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Sermon preached by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham on 24th.  
January, 1951.

Text: "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled". Proverbs 9.5.

These verses with the remarkable preceding chapter elucidate some very choice, confirming truths in relation particularly to the Lord Jesus who is defined under the appellation of wisdom, that divine attribute necessarily essential to Him as a person in the deity and as being the wisdom of His people. This perfection is not in Him an incommunicable one, but one which is bestowed upon His children, all of them, in some measure whereby they are made wise unto Salvation. It reveals a doctrine with regard to Christ, as to who He is, being God's eternal Son, saying here of Himself "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.... Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth." He ever was in the bosom of the Father. In the beginning was the Word which is wisdom. The word was with God and the word was God. It is sometimes very sweet to believing people to contemplate the blessed Trinity and that equality that exists between, and in, each divine person. Not only does it declare who He is, but the word that He proclaims, "Hear: for I will speak of excellent things: and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth: and wickedness is an abomination to my lips." Truly they are excellent things. The voice of the good Shepherd is sweeter in the ears of His sheep than any music can be.

"My soul, with joy attend,  
While Jesus silence breaks;  
No angel's harp such music yields  
As what my Shepherd speaks."

Some of you know that is true. Why? Because you have heard Him, heard His voice and have known it to be His voice. What a wonderful mercy. So then you can endorse this truth, "Hear for I will speak of excellent things". This is Gospel, the Gospel of His grace, the word of His grace to sinners.

He also speaks of the invitation that He extends and of the exhortation to listen to His words. "Now therefore hearken unto me". We may hear many things in which there is little profit, but if we hear Him we have great profit. "Hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways... Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord." These children of the Lord are blessed then; they are blessed in their state, they are blessed in their hearing, their watching, their waiting; but they are according to their own feelings blessed in their finding. They may often feel disappointed in themselves by reason of the withholding of the desired blessing, which will surely come in the Lord's appointed time. Even though they may not feel to possess what they would, or may feel to lack that clear manifestation, yet in this relationship they are indeed truly blessed. In a way all the Lord's people, in view of their union with the Saviour, are prepared to die, irrespective of their present feelings, for they are in Him, by a union that is indissoluble. Therefore at all times they are, in that aspect, prepared for death, but not always so in their own experience. Even then when the Lord is with them and when their prospects are clear, when their own assurance is felt, of interest in the Son of God they are then feelingly prepared and ready and willing to depart this life and dwell where Jesus is. They are blessed; but they are feelingly so when the Lord comes. To find Him is to find the pearl of great price, the richest of all treasures to find eternal life which He is. "Whoso findeth me findeth life and shall obtain the favour of the Lord."

Then He follows on under these figures. The Lord prepares a banquet for His people, a banquet, a feast of good things, He extends an invitation to people to come and present themselves at His banquet. It is compared thus to a feast provided by wisdom. "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:

She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city. Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled". He seems to say, You are heartily welcome; come for all things are now ready; you will not be refused. The invitation is open to the simple, "Come". Yet at the same time we know that we cannot, in our own strength or by any initiative which we may possess, but need by His grace to be brought in; but when that invitation is heard in the soul, by the power of the Spirit, there will be a response and there will be an acceptance of the invitation. Is it not a remarkable thing that the Lord should condescend to invite people?

The invitation is to be considered here and the people to whom it is extended. There can be no question with regard to the invitation; it is clear, open, free. It is extended to all who have a case, a need, who are hungering, thirsting, panting, fainting, ready to perish; it is extended to them, as we have read this evening, "Ho, every one that thirsteth", every one, every one, "come ye to the waters", the invitation is beautiful. Come ye thirsty soul "Come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money", come without money. How free is this invitation; it removes all fears in this particular, for none can be too poor. The sad point is that many are too rich; but none can be too poor for Christ, can they? "He that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and wit out price". Do not spend your labour for that which is not bread; there is so much of that in religion, so much spending of the labour for that which is not bread. But these poor, hungry souls have to come to Christ of necessity. "Come, eat of my bread". Do not go anywhere else for it, come to me for it; do not labour for that which satisfieth not. In religion satisfaction only can be found in Him, "Come eat of my bread". Why, sometimes it does seem an amazing consideration that the Lord Jesus should be so free with His

invitations. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely". Let him take it freely! Say you, some of you, Well, I cannot understand that, for I am faint. I try to wait and pray and ask the Lord to come and show His mercy to me, visit me with His Salvation, show me Himself; and still I feel this bondage, seem to be out of the secret; I am all confused. Well, poor sinner you are just the kind for Him. Then perhaps you say, Well, why does He not come? He knows why. He will come and when He does come you will say it has been worth all the waiting and praying, all the anxiety, all the fears, all the disappointment; it has been worth it all. O yes, a few minutes of Christ in your soul will make amends for years of praying and waiting and hungering and thirsting. But He does invite people to come to Him, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest".

There is then an invitation extended; and what a mercy it is so, because if there were no invitation we could never come, we should not presume to venture, in fact we should have no heart to come because the welcome is embodied in the invitation. Come and welcome to Jesus Christ, "Come and eat of my bread". It is noticeable here that a certain character is defined who is particularly welcome to this banquet, "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread". So it is these simple ones to whom the invitation is particularly extended, not to the wise and prudent no, but to the simple. Was not that the Lord's thanksgiving to His Father when He said "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes", that is these simple ones, these teachable ones. "Whoso is simple", these are under the Lord's special notice I think. The Lord preserveth the simple, the psalmist would say, I was one of these. The Lord preserveth the simple, "I was brought low and He helped me". By simplicity in

this spiritual aspect we understand those that are low in their own eyes, that have no great views of themselves, who would not stand above others in their own estimation, like the scribes and pharisees, like those that are whole that need not a physician. These simple ones are those who are truly conscious of their own vileness and nothingness and unworthiness and unfitness. They are simple, not in the sense we sometimes use the word with regard to people that may have a slight mental deficiency, but those who have a single eye. Berridge says "Simple folk have sharpest eyes"; they have often a more clear vision. Yes, it is a mercy to be simple in this way; that is to say to be teachable. "Whoso is simple", that is who has a heart for Christ; who has room for Christ; who has a need for Christ; who know that they must perish without Him; who cannot do without Him; who are brought to that place to say, "Give me Christ or else I die". To these wisdom speaks, "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled". Truly it is a mercy and condescending on the Lord's part to invite the simple. We cannot be too simple in this sense for this is to be entirely out of conceit with ourselves. They are thus who want understanding. These are the simple ones. "As for him that wanteth understanding". Do you have to come to the Lord at times and say, What I know not teach Thou me, Lord, I feel to be so ignorant? Sometimes those who mourn their ignorance have much more knowledge of the Lord Jesus, they get a glimpse, they see His beauty, they are drawn towards Him as it is in the Canticles "Draw me, we will run after Thee". These simple ones, they can run, "We will run after Thee". Their heart is set upon Jesus, there is in Him an attraction to them; He says "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled".

The invitation then is clear, is it not? This draws no line whatever at one's mental power, state or station, whether rich or poor with regard to the things of this life, or whether simple. Even if they be idiots they can yet have a rich view as Yeddie had of that wonderful Man. "Whoso is simple". A great point is to be

brought down, to be stripped, wounded, guilty, to be emptied from vessel to vessel; to have room for Christ; to long, hunger, thirst, and pant for Him. These are the simple ones, and He will give them far more than they could anticipate. It is said, "He brought me into His banqueting house, His banner over me was love". I feel persuaded that there are none the Lord loves more than these simple ones who have often to say "Lord, help me", teach me, shine into my poor heart; though yet I feel disappointed help me to keep waiting, watching daily at the gates, waiting at the door.

The invitation is attended with a warm heart on the part of Christ. He has a large heart towards His people, "Come, eat of my bread", Here is provision, it is following upon the invitation. He does not invite these simple ones to an empty house, a bare table, no, but to a divine repast, "Come, eat of my bread"; do not try to make your own, do not try to spend your labour for that which satisfieth not, but, "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled". What is this provision? Why, it is bread and wine, that is what the Lord provides for His simple ones that are hungry and thirsty. Bread and wine is what He provides for them and invites them to His table to partake of. What may we understand by this? They are figures to know, and figures which are familiar in the Scriptures. In the 6th. chapter of John the Lord Jesus declares Himself to be that very bread. "I am the bread of life", He says, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger: and he that believeth on me shall never thirst". O wonderful Bread, wonderful Bread for hungry souls! It is also spoken of by Himself as His flesh and blood, which it is essential that we should partake of in order to everlasting Life and Salvation. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him". Except we eat this we have no life in us, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you". How very separating is that truth. Yet these simple ones who have a single eye to look alone to Him, come to Him, depend upon Him, draw out of His fulness, these are the very ones who being emptied from vessel to vessel must be fed, whose souls are hungering and thirsting

for the bread and wine of the blessed Gospel. "Come, eat of my bread". Here it is, here is the provision, nothing is wanting, nothing is lacking, come, for all things are now ready. This is very beautifully typified by the falling of the manna that sustained the children of Israel in the wilderness. The manna was very sweet to the taste; so is the Lord Jesus in the receiving of Him in the affections. He is wonderfully sweet to a living soul when He comes in the touches of His love and grace and in His sustaining power. He is the Bread of Life, He is compared to this so that as bread represents the chief necessities of this life to sustain the body, so the Lord Jesus Christ is the one necessity to sustain the soul. He is the staff of life and all spiritual living is living thus upon Him, eating this bread and wine, bread so pure, so rich. He is heavenly bread; this is the true bread which cometh down from Heaven, which if man eat thereof he shall live and not die. That is true is it not? All who live upon Him shall never see death, "he that believeth on Me shall never die". It is true that there will be a corporal death, but not spiritual death. Because He lives after the power of an endless life, so shall they. "Because I live, ye shall live also". "Come, eat of my bread", O what an invitation this is! And what fare, He could make no richer entertainment than this, "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste". O wonderful bread, wonderful bread! "I am the Bread of Life", He says, and you will find that to be true because every communication of His mercy in the Gospel to your soul will nourish you, will separate you from the world, will strengthen you in Himself, build you up in the faith and enable you to come up from the wilderness leaning upon your beloved. Eat of My bread, eat of it. But, perhaps some poor, hungry soul says, I wish I could. You can eat of it. What is it stands in the way? Well, the Lord knows that each must through His grace and Spirit be brought into this banqueting house and though He does thus extend

the invitation freely yet such poor, helpless things are we that we need His good Spirit to bring us in. Perhaps you say. What is this eating of the bread? It is in the sweet manifestations of His love and grace to your soul, those views of faith that you get of Him that are so confirming and so supporting; it is to be brought to His blessed cross and see a dying Saviour, to feel able to say of Him, as faith views the merit of His flowing wounds, "He loved me and gave Himself for me". Surely this is a wonderful religion; there is no sentiment here, no wild fancy of the brain, but a living in a spiritual capacity on the merits of a once crucified Man. How precious is this invitation, "Come, eat of my bread".

The Lord Jesus Christ is represented in the communion of the Lord's supper as broken bread. As the bread is broken, which is necessary for each communicant to receive a portion thereof, so in order for the life-giving efficacy of His death to be communicated He must expire and give up the ghost. He must be broken, as it were under the strokes of divine justice, broken under the weight of imputed sin, broken by the guilt that pressed upon Him as standing in the place of guilty man. Yet at times when the spirit is made contrite, the heart is softened, opened, and your faith does get just a glimpse of Him, you receive of this bread and say, "My soul could live upon Him, He is all I need, He is altogether lovely. When you can so speak of Him in the view of faith He can say of you "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." This eating of the bread is the communion of the soul with Jesus, walking with Him, the dependence of faith upon Him. It is a wonderful provision:

"Eat of my bread", He says, and "drink of the wine which I have mingled"; not only bread but wine. Wine sometimes in the Scriptures denotes the love of Christ; it is compared to wine in the Canticles several times, "We will remember thy love more than wine". It is more choice, more rich, more rare, more exhilarating, more strengthening. As wine is strength to the body, as wine maketh glad the heart of man, so the love of Christ is strength to the soul, enriching, exhilarating, refreshing to the soul.

This is the good wine of the Kingdom. "Come, drink of it", He says

of this wine. It is taken as the blessed provision of the Gospel in connection with the bread and sometimes too in the Canticles where the Lord speaks of coming into His garden and of drinking of the wine, He invites His people to partake of this. "Drink of the wine which I have mingled". But I suggest here that the wine may intend more particularly the atonement of Christ which is received by His people whereby they receive the forgiveness of sins. As His body was broken so was His blood shed on the tree and this drinking of the wine is, I believe, the receiving by faith in a spiritual experience of His atonement. This is drinking of the wine. "Not only so" said the Apostle "but we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Now when He brings spiritual provision into your heart, a taste of forgiveness, when you get a view of those flowing wounds as flowing for your guilty sins, of His blood as applied to your conscience, purging it from dead works when the true liberty of the Gospel is felt under a view of an agonising, dying Saviour; when that fountain is opened for sin and uncleanness for you, you receive His atonement and drink of the wine. This is a gracious invitation to guilty sinners burdened with sin, stung by guilt like those who were bitten by the fiery serpent and were told to look to the brazen serpent that was lifted up in the wilderness; so Christ said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life". O this is receiving of His body by faith as a suitable Saviour, a sacrifice, appeasing justice and satisfying the sinner. This is real satisfaction, it brings heavenly peace, divine comfort, into the soul. "Drink of the wine that I have mingled", that is prepared. This wine is prepared for His people to receive by faith, by His sufferings and death, and thus represented by the piercing of His side from which once flowed forth blood and water. "Which I have mingled", mingled in a suitable way so that it can be received by His people.

In concluding it may also have some reference to that which the Lord has appointed unto us in this life, in the trials and

sufferings and afflictions that divine providence has laid on us as though the Lord would say "drink of the wine which I have mingled". Take this cup; it is that which in My love I have appointed for you, every ingredient being necessary for your health and benefit; drink of it. What is this drinking of the wine which the Lord has mingled in this sense? "Drink of it", this is to be still and know that He is God and to resign ourselves by faith, by His grace, to what He may dispose to lay upon us of the afflictions or tribulations. He has mingled the cup, you see, He has mingled the cup, the joys and the sorrows, the sufferings, the griefs, the bereavements, the losses, the afflictions, the changes; He has mingled the cup and He says, Drink of it. This is greatly to our benefit, for when we rebel against the strokes of His hand or the burdens that He may lay upon us, the dispensations of His providence, we are kicking against the pricks, but when we can drink of the wine which He has mingled we shall find it to our help for then will the bitter be sweet and the medicine food.

Well, may the Lord grant us admission to this blessed provision. We are but few this evening, but we are privileged to meet, and if we get just a sip of this great Gospel, if the Lord brings it to us, it can be a good evening. O may He grant it, that His children may be favoured by His grace with this rich provision and feel the warmth, not only of the gracious invitation, but in the eating of this bread and drinking of His blood. Amen