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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor
on Thursday, February 7. 1980.

Lesson. Song of Solomon 1 & 2.

Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?

Isaiah 60.8.

Our beloved friends and spiritual hearers will see immediately the sacred connection between the whole of the matter in the Lesson and the profound, beautiful, precious Text. It is obvious all who love and fear God wish to experience in their souls a dove-like nature, and what rich blessings there are in the Covenant of Grace for precious doves! They are so profoundly changed from what they were in unregeneracy when the exact opposite obtained. A work of divine grace in their souls bestowed on every quickened sinner, especially in a revelation of the glory of Christ and the secret of the indwelling of the heavenly Dove, the Holy Ghost bestowed on them, enriches them with exercise in their souls and they have a lovely, dove-like character. As we mentioned, there are rich blessings the Lord has for doves, or His dove, His bride. Two of these are referred to in the beautiful Text: they fly as a cloud, also they have windows. I hardly need tell you what the ultimate is in relation to windows. You will not look out of the window and see destruction and despair. You look through and see your Beloved, your precious Redeemer and His track and Heaven. You will see the exquisite beauty of the Precious Redeemer, Heaven itself opened to your soul.

I will make a personal observation that will interest you. On 17th September 1839 a meeting was held in the original section of this Chapel on Tuesday evening at 7pm. Mr Cowper the Pastor presided and there were a large company of godly people. There was a specific reason for the meeting; viz, to form the first Church in this House of God. Mr Cowper read this chapter to open the service. I am sure you see the background in so far as our own beloved cause of truth is concerned. "Who are these that fly as a cloud,- a cloud of precious souls, several hundreds of them, flying to do His will, to follow Him and to walk in His blessed ordinances. They had been waiting for years. "and as the doves to their windows." See how the Scripture has been fulfilled. After prayer and a

Hymn and reading Mr Cowper heard the testimonies of four men and formed the nucleus of the first Church. They were followed by two,- John Verrall and his wife. It is notable that the dear wife, so full of the love of God, outstripped her husband and stirred him up to holy jealousy, and they were both baptised together. It was a sweet season. His beloved daughter had been waiting for nine years,- "Who are these that fly as a cloud?" They were all waiting; a cloud of precious souls. Then his clerk who had waited fifteen years: after that there were sixteen, and I remind you that the service was so heavenly that many testified they hardly knew how to stay in their beds for joy: they were praising and blessing the Lord. Then another sixteen, and then seventeen. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" A cloud may refer to the access of the Gentiles, a day of great prosperity, precious souls gathered and flying as a cloud and as doves to their windows. I cannot tell how the inauguration, the founding of this blessed cause of truth under dear Mr Cowper affected me, especially to realise for 141 years the Lord has maintained the Church, and the ministry of the Spirit for 143 years. "Who are these?" This has been my experience in my term of holy office. I have looked on the congregation and said in spirit, "Who are these that fly as a cloud" to follow the Lord, to obey and honour Him; to do His pleasure. I felt it would be profitable and edifying and to the glory of God to name to you that extract of the history of the Church at Zoar Chapel, Lower Dicker. In just over a year there were sixty members, a cloud was waiting. The Lord had prepared them and they were flying; not lingering, halting, drawing back; they were flying as a cloud together. "Who are these that fly as a cloud?" I am sure our ministerial brethren will be able to sympathise: we need special help to expound to the glory of God, and not only to expound with clarity, unction and power, but to have the experience of it in the soul, so we do not have it as a subject; it is effected and accomplished in our souls.

"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" As enabled I will endeavour to lift up the salient points in the verse and dilate on them. There are two things in the first section of the Text,- fly, and cloud. This will surely search us, and I hope, sweetly confirm us. What shall I say to you concerning the word

fly" as it relates to poor sinners, born again, taught of God, blessed with His Spirit, knowing the Lord Jesus? I will use one word, that is, they become airborne. It will be needful to work this out with you. You will be happy when you are airborne by the Holy Ghost. You leave this dark world and grovelling here below and find yourself airborne. You will know this is spiritual and Scriptural. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young," The eagle knows her young are not to lie about in the nest, they are to fly. We were once fledglings: we are not to lie in the nest. The nature of a child of God is to fly. No ~~word~~ there is bondage and darkness that is caused by grovelling here below. That is a crude word: it is true, "See how we grovel here below," If the Lord has blessed you your nature is to fly. The eagle stirs up her nest. Over the years the Lord has done it: we do not go long before He does. You are not to repose in ease: rest in Christ, that is different, - not in the things of life. The eagle agitates, stirs up the nest. We do not like that; we are averse to it. If we are left to sinful nature we tend to rebel. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young." This is the example of the godly to the younger: it should be: those well established in the things of God should give an example to fledglings.

"spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them," She takes them into the air, teaches them to fly. This is intuition: it is latent and must be developed. I am bold to say the sacred intuition of a child of God, knowing the Lord Jesus is to fly. You know in the Hymn the beautiful expression, "Give me the wings of faith to rise." "Who are these that fly as a cloud." It is clear when you are born again of the Spirit and under the condemnation of the law, if you could you would fly: you do not know where to fly to. It is certain when the Lord quickens sinners into life ~~and~~ they begin to pray and they look to God for mercy. Until the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed personally to your soul you do not know who to fly to. You cannot relate flying to being under condemnation in the pit and the miry clay. You could not get from the presence of a holy God and you knew it.

There are two things to name; the first is, and it came out in the Lesson; with a child of God there are two men, two natures, a company of two armies. The old man of sin is corrupt. O this old man of

corruption! There is the new man that has been created by the breath of the Lord, and it is holy, impeccable. "That which is born of God sinneth not." The new man is intrinsically holy. We read in the Lesson, "I am black, but comely." None understand without a work of grace in the soul. "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon." In the same inspired breath she says, "I am black, but comely."- black in herself yet all fair. That is why grace makes a conflict, because the elder rises against the younger. I go further. Are you confirmed in your soul that you have two men under one roof? You have the old man, and I am sure you will say it hardly needs proof; an ugly black sinner, yet there is the new man. The new man is created after His image in righteousness and holiness, and the image will never be defaced. What shall I say concerning the new man? The new man has all holy, spiritual faculties: eyes that see, ears that hear, a nose that smells, a palate that tastes, hands that feel,- it is wonderful to feel Christ.- and feet and legs to walk, stand, run, leap, and wings to fly. These are some of the faculties of the new man. I ask you a question: do you know you have got wings? do you ever stretch them? When the Lord comes and shines in your soul and gives a sweet cup of blessing, you are so happy and peaceful, and you begin to stretch your wings. I have referred to the analogy: captive birds are not in their natural habitat; they cannot fly far. A body of sin and death is a cage. Presently, my friends,,

"He'll break the strings of nature soon,
And bid the prisoner fly."

What will ^{it} be like when a body of sin and death is left behind? That is the first thing to say. The new man is intrinsically holy and pure, and it has all faculties. The Lord said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear." and John speaks of "that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled." This is true, vital religion, the work of the Holy Ghost from the beginning to the consummation.

A little further. The spiritual faculties are in the new man of grace just as with a normal, healthy baby; it is all there and things are developed. Everything in the new man of grace the Lord brings into exercise from the moment of quickening. Have we sweet, blessed

confirmation that the Lord has blessed us with the new man of grace? Many of the faculties express the sweet saving grace of holy, living faith...When does a child of God begin to fly? Immediately by the precious grace, light, unction, life of the Holy Ghost the precious Son of God incarnate, a beloved Saviour is revealed to you and you know Him you will fly to Him.

"Fly, then, awakened sinners, fly;
Your case admits no stay;"

and you fled to the refuge that was set before you. Once you see Christ you will fly. Love flows into your spirit; He looks with clemency and mighty love, and you fly to the clefts of the Rock. "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock." Reverently I name this. You will fly to His wounds, to your Beloved, to Gethsemane and Calvary. You will fly to His riven side. That is when a child of God first becomes airborne. Whenever the Lord blesses your soul, sheds abroad His love in your heart, smiles on you, you will stretch your wings and fly. When He gives you forgiveness of sins experimentally you will stretch your wings and try to fly to be with Him for ever. How often are you airborne? This will be a guide to try your own case. I thank God in this blessed pulpit that is holy ground indeed, on a number of occasions I have lost this time's state, and I am sure with a number of you the Lord has so come and you have lost sight of all on earth. So, "Who are these that fly as a cloud?" Flying is a response to the beauty and felt preciousness of the Lord to your soul, and to know that Heaven is your Home. You will fly under the influence of His love. "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Such is the need of your soul and the delight of your soul in Him, He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and you will fly. It is the unparalleled beauty and preciousness of the Lord. You fly by prayer, in love and holy desire.

We have also clouds. A cloud is a symbol for a flock of birds flying. I revert,- I can contemplate precious souls in Dicker land flying as a cloud together. They loved each other's company and their Pastor. What a sight in this parish! The symbol is cloud: not only numerically, a large number. Things may be, they are low. "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time." In past history things have appeared

low. Elijah thought he was the only one: there were seven thousand. David said, "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth." The Lord has had a long line of witnesses ever since, and they will never cease until the Second Advent. So the symbol cloud. They love to be together; they must be in company with each other. How you love the people of God, and how they realise you do. They are your best friends, your kindred. They are spiritually gregarious: it is the spiritual nature of a child of God. We know what a cloud is: it is a tremendous collection of watery particles suspended in the atmosphere. Water comes from the clouds, and souls are like that. They derive from the ocean fulness of Christ life, unction, power, blessing. There is another part to it. There will be showers of blessing because the clouds let down rain, and precious souls in their testimony are as showers of blessing to the Church of God.

"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" There are two things here; the dove, and windows. The dove in the Bible is a lovely bird, pure, innocent, tractable, loving, very faithful, so if one misses its mate it will sit alone and mourn. It must have its beloved. It is lovely because the Lord Jesus Christ when He was baptised, "went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove." And the dove in Noah's ark came back with an olive leaf plucked off, and an olive ^{leaf} is a permanent symbol of peace. A dove is defenceless; it has no fighting instincts. It is lovely because the Lord uses the term concerning His beloved Church. "O my dove," He says. A dove is so beautiful, holy, clean, faithful, meek, humble. Sweet dove! We have referred to the Immortal Dove, the Holy Ghost.

Do we hope by sovereign grace we belong to this category and are as doves? The Church of God is lovely in Christ. They fly as a cloud and as doves to their windows, - a window opening with sashes and glass. What is the purpose of a window? So light shines in and you can see out. When the Lord quickens a soul to life He puts a window in, and when He blesses with divine revelation the light of life will shine out of the window to your ransomed soul. Also you will look out and see the Trinity, the Land of Promise, your Beloved, the way to Heaven, His track, the ladder whose top reaches to Heaven.

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,

"Stand dressed in living green."

And in all means of grace it is one of the Lord's purposes that the ministry of the Spirit is a window of grace, so you look through and see your Beloved. And the Scriptures are windows. Blessed be God for this. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" Amen.