

Prayer Meeting Address
given at
Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham
by **Mr. G. D. Buss**
on **Wednesday evening, 5th February, 2014**

Text: “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.” *Psalms 46, verse 5.*

There are two places where God especially dwells. We sometimes speak of His omnipresence: His everywhere present Being, which is true. There is no place in earth, heaven or hell where His presence, in one way or another, is not to be found. But, there are two places where He *especially* dwells. One is in that blessed place above where the throne of grace is established. There the dear Mediator sits, our Lord Jesus Christ; the triune God. All the glory of the Trinity is seen there. And that congregation, that perfect Church above, is gathered around adoring Father, Son and Holy Ghost. That is the Church triumphant. The Church, having passed through this time state, the Church having passed through the hour and article of death; proved it was conquered for them by the ‘death of deaths, and hell’s Destruction:’ our Lord Jesus. And, now free from all sin, sorrow, temptation, burdens, cares, trials, troubles, fears and doubts they, in perfect peace, stand around the throne. That word in 1 John is fulfilled in its fullness: “perfect love casteth out fear.” Heaven is the place of perfect love. This is the church triumphant.

But then, there is another place where God dwells, just as really and just as truly as He does in the Church triumphant. It is what we call the Church militant: the Church still on the battle ground here below, the Church having to contend with the world, the flesh and the devil, the thorns in the flesh, crooks in the lot, heavy burdens, iron bars, brazen gates, rough places, dark clouds, fiery trials and deep waters. This is the Church militant. Now, friends, let me tell you three things about this. First of all, the Church militant is as precious to God as the Church triumphant is above. True; in heaven within the veil, where Jesus is

seen *without* a veil between: the overflowing, overwhelming (I was going to say the baptising) love of God is felt in a measure we can hardly comprehend. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." But, the Church of God on earth is just as loved, just as cared for and just as much in the hand of Almighty God as those who are safe within the veil. Our comforts are less and our darkness is great, but in God's account there is no difference whatsoever in His love towards them.

Let me tell you the second thing. The Church above is still in God's hand. They are maintained in that glorious state eternally by the eternal covenant "ordered in all things, and sure." All the joys they have flow from the King of kings and Lord of lords. All the pleasures they enjoy are from that river that flows that we read of in Revelation chapter 22: "clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." And, the Church on earth is just as supported and just as upheld. True, she may not feel it. Often she cries out: "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing." Often she cries out, like Job: "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" Often she cannot see either where she is or where the next step will be. But, in God's account, that word is as true in the Church militant as in the church triumphant: "underneath are the everlasting arms." Bless God for it.

The third thing we must say, is this: the Church triumphant is never without the memory and the view of Jesus as the Lamb of God. They are continually doing what John the Baptist did, by faith, when here below: beholding "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." That is their joy, and that is their fellowship with God in Christ Jesus. Dear friends, the Church triumphant is no different, in that sense, to the Church militant here below. Yes, do not we, who are living members of Christ's mystical body here, cannot we say that we, in our little measure (and it is only a little measure, we know), value the blood? What would we do without it? Where would we be without the blood of Christ to cleanse us from all sin? What else would cleanse your guilty conscience? What else could remove the debt that you owe to God's holy law? What else can bring you nigh to God? Oh! Dear

friends, the boldness we read of is so essential here below: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” That is how we enter by faith while we are here below, and it is by the *same* blood of Jesus that we shall enter glory above. It is a sprinkled door, door posts and lintels. Not with the blood of a bull or a goat. No. It is by the blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son: that new and living way. You say: ‘What has all this to do with our text tonight?’ It is everything to do with it. These great privileges, these foundation truths: these things, dear friends, are the security of the saints, whether they be in heaven or on earth. They are the essence of our text this evening.

We are told four things for the encouragement of the Church, here below. “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.” These are four things that our text tells us that are the privilege of the Church of God, here below.

First of all, “God is in the midst of her.” He is in the midst of the Church here below in two ways. Firstly, He is within every member of His mystical body. They would not be members without that union. This is what unites them to God in Christ Jesus: that living, vital union of ‘sovereign grace o’er sin abounding:’ the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul, the Spirit of Christ. It is God in the midst of His dear people. It is that which binds the Church of God here below. It is not a social religion. What binds the people of God here below is what is in Christ within them, and what they see of Christ in others. What a question! Do they see anything of Christ in you or in me? But, God is in the midst of His church here below. As Polycarp, one of the early martyrs, said when he was standing before the emperor ‘I am the God-bearer.’ The emperor laughed at him. ‘The God-bearer.’ So is every member of Christ’s Church. They bear within them nothing less than the work of the Holy Ghost. That is what makes them a child of God, and it is the very life of God in their soul. Without that life they would be a dead, lifeless, fruitless, barren branch, giving no honour or glory to God. Dear friends, you cannot live without it.

But then, God is in the midst of His Church in another way. Just as the Lord Jesus Christ, in Revelation 1 to 3 walked in the midst of the golden candlesticks, He is present in His church. He said, when He ascended on high, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Although we cannot see Him, yet wherever His dear Spirit is, there He is. We sometimes sing that well known hymn, 911, which illustrates our text this evening. The good hymn writer says

“As members of His mystic frame,
Together met to bless His name;
While humbly at His throne we bow,
As “God with us” He’s present now.”

J. Kent

He is present in His blessed Word, He is present in His gospel and He is present in the fellowship of the saints, if, indeed, it be a spiritual fellowship and not a carnal one. He is present: present to hear the prayers of His dear people, present to make the Word of God a blessing to them, present to bless the ordinances of His house to them, present to be the great Head of the Church, the Master of the assemblies of His dear people, present to hear their cries, understand their groans, mourn with them in their tears and undertake for them in their sorrows. Friends, He is present here tonight in Old Baptist Chapel. We cannot see Him with the natural eye, but I hope that sometimes we have felt Him to be here, and it has been like that Bethel of which Jacob spoke: “surely the LORD is in this place.” “God is in the midst of her.”

The next thing we read is, because of this, “she shall not be moved.” What does that mean? God’s people *are* often moved, in one sense. I know Paul said: “But none of these things move me.” That was a moment of great faith for the apostle Paul. But, you will know that sometimes we are like “a reed shaken with the wind.” We have to be honest: sin and temptation, the world, the flesh, the devil, troubles and trials come and we seem *very* moveable. We wonder where the scene will end. Yet, our text stands: “she shall not be moved.” What does it

mean? Firstly, she shall never be moved from the heart of her great High Priest

“Christ bears the names of all His saints,
Deep on His heart engraved;
Attentive to the state and wants
Of all His love has saved.”

J. Newton

No one can remove one of His dear people from the heart of the Saviour. The weakest lamb, the feeblest of the flock are all there on His bosom and in His heart. They have a place established there by sovereign grace.

Secondly, we have this. They are in His hand. None shall pluck them out of His hand: that wounded hand, that saving hand, that sanctifying hand, that justifying hand and that omnipotent hand. Oh! The devil shall never pluck them out of His hand, nor His Father’s hand either, for He and His Father are one. And, they will never be moved from His shoulders, for the government of His church is upon His shoulders. He has not delegated it to any other. He undertakes for His people. He supplies the grace they need, the wisdom they need, the strength they need and the patience they need. It all comes from His dear hand, and He manages everything for them “by the way and to the end.” Oh! Those of you tonight who feel to be moved and vulnerable because you have been looking to self and looking to some human arm; may you look to this immovable work: “she shall not be moved.” And, of course, underneath is that blessed foundation of which Paul speaks: ‘For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ’ If ever the Holy Ghost has built you on that foundation you will never be moved from it. Good Martin Luther said ‘I tremble on the Rock, but the Rock does not tremble under me.’ Oh! Poor, trembling saint, listen! “She shall not be moved.”

It also means that “she shall not be moved” from the path God has ordained for her to be in. How Saul tried to move David out of the way!

But he could not; God had put him there. How Joseph's brethren tried hard to undo the revelation given to him! But they could not. "He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth. For He performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with Him." "She shall not be moved."

Thirdly, "God shall help her." She needs help. He is the helper of the helpless. We need help every day; help in the battle with indwelling sin, help in that warfare against Satan and against the world, help to bear the crook in the lot, the thorn in the flesh and the cross He has laid upon us in love. He puts these things upon us that we may be weak in ourselves, but strong in Him. "God shall help her." Those tomorrows that you are dreading and wondering where the scene will end: "God shall help her." "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." "But whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." "God shall help her."

Then it says, "and that right early." That is a wonderful expression. First of all, dear friends, it tells us that God is never behind His time. Often, in Holy Scripture, and since, God's people have thought He was behind His time. That is why Rebecca got Jacob to deceive Isaac. She forgot the Lord was at hand and thought that somehow He was going to miss out on the time in this matter. But, God did not need Rebekah and Jacob to enter into that path of deceit to bring about His purposes. We know He overruled them, but they did not need to behave in that way. When Peter was beginning to sink, it was a very wonderful thing, as soon as he cried: "Lord, save me," "*immediately* Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him." "That right early," never too late. He may wait until your eleventh hour and the last moment of it, but, friends, He will never be too late. Never. Oh! May that encourage one of you, this evening hour. He never is too late. God never is before His time, but He never is too late.

Secondly, it means (as the margin has it), "when the morning appeareth." This tells us a poor, troubled one tonight, who is so tempted

and burdened, there is a morning coming. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” “Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart,” the Word of God says. It is like a man who sows a seed and waits for the harvest. “Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.” What a wonderful mercy that there is that promise: “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” There is a moment coming when all will be revealed. “It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” “That right early.”

Well friends, what is your burden tonight? Here you are among the Church militant, your body, soul, family, church, business; all may be resting heavily upon your poor soul. Is not our text the answer to all your burdens? If this be true of you tonight, then, dear friends, you can go to your rest tonight and lay down your head on your pillow in perfect peace, because your great High Priest has got your cares and your concerns in His dear hands. And there are no better hands than His. “Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.”

Amen