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Prayer Meeting address by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham
on 3rd. April, 1960.
Hymns 1030, 319. Reading 1 Peter 1.1-19.

These few verses bring to mind a number of choice things relating to the people of God in various aspects. In the first place, they are a people chosen in the sovereign purposes of God according to His fore-knowledge; eternally elect, sovereignly chosen and appointed, as here indicated, and yet scattered throughout different countries. "Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Here we have three distinct operations attributed to the three divine persons in the Trinity - the fore-knowledge of God, the sanctification of the Spirit and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. This blood is again referred to by Peter when he reminds us that "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." He seems to take us back to an eternal past (which is more than we can understand, but which we yet believe) to the sovereignty of God who in His divine foreknowledge elected His people from everlasting in His decree in the covenant of grace. He refers to their experience in this life, how they are at times cast down and in heaviness through manifold temptations. Yet, although this was the case with them and still is, and will be more or less, the foundation of their comfort and joy remains, irrespective of circumstantial changes, trials and afflictions or joy and happiness in this life. These things do not affect their standing as redeemed people, washed in the blood of Christ, enfolded in that bond which holds them, from which nothing can separate them. Then Peter takes us to an eternal future, referring to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

An inheritance reserved! It is all reserved there, awaiting us, that is if we are among the people here indicated. It is reserved and will never be filled without us. We have a place there in the love of God, if we are His people, an inheritance in heaven awaiting us. It is said to be prepared by the Lord Jesus. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

So the prospect stands decreed in an eternal past. The foundation stands firmly now, irrespective of all we may pass through here; and in spite of all our changes the promise stands firm too. This may be looked upon and received as a confirming truth to support the tried family of God in this vale of tears. It points forward to the resurrection and is their consolation under all that may arise to try their faith. The apostle says it is all for your good. The trial of faith is precious, though tried by fire, and is to be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. If there is no cross there will be no crown. If there is no bringing down there will be no lifting up. It is good to look forward to this, to be enabled to look straight on, to turn aside neither to the right hand nor to the left. For this we need grace to feel by living faith in our own souls that we are begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Amen.