

John 14: 1-3

Brief notes of an address on John 14: 1-3

W. Kelly.

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It is very common even among the children of God to confound the Christian hope with prophecy, but Scripture gives no countenance to anything so lowering to the heavenly calling; though prophecy is a very important part of scripture, either directly or indirectly as in the book of Genesis. All the blessings of a converted soul in the days of Genesis lay in the future, so that it is not in order to disparage prophecy that I claim a higher place for the Christian hope. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. It was so in Old Testament days, and will be again. The more we distinguish that which is for the earth from that which is for heaven, the more honour we give not merely to the heavenly, but also to the earthly. God's purpose is to bring both earth and heaven under the Lord Jesus. The great mistake is to make the earth the scene of the Lord's being peculiarly glorified, and the saints with Him. For the earth is what God means for Israel. They are the people to be exalted in the earth. There is not one part of the universe (I do not speak of that awful but suited vision throughout eternity of the lake of fire) in all the scene of blessing but will be under the direct control of the Lord Jesus. But as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are the heavenly blessings than the earthly.

God means to bless every family of the earth. It was the promise given to Israel. But what about saints raised from the dead and glorified? To have them for the earth is a terrible blunder. It is a sorrowful thing that any saint could look for a place on earth when a heavenly hope is made known. The effect is to blot out Israel's portion (which cannot fail), and to lose all sense of heavenly glory into which Christ is gone, and gone as our Forerunner.

Now it will help if I show the context of the words read; for you are never sure you have the real truth if you take a few words by themselves. But if the surroundings are of a similar character, they strengthen the true meaning. From the beginning of John 13 the Lord opened out the entirely new character of Christianity; that which follows His total rejection by Israel. The great doctrine of the Gospel of John is that we are children of God and know it, and are now fitted to enjoy it. As the apostle Paul, who says we are to bear the image of the heavenly when Christ comes, also says we are heavenly now. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." John 13 brings before us a most remarkable act on the part of our Lord. After the intimation that He was going to leave them, for the chapter begins with, "When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father," etc. — that is the way His departure is looked at; not that He should die, though He was going to die — it proceeds, "And supper being come (not "ended") . . . Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands . . . he riseth from supper," etc. Here is a very remarkable thing, though we might pass over it as nothing peculiar. Jesus is here not looking for the throne of David, for Jerusalem, and the land — all to be given Him by and by. That is what God *will* do for His Beloved Son, who by His death not only reconciles the creature with the Creator, but glorifies God about that in which He had been so dishonoured. But now that the Lord Jesus (no longer in the world where we still are, but) is gone to the Father, He devotes Himself on high that we, whilst walking here, may nevertheless by His advocacy there, be maintained in blessed communion with Him now glorified. This is to have "part *with* him," and is effected by His cleansing our feet — from the defilements of the way — by "the washing of *water* by the word."

In these chapters the Spirit of God gives a far deeper account of that which ever had been

revealed in the Old Testament. What! the Messiah wash our feet! There is nothing in the Old Testament scriptures nor in the heart of man to prepare for such a thing, and it astonished the disciples; it astonished Peter. Peter had part in Christ, eternal life in Christ; but the Lord would give him part *with* Christ, *i.e.* communion with Him in heaven whilst we are still walking down here on earth. Christianity is not only being born of the Spirit; the Old Testament saints were that, though they did not know it. They rested on the coming Saviour, and there is nothing good for God without that, without faith. What is needed is that which is of God. We are called to acknowledge the utter ruin of all that is of ourselves. This is repentance, taking part with God's righteousness and holiness against myself. But this is negative; faith gives us the positive — the Lord Jesus. He presses on Peter the necessity of washing his feet, not his whole body; for if a man is regenerate by being born of water and of the Spirit, that is done once; there is no repetition, as there is none of the death of Christ.

Washing of feet meets defilement of our walk. Is that nothing? or am I merely to fall back on forgiveness of sins through His blood? It is as Advocate He washes our feet. The advocacy is one grand characteristic of Christianity. His priesthood is quite distinct. As Priest He strengthens us against the enemy, but if we break down His advocacy comes in. What makes a man repent? Not sinning, that hardens. It is an Advocate with the *Father*. Not with God — God is the judge of sin — but with the Father, for we are children of God.

In the case of Peter we see the Advocate. He was warned not to enter into temptation. The Lord *endured* temptation. That is very different from entering into it. But Peter, bold enough to get into the difficulty, failed; and when he denied the Lord, the Lord looked upon Peter; then Peter remembered. This is a little specimen before the time of advocacy. It is eminently belonging to the Christian. Though Christianity rests on Christ's death, it is characterised by His resurrection and ascension — all facts. There is nothing so simple as a fact, but these facts are the groundwork of all the truth of Christianity.

The same chapter also shows the death of Christ in quite a different way from Isa. 53 or Ps. 22. Judas went out to betray the Lord, "and it was night"; and he was going into the deepest darkness that a poor soul could enter — going to sell the Lord for the price of a slave! What does the Lord say? "Now is the Son of man *glorified*." What, by being crucified? Yes. There is no glory so bright as moral glory. It was an easy thing for God to give the Lord Jesus actual glory, but it was no easy thing for Christ to suffer. In that, God was glorified, not as Father, but as God, the judge of sin; and that insoluble question was about to be settled for all eternity! The *Father* had been glorified in all the life of Jesus; He was His delight. Christ, who by His love, humility, entire obedience had glorified Him in good, had now to glorify Him about all that was bad. "If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself and shall straightway glorify Him." That is what He has done. God having set Him, not on the throne of David, but on the throne of God, where no man can sit but Himself, He is there as Man; but if He were one hair's breadth less God than the Father there could be no Christianity.

He is glorified in Himself — that brings in Christianity. The Holy Spirit is sent down from Christ in glory, and every one who truly believes is "one spirit with the Lord," and this leads me into my subject tonight. "Let not your heart be troubled." It seemed one of the greatest troubles that He was going to leave them, but He says, as it were, "You ought to rejoice if you cared for Me, for I am going to the Father; but I am going to care for you in a way impossible otherwise." "Ye believe in God," though you never saw God; "Believe in Me," when you no longer see Me. Thomas gives a good sample of the Jew, but "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Who are they? Those who, unlike Thomas, believe on Him *before* they see Him; though it was precious also to see Him, for His life lays the foundation for love of His person.

"In my Father's house." The temple was entirely too low. What can match the Father's house? the description of that place where God the Father shows His delight in His Son! Here is the blessed hope-room for you all; room for every Christian, room for you to be "with Me." In all heaven there is but one Father's house, only one place worthy of the Son, and, says the Lord, "I am going to have you with Myself." They are to be "with Me." Prophetic scriptures are connected with Israel's hope. Association with Christ is ours now, and by a tie that cannot be broken — the Holy Spirit.

Every member of Christ's body will be there a matter entirely of sovereign grace, though there will be reward according to faithfulness.

W. K.