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WILLIAMSVILLE STUDY WEEKEND - August 1994

CHRIST IN YOU - THE HOPE OF GLORY

Speaker: Bro. John Ullman

Study #1

In The Midst Of The Lampstand

Reading: Colossians 1:1-29

My dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ and young people and friends

During the course of this day, God willing, we hope to consider a variety of sections of scripture, directing us to this general theme of Christ in You, the Hope of Glory. Some of our talks are going to find their foundation in the book of Revelation, in the Apocalypse, which contain so many warnings for us from the Lord Jesus Christ. As our need to be thoroughly and carefully prepared for His appearance, which we know from the signs of the times, may occur at any moment. And so, I would like you to just notice, that in Colossians chapter 1 from which we have drawn this theme, Paul makes this emphatic statement in the 27th verse, bearing in mind the fact that Paul's great desire, was that all the brethren and sisters to whom he had preached, might find a place in the kingdom of God at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul worked tirelessly for the generation in which he lived, and we believe that God in His mercy, has left on record for us, the works of Paul, that is the inspired epistles that he has written, that we might benefit from his zeal, from his conviction, from his enthusiasm and above all else perhaps from his instruction in the things of God. And so as Paul wrote to the ecclesia at Colosse, in his own day and sent this epistle to them that they might be enthused, that they might be built up; that they might be encouraged in the way that would lead them to the kingdom of God; so we are blessed to have a record of that same epistle today and we are able to turn to it as did those brethren and sisters of so long ago, to whom the epistle was originally written. And needless to say, it serves the same purpose today, as it did in the day that it was written. The only thing is that the people are different. It's dealing with a little ecclesia at Colosse, this letter was eventually spread abroad and found its way ultimately into the inspired Word, and so we have a record for our benefit today.

Now, you'll notice in verse 27 there is an expression of Paul's great obsessive desire, that all those to whom he had preached, all those to whom he had carried the Word of truth, might find ultimately a place in the kingdom. And so Paul speaks in verse 26 of

the 'secret', as that word 'mystery' should literally really be translated, 'the secret which had been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints'. And you know in Colossians chapter 1, the dominant word in that chapter, is the word 'saints'. You will find it, for example, in verse 4; you will find it again in verse 12; you'll find it again in verse 22, where it's been rendered as 'holy'; you'll find it again in verse 26 and there is yet another place where it occurs, but I haven't got it marked in this particular bible that we are looking at now. No; verse 2, 'to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ'. So, he's determined that the saints might receive his message and that they might be built up and strengthened in the things of God. So in verse 26 he speaks of this 'secret which have been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this secret among the Gentiles; which is (and here is the embodiment of the great 'secret' that is being revealed and which is being passed on to us, and we have been initiated into this secret. In a nutshell, put very, very carefully,) it is Christ in you, the hope of glory'. And we have to examine that phrase very, very carefully because otherwise we may skip over it and say, 'it sounds very, very nice and it sounds wonderful and we're sure it's all going to come true as far as we are concerned'.

We need to look at it very, very carefully, because here is the statement 'Christ in you; the hope of glory'. Now, you say, there are two stages of development in that statement that he makes. That was his hope for the ecclesia at Colosse. That would be Paul's hope for us today, and brethren and sisters of Christ where ever they are, in this current generation. 'Christ in you, the hope of glory', but you see, when we look at that statement and we take it as an overall theme for our studies today, and also for our exhortation, God willing, tomorrow morning, we look at that statement and we see that there are two distinctive parts to that statement. We speak a great deal to one another about the 'hope of glory' or the 'hope of Israel' which is the motivating force for our faith in serving God. There it is before us in the words of Paul, 'the hope of glory' and that is, of course, the hope of a glorious eternal inheritance in the kingdom of God, and a change to divine nature to possess the same nature which the Lord Jesus Christ now possesses, that we might live and reign with Him upon this earth for a 1000 years, and that we might be joined in His glorious company, not only for the 1,000 years of the kingdom, but for all eternity, as manifestations of God upon this earth. And so, that is the latter part of this statement, 'the hope of glory', and we need to have that ever before us. We need to have it ever before our minds that we might always remember that despite the trials, and the problems and the difficulties of life, we must never allow ourselves to be dominated by those things.

There is always the example you know, of Moses from Hebrews chapter 11, where we learn there that he was faced with two completely conflicting ways of life. He had been brought up to receive ultimately, a very high position in the nation of Egypt, possibly he may even have been the next Pharaoh of Egypt. And so, he had a choice between two things; there were the things that he had been taught regarding Egypt and there were the things that his mother had taught him regarding the 'hope of Israel'. On the one hand, he could have allowed his mind to become dominated by the wonders and the riches and the treasures and the absolutely glorious things to the flesh, that he could

have had and that could have been his, in the land of Egypt. There would have been absolutely nothing, there would have been absolutely nothing that Moses could have desired, as a great and powerful man in Egypt, that he couldn't by only the snap of his fingers, had brought before him and that he could have enjoyed as a pleasure of the things of the flesh. That would have been very, very compelling to Moses had he allowed his mind to become concentrated upon those things. He would have thought more and more about Egypt, and all the things that Egypt had to offer and being a man of our nature and our propensities, it would have been very simple for him to have been drawn closer and closer and closer, to those things of Egypt. Similarly, he could have allowed his mind to be dominated by the concept of sharing the reproaches of the children of Israel in the wilderness wanderings for a long period of time. And had he allowed his mind to become dominated by those things, he would have thought about the trials, about the privations, about the demands that would be placed upon him, about endless hours of trying to settle disputes, of trying to supervise an unruly nation and an unruly people, and he would have become dominated by that idea, until he reached a stage where he would have been repelled by it. So, you can see Moses in a situation, where really he had a choice of two things. On the one hand, everything that the flesh could desire in Egypt, on the other hand, that which God would desire but which was totally unpalatable to the flesh, they were the children of Israel in the wilderness wanderings. But Moses did not do that; Moses did not allow his mind to be dominated by the one or the other; he did not allow his mind to become captivated by the things of this life, and all that the flesh offered in Egypt, nor did he allow his mind to become depressed and anguished by the sufferings and the problems and the difficulties of life that faced him. You'll find in Hebrews chapter 11 that we're told exactly what Moses did, and it's a very, very interesting and a very wonderful concept of the mind of Moses.

In Hebrews 11 and verse 24 we read that 'By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;' (and the word 'refused' there is a very eloquent word. It implies a struggle within Moses as we have seen these two conflicting things. The one, that God wished him to do which was unpalatable to the flesh, on the other hand, that which could have been his, with a mere snap of the fingers as far as the things of the flesh were concerned). So Paul says in verse 24 that 'he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter' and it implies a 'struggle within himself' and yet a final clear-cut decision being made. So what did he do? Verse 25, 'Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward'. Now, those last phrases in verse 26 hold the key to what Moses did. And it also holds the key as to what we should do, and our own attitude, our own disposition of mind, because those words at the end of verse 26, instead of being translated as in our King James Version 'for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward', it should be rendered 'for he look off toward the reward'. And there it is in a very, very tightly presented concept of the mind of Moses. It says in this 26th verse of Hebrews 11, 'that he looked off toward the reward', and can you see what that means? He refused to allow his mind to be captivated or dominated by all the wonderful things that Egypt had to offer him. By the

same token, he refused to allow his mind to become engrossed and gradually more and more depressed at the prospect that awaited him in the wilderness. Either one or the other would have sunk him as far as faith was concerned, so he lived day by day in his service to God, and instead of being dominated on the left hand or the right, what he did was to get his mind on the kingdom of God, and he looked off to the reward. And that's where his vision was, and that is how Moses became such a faithful leader for God, in leading the children of Israel through the wilderness. He refused to allow himself to be dominated by the sufferings of the present time. He refused to allow the world to capture or to captivate his attention, and so in that way he 'looked off toward the reward'.

Now, that is really what we are dealing with here in this passage in Colossians chapter 1. Christ in you, the hope of glory; that was the hope of glory that moved Moses. It was the 'hope of glory' that moved Abel right back in the early days of history. It was the 'hope of glory' that moved Noah; it was the 'hope of glory' that moved the patriarchs who had received the promises and the covenants. The 'hope of glory' to which they looked off that they might see; it was the 'hope of glory' that moved men like David, when after Yahweh had made His great covenant with David, remember that David says 'Yahweh has surely spoken of my house for a long time to come'. For a long time to come, and so David did not expect the covenant that God had made with him to be fulfilled in his own generation, nor did he expect it to be fulfilled in the next generation, in the generation of Solomon, nor did he expect it to be fulfilled in the generation after that. He spoke of a long time to come, and so he knew the unfolding of Yahweh's purpose would carry on down through the ages of time; that it may take many, many centuries. It may take thousands of years for all David knew and yet his mind was off toward the reward, and his mind was concentrated on 'the hope of glory'. And many men after David, even before and since, among the great prophets of Israel, the apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember when Peter, a spokesman for the apostles, said to the Lord in Matthew 19, 'Look, we've given up everything to follow you; we've been with you all this time, and we've sacrificed everything that we might be with you. Now in the end, ultimately, what are we going to get out of all this?' And remember the Lord's reply, 'In the day of the regeneration, when the Son of Man sitteth upon the throne of His glory; ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel'. And those words meant the coming of the kingdom of God, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, not now as the humble Son of God and Son of David, to bear the sins of many and to die upon the tree; but the Son of God with power and with authority to put down all human rule, to abolish all human government and to establish upon the earth, a divine theocracy that would cover and spread abroad, throughout the whole of the earth, embodying all nations under the rulership of the Lord Jesus Christ, together with His faithful apostles who would judge, each one of them, one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The great princes, the great immortal princes of the future age, and we must understand that it was that 'hope of glory' that drove them on and caused them to remain faithful, in the face of all the trials and problems and tribulations of life. **NOTHING WAS GOING TO TAKE THE TRUTH AWAY FROM THEM!** No one was going to rob them of their eternal inheritance that was to come; never mind the sufferings of the present time; never mind the problems that had to be dealt with day by day. Where should our vision

be? And where should our lives be? And the answer is as with Moses, looking off toward the reward, or as we have here, 'the hope of glory' in Colossians 1 and verse 27.

And as we consider those words, brethren and sisters, let us look at the first part of the statement, where the words are 'Christ in you' and there is the key to 'the hope of glory'. Those who hold the 'hope of glory' are not those of any persuasion or any particular disposition. The 'hope of glory' is a hope that can be possessed by a certain class of people, whether it be Abel or any of the faithful down through the ages, from his time. It doesn't matter. They all had a common disposition, and although Abel never lived to see the Lord Jesus Christ, neither did Abraham, and yet both Abel and Abraham were of one mind, in that they were aware of the covenants of promise that had been made, from the covenant in Eden to the covenant made with Abraham. And they were aware of the fact the seed of the woman would come, Who would overcome sin and provide redemption for those who were of a godly disposition. And so the disposition hasn't changed throughout the ages, but since apostolic times, the disposition is termed 'Christ in you', and it is that class of person, those who have that attitude toward their lives, day by day, and in particular, their relationship to their Creator. Those are the ones, who will know and understand, and will have the living reality of the hope of glory. And so it is Christ in you, and that means in everyone of us and it means in myself as well. And what it means is, that the disposition of Christ and the character of Christ that was so great that it was absolutely the perfect manifestation of the Father's character. The basic disposition of the Lord Jesus Christ has got to be in us. Now, we cannot afford to say 'well, that's impossible'; the only thing that is impossible is that we should do it perfectly; is that we should manifest a perfect character as did the Son of God. We cannot do that. We do not have God for our literal father, but we do have God for our spiritual Father. We do have the Lord Jesus Christ as our sacrifice and as our Priest. We do have the Lord Jesus Christ as the means whereby we may gain eternal salvation, and so in all these things it is quite possible for Christ to be in us. It is possible for Christ to be in us, in the sense that we are dedicated to the hope of Israel. That our lives are dedicated to serving the God that we worship; that we put God first in our lives and our service to the Lord Jesus Christ; that those become the dominant aspects of our lives; that we learn to imitate the character of the Lord Jesus Christ and to imbibe the things that He taught, and to have respect and reverence for the commandments that He has left on record, by which if we strive to walk according to those commandments, His likeness of character will be developed in each one of us, never to perfection, but nevertheless it will be there.

So you see, today for us, there is a great warning that we must all consider, and while it is very easy to speak for hours and hours on end, about the 'hope of glory', we have to consider it in relation to the other part of that statement, Christ in you, that will lead to 'the hope of glory'. There are many people in the world today who look forward to the time when they will find that their immortal soul will leave their body and they will ascend, wafting into the heavens and skies above, where they believe that they will ever be with the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that their hope is vain, sometimes we hear people of that persuasion talking about their hope of glory. Sometimes in fact, you will even read in the newspaper bereavement, quite common in Australia, they would

particularly, with certain religious organizations where somebody has died and their obituary is in the newspaper, and on the bottom of the obituary will usually be the words, CALLED TO HIGHER SERVICE, or sometimes, CALLED TO GLORY, and we know that to be wrong. Wherever our glory lies, the glory lies with the Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of His Father, and we know when that glory will be manifested, when the Father says to the Son, 'that it is time now for Him to return to the earth', and to take up His throne and His kingdom and to reign over all nations, subduing all flesh. THAT WILL BE THE TIME WHEN THE HOPE OF GLORY WILL BECOME A LIVING REALITY, so we understand that, but we must also understand with equal conviction and fervour, that the way to participate in that 'hope of glory', is to have 'Christ in us'.

We must learn to become manifestations of the Lord Jesus Christ, as He was a manifestation of His Father in heaven. Now, in that regard, we wish to just comment on Christ's very last words to our generation. Have you ever contemplated from the words of scripture, the words of Christ which you would define as being His very last words to this generation? Since we believe, it is to this generation, I'm not speaking about myself and my own age group at this present point in history, I'm talking about the current generation, the average age of the current generation. We believe that the signs of the times indicate to us, that this current generation will witness the second coming of Christ. Now, what are Christ's very last words to this generation? and you may say, 'well, surely, they've got to be the very last words at the end of the book of Revelation'. Well, I don't believe so; I believe that Christ's very last words to this generation are found in Revelation chapter 16, because you see, the Lord Jesus Christ comes 'to those saints', of whom we read in Colossians chapter 1, 'He comes to those saints who are living under the sixth vial'. The Lord Jesus Christ will return apocalyptically under the sixth vial, when of course, the frog-like spirits do their work, and they're doing their work now, and they have been for many, many years. They are the spirits of demons 'working signs which go forth unto the kings of the earth'. Have you ever thought about that in verse 14 of Revelation chapter 16? They are the spirits of demonia, the spirits of demons, not literal demons but demons of the flesh, because they are purely of the flesh in origin. They are purely of the flesh in purpose and determination, and they are purely of the flesh in their godless aims and ambitions. But you see, verse 14 says, 'they are the spirits of demons working 'signs'', it's not the word 'miracles' at all, because they can't work miracles. The only people that can work miracles are those that are given the power of God to do exactly that, and nobody on earth at the moment, has that power. So the word there is 'signs', and do you know, it's exactly the same word that occurs in Luke chapter 21, 'there shall be 'signs in the sun and the moon and the stars'; there shall be distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring', said the Lord Jesus Christ in the Olivet prophecy. Here is the same word, under the sixth vial in Revelation 16 and in verse 14, 'they go forth working signs which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, for the purpose of gathering them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty'. Now, let us consider those words in verse 14.

'They are the spirits of demons working signs which go forth unto the kings of the earth', now who is going to understand the 'signs'? Certainly not the kings of the earth; those

signs that are referred to in verse 14, are not for the benefit of the kings of the earth, because they know not God, neither do they desire to know God. They may have a form of religion but it denies the power of godliness as revealed in the Word of God. They are not converted to the gospel of truth, the saving power of God's Word. They are indeed, in spiritual darkness, pursuing their own aims, their own ambitions, ruthlessly determined to achieve their own ends whatever they might be, through the influence of the frog-like spirits. The signs, brethren and sisters, are for us as they are in Luke 21. When the Lord says there, 'there shall be signs in the sun, the moon and the stars', He is again, in Luke 21, speaking essentially to our own generation. Our own generation, because we are the ones, with the understanding of the prophetic word. We are the ones whom God has blessed with an understanding of those events that will lead up to, and immediately precede, the return of His Son to the earth, so therefore, the signs in verse 14 of Revelation 16, are for our benefit and the object is 'to gather the nations together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty'. And here in verse 15, are the Lord's very last words to our generation, 'Behold, I come as a thief'. Do you remember that parable in which He stated very, very eloquently and very clearly that 'the Son of man cometh in an hour that ye think not'. That parable is also for our generation. Now, you may say now, 'Just a moment, how are we to understand that? If God is sending forth signs, as indicated by the Lord in Luke 21, and again here in Revelations 16, and if we are able to recognize and determine those signs, with such clarity, that we know that the Lord's coming is near, how does it come about then that He is able to say, 'that the Lord cometh when ye think not?', and that He should say here in verse 15, 'behold I come as a thief'?

Well, we know that He will come as a thief to the world because the world is not expecting Him. But, those two passages of scripture in the parable and here, indicate that He may well come as a thief to us. That there will be many in the household of faith, who may even be talking about the signs of the times, and the circumstances of excitement that are generated by those signs of the times, and yet so involved in other things, the everyday affairs of life, that they are not actually going to be, right ready when the word comes that the Lord is here, and when an angel appears into the presence of each one of us and says, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him', then the Lord's words must be taken very, very seriously, because they highlight a great weakness of human nature. We may well understand the signs of the times; we may well speak to each other until it becomes almost like a cliché, that the Lord's coming is near. That the Lord's coming is not far away and yet at the same time find, that when the Lord does come, for reasons that may be many and varied, we are not precisely ready for that coming. There's importance in that, isn't there? But you see, if we take our theme, CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY, if truly day by day, we are serving the Lord Jesus Christ, if truly day by day, we are constantly in communion and prayer with our heavenly Father; if day by day we are doing like Bro. Roberts suggests to us in his introduction to the Reader's Companion, absorbing the divine mind out of the Word of God, so that our minds become attuned to the things of the Spirit and to the things of the Word of God, and we are striving day by day to live with God. Remember the faithfulness of Noah, and it is said of others as well, that he walked with God. HE WALKED WITH GOD, and although that sounds like a very

interesting statement and it just falls off the lips as we read those words from Genesis, once a year at least in our daily readings, and hopefully other times as well, yet they are very profound words. When it says that Noah 'walked with God', it has a very simple meaning, because when you walk with somebody, you may go out of this building at the end of the day, and you may walk down the street with your husband or your wife or with a very close friend, and you're walking side by side very closely, and because you are intimately associated with that other person, you are perhaps checking about the things that are being said and done today, you'll be chatting about something that is of mutual interest to the both of you, but the main thing is you'll be very close together, as you walk together down the street. Now you say, that terminology that 'Noah walked with God' is a term that indicates a very close and a very intimate relationship between Noah and His Creator. They are words that indicate to us, that as far as Noah was concerned, GOD WAS NEVER, EVER VERY FAR AWAY, and what those words mean is, that Noah had learned to live his life in a very close and intimate relationship with his God, so that prayer would come easily to his lips, so that it would be a very rare occasion for God to be out of his mind. There is a man who walks with God.

Now, keeping your hand in Revelation 16, because we're coming back there in just a moment, come back with me to Psalm 37, and let us observe where David uses exactly the same kind of terminology, although the wording is a little different. Here's a very wonderful passage of scripture in Psalm 37; in Psalm 37 he speaks of those who will remain faithful under the trials and pressures of life, in fact in Psalm 37 in my bible, I've given it a particular heading. Psalm 37 is one of my very favorite Psalms and I call it, THE PSALM OF THE TWO SEEDS, because that's exactly what it is about; the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and they're both clearly illustrated here in Psalm 37 and the enmity that exists between them. It is stressed constantly in Psalm 37, but David's great point in Psalm 37 is that, for those that live in hope of glory, those that live in harmony with God, have nothing to worry about the adversaries who are of serpent origin, because you see, he says in verse 23, 'the steps of a good man' (and you notice the word 'good' is in italics and should not be there. The translators had implied that it should be, but it really means, 'the steps of a man who is a man of God', that's the idea of it. It doesn't literally mean that, so don't take me as saying I'm translating it in that way; I'm telling you that that is the significance of the term in verse 23) 'the steps of a man who is a man of God, lighteth in his way'. Now, what he is saying is, that here is a man, who is a man of God, and he surrenders up his will to the will of his Heavenly Father. And all of us must learn to do that. We must learn to surrender up our own will that God might work in our lives, because you see, none of us can work out our redemption or save ourselves. If that were possible, then we would not need a Messiah; we would not need the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and the covering that He provides. And so therefore, we do not want to be deluded on that particular point, we are totally dependent upon God, and the way in which He works in our lives, is when we place all our cares into His hand, when we place the whole of ourselves, our heart, mind and body into His hand, and say to Him, 'mould us according to Thy will, that we might walk in Thy ways, to the honour and glory of Thy name, that we might bring glory unto Thy name'. That is, surrendering up our will to the will of God, so that the Word of God might dwell in us. And we cannot dominate our lives with

our own will, and also delude ourselves that God can work in our lives, when we are intent on dominating our lives with our own desires and our own will and our own wants. So you see, here is a man of that disposition, in verse 23, 'the steps of a man of God are ordered by Yahweh', in other words, he has surrendered up his life and he has said to God, 'direct me in the path in which I should go. The path that will be pleasing unto you, and although there be trial and tribulation and suffering on the way, may that path be directed toward Thy kingdom'. That is the 'Abel' spirit; that is the 'Noah' spirit; that is the 'Abraham' spirit; that is the 'David' spirit; that is the apostle 'Paul' spirit; and above all else, it was the spirit that ruled and dominated the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, in verse 24 here is the point, when we talked about Noah walking with God. So far as this man of verse 23 is concerned, as long as God is in charge of his life, and he has placed his life in the hands of God, verse 24 says of such a person, 'Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for Yahweh upholdeth him with His hand'. Now, you just think about that, and think what it means. You see it's the same as Noah walking with God. Because, what that beautiful little verse in Psalm 37 is saying, is that a man who allows his steps and his direction in life to be ordered by Almighty God, will be walking with God. And should such a one, as we all do from time to time, stumble, you realize what the verse is saying? It is saying, that we live so close to God, that God will reach out and take us by the hand or by the arm, and He will lift us up onto our feet again. But, if we are walking down a street on our own, going our own way to achieve our own ends, and God is far away, then how can God help us in our time of need? And bear in mind the fact that it is not God that necessarily goes far away from us, it is possible for us, in our own wrong thinking that we may develop, to go far away from God. And then where are we? So you see, all of this comes down to the same thing doesn't it?

The Lord Jesus Christ in verse 15 of Revelation 16 says, 'Behold I come as a thief'. Now, the closer we are to God in our time of probation, the closer we live in harmony with our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, the more ready we're going to be, and we're not going to be caught unprepared at the coming of the Son of God. And so, verse 15 says this to our generation, 'Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame'. Now that is the Lord's very last warning, to those that live under the sixth vial, which we do. The vial under which the Lord Jesus Christ will return. He has provided us with garments, in effect, on the basis of Galatians chapter 3 verse 27, 28; they are priestly garments that completely clothe us down to our feet, but give us a covering for our sins, and a covering whereby we can approach unto God and to serve God. But you see, those garments must be retained. The word 'naked' occurs only in one other place in the book of Revelation, and that is in relation to 'the ecclesia of Laodicea, where the Lord told them, 'thou knowest not, in Revelation chapter 3, 'thou knowest not that thou are wretched, and miserable and poor and blind and naked'. They had lost their covering that Christ had provided for them.

And so we bear in mind, the necessity, the urgent necessity of our times. The first is, Christ in you or perhaps we should better say, Christ in us because it includes me as

well, as much as anyone else who is gathered here today. Christ in us, if we can just change the apostolic wording just a little to embrace us all. Christ in us, that we might develop a character and a disposition that is going to be pleasing to Him when He comes, and with that preparation and with that attitude toward life, we have the hope of glory. And that is what we await; we await the fulfillment of that.

Now with a word of comment in that regard, let us turn to the book of Revelation again, this time to chapter 1. We look at the basis upon which the Apocalypse has been presented to the brotherhood, and it is stated in chapter 1 and verse 3. Let us just bear in mind the fact, brethren and sisters, that the Apocalypse was not written for every man. The Apocalypse was written and placed on record, exclusively for the servants of God and the servants of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who were in covenant relationship with Him, and it was for their purpose that this book was written, that they might understand what the future held from the apostolic era right through to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and beyond. So, in Revelation chapter 1 and at verse 3, we find again, a blessing that will apply to our generation, if we are moved by that principle, Christ in you, the hope of glory. In Revelation chapter 1 and verse 3, we're all told, and the servants of Christ from the days of John down to our own day, have been told this, 'Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein'. Now, in Eureka, we find that Bro. Thomas, more accurately translates those words in verse 3 in this way, 'Blessed is he, that knows accurately, and they who give heed to the words of the prophecy, and observe narrowly the things which have been written in it. Now you see, we referred to the sixth vial; we referred to the need for our generation to be in a state of avid preparation for the coming of the Son of God, and yet when these things are revealed to us, in some considerable detail, in the book of Revelation or the Apocalypse, we are shown here, that there are three basic essentials, and really we know, that these three basic essentials apply just as equally, to all the rest of revealed scripture, so far as the basic message, the fundamental things that must be learned and understood are concerned, accurately not wrongly; not speculatively not with an attitude of saying, well, 'I think it might be this, but on the other hand, it could mean that'. We cannot afford in these times in which we live, brethren and sisters, to be fiddling around with the Word of God. To be messing around with it; to be reading this and reading that; this says one thing, that says something else. Let's find out what the truth is and know what it is, and stand by it. And that of course, has been a Christadelphian custom now for almost a hundred and fifty years; let's not throw it away now! when the Lord is so near. So the Apocalypse says we must know accurately. But, knowledge is not enough; Point 2 is, we must give heed, in other words we must listen to what we learn from the Word, and we must see that we do it, that we implement the principle of it in our lives. And then thirdly, we must observe narrowly, and that means of course, to stay in the way. Keep your eye on the Word. Keep your mind on the Word. Keep your vision on the need, to have always within your heart, the hope of glory. Let everyone become a Moses; do not allow ourselves to be captivated by things of everyday life, and the things that are found in this world, that provide great distractions from the pathway to the kingdom of God. And at the same time, do not let any of us become so depressed and oppressed, under difficult circumstances of life, that we begin to lose heart, and our courage begins to

fade, and our faith becomes weaker. Do not let either of those two extremes take over our lives and become dominant features; let us all be a Moses, and let us look off toward the reward, and concentrate the bulk of our attention and our minds and our considerations, upon the hope of glory. At the same time, continuing the preparation of building the character of the Lord Jesus Christ into our lives.

And so, when we look at those things that are there, we find that a little later on, we learn in the concluding words of the book of Revelation in chapter 1, the first chapter, 'that Christ walked in the midst of the seven lampstands'; that's what we're told there, that Christ walked, actually and literally that expression is that, 'He walked about'; not just simply that He walked and stood there, but that He walked about in the midst of the seven lampstands, and this of course, refers to the seven ecclesias in Asia to whom the seven letters of the Apocalypse were written. But you know, brethren and sisters, we cannot afford to say, 'well, they're very wonderful lessons, and they're very lovely letters, and they were written a long time ago to ecclesias that no longer exist. That it doesn't really have much application to us. It's interesting to study', but you know, we need to stop and pause and ask ourselves, 'why do those ecclesias no longer exist today?' Why are they not flourishing ecclesias today? in those places to which the Lord directed those seven letters? And the answer we all know don't we? IT'S BECAUSE THEY FAILED TO HEED. You see, we come back to chapter 1 and verse 3 again, we must know accurately, we must give heed, we must observe narrowly, that we maintain our integrity before God, that we maintain our standing before the Lord Jesus Christ, in the sense of our fidelity and faithfulness to Him, and that we remain faithfully walking in the way, with our steps directed by God, that will lead us ultimately, through all the trials and tribulations and problems of life, right to the kingdom of God, because we will remain faithful if we have that disposition and we have those characteristics. And so, therefore, if Christ walked in the ecclesias of the days of John, are we not to accept the fact that He observes narrowly the ecclesias of today? and the individuals, who go to make up those ecclesias? It would be foolish to deny it, wouldn't it? It would be like picturing the Lord Jesus Christ, sitting at the right hand of His Father, enthroned in glory in the heavens, and yet with His back turned to the world, looking in the opposite direction, to this earth and all that takes place upon it. We have every reason to believe from scripture, that the angels of God, in their myriads, their countless tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, we know not how many, we know a myriad is the term that Jude uses in his epistle, that they walk to and fro throughout the earth, at this present time. That as Daniel says, and it says elsewhere in scripture, 'by the eyes of Yahweh, they are constantly conveying messages back and forth to the heavens, and to the throne of the Father, and are constantly obeying His commandments, and doing the things that He requires, so far as the shaping and moulding of this earth is, for the eventual unfolding of His purpose'. And of all people that are upon the face of this earth today, is it not true to say, that His own servants, are more important to Him, those who are the brethren and sisters of Christ, are more important to Him, than the kings of the earth, and those who rule and sit in seats of power, as they believe they do today, not knowing that God is the controller over everything that happens in the earth? Is not the Lord Jesus Christ concerned for every single one of us? Is He not concerned for our welfare? Is He not concerned for our

ecclesias? And so, therefore, we are to understand that the Lord Jesus Christ, so far as the seven ecclesias are concerned, He had all these ecclesias under the closest scrutiny, because the letters, the seven letters reveal that to us. They tell us that He missed nothing! That He observed all their doings That He carefully noted the policies that they implemented and followed, whether to the detriment of the truth or for the preservation of the truth. He looked upon them and He observed their basis of fellowship and whether they preserved the truth in its purity and endeavoured to do so, or whether they didn't. He appreciated their strengths and He deplored their compromisings, whilst at the same time, with all those things, He encouraged them in their weaknesses. Now, isn't this the way it is today as well? Do we appreciate that the Lord Jesus Christ continues to observe the ecclesias with the very closest scrutiny? that He determines the positions of all the ecclesias in regard to their attitude toward the truth? That He has an accurate record and summary of the affairs of every ecclesia everywhere, similarly, as we find in the seven letters to the seven ecclesias of Asia? Do we not understand that He has said in chapter 2 and verse 23 of the Apocalypse, 'all the ecclesias shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you', you see, we have the ecclesial aspect; that we have the individual aspect, of those who are members of individual ecclesias. He says, all the ecclesias shall know that I am He which searches the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you, 'according to your works'. And so He stated quite clearly that He possessed the power to remove the lampstand of the light of the truth, from any ecclesia if that should prove His decision. And ultimately, of course, the light of the lampstand of truth, departed from all seven of those ecclesias of Asia, because you'll find the truth, not in those places anymore today. In fact, not long after that, within a few generations, the light of the truth had gone, and history testifies to the truth of that.

So we must ask ourselves then, if we are to live according to that basic principle, Christ in you, the hope of glory, we must see that the light of the truth, is maintained in these times and these days in which we now live, and it is not a bit of good, brethren and sisters, for us to use the same old catch-cry that we have heard in every part of the world, wherever we have travelled, at some time or other, 'well, that's quite true; the truth does have to be preserved; it does have to be guarded; but that's the job of the arranging brethren, and let them get on with it'. Well, certainly it's true, that those that are appointed by the ecclesia to the office of the arranging body, have a responsibility for which they must ultimately answer to Christ, as to how they have cared for the flock, and how they have worked and stood firm to preserve the truth. Yet, at the same time, there are none that are going to be exempted. Can you imagine the Lord Jesus Christ accepting an excuse from a brother or a sister, who holds no office in the ecclesia whatever, if the Lord should say, 'when your ecclesia was faced with that great problem, and monumental decisions had to be made that were of the utmost importance for the preservation of the truth, where were you?' And we may have to answer, 'well, ah, I'm sorry Lord, but I don't really remember that occasion. When was it?' And the Lord will soon enlighten us. And we may say, 'Ah, yes, well we vaguely remember that', and He may say, 'Why, do you vaguely remember it; why haven't you a clear memory of that?' And we might then say, 'Well, really you see, it wasn't our responsibility. You see, I've never been a serving brother in the ecclesia, and I've never held office really. I've just

been content to attend the ecclesia, and mine you, I've always been there every Sunday, but nevertheless, I leave those things to the arranging brethren'. Do we think that individuals are exempt from responsibility? You see, everyone of us, whether young or old, everyone of us have a responsibility to guard the preservation of the truth, and to support those, particularly if our arranging brethren are striving to hold fast and to hold firm to what is right. We have an obligation to stand up and be counted, that it might be found by the Lord Jesus Christ, that indeed, Christ is in us, and that we live in the hope of glory to come. So you see, a responsibility rests with everyone of us, that we should contend earnestly for the faith, until the Lord comes, that He might find us at that time, holding fast to those precious truths that have been delivered into our care, not just the ecclesia, but every brother and sister who comes into the truth, is made a custodian of the precious word of God, and He must find us holding fast to those precious truths that have been delivered into our care, that we might guard them and defend them with sound, clear, accurate knowledge and understanding, as we saw a few moments ago, from Revelation 1 and verse 3. And not only so, but that we do so, in a spirit of total dedication to His cause, right up to the moment that we are going to be summoned into His presence.

Now you see, all these things are really very, very important, and I believe that all of them are very, very significant. You see, you take the words of chapter 2 and verse 25 and verse 26, with which He encourages us today. You know, when we look, just before we read those words, we consider just briefly the letters to the seven ecclesias. We need to remember that only two of the seven ecclesias, did not receive a rebuke from Christ. Only two out of seven, and remember that was the apostolic era, if ever we would have thought there would have been the time, when there was still faith that was paramount, when all ecclesias were standing firm, then we've forgotten the words of Paul in his second letter to Timothy, when at the end of his own life, he writes to Timothy and he says, 'Ye have heard how that all those which be in Asia, be turned away from me.' (2 Tim.1:15) One of the most incredible statements in the whole of scripture, 'ye have heard that all those that be in Asia, be turned away from me', and Paul had been the father of most of those ecclesias. He had taught them, he had nurtured them. To the Thessalonians he had said that 'he had been a father to them, and he had also been a mother. He had loved them and shown them the example of a father; he had given them the loving care and compassion and consideration of a mother; he had been a 'nurse' to them', he says. But, where were they today? or where were they when Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy in chapter two? 'all Asia be turned away from me'; what had happened to them? They had been undermined. Why? because they had forgotten that Christ was to be in them and that was the hope of glory. And so you see, when we come to chapter 2, we find that there's a feature that emerges here, of a most positive and encouraging nature, and it's that ecclesias, brethren and sisters, and I want to stress this, about ecclesias and individuals within ecclesias, do not have to bow beneath the weight of destructive pressures and forces, whether they come from within or without. We don't have to be destroyed. We don't have to capitulate, and throw down the truth and say, 'Well, if this is the ecclesial world today, and this is how things are, I'll come to the meeting every Sunday and leave it to everybody else'. Everybody has their responsibility and the Lord really emphasizes in

those seven letters, again and again and again, without the words actually appearing, He emphasizes again and again, that the brethren and sisters of those ecclesias did not have to die. They did not have to lose the truth; I mean die spiritually. They did not have to throw it away; it was of their own free will that they allowed destructive pressures, from within as well as without, to rob them of their hope of glory, and we must understand this brethren and sisters, and we must understand it very, very clearly, and let it never, ever depart from our minds. It is this, that there is no person on the face of this earth, that can rob a single one of us of the kingdom of God. NOT ONE PERSON! unless we allow it to happen.

There is one person who can rob us of the kingdom of God, and that is this person right here. OURSELVES!. Because, we as individuals, more importantly in this sense than ecclesias, we as individuals make our own decisions, when it comes to those principles that we have talked about, so far this morning. WALKING IN THE WAY, KNOWING ACCURATELY, GIVING HEED, OBSERVING NARROWLY, WALKING WITH GOD, being so close to Him, that when we stumble, He is near enough because we stay near to Him; He is near enough to reach out and take our hand and lift us up, and set our feet back on the path that leads to the kingdom. The only person that can rob us of the kingdom of God is ourselves, and that will happen if we capitulate the things of those great precious truths that have been delivered into our hands. And the Lord tells us in the Apocalypse that we do not have to bow beneath the pressures, and we do not have to capitulate the truth, so that in chapter 2 and verse 25 and 26, the Lord says this today to everyone of us, 'Hold fast till I come. He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations'. And that's another way of saying, CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY. And so may it be, that in the closing days of spiritual darkness, which day by day, are more thoroughly engulfing the whole of the earth around us, whether we be in Australia or Canada or the United States or Great Britain, or wherever we may be, wherever our lot may be, let us remember that what is essential today is to know and understand these things with clarity. That we must get our minds working upon this two fold aspect of salvation, CHRIST IN YOU, THAT IS THE HOPE OF GLORY. And may it be that each one of us will continue to hold fast, to that which we have been given, because those things are not only too precious to cast aside, upon those things depends our own hope of eternal glory, the hope of glory that is to come. So, let us hold fast till the Lord Jesus Christ comes, knowing that to him that overcometh, and keepeth his works unto the end, to him will He give power over the nations the wonder, and the glory, and the inestimable spiritual beauty of THE HOPE OF GLORY.