingdom, *He* is the only one to be King; but not to be a King on earth, but reigning over the earth, surrounded by a heavenly people, after putting on them all His own beauty. Is it a fact that Jesus of Nazareth is at rest on the throne of His Father, all honour, and power, and glory, His, and that He is forming for Himself, whilst there, a people to present to Himself without spot or wrinkle? What brilliancy of light the apostle points us to! And then he puts before us the quarry whence the Lord is picking up those whom He is going to fashion for such glory.

What a contrast to the beginning of the chapter is this — Satan having got the mastery over the mind of man, and no one found in nature not subject to these lusts, and Christ, in all dominion, power, and glory, looking down and forming of *these* a body fit to be taken up there! And the apostle could

say, "He has enabled you Ephesians and me, Paul, the persecutor and blasphemer, to know that we are some of these; not looked on by God according to the pit, the miry clay, the lusts in which we wallowed, but according to this union with the Son up there, as those quickened together with Christ." But I not only think of Paul and these Ephesians, but of myself. I know the pit whence I was taken, and I can only account for it by saying, "Ah! it was God, rich in *mercy*, who picked me up, and made me to be one with Christ."

Do we as individuals know this doctrine? God not only a God of life, but this living God having a certain character of His own, on the ground of which He took up persons dead in sins, raised them up, and made them sit in heavenly places in Christ. If so, it must be all on His part. It is not of him that runneth, nor of him that willeth, but of Him that showeth mercy. There is no dealing of God before the day of Pentecost, in which mercy is put out in so marked a way, as from that time to the day when Christ will come to take His people up. It is mercy, rich mercy, from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ — mercy to Jews, and to these poor unclean heathen, mercy not only taking poor sinners out of everything they were in, connected with lusts and death, but mercy coming to take them up out of it all to a place inside heaven, fitting them for a place in God's house.

"God rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us," etc. This expressing God's wealth of mercy is here in contrast to grace. By grace we are saved through faith; but mercy is connected with giving those who are dead in sins life; and grace again with holiness, through faith (God's gift) in the atonement. One of the most vivid places in which mercy is referred to is in Exodus 33. Paul, when arguing with Israel in Romans, states that all are included as guilty that God may have mercy on all, not on the ground of their obedience, but on that of His mercy. (See Rom. 9: 15, 16.) "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," etc. It does not come forth from him that runneth or willeth, but from God. It is something rising from God, and flowing from Him. Turning to Exodus 32, we find that Moses had been called up into the mount for the ordering of the tabernacle. No sooner is Moses there than the people show that they are tired of being God's people. They cry out, "Make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him;" and all their trumpery ornaments, nose-rings, etc., are given to make a god. They turn their back on the living God, saying, "Now we have got a god of our own making, and we do not want to know Him." What a thing, to turn the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made with hands! Moses pleads for them; he knows the value of an appeal in God's mind. The Lord hears it, and spares. Moses then says, "Show me thy glory." The Lord answers, "I will make all My *goodness* pass before thee." "Israel shall not escape; they think they can make a calf of gold, and despise me. They do not know Me; I shall have mercy on whom I will have mercy." Mercy, is the prerogative of God. Though there has been the denial of everything, and the setting up of a false god, yet mercy can flow out to meet it; but the sole and only One it can flow from is this God, and none but this God.

Who can say to God, "What doest Thou?" Did you ever call upon God to reckon with you? Is God the only Being who is not to have a will of His own? He laughs and mocks at those who would bring Him down to their level. What He says, He will *do*; "He *will* have mercy on whom He will have mercy." Am I to say that *mercy* will not do for me? God came out there in His fullest character as the God rich in *mercy*, the only Being who could, and who can, have the right to have mercy on whom He will. How could I look at any of you, and say that you are like Christ? Christ will have you apart from all that you are. God sees you the very opposite of what He is; but He says, "I am determined to have them; I will have My own way; I can use that wealth of mercy which I rest in up here, for the chiefest of rebels that can be found down there." Why did He look on me when I was dead in trespasses? Because He had a right to pick me up, and give me life. Power is one thing, and the character of Him

that uses it another. Satan has power, and he uses it by lies which lead souls to destruction. Ah! but God has a character of His own. I rest on the individuality of God. God always acts without consulting any other individual. Whom did He consult when He created the world? Whom, when He proposed that His only Son should come down to die? Whom when, after seven thousand years of man's rebellion on this little globe, He purposes to make new heavens and a new earth? Nobody. And when He said, "Ah! you did not look to or own Me as God; you were dead in sins, and I quickened you" — did. He consult anybody? No; and now He is bringing one bit of truth after another into my soul; and when He takes up souls He consults nobody, and if any come into collision with Him they must be swept' away. There is that entire individuality about God, and a character of His own, that regulates all His acts. And this is so sweet in Exodus 33, where He says to Moses, "My glory is too great a sight for you to look into; you must be put in the cleft of the rock, covered with My hand whilst My glory passes by; but all My goodness shall pass before you, and I will proclaim My name, the name of the Lord before you." "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy."

How beautifully God's character shines out in that authoritative, "I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." Israel shall know this mercy (and in the end Israel *shall* know it). All its springs are in Him. Has He a character of His own? And are you because of that like one at rest in heaven where the Lord Jesus Christ is, blest according to His merit, with all blessings in heavenly places? If I come to what is in self, I find nothing but what is of the first creation; but if I come to the new creation, I meet what God has created in Christ Jesus. I see Him set up there as the slain Lamb, my accepted sacrifice; all blessings due to Him, and the curse due to me, but it was borne by Him. What right have I to go where the glory of God is? Moses had to be hidden in the rock, because he could not see it; but I can go, just as I am, into the full blaze of it. Ah! but only *in Him*, who is seated at that right hand — not in my own name, but in *His*. If in my own, I could not come, but I dare not show any hesitancy; I have perfect acceptance there, not on the ground of what I am, but on that of being one with Him who is the perfect expression of God's love. I can go in there with His acceptancy. Is there one affection of your heart that does not find a perfect response? Not one! Is that the ground you are on, *that* the rock out of which the water of life has flowed to you? the ground out of which you are daily drawing strength? God says, "Having given this perfect Son of My love to die for poor sinners, tells out what My thoughts are towards those on earth who have eternal life in Him."

Ah! the human heart is deceitful, and desperately wicked. People say they believe all this, and the next moment say, "But, oh! I am such a failing pitiful creature." So you are; but you should spread out all your failure and evil before God, and the confession of it would just prove what the *God* is with whom you have to do. "Ah! but the heart is so deceitful" — still turning back to what self is. When one has taken up Scripture, and He has shown me there my utter ruin, and that the Son of His love is the One on whom alone my soul rests, then I know that it is not me, but God; not my thoughts, but God's. Are you on that ground? Does the contrast between God and yourself turn you from every thought of self in His presence? Man cannot be separated from self, save as knowing himself to be in Christ. That links the heart to Him, but it makes me abhor self, because He is so perfectly unlike myself — self thinking of every vanity, and of pleasing the flesh, and God showing the contrast in that Son of His love. There is the beauty of His using that Son to carry out His plan of mercy. God has got something to woo me, but it makes one say, "What a vile creature one is;" it makes one loathe one's self. What a God! hiding sinners in the person of that Son seated at His own right hand — His hands and His feet being witness for them that their sins are washed in His blood. Ah, poor sinner, no other tidings for you, nothing else will do for you; there is no hope save through this mercy of God, quickening your soul, and bringing you nigh to Himself by the blood of Christ. It is a finished work to which you can add nothing. Do you begin with self or with God? God began with Himself, and He ends with Himself;

and you must begin with Him, and end with Him. He alone can say, "I have a right to do as I will; and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

Lecture 3. Ephesians 3.

In the first chapter there were two things especially the apostle wanted these Ephesians to know. First, What was the hope of the calling of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory? God had so used the brightness of the light of His Son to shine into their souls, that they knew they were called by Him. Then there was a certain hope connected with the calling, and He wanted them to know it also. Secondly, he wanted them to know the field that had been thrown open, the inheritance, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." It will be a much more brilliant display of glory when all those rescued from Satan are there, and God is enjoying that display in glory. Then, thirdly, it required that the Son should come down to be raised again, and the very power that raised Christ, works in them to give fellowship with Christ.

There are two things brought out in this third chapter, and I think they escape believers very much. (Eph. 3: 10-12.) The first thing is the way that the manifold wisdom of God is made known by the Church to principalities and powers in heavenly places. You know one of the things that the Holy Ghost by the apostle warns us about is not to intrude into the question of angels. (Col. 2: 18.) It is very important not to go on ground on which the Spirit of God does not lead us; but then I find that Christians have got wrong thoughts about angels. For one thing, they give the angels a power of intelligence the word of God never does. They think angels know the mind of God, and they do not; we lose an immense deal by not understanding it. That these Ephesians were part of a glorified body connected with a Head in heaven, did the angels know? People quietly assumed that they did. They had learned certain things about God in providence and redemption, but they had not learned, until the Spirit of God began to unfold it by the apostle, what this manifold wisdom of God was in the Church. The word "church" means any number gathered together. The Church of God means those gathered together by Him out of the world.

I would make one remark in passing, and that is the question of association with Christ while sitting at the right hand of God. I never get this truth until I see the place assigned to Christ at that particular time. Rejected on earth, He is taken up to heaven, and is testified to by the Holy Ghost as the One in whom all fulness is. It was when He had ascended up to heaven, that He is testified to as Head of the body. If it is a question of being received, why am I received? It is a righteous thing with God to receive anyone who comes in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then as to the question of responsibility. Enoch walked *with* God, seeing by faith Him who is invisible, and God took him. Abraham was told to walk *before* God, and he did, and God cared for him; and what is the character of the *Christian's* walk? Not merely walking before God, but it should be God walking in me. I am to walk like a son of God, but not by human effort, but by the free Spirit in me, and all the light working in me a certain loving of the things of God, and a certain shrinking from all things contrary to Him. Did Christ walk as a good man down here? Did that characterize Him? He *did* walk as a good man surely, but He walked as the Son of God, and that is what is also to characterize us. He "made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a Servant," and passes on to the cross where He was alone with God — just the expression of what His mind was — perfect subjection to the Father — Nazarite perfectness. I get an almost perfect expression of what that life was in Paul, but I get no power to communicate life in Paul. When I look at Christ I am changed into the same image.

Now for the second part of this chapter. It is quite natural for the apostle to feel for what an important thing he was called. One of the constant, frequent thoughts of my soul for the last forty years

has been, Where is this church down here? And how can I get the souls of the saints, loved by God, into such a state so that I could say, "There is the expression of what Paul spoke of"? If He is coming; well, what is the state in which He will find His people? Can it be said now of the children of God in London, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come"? I know many of you have had the same exercises about it — even deeper perhaps — the same intense desire to see the children of God like, those who wait for their Lord, knowing the sweetness of looking up to God, the sweetness of looking up, and being fed by the droppings of that love. I have the strongest desire to see it brought out more and more, not only for the children's sake, but for the blessed Lord's sake, when He shall come on that cloud of glory.

Eph. 3: 15. "Of whom *every* family" (right translation). There is no company of any kind whatever that God puts this sanction upon which is not connected with Christ. Abraham's family was connected with the state that was to come. Eph. 3: 16. Now he prays for them, for us, dear friends, for me. Eph. 3: 19. Am I as he speaks of here? Are you as he speaks of here? Verse 16. "The riches of His glory" — "by His Spirit." I incline to take it more as the Spirit connected with the moral glory. Nothing will be more beautiful than the outward glory of the new Jerusalem; but now he is not talking of the glory of the city, but of the moral glory of the Father's house. The only begotten Son bringing them to His Father's house, and there He will show them all His Father's love and explain it all to them. The external glory of the city is very different There all will be brilliant; but the Father's satisfaction is the expression of the house. There, there is the rest of love; that is the moral glory. Oh, the ways of God are beautiful! When we think of it, it is not only beautiful in itself, but in connection with a poor saint on earth finding his way along. When God created the earth it was very good. Then what led Him, when man had made nothing of God, to make the Seed of the woman bruise the serpent's head? God knew who it was, knew there was no one He could send into the conflict but that Son of His. He sent Him to Israel, but they would not have Him; and He would not be King, if they would not own Him as God's King. But God's ways are beautiful! I will have My own way; I will bless them to please My own heart. For My own Son's sake the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, and Israel shall be there.

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Eph. 3: 17. That is not John 20: 22. The Spirit is always there, but there is something more than that, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Does He dwell in your heart? If I dwell in a house I should be expected to be found there; a person coming there would always find me at home. The Spirit never leaves the house. He is always at home there, but does Christ ever leave the house? When anyone comes to see you, do they find Christ there? Well, if I could catechize you when you got up in the morning, was the thought of your mind, "Well, what a blessed person that Christ is" — and you go on your business with that? If so, God says "There is a man where Christ dwells." If I had met Paul at any time, I should have found that he had got *one* subject, and that was always Christ; one object in his heart, that was Christ. If you called on me at any time, would you really find that Christ was the Master of the house, and that He was dwelling there? It is not the apostle's mind to can you off from circumstances. Christ puts the circumstances for you to do everything to Him; it comes into all the details of life. He has got a large heart enough for a man sweeping a crossing, and He can say to him, "Sweep this crossing for Me." It is not work apart from life, but works manifesting Christ in your life in little things. Looking at the history of the disciples, it made all the difference whether Christ were in the boat or not; if the Almighty Son of God was in the boat they could not be swallowed up. It will characterize the whole life. They may kill us in one way or another; never mind! Paul says Christ is there; if they break the earthly tenement they let me out to go to Christ.

God has a vast plan, and He has spread it out in His, word; am I to know all that glory to come?

Ah, but there is the centre of it all, and that is Christ. All God's plans and counsels roll round Christ. He is the end of them all, the beginning of them all, the centre of them all. God says, "I am set for the glory of My Son; I have got My plan about Him, and, poor sinner, do you not know Him? do you not love Him?" Well, — let Him dwell in your heart, and you will be filled unto all the fulness of God. "I shrink," do you say, "from being one of that company for whom that prayer was offered." Oh, what a silly thought! A poor feeble person like myself, or you, some poor old thing, if we have Christ directly in our hearts by faith; well, God says, "I can add nothing there." I look and see Christ in that heart, and I can sit down in holy communion with Him in spite of all infirmities. I have often to tell God that I do not understand the worth of the blood, but I say, "Thou knowest it." It is simple faith; we have got the Spirit, and can lay hold of it. When there is all the perception of what the mind of God was, that was what the apostle wanted. I know there is no name so delightful to God as the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He never could send a soul coming in that name away empty. I do not want to get to the end of it; I bless God I never can when I am in the Father's house, when I see all the blessed intercourse between the Father and the Son. I bless God it is perfect and unexplorable in the vast compass of it. It is infinite as God is infinite.

Eph. 3: 18. This is interpreted to us in human language by the blessed Son Himself. (vv. 19-21.) People say, "Oh, Paul was in an ecstasy when he was in that prayer!" Well, he took care to say that he had not asked as much as he might have asked. "According to the mighty power that worketh in us;" well, it has wrought in you if you are a believer. But people say "Paul was an apostle." But you must not run down the life that Paul had; as an apostle he taught always that the divine life which he had as a *believer* was beyond the apostleship. The soul by the Spirit gives back to God what He had given to it. (Eph. 3: 21.)

It is not an unimportant thing that there should be great joy among Christians: "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Have we learned that we are really dealing with God? If God loves a cheerful giver, He has shown us how large a giver He is; He has given His only begotten Son; He has given His Spirit, and has brought us into the enjoyment of all that He is as our God and Father.

Lecture 4. Ephesians 4.

Down to the 10th verse of the 2nd chapter, the apostle is looking at the counsels of God to be made good in a people on the earth through that mighty power by which Christ was raised from the dead. From Eph. 2: 11, to the end of Eph. 3, we get him looking at the change that had taken place upon earth, from the time that Christ went up rejected by Israel, and the rejection of Israel confirmed by the wickedness of the Gentiles. In the Church Jew and Gentile were not recognized as such, but both together are looked at here as the habitation of God through the Spirit. Then in Ephesians 3, he takes up the mystery God had revealed; and in the end of chapter 3, we get that blessed prayer that brings us to this — that Christ may be in our hearts the centre and pivot of everything, as He is the centre and pivot of all God's thoughts; that we may not only rest in Christ, but that He may really have that place in our hearts, as he says, "Filled unto all the fulness of God;" so that everything connected with us, everything, that flows forth from us, may flow forth through Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. This Christ, who in this way is revealed to us, is the centre of all God's plans and counsels. In Eph. 4: 1-16, he shows the provision God had made for the development of this blessed truth down to the end of time in apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers — persons able to carry on the work to the end, not in the power of human nature, but in the power of Christ, that there might always be a testimony in this scene, something sure to be displayed because it was secured in Christ. Verse 17 gives not only what is secure for us in Christ (and this fountain open and unsealed is sure to pour forth its waters, and the people sure to receive it), but he takes up the portion of those that are to receive it in detail. I have no

doubt there is a connection between Eph. 2: 8-10, and the beginning of this 17th verse. He is speaking of something that in man down here he can call and calls God's workmanship. It is not that each believer has his path marked out for him here — that we get elsewhere.

In Ephesians 4: 17, Ephesians 5: 21, we have what these works were, which as connected with us make us to be connected with God — make us to be the workmanship of God. It turns out then they are *truth, love, and light* — three things which evidently are not of the first, but of the last Adam, and could not be understood by man cast out of the garden. You are *called* as created in truth, and this creation is inseparable from love and light.

Ephesians 4: 18. It is a remarkable expression as connected with the state of man in nature, "alienated from the life of God" — "come short of the glory of God;" but this is stronger still, because it says "alienated from the life of God." "You do not mean to say I am to walk down here as having the life of God?" Yes; "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." They were called from that time not to walk as good men, but, as having the life of God, we are to walk as sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. We cannot be connected with that Son by the Spirit without having the life of God. There are two portions of Scripture which are very similar — Eph. 4: 22-29, and Col. 3: 9. This is the peculiar position in which the child of God stands now — I have put off the livery of Satan, and have put on the livery of Christ.

Ephesians 4: 20, he expresses surprise at them. Verse 21, "as the truth is in Jesus." This is not the truth of the gospel that presents the mercy and compassion of God to the poor sinner afar off. This is the extent of grace given to us who have come in. "I do not see you apart from Christ. I do not see you as part of the world; how can you live as part of the world?" Now this is a grand thought. As to our display of truth, I have got to run as a man that has been taken out of the hand of Satan, and become a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is to be the character of my walk, having put off the old man and put on the new? I am to walk as a man delivered from the power of darkness, and so connected with Him Who is the truth, that without His body, of which through grace I am a member, the very glory that was prepared for Him could not be His. What would be the bearing of it upon Christ, if all power was put into His hand up there for His body the Church? If there was no such thing as the body, there could not be the glory of the Head; it would be a dishonour to Him that had been put at God's right hand. Well, God wanted to honour Him, and therefore the power of God came forth, and called such a man as Saul of Tarsus, and gave him certain light, and then to others; and that light has come to us, and what has been the effect of it upon us? When the Lord Jesus Christ came one night, and looked into my heart, that eternal life which is His came forth to my soul, and I got a new position from that time, having Himself before me. This new position was one clean outside of the world — entirely a new position. Christ up there in heaven, Head of the body, and believers down here on earth, members of that body; that truth was, revealed to my soul. God looking into a soul quickens it. God does not turn the rebel into a pit of despair to learn what He has done. No, He never does that; they never could learn it there.

Well, that is the first great thing connected with these works. It has got the standard of everything in Christ. I have got to do with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is this Lord Jesus Christ making the throne of God a mercy-seat. All that Satan could do could not prevent the Lord Jesus taking up such a man as Saul of Tarsus. He takes His place not only as the Giver of life, but as the life of those who believe on Him. In Scripture there is no redemption apart from the Lamb. When it comes to the question of redemption, the Lamb is on the throne before it could be unfolded to man. It must be true in Him, before it is true for us. The thing was true in Him. He had gone into the presence of God, and sat down there — before He woke us up. He was at the right hand of God. God saw us wandering

about seeing what we could do, and then He not only let the light shine down upon us, but gave it force to enter the soul and quicken us. It was all wholly grace.

Verse 26, etc. There was a number of things that were practically inconsistent with the truth, and the man of God was to watch against them, and seek God's strength to avoid them.

Ephesians 5: 1, 2. How is it possible for me, as a mere man, to look upon man on the earth with anything like love? What can lay hold of the heart and draw forth love? You cannot have it in the heart and it not go forth to man. (John 3: 16.) It is part of the truth connected with the new creation; it is not in nature — that is cold; it grows out of the love God has had for us. Is there a believer, a child of God, that does not know that Christ gave Himself a ransom for us? that does not know the Father's love to the children. The faith given to the child identifies him with the Father. Did He wait till I loved Him? Have I a single word I could say to Him about my love except, "I love Him because He first loved me?" What is my position as a believer? I have the Father, and He has an only begotten Son, and the Spirit has taken possession of my heart, and possession of a great number of hearts down here. Love begets love, and a person cannot find himself truly loved by God without a heart of peculiar interest in those in the same position. And he has to vindicate the love of God to poor sinners; there are many on the wide common of the world still. The new creation — the bringing into vital union with Him, and the display of that life that was brought out when He cleansed their sins, and brought them into perfect liberty and peace in the presence of God. Our being children of light flows out of our being of the divine nature. Who can hold that truth as the expression of God's feelings towards us, and not find himself brought into the light, and find at the same time everything for him? He who is without any veil over His face, is able to rend the veils of the hearts of poor sinners that all the light of God may shine down into their hearts, that everything in them and around them may be brought out to their own knowledge.

Verse 3. Who that is in the light of this fellowship does not see that the body is for the Lord? I am like a bound man. His love constrains His own that they should not "henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." Hence they cannot make their bodies their end, live for themselves down here, but unto Him. Though He is sitting at God's right hand, He wants us to live for Him. — The poorest as well as the richest can do this.

Verse. 8. "Light in the Lord;" is not that light? Ah! light of the purest kind. Verse 17. A man that has got sight does not feel his way as one often sees a blind man groping about the street. One naturally inclines to turn and see in such a case if he is near a crossing or any danger. But if one sees a person walking in that way, if the eye is clear one supposes intoxication, and gets out of his way as fast as possible. This is the place you are put into — the truth, love, and light; and the works are truth, light, and love displayed in Christ, Head of the body in heaven. Verses 18-21. There may be fictitious strength, but it cannot last. Then he goes on to the effect of light. It produces joy in the heart. If you and I were abiding in the light, how natural that word in Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord," would be to us. abiding in the light of the glory. It is there for us. We have got the principles connecting us with Him, but if we were abiding in that light flowing out to us, that blessed joy of Christ flowing into the heart, there would be the way of expressing it, making melody in our hearts to the Lord.

Verse 20. Now there will be that giving of thanks for all things, etc. — that is the effect. A great many believers say, "Oh, yes; but I find the wilderness a very inconvenient place. I get very weary; I find it very irritating mixing with a company of believers, and their flesh and my flesh do not get on well together." What led Paul in everything to give thanks? He was abiding in the light; he saw all the untoward things but as occasions for the love of God to display itself. One is obliged to go through this

bit of the wilderness, suppressing what is naughty in oneself. But, ah! we do not think that God formed that wilderness for Himself. God wanted the opportunity, as One who is the eternal Lover of His people, of being alone with Israel. He knew their difficulties; God was with His people. "They have no water — they are thirsty; I shall have the pleasure of opening the rock for them. Have they learnt their lesson? Do they call upon Me? I brought them out, that in my dealing with them they may learn that I am God. I must make more difficulties for them. I did not take them across the Red Sea to drop them. I am present with them, as watching over them, that I may see I have the first place in their hearts." God was jealous over His first-born son. (Ex. 4: 22.) May not a Father have a thought that he would like to have the affection of His child? He took them into the wilderness that He might have the opportunity of teaching them that. Ah! beloved, I am not throwing a stone at anybody in this. If any feel it, I hope they take it home to themselves. It is a very great thing to give thanks for all things at all times. There is something disappointing all my thought. Well, God is behind it, I must find Him there; it has not brought God to His wits' end. The more I am in the light, the more I see there is my heaven up there, and everything connected with that glorious Person is watched over even in me, the feeblest member here; for I can give thanks. You must be in the light to give thanks always. I do not say, *I* do it. That we do not is because there is independence, and we do not see God in our circumstances. We are at school; but there will be nothing of the kind when we get home to our Father's house. If you were in subjection to God, you would see it is an easy thing in everything to give thanks. Every day brings out things which seem untoward to us; but they are not untoward to God, but are opportunities for God to display His love to us. There is nothing more sweet than to say, when everything is contrary to nature, "Not my will, but Thine be done." I will take up Thy will in these things, satisfied to let my own will go.

Lecture 5. Ephesians 6: 10-24.

There are three parts in the redemption of Israel out of Egypt. There was, first of all, the making a way through the Red Sea; getting them on the road with God on the other side. Then, there was a certain school-time, when God had them in the wilderness, where He had them in training; and they were to take possession of the land and dwell in it. There is a remarkable connection between the Ephesians and the people when they got into the land, laying hold of the things given them; for they were to take possession of all the things in the land. Really, without their knowing it, God had given the land to the Son of His love. When we follow Israel into the land, we find they *would* not and *did* not take possession of it. Why? Because they had not faith. All the teaching they had in the wilderness alone with God, did it teach them to have done with themselves? No, it did not, Now in this scripture God teaches us that there is a certain armour a saint must have, if he intends to get into the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. God giving the land to Israel was one thing, and Israel knowing how to conduct themselves so as to get possession of it is another thing. Now we shall see in Scripture that while every blessing is secured in Christ, I may yet turn to the people of God down here and say, Have you got them in possession? If I have not, I ought to challenge my heart.

If I turn to various scriptures, I see how far Paul recognizes that such people as the Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians, had these spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. He shows that he does not think they had, and he is obliged to set to work to show them what was in Christ, and that these spiritual blessings were not enjoyed by them. In 2 Corinthians 1: 20, we find that "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen;" and when I turn back to the first epistle, I find that these Corinthians had received certain blessings and powers from God, but they were walking entirely unlike the apostle — not walking like persons separated practically because knowing Christ at God's right hand in resurrection glory. They had got hold of the *doctrine* of having been crucified together with

Christ; but had they the practice of it? No; they were going to law one with another. There was something clearly very wrong. There were all sorts of works of the flesh as if they were not dead at all; and in chapter 15, many of them were even calling in question the resurrection, through the deceitful influences of evil doctrine upon them. The great mark of the apostle Paul was the brightness of his walk as a man raised from the dead. Paul beautifully depicts the way God had made good the doctrine to him; but the way He made good the doctrine to him was by always rolling him into the valley of death down here. If I were walking with a friend as a man raised from the dead, the thorns and briars in the path could not stop me; they may stop my friend if he is not walking in the same character.

Now look at Colossians: it goes on the same ground somewhat as Ephesians, yet he speaks of some of them as not holding the Head — the Head holding them was one thing, and their holding the Head was another. Abraham was a strong contrast to Lot. Whenever Abraham was at his wits' end, there was God ready to help him, and go through it all with him. Then the Galatians. Satan is very subtle and crafty; he got them to add on a little insignificant nothing. They consented to add on the circumcision, and so to compromise the gospel. Christ being crucified, the world was crucified to them, and they to the world. The way God acted was to put man at the other side of the cross. Now God has given us all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. If I meet a child of God in an omnibus, and see faith in that man's soul, I should know that everything that God saw to be in Christ belongs to him. When he is getting settled in Christ he has no idea that everything in Christ belongs to him. But it does according to God's purpose. He has, however, to grow up into that; he must know Christ as the Head of the body. He must know how to stand there, and not only how to stand there, but to follow on in communion with God that these spiritual blessings may become known to himself, that he may know the whole grace of God as one sifted of God. The thought here is, that we are to stand fast in the heavenly places; and to stand fast we must lay hold of these spiritual blessings that are ours in Christ.

Eph. 6: 10. It is not a piece of armour, but the character the child of God wears who has learnt God in the wilderness. If Israel had learnt God in the wilderness, they would have known how to stand fast in the land. If you and I have learned what it is to know God, we should understand how to use that word, "Rejoice in tribulation." We should know how to count upon God, as God said through Haggai, "Be strong, O Zerubbabel: *be strong*, O, Joshua; do not suppose you have to do anything; it is My time to bless, *be strong*, recognize where and what I am." Here it is, "Be strong in the Lord." If He has given Christ to be Head of the body, if He has given Him all possession of all in heaven and earth, we may well be strong in Him; and if we are not strong in the Lord all the armour in the world is of no use. "The power. of His might." The same power that raised Christ works in the believer. It is just the same power which took a Saul of Tarsus, and enabled him to say, "I am a member of Christ in heaven." But you say, "I want to know about the armour." If a person does not know what it is to be quickened together with Christ, raised together, seated together in Him, he does not know what it is to stand fast in the Lord. If I look at Paul's life, he looks uncommonly like a man quickened together with Christ. He was just the man that to my mind lived by and with Christ. If we are really standing fast in Him, the effect of that life is that it displays our weakness, but it is a bright light by which people take notice of us.

Eph. 6: 11. "The wiles of the devil." I should myself press that, name given to him here — "devil." In two scriptures Satan takes the particular form of accuser; in Numbers, where he accuses Israel, he brings up a number of things, many of them true. God had taken up Israel on the ground of what was in Himself, and He did not behold iniquity in Jacob. But the people did not know that. In Revelation the accuser of the brethren is cast down. He accuses still: the weakest and the strongest will find it out. It is one of his great ways to take the eye off Christ and His work, to bring up our

inconsistencies, and then we are confounded. God's answer is in Numbers 6. Ceasing from the life in the flesh is the answer. If Christ be risen, then I am accepted. But then it comes to our mind, "I am living as I did before; I do reckon myself dead, but, alas! Satan is too strong for me." Nevertheless I say, "Take a knife; let the Lord Jesus cut what He will. Christ has come into the world to destroy the works of the devil, and He will destroy them in me. I have got this old man, a horrible old man, but I, will reckon it dead, because God says it is dead."

Now let me ask you, Do all Christians see this? Do you take the death of Christ as the answer to all that? There is forgiveness of sins through His blood, and I rejoice in it. My flesh could not go into the glory — it is utterly bad! God says, "Do not trouble, I will take care of all that." If God were to say to me, "I will take you into heaven just as you are," I would say, "Oh, I beseech thee, do not, there is sin in me!" When He changes me, every one of these things I struggle against now will be gone; I shall have a glorified body like that of Christ.

Now let me put this question, Do believers see these two things? *They do not.* We have to learn them, and then we have got to stand fast in it, and know the one who comes against us. Satan has no wisdom if you look at him in the presence of God; but he knows *man*; he has had nearly six thousand years' experience. He knows those that love money; give that man a little bit of money. And that man is fond of a bit of good character — well, just put a bit of good character into his hand, and that will occupy him. *Satan is very wily.* It is a hard strong word to use of a man, but it is not at all unsuitable to Satan.

Eph. 6: 12. I do not think that believers calmly recognize that the powers of darkness go into heaven. If I set myself to pray for some spiritual blessing, just when I am thinking of it, I find some other thought comes in. That is the adversary, God's adversary as well as ours. If we think of our morning prayers, our mid-day or our evening prayers, we see the way we are turned from being instant in them. Then comes darkness. God means us to know that we cannot keep the heart's thoughts pointing steadily to any one particular thing. God can put the mind just there, and keep it steadily fixed. If you break down, the very consciousness of your breaking down only draws you nearer to God. The wandering Arabs do not care to attack an empty caravan; and the devil does not care much about attacking you if you are empty. But if you have had communion, if you are happy, and have got some fresh enjoyment, the devil will spoil it if he possibly can.

Eph. 6: 14. The Lord Jesus Christ is *the Truth*, and when I say He is the truth, I do not mean He is the truth of forgiveness, or acceptance merely, but that He is the One by whom God measures everything. What sort of Person is God? He sent His Son to bear our sins that He might give us eternal life. What sort of person is man? Man crucified Christ — Jew and Gentile. If they had only known what they were doing, they would not have done it, Satan would not have done it, for it was then that man got his measure. Christ, in what He was, had the right and title to be a provision for sin, and for sin in the flesh? Oh, do not talk to me of my flesh! It is not such a nature as Christ had, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Depend upon it, if it is I, I, I, in myself or my neighbour, it is flesh; if it is finding fault with my neighbour for not being spiritual, it is I, I, I. Now just see how *Satan* got his match in the Lord Jesus (Heb. 2: 14, 15), "that through death He might destroy him, that is, the devil; and deliver," etc.

If my loins are girt about with truth, it is the truth about everything, and it is this that gives strength to a person; and the weakness of another is because he has not got into the presence of God about things. If I have got it about my loins, it is part of my strength. If a man brings anything into God's presence, he has to learn God's mind about it. Christ is there, the touchstone of all and

everything. Say I am a great money-maker; well, when I get into God's presence I find the strongest thought in His mind about money is the thirty pieces, little bits of it given for Christ, the Lord of hosts. When the Lord came to purchase the flock, He gave His *own blood*.

"Having on the breastplate of righteousness." Christ has walked through the world and left the marks of His feet, and we are to walk as He walked, to like what He liked, and to dislike what He disliked. If I do this it will be a perfect covering for me. Verse 15. I should connect that as much with "having done," and "standing," as with walking. Both "the peace of God," connected with your emptying your heart out before God, and the "God of peace" from your walking with God (Phil. 4: 6-9), both enter in here as giving rest and quietness to the soul. Verse 16. Do not suppose this is the shield of *the* faith. He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Well, an arrow comes whistling close by me. What did you do when the arrow came? Did you say, "Oh, there is God!?" and did you look at the trouble and glory in it? I raise my song just where other people sit down and say, "Oh dear, I never counted upon this at all!" God has marked the road for us, and the heart turns to Him, and says, "He said it should be so. Ah! He said I should have trouble, and here is trouble. He said, 'You cannot get on a day without *Me*,' and I cannot indeed get on half a day without Him." And then the heart is kept.

Eph. 6: 17. I should take the "helmet of salvation" to mean not merely that Christ is the Head up there in heaven, but something I have put on. The Saviour appears in the wilderness as a Saviour for my course an through. When Paul is speaking in Philippians of how he had to run counter to everything as he travelled on, if it were a bright shining way, it was yet a very rough way, but *salvation* is at the end of it. If I am floating, down the stream I shall not talk much of the helmet of salvation, nor the want of it. If I am filling up the sufferings of Christ as Paul was, I shall have his experience daily, and I shall want the helmet of salvation. "The sword of the Spirit." It is not only that we have the Spirit, but it is rather using the word by His power. Christ used it ably in that conflict with Satan, turning aside the sword of the adversary.

Eph. 6: 20. If you take the apostle, as he describes himself in this epistle, you see a wonderful instance of a man standing fast with Christ up there. He knew he had to put on all the armour, and be skilful in the use of it all. It was his service as ambassador that gave him the opportunity of using it to teach these Ephesians. Such portions as Numbers and Job, those parts of Scripture which describe the passing of a people from the time of redemption on to their rest in glory, are not adequately understood by us. I think we want stirring up as to the peculiar power of the life of Christ, and as to the understanding and present enjoyment of these things that are true of us in Christ. In order to this there must be a daily refusal of those things that are natural to us, and a daily occupation with those things that will enable us to meet the adversary in our course.