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Address given at Hope Chapel, Redhill, by Mr. L. S. B. Hyde,  
on Tuesday, 2nd November, 1982 at the funeral of Mrs. C. E. Raven

LIBRARY OF THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTIST

Ecclesiastes 12  
John 14. 1-6, 25-31

Our dear, departed sister is a link with the past. Ninety-eight years, nearly ninety-nine, takes us back nearly a century, and she could relate instances of meeting with people and hearing her first pastor, Mr. Grey Hazlerigg at Leicester, who to many of us are just names. But she knew these people and she was influenced by their own way of life. And those were good days, very different days from the present when, to a large extent, there is a great declension in churches and chapels everywhere.

It is clear that she feared God very early in her life. She was always very interested in history and she has said that even from a very young age she was fully acquainted with the history of the Bible simply because of her interest in historical events. She also made it clear that though this interest drew her attention to the Bible and to the accounts therein, yet it was not salvation, and she had to prove that there is a greater work than just having an interest in and historical knowledge of that side of the Scriptures.

She was clear in her mind up to the end of her life and it was always an interesting occasion to visit her to hear of some of those former times when the Lord had blessed her soul, showed her the vanity of this life and showed to her that there was something more. Whatever attainments she may have reached or achievements, yet nevertheless she saw as the wise man observed in the chapter in Ecclesiastes we read: "Vanity of vanities, ... all is vanity." And if this is true, which it is, then it will be a blessing indeed if there should be those preachers made wise by the Spirit of God who taught the people knowledge, who taught the people that knowledge that salvation is of the Lord, that that which is to be known in this life in the soul and ultimately in heaven with the people of God is a blessing which will far supersede anything that this life can offer.

It may seem strange, but we come into this remarkable work of God in having our eyes opened to see that in Christ there is that which exceeds everything that this world can give. You know, it has been observed even by gracious men that their learning must be secondary to the grace of God. Dr. John Owen, a celebrated Puritan minister in Charles II's time, was speaking to the king on one occasion and the king said to him, "Why do you go and listen to that tinker? I can't understand why you go and listen to that tinker." (That was John Bunyan.) Dr. Owen said, "I would give away all my learning to have the grace that that man has." So what a wonderful blessing it is for the Spirit of God to reveal it as he did to our beloved sister, that there is something so rich in the grace of God. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves."

In this chapter we are exhorted, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." And we are told later on that the time will come when various infirmities will overtake us. This was sadly true with our dear, departed sister in the blindness and the deafness which, to a large extent, shut her out from this life altogether. And yet she was patient. Many of you will know that she was a very active person in various spheres. It was through her instrumentality that the Horley Auxiliary of the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society was brought into being, and that has been going on something over sixty years now. When the Bethesda Home here was opened, being the first one, she was an early member of the Home Committee, and so therefore she was not

secluded; her interests were very broad. Yet in them all she was continually beholding the work of God. It was not what she did, but what the Lord did, maybe through her. Her principal consideration was that the Lord's name may be honoured and glorified in all things.

She was a woman of a feeling religion and she knew when God spoke to her. Furthermore, when God spoke to her with respect to certain matters, then she was able to do them. Also, she knew the love of God shed abroad in her own soul.

Now the days came when she was not able to do these things and she had a religion that stood her in good stead when everything else failed. When all her faculties became too weak, yet she had a religion, though sometimes she was tried and anxious and wondered whether after all she would reach the heavenly shore. Yet because her anchor was cast within the veil and her hope was in God she has come, we believe, safely through and by the power of Christ is now with Him for ever and ever.

We may just notice the concluding words in this chapter in Ecclesiastes. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Now when we think of commandments, then men will often think of the ten commandments, and they will try to do this and try to do that, but there is one commandment which we must never overlook, because if we do, however we may feel to have kept the other commandments, we shall fall in the end.

This is the commandment that we would particularly draw your attention to: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." That was the sum and substance of our dear sister's faith. By the grace of God she believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; she believed on the work of Christ, the finished work of Christ. In all our lives we may well say, "Well there is something I have got to finish," and for the most part we have to say, "Well, that was unfinished." But with God's work it never comes to its conclusion until it is finished. There is no interruption and hence we find the hymn putting it like this:

"Thou shalt see My glory soon,  
When the work of grace is done;" - finished -  
"Partner of My throne shalt be;  
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou Me?"

And now our dear friend and sister has entered upon that finished work, although the works of God in God's mind and purpose were finished before the world begun.

May the Lord grant us a gracious exercise with regard to the things of eternity. We are all hastening on; every day we are getting nearer to the end of our life and then we might well consider what is written in the Scripture when one was so prospered that he said he could fill all his barns and he had much goods laid up for many years to come, but God spoke to him that night and said, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall these things be?"