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Prayer Meeting Address by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer", Clapham.

16th October 1950

Reading: Ephesians 1.

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This is a chapter which has in it so to speak the very body of divinity, revealing the eternal immutable purposes of a covenant God towards His people; their blessed estate and standing in that will which is so moving. Because of all these appointments they are, as it is stated here, blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, and it is noticeable that the Apostle, feeling so confident as he did in regard to these believers, and being moved in his heart by the report of their faith in Christ and their mutual love, prays very earnestly on their behalf. He did not say, Well, you will see by what I have written that you are a well established people, well set down in the truth, incorporated in the eternal love of God, predestinated according to the counsel of His will, redeemed by His blood and have obtained from Christ an inheritance of this, so according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will, there is not much need of my prayers on your behalf. Not so, but being so graciously persuaded he feels all the more moved to pray that, though the evidence is so clear and definite, they might have gracious growth and revelation in it in their souls. This is just what you and I need.

God has, under His unchangeable purpose, appointed the lot of His people. Here the truth is so clearly defined. They are said to be predestinated unto the adoption of children and redeemed by blood. Here are the great pillars of the covenant of grace; and the great and cardinal point to us is whether we can rightly feel and hope that it embraces us. What a mercy if we can without presumption; if we can hope to have had some witness or some sealing as here we read, that God's purposes were thus toward us and His will thus favourable to us. If we can feel that hope, then may we have grace to pray more and more earnestly that we may have given to us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, for nothing can so well set us down in the truth as a personal manifestation of the Lord Jesus. Then truth will be more than a theory, a commonplace statement of things, but will be, as we are exercised, like a living spring in our souls, a principle which will pant after Him. There will be in Him an attraction to us as the magnet attracts the needle, and the closer the needle comes to the magnet, the greater the attraction

and the more swiftly does it fly to it and cling to it, so it is with a poor sinner. The action may at first be perhaps not particularly lively but as more nearness is felt and more liveliness then the attraction increases and the heart pants after its beloved.

Oh, what a mercy to have any part in these things! If we have, then we shall be eternally happy, whatever our estate here. With all the attending afflictions and tribulations our standing is eternally blessed, if we could but realise it, which I think we shall when the love of Christ softens us; but if we are outside this, - and here is a dividing line, - we can but be for ever miserable. The issues are so portentous that, if we could realise their incomparable import, the things which accompany salvation would be life and death matters with us. Oh what a mercy it would be if they were of such concern to many who appear comparatively unconcerned and indifferent. May the Lord keep us and bring into our hearts this night some humble testimony that we are indeed of that people that are predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His holy will, and all this for us. If it be so it is to the praise and the glory of His grace wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved. It will humble us and that will be good and we shall, I believe, if we are so favoured pray that we may live nearer to Him and perceiving all blessings to flow from the fountain of His grace so wait on Him that we may receive more and more of that fulness. Amen.