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Prayer Meeting Address by Mr. J. Delyes at "Ebenezer", Clapham
on Saturday evening 17.3.73

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5

730/PM

In the verses I have read the Apostle gives expression to his hope of immortal glory. There seems to be something more than a hope merely, for he speaks with a confidence, and a gracious confidence, He says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The first part of this verse leaves no doubt whatever. None of us can question the fact that this earthly house of our tabernacle must be dissolved, for we are constantly reminded of it, and there are many references to it in the Holy Scripture; and sometimes the Lord's dear people are enabled to contemplate it with calmness of spirit. It is a mercy when it is so, for, whatever we may feel in ourselves, nothing alters the fact; our bodies are described as a tabernacle and tabernacles are taken down, and sometimes very suddenly. It is a mercy if we can be aware of this and if we can feel to go through the verse and say, "We have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." If we can feel that confidence in a sweet and gracious way in our own hearts, if we can feel that, then when this earthly house be dissolved we shall enter that building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

So the Apostle goes on to describe conditions in this earthly tabernacle. It is not all joy, peace and happiness. He says, "For in this we groan", and is not this the experience of the Lord's people at times? Not always; but there are times when certain things occasion this, and have done through the ages of time, as in the days of the Psalmist when he said, "Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee". But amidst all the groaning and the trouble and the affliction and the distress, it is the privilege of the Lord's people to look forward not to a tabernacle in the heavens, not to a tabernacle there to be taken down, but an "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens". This is the heavenly city that we read of in the Revelation and also of all those that are there, how they are

engaged and their sacred, sweet, holy worship. This is the prospect of all the Lord's dear people, although they may not everyone of them say, we know, that it will be so, even so, this is where their hope stands. For it is true of every vessel of mercy that there is for them an "house not made with hands eternal in the heavens".

So there is a striking contrast, you see, between the two states and conditions; in this tabernacle "we groan being burdened", but in the house not made with hands we shall be "clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life"; swallowed up of immortal life, immortal, everlasting peace. The Apostle says while we are here "We walk by faith, not by sight", and sometimes things look very dark, our own case does, our prospects do, our hope does; but amidst all the darkness the Lord's people "walk by faith, not by sight". They walk by faith, looking forward, looking to Christ, His blessed atonement, His Mediation, His glorious Person; they walk by faith, contemplating one day entering this "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The Apostle was able to say, "We are confident..and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord"; not that everyone can use this language with the same assurance, but there are times when in the view of faith the prospect that lies ahead seems to eclipse present conditions; "we walk by faith, not by sight". We have many favours here, ~~many~~ privileges, but it is an earthly tabernacle and we have to feel it. There it will not be an earthly tabernacle, but the immortal ransomed soul will be in that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens". There is therefore this resolve with the Apostle Paul in verse 9, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him". O beloved friends that is the great thing, it covers everything else, to be accepted of Him. Many people speak of accepting Christ, and it is true the Lord's people do accept Him, they do receive Him, but in the exercise of the soul is this, will He receive me, will He accept me? That is the point, therefore there is a labour unto this end, that when the time shall come that our appointed days are fulfilled we may be accepted of Him. O may the Lord grant it to us, to each of us, if His heavenly will, and that will be the greatest blessing any poor mortal can know in this life and in the life to come. Amen.