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A Sermon preached by

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A SOLEMN EXHORTATION TO ALL WHO WOULD LIVE GODLY

BEING A SERMON PREACHED BY

Mr. H. DAWSON

OF KENT

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Colossians ii. v. 6.

THIS is a word that should be a searching word to any sinner who has the mercy to be born again. A sinner not born again does not realise the searching nature of the Word of God, but a sinner *who is born again* does realise it, as grace is given, and oftentimes he feels to be guilty before God in contemplating what that word enjoins. This word, is a searching word, because it relates to our walk, and none of us, who has the mercy to be a sinner born again, can look back on life's way and contemplate life's walk and not have to say: "God be merciful to me a sinner," or stand alongside Ezra and confess: "Oh, my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God."

When you think of what you ought to be, especially you with names on Church rolls, — you ought to be what you profess to be. Are you? Let your consciences tell you the truth about this. Preacher and people must all plead guilty here, therefore a word like this is a searching word, a solemn word to contemplate, and it must be contemplated as grace is given. How can we expect our life to have any witness for God unless you and I are brought to walk in agreement with God in all that He has to say in this Holy Bible, Book Divine.

I want, as He will help me, to say something that might be helpful and seasonable to you, and it might be well in approaching the subject to look just a little at the setting of it. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." The Apostle Paul was inspired of God to pen this epistle to the Colossians, and one thing concerning it is very pleasing to me; Paul, who was now Paul the aged, had never been to Colosse, but his large heart overflowed in writing this epistle to that people. When Paul wrote his epistles to other Churches, such as those at Ephesus, or Corinth, or Philippi, or Galatia, he could remember how God owned and blessed his labours, either to their being founded or being built up and established in the faith, but Paul had never been to Colosse, yet in his large heartedness (ask God to give it to you) when he hears the good tidings of what the Spirit of God had been pleased to do at Colosse, Paul says: "We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints."

It is a wonderful mercy to be largehearted in the things of God, and to look out beyond our own Cause, our own Church, and say: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth." And, inspired of God, the Apostle Paul desires for these Colossians what I hope you desire, and I do too: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Does that draw a picture of the religion you would like God to grant you?

"When on the bough rich fruit we see,
'Tis then we cry 'A goodly tree'."

Fruit, dear friends, fruit in our lips and lives. It may be you have to say: "My leanness, my leanness;" "Make not my soul bare." "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me;" and you are glad to feel: "He will hear the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Have you been reduced to pray like this?

I leave it between you and God. Let your consciences tell you the truth.

"Quickened by Thee and kept alive,
I'd flourish and bear fruit;
My life I'd from Thy sap derive,
My vigour from Thy root."

Does it concern you to reduce to practice the things of God, as much as you have been led into the same?

"Hoard up His sacred word,
And feed thereon and grow;
Go on to seek and know the Lord,
And practice what you know."

One more thought before I open up the subject, as the Lord shall help me. This epistle to the Colossians was addressed "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse." If there could be sent from heaven an epistle to the saints and faithful brethren at Bath, and thereabouts, do you think it would apply to you? Would you read what was in the epistle to gain instruction to speed you on your heavenly way? Or is it true that some of you are here with no evidence at all of being a saint — but you are here, and you are welcome. The Lord bless you in coming. It is a very solemn place to be in without evidence of being numbered with the saints or faithful brethren. If I am a sinner in such a case I shall be lost, and no preacher could ever tell you a millionth part of what it means to be lost.

"If I should die to-day,
What is my case?
Am I with pardon blessed?
Is Christ my life and rest —
In His obedience dressed —
And saved by grace?"

The Lord help us to look at this word. There is in it what we may term a kind of supposition: "*As ye have therefore received* Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." The Apostle Paul had a sweet, blessed persuasion, that those who would read this in the church of Colosse *had* received Christ Jesus the Lord. He ruled and reigned in their lives. Now, *we are here*

before God. Have you received Christ Jesus the Lord in your souls, esteeming Him, desiring that He would reign over you, reign in you and be your God and Guide along life's way? We must look into it, dear friends, for as you were born it was an impossibility for you to receive Christ Jesus the Lord, hence the Word of God tells us very plainly, and it is useless to argue against it, for it remains the truth, that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned."

Man, as he is born, comes into the world with a carnal mind, the only mind he possesses. "The carnal mind is enmity toward God, and is not subject to the law of God, and neither indeed can be;" and for a sinner to receive Christ Jesus the Lord to reign in his soul's affections, something has got to be done, and that, God alone can do. Man cannot do it in his own strength, and, as he is born, he does not want it to be done when he hears about it being done for other people. "No," he says, "we will not have this Man to reign over us." Will you? "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thee or Thy ways." Is that the truth about you? Do you say: "Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me.?" Can you say "Amen" to the hymn-writer's petition:

"Enter my heart, Redeemer blest;
Enter, O ever-honoured Guest;
Not for a transient hour alone,—
O come and fix Thy lasting throne.?"

Great is such a miracle that is wrought, a miracle of grace; and then, and not till then can a sinner receive Christ Jesus the Lord.

Do you remember about Lydia at Philippi? Paul says when he was there preaching the Gospel: "She heard us, whose heart the Lord opened;" and the outcome was: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." "She attended to the things which were spoken." The effect is seen. Lydia received the things of God in her heart, and the effect shows immediately in her walk. Yes, mark the wording: "*She*

attended to the things which were spoken." Sometimes you meet godly people, and they are strangers to you, but they make themselves known; you may say: "What Cause do you attend?" but the all-important matter when all is said and done, wherever you go, it is only as you attend to the things which are spoken that you will be able to reduce to practice this word before us.

I like to think of the Apostle James, it needs preachers nowadays like James; James was a cutter, a stripper, and he got right down to bedrock, and he said: "Be not hearers of the word only, but doers also." "Doers" are they who will be concerned about receiving Christ Jesus the Lord, and walking in accordance with the truth, as they receive it in the love of it. The sinner born again receives Christ Jesus the Lord in a heart which God has opened. And then the Apostle speaks about "the eyes of the understanding being enlightened" and Christ Jesus the Lord is received in that enlightened understanding. When the sinner receives it he then understands:

"If ever my poor soul is saved
'Tis Christ must be the way."

He ponders in his heart what was done on Calvary's cross.

"My faith looks back to see
The burdens Christ did bear,
When hanging on the accursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there"

There is one more truth about receiving Christ Jesus the Lord, for He is received, not only in our new heart and in our enlightened understanding, but is received in our spiritual affections, causing a poor sinner to declare:

"'Tis Christ the bright and morning Star,
Draws my affections from afar."

What think ye of Christ? Let your consciences tell you what you do think. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him."

I want especially to emphasise, as grace is given, how Christ Jesus is received as Lord. The meaning is that He must be the

Lord of our life. Think of Balaam ; he was a graceless scamp, but he said : " Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his," and he would, if he could have done, receive some benefit at his death from Jesus as the Saviour, yet he never had the shadow of a shade of desire that Christ Jesus should rule his life that he might live the life of the righteous. Young and old alike think on that. " As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him."

Christ Jesus is received as the Lord, verily God, verily Man. Think of His Person, Who HE is. In seeking to enter into it, as the Lord shall help us, let us go to Bethlehem. It would do you good to go to Bethlehem, — it would do all our people in our denomination good to go there much more often than any of us do. The Word of God says : " Foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Think of *your* homelife, and how you look around to see if you can still improve it, and if you cannot do so when you would like to, you are ready to grumble about it. No ! Let us go to Bethlehem, and see the thing that came to pass there. By faith you see a little Babe, a holy Babe, the only babe that ever was holy when it was born. Yes, a little babe sheltered in a manger. Who is He ? He is Almighty God, Maker of heaven and earth. Do you think if you had been there, and an angel had said : " See yon little Babe, He is Almighty God," do you think you would have received the blessed truth of it, and worshipped that little Babe ? Do you believe it now as you are here before God ?

" Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the Incarnate Deity ;"

and in thinking of Him as Almighty God, Maker of heaven and earth, what do you sing ?

" Almighty God sighed human breath ;
The Lord of life experienced death ;—
How it was done we can't discuss,
But this we hope, 'twas done for us."

Yes, in that little Babe by living faith you see Christ Jesus

the Lord :

" His shoulders held up heaven and earth,
While Mary held up Him."

And now come again, let us go to Calvary's cross, and gaze upon that Man on the centre cross. Suppose an angel had come again to you, and said : " See that Man on that centre cross, He made the world in which you live and move, He is Almighty God, and there He is suffering for poor sinners like you, — verily Man, verily God." Do you think you would have received Him as Christ Jesus the Lord ? " As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but as he is under the blessed teaching of the Holy Spirit. Oh, dear friends, I wish you well, but let us get right down to bedrock. Do let your consciences tell you " What think ye of Christ," can you say :

" To me Christ is more precious far,
Than life and all its comforts are ?"

The Lord bless you then. Much might be said under that heading: " As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord."

If you have received Him as Christ Jesus the Lord in the way I have opened up a little there will be other truths you have received in connection with it. You will receive the Word of God the Holy Bible, Book Divine, in its entirety as being the Word of God. Men nowadays seek to undermine its Divine original, its conclusive authority, but what godless men may do will not alter the fact ;

" The Scriptures and the Lord,
Bear one tremendous Name !
The written and the Incarnate Word,
In all things are the same."

" All scripture is given by inspiration of God." " Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." So they spake, so they wrote, and when you look into the Holy Bible never forget that " God spake all these words." Remember, if you receive the Word of God *as* the Word of God, then, as you receive *the written word and search the scriptures* you will

be brought in touch with Him, Who is the Incarnate Word. See those two sad-hearted disciples along the road to Emmaus, speaking of those things which had taken place. "Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them." What sweet companionship! "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Remember, if you are helped to read the Word of God to purpose and profit, it will always bring you near to Him Whose Word it is. "In the volume of the book it is written of Me." Remember that.

"Divine Instructor, Gracious Lord,
O be for ever near;
Help me to read Thy sacred Word,
And find *my* Saviour there."

And now, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord" receive His doctrine, which is:

"SOVEREIGN GRACE o'er sin abounding."

The foundation of doctrine is this: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious; I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." You will receive it, and say "It is truth." You will fall *under* it, and ask for divine aid not to fall *out* with it. What you are by nature will resent it; what you are by grace will receive it, and you will be concerned to live in the light of it. Yes, not only so, you will receive the *Word of God in its authority*. What saith the Scriptures? There is nothing else to be done, but seek divine aid to do what the scripture saith. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." If you receive the word of God *as the Word of God*, you will receive not only the "Exceeding great and precious promises," but you will receive the exceeding great and precious precepts. You like preachers when they preach about the promises, which means something for you to receive; but when preachers are ordered by their Master to declare unto you the precepts of the gospel, which is something God is exhorting *you to do*, you do not like that line of things so much, do you? And yet sometimes you sing:

"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my love, my all."

When I was a lad at school over sixty years ago we used to sing often in morning school:

"Make me to walk in Thy commands,—
'Tis a delightful road;
Nor let my head, or heart, or hands,
Offend against my God."

I still sing it, and at times with a trembling tongue, and I consider the words: "*Make me*." Think on it, dear friends,— "*Make me*." The Psalmist said: "Make me to go in the way of Thy commandments, for therein do I delight." It is a wonderful mercy if you say it, feeling "The love of God constraineth me." "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord" you will receive, I say, the word of His grace, receive Him as the authority of it, and you will say:

"Order my footsteps by Thy Word,
And make my heart sincere;
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,
And keep my conscience clear."

Not only so, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord" you will desire to receive all who love the truth, and, like you, are concerned to live in it. Surely you will be like Barnabas, "Who, when he came to Antioch, and saw the grace of God, he was glad." "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Wonderful mercy to love the truth. Do you love it?—and loving it, is it your concern to live it? "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee."

Paul said to the Thessalonians: "Ye did receive the love of the truth" It is a wonderful mercy to receive it. Do you love them that love the truth irrespective of any denominational label? Not just *our people*, as we know them, but stretch your hand over the baptismal waters and desire to love all who love Christ Jesus the Lord, and esteem them for what they are. Your behaviour should be like that if you receive Christ Jesus the Lord. Remember the word I have already quoted: "Grace be to all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." "As

ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." So you will receive His dear people. Many of them you do love, you like to hear what they say, when they say what they ought to be saying, and not just gossip, and things unedifying. How glad you can sometimes feel when you hear them tell out what God has done for their souls. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Another sure mark is: "A lover of good men." "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord," you will receive those whom God sends to preach, and it says in this Holy Bible: "Them that have the rule over you." When you go to hear the gospel, wherever you go, it does not matter *who the preacher is*, as long as he has authority from God to be where he is! "And they saw no man, save Jesus only." If you go to hear the Gospel otherwise you may be disappointed. Look to Jesus, look to Him alone. "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." "And we believe, and am sure, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord," you will receive your cross. You know what your cross is, you are well aware of it, and you will receive it as His all-wise choice for you to bear. Weigh that up. "It is enough for the disciple, that he be as his Lord." One of the biggest evidences you can have of being born again is sanctified trouble, and to enter into that word to the Philippians: "Not only is it given unto you to believe on His Name, but also to suffer for His sake." Sometimes you are cast-down, and think you suffer for your sake, and so you do; but remember what you sometimes sing, (I wish you would think more about what you sing):

"If sick, or lame, or poor,
Or by the world abhorred;
Whatever cross lies at thy door,
It cometh from the Lord".

Do you believe it? It means this: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord," so receive your cross as His all-wise choice, and say: "It is the Lord, let Him do what

seemeth Him good." And you will be concerned to behave aright under it, and say:

"Not in anger,
But in His dear covenant love",

and sometimes you will climb as high in your soul's experience as this:

"Let but my fainting heart be blessed
With Thy sweet Spirit for its Guest;
O God, to Thee I'd leave the rest--
Thy will be done".

You see "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord," you will receive whatever His Will is for you, whether it be to be still, or go forward, "The will of the Lord be done" is how you will feel deep down. Great words—"Thy will be done." It needs saying, it needs much grace to feel it, but the will of the Lord must be done, and, O, to do it willingly. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord" you will receive His ordering of your life, remembering: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in His way." Did you ever do that? Did you ever see the way set out before you that the Lord has led you along, and say: "It is the right way, and I am willing to go along it as grace is given?" "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." "My times are in Thy hand," "O, God, I wish them there." "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him."

Looking at the subject from another viewpoint marking this wording: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him". What does this mean? "Walk ye in Him." It means walk ye in Him *dependently*. You and I can only live the life of the righteous as God works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure, so walk ye in Him dependently. "In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, *let your requests be made known unto God.*" So walk ye in Him—*prayerfully*. I like those words of Joseph Hart:

“Ever on thy Captain calling,
Make thy worst condition known;
He shall hold thee up when falling,
Or shall lift thee up when down”.

Walk ye in Him prayerfully. You have read the Word of God about it: “Pray without ceasing,” and you cannot live the life of the righteous without it,—so walk ye in Him prayerfully and:

“Him in everything employ”.

And do I need to say this? *So walk ye in Him soberly.* The Word of God is very plain about that, and it means our life. How can you walk in this blessed way without a godly sobriety? It will never do for people, who love the truth, to be light and trifling, carnal and earthbound. No. You sang about:

“SOVEREIGN GRACE o’er sin abounding,”

and it must abound over what you are by nature, or where is your witness? “Ye are my witnesses,” saith the Word of God. Much might be said concerning this, but I must think about the “Amen” coming soon.

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” Not only soberly, but *humbly*. Seek grace to walk humbly. After all is said and done, “who are you,—who am I?” It will not be long at the longest when all that is mortal of us will be laid in the grave, and you have no warrant for the “great I” to be lifted up and exalted, and you to strut about as somebody. You and I are just a blade of grass, a speck of dust. Soon it will be said of all that is mortal of us: “Earth to earth; ashes to ashes; dust to dust.” “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him,” *loyally*, not to be ashamed of Jesus at any time, anywhere. Sometimes you will be like Lot; “he vexed his righteous soul from day to day when he heard the filthy conversation of the wicked,” and you will feel among the wicked: “So did not I because of the fear of the Lord.” Other folks must know that you and I walk in Christ Jesus the Lord. Do you think the people who live where you do discern that you have been with Jesus? If not, why not?

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” John Bunyan says: “The important part of religion is the practical part.” “By their fruits ye shall know them.” “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him” wherever you are, be it day or night. So walk ye in *your home life*. There must have been something in Naomi’s home life, while she lived in Moab, that was very attractive to Ruth; and God overruled it so that Ruth desired also to feel an interest in those things which Naomi knew concerning Israel’s God, and solemnly declared: “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” You must walk these things out at home. Your children must be able to look at you and see what godliness is reduced to practice. “Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children.” Yes, and it means *your walk in the world at large*. Dear friends, you must be found only in places where you can do what you do when you come here, you bow your head, and seek the blessing of the Lord. “So walk ye in Him” that you never go anywhere where you cannot ask the Lord to bless you, and that means there are some places you must not be found in; you must not be found anywhere where the worldling is walking after the flesh, and seeking a delusive happiness. Suffer a word of warning. There must be more separation from the world in our denominational life, dear friends, than is yet to be seen in many places. I am not fitting any caps on. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.”

“Let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay.” Think of the three godly Hebrews when sorely tried: “If it be so, our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” “No, if it means the fire, then into the fire we will go, and hope that God will go with us,” *and He did*. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” And it will

mean in *times of trouble*. It will be good if you can so walk in Him then, that you come into the beautiful scripture: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." So walk in Him, and say:

"Did Christ, my Lord, suffer,
And shall I repine,
His way was much rougher,
And darker than mine".

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him," in the Cause of truth to which you belong, and those of you with names on the Church roll especially. I remember reading many years ago something good Daniel Smart said in Providence Chapel, Cranbrook. He declared that in his going among the Churches he had learned of much Church trouble undermining the peace and prosperity of the Churches, but he had never known of any such trouble but that a few minutes right behaviour in the fear of God between the parties concerned would put matters right before God and man. So walk ye in Him. That means this: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." In the Church at Philippi there was very much to commend and there was only one thing that was a little awry: "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of *the same mind in the Lord*." It was not put like this, that one go immediately and apologise to the other, no; but "That they be of the same mind in the Lord." And that must be done in *our Church life*, which means we have got to learn to "pray one for another;" "love as brethren;" "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;" and to pray for those who despitefully use us. "So walk ye in Him."

"Thus may we abide in union
With each other and the Lord;
And possess in sweet communion
Joys which earth cannot afford."

When all is said and done you and I have got to come back to this subject: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him."

I wish you dear friends well. I wish, if God would grant it that you might receive Christ Jesus the Lord, as your Guide your Friend; and by His grace be enabled so to walk in Him while you live, and then dwell for ever with Him when you come down to die.

"Lord hast Thou made me know Thy way s:
Conduct me in Thy fear;
And grant me such supplies of grace,
That I may persevere".

AMEN.

