

Notes of Sermons Preached by Pastor Henry Haddow at Brockham Green
on Lord's day July 3rd 1910

Morning Sermon

Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men: yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. (Psalm 68:18)

This psalm is full of Christ. And O, what is the word of God without Christ? Christ is everything to the believer. When you go to the word of God, is it not that you may find Christ in it? Jeremiah says: *Thy words were found, and I did eat them.* The Lord Jesus Christ is everything to the child of God. *Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.* In all He has done, in all He is doing in the courts of heaven. *What is my beloved more than another beloved?* The church can say: *My beloved is the chiefest among ten thousand. Whom have I in heaven beside Thee?*

We have the doctrine of the ascension brought under our notice in the words of our text. He appeared, you know, after the resurrection, to His disciples, and at the appropriate hour He leads them out as far as to Bethany, and He blesses them. And then He ascends up into heaven.

*Descend from heaven, immortal Dove,
Stoop down and take us on Thy wings,
And mount and bear us far above
The reach of these inferior things.
Beyond, beyond this lower sky,
Up where eternal ages roll,
Where solid pleasures never die,
And fruits immortal feast the soul. (Isaac Watts)*

And there to see the dear Redeemer, to see Him seated on His immortal throne. It is a mercy if you and I have a grain of grace. I speak it feelingly. It is a mercy if we have a grain of grace in the Person of the Son of God. *The devils believe and tremble.* That is more than some do.

We hope to show you that this faith is God's gift. Faith viewed Him dead upon the tree – that is, the Christ of God. There is something very solemn in this – Christ dead upon the cross. It was prophesied that He should die. And we look back to the cross, and we view Him at times, dead upon the cross. We see Him dead. He bows His head in death.

*Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When God, the mighty Maker, died
For man, the creature's sin.*

*Alas, and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I? (Isaac Watts)*

He died, He bowed His head in death. *Into Thy hands I commit My spirit.* He dies, we view Him dead upon the tree.

Faith views Him buried in the tomb. Yes, He is buried; He is put into the sepulchre. But faith awaits the time to see Him rise with power to save. He has led captivity captive. *The Lord is risen indeed.*

*Then to the Mount of Olives go;
There faith, with eager eye,
Beholds her Lord leave all below,
To dwell and reign on high. (John Stevens)*

Thou hast ascended on high. He has gone up with a shout. The disciples gaze up into heaven as the Lord Jesus Christ is taken from them. *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?* It was a glorious ascension up into heaven. He went up with a shout. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts; He is the King of glory.*

I heard Mr. Popham make a remark, and I went with him in all he said. He said that the greatest insult that could be offered to God had been offered the previous day in London. He spoke of the dedication of the cathedral. The archbishop dedicated a cathedral in London, and he was vested in his robes. He insulted the Saviour in heaven. He sprinkled the door with water, and then the walls. He returned again to the door, and knocked, and said, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." The deacon within asked, "Who is this King of glory?" The reply was, "The Lord strong and mighty." And the door was opened. O my friends, how solemn! What blasphemy! What an insult to the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven! To use words which none but the Lord Jesus Christ could use.

Thou hast ascended on high. "Precious Jesus", says the child of God. What is the ascension to you, my dear hearers, and to me? Persons may contend for doctrine, but after all, what do we know of the grace of doctrine? I hope I read that hymn I have just quoted with sweetness:

*Descend from heaven, immortal Dove,
Stoop down and take us on Thy wings –*

– especially the verse:

*Adoring saints around Him stand,
And thrones and powers before Him fall;
The God shines gracious through the Man,
And sheds sweet glories on them all.*

*When shall the day, dear Lord, appear,
That I shall mount to dwell above,
And stand and bow amongst them there,
And view Thy face, and sing Thy love? (Isaac Watts)*

A child of God has faith at times in the Person of the Son of God. And he views Him at the right hand of the Father, and has the witness within that he is a part of the purchased possession. Are there not moments when your meditation is sweet? And in that moment you can say: *I shall be satisfied when I awake in His likeness.*

Thou hast ascended up on high. O to have your affection there – not on things below, but on things above. There He sits, the mighty Conqueror. He has ascended on high, He sits there, the mighty Conqueror, the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Mighty God. The Saviour that is able to save to the very uttermost all them that come unto God by Him. *This man, after one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God. And His enemies shall be made His footstool.* Thus He led captivity captive. He came, friends, into the world to redeem Israel. He came to save His people. *Thou shalt call His name JESUS; for He shall save His people from their sins.* The law holds them captive. But Christ came to lead captivity captive. He came to redeem His people. They had sold themselves for

nought. They shall be redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He died and by His death was conqueror – He destroyed him that had power – the devil, and brought forth the immortal to life. He put an end to sin.

*Say, wast thou not a captive born,
And art thou not a captive led? (John Berridge)*

Yes, God's people are born captives, and led by the devil at his will. And they do those things which please the devil. They are held captive by the law of sin and the devil. Spiritually they are captives. And the Lord Jesus Christ has led captivity captive. He has redeemed Israel. He has brought in an everlasting righteousness. O if the Lord had not done this, where would you be? O friends, those persons who profess to preach the word, they would not preach as they do of sinners going to the Lord, and giving their hearts to God. You read the Epistle to the Romans, and you see what state Zion is in.

But we read in the word of God that God has redeemed his people. And He will bring them, and they shall return. *They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them. (Jeremiah 31:8,9)* Now, you think of it for a few moments. *He has led captivity captive.* He has power over the devil. A person was saying to a friend of mine that you can take God at His word; unbelief is a sin. True, but if God died for all sin, then He died for that sin. God the Father promised the Saviour that He should see of the travail of His soul. *By His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many. (Isaiah 53:11)* The Lord hath redeemed Jacob. His people are His; He has bought them; He has redeemed them.

Thou hast led captivity captive. Having led captivity captive, having redeemed His people, He shall save His people, as it is written in the word of God: *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? (Isaiah 49:24)* *I have raised Him (that is Christ) up in righteousness, and I will direct all His ways. (Isaiah 45:13)* The law demanded blood for blood, and He so willingly shed His blood. How willing was Jesus to die! He died in the room, place and stead of His captives.

Where does He find them? He finds them – He finds the strong man in possession. *When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. (Luke 11:21)* He keeps this man's heart; it is the devil's palace. He keeps this man's heart, and his goods are in peace. You do not find the wicked are in trouble. Here is a sinner; he is of the legal spirit; he is led captive by the devil at his will. Can a man say, "Go out, devil. Come in, Christ?" Can you cast out the unclean spirit? Can you bid the Lord Jesus Christ come in? I trow not. *As many as I love I chasten. I stand at the door and knock.* O what a blessed knocking that is! O take the sinner in his sin – a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God. He seeks to have his fill; there is no thought of God, no trembling at God's majesty. He knows nothing of the curse of a broken law. His goods are in peace. He lives without God, and without hope in the world. He receives God's mercies as common things. And unless divine grace prevent, like a beast he will live, and like a beast he will die. But when the Stronger than he shall come upon him, is it not the One God speaks of? *I will raise Him up in righteousness.* Is not this the stronger than the strong man armed? This Jesus is, and He comes, and He bids this strong man depart. He afflicts him, and divides his spoil. He comes, the mighty Conqueror. He says: "This heart is Mine." He casts out the devil, and He takes possession. "This heart is Mine, and I bought it with My blood."

And here the Lord Jesus Christ comes, and He takes possession. He casts out the strong man. He gives us a new heart. He implants divine life, and He dwells in the new heart. He takes possession. And when this change comes, the sinner knows something about it. When He plucked him as a brand from the burning, and when He turned your face Zion-ward. Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me. Lord, save, or I perish. *This people,* says God the Father to the Son, *this people shall be willing in the day of My power.* When the day comes, then the sinner is willing to come to God. I do not believe that there is a man living in a state of unregeneracy that is willing to come before God. You cannot find one.

The worldling that lives in wickedness is not willing to come to God. But in the experience of those He has redeemed, there comes a time when they are made willing, and that in the day of God's power. Do you believe that God is powerful, or that the devil is powerful? *Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am.* The will of the Father; the will of the Son; the will of the Holy Ghost. Who hath resisted His will? When Christ comes, if I may so speak, He comes and casts out the unclean spirit, and takes possession of the souls of the redeemed.

As I was saying to the friends at Burgess Hill, if you have anything in you that comes from God, it will go back to God – perhaps after 50 or 60 years. He wants God; he hungers and thirsts after Him. He thirsts for God, and he hungers for God. His poor heart cries out for the Lord. He is made willing now to be saved in God's way of saving. Until the Lord made him, was the dying thief willing to be saved in His way of saving? *To day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.* O great salvation! *Thou hast led captivity captive.*

May the Lord add His blessing.

Afternoon Sermon

Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men: yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. (Psalm 68:18)

I am glad our friend gave out the hymn you have just been singing, for those of you who were present this morning will remember we were speaking at the end of the Lord Jesus winning the hearts, and making the sinners willing in His appointed hour. He comes to His dead elect, and He casts out the strong man armed, who keeps his goods in peace.

*“This heart I bought with blood”, He says,
“And now it shall be Mine;”
His voice the strong one armed dismays;
He knows he must resign. (John Newton)*

Jesus Christ is able to save to the very uttermost all that come unto God by Him. What a mercy if you are coming unto God by Jesus Christ! What a mercy if there is something in you that wants the person of the Son of God! *O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.*

*Just as I am, without one plea...I come.
O God, be merciful to me.*

Jesus Christ (I speak it with reverence) He has a gift for such. There is a fulness in Him for such poor sinners who have been made to feel themselves to be such. He will not cast them away. He will receive them graciously, love them freely.

I was thinking, as I sat by the bedside of our friend, what a mercy that Christ has led captivity captive! What a mercy that none can do them any real harm! He has destroyed the works of the devil. O what a blessed person is the person of the Christ of God! He is our Refuge, our strong habitation, whereunto we may continually resort. When the soul is cast down within you, you reason: “Why so cast down?” *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. (Psalm 43:5)* Arise. God is the God of my salvation.

Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men. In the margin of your Bibles you will find it is rendered: *in the man.* You know the Lord Jesus Christ took upon Him our nature, sin excepted. He received gifts in that nature for men. This has been made

sweet to me, and I hope it may be sweet to you. *In Him should all fulness dwell* – that is, in the man – all fulness in God. All fulness dwells in Him as God. He received gifts in the man. *It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell* – dwells in Him for men. Now, is not there something very sweet in this? *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* There is everything in Him the sinner needs, and it dwells in Him. Gifts Thou hast received in the Man for men. And these gifts are given to men, to fallen men and women these gifts are given. *The wages of sin* – what is it? *death.* I warn you solemnly: *The wages of sin is death. The soul that sinneth it shall die. But the gift of God is eternal life.*

Thou hast received gifts for men. The poor woman at the well of Samaria – she was asked by the Lord Jesus Christ to give Him water to drink. But the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. The Lord said to her: *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.* Ah, soon the Lord told that poor woman all that was in her heart. And she left her water pot, and she went into the city, and said: *Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?* O, have you ever left your water pots and gone into the city, and said what Jesus Christ has done for you?

Thou hast received gifts for men – the gift of eternal life. The Lord Jesus Christ alone can give it. None can give this eternal life but the Lord Jesus Christ. He has but to speak, and the sinner lives. *Thou hast received gifts for men.* There is the gift of grace – and this alone comes from Him.

*Grace first inscribed my name
In God's eternal book;
'Twas grace that gave me to the Lamb,
Who all my sorrows took.*

*Grace taught my soul to pray,
And pardoning love to know;
'Twas grace that kept me to this day,
And will not let me go. (Philip Doddridge)*

But it is no small mercy, friends, to have grace given to us, to have the gift from the person of the Son of God. There is a fulness of grace in Him, and He gives grace. The Lord God is a sun and shield. Now you know you cannot buy it. It is a gift. God gives it. He may give grace to some sinner in this house of prayer this afternoon. *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.* Have you ever known this? Two persons, perhaps, have walked together for years, and in the house of God, God gives grace to one, and not to the other. It is God's gift. He gives grace.

He gives faith. Faith is the gift of God. O to have faith in the bleeding Lamb! You know it is not in the power of the man to believe. There is much said about this in the day in which we live. *By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8,9)* Have you faith in the bleeding Lamb – hope of salvation in His Name? O to be a possessor of the grace of God! It is God's gift. *Who by God do believe in Him* – who did believe in God, who raised Christ from the dead, that our faith and hope may be in God.

What must we do to be saved? You know the Philippian jailer said: *What must I do to be saved?* O friends, there is only one answer to that question: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* O could I but believe. I am full of unbelief. Faith is the gift of God, and when God gives this faith, the sinner believes. Faith comes from God – it is God's gift. You know, a person who can believe just when he likes – it stands in his own wisdom. But that faith which God gives, He will try it.

O to have this faith! O for more faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in God! One of our friends said to me this afternoon: "I have no faith – that is, in exercise." Faith is a precious gift. And when the soul is a partaker of this gift, it will never be destroyed. The poor sinner may feel he has no faith, but the Lord can give it in a moment. *Be not faithless, but believing.* He increases it. The soul believes that God is a rewarder of them that believe, and will stand every storm, and live at last.

Love is God's gift. *Thou hast received gifts for men.* Now Jesus Christ did not receive these gifts for all men. He gives faith to those He has redeemed. He gives them the grace of faith, the grace of love. O what a gift is this – to be loved of God, and to have this gift bestowed upon us! *We love Him because He first loved us.* Now, if the Lord never gives you love, you will never have love. There is no love in the natural heart. *Thou hast received gifts for men* – this gift of love. Yes, He sheds this gift abroad in the heart. And when God begets love, O how that soul loves!

*Do not I love Thee, dearest Lord?
Behold my heart and see;
And cast each hated idol down,
That dares to rival Thee. (Philip Doddridge)*

If the Lord appeared to some of you this afternoon, what would you say? I should say, "Lord, Thou knowest all things." This is the gift of God. It comes from Him, and it goes after Him. Don't you sometimes say, "O Lord, give me more love."

*Dear Lord, and shall we ever live
At this poor dying rate?
Our love so faint, so cold to Thee,
And Thine to us so great? (Isaac Watts)*

He gives this gift of love.

Another gift is hope. It is no small mercy to have the grace of hope. If you have a good hope that comes from God, you are begotten to an inheritance. You speak to some persons, and they will say, "Are you saved?" I remember hearing a person put the question to a friend of mine. My friend says: "I hope so." Why, have you not got beyond hope yet? I would rather have hope than have the confidence of the mere professor. Rest in hope, and be instant in prayer. A good hope shall never fail. *Now abideth faith, hope, charity.* What a mercy to have a good hope! This hope that God gives rests upon Him.

*I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly rest on Jesus' name. (Edward Mote)*

Thou hast received gifts for men – gifts in the Man for men. All the gifts that the Lord Jesus Christ gives to the sons of men He received in Him for them.

*All needful grace will God bestow,
And crown that grace with glory too. (Isaac Watts)*

Received gifts for men. They are gifts which the Lord gives to His people, to His church. We were reading just now: *some prophets, some pastors and teachers* – for the work of the ministry. The Lord gives pastors. Would to God there were more pastors given in the day in which we live. There is a promise that He will give pastors according to His own heart, that shall feed the flock. A pastor is God's gift. I do not say this because I am your pastor. I hope, long before I was your pastor, I knew the value of sitting under a God-given pastor. You cannot think too much of your pastor. I do not say idolise your pastor, but you cannot pray too much for him, and for the blessing of God to rest upon him. And it is a mercy to have grace to thank God for these gifts, for good gifts, for perfect gifts. They come down from *the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness.*

Yea, for the rebellious also. Now, you can come in. Can you come in here? If you have not been able to come in before, can you come in now? The rebellious dwell in a dry land. There they would dwell for ever, were it not true that He received gifts for men.

*Rebellious thou hast been,
And art rebellious still;
But since in love I took thee in,
My promise I'll fulfil. (Henry Fowler)*

He gives sinners the grace of repentance. And He brings them to His feet in honest confession, and they call upon the name of the Lord, and receive from Him this gift. *Gifts for the rebellious also.* Perhaps some of you farmers have been rebellious during this week, as the showers have come down upon the grass. His hopes have been blighted, and he has wondered how things would end. Perhaps he has been depending on the hay to pay his way. He thinks that God is dealing hard with him. We are not always in that place where we are able to bow to the will of God. God's hand seems against us.

Are there gifts for the rebellious man? *Yea, for the rebellious also. I do well, said one, to be angry.* But God did not cast him off. There are gifts for the rebellious also. All blessings are in Him – *Yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.* There is something, my friends, which astonishes one. Why, sometimes I stand amazed as I read the Word of God. *For the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them* – might dwell in them. O friends, you think of it for one moment. God dwells in the man. God dwells in the hearts of men and women. The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him – and yet, the Lord that dwells in the heavens condescends to dwell in the hearts of sinful men and women. He gives them a new heart, and He dwells in the new heart. And when we realise that God dwells in us, is not the language of our souls:

*Unworthy dwelling! glorious Guest!
Favour astonishing, divine! (Anne Steele)*

– that the Lord God, the great majesty of heaven, might dwell among us! O what a mercy, friends, if He dwells among us here as a church and people – if He dwells in my heart – and the deacons of the church, and the members of the church! I would be exercised about this.

Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.

May the Lord add His blessing.