

# 'Ye Are Come Unto Mount Zion'

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*We are come to Mount Zion, which represents the consummation of everything, the perfected work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the supreme victory of the Lord.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 12:22

**Topics:** "Spiritual Identity", "Mount Zion"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the profound transition from the old covenant represented by Mount Sinai to the new covenant embodied in Mount Zion, highlighting that believers have already arrived at this spiritual reality. He urges the congregation to recognize that Zion symbolizes the consummation of God's work through Christ, where they find their identity, victory, and fellowship in Him. Sparks stresses that Zion is not merely a physical location but a spiritual state where God's presence dwells among His people, and where they are called to live in the fullness of His perfect work. He challenges the listeners to embrace their citizenship in heaven and to understand the significance of being part of the body of Christ, which embodies the victory over death and sin. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper realization of what it means to be part of Zion, encouraging believers to live out their faith in the light of this truth.

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## Transcript

While we wait upon Thee [on Thee, Lord, we wait] and while we do need Thee to bless us and ask Thee to bless us while we wait on Thee, we would rise even higher and say, Lord, satisfy Thyself. Get to Thyself the reward of Thy sufferings, the travail of Thy soul. Lord, find Thine Own Satisfaction. Ours will, we know, follow. We shall not lose anything if the Lord gets what He wants. And so, may we find our blessing in Thy Blessing, for Thy Name's Sake, Amen.

The Letter to the Hebrews; and we are this morning coming to the concentration of the whole letter in one section. In chapter twelve, you will note that this concentration of the whole letter in this section is governed by the two words, "NOT--BUT." Verses 18-25:

For ye are NOT come unto a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them; for they could not endure that which was enjoined, if even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned; and so fearful was the appearance, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:

BUT ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh.

Not--But. We shall not dwell upon the various details gathered under the "not." We will simply say that this does represent a tremendous change over from one whole system of Divine activity and method in the past which is, or was, of the nature of the tangible, the sentient, the palpable--what you could see with your natural eyes and hear with your natural ears and touch with your hands and register by all your natural senses of soul and body. That comprehends the past system, and over it is written "Not"--not anymore. That kind of thing is left behind. And, mark you, dear friends, it is because that has been overlooked or not recognized that Christianity is in the poor state that it is in today, for Christianity is built very largely upon this "not." You will see that more, perhaps, as we go on the positive side. But register that, register what you are not come to. Take it clause by clause in its significance. Take each clause with its significance and see what we are not come to. We are not come to a system that can be appropriated and known by natural senses. That is very comprehensive, touches a very great deal, that is finished. The Cross has cut in between that and this "but we are come."

Now I want to be very implicit and careful. Did they really come to Sinai? You see the description? The Holy Spirit through the writer is making it very, very definite and positive and emphatic that this was something very real--so real that even Moses, who had such access to God, such fellowship with God, with whom God did speak Face to face as a man to his friend, this man said: "I exceedingly fear and quake." Was that real? Was that imaginary? Was that just abstract? No, this thing was very real. People cried out, "Stop, we cannot bear this. We cannot endure this." Very real! That is what they came to. If you had been there, no doubt, you would have said, "There is no imaginary thing here. This is something terrific." "But we are come," and do you mean to say that the "but" is less real than the "not"? Do you mean to say that this that we are come to is abstract, while that was concrete? Oh, no, I am sure that this is even more real, after its own kind, in its own realm; and, dear friends, that is the point upon which we must focus everything, the reality of what we are come to.

When you go on and break this all up into its details, if you are in your own senses, senses of mind and soul, you are just completely baffled. It seems so idealistic or imaginary, so ethereal, so unreal. See, to the natural, the spiritual is unreal. To the natural man, the man of soul, what is essentially and intrinsically spiritual is unreal. Their reaction is "Oh, let us be practical, let us come down to earth, let us get out of the clouds and get our feet solidly on the terra firma, let us get down to things that are more real." That is the reaction of the natural man to the spiritual. But to the spiritual man, spiritual things are far more real than the tangible. And this that we are come to, to say the very least, is as real as what they came to at Sinai, even though after a different order.

Zion: the Consummation of Everything

Now I want you to note the tense of the verb, because it is very important to get the tense: "we are come to Mount Zion." Not we are coming, not we are going, not we shall then arrive at Zion. No, "we are, we are come." I know you will go on singing, "We Are Marching Upward To Zion." We know what you mean, but we are not marching upward to Zion. The Word says: "But ye are come to Zion," present tense. We are supposed to be at Zion now. Have you got that? There is here, of course, a contrast between Sinai and

Zion, but it is not only contrast here, but note, in keeping with what I have just said, it is more than contrast, it is consummation!

This Zion was on the horizon for Israel right at the beginning. I think it is an impressive and amazing thing that you find the people through the Red Sea and on the far side; and then you look at Exodus 15 and find them on the far side and you have this, right there, before ever they had marched into the wilderness and on to the land--or got anywhere other than on the other side of the Red Sea--you have this: "Thou wilt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established." Right at the beginning Zion is in view, as the end, the consummation of their journeyings and their experiences. During the next forty years? Ah, yes, and many more. Zion is on the horizon from the beginning. Zion is not the beginning, Zion is the consummation of everything.

This is the Letter to the Hebrews. In old times, they were on the journey, stage by stage, phase by phase, step by step. You remember that chapter which is just full, smothered, with that word in Numbers, "and they journeyed and they journeyed and they journeyed." I think it is forty times in one chapter, "and they journeyed." This is "the old times." The Letter to the Hebrews says, "We have arrived, we have arrived." How? Because all the bits and pieces, phases and stages, steps and movements, have come to their consummation in Jesus Christ. We have arrived, we are come to the end of all God's movements in His Son. He is the consummation of all!

Zion: the Perfected Work of the Lord Jesus Christ

Now then, still this word "Zion," which it says we are come to, remains a bit abstract so far as our mentality is concerned. We must, therefore, get down to see what this Zion is that we have come to. We have said Zion is consummation, comprehension, or comprehensiveness, but what is it? What makes it up? What is the constitution of Zion as God's end?

#### [1] ZION: A PEOPLE IN THE GOOD OF THE COMPLETE AND PERFECT WORK OF CHRIST

First of all, we say Zion is an inclusive and comprehensive term; in other words, we are come to the all-inclusive and all-comprehending thought and intention of God when we have come into the Lord Jesus. We may have to grow in our apprehension and understanding of what we have come to, but God has nothing whatever to add to what we have come to. We have got it all! In Christ, we have all! God has reached His end in His Son, finished His New Creation in His Son, and entered into His rest. So the letter here says, "We who have believed do enter into His rest." It is a comprehensive term, Zion --it is coming into all that God has placed in His Son for us. Christ is the sum total of all God's work over which is written: "It is finished." That does not mean just come to an end, it means it is all completed, it is all completed, it is all perfect!

You know the formula when the priests brought the sacrifice for the atonement and placed their hands upon the head of the sacrifice, they uttered a formula which in the Greek means, "It is perfect." They had gone with their trained eye over that sacrifice, turning up every hair to see if there was one of another color, any minute point of contradiction and inconsistency, through and through, opening its mouth, examining its teeth, every part gone through the trained eye of the meticulous priest; and when he finished his examination, and when the sacrifice had been put up for ten days under that scrutiny to see if there would be any development whatever of an inconsistent, imperfect element--at the end, he brought it forth and put his hands on it and pronounced: "It is perfect." That is the Letter to the Hebrews. By one offering,

forever He has perfected, made complete; and when Jesus cried, "It is finished," it was the cry of the verdict of an Offering Perfect, without spot or blemish, to God. It is perfect. It is complete. His work and His Person are in right standing with God.

The sum of all God's work is represented in the symbolic name, "Zion." But Zion is seen to be not only Christ Personal, but a corporate thing. It is the people of Zion, as well as Zion--the people of Zion, a corporate thing; and Zion then is a people who are in the good of the complete and perfect work of Christ, a people who are the vessel of that work of the Lord which is complete.

Zion? It is so easy to say things like this, and this is Bible teaching, perhaps, you might say, good Bible teaching; but, oh, my friends, we have got to see before we get through this week that it is not just as simple as that. And you will discover almost every day of your life that this position of standing in and being in the good of the finality of Christ's work is not a simple matter--it is challenged, up hill and down dale, all the way along, that you should be moved, we should be moved, from this position of the perfected work of the Lord Jesus. We are come to something perfect, and we should be the people embodying that perfect work of the Lord Jesus! I do not mean that we are perfect, but His work is perfect; and He Who is perfect is with us and in us. The time will come when that perfection will be manifested. I think that is a very wonderful fragment in Thessalonians: "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed"--marvelled at!--and I suppose we shall marvel more than anyone else. Well, that is Zion. It is Christ and Christ collective, Christ corporate, the foundation of everything. His perfect work as His perfect Person--that is Zion!

## [2] ZION: THE SUPREME VICTORY OF THE LORD

Number two: Now, of course, I am keeping very close to the background, the symbolic and typical background, of the Old Testament because while the things of the Old Testament have gone, the meaning and the spiritual principles are eternal so that the spiritual meaning and principle of Zion is taken over and applied here. That is why the very name, Zion, is taken out of the Old Testament and brought here into the New: so that the next thing about Zion is that it is the very symbol of His absolute victory.

Do you remember the beginning of Zion? After they had brought David back from his exile and made him king, the Jebusites occupied this site and they sneered at David from Zion and said, "Thou shall not come in hither"; and they fortified it with the blind and the lame and said, "These are enough to keep you out of here. This is an impregnable stronghold, so much so that the weakest can hold it, save it. If the weakest, the blind, and the lame can do it, well, of course, it goes without saying what the strongest can do." The Jebusites considered this Zion to be absolutely impregnable, the last word in the unassailable and "uncapturable." They said: "You shall not come in here, indeed, it is quite impossible for you to do so."--"All right," says David. [They accept the challenge.] "We take up the gauntlet. You will see." We know what happened. He did break through and break in and take the stronghold and destroy the erstwhile impregnability, and it became the city of David, the City of the Great King. His great victory, his immense victory, is centered in, registered in, established in, Zion; and Zion is the very symbol and synonym of the great prowess of God's King, of God's Anointed.

Now, bring that over: "Ye are come to Zion," the City of the Living God, ye are come to Zion. What have we come to? We have come, we have come, to the Supreme Victory of the Lord Jesus Christ over the formerly impregnable--and what was that? We quote from Matthew: "I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." And what have you heard as the exposition of "the gates of Hades?"

I am not sure that in the early days I did not make this mistake. "Gates," in the Bible in the Old Testament cities, were the place of the counsels of the elders, where they came to their decision by discussion and counsel and made their decisions for the city and the land; and so we have said the "gates" are the counsels of Hell. Do not make that mistake. That is right, but that is not what it means. What is the otherwise impregnable stronghold of the prince of this world? It is death. It is death. The spiritual stronghold into which the Lord Jesus broke was that impregnable stronghold of "him, that is, the devil, that had [the hold] the power of death" (Hebrews 2:14). So the Risen Lord in the presentation of Himself in the Book of the Revelation, right at the beginning, says, "I am He That liveth, I became dead; and, behold, I am alive unto the ages of the ages; and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

Spiritual death is a tremendous thing, a terrific thing, so much so that the Apostle Paul almost exhausts the vocabulary in this connection when he says that we should know "the exceeding greatness of His power, exceeding greatness of God's power." Think of that! The psalmist would say, "Selah."--Think of that!

"The exceeding greatness of His power (which is) to us-ward who believe, according to the working [the energy, the Greek word here is energy] of the strength of His might, which He wrought [or energized] in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead." What language, what language. It is simply beyond Paul's expressions. He had a very good vocabulary, but he is finding himself hard put to express and explain what it meant to raise Jesus from the dead--to overcome death!

Oh, it is so easy to say, "God raised Him from the dead," but do you see what it meant? The illustration in the Word--and, of course, the illustration always fades in the presence of the reality--but the illustration in the Word is Egypt and Pharaoh and the gods of the Egyptians. See how God is just, shall I say, panning out His power in those ten judgments. The first is a great power, the second is a great power and more, and the third is still more, and on to ten. Increasing power, increasing power, breaking down something, steadily, steadily, breaking down a great force; and when you come to the consummate thing, what is it? It is life and death, the death of all the firstborn in Egypt; and when that is registered, the people are free, out they go, resurrected! It is an illustration. Types are always poor things in the presence of the reality, the reality is the raising of Jesus Christ from the dead by the glory of the Father, by the exceeding greatness of His power--and that is to us-ward. Dear friends, I do not think we have begun to understand what it cost, and what power lies behind, our being born again, our being brought from death unto life.

Now we come back to Zion. That is Zion. "Ye are come to Zion." Ye are come to the immense victory of the Lord Jesus in the realm that supremely challenged God and heaven, the realm of death. Death. And so you have here in this letter, especially in the first chapters of Hebrews, so much about death. "He tasted death for every man." He tasted death for every man: "He delivered all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:15). Underline death in those early chapters because it is basic to all that follows; and when you come to the end of the letter, you have that great note struck again: "Now the God of peace, Who brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect." We are brought again from the dead. There is the potential, there is the dynamic, of our being made perfect. That death, which put a period to all spiritual perfection before, has now been broken by the Great Shepherd of the sheep.

Did I say put a period? You remember in Hebrews, remember Aaron and all his sons, the priests? It says they could make nothing perfect because they died. Death put a period to their work, and nothing was perfect. But He has perfected forever. Why? Because He lives forever, "I am alive unto the ages of the

ages," therefore, that is the hope and dynamic of your being made perfect.

Oh, thank God, "the exceeding greatness of His power" which is going, eventually, "to present us faultless before the presence of His glory in exceeding joy; a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," --presented faultless. Oh, what a word! What a sweep of the board that is! Faultless! My, we down here are just obsessed with one another's faults and with our own faultiness; and that is one's trouble--looking for the perfect assembly, the perfect church, and the perfect Christian, and we are just all the time occupied with what is not perfect. The fault and faults. To present us faultless--"He is able to present us faultless before the presence of His glory in exceeding joy." Why? Because He has conquered death. Death is the stronghold, the stronghold, and He has plundered the stronghold of Satan:

He plunged in His imperial strength to gulfs of darkness down:

He brought His trophy up, at length, the foiled usurper's crown.

The crown of Satan is death. The crown of Christ is Life: "I will give thee the crown of Life." Well, are we spending too much time on details about Zion? This is what we have come to, or are supposed to have come to. May we be given strength and faith to apprehend what is being said. May we enter into the marvelous joy of it.

### [3] ZION: THE PLACE OF HIS DWELLING

Number three: Zion, again, was and is in its spiritual meaning, in its reality, the center of His dwelling. His dwelling. The Lord dwelt in Zion. The Lord was found in Zion. You notice the words from Exodus 15? "Thou wilt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, the place, O Lord, Which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in...." We know historically that it was there that God had His Sanctuary; and I ought to say here that without dealing with details, as in Hebrews 12, verse 18 and onward, Jerusalem and Zion look like synonymous terms. They look as though they are interchangeable. They are not exactly the same thing, but dare I stop to deal with the difference that there is? It may come out without any special consideration, but here is "the city which Thou, O Lord, hast made--the heavenly Jerusalem."

And so we come then to this place of His dwelling, the place where the Lord is. If you were asked where you would find the Lord, I wonder what you would answer. You might mention many things, such as, "If you want to find the Lord, you come to our meetings. You come to our company, our place of worship, and you will find the Lord there"; and so you localize the Lord. I know in the Old Testament they had to go to the places where He caused His Name to be. However, in the geographical and literal sense, that is no longer the case.

To understand this, let us see that here is a great danger into which Christendom has fallen; and we are all in danger of localizing the presence of God. I mean literally saying: "This is where you have to come, or that is where you have to go, if you want to find the Lord." Do not be deceived. That is not true. We have passed from that system. That is under the "not." That is under the not. It sweeps all that conception away. There are no sacred "Ephesus" or "Philippi" or "Thessalonica": if there were, they would be today where they were two thousand years ago. They are not. They have gone. The Lord was met there, but you will not meet Him there any longer, not in that way. No, not even in Jerusalem, and not in Rome. But where is the Lord? The Lord Jesus has given us, is it a formula, a prescription? "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am." There I AM, that is the only localization (I hesitate to use the word "locality") that is the only localization of the Lord!

Now, at any place where you may have met the Lord, amongst any company of the Lord's people where people may have met Him, as soon as they cease to be spiritually Zion, to be what Zion really is spiritually, the Lord leaves that just as He left the tabernacle in Shiloh. It is not sacred, the tabernacle is not sacred or it would be preserved until today. No, things on this earth are not sacred to God. The place where the Lord is and is to be found is in Zion; ah, but what Zion means, what Zion is, what we have been saying Zion is--that is what we have come to!

Now you can go and put up a building and get a congregation and put over the door--"Zion." No! no! no! this is this mentality, you see this mentality? No, Zion is a spiritual thing, a spiritual people, and the great thing about them is... you meet the Lord there when you meet them. With them, you just meet the Lord. You are not meeting a technique, a form, a ritual, a doctrine, a teaching, an interpretation and all that. You are just meeting the Lord. "Ye are come to Zion."--Oh, let that be a test as well as a statement. We will give up everything, and rightly so, we could let anything go--buildings, places, and all our constitution--we let it all go if people are not finding the Lord when they come where we are. Paul brings that down to the individual: "Ye are a sanctuary of the Living God." That is an individual application, "the temple of God." The place of His dwelling is the place where Christ is in the finality of His work, the fullness of what He has done, where things are according to Christ. That is Zion!

#### [4] ZION: THE SEAT OF DIVINE GOVERNMENT

Number four: Zion is the seat of Divine government, so go back again to "Zion, the city of the great King." Out of Zion shall the government go forth. Out of Zion shall He rule the nation. Zion, the seat of His sovereignty and His government, where His throne is. I hinted a few minutes ago at the difference between Jerusalem and Zion. Zion, as I understand, is what Jerusalem ought to be; and Jerusalem is not always Zion, but Zion is what Jerusalem ought to be--the governmental center.

All the people of God are not the seat and center and expression of this government; and in the Book of Revelation, you will have something more than "the holy city, new Jerusalem." You will have "nations walking in the light thereof." You will have an extra circle. Yes, they are in the Kingdom. No, I am not now discriminating between the Church and the Kingdom. That is not my point, but I am saying that there are overcomers. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in My Throne." That is Zion, but Jerusalem does not always conform to that, so far as the Lord's people are concerned.

I think I had better leave it there, but, you see, this is a great difficulty with many. You present the ultimate, full thought of God for the Church, what God's Mind is about the Church, the Heavenly Jerusalem, yes, you present it; but some say, "Look at all these Christians, one foot in the world and the other foot in Christianity." But remember, there is such a thing as God having a governing people. It is one thing to be the citizen of a country, or even of a city, but it is another thing to be a member of the royal household. Do you see what I mean? Zion is the very epitome, the very essence, of God's thought for His Church, to which the Church (as a whole) does not all approximate, but it, Zion, is this governmental thing.

Now at the beginning it was like that. The literal Jerusalem in Judæa of old was the center of the government of the land. You come into your New Testament, and you find that things move from Jerusalem. They move. You say, "Antioch becomes the new center, takes the place of Jerusalem"? Is that right? That is the way expositors put it, they make a geographical movement of it. Well, all right, you can have it if you like, but it is not true. Let us go to Antioch then and have a look and see what this is.

What are they doing in Antioch? There were certain brethren in Antioch and "they fasted and prayed, and the Holy Spirit said...." They are off the earth, they are out of the world, they have left things here, they are linked with heaven. And by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, the Heavenly Government is in operation. The Heavenly Throne is governing there.

No, it is not a board meeting. I do not know if any of you know the cartoons of E. J. Pace, but years ago in the Sunday School Times, he had a very good one. I think it was a humorous one, but very good. He called it, "The First Board Meeting of the New Testament," and here it is: all the believers are gathered in a congregation in Jerusalem, and there are two big Hands with a big board in them. And this big board, this huge piece of timber, smashed down upon that building and "they were all scattered," scattered throughout all Judæa, throughout all Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth; and he calls that "The First Board Meeting."

No, the governmental center is not in Jerusalem literally and, no, not in Antioch literally. Zion is where heaven is governing and not men, where the heavenly councils are operating: "and the Holy Spirit said." The Holy Spirit. That is what we have come to, or ought to have come to. I hope I have not offended any of you board members, you committee men, you church directors. No, no, we are coming to reality. Zion is testing, challenging our whole system. And here, at this point, Zion means:--it is that where Heaven rules, the Ascended Christ governs through the Holy Spirit, makes the decisions, gives the decisions, directs the courses. "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto..." the board meeting has appointed them?--No, "I have called them." This is Heaven acting, and that is fruitful.

#### [5] ZION: THE PLACE OF SECURED AND ESTABLISHED FELLOWSHIP

Number five: Zion is the place of secured and established fellowship. Now this is rather interesting, instructive. Go back to your Old Testament. When the hearts of the men of Israel turned from Saul to David to bring him back and make him king, what happened? The first movement was to Hebron, and there they stayed for seven years at Hebron. What is Hebron? Do you know the meaning of Hebron?--Fellowship, fellowship, that is Hebron. Now you can put that over a fellowship if you like, and call it Hebron, but let it be true of that fellowship. However, they brought David back and, first of all, made him king in Hebron. It was a partial thing. It was a movement unto fulness, but seven years in Hebron, seven years (spiritually interpreted) of securing fellowship. And after the seven years, up to Jerusalem to Zion; and the values of Hebron are now centered in Zion, i.e., Zion is that in which the true fellowship of the Spirit is established!

You have got to read the rest of this section of Hebrews. See the marvelous fellowship that is there. What have we come to? Even "to the spirits of just men made perfect." We are come to a marvelous fellowship in heaven. "To hosts of angels," in fellowship with the angels; fellowship with "the spirits of just men made perfect"; in fellowship with "Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." It is fellowship that is in Zion, heavenly fellowship, heavenly fellowship. And you know quite well if you just get a little taste of heavenly fellowship, it is heaven.

Some of you have come from far places where you have little or no real spiritual fellowship; and whatever other values there may be about convocations, I have always found that one of the greatest values, even more than the ministry, has been these lonely pilgrims coming from far and near in the songs of ascents up to Zion, and finding that heart-ravishing fellowship which has sent them back to their lonely places feeling and knowing: "Well, I am not alone after all, I thought I was alone. I was Elijah looking for a juniper

tree to say, it is enough. Oh, Lord, take away my life. I am the only one left. But I discovered that there are seven thousand in Israel!" Fellowship is a marvelous thing. That is Zion in truth. "Ye are come." Oh, that we might always live in the good of that, and in our loneliness and isolations and exiles know that our fellowship is in heaven. It took seven years to get that fellowship, and then established in Zion.

In Zion. Well, what is it again? It is the fellowship of Christ being in His right place and His full place. David is now in his right place, and in his full place, for which God chose and anointed him. He is there: Our Greater David in His place, right place and full place--and wherever that is true, that is Zion. And it is not Zion unless it is like that.

#### [6] ZION: THE GROUND OF OUR SPIRITUAL FESTIVITY

Number six: Zion is the ground of our festivities. I have almost said this in what I have just said. What does it say? "Zion, the city of our solemnities." That is the phrase in Scripture, "the city, the place, of our solemnities." What did that mean? It was the great feasts and festivals of the people which they had in Zion. God had ordained this people should be a festive people. Now this portion in Hebrews says that is what we have come to. We have come to numerous angels in festal array. The city of our festivities. Need I say any more? I believe this, I know this, that if you have anything that approximates to Zion spiritually, anything that is really and truly spiritual Zion, however small it may be, you will have a feast of good things. Where these things are true, where these five things that I have mentioned are true:

[1] A people in the good of the Complete and Perfect Work of Christ

[2] The Supreme Victory of the Lord

[3] The Place of His Dwelling

[4] The Seat of Divine Government

[5] The Place of Secured and Established Fellowship

where these things are true, you will never be hungry, spiritually hungry. The Lord will see to it that there is plenty there. You will not be miserable, but full of joy! We need something more than religious picnics: we need Zion's spiritual festivities.

"Hosts of angels in festal array." I do not know that I understand that altogether, but I think I can glimpse it. My, when the angels see Zion, how happy they are! How glad they are! There is certainly joy amongst the angels when you have things like this. When they look at a spiritual Zion, they put on their festal garments and say, "This is it. This is it." The angels rejoice. Perhaps that is an imperfect interpretation: I do not know, but I am sure it is a part of it because we register this when we have anything that approximates to Zion in this way. Zion's fellowship and the King really in His Place of Governing--we register heaven's feeling about it and say, "My, this is good"; and we no longer condemn poor old Simon Peter. We fall into the same wonderful and glorious trap. We say, "It is good to be here." Let us never go away from this place again. "Let us make three tabernacles." We sang, just before this ministry this morning, about the warring world below. We have got to go back to it, but may we go back with something of the joy of Zion, the city of our solemnities, spiritual festivity. I must leave that then and come to the last thing about Zion for this morning; and this is only the first fragment in the whole section. There is another one which will probably take the whole of our time tomorrow, number eight, but that is not coming now.

## [7] ZION: THE PLACE OF OUR SPIRITUAL FRANCHISE-- I AM REGISTERED IN HEAVEN, I AM A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN

Number seven: Zion, the place of our spiritual franchise. Is that a difficult word, idea? Now if you do not know what I mean, I remind you of Psalm 87: "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." Then the psalmist picks out those places in the world that men boast of. "I was born in Philistia. Think of that."--"I was born in Tyre. Think of that! I am a Tyrite. I am a citizen of Tyre."--"I was born in Ethiopia. Think of that!" The psalmist (you can almost hear and see his joy) the psalmist says: "But this man was born in Zion, it shall be said. Of Zion, it shall be said, this man was born there." Something absolutely superior. This man is a citizen of Zion, he is born there, his name is registered there, and the psalmist concludes that whole survey, comparison, and contrast with: "All my springs are in thee"--All my wellsprings are in thee. The place of my franchise: "I am registered in heaven, I am a citizen of heaven."

"Our citizenship, says the apostle, is in heaven; from whence we look for a Saviour." "Our life is hid with Christ in God." We have been "born from above" [always correct the translation]; not "born again," but "born from above," that is something more than born again. Not only have we been "born from above" and our names "written in the Lamb's Book of Life"; not only that, that is glorious, but you have the franchise. Paul boasted of his freemanship: "I am a freeman born," and they all had to yield to that, even the Roman Empire had to bow to that, a freeman born. The poor centurion captain had a bad time when he heard that. My word, his life was at stake for having put chains on a free man. Our citizenship is in heaven, our franchise is in heaven, we are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." This one was born there at Zion, in Zion.

I must leave that with you, I do trust it is not just a lot of either interesting or even fascinating Bible teaching, but this is a challenge: "Ye are come to Zion."

Lord, help us to see what we have come to, what we really are in the Divine Thought. The Lord make this true of us, wherever we may be, and of the little companies with which we may be related and connected, that it is in this true spiritual sense, Zion indeed!

Lord, make this more than teaching and doctrine and truth and Bible exposition. Do put the challenge into it, into every one of our hearts, is this true of me? Am I a citizen of Zion? Are these things real in my life? Help us to attend to it. Answer our prayer, for the Sake of Thine Own Glory and Satisfaction in Thy Son, Amen.

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