

“The Man Christ Jesus”: Addresses on the Gospel of Luke

Resurrection Appearances

Luke 24:28-53

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I may so say) of truth, springs from a *partial knowledge* of the Word. That which alone can preserve us from this is, giving *all* the truth its due place. That which hinders us giving all the truth its place is, the not having all the truth ourselves. When I say "*not having*," I mean not consciously through the ministry of the Holy Ghost. If you have only a part, the mind is biased, and its tendency is to exaggerate that part to the exclusion of much else. We should seek, beloved friends, by God's grace, to be kept from this. The limitation of partial knowledge assuredly hinders our seeing all Christ's glory, and deprives our own souls of precious blessing.

Bear with me in pressing on you this danger of exaggerating any part of truth from simply having only a part; and do let that little word, beloved friends, sink into your souls, "All the Scriptures": "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in *all the Scriptures* the things concerning Himself." How foolish are we to desire or accept less than "all the Scriptures," when God has given us all! Be assured of it, when you have Christ before your soul as the center of the Scriptures, the center of the counsels and purposes and mind of God, it is indeed well. All the Scriptures testify of Christ, and point to Him; all the counsels of God revolve around Him; and it makes a wonderful difference if, instead of looking at the Scriptures in reference to yourself, you look at them in relation to Him. I remember so well how that very thing delivered me from a false notion. It is now some years ago. I remember seeing how Christ was the center of the thoughts and purposes and counsels of God, the center of all Scripture. I remember how it set me free from the thought that the elect were the center of the mind, purposes, and counsels of God. No; it is not so. It is in this our souls get balance. If you have Christ before you, you have God's balance. This is what we need; and it is truly blessed to have the truth communicated by the ministry of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, and to see Christ everywhere, in "*all the Scriptures*."

The Lord in His grace affect our souls with the record He has been pleased to give to us of this precious and wonderful scene of resurrection glory. May He fasten it on our hearts more really than ever, according to the skill of His hand and the grace of His heart; and thus bless us just as He did the feeble souls in those days.

Chapter 9: *Luke 24:28-53*

When last together, beloved brethren, we got as far into this closing chapter of the Gospel of Luke as that part where the Blessed One is seen expounding to those sorrowful travelers, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself. That was the point to which our thoughts were led last Tuesday evening: the risen Lord, in precious grace, showing how Himself is set forth everywhere in Scripture. And I was trying to impress upon you these two things: first, that we need "*all the Scriptures*" -- not merely part of Scripture, not merely certain portions of it, but all -- and, secondly, that the second Person of the blessed Trinity is in every part of it; the united testimony

of the Word as God has been pleased to give it to us, and Christ the center of it: "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (v. 27). Only permit me again to emphasize, it was *Himself* in His own person in Scripture.

Now, we are told that their eyes were holden, that they should not know Him; and there was a distinct purpose of God in their eyes being holden, as we shall see presently; but the Blessed One is seen here connecting the Scriptures with Himself, and all that happened to Himself. That is what was before us last week.

I would invite you this evening to consider with me three distinct points presented in the rest of the chapter. The first is, the *kindlings* of His grace in their souls; the lighting up, as it were, of the fire of divine grace within them, so as to make their hearts burn. May I ask if your hearts have ever been thus on fire? What a wonderful thing it is when under His kindling the heart burns! I grant you it is not everything; I quite grant it is not the fulness of the blessing, but it is the *highroad* to it; it is the grand commencement and spring of the divine work in the soul.

Then comes the answer to it in the manifestation of Himself as *risen*. That is our second subject to-night. He had not, as far as we are aware, yet made Himself known to them as the very One who was risen. Their eyes were holden. He traced throughout the Scriptures the testimony to Himself, but He did not as yet stand truly and really as risen before them.

The third and last subject of the chapter is His *departure*.

These are the three subjects; and I think the three places spoken of here would answer to the subjects -- Emmaus, Jerusalem, and Bethany. These three places will help us, by God's grace, to fix our thoughts on the subjects: the words of His grace to their souls; the manifestation of Himself to them as really risen, and the consequences of it; and then the platform from which He left this world, the place to which He brought them out, and from which, having blessed them, He went up on high.

Well, now, seeking the blessed Spirit's help, let us look at these for a little, and we shall see how they bring Himself in His person before us. Look at these kindlings: what a fire His love sets burning in their souls! Oh, beloved friends, it is a wonderful thing to think of it! He does not leave them. They were slow and foolish, slow of heart indeed, to believe all that Moses and the prophets had spoken; but He never gives them up. What a comfort to your souls and mine: He never will give up His own. It is a blessed thing to hold fast to all this grace of the heart of Christ. He will never give up even the feeblest of His own. He does not leave them. He does not say, as it were, There, I leave you now! You have turned away; you have become hard in your hearts. On the contrary, as we have seen, He went after them, He journeyed with them. And what is He doing all the time? Why, what He does still. He is making Himself necessary to them, indispensable to them. How often one hears that word -- and has used it one's self -- "That is indispensable to me." Now, there is but One that is indispensable to us, and that is Jesus. There is but One worthy of that place in our souls, and that is Christ. Christ is

indispensable to us. There is not a thing in this world we could not do without; but you cannot do without Him. He is verily the indispensable One. We often think we can manage without Him, and then in all His blessed love He allows us to find out our insufficiency, and deals with us in His love, and leads us to discover that we cannot do without Him; and thus we sing --

“As weaker than a bruised reed,
We cannot do without Thee;
We want Thee here each hour of need,
Shall want Thee too in glory.”

This unfailing love of His is what kindled the fire in their souls; and there was besides all the wonderful skill of His love in doing it. Love, if I may so say, is the most skillful operator in the world. He draws their hearts out, and He goes with them and lights up this fire. Observe how easy it would have been to extinguish it. I grant it was but a little spark; still He, so to speak, fans it, ministers to it, adds the fuel of His grace to that little flame which He Himself had kindled. And then mark what happens. As they journeyed they drew near to the village whither they went, and the evening was upon them; but He (oh, the blessedness of it!) had become necessary, oh, so necessary, to them; this mysterious Stranger, who had walked that road with them, had so imprinted Himself upon the fleshy tables of their hearts; He who had walked as the unknown Stranger, as far as they were concerned, had so got possession of their affections and souls, that when the moment comes that He would withdraw, when “He made as though He would have gone further,” then it was that they “constrained Him” (vv. 28, 29).

Oh, beloved friends, how blessed all this is! The deepest love was manifested in that action of the Blessed One. If you look at it merely from the outside, you would fail to see the blessedness of it. But He *drew off* that He might *draw out*. Though He essayed to leave them, His heart was toward them, and He had so got into the affections and souls of those poor disciples that they cannot go in without Him, and “they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent” (v. 29). How gladly He goes! That is why He drew off. For ever blessed be His name, He loves to be constrained. He kindled the fire in their souls, and when thus He had opened the door, so to speak, He went in to abide: He *was* constrained.

It is the same in respect of ourselves. We can have Christ by faith with us now. And it is an immense thing to have His own blessed person spiritually with us; to have His company, His presence, and to know He is with us according to His word, “I will not leave you *orphans*, I am coming to you” (John 14:8). And we need the sustinment and comfort and joy of that blessed presence. He conducts us, and leads us on step by step. What a blessed reality it all is! It is not that it belongs to a chosen few. Far from it; it is the portion of all His people; it is for you, beloved friends. You may have Him in your home as your Companion, your Friend, to walk beside you, to solace you, to cheer up the lonely moments of your life. How blessed it is! “Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” Do you think it was difficult to constrain Him? Do you suppose He wanted *much* pressing? He wanted just as much constraining from them as kindled into a holy flame that

ebbing fire in their hearts. Then, we are told, “He went in to tarry with them” (v. 29). He became their guest; for I have no doubt they entertained Him. Oh, did they not in a deeper way entertain Him? Beloved friends, there is nothing entertains our Lord Jesus Christ more than a weary, desolate heart that turns to Himself. You can bring nothing to Him so attractive as a weary, heavy-laden heart. So He was entertained in a double way. He was entertained, no doubt, because of the circumstances. They were broken-hearted, sad, cast down. He accepts the *external* entertainment set before Him. He went in, and while He sat at meat with them He took the *initiative*. He can never go into any scene where He is not first and last. But He took, as the head of the house would, the bread into His hands, and He broke it, and gave to them.

Now, that was not the Lord’s Supper. It is most important to have correct thoughts as to the Lord’s Supper, but this was not the Lord’s Supper. It was the ordinary meal they were partaking of here; but nevertheless it was the breaking of the bread which the Blessed One was pleased to make to their souls *the sign of His death*. As He broke that bread before them, the reality of His death on Calvary’s cross passed from the symbol in His hands, by His own power in its reality, into their souls. He brought Himself before them, as the One who had been dead.

Now you see the object of their eyes being holden until this moment. Had they recognized Him, and known Him, and accepted Him previously, it would have been a kind of substantiating of all the Jewish thoughts and aspirations which were so alive in their souls. They are to know Him as *the One that died*, the One who passed through death. And hence it was that until now their eyes were holden. Now would come the overthrow of everything that was merely egotistical in Judaism, and it was this very thing that ruled in their breasts at that time. They must now know Him as the One that died and rose again, as the One alive out of death. He broke the bread before their eyes as the risen One, and immediately their eyes were opened. But the moment He, by this symbol, conveyed Himself as the risen One really before their eyes, He vanished out of their sight. How blessed and how wonderful to think of it! What they had been looking for, what had moved in their souls before, was as expressed in their words, “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel” (v. 21). What had slain all their living hopes was His death, the fact of His death. It was the *death of the heir* to them; and their hopes, *which centered in earth*, were all broken up and scattered to the winds, as we say, by His death. But now God has led them on in His wondrous grace; Christ, in His wonderful love, has led them step by step to this point. There He was Himself before them in His death, in symbol, yet as the risen One; their opened eyes rested on Him thus for an instant, and then the Savior vanishes out of their sight.

Let us now look at the consequences of this for a moment. There are two things that are perfectly beautiful here. “They said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?” (v. 32). Now, I do not think we ought to depreciate that. I am always afraid of such depreciation. We ought not to *make little* of it, and yet we ought not to *make*

everything of it. What was it made their heart burn while He talked with them and while He opened the Scriptures to them? Was it not Himself? Do not tell me that anything He does is small or trifling. It was He that did it. It was He that lighted that fire, He that kindled that flame. It was His love that struck, as it were, the match in their souls.

All these exercises, under the Lord's blessed hand, conduct to that which next comes before us -- *communion*. But you must have burning to lead to communion; you must have burning of heart to lead to communion of heart. That is the road to communion. The heart is set on fire by the kindlings of the love of Christ; the heart is delighted as the word comes from His own blessed lips, and He conducts on to this moment. He Himself is before us, really and literally back from the dead, a living Person. That is just what it was with them. What made all the difference now is, that Himself is there before them. Not merely Himself in Scripture; because that is what you do find: He had been before them in Scripture, in His own interpretation of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms. And what a wonderful interpretation of Scripture that must have been! Not a flaw in it! Oh, what divine harmony and perfectness as He conducted them through the Scriptures, and said, as it were, I am there; and I am there; and I am there! Not a scene that He did not fill; not an event of which He was not the crowning figure, so to speak; not a circumstance that did not revolve around Him. But He, in His own blessed person, is now really before their eyes. It was more than *report*, it was *reality* now. He is there present to the gaze as alive from the dead, alive out of that death which He had undergone in the deep, eternal love of His heart for them; Himself having changed everything, altered everything, *and brought in an entirely new order of things*. Then it is they rise up the same hour of the night. Farewell now to weariness! It matters not that the day was far spent, that the shadows of the evening were cast upon their path: "They rose up the same hour" (v. 33), to go to the very place to which He was going. That is communion. They have got into communion now with His own thoughts. That is why I spoke of the beginnings of the kindlings of His love in their souls; and the culmination and issue of it is, He brings them to the place where He was Himself going.

Thus, then, it is we have got to Jerusalem. Observe how you are called back from Emmaus, where the kindlings began. And that which marks Jerusalem is, the manifestation and full revelation of Himself as the risen One, the manifestation of Himself as the One alive out of death. It is this which characterizes our second subject tonight. And so He comes into the midst of the apostles and disciples as they were assembled together. And note this, for it is exquisite: He connects Himself in their souls with all His risen glories, all the magnificence of the victories which He has won, and of which His resurrection is the great witness, as seen in the One whom they had known down here. That is what forms the *first* great part of this subject. It is the same Jesus. There is no change in Him. True, He had gone into death and come out of death; true, He was risen from the dead; true, He had passed through the portals of the tomb, and, being raised from the dead, dies no more; true, He has a glorified body; but for all that He was the *same Jesus*;

and that is the great point in the second subject tonight. He connects Himself in resurrection glory with Himself as they knew Him as He was down here in this world. "But they, being confounded and being frightened, supposed they beheld a spirit. And He said to them, Why are ye troubled? and why are thoughts rising in your hearts?" (vv. 37-38).

Did He ever say that to you, beloved friends? Did He ever stand beside you in the troubles and sorrows of your heart, in the trials and exercises of your souls? Did *you* ever hear His voice saying, "Why are ye troubled? and why are thoughts rising in your hearts?" Do you know what can put that all away? Two little words will banish for ever everything of that kind from conscience and soul. Those words are, "I myself." Oh, what words they are, "I myself"! "Why are ye troubled? and why are thoughts rising in your hearts?" What we find here disposes of all that kind of thing. "Handle Me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as ye see Me having" (v.39). He establishes the fact of the identity of the Person standing before them, risen from the dead, with the very One they had known and walked in company with down here in this world; but mark it well, He is leading their souls to know Him in other parts of His glory. That is a beautiful word in the Epistle to the Colossians, where the Holy Ghost says of Him, "Who is the Beginning" (Col. 1:18). Oh, beloved brethren, what glories are involved in that word, what glories circle around that word, "Who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead"! How blessed to think of it! In Adam fallen we see the responsible man, we see the moral ruin, misery, and wretchedness, the decrepitude (may I say?) of humanity; but in the risen Christ we behold *the beginning* of all the new order of things that is according to God. The cross and the grave closed the history of the old; the open tomb and the resurrection morn began the history of the new, and He who began it must ever after give this character as such to all that is according to God in man. Hence He is the *last* Adam. That is to say, there never will be any other order of man than He: now risen, He is the last Adam. And He is the *second* Man, because He has closed the history of the first. He is the last Adam, because He in His own new heavenly order continues the history evermore; there will never be another. And that is what He is bringing their souls into the knowledge of here. He is setting Himself before them in those glories that pertain to Him as risen. He is, as it were, educating their souls into that, and therefore He points to these evidences, and eats before them.

Not only have we the establishment of the fact of Himself risen, but a very blessed thing connected with it too. You find peace and the *foundation* of it; peace and its foundation. Now, it is a grand thing that peace rests, and that peace is established, for its eternal immovability, upon such foundations as are here. Hence He announces it: "Peace unto you" (v. 36). This is His first word when He comes into their midst. Do they question it? "He showed them His hands and His feet" (v. 40). There was the price of it, the purchase of it, the foundation of it. There was the grand, eternal stability of it, the immovability of it. Is there any power on earth or in hell that can remove these marks in the Savior's hands and side? No more can you take away that peace in evidence of which those marks were

here displayed. He announces peace, and points to its evidences, those marks in His hands and side. How blessed! Is there any one here tonight who has not peace? Some one says, "That is only the gospel." What do you mean by "only the gospel"? I would like to measure the value of all such expressions. Do you know that you can never get beyond the gospel? Never, beloved friends, whoever you may be. In it you are introduced to the heart and nature of God. I admit there are the counsels of God, fruit of the purposes of God, and that there is precious instruction in Scripture about them. But the gospel is the revelation, in this blessed Person and His work, of the heart of God Himself, and all that was connected with the manifestation and display of His nature. Is there any one here who has not known this? Is there a single soul in this company who has not peace? If such is the case, I will tell you why you have it not. You are looking into your own heart and feelings. Introspection as to the feelings of your own heart is the secret of it, the cause of your want of peace. And I will tell you more than that: in this lies the reason why the saints of God are not happy. I never knew any one to be made happy by looking within. Never! There is nothing but misery for saint or sinner by looking within. What gives peace is Christ's finished work upon the cross. Look away, then, to Jesus, and to that great transaction accomplished for us more than eighteen hundred years ago. That, and that alone, imparts peace.

"That which can shake the cross,
May shake the peace it gave;
Which tells me Christ has never died,
And never left the grave.

"Till then my peace is sure:
It will not, cannot yield;
Jesus, I know, has died and lives:
On this firm rock I build."

Observe how two sensations take possession of them here -- amazement and joy: "While they yet believed not for joy, and wondered" (v. 41). And then He establishes the fact of His resurrection as a real Man before their eyes, by taking and eating a portion of broiled fish and of a honeycomb.

Another thing you find in connection with this incident is the true basis of faith; and I am very anxious to impress that upon every heart -- the true basis of faith, which the fact of resurrection, the announcement of peace, and of the foundations of it, involve. You find two great elements in it here. One is the words of Jesus; the other is the Scriptures. I need not say that now His words are in the Scriptures. It will be well to read together v. 44 again, so that it may be impressed upon every heart. "And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you." There you have His own words. They had listened to them, they had received them: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." There also are the Scriptures. Now do you see the object of this? There are three things here. First, the words of Jesus for the true basis of faith; secondly, the Scriptures; and thirdly, their understanding opened by the risen Lord. So that they

could say not merely, We have heard these words, we have heard Him say it, we have listened to the voice of His own mouth, but it must be so because God has said it. There is the real and true basis of faith. And they have received opened understandings as well -- understandings illuminated and opened by the risen Lord Himself. The words of the Lord Jesus, now in the Scriptures as God has given them, constitute the ground upon which faith can always rest. Upon this precious, magnificent foundation which He puts under our feet we can indeed repose. How wonderful to think of it! It is not mere hearsay, nor the imagination of any person's mind; but faith has for its immovable basis the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the certainty of Holy Scripture, as God has been pleased to give it to us, as well as the understanding opened by the risen Lord. This was before the Holy Ghost came down. The Spirit of God had not yet been given, as you know; but their understandings were opened by Christ Himself, so that they could understand the Scriptures. And so He says, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (vv. 46, 47).

Now observe the wonderful grace displayed here. If there was a place on earth more wicked than another, more tarnished by man's sin, more steeped in all the iniquity perpetrated in it, it was Jerusalem, yet there it was that God's grace was first to be set forth! How blessed to think that there, where the Son of God had been cast out and despised, divine grace was to be first proclaimed! But this grace was to take in *all nations*, not merely one nation. The cross would be, as it were, the grave of Judaism as such, and would open the way for repentance and remission of sins to be preached among all nations, beginning at the spot which was, so to speak, the worst upon earth: "And ye are witnesses of these things" (v. 48).

This, then, brings us to our third point and that is, the Blessed One's *departure*; and my object in speaking of it in this connection is to show how that marvelous mission of the disciples was to be carried out. Repentance and remission of sins was to be proclaimed world-wide, but in order to carry this out *power* was necessary; and therefore He says to them: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with *power from on high*" (v. 49). As if He had said, I have laid the ground of your *peace*, but now you want *power*. You have the peace, I pronounced peace and showed you the foundation of it; but you must have power in order to deliver this wonderful testimony, to preach it in My name amongst all nations.

Do you see why I connect this with the departure? Because I greatly desire that all our hearts should get a truer sense of the significance of those wondrous words, "power from on high." Not power from earth; not power from learning; not power from education; not power from skill of any kind here; not power from or by men; but "power from on high." And, as some one has said, and I believe it is perfectly true, "It is the power that is irresistible, and yet the easiest quenched, if He, who is Himself the power, the blessed Spirit of God, the third Person of the adorable Trinity, be grieved." May we ever keep this in mind, even how the smallest unsuitable thing will check that power, will retard its exercise. The remembrance of

that would bring us to where our solemn responsibility lies. Have we not frequently grieved Him? Have we not even in that to which it relates quenched Him often? Oh, how have we not, by our own ways, interfered with the manifestation of this power! Mark this a moment more, for that is all that concerns us at this time: this power is “from on high,” but not merely from the place to which He was *going*, but from that to which He was to be *exalted*. Power was to come down from the scene of His exaltation, and was connected with His exaltation. “Being,” says the Holy Ghost by the apostle Peter, in the Acts, after the blessed Spirit had come down,

Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2:33).

Thus we find that which is identified exactly with this utterance of the Lord Jesus here. And this “power from on high,” He distinctly tells them, was “the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4). Now put those two things together. “The promise of the Father” -- to whom, beloved friends? To Christ Himself. Not to us, but to Him, the exalted, glorified Man. “Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He” (that is, Christ) “hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” That is to say, the Lord Jesus Christ, having accomplished everything as Man on earth according to God’s purpose, having fulfilled everything according to God’s pleasure as the perfect Man, and having gone on high, He, exalted, received from God, the Holy Ghost to give to others; as Man too, for He received this promise, He received the Holy Spirit, as the exalted, glorified Man; and the apostle identifies the very fact of His departure with that great reality.

There is here a kind of two-fold glory. The Holy Ghost shed forth is a *proof of Christ’s exaltation*, but the fact of His exaltation laid the ground for this coming down of the Holy Ghost. It is an important thing to bear in mind, for had we before us the Church, or Church truth, we should see that the Church is founded on ascension, not on resurrection. I do not mean that resurrection is excluded, but I do say, it does not go far enough, for that by which the Church is formed on earth is the Holy Ghost, who came down from the *ascended, glorified* Christ. There must be ascension, and exaltation as well, Christ as Man seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, before there can be the presence on earth of the Holy Ghost, by whom all the members are baptized into one body.

Further observe -- and it is very interesting to notice it -- how the Holy Ghost is designated according to the object which God had in view in the gospel. I do not know whether you have ever *compared* the gospels. If not I would invite you to do so; not to harmonize them; for, as I intimated on a previous occasion, harmonizing is based on the profane and irreverent assumption that the records disagree -- the Lord pardon the thought! They have never disagreed, never differed. Why attempt to harmonize such records? But you can compare them, and if you do this you will find that in Matthew there is no mention at all of the ascension. We have Christ’s resurrection in that gospel, and then He goes into a mountain in Galilee, and meets the disciples there. In Mark it does tell us He ascended; and He presides, as it were, over the operations and

service of His servants: Mark being the gospel of service. But the Gospel of Matthew being the dispensational record, it leaves off {concludes} with the remnant and Christ in Galilee. The Gospel of Mark shows us the Man gone on high, and presiding over the service of His people performed on earth. The Gospel of Luke shows you the Priest gone up on high. Hence I believe His lifting up of His hands is a priestly action. “He lifted up His hands, and blessed them” (v. 50). The Gospel of John speaks of the Comforter, the Lord Jesus Christ going to the Father, and sending down the Comforter to conduct the affections and hearts of His people into the Father’s house and the Father’s joys. But here in the Gospel of Luke it is connected distinctly with the Acts. This is Luke’s first letter to Theophilus; the Acts is his second. The first letter contemplates here what was coming: “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.” That power was distinctly in connection with the remission of sins; and the commission was to go out to all nations.

The Gospel of Luke records the commission under which every evangelist and preacher to-day through grace goes forth and stands in the mountains and valleys and highways of this world, proclaiming repentance and remission of sins. And mark, this commission comes, not from this man, nor from that, nor from so-called churches, nor from any assembly of people whatever. No, brethren, the servants of Christ hold their commission *direct from heaven*, from the ascended, glorified Man at God’s right hand. He is the One who calls them, and sends them when and where He will. To Him they are responsible; while, of course, those who hear, are likewise responsible to judge as to whether such speak according to God’s mind, as revealed in this Book. But it is an immense thing to keep these in their true order. I care not whether it be the greatest, the highest ecclesiastical person in the land, or the meanest connected with any body of people meeting together and calling themselves a church: all true commission in ministry under which the ministers of Christ act is neither *of* man as to source, nor *by* man as to channel. Here, then, is the commission, and the One who sends the servants -- the glorified Man, Head over all things to the Church. Hence ministry is ever individual; whereas worship and praise and thanksgiving are in their nature corporate; and as surely as you mix these two things together you get into confusion.

And now we come to the positive act of departure, and we know it was from the place called Bethany. Now, it is not my purpose to say much about Bethany, and the Lord knows I have no desire to exaggerate it. I fear it *has* been exaggerated. As I have before observed, the exaggeration of any truth is very dangerous. It arises, I believe from not having the whole of the Scriptures before our souls. But yet Bethany comes in here in a very distinct way. “And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven” (vv. 50, 51).

Bethany is, I believe, remarkable as the spot where He connects the affections of the remnant that were attached to Himself with the place whither He was going. He connects, as it were, the divine link which He had formed between the affections of the remnant and Himself, with that blessed place

in heaven into which He was going. Therefore Bethany connected heaven with the person of Jesus. "He led them out as far as to Bethany." I fully accept, for I believe it is perfectly true, that the character of all real blessing is as expressed in the words, "He led them out." They describe exactly what must take place with every person who receives blessing of this order. And you will find that the more heavenly, the more distinct, the blessing is, the more you will have *to be led out for it*. "He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them." Could anything be more precious than to see the blessing coming from those pierced hands, the very same hands? Do you not cherish the thought that the Blessed One, after fulfilling the purposes of God, after accomplishing that which is the ground of the eternal blessing of His people, has carried His manhood up to the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, and there bears the nail-prints in His hands, and the spear-mark in His side, those marks which He will bear for ever as a Man; for it is the same Jesus? And, beloved friends, here is the great proof of it: He had His glorified body in the twenty-fourth of Luke, and He showed to His disciples in His glorified body the wounds in those hands; then He lifted up those wounded hands, and blessed them.

It has been beautifully said that the Gospel of Luke terminates in perfect keeping with the way it began. It opened by showing you the priest of the order of Levi ministering on earth in the temple, and closes with the Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek going up to heaven. The Gospel of Luke began with Zecharias but ends with Jesus about to enter upon the exercises of His priestly office on high.

One word further. Are there broken hearts any more? weeping eyes any more? He has gone from them; He has left them. Ah! but He has gone to heaven, and see how they worship Him. Those closing words of Luke 24 remind me of what you find typically set forth in Lev. 23. You will see that there was a feast, and all that belonged to it preceded the Feast of Weeks. It was the wave-sheaf and all that belonged to the wave-sheaf, and following it was the Feast of Weeks. The disciples were waiting for the Feast of Weeks. He said to them, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." How magnificent the grace exhibited here! It was to begin at Jerusalem, and the power from on high was to come down at Jerusalem, the place of vileness and wickedness. Where the power of evil was most displayed, there the remission of sins was to be first proclaimed!

And now see the action: the disciples worship Him. Their hearts are linked with *the heavenly Savior*. They had been looking for an earthly kingdom; now they have *a heavenly Friend*. Their eyes follow Him into heaven, and they return to Jerusalem, the seat of God's interests on earth, "with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (vv. 52, 53).

The Lord in His grace give to our souls a corresponding sense of His preciousness, and set our hearts on fire, that we may show out upon earth what we have found in Him; and that, instead of mourning, groaning, and being dissatisfied, we may be bright and happy in His love.

And may He grant that our hearts and affections may

follow Him *to the place where He has gone*, and that we may walk down here a little more in all the blessedness of His company *there*, and presence with us, until we see His face, and are with Him for ever, for His blessed name's sake.

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