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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor
on Thursday Evening. November 14. 1974.

Lesson. 1 Corinthians 3.

For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Matthew 6. 32.

This sacred Scripture in our dear Lord's Sermon on the Mount has impressed my spirit this day, and although because of temptation I have felt ready to ~~retreat~~ from attempting to discourse on it, it is incumbent on us to proceed to deliver to the people of God the holy doctrine divine of the Fatherhood of God. What a wonderful confirmation we have received in the first Hymn. You will have noticed the language of Mr Berridge;

"The Father's pardoning love receive,
And 'Abba, Father,' cry." (81)

So I hope I may make a beginning this evening under a sense of the confirmatory presence and influence of the Lord over my soul. I will make this observation. All here who fear God will recognise the wonderful second part of the Text; "ye have need of all these things." What a tremendous need we have of all pertaining to this life! and especially to eternal things and things of the soul. What an increasing struggle it is to pass through this great and terrible wilderness! So there is a need of all things that are terrestrial.

The tremendous need is for immortal blessings; divine blessings to enrich, sanctify, justify our souls and fit us for the Better Country. So I will just remark there are those present who will undoubtedly feel concerned with what is comprehended in "all these things." It will be needful, taking a great venture on God, to try to deliver to you the fundamental and cardinal doctrine divine of adoption, - one of the most remarkable truths we can ever contemplate and the most blissful we can possibly experience.

What is the great doctrine of adoption? It is for God to take those who were erstwhile rebels, aliens, foes; nothing lovable about them; ruined in the fall; and by a sovereign act of electing love and redeeming grace and regenerating grace receive them as His own sons and daughters. Quite clearly the act of God in adopting grace belongs to eternity. It was an act of God before man was created, when His electing love embraced a chosen number of man's ruined race, and when He gave them to His beloved Son and placed them in Christ in filial relationship with Himself. "Before all worlds, the glorious plan" and the wondrous act of adopting grace was enacted. You will have noticed as we prayed we mentioned the mystery of our creation, because

so often we wonder why we are here, and whether we have contributed anything since we have been here for the good of others; if we have lived to the glory of God. Certainly those embraced by the act of adopting grace in eternity are given a being so they are able in the enjoyment of the Spirit of adoption to thank Him for their creation, salvation and preservation. That is the point. There is that part that is accomplished in this life as God gives us a being. We are born into this world according to His sovereign decree and divine purpose. And formed, - what for? to live a life of pleasure to live to self, the world and sin? No! to show forth His praise; to live to know the wonders of adopting grace in our souls; the wonders of redeeming love, and to be brought into the felicity of a beautiful relationship with God Himself in Christ; to know the unspeakable joy of union with Christ, oneness with the Trinity, and to know by adopting grace we are His sons and daughters, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

I need grace to expound the doctrine further. In regeneration we receive the principle of life, which is the principle of holiness, so we are effectively brought into this relationship. When we think of the holy soul the Holy Ghost has formed anew, the fruit of the everlasting love of the divine Father, and the fruit of the travail of Christ's holy soul, so effectively we are brought to the experience without realising it, of this relationship with God; His sons and daughters. The point is, not till faith is given, and faith which is potent and powerful to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, have we the sweet, efficacious realisation that He is our Father and we His sons and daughters. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." - Power: and power is the power of holy faith. "to them gave he power to become the sons of God" - that is, efficaciously, in the sweet knowledge of it in the innermost soul.

There are two other points to make. One is obviously need. O the bliss and wonder of it!

"A foe received a favourite,
An alien made a child." (792)

This is adoption. One who fought against God, hated God; filled with enmity and by adopting grace made a favourite; brought into the closest relationship with Him. "An alien made a child." This will break your poor heart when you have a sweet realisation of it. I will just mention this. You may say; "How shall I ever know He is my Father and I His adopted child?" The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace and the Spirit of adoption; - the Spirit of grace and supplication and adoption, and when the Holy Spirit fills your heart as the Spirit of adoption you will cry; "Abba, Father." (Both words mean the same. Abba, as you probably know, is the Aramaic form.)

The Spirit of adoption will give you the assurance that He is your Father. I will deliver to you a point I wished to make. Adoption is not only the enjoyment of all the privileges and blessings God can give to His sons and daughters: it is manifest in this; that soul, that child bears His image. You look at a child: the child bears the image of the parents. When you look at the children God has given you, you say; "How they bear the image of their parents!" and they do. So this is a glorious truth and a potent, positive proof of adoption. Think of the wonder of it! You not only have the privileges, you bear His image; you are like Christ. You see, this is the exact opposite of the state of man in the fall. When man fell God's image was defaced in him, and there was no neutrality. He fell to the very image of Satan. How awful to bear the image of Satan! Sin, when it is defined, is not only an act and an absence, - an act of violation of the moral law; it is not only a complete lack of rightness with God in His nature and image, but nature is enmity. These are things that so distress and overwhelm a quickened sinner, when he realises it is not only the commission of sin, a lack of rightness; he can never do what is pure and holy, but he realises that his nature is enmity against God. In adopting grace it is not only the wonder and privileges in the enjoyment of sonship it is the nature, likeness, image of Christ that is restored to us, and this is the proof of it. It is vain, completely vain and presumptuous for people to talk of God as their Father in a spiritual sense if there is no regenerating grace in their souls and they bear no likeness to Him; if they possess not His nature and Spirit.

In the act of adopting grace in the soul, and especially when Christ is revealed and the efficacious power of faith given to believe Him, to become the sons of God in the blessed realisation of filial union, - and this is the sweetest thing on earth to feel, to know He is your Father and you His child, sons and daughters, - this is the proof: you receive His image, His nature, His Spirit, and this was made possible by the incarnation of the Son of God. So as He partook of our nature and assumed a holy humanity to redeem us, so He made it possible for us to partake of His divine nature and His image was restored. This is a point of great searching to those who fear God. Do I bear His image? do I bear His Spirit have I His nature? They are sons of God by blessed adoption, and they bear His Name. You will notice in Scripture He calls them "My people." Wonderful to be called "My people" ! Or He says to you; "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." or "Daughter, go in peace; thy faith has made thee whole." Think of the wonder of it! for the Lord to speak to you as a son or daughter. So this is the glorious doctrine. I want to make application of it.

How do you stand in relation to the sacred doctrine? I wonder what the

dimensions of your spiritual experience are? Are you saying; "I feel destitute of it"? or are you saying; "I believe I know it, but I am in the dark now, and I need another precious confirmation and reviving."? or are you saying; "I believe in this last day or two I have received a sweet token that He is my Father."? Let us name some of the holy privileges of the blessed estate of filial relationship with the Lord; adopted sons and daughters. First, it may be you know just what we read in the Lesson; because ye are Christ's and Christ is God's, all things are yours. You have treasures and blessings that are incomprehensible, boundless and infinite; eternal riches; all the fruits of the accomplished work of redemption of Christ communicated and conveyed to you; all the riches of His grace and the blessing of eternal life and the great hereafter and a title to it.

Probably this was what initially drew me to the subject, for the Lord was dehorting His disciples concerning inordinate concern about things the Gentiles,- the world seek after. What do they? "What shall we eat, and what shall we wear?" all perishing things. I can understand a housewife coming and saying; "I must be concerned with the wardrobes,- the children's clothes father's clothes." Fifty years ago the wives did everything for their husbands; polished their boots and put their clothes away. They never did anything; mother did it. When it was time to go to Chapel she would take out father's suit and all he needed to get ready for the service. (This is an aside observation.) The children are growing and they need larger clothes, and so on. You must be concerned about their dietary. Some of them have ailments and need special food, and to avoid other things. The Lord is not condemning you for that. It is prudent and comely and desirable to be methodical, prudent, frugal; to have foresight. He is saying to you; "Don't let this this be the first thing." Man is fond of his food: man is concentrating on it. The Lord has taught us that these things should be secondary to the things of the soul: that we learn to be abstemious, and more concerned about immortal meat for our souls; the bread and water of life the wine of the Kingdom; the sincere milk of the Word, than of the bread that perisheth. This should have priority over a suit or a dress; namely, that I have on the wedding garment, and am

"rendered fit with Christ to feast,
And be the guest of God." (805)

This is what the Saviour says; "Don't put perishing things first." Yes; there is a proportion; a fair balance. It is quite correct to be concerned; not over-anxious.

There is another aspect. There is so much inordinate anxiety concerning the things of this life. So troubled and over-anxious we become about all that pertains to this life,- clothing, food, the flow of funds to meet your need, and there is so much of this with us. He says; "For your heavenly

Father knoweth. You do this by grace. Seek first the Kingdom of God. Put Me first, and His righteousness. Put that first and all other things will be added unto you: not all this feverish anxiety in the Stock Market, monetary obsession, and all undue disturbance in the mind concerning the things that will all perish. Put Me first; My Kingdom; My righteousness; and then, your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

I can develop this further. Take another facet; namely, the health of your body. Health is a wonderful blessing. When you see poor people about forty paralysed, and can do nothing for themselves, but are dependant on others, you realise it is wonderful to wake up in the morning, and stand up and go through the day. I wanted to make that point. There are many sicknesses and illnesses, and the Lord makes them a means of grace to His dear people, as sanctified. He tells us this is not our rest. Sanctified affliction leaves its mark, and you never lose it. It does something for you. Let me express it by an illustration. The Lord has loosened and taken one or two pegs of the tent, and you are never the same again. You are loosened from the world more: there is a change in you, and you feel from your soul you are not over concerned with the things of life. It is to have the presence of your Saviour His forgiving love in your soul, and to live near Him. You are never the same as before. As I have said to you; you have come out close to the Kingdom. God has made it a real blessing to you. He has not forsaken you. He is your Father. It is a Fatherly correction or stroke. We come into affliction of body, and it is as though the Lord says; "My child, be more concerned to have your soul healed. This affliction has been sent in faithfulness and love. Be more concerned to get your soul healed and your sins forgiven. Hezekiah was in that, with great distress concerning his bodily affliction, and great distress concerning his soul. Presently the Lord came and healed his soul and his body, and he said; "What shall be the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?"

So "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Put these things first, to get your soul restored, cleansed and ready for heaven, and if the good Lord sees fit to put His healing touch on your body. The paralysed man was let down through the roof. He was borne of four, and they let him down before Christ, and they did not say anything. He was completely paralysed. The Lord said; "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." That was first. That is the whole gist, - the whole tenor of the word. So he was still paralysed in his body: his sins were all forgiven. Afterwards He said "Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk." These are priorities: first the soul then the body. If any of you are in affliction, seek first as helped, that the Lord will restore your soul; forgive your sin. You will be happy and perfectly whole, and He can soon raise your body.

So "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

The word is comprehensive of all these things. How shall I try to give a few words on it? These things are imperative. If I go back it would be to name to you the purposes and decrees of God. You will need the Lord to do for you all the things He has purposed, decreed and promised. There is a certain area there. How can you die destitute, disappointed concerning things the Lord has decreed, purposed, and indicated to you by sweet promises? So you go to Him for them, and He knows your need.- your poor needy soul and body, and you are in trial, privation, difficulty, in a solitary path. He knows you have need of all these things. "Omnipotence hath servants everywhere." You come down in the morning, and there is a token: you have a loving Father "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Remember this; it is something I regretted I did not reach on Sunday afternoon. A child has an obediential spirit: an adopted child has an obediential spirit. This is one of the evidences of being a son or a daughter. The Lord gives you a spirit that is obediential: you delight to do His will. So this will link up with Sunday. I saw it before the afternoon service. "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Come forth as gold? and you know we looked on it in two sections: the part known here below, and the part in the full beauty and glory of it in heaven. Think of the part below. "When he hath tried me, I shall come ~~xxx~~ forth as gold." What are you coming forth for? To be under the seat? Certainly for humility. What are you going to do when you come forth? remain dumb? Does God bring you forth for nothing? no revenue of praise and glory to Him? "What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?" The Lord will bring you forth for a purpose. This is beautifully expressed by the Psalmist: "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people, In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord." Amen.