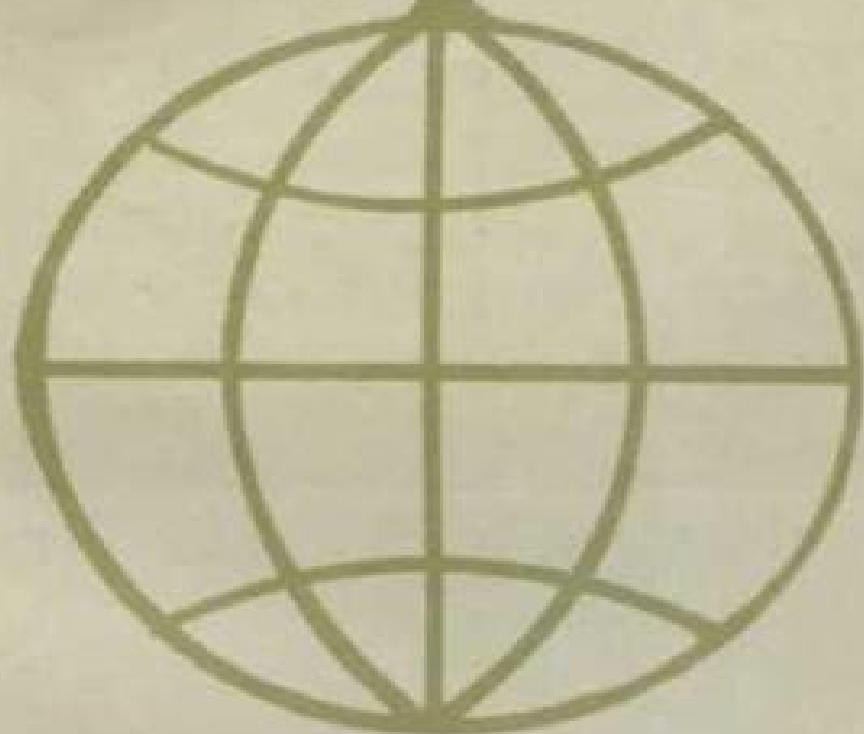


the
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WATCHMAN NEE

The Church: The Building of God Upon This Rock

"According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise master-builder I laid a foundation," writes Paul to the Corinthians. What was this foundation of which he speaks? It was certainly nothing peculiar to Paul, nor did it originate with him. It was something which the apostles had in common, and we must turn back briefly to the Gospels and to the words of the Lord Jesus Himself for a first definition of it. Hear Him at Caesarea Philippi, as He addresses Simon Peter in these remarkable terms: *"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church"* (Matt. 16:18).

It is important to understand this passage, for as we shall see, it really defines the point from which, later, Paul in his turn begins. What did Jesus imply? Thou art Petros, a stone—one who is to be builded with others into the basic structure of My Church (see Eph. 2:20; Rev. 21:19)—and on this Rock I will build. What then is the Church? It is a structure of living stones founded upon a rock. And what is the rock? Here it is that we need to be very clear. It is a confession based upon a revelation of a Person.

Jesus, who never seemed to care what men said or thought about Him, had suddenly put the question to His disciples: *"Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"* Then, turning from the views and speculations of others, He went a step further: *"Who say ye that I am?"* His challenge drew forth spontaneously from Peter the historic confession: *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Thus it is true to say that the Church is built upon a confession, for to "say" is to confess, not merely to hazard an opinion. Moreover it was no empty confession such as might today be based on study or deduction or "point of view." As Jesus made clear, Peter's confession was called forth by a God-given revelation. *"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."* And further, it was a revelation of the true character and meaning of Jesus, and not merely of facts about Him—not merely, that is, of what the Gospels tell us He did, but of what and who He is. As to His person, He is the Son of the living God; as to His office and ministry, He is the Christ. All this was contained in Peter's words.

This dual discovery was later, as we have said, to become Paul's starting point. Read again, for example, his opening words to the Romans. The Jesus whom he had persecuted is now, he affirms, *"declared the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Rom. 1:4). All he writes to the churches is founded upon this revelation concerning Jesus. From everlasting to everlasting He is the Son of God: that is the first thing. But there came a day when, taking upon Himself the

form of a servant, He became also the Christ, the Anointed One, God's Minister. All God's purpose, all God's hopes are bound up with that risen Christ. It is He who has been separated and anointed as God's sure foundation.

But if He is the foundation, we are the living stones. To recognize Christ is to recognize also the Christians, and God's plan through them for the universe. For we shall be of little use to God if we know only our salvation, and have caught no glimpse of the purpose for which He has brought us into relation to His Son. How many claim to have the anointing of the Spirit, and yet seem quite unaware that the object for which the Spirit is given to Christ and to His members is one and the same! It is directed to one and the same divine end. To see this is suddenly to see the extreme smallness of all our work that in the past has been unrelated to that end.

Let us be clear about this fact, that the Church is not merely a company of people whose sins are forgiven and who are going to heaven; it is a company of those whose eyes have been opened by God to recognize the person and work of the Son. This is something far more than man can see or know or handle—far more, even, than the outward experiences of those disciples who for three years, as His constant companions, ate and slept, walked and lived with Him. Truly theirs was a great happiness, and how many of us would not gladly exchange places with Peter for a few days? But even their experience did not unite them with Him as a part of the Church. Only revelation from God as to who Christ is can do that to you and me. The Rock is Christ—yes, but a revealed Christ, not a theoretical or doctrinal Christ. Twenty years among Christians and a lifetime of exercise in theology will not build us into His Church. It is inner, not outer knowledge that brings that about.

"This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). Personal knowledge is required.

God's Building

Yes, Jesus Christ is the true Rock. He Himself is the *"precious corner stone of sure foundation"* (Isa. 28:16). Each child of God who has life and is redeemed by His blood stands upon this foundation, and upon it he builds. Unbelievers have no part here at all. Whether it be the Church universal or its local expression, the principle is one and the same: Christ is the *"tried stone"* to whom are brought and fashioned and fitted.

Paul takes this as his point of departure, for certainly it is the only possible one. *"We are ... God's building,"* he writes to the Corinthians and then goes on: *"As a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid,*

which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:9-11). In other words, the choice of a foundation is no longer our responsibility. God Himself has laid it, and no man can lay any other; no man can begin anywhere else. The apostles witness to this, and God does not ask our approval! He has done it, and He knows what He is doing. Whenever a soul comes to Christ, and Christ enters into the life, that foundation is laid. On it the child of God stands, on it he builds. Not only is he a living stone, a part of the building, but he is also a fellow-builder with the apostles. And it matters greatly what he puts on the foundation.

God looks for quality. He is not so much concerned with whether we do the work as with what we use to do it. Many argue, "If my work is well done, surely that is enough!" But God asks not merely whether we have served Him, given ourselves to His work, and built on the foundation, important though these things are. His question goes deeper. What, He inquires, have we used to do these things? He looks not only at the things done but at the materials used. Among those who preach the gospel, He is aware of a difference of quality, and readily distinguishes the solid from the superficial worker. Among those who see spiritual truth, He recognizes a like difference in their seeing. Among those who pray, He discerns what lies behind each one's "Amen." This is what Paul means when he warns us: *"If any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire"* (verses 12,13).

Material for Building

It is weight that counts. Wood, hay, stubble are cheap, light, temporary; gold silver, precious stones are costly, weighty, eternal. Here is the key to value. The heavy metals, the gold of the divine character and glory, the silver of His redemptive work: these are the materials He prizes. Not merely what we preach, please note, but what we are, weighs with God; not doctrine, but the character of Christ wrought out in us by God's orderings, by God's testings, by the Spirit's patient workings. Work that is of God is work that has been to the Cross. When our work has been that way, we can rest assured that it will in the end survive the fire. Not, "Where is the need most evident? What ideas and resources have I got? How much can I do? How soon can I put that doctrine into practice?" but, "Where is God moving? What is there of Him here? How far does He will for me to go? What is the mind of the Spirit on this?"—these are the questions of the truly crucified servant. He recognizes God's "Go" and His "Speak," but also His "Wait," and His "Go," but say only so much. Aware of his own weakness and emptiness, the greatest lesson he has to learn is to commit his way to God and wait to see Him move.

The problem lies in our failure to understand that, in God's work, man in himself is of no use. Wood, hay, stubble, these suggest what is essentially of man and of the flesh. They imply what is common, ordinary, easily and cheaply acquired—and of course perishable. Grass today may clothe the earth with beauty, but where is it tomorrow? Human intellect may give us a grasp of Scripture; natural eloquence may have the power to attract; emotion may carry us along; feelings may seem to supply a guiding sense—but to what? God looks for more solid values than these. Many of us can preach well and accurately enough, but we are wrong. We talk of the flesh but don't know its perils; we talk of the Spirit, but would we recognize Him were He really to move us? Too much of our work for God depends not on His will and purpose, but on our feelings—or even, God forgive us! on the weather. Like chaff and stubble, it is carried away by the wind. Given the right mood we may accomplish a lot, but just as easily, in adverse conditions, we may give up entirely. No, as the fire will one day prove, work that is dependent on feelings or on the wind of revival is of little use to God. When God commands, feelings or no feelings, we must learn to do.

The God-prized values are costly. Those unwilling to pay the price will never come by them. Grace is free, but this isn't. Only a high price buys costly stones. Many a time we shall want to cry out "This is costing too much!" Yet the things wrought by God through the lessons we learn under His hand, though we be long in learning them—these are the really worthwhile things. Time is an element in this. In the light of God, some things perish of themselves; there is no need to wait for the fire. It is in what remains, in what has stood God's test of time, that true worth lies. Here are found the precious stones, formed in what

God graciously gives us of sorrow and trouble, as He puts us "through fire and water" to bring us to His wealthy place. Man sees the outward appearance; God sees the inward cost. Do not wonder that you experience all sorts of trials. Accepted from His hand they are the sure way to a life that is precious to Him.

May God have mercy on the clever people who pass on merely what they have read or received from another. Not even speaking for God can be done without cost. It is all a question of whether the person's life is light or weighty, for weight shows the quality of the material. Two men may use the same words, but in the one you meet something you cannot get past; in the other— nothing. The difference is in the man. You always know when you are in the presence of spiritual worth. No amount of theorizing about the Lord's return, for example, will take the place of a life that has been daily lived looking for Him. There is no escaping this difference, and no substitute for the real thing. Alas, some of us are so unlike our words that it might be better if we said less about spiritual things.

Do not wonder, then, at God's concern for the materials of His house.

Imitation jewelry may have a certain beauty, but what woman who has once possessed the real thing would give it another thought? The apostle Paul leaves us in no doubt of his own valuation. Ten coolie-loads of stubble can never approach the price of one single gemstone. All flesh, all mere feelings, all that is essentially of man, is grass and must vanish away. What is of Christ, the gold, the silver, the costly stones, these alone are eternal, incorruptible, imperishable.

It is this lasting character of God's Church that must now claim our attention.

Eternal in the Heavens

It is in the later writings of the apostle Paul, and more especially in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that the eternal nature of the Church of Christ is given the greatest prominence. As the House, as the Body, as the Bride of Christ, as the people of God, the Church is a special theme of Ephesians. We have the Lord of the Body (Ch. 1), the material of the House (Ch. 2), the eternal mystery of the Church (Ch. 3), the growth of the Body (Ch. 4), the preciousness of the Bride (Ch. 5), and the warfare of the people of God (Ch. 6); and every one of these is seen in an eternal context. We have already touched on the third of these,¹ and we now have to speak a little about Chapters 1, 2 and 5.

What is God doing today? Ephesians helps us to answer this question. First the apostle takes a backward look. *"He chose us in him before the foundation of the world."* *"In him...we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will"* (1:4,11). Here he shows us God working, not to a hoped-for end, but from a settled purpose. It is because God's eternal work first reaches back into the past that it then also reaches on into *"the ages to come"* (2:7).

Next the apostle looks forward. God has, he assures us, *"made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to in his good pleasure which he purposed him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ"* (1:9,10). In this last clause he summarizes and defines God's work in time; it is *"to sum up all things in Christ."* To leave no loose ends of any kind, to have nothing out of harmony in His universe, to see realized in fulness in His own the oneness that now they only taste: that is His goal.

But instead, what is our common experience today? Perhaps a group of us are together in God's presence, and all that passes between us is so evidently of Christ, and therefore so good, that we feel we have touched the fulness. But then, at a point, one of us who should know better speaks or prays of himself—"after the flesh," as Paul would put it—and the life goes out of our fellowship. The spell is broken, and the thing we tasted has eluded us. Here on earth, how we long that such fellowship in Christ should be, in some measure at least, the

normal experience in our churches and in our homes: "all one in Christ Jesus," with nothing that is outside of Him! How we long and labor for this, and yet how hard it seems to realize it! We have to confess that to bring it to pass is impossible to us. Yet we praise God that He calls us to have a share in this "impossible" work.

In this letter Paul points us both back to paradise and forward to paradise, back to what God did before the creation (1:4) and on to what He is going to do to all generations (2:7), both of them in respect of the Church. God's Son Himself is revealed in the Church, which is why she is here described as "His Body" (1:23). As a man's personality is expressed through his body, so is Christ displayed through the Church. She is in this age the vessel which, in a spiritual sense, contains and reveals Christ.

To be found "working together with God" does not mean that many men are called to "help" God. It means that what God has determined to do, the Church must make way for Him to do in her.

And if it is indeed God's purpose forever to reveal His wisdom and power through her, then surely to miss this is to miss everything. Paul himself held *that* whatever else he did counted for nothing if he failed to apprehend that for which he was apprehended by Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12). Ask yourself, "The work I have done, that for which I have lived and poured out my strength, what is it?" May God give us grace once again, if need be, to weigh our work in the balance of the sanctuary. We dare not live for a small thing. When, in the light of His Word, we see God's purpose in His Son, everything is transformed. We still preach, but we see differently. Nothing we do thereafter stands alone. All is for one thing—the eternal selfrevelation of Christ through His Body.

A second wonderful thing that Ephesians discloses to us is this, that not only is the Church's work eternal; in the sight of God, it is also in heaven. The place of blessing where she is seated, her standing, life, ministry, warfare—everything is in "the heavens" and from "the heavens" (1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10; 4: 8-12; 6:12). This helps us to define further what it should mean to work for God. To create an earthly thing is easy for us. If we are content with an outward, technical Christianity—a "movement" based on an earthly foundation, with an earthly structure and organization—then it is quite possible to do the thing ourselves. But we have been apprehended for something utterly different from this. The Church is spiritual, and her work is heavenly. It must never become earthbound.

David "served his own generation," and slept (Acts 13:36). He could not serve two! Where today we seek to perpetuate our work by setting up an organization or society or system, the Old Testament saints served their own day and passed on. This is an important principle of life. Wheat is sown, grows ears,

is reaped, and then the whole plant, even to the root, is ploughed out. That is the Church, never rooted permanently in the earth. God's work is spiritual to the point of having no earthly roots, no smell of earth on it at all. Men pass on, but the Lord remains. The spiritual testimony of believers is to be heavenly, not earthly.

Everything to do with the Church must be up-to-date and living, meeting the present—one could even say the passing—needs of the hour. Never must it become fixed, static. God Himself takes away His workers, but He gives others. Our work suffers, but His never does. Nothing touches Him. He is still God.

One New Man

One very interesting consequence of this heavenly character of the Church appears in the second chapter, and in a parallel passage in Colossians. In Ephesians 2 Paul sets out to show how two mutually hostile elements in the world of his day, the Jews and the non-Jews, have been brought together by Him to become one "holy temple in the Lord." What he has to say concerning this "habitation of God in the Spirit" is surprisingly different from what most Christians say today. Today it is widely held that, if the people of God of different race or background or Christian denomination are gathered on the agreed ground of a creed or "basis of faith," that is of the essence of the Church. To them, all sorts of Christians, of no matter what language or tradition or viewpoint or connection, together form the Church, and this is not affected by what various things they may carry in with them from outside.

The correction for this kind of thinking is the word "new" in verse 15: "... *that he might create in himself of the twain one new man.*" We think Jewish believers plus Gentile believers (or whatever other groupings are in our minds at the moment) are the Church. But to leave us in no doubt as to what the Holy Spirit means, Paul expresses the same thing even more explicitly in Colossians 3:11. Writing once again of the new man, he says that within its sphere: "*there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman: but Christ is all, and in all.*" If we understand him aright this means that, if we want to be Christians, we cannot be anything else but Christians!

The trouble is that much of our thinking about these things starts from a false premise. Let me try to illustrate.

Imagine yourself standing outside the door of the Church and symbolically giving away bread to the hungry. Any who care to do so are free to come and take a little, regardless of what they may be engaged in or encumbered with. All sorts and conditions of men come, and they eat. Are they not qualified to enter? And will they live together peaceably if they do? Your first reaction may be to

answer yes, regarding the rabble that have gathered as partaking of a fellowship that unifies them on the basis of what they have received. But wait a minute! What about the bulky articles in their hands, and the burdens on their shoulders? What about the animals they drive before them, and the cartloads of furniture and merchandise they drag behind? You are overlooking what comes in with them when they come in. They have with them all the makings of a busy market, or worse!

Look again. The door is narrow. A Cross overshadows it, and beyond it lies a tomb. If the bread you distribute speaks of a shared life, these symbolize something else. They tell us that in entering, not only is there something to be received; there is something also to be relinquished. *"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity"* He made both one (Eph. 2:15). There was in fallen man something to be broken down that constituted a positive barrier to fellowship, and that had to go.

We cannot evade this other symbol. We cannot escape this second condition of fellowship in life. Whatever our nationality or color or Christian denomination, we must die, for only those who have been crucified with Christ, only those who have let go of something, find themselves at home there. Natural traits, national rivalries, class traditions, personal preferences, all the things that we would instinctively clutch to ourselves and seek to carry over, as it were, from the old life and order—all are by the Cross excluded. God's "new man" is altogether and only new. Inside those limits, what is of Christ alone is found, and He must be "all and in all."

From the Beginning

From what we have already said it will be evident that Ephesians sets out to give us the highest New Testament revelation of the Church. This appears again in the order in which the Church's history is treated in this letter. Here, as we have suggested, we not only see her as from sin redeemed; we are shown too her course from the beginning of creation. Whereas Romans introduces sin in Chapter 1, and only approaches the subject of the Body of Christ in Chapter 12 after dealing at length with the justification and sanctification of the individual sinner, Ephesians begins differently, going back further into history to do so. It is striking that, as early as Ephesians 1, the Church comes into view as already "chosen in Christ," and that even though the question of sin follows hard after this statement, it is not treated at any length until Chapter 2. The letter as a whole sets out, in fact, to give us the Church's complete history, comprising both her place in the fulness of God's purpose in Christ and the work of God's grace by which He redeemed her to bring her there.

This view of the Church goes back to the very start of things. It sees her

there in the mind of God much as Eve appears in the second chapter of Genesis, before the irruption of sin into the creation.² This comparison makes Eve unusual, even unique, among the women of the Old Testament who may be felt to be types of the Church. In each of them some aspect of the Church is depicted. We see her presented to the bridegroom (Rebekah), chosen from among the Gentiles (Asenath), passing through the wilderness (Zipporah), receiving her inheritance in the land (Achsah), altogether dependent upon her kinsman-redeemer (Ruth), and militant for her Lord (Abigail). Yet, interesting as is this sequence of types, none is so instructive as that presented by Eve. For they all succeed the Fall, and therefore directly or indirectly have moral issues and responsibilities associated with them. But Eve, viewed as in that blessed period before sin entered, remains uniquely typical of the Church as the one who fulfils all God's desire for her in union with His Son.

For Eve was one and alone; and she was absolutely for Adam. *"Have ye not read,"* said Jesus, *"that he which made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh?"* (Matt. 19:4,5). At this point the spiritual type, preceding the entry of sin and for the present untouched by it, expresses most perfectly God's original and eternal intention to have a Bride for His Son.

Moreover the figure of the Church that Eve presents is a double figure, and this may help us to understand Paul's language in Ephesians. First, as a part of Adam, taken from him in sleep, she was his body. Then, created, perfected, and brought again to him, she became his bride. Other created things were brought to him, but not being of him they could not be his helpmeet. This distinguishes Eve from the rest of the creation. It also typically distinguishes the Church of Christ from the entire old creation today.

For sin has entered. The Fall is a fact of history. *"Through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners."* *"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."* The work of redemption thus became a divine necessity. The Cross had to become history, not merely now to fulfil the figure of sleep and waking and new creation foreshadowed by the sleep of Adam. It must deal as well with the new situation the Fall has created.³ Sin and death must by it be met and done away. Christ Jesus must humble Himself for our sakes, becoming obedient even to the death of the cross. The price must be paid and Satan's power broken. Every individual sinner must come to the Saviour and find remission of sins through the atoning blood. So it is that we see ourselves—and rightly—as in the valley of sin, the trophies of redemption. That,

as I said is Romans. Yet even after all this history, Ephesians finds God choosing, rather, to view us as within His eternal purpose, altogether from Christ and altogether for Christ.

Here is the miracle of divine hope, that even the disaster of the Fall could not frustrate but could only hinder. Adam has sinned; and apart from the grace of God, man in the flesh—yes, even redeemed man—can, and would repeatedly, sin. But by new birth there is planted in him that of Christ which sin cannot touch, and he is commanded to live by that. The very life of Christ

Himself, released by the Cross and distributed to His members, supplies them with the power to do so. By it, sin's dominion over them is broken; in its resurrection newness, they walk (Rom. 6:4,6). There is no substitute. It alone can meet God's demands.

And it is to be shared, for in the sphere of divine purpose there are not many individual vessels, but one Vessel. God created one Eve, not many men. Outside of Christ, I personally do not possess life; outside of the Church, His Body, I have not the means to live the life I possess as it should be lived.

But now, not only do I have the life; I have also with me the Giver of life Himself. Let us turn for a moment to the latter part of Ephesians 5. In the passage from verses 25-30 I think we can distinguish these two things, the Bride and the Body. In verses 25-27 we have the first law of love, "*Husbands, love your wives,*" and it is based upon two things: the past tense of Christ's love for His Bride, expressed in His death on her behalf, and the future tense of His purpose for her. This is the eternal view. Again in verses 28-30 we have a second law of love, "*Husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies,*" and this is based upon one thing: the present tense of Christ's love for that which is, in essence, Himself, His Body. This latter is the view today. The first passage sees Christ and His Church apart, having separate existence, and is concerned with her union as Bride, with Him, the Giver of life. The second sees Christ and His Church spiritually identified without separate existence, and concerns her identification and present unity of life with Him as His Body. From One there have become two; from being two they will again be one. This is the mystery of the Church, that all that is from Christ returns to Him.

The work of Christ now is to love and cherish her, to protect and preserve her from disease and blemish, caring thus for her because He loves her as His own self—because, speaking reverently, the Church is Christ! How does He nourish and preserve her? "*By the washing of water with the word*" (verse 26). In this verse "the word" is not *logos*, the great, objective, eternal Word of God; it is *rhema*, the smaller more personal and subjective spoken word. "*The words (rhemata) that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life*" (John 6:63).

Rhema always suggests to us something very personal and intimate: *"Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."* *"Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace."* *"The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness."* *"We toiled all night, and took nothing: but at thy word I will let down the nets."* *"He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in*

Galilee.....And they remembered his words."

"The Holy Ghost fell on them And I remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, ... Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." (Luke 1:38; 2:29; 3:2; 5:5; 24:6-8; Acts 11:15,16).

How is the Church's return to the plan of God effected? "By water with the word": the water of His risen life, checking us and exposing, by contrast with itself, all that needs to be eliminated; and His Spirit-spoken word, dealing with what has been revealed, and renewing us by cleansing away the blemishes. Sometimes maybe the word comes first and then the life, but the effect is the same. *"The second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word And when he thought thereon, he wept"* (Mark 14:72). The Church to which God's word has no power to appeal is no Church. But the word is His instrument of cleansing and renewal. If only we realize this, and allow it to do its work, though we may fail, we shall not long remain unaware that we have done so.

And blessed be God, the day will come when the Body taking its character wholly from Him who is its life, will have been made ready to become the Bride, His helpmeet. Because, as His Body, she has attained to the measure of the stature of His fulness (4:13) she will be presented to Him at the last, *"a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing"* (5:27). Wholly like Him because wholly of Him, she will be wholly for Him. She has expressed His glory; she will be presented to Him clothed in that glory, with no scar of sin, no wrinkle of age, no time wasted, no flaw of any kind, but holy and without blemish. Christ, by His word, has left in her no ground for Satan or demons, men or angels—no, nor yet even for God Himself—to lay any charge against her. For in her, now, all is new, and all is of God.

Should we not, then, if this is to be its blessed effect, greatly treasure the word that God speaks to us today?

¹ Paul speaks of the Church as a "mystery"—that is to say, a divine secret, held in reserve through the ages and only now made known by God to His servants through "the preaching of Jesus Christ" in this new day of the Spirit (Rom. 16:25,26).

² While the Church was no doubt revealed to man only long after the Fall, we must, I think, allow that she was planned by God before it.

³ This is perhaps the reason why, unlike that of believers, the death of Jesus is never described in the New Testament merely in terms of "sleep."