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Sermon preached by Mr. J. Delves on Sunday morning 2.7.72 at
Ebenezer, Clapham.

Hymns 1155, 158, 934

Reading: Revelation 19.

Text: Colossians 3.4

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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall
ye also appear with him in glory".

I have read this particular verse because it had been on
one occasion greatly blessed to our dear departed friend (Mrs.
Wakeley) and we have sung this second hymn because a part of it also
was much blessed to her, as you may realise later when I hope to
read a few extracts from her writings. We can truly say of her that
she is now, as to her redeemed spirit, with her Lord in glory, and
her enjoyment surpasses all our present comprehension, as it did
in her own case when she was here with us. Now those streams of
which at times she had a blessed foretaste have merged into a river
that has no banks, an endless river of divine love, and that will
be for ever and ever "with Him in glory", and this follows with
respect to those who knew something experimentally of a precious
Christ while they were here. "When Christ, who is our life, shall
appear", He must be our life here spiritually to be our glory there
openly. As I said at the funeral service, if we never live with
Christ we shall never die with Him or be with Him where He is.

I have been thinking of three things concerning the Lord's
dear people and our departed sister, and the first is the choice
that has been made of them. Their names are written in the Lamb's
book of life, as we read, and they are said to be chosen in Christ,
in Him from the foundation of the world; and if we are really
chosen in Him, then one day we shall be in glory with Him, and
we can feel this of our departed one from her experience of the
blessed Gospel. She had very clear evidences that she was chosen
in Him. It could be said of her that Christ was her life
spiritually. But not only are His people chosen in Christ; there
is the price paid for them. What price was this? It was the

shedding of His own heart's blood, that was the price He paid for our departed sister, that is the price paid for every ransomed vessel of mercy. Nothing less can appease justice, remove the curse, open a way to heaven and give admission there, but the precious blood of Christ, that is the life of the soul here, and the glory of the soul there. It is said of them that they sing a new song, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood"; and it may be noticed in the Revelation that in that sweet opening of heaven to John he saw the Lamb as it had been slain. Our dear friend had many sweet views of Him while she was here, but now it is not a view of faith such as we may have here, but she sees Him face to face without a veil between, a trophy of redeeming grace and blood. A third point is the glory that is awaiting them. This is more than we can conceive while we are here in this poor world, beclouded with temptations, sin, and many opposing powers that often mar our peace and bring our poor minds into a state of great confusion. There is no confusion there, the "Lamb as it had been slain" is seen openly in the glory of His most precious redeeming blood, and as good Irons says in his hymn, "That makes all heaven to ring with joy". O what must it be to be there!

What a mercy dear friends if we are not left to live and die ignorant of Christ. There are some people, you know to Whom He is but a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, but there are some to whom He is a tried Stone, a precious corner Stone, a sure Foundation. Precious corner Stone! It is very solemn, and I have been thinking of it quite a lot, that for the whole mass of humanity there is only heaven or hell. Everyone will be either eternally saved or eternally lost - an everlasting smile or an everlasting frown; and we have no reason to question this. If this is not solemnly true we might as well close our Bibles and go home; but it is solemnly true concerning the ungodly and blessedly true of the redeemed of the Lord. We know that there is a curse upon those who add to and take away from the things written in this Book.

Now what I have read is an experience, more or less, of

everyone who knows something of the blessed Gospel. There is a context which gives force to this. The Apostle says, "If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God". Here, then we have an exhortation and a definition. How many of us can really say that we are setting our affection on things above, that is not of course our natural affection that we feel one to the other, but the affection of the soul to Christ, Who is and will be in the experience of a living soul the Amen, the First and Last? If our affections are set upon Him here by His grace, then one day we shall experience the text; "we shall appear with Him in glory".

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God". The fact that our life is hid with Christ is a very blessed and confirming truth. It indicates its security. It is hidden from the eyes of an ungodly world, from the devil, from all opposing powers. It is hid with Christ where it is absolutely secure so that no power can remove it. It is hid with Christ in a sense even from His dear people, in the sense to which the Apostle refers where he says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him". It is a hidden glory. It is the glory of heaven, the glory of a full realisation of all our hopes and our prospects. It is everlasting life. This was very sweet to our dear friend once in her own experience and it was so sweet to her because she could feel in a particular way that her life was hid there with Christ in God; and there it will continue to be eventually openly revealed in that great day. So it is with our dear sister; we can think of her as being eternally chosen in Christ, blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him, washed in His most precious blood experimentally, having had some sweet feeling of forgiveness, clothed with His righteousness, so that she could be presented before the Throne without spot and blameless. Happy soul - it is well with her and we would not wish her back, although we keenly feel the loss we have sustained, yet still for her we can but rejoice; her weary, painful, suffering body, is all left behind. She fell on sleep so

so quietly and blessedly and her redeemed spirit was then "absent from the body, present with the Lord".

May we have grace then to follow this cloud of witnesses that have gone before, and now possess an experience of the same precious truth as we have here, "When Christ Who is our life". Do we feel we can say this? Can you feel to say that He is the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely? Can we feel to say as it is in the Song, "My Beloved is mine and I am His"? He is the life of His dear people in this sense, that by divine teaching He is formed in the heart the hope of glory. This is what the Apostle says, "Christ in you the hope of glory". This is real religion, not religious excitement. This is the secret of them that fear the Lord and who are shown His blessed covenant. If our religion is right Christ must be its foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ", and He was well laid in the heart of our departed friend. Can we feel that He is laid in our heart - in your heart, in my heart? It is a vital point. He is our life. He is our life in the desire for Him, feeling that we cannot be satisfied without Him. If we are rightly taught He will make Himself the one thing needful in our soul's case. We shall have to be brought to that place to say, "Give me Christ or else I die". But we shall never die if we possess Him, except it be the death that is in the text, and we shall die that death because it is a death to sin, not a death in sin, "For ye are dead", that is dead to sin, dead with Christ, dead to the world, dead - "and your life is hid with Christ in God". So these two opposites will have to be known in some measure in our experience - death and life.

He is the life of our hope. This is that good hope through grace that His people possess, who can say and "Now Lord what wait I for my hope is in thee". He is the life of this hope, He is formed in the heart in this sense, and this is a hope relating to the future, that one day the hope that we feel now will give place to a blessed realisation of all that we have hoped for. In a hymn it is said,

"Here it is I find my heaven,
While upon the Lamb I gaze"

What is it now with regard to those that have crossed the river, and have entered the new Jerusalem? What is it now? Now say they "I have found my heaven, now upon the Lamb I gaze". We shall not need a sweeter heaven, friends, than conformity to Christ, to see Him as He is and to know no more sin.

He is the life of our peace. He says so, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you". O what a sweet peace it is! Many a poor, tempest-tossed soul has been brought into this blessed oasis to feel a sweet touch of that "peace which passeth all understanding". He is the life of our worship, for if we worship rightly we worship God in His Son, for there He is loved and there alone.

So it is said here, "When Christ who is our life shall appear", - so there is to be an appearing. I would like to speak of this appearing in two or three aspects, although here of course evidently it refers to the Lord's second coming; but there is an appearing before this, and what a blessed appearing it is. What is it then? It is when He is revealed to the soul, it is when that good Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. This is an experimental appearing. It is that sweet view of faith that is given when the veil is drawn and the beauties of our glorious Emmanuel are seen, so that He becomes in the soul's affections the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely. Oh what a sweet appearing it is. But there will be another appearing besides this, and that is a visible appearing. He appears experimentally now to His dear people, but one day He will appear visibly to all, as it is said in the Revelation, "Behold He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him". What a blessed appearing that will be to everyone who has died in the Lord, who has known something, as our departed sister did, of His sweet appearing in experience. This will be that visible appearing when to them that look for Him He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation. O dear friends if we have seen Him here by precious faith, we shall see Him again at the blessed morning of the glorious resurrection of which we read in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, of which the Apostle treats so beautifully where he says, "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together

with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord". Possibly the worldling would say "All that is a fancy of the brain", but there is no fancy in the Holy Scriptures, it is all a blessed reality. The Apostle says that "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him". What a blessed hope it is, even with respect to the body; it is laid in the grave, as I said at the grave on Friday; this body is Christ's property, it is the purchased possession. What was laid in the grave is the purchased possession. The soul is in glory; but one day the body will be raised again, not a corruptible body but a glorious body. O what a prospect, then, lies ahead for all to whom Christ has been their life while they have been down here. He is their life upon earth and He is their life in heaven.

There is just another point, and this is that there will be an appearing in glory, that will be for ever and ever, as several times we read in the Revelation of those already there before the throne, that their peace, happiness, joy, and glory is for ever and ever. How do we stand in relation to this? We have some sweet reflections, sweet memories of our departed one, but we cannot very well visualise what she is enjoying now before the throne of God. She has a harp now, a well-tuned harp and as good Irons says, of those redeemed with His most precious blood, that they are washed in that sacred Fountain, and are there uniting with the song of the saints and angels adoring the Lamb, the Lamb slain, Who has perfected redemption's work, and ensured an eternal heaven to all His dear people.

May the Lord look upon us and sanctify to us the loss we have sustained, grant us submission to His heavenly will, help us to fall into His hands, may He answer her prayers for us while she was here, that the Lord's presence and blessing may often be in this little "Ebenezer". May we be helped to follow on and one day enter into that same everlasting joy.

I will now close by reading a few extracts from her writings.

Extracts from the writings of the late Mrs. Annie Wakeley

In the night watches when feeling very ill, and musing on the memorial of one of the Lord's aged servants, these lines came to me.

"Yes, I shall soon be landed,
On yonder shores of bliss,
There with my powers expanded,
To dwell where Jesus is."

I felt that I should soon be there. A little while afterwards a verse of Rutherford's came so sweetly into the mind.

"Oh, Christ He is the fountain,
The deep sweet well of love,
The streams on earth I've tasted,
More deep I'll drink above,
There to an ocean fulness,
His mercy doth expand;
And e'en where glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel's land".

At another time Rutherford's hymn was so sweet and precious to me for I was living in the enjoyment of it then and felt I could say without presumption.

"Oh I am my beloved's,
And my beloved's mine,
He brings a poor vile sinner,
Into His house of wine."

Also hymn 477 was so expressive of my desires then. On the following Sabbath afternoon when reading Colossians 2 and 3 when I got to the 3rd and 4th. verses I could not read any further, those two verses seemed to fix me. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear then shall ye also appear with him in glory." I felt if my life was hid with Christ in God I was safe; Oh the sweet resting I felt in my soul. Then to appear with Him in glory, what a prospect. My soul was filled with joy and peace in believing I should soon be with Him in glory. I longed to be with Him, for I felt so weary of earth and could feelingly say with the hymn writer,

"Weary of earth, myself and sin,
Dear Jesus set me free,
And to thy glory take me in,
For there I long to be."

During the first night after my return this verse came with much power.

"Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of grace is done,
Partner of my throne shalt be,
Say, poor sinner lovest thou me."

I said, Lord do take me to thyself, I did long to be free from sin; it was so hateful to me.

Then again she refers to that hymn we had this morning,

"Here it is I find my heaven,
While upon the Lamb I gaze,
Love I much I've much forgiven,
I'm a miracle of grace."

The same evening that hymn was given out at Ebenezer and it was so sweet to me and for weeks afterwards. I felt it was life and health and peace possessing then, for Christ was everything to me. I did long to be with Him

A few days after this our dear Pastor preached at Ebenezer from 1 Corinthians 13.12 "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even also as I am known". This was a good time to me, it made me long for the time to come when I should see Him without a veil between. The following Sabbath morning in the early hours of the morning these words came with power, so powerful that my strength went from me. "Christ in you, the hope of glory".

A few weeks after this I went to Zoar London feeling very burdened and troubled about many things. Mr. Gosden preached from John 16.33. He spoke of the first clause which is "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace", I felt as the Lord's servant was speaking that the Lord had kindly condescended to speak to me, and as I looked back over the past weeks, all that I hoped the Lord had done and spoken to me, was so sweetly revived, and His love seemed to flow in, the sweetness I felt then was indescribable..