

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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GOD SPEAKING

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NJH We had reference in the earlier meeting to the beginning of Hebrews: "God having spoken in many parts and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days has spoken to us in the person of the Son", chap 1: 1-2. The footnote (i) is rather interesting, 'It is God Himself who speaks; not by another; not as the Father, nor in the person of the Father; not merely by the Holy Spirit using a person not divine, but as himself a divine person, and that person the Son'. That illuminates the glory of the Person and the deity of Christ. And I have been thinking we also have teaching in these meetings, and we should feel convicted that we are wanting to go on with the truth.

We can say truly looking back on the ones we have known that have set out the truth and served us in our lifetime, that they were men that completely refused the flesh in the first man; he must be dispensed with for the glory of the second Man to come on to view. And therefore, the ministry that came to us was vitally important and is also true. It is good for the young people to know it is worth being convicted as to the truth as it has come out in that Person. That is why I thought we should read about the glory of the Person that dwelt - He is called the Word and, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us". I think that is very, very precious, One that is the Word. It was what was expressed in manhood by a divine Person, the Word. We have the word '*logos*' (see footnote to 1 Cor 1: 5) and '*logos*' means that only God could speak about God; that is the significance of the word. Moses could tell you some impressions about it, but even at that, there was still darkness, there was something beyond what even Moses could penetrate. Nor could any, but the One that came in: "the Word became flesh" is the One who could tell us about God because He was God; that is a very wonderful thing. It says, "no one knows the Son but the Father, nor does anyone know the Father, but the Son, and He to whom the Son may be pleased to reveal him", Matt 11: 27. That is, that Christ reveals the Father to us; that is very special.

We know that there are things that are not revealed to us. We are in holy worship, as we have God before the soul, but the revealer of

God was Christ. That is, the revelation of God was in Christ. And it says it “dwelt among us”. That goes back to what we were saying earlier as to the tent of meeting; it is just “dwelt among us”. Think of that circle, set aside in the gospels and at beginning of the Acts: “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”. It might say, 'tabernacled'. And it says, “we have contemplated his glory”. Now the Person is presented in John's gospel, as chapter 1 says. It is clear that, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”. That relates to His eternal being as described as “the form of God”, Phil 2: 6. When you come to John's epistle, it is the beginning of the testimony of Christ that we read about: “That which is **from** the beginning” is the testimony of Christ while here, and the disciples that were favoured to be numbered as apostles, had fellowship with what came out in Christ. You see differences between the two presentations; John's gospel is the supreme thought, that the Person that ever existed came into manhood, but never ceased to be who He was by reason of what He became.

These things are worth contemplating; they have come so close to the circle of His own. Now, we do not have part in that “fellowship ... with the Father”; but the apostle himself said that, “that which we have seen and heard we report to you, that ye also may have fellowship with us”. That is, we have fellowship with the apostles: that is in John's epistle. Then he says, “our fellowship is indeed with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ”. We cannot call that 'our' fellowship; that expression, “our fellowship”, relates to those that were in the company of Christ - the apostles. It is a very exalted line that we are following. And we are thankful for those that laid down their life to give us it. That was what was in my mind - is that acceptable?

DMW Do you feel that the thing that comes to our consciousness in the revelation of God Himself is that it is something He did Himself? Would you say that, as a result of what He did Himself, the response is going to be what He does Himself? You mentioned John 9, for example.

NJH Yes, exactly. Yes, it is good to bring John 9 in because the blind man there is a ready listener, and he is not turned aside by religious influence, nor the sin question, because that is not the point in John 9. But it is divinely taken up. And the application of the mud on his eyes relates to the incarnation and death of Christ really; the spittle of Christ and dust made the mud, and He put it on his eyes. You might say it

made him more blind, if that were possible. But it was a way to remove that condition; it involved the death of Christ. And then the Lord says, "dost thou believe" (v 35), "Thou hast both seen him, and he that speaks with thee is he", v 37. He was a quick learner. The Lord hears in verse 35, "they had cast him out". That was religious people who cast him out. And "having found him, he says to him, Thou, dost thou believe on the Son of God?". They cast him out to where the Lord was Himself. The Lord was not part of the religious system at all. And Jesus says, "Thou hast both seen him, and he that speaks with thee is he".

DMW Would it be going too far in our thoughts to suggest that the counsel of God was for God to be known, to be known as speaking Himself? And therefore, the incarnation was in the mind of God, "in the roll of the book it is written of me", Heb 10: 7.

NJH And we read of the Lamb that was "foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world", 1 Pet 1: 20. It means the Lamb was in counsel. It is a remarkable thing. It is the blood of that One.

SWS It is interesting with the man in John 9 that the first impression he has was that it was, "A man called Jesus made mud and anointed mine eyes, and said to me" - the thought of divine communication coming through a blessed Man. That is the first thing that laid hold of him, "A man called Jesus".

NJH That is helpful. I think when he says that every other man was out of his sight.

SWS Yes, that is good.

NJH "A man called Jesus": nothing else mattered to him, but that one Person. And he gets that communication in response to Him; He worshipped Him. That is what God is looking for. He responded to God after getting sight.

AML Could you say something about "Jesus **heard** that they had cast him out"? Would it imply His manhood? Jesus, who He was, as Son of God, would know. But it says that Jesus heard it.

NJH Yes, He was aware of the circumstances that man was in. I was thinking of the reference that was made in prayer to His ear being opened morning by morning "to **succour** by a word him that is weary", Isa 50: 4. That was the result of the word in Christ's ear; He succoured those that were weary and needed help, strengthening. This man

needed sight; He was looking for it. The disciples thought it was his history: “who sinned, this man or his parents”, John 9: 2. That was not the point. The point in John 9 was that the Lord heard, as you said - “Jesus heard”. He knew where that man was in his soul.

KRO Maybe you might help us as to the Lord's voice. Those that are His know His voice. It is not just what is said, but it is the One who speaks.

NJH Yes, exactly. Mary knew His voice, when He said, “Mary”, John 20: 16. He had used that before in the period of service and now He is in resurrection. And she knew it right away, “Rabboni”. She wanted that communication, 'My teacher'.

GMC I was thinking of Joseph in Genesis 45. He makes himself known to his brethren and so on; that is one thing, but then when it becomes a question of dwelling, he said, “it is my mouth which speaks to you”, Gen 45: 12. That would link with what our brother is bringing out, would it not?

NJH That is a good reference. Yes, “my mouth”. We know what they had done to him, but God meant it for good; God turned it around. And that is what we come back to; God can turn around the circumstances. Whatever comes into our lives, leave room for God to come in. I think that is the point of communication; God is ready to speak.

MTH I was thinking of this in relation to what our brother says, that in Revelation, “I turned back to see the voice”, Rev 1: 12. It is the one who is speaking that is before him.

NJH Yes, it is the first reference I think where the assembly is referred to. In Revelation 1, there are the candlesticks: “And I turned back to see the voice which spoke with me; and having turned, I saw seven golden lamps, and in the midst of the seven lamps one like the Son of man”, Rev 1: 12-13. So there the assembly comes first. It is a vessel which can be used; in the millennium she will be used. The assembly will take up a mediatorial position along with Christ. But it is the glory of the Person before us now, the Word becoming flesh. God is in the midst. It says at one point, “God is in the midst of her”, Ps 46: 5.

DMW I just raise this more as an inquiry, but we sometimes speak about the fear of God, and rightly so. It could be defined as respect. But do you think it goes deeper into our souls, the fear of God? That we are having to do with things that are beyond man as He is.

NJH These men I referred to were so at ease in the presence of divine Persons. They had total respect for who the Father is as supreme, representing the Deity. Everything was in the Father in that sense; He has not taken a mediatorial position as Christ and the Spirit have. The unity of godhead is not disturbed by the mediatorial service of Christ and the Spirit.

DMW Well I just wondered about it myself. As you say, you fear yourself more than anyone else. We were speaking also at the break about the apostle saying, "I am crucified with Christ", Gal 2: 20. That taking up our cross is between ourselves and what we are in Christ and what we were out of Christ.

NJH Yes, there are two references to stones at the Jordan. There are the stones that were left in the bed of the Jordan - that is everything we were, all buried there. And we have to be told, "they are there to this day", Josh 4: 9. But the stones that were brought out represent what we are after Christ. What an exalted company this is. We have been speaking of the tent of meeting. There is no meeting like that, with the Lord in the midst. I was thinking after we spoke this morning that our week starts with the Supper. That is what our meeting starts with. The death of Christ is before the soul, and that is the basis of our fellowship, and our release spiritually in worship.

MJK Would that be the contemplation of His glory?

NJH Yes, it would. It is what moves the soul. You get a glimpse of that Person; you have to respond; it is not forced. And there is great liberty and variety in the service of God. One and another get up and express it and hymns are given out - all express our liberty we have with divine Persons.

PBK Could you say something more as to "our fellowship is indeed with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ"? Is that really Christ bringing forth the greatness of God and manifesting God in many ways?

NJH The reference to "our fellowship" largely stands related to the twelve apostles of the Lord. They had fellowship in the days of His flesh when it was literal that the Lord was amongst them and they conscious of it. But we are not left out of it; our fellowship is with the apostles; that is what I understand. So in the beginning of the Acts you have, "they persevered in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles", Acts 2: 42.

That is how I have viewed it. We have fellowship with those that were immediate witnesses to everything. They were there when He did all these variety of miracles. And the three of them were up in the mount of transfiguration; they saw His kingdom glory. They were brought into immediacy with glory, the thought of glory.

DMW In the history of the assembly one thing is connected to others that preceded. So we are connected with the apostles' fellowship, and the authority that they had and was used by God we have in the New Testament scriptures. But does fellowship mean that we have common thoughts as to the revelation of God? And those common thoughts are linked on with what went on previously in the apostles, who actually had fellowship with Him in flesh and blood condition.

NJH Yes, that is what I understand, that there were those who were eyewitnesses of His glory. They were personally there. Even the courts of law want to know what witnesses were there. They were eyewitnesses of the glory. But what these men had was a foundation; God used that in the beginning of the Acts; there were the one hundred twenty together, that was the twelve and others. And the Spirit of God came down in power on them. That has come down - the Spirit is amongst us now. So we get the gain of the glory that the apostles knew. Is that right?

DMW The heavenly side was what was to be brought out in teaching. But immediately Paul went up to Jerusalem; He linked on with what had gone before. He had been, as it were, destroyed morally in what he was connected with before, to be connected with a new system that he himself wanted to be part of. But he also got the light out of heaven, did he not?

NJH Yes, he did, exactly. Ananias in one account says, "why lingerest thou?", Acts 22: 16. It was a big thing to break the connections of the past history, but that was done and finished. And Paul was then taken up to the third heaven and, I was going to say, excelled, not only in his experiences but in the truth that he was given for the assembly.

DJK In John 14: 2 where He says, "I go to prepare you a place", would it bring before us the greatness of the Person in what He has secured for us in the way of divine communication? He goes on to say in verse 6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life".

NJH Very good, yes, everything was in the Person. And He was

preparing the place. It is prepared by Him going there, as we know. It is not taking Him two thousand years to prepare it. Because He went there; that is our place. "I sanctify myself for them", John 17: 19. He went into the place. 'Sanctify Himself' is the position that He holds for us. That is what belongs to us, sanctified from every other element.

DMW I sometimes wonder about that verse, "I sanctify myself for them", whether He had the Spirit in mind? Because we are sanctified by the Spirit practically, but we have the support of Christ in heaven and the Holy Spirit superintending everything that He left when He ascended.

NJH He personally did not need sanctification as we do, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners", Heb 7: 26. But He says it is for them and no doubt the Spirit would be in mind also, but He holds Himself, you might say, in that situation, right now, that we are not part of the world. He is the Centre of the world we belong to. Would you agree?

DMW And all our affiliations therefore are heavenly.

NJH Yes, a heavenly people, exactly.

JKK Is that why the word is "full of grace"; the entrance in is through that? I was just wondering about the passage there; it specifically identifies Him as being the Word and attaches "full of grace and truth" to that. Truth would be who He is; grace would be the entrance into it?

NJH Yes, that is good. You have to bring the subjective side in. Certainly objectively, He does not need anything added to Himself. He is a divine Person; He is God. I think that footnote in Hebrews 1 helps. It is a divine Person in manhood. And that was why John's writings largely are written, because the deity of Christ had been given up widely in the religious world. So he wrote his epistles to meet that.

LEO Could you help me as to the thought of the Son declaring the Father? This seems to be an authoritative phrase, that He is declaring the Father in John 1: "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him". It helps us speaking, does it not? But there is power behind it, is there not?

NJH Yes, there is. Yes, it is different from revelation. I always think declaration is like a public announcement; it cannot be changed. I do not know what the Constitution of America is, but it is something that is

supposed to be determined for all. And here, it is declared to the universe. And how great He is: “No one has seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him”. That is His characteristic place, the bosom of the Father; He is there now, in the bosom of the Father.

DMW Would the word “flesh” speak to us a bit; it is not flesh and blood? Would you say something about that?

NJH The idea of 'flesh' there would refer to the new order of manhood which has been seen in Jesus, over against fallen man in the flesh.

DMW I think so. And having begun, it has in view continuance.

NJH Yes, exactly, “became flesh”. We are apt to think that ceased by His work, but it is not so. What a glorious Person He is. It must have been profound to be in His company for even a few minutes. That man in John 9 must have had an enormous change to his life. “Thou hast both seen him” was because of what Jesus put on his eyes, because he was blind from birth, and this was now the time to see Him. I think the mud speaks of the removal of the man. The application of the humanity of grace and death put in his eyes, cleared his eyes.

GMC Can I just go back to grace and truth subsisting in Him? That would mean that it is only in Him that those two things are found. I am wondering if the only way we can know grace or truth is to learn from Him.

NJH Yes, that is a good point. That follows up what has been referred to. That is another thing that is conveyed to us, that they are both together: grace and truth.

AML You mentioned getting an impression with Him. Later in the chapter we have, “they abode with him that day”, John 1: 39. Will the fullness of that be seen in the heavenly city, contributing to the foundations, do you think?

NJH Well, yes. I often think these two involve the privilege of the assembly. In chapter 1: 29, you have, “who takes away the sin of the world”. Well, who could do that? Only One could do that! He will do it yet. Mr Raven says that He will do it by bringing God into the world, vol 5 p21. That is how He will take away the sin of the world. Think of the awfulness of sin; the whole world is just steeped in it, is it not? In

Revelation 18: 5, it says of the harlot that “her sins have been heaped on one another up to the heaven”. There are so many sins man is responsible for. The Lord is going to take it all away in the world to come by bringing God into it.

MG That verse that you refer to - “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” - is a mature impression. That is the result of divine speaking. It can only be the result of divine speaking. Is that not the intention of the word of God? To bring out mature impressions of Christ in our hearts?

NJH Yes, it would be. And the fact that His name is the Word makes Him the originator of every impression we get; it comes through Christ. What you have said is good. He is the source of it. He is the One that made known the Father; He revealed God in Himself: that is in Christ. He could be revealed no other way. You might meet men of God - Moses, David, Solomon and others we have spoken about - but this One here is the One that God is revealed in, this One. He is the Word.

RBC In the meeting this morning, a brother made mention as to the mercy-seat. Do we get a touch of the mercy-seat here in John 9, the Lord coming to this blind man? We did not read it this morning, but I am thinking of Exodus 25 and the building of the ark. It says to put the mercy-seat on top of the ark, v 21. It says, “there will I meet with thee, and will speak with thee”, v 22. I wonder if that came out here, the Lord speaking to this blind man. That is the basis of God's invitation to the sinner, is it not? It is the mercy-seat; we must come in through Him.

NJH Yes. The mercy-seat was very small. And if you take the cherubim at either end, it must have been quite a small area. And yet it meets the whole universe. The blood on the mercy-seat meets the problems of the whole universe. What a Man He is, a Man to our affections. I think that is good; the mercy-seat was there. And He could deal with whatever comes up: whether it is Lazarus, whether it is because of death and corruption, He could deal with that both together; it is no problem to Christ. And here is this man, blind since birth. The man at the of porch of Solomon in the beginning of the Acts had never walked, chap 3. He is made to walk. It shows the mercy-seat was so available. But as long as the way into the holiest was shut up, there was no approach for the people. But then, when Christ died, the veil was rent.

RBC The blood is on the mercy-seat.

NJH Yes, and on the day of atonement, the blood was put in there, Lev 16. And before he did that, the priest took the coals from off the golden altar and he put them in the censer and put frankincense in it. So when you are inside, there is a whole cloud of frankincense, that spoke of Christ and that went to the nostrils of God. The perfection of Christ filled the place. And then the blood was put there. And the cherubim were looking down in the place where the blood was put. And the rights of God are satisfied. So there is no question. It is “the word of the truth” - we have in Ephesians 1, “the glad tidings of your salvation”, v 13.

DMW Revelation comes in then in this part that you have read associated with the Spirit. You mentioned declaration, which was more the public, and perhaps the subjective side. Is the Holy Spirit connected with revelation here?

NJH Well, He has to be. His power was known earlier, but the Person is now revealed. Is that what you mean as to the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Yes, that had to be. In the Old Testament, persons were moved by the Spirit, but that was an influence. That Person ever existed in the Godhead; He was in form of God. But in Christ, the whole matter is cleared now. He is great enough to baptise with the Holy Spirit and that is the way into the assembly. And that is something we had to meet with. Farther south from Anand, where our brother is in India, they thought baptism with water brought you into the assembly, but that is not the truth. Baptism by water was done for us in the household before we did not know any better. We were in a baptised house. So every person in the house has been baptised with water. That is dealing with what is here, but baptism of the Spirit brings you into the assembly. And Christ is great enough to do that.

DEW I was thinking about what our brother brought in about, “*he* hath declared him”. Just moving on from that scripture you were reading, I was thinking in Hebrews about the Lord being “the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance”, Heb 1: 3. He has declared God perfectly, has He not? Nothing has been missed out. His love has been perfectly shown. If we try and declare something of someone, we do not do it right, but the Lord is perfect in that.

NJH That is good. That sets out the whole glory; every aspect of divine glory was in Christ. I think declaration somewhat involves a little more what is public to the universe. But what you say is still so true, that

He is “the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power”. That is who the Person is. And those that belong to God really know that.

DEW There is a hymn that says,

Effulgence of God's glory, blessed Lord!
Expression of His substance! Thus adored
By those who are the fruit of love divine,
Supreme art Thou, as all Thy glories shine!

(Hymn 16)

So we can appreciate it, can we not?

NJH That is it. It comes back to the privilege we have in the assembly. Why are we where we are? Because divine Persons have communicated, and also operated in our souls, created a need in our souls. And we are secured by faith. It is from God; everything we get is from God. And I think what you have said is helpful. It is those that have been worked on by God who appreciate what is of God.

MTH Just to link on with that, the knowledge of the glory of God is shining in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor 4: 6. We can take that in through spiritual senses.

NJH Yes, that is current things you are referring to, “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”.

DMW There is transformation as a result of that.

NJH That is right - change takes place.

DMW It says, “this not of yourselves”, Eph 2: 8. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit”, Zech 4: 6. So we cannot add anything to it, even by our efforts.

NJH That is right. It is entirely of God.

SWS It is really wonderful what we are speaking about. I just wonder, even for myself, if we really appreciate the greatness of what has been communicated to us, in the way of life, in the way of God's love, His grace and His goodness towards us. That it is in view of something. And something far greater than simply having our need met. Perhaps this man might have been satisfied with having received sight. But it says, “Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him, he

said to him, Thou, dost thou believe on the Son of God?”. The Lord Jesus was not satisfied that this man might simply have his need met. What He had was something far greater in view. His desire was to bring this man into all the blessing and the greatness of what God has purposed in His heart for Himself. There is nothing greater than that. And do we really lay hold of that?

NJH Well, we should. I agree with it fully. He had lost his family; they had refused him, through religious pride, and he was cast out of the synagogue. And how was he going to live? Well, eventually he would come into the quickened company, and made to live - live to God.

VMK In John's first epistle it says, “and our hands handled”, 1 John 1: 1. What would that mean?

NJH I think it just means the disciples were so close. The fellowship was very real. Judas betrayed Him by a kiss; that is what the heartless side of man will do, to bring reproach to Christ and deliver Him up. But there was a freedom there. According to Nathan's word to David, he drank out the same cup, 2 Sam 12: 3. They were very close. He was not above them, although He was their Teacher. He helped them, guided them, everything they needed. And yet at the same time bearing the brunt of force against Himself from Satan and His enemies.

DMW Would the Lord use Thomas as an example as well? The Lord was in resurrection for forty days; that was something they had to get used to. So would that go on to that, do you think, “our hands handled”?

NJH Yes, I think that is good. Thomas represents the Jew. And the Jew will need proof. They said, “What are those wounds in thy hands?”, Zech 13: 6. And Thomas wanted to put his hand into the side of Christ. There is not very much faith in that. But the Jew eventually wants these proofs that He has been into death. I think that is what he represents. But the rest of the apostles did not need that. It would be spiritually what they had gained from Him.

GMC The words “our hands handled” would preserve us from it being an intellectual thing, would it not?

NJH Yes, it would. The mind can be involved very easily. The mind has got to be controlled by the Spirit.

CJB Paul does not say this in a boastful way in the beginning of this epistle. I am impressed by how the paragraph finishes, “these things

write we to you that your joy may be full". Can you say just a little bit more about the joy that there is, the fulness of joy, in knowing the Person of the Son that John seeks to manifest in this epistle?

NJH Well, they witnessed the eternal life. That is what they saw, the eternal life which was with the Father, Christ's relation to the Father. They must have heard through His prayers when the Lord prayed, and they said at one point, "teach us to pray", Luke 11: 1. They must have actually witnessed the eternal life that was with the Father. What an impression you get when you think about it.

DMW It has its moral bearing, eternal life, in a scene of opposition where joy is quenched if we are distracted from the area of eternal life.

NJH Yes, we need to be preserved in it.

DMW And it consists in Him. Eternal life is an out of the world relationship and order of being which subsists in Christ for us, see JND Notes & Comments vol 2 p231. That would be the present bearing of it, would it not?

NJH Yes. And it involves knowledge too, does it not? "And this is the eternal life, that they should know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent", John 17: 3. That is the entrance to eternal life.

JKK The Lord's words to Peter are very simple in that, "Follow thou me", John 21: 22. His statement was to bring Peter into the enjoyment of that. He was distracted.

NJH That is good. Yes, distracted by another brother. You may look at the brethren; it is better to look at Christ. You will not see imperfections in Christ. The interesting point is that Peter would be told to follow, but the Lord did not need to tell John to follow. He was already following: a reliable man, John. It would be fine to be that until the end. "If I will that he abide until I come, what is that to thee?"

MTH I was thinking of our brother's earlier question and your response in your opening comments too, that in relation to this first epistle of John and the distinction between the apostles' fellowship with the Father and our fellowship with the apostles. The way it is put preserves us also from any thought of transubstantiation. There is no handling Him in that sense at all. We are preserved from what has been suggested, the intellectual thought of the mind rather than the

reality that we have fellowship with the apostles.

NJH Yes. Transubstantiation, the teaching that the bread and the cup become literally the body and blood of the Lord, was a terrible evil from Rome. That is just awful error.

DMW Would you say something as to the correct understanding of John 6: 51?

NJH Let us look at it. First of all, “if any one shall have eaten of this bread he shall live forever; but the bread withal which I shall give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world”. And then further down, in verse 54, “He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and I will raise him up at the last day”. Well, it is moral and spiritual. It is the same as life eternal now. We are still in conditions that are not going to last long, some of us. But it is moral and spiritual. It is life to you. The natural man cannot take in that feeding on the death of Christ gives us life.

DMW The Lord insists on that here.

NJH Yes, exactly. You have to have it. And then He says, “*he* also who eats me” (v 57); that is Christ where He is.

DMW It is important to see that this is a moral and spiritual appropriation. And then nothing can be appropriated unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood. We accept that and we must have that. And the way that He speaks of life eternal in verse 54 does not really project itself into eternity. It is a present matter that is needed. There was a great conflict waged over that.

NJH That is right. It is proved here. I think it is important to come back to what we said earlier, as to the emblems before you, that it is the import of these, morally and spiritually in your soul. Then throughout the week, you eat this bread, drink His blood. We go through this scene; and the death of Christ means the shutting out of everything that was foreign to God for us. And we can therefore feed and have life in it.

MTH Just in relation to the hands handling, again, they had an intimacy, if we can say that, and the distinction you made at the outset is important in relation to that. It is a beautiful thing. We were speaking about one body and one Spirit. That is how we can enjoy that fellowship with them.

NJH I have often thought about the judges to whom the Hebrew

bondman was brought after his committal as to his love for his master and his wife and his children; and his ear was bored through with an awl. Now, there are the apostles of the Lord that wrote two of the gospels, and two of Paul's company wrote the other two. I think the idea of these judges come in in that - would that be all right? The judges would have given a proper estimate of the committal and devotion of the Hebrew bondman, and you get that in both the Lord's apostles that were given to write a gospel and the two of Paul's company. Is that not beautiful? There is thorough seamless connection that is not just those that lived physically with the Lord. That is what is referred to here. They were physically with the Lord and in His company. They witnessed His testimony, His devotion, His sacrifice, and His suffering as far as they could go. They did not witness the pressure of Gethsemane because they were heavy with sleep. But they get it - and we get it by the Spirit - as He gives them what the Lord said in His prayer. But two of Paul's company join in seamless committal to the sufferings and death of Christ.

DMW Does the idea of the judges carry over; does it not also speak of holy ones as saints? So that carries over to an appreciation and appropriation among ourselves; as we take that in from the judges you mentioned who wrote the gospels.

NJH Yes, I think that is right; I think they follow through. I look at Mr Darby's writings, and they are so amazingly enlightened. There was little surrounding him to give what was necessary. And he witnessed, he opened up, in holy regard for what Christ went through in regard to sin, and everything He bore. These are tremendous things.

MJK In relation to what you are speaking about, does there have to be confidence in the Person, in order to commit all things to Christ?

NJH Oh yes, you mean God has confidence in Him; is that what you meant?

MJK I am seeing that Christ committed everything to the Father. He is the One who could commit to the Father, but it is committing all things to Him in relation to ourselves. It is what we commit to Him that is in safekeeping. There is confidence in the Man.

NJH Yes, that is true exactly. Well, we trust Him for all that is asked. We can trust Him for it, address Him for looking after us in every way. He is the 'all the way through Saviour'. We can trust Him; we can love

Him: there is nobody like Him in the universe.

MJK Yes. I was thinking that in relation to the Hebrew bondman. He could do that because he had confidence in the master.

NJH Yes, exactly. He says, "I love my master".

DCD I was affected by what you were saying about life earlier. We had locally recently that we are called to walk in newness of life. Our brother has referred to it with a similar thought, having confidence in the Lord; it is who we identify with, identifying with Him where He is now. I am wondering if that is really needed if we are to walk in newness of life.

NJH That is good. That is Roman teaching, being identified with Him in His death. "We have been buried therefore with him by baptism unto death, in order that, even as Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life", Rom 6: 4. It is a good scripture. Do you want to say more about it?

DCD I am freshly affected too by what you were speaking of, how a natural person in this scene looking upon the emblems could have no understanding. But we have such encouragement and teaching. That is because we identify with His death and His resurrection, but we identify with Him too now where He is. And that is really what we look for, a fresh manifestation of His love in the Supper, but it is keeping an eye on the Lord where He is now.

NJH Yes, He loves to meet us. I think the tent of meeting must have some reflection in the Supper. He loves to come, speaking simply, because He loves us. He died for us, He lives for us, He comes to us, and He conveys the word for the moment.

SP In John 1: 4, we read, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men". In Him was a light and that was a light for man. So a spiritual understanding and a spiritual light was in Him. So you spoke about how wonderful our Lord is, God putting confidence in Him: He sent Him, and He obeyed.

NJH John the baptist was the greatest prophet born of woman, was he not? But here in verses 32, John the baptist says, "I beheld the Spirit descending as a dove from heaven, and it abode upon him", and it says that "*he* said to me" - emphatic '*he*' - "And I knew him not; but he who sent me to baptise with water, *he* said to me, Upon whom thou shalt see

the Spirit descending and abiding on him, he it is who baptises with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son of God". *John* is sent there; he says it is conveyed to him; it is a divine word to him.

DMW You quoted earlier, "no one knows who the Son is but the Father" (Luke 10: 22), but here it says, "I knew him not" in v 31, and again in v 33. Would that convey to us the support of that scripture, "I knew him not"?

NJH Yes, it would. But there was something beyond him.

DMW Yes, something beyond him was that Person: "no one knows who the Son is but the Father", but then He comes into our range in revelation, to be for God, the Son of God, to speak on behalf of God, as God's instrument, but He is God.

NJH That is right. Yes, I like that, and the Father has to do with that. *John* says, "*he* said to me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending". That was bodily. Scripture says that was as a dove, "in a bodily form as a dove", Luke 3: 22. There was nothing like that. It is peculiar to Christ. No one else has had anything like that happen to him. The disciples did not get the Spirit that way. But the Spirit "bodily" must suggest - it has that inference - that the Spirit is going to dwell in the assembly bodily; would that be right?

KAK I am just linking on with what he received; the same thing is seen in chapter 9. The man is given a question by the Lord Jesus, "dost thou believe on the Son of God?" and what the Lord reveals to him in speaking with him is the 'I am'. What He says is, "Thou has both seen him, and he that speaks with thee is he", which is the One who is God in the flesh, in his presence - that causes worship.

NJH Yes, exactly. Yes, 'I am' was a name that was made known back in Moses' time, Exod 3: 14.

KAK I was thinking of the import of the Lord Jesus presenting Himself and speaking in such a way that a person could change his whole understanding of who God is.

NJH Yes, well, anything to be known about God is seen in Christ; it is totality, anything that we can apprehend. There is what Mr James Taylor often spoke of as 'absolute deity', which the Father represents, and of course that marks each divine Person. There is a certain point

that is beyond us; we are creatures and ever will be.

KAK Yes, so here it is, “he that speaks with thee”.

NJH Yes, that is good. It shows that nothing can be weakened in the divine system, I think the will - the counsel of His will - means everything contained within what has been revealed to be communicated to man, and that has been fully done in Christ. We can be assured that we are not deprived of anything. The assembly is the most intelligent family in the universe. She will be the display of God's glory millennially as united to Christ. It has even been said that the assembly is the library of the universe; other families will learn through the assembly, Rev 21: 14. Everything that can be conveyed is resident in the assembly. She is fully aware.

DMW There is truth that we would be exercised to seek the Spirit's help to take in, is there not? The learning time is now. And we are learning from the Lord by the Spirit during the dispensation of God which is in faith. But in the day to come, the heavenly influence will be through the assembly as to what proceeds here.

NJH Yes.

DJK I was just thinking as we were speaking, going back to what we read earlier, about the end of John 1: 18, “*he* hath declared”: the “*he*” is in italics, I suppose to bring before us the greatness of the instrument. I think too it goes back to what you said earlier, that everything is from God's side, because “*he* hath declared” involved whether it was heard or not. It is from God's side, but then God's side also supposes that there is an answer. I think it is important what you are bringing before us, to see what comes out in the assembly.

NJH Yes, I think you are right. John in writing about the holy city in Revelation 21 says, “I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lamb”, v 22. See the immediacy. God's glory marks the city, having the glory of God. It is the residence -

O residence of glory! (Hymn 221)

It is all there in the assembly and it will radiate throughout the universe. Think of it! And the kings and nations that will bring their glory to it, and whoever does not will be marked by drought and famine, Zech 14: 17. What an arrangement it will be; death will not reign.

DMW The reason death will not reign is because, first of all, he that

had the might of it has been defeated; and that is carried through in testimony by the assembly. But Satan will be bound a thousand years; so where God had to reduce the age of man because of sin, He will extend it in the millennium.

NJH Yes. Methuselah did not quite make it, did he? He did not make the thousand - nine hundred and sixty-nine years. But it is a thousand-year reign. It is a tremendous thing to think of what the earth has been subject to and how everything is affected in it. At present the whole scene is given up to corruption. It grieves you, even in the present day, the so-called enlightened West, the Christian world, is giving up far more than the heathen world - terrible conditions, moral conditions are terrible. We need strength, and that is what the tent of meeting involves. It is strengthening us to stand firm. The man in John 9 stood firm. Whoever tried to knock him off what he was at, he was impervious to attack; and he got the light of the Son of God. That is what we need in our souls, brethren, the light of the Son of God.

JKK God wanted to be known by men. You were speaking about being brought into this sphere of things in the assembly, that it is a place that we are brought into what is desired by God. It is a place that belongs to us.

NJH That is right. The baptism of the Spirit brings you into the assembly. That is the only way you come into it. We see this throughout the Acts, I think you will find. Take those in Samaria: Phillip preached and there were results, but when the assembly in Jerusalem heard about it, then two of them came down and they immediately preached the reception of the Spirit. And you have to have the Spirit to be in the assembly. It is a spiritual vessel. It is not just a church or company. In that sense, it is a spiritual vessel that we are brought into, and it is by the Spirit.

GMC In John's gospel, he uses the word "witness" and then in the epistle, he said, "we report to you". Is there a distinct way in which God speaks to that person, and then they communicate that on to us? I am wondering in relation to the assembly, if there is an area where God's communication is, you might say, traded or exchanged back and forth?

NJH That is interesting. I do not know if there is a difference between witness and reporting except that we speak about witnessing, of course, to unbelievers now. There is open-air preaching and whatever it may be, or speaking personally, but I think you witness

something that is indelibly marked in your soul. It is like this stamp in your being, and the report is kind of a result of that. You are telling what you have got in your soul. Saul of Tarsus was secured. He was a rough man; he was a violent man, very strong in his pursuit of being against Christ and His followers. He was dragging women and children out of homes to put them in prison and so on. But the Lord did not meet him by force; He met him by light. Light brought that man down with all his strength. I think it has even been said that that he was formed in strength in his mother's womb. He was set apart as if he was made to be strong for his pursuit, which was wrong at first, but light brought him down.

GMC Paul was told, "enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do", Acts 9: 6. So he is brought into contact with the assembly.

NJH Yes, and when he saw the first one of the brethren as he was baptised, scales fell from his eyes; he says, I "saw him" (Acts 22: 13); that was Ananias. That wonderful first person he saw was maybe the top of the list to drag off to prison. He says, I "saw him". It is a remarkable case of a person finding relief from his history and everything and finding his place in the assembly.

MG And he was brought to that realisation by a word, "Saul, Saul", Acts 9: 4.

NJH Yes, exactly. I think it is a delightful case, and then he comes to Damascus, and the first thing that struck him was the Lord speaking to Saul and saying, "why dost thou persecute me?". When the Lord spoke to Ananias, He says that Saul was praying, v 11. So He had two sides of the case going at one time. For this man to be received into the assembly, the Lord was preparing the assembly to receive him. Is that not wonderful?

DMW There was no questioning. There was some questioning on Ananias's part, but it shows a principle of mutuality and coordination of the Spirit. Then adjustment comes in but not on the principle of questioning exactly, although because of what is known maybe about a person there may be some reluctance.

NJH Yes, I know, but Ananias was three days behind in his news, was he not?

DMW Yes, three days behind in his news, but there was certainly no

questioning by Saul.

NJH Yes, we have that questioning: was it of God or of man? That was to those that had refused John the baptist.

SWS I was thinking about what you said in relation to the baptism of the Holy Spirit bringing persons into the assembly. You referred to two who came down from Jerusalem to Samaria, Peter and John. And they prayed that they would receive the Holy Spirit. Do you not see the wisdom of God in that? They were to be brought into fellowship with those that were in Jerusalem, otherwise there was a danger that there would be an independent church set up in Samaria. So the evidence of the Spirit's working is that it has a uniting effect and it brings persons into the gain and into the good of what is practically worked out in fellowship,

NJH Exactly. The fullest thought that God has in His mind is that a person gets the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit; only then is he in a safe circle.

Reading at a three-day meeting in Denton

29th March 2024

List of initials:-

C J Brien, Aberdeen; R B Clark, Aberdeen; D C Drever, Calgary;
G M Chellberg, Wheaton; M Gardiner, Toronto; M T Holland, Calgary;
N J Henry, Glasgow; D J Klassen, Aberdeen; M J Klassen, Aberdeen;
P B Klassen, Aberdeen; V M Klassen, Aberdeen; J K Knauss,
Indianapolis; K A Knauss, Indianapolis; A M Lidbeck, Aberdeen;
K R Oliver, Denton; L E Oliver, Denton; S Parmar, Anand; S W Selman,
Denton; D E Walkinshaw, Linlithgow; D M Welch, Denton

REDEMPTION IN A PERSON

David C Brown

Romans 3: 21-25 (to “blood”)

Ephesians 1: 6 (from “the Beloved”), 7

Colossians 1: 14

I trust the Lord with give me help to speak further about redemption. It is a wonderful fact that God has presented salvation to us, but that salvation is one that depends on redemption. And as we see in each of these cases, it speaks of redemption as *in* Christ Jesus, *in whom* is our redemption. Redemption accomplished: how wonderful the work of Christ in accomplishing redemption! But how wonderful that the redemption is *in Him*. We know the need. I trust everyone here knows the need, and I look around the company I broke bread with this morning; yet I feel that it is a responsibility in preaching that we should preach to present salvation, preach without any presumption regarding anyone who is under the sound of the word. The word should go out as a challenge indeed to every soul here. Do you know this? Are you in the benefit of it? Are you in the blessing of redemption, “being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus”?

But what does redemption mean? It means firstly that there is a right: God has a right to you. Think of Him, the Creator. The Creator of the universe has a right to you, a right to your attention, a right to your subjection, a right that you should fulfil His will and His word. And what has your history been? What has my history been? It is one in which the only conclusion can be, “for there is no difference”, no difference between you and me. No doubt there are different sins, or different degrees of sinning, but the final point is “there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”. You cannot put yourself on an elevated platform compared to the most wicked sinner in the world. You cannot say that you have a right to salvation, or that you have a right to the presence of God, or that you have a right to eternity with God, on the ground of anything whatsoever that you have done. You are a sinner, and I am a sinner through and through. It is the character of mankind, it is the activity of mankind, sinners, and there is no answer in us and no difference. There is no remedy apart from Christ, blessed remedy.

What a full and blessed remedy there is in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. What did it require if you were to come into blessing? It

required that wonderful activity in redemption that you, the sinner, with no rights, who has gone against the rights of God, should be affected by the glad tidings of His grace. For that, Christ had to go into the depths, had to take up the challenge, had to take up everything that is necessary in order that you should come into blessing. He has done it; He has done it all. How wonderful that we can preach the glad tidings on the ground that Christ has done it all. He has paid the price; redemption's price is paid.

Hark to the wondrous story,
Redemption's price is paid. (Hymn 332)

Can anyone ask or demand anything further?

But what a price it was. What a price it was, "the redemption of their soul is costly, and must be given up forever", Ps 49: 8. Think of the blessedness of the fact that the Lord Jesus was prepared to pay the fullest and the greatest price in the shedding of His precious blood. How wonderful: redemption's price is paid. How wonderful that everything that would challenge God has been dealt with in the fulness and the blessedness of the work of the Lord Jesus: "being justified freely by his grace", everything from the side of grace. The grace of God is towards you. We are in a period that is called the dispensation of grace. That does not simply mean a time of grace: it is a whole administration of grace towards man. And it is flowing towards you and it is flowing towards me tonight in the blessedness of the glad tidings. It is wonderful to have such an administration of grace: it is flowing towards you in all your need. I suppose we could all say we have some need. Whatever the need is it is answered in the grace of God in its fulness, because the price has been paid in its fulness for redemption.

And where was it paid? It was paid at the cross. What was the great transaction at the cross? That is where the Saviour took up every liability of mine. That is where He bore all my sins in their totality. The sins I know, and the sins I have forgotten, the sins I may think little of, and perhaps some I may appreciate the reality of: every one, Jesus knows them. He knows every one of my sins far better than I know them, because He bore every one of them and He has taken away the charge of them. And the redemption that is in Christ Jesus is that full witness that everything that could be charged against me in the sight of God has been removed. How blessed that is. I know it for myself, unchallengeably, and the blood of Jesus as shed is a witness to that. How wonderful that is. You need to know it yourself and to grow in the

knowledge of it, to increase in appreciation of such a love, such a grace, the grace of God would flow towards you because of redemption.

But then He has not only come to rescue you from your lost condition, He has come to attach you to a Person, and that is what the gospel would do to you. There is a Man for your heart here, so that Paul speaks of it in that way, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. There He is at the Father's right hand, glorified as we delighted to speak of earlier. There He is, glorified and anointed by the Father, "crowned with glory and honour" (Heb 3: 9), blessed in every way, given the fullest, richest, greatest accolade that divine giving could bestow upon Him. And your redemption is in Him, and your blessing is in Him, and your knowledge of God is in Him, and you have a Man for your heart because of the wonder and the blessedness of that wonderful One.

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth a mercy-seat, through faith in his blood". Wonderful blood of Jesus. How much does the blood of Jesus mean to you? Think of its preciousness to God, the fulness of it, while it is an object of faith for you. How wonderful to think of the blood of Jesus, an object of faith, "through faith in his blood". It is the answer to your need; it is the answer to the charge against you. It is used of course in so many ways; it is referred to in scripture in so many ways. There is the price, as we are speaking of it in redemption, redemption's price is paid. And the blood can wash away your sins, the blood of the covenant that gives that liberty that is in the divine mind for you. It is wonderful to think of the fulness and the blessedness of the blood of Jesus. That blood, of course, was blood that flowed from the side of One who had gone into death. He died. Why did he die? *He died for you.* He died because you are a sinner. He died because you needed somebody to take on that penalty. He died so that you should come into the fulness of the blessing. Redemption is in the precious blood of Jesus, and that is the eternal witness to the fact that there is One who has died, who has gone into death, His blood no longer in His body. What a witness it was, what a witness to the completeness of the work! Do you value it? Do you appreciate it, and has it attached you to the Man so that you know what it is, "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus"? God sets Him forth in the gospel as a mercy-seat, as a place of approach to God, and the place where God would approach you; and the mercy-seat was where God was satisfied. The blood was put upon the mercy-seat, and God looked upon it and He was satisfied. He has

satisfied entirely with the work of Jesus and we have that in Him.

God is satisfied with Jesus,
We are satisfied as well. (Hymn 410)

You are to be satisfied in Him. Have you found the Lord Jesus as the source of your satisfaction? Redemption not only having rescued you, redemption not only having secured you as the children of Israel were secured from Egypt by the work of redemption as it was presented then, but brought to Him, attached to Him, led by Him, having everything in Him, the One who is of such great attraction to the heart of God.

And that is what was in mind in reading these other two verses. The Beloved - who is He? It is the Beloved "in whom we have redemption". It is secured in Him, the One who has done all the work, the One who has gone into the grave too, the One who is risen, the One who is ascended at God's right hand: God has given Him the greatest title. What a wonderful title is "the Beloved". *The Beloved*, the One who satisfies the heart of God, who rejoices the heart of God. I suppose in this scene He was always the Beloved. God looked upon Him as He walked the pathway of perfection. God looked upon him as He walked the pathway of His will. But now God looks upon Him and has shown to us in the Scriptures that He is the One: He is the Beloved. But we read yesterday that scripture about a beloved. There was someone knowing this, there in the Song of Songs 5. We find a beloved. Assuredly, He was God's Beloved. Has he become your beloved? You can see He is the assembly's beloved, and unique and glorious and perfect. A beloved who is "more than another beloved", more than anyone else that can be presented to God's view, more than anyone else that can be presented to the assembly's view.

How about you? Do you see the One who is your beloved, and do you see Him as God's beloved, the Father's beloved? How wonderful that this is the One, and it says, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of offences". You have offended. Colossians says, "the forgiveness of sins", sins, offences. You have sinned and you have offended. Where are you going to find the answer? Where are you going to find the rescue? Where are you going to find what there is in God's heart for you and the fulness of His blessing? You are only going to find it in the Beloved. You are only going to find it in "the Son of His love". But how wonderful and attractive that One, "the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood". What it meant to the Father when the blood of Jesus was shed.

What it meant to Him, what a cost to God, what a thought for the Lord Jesus. But what it was to God, His Beloved despised -

Hail! Thou once despisèd Jesus.

And you have despised Him at some stage. I have despised Him at some stage, have not listened to His word, have not done what He required of me. Well, grace is towards you. Grace is towards you in the gospel. And in that same despised Jesus, there is salvation - "in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of offences". Wonderful to think your offences, your sins, forgiven. Think of God looking upon you, looking upon me, and saying that is what you have offended in, the way in which you have offended. It is forgiven. It is not going to be raised again. And it is righteously forgiven. Men will pardon; men perhaps think that they could send forth a pardon to persons. And they do it on other grounds, on unrighteous grounds. And here God is pardoning you as a believer. He has forgiven you entirely righteously in such a way that no one can charge you. No one can charge you, because God has forgiven you. How blessed, how beautiful, how simple it is that we are forgiven. So we know how we can come before God in that way, in the enjoyment of the fact that we are forgiven sinners, with a redemption that is "in the Beloved". God has that One. He has a redemption. The Lord has been set forth by God as a redemption; Wonderful to find that it is all in Himself. There was a work, a glorious work which has been done, but we have to be bound up with Himself.

So God would speak of Him in another way, in Colossians, as "the Son of his love". It was very interesting. The Ephesians brings in the redemption through His blood: "in whom we have redemption through his blood". Colossians does not refer to that. We know it. It comes in later in the chapter and we know it is vital for it. And we know it is essential to it. But as has been said, redemption subsists in the worth of the Person, CAC vol 9 p265. Redemption subsists in the worth of Christ, *the* Son of His love. God has found Himself a Man who He has unreserved affection for. And then having such a Man who is worthy of God's unreserved affection, He says, 'You can come into the blessing of that. You can have redemption *in the Man* who satisfies me, in the Man who delights my heart'.

We have spoken a little of redemption, and one of the blessed things about it is that we are awaiting the fulness of what is in mind in redemption. It is all in Christ Jesus, and it is all secured, and it is all

unchallengeable. How blessed it is. But then to live in this scene, to live in this life, we require divine power. How could we live without divine power to sustain us while we remain here? And how blessed that the Holy Spirit has been given. But we read later in Ephesians 1 about the Holy Spirit: “Ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance to the redemption of the acquired possession”, v 13, 14. In Ephesians 4: 30 it says, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which ye have been sealed for the day of redemption”. So there is a day that we are waiting for, a day of redemption in its fulness and in its blessedness. I suppose that in its fulness this is the day of the Lord, the day of God. How blessed that there will be a day of redemption where everything that is out of order in the scene is put right. Thankfully, *you* can know what it is to be put right. You can know what it is to be in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. But everything is going to be set right. The scene in all its beauty will be flourishing under the hand of Lord Jesus. He will be there in the day of redemption. As receiving the Holy Spirit you are sealed for that, you have that seal of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is “to the redemption of the acquired possession”. Think of that, that He has given the earnest of it, given the pledge of it in this present time. What you are going to enjoy in the inheritance eternally, you have the pledge of now. In ordinary things, if somebody gives you a pledge, the pledge is much less than the thing. It is simply a token that you are going to enjoy something. But God does not act like that: in the fulness of His grace, the pledge, the Earnest of what you are going to come into is a divine Person himself, the Holy Spirit of God. And you are sealed by that. And the believer can know what it is to have an anticipation of the fulness of God's thoughts in redemption because of the work of Christ and because too of the giving of the Holy Spirit.

And then all the time we come back to “in whom we have redemption”; in Him, is a Person. Remember the word of Job; it was quite remarkable what he should say in his time, “I know that my Redeemer liveth”, Job 19: 25. You are looking for the Redeemer. There is redemption, and there is a work, and all that is accomplished with every believer. How much we need to be attached in heart to the Redeemer. How wonderful that we know Him, as we go through times of sorrow and pressure at the moment, and brethren in particular sorrow. How wonderful to think the matters are “to the redemption of the acquired possession”.

Another reference comes to mind in Romans 8, which speaks of “the redemption of our body”. We think of what it is for our beloved brother who is now with Christ. But then he is “awaiting adoption, that is the redemption of our body”. All of us are. But even as having entered into death, how wonderful to be awaiting the redemption of our body; so that our brother will rise; our brother will stand again. How wonderful! Man could not do that. Nothing in the whole range and scope of human endeavour could raise a person. I am thankful for the mercy that God has allowed that can maintain life with medication and so on, but here there is something that is going to rise again. How wonderful! There will be what will rise. Life according to God includes redemption of the body in its fulness: free of all unsuitability for God, and free to enjoy His presence and a whole sphere as according to His mind.

I trust every one of us should be more firmly attached to Him, the Redeemer, more firmly attached to the Saviour, more firmly in the assurance that “he has taken us into favour in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption”.

May the Lord bless the word.

Grimsby

9th June 2024

THE WAY

Phil D Brien

John 14: 6

Psalm 119: 30-37

Proverbs 4: 1, 11

1 Corinthians 12: 31

I had an impression when we were reading Acts, the other week. In Acts 16 a slave girl with a spirit of Python had been speaking out as to Paul and those with him, and she “cried saying, These men are bondmen of the Most High God, who announce to you the way of salvation”, v 17. It is evident from these passages that it has been on my mind to say a word about the various aspects of “the way”. We see from John's gospel how Jesus says in His own words to Thomas, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life”. I was thinking specifically about “the way”. It encompasses the whole concept, “the way, and the truth, and the life”. I was impressed with this idea of “the way” in various aspects. You think of the way as being guideposts to guide you in a certain direction, and we can see with Jesus that He is the Way, God's way to direct us to God's mind, to direct us into all that is in the heart and mind of God, God the Father. We have this perfectly with Jesus: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life”. In Philippi, what God said in the gospel was preached by Paul and others. They were able to preach “the way of salvation”, Acts 16: 17. The “way of salvation” is directed and the guideposts are to go to Jesus. He is the Way.

There are various aspects of the way. We have other references in the Scriptures, in the Psalms and Proverbs. The devil will often take persons down into the way of evil and the way of the wicked. The Proverbs and Psalms and these other scriptures bring out the opposite to that. The various aspects of the way are an interesting study to me. Everything stems from looking at Jesus, “I am the way”. It is a direction to know God's mind, to know the Father's heart and so to focus on Him, to seek guidance from Him, because He is the way. He is the only way to salvation, the only way into that world where blessing is abundant.

I am sure there are a lot more, but these specific impressions affected me. In the Psalms, we have these references to “the way of faithfulness”. The writer is pointing out that there is a choice. If you look back to Psalm 119: 14, it says, “I have rejoiced in the way of thy

testimonies”, speaking as to the things that are of God, the things that have come from above. These are positive aspects of knowing the guideposts, spiritual guidance and wisdom that we have here in Proverbs too, “the way of wisdom”. Here in Psalm 119, it affected me that the writer has chosen “the way of faithfulness”. There are other references in this Psalm as to the way, such as “I will run the way of thy commandments”, to seek God, to seek the divine mind, to seek that through Jesus. It is the way to know what the mind of God is, to know His thoughts as outlined here in Scripture, to understand the mind of God, which centres in Jesus.

It is a wonderful thing to have an impression and reassurance as to the various aspects of the way, that are known in Jesus. He is the epitome of “the way of faithfulness”, and it is a choice. “I have chosen the way of faithfulness”; “I will run the way of thy commandments”. Jesus is an example of One who completed the Father's will. All that the Father had in mind was His commandments, His will, and the writer here is aspiring to that: “I will run the way of thy commandments”. “Teach me, O Jehovah, the way of thy statutes”. These are the things that are guiding, the things that are regulating a person in their soul. We learn that from the divine side if we look and see what is in Jesus. He will teach us: “Teach me, O Jehovah, the way of thy statutes, and I will observe it unto the end”. And then finally the psalmist says, “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; quicken me in thy way”. There is reference to the Spirit being involved; we have sung as to the Spirit: “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity”. There are things that are distracting us from learning and from “the way of thy statutes” and “the way of faithfulness”; so the Spirit would help us in quickening, in “thy way”, the way of Jesus.

There are various other aspects; you can look into them yourself. This impression might help stir our hearts as to this thought that was really stimulated by this slave girl speaking things that were true. She did not have the Spirit of it directly at that time because she had a spirit of Python. She was released by Paul but was able to say things that were true to Paul and point to the way of salvation, the way that was in Jesus.

What we have here in 1 Corinthians 12 is also encouraging the saints, with all the various spiritual gifts and spiritual things said to encourage and strengthen and help us in our pathway here, to be part of the assembly which is so pleasing to Christ. It is to be moulded and

shaped like Him. Paul is encouraging them to “desire earnestly the greater gifts”, gifts that promote spiritual well-being in one another and promote what is of Christ. Paul is able to say, “yet shew I unto you a way of more surpassing excellence”. That is the way that is in Jesus, because He is the Way. These things are only experienced in Him, but can be ours. We can be strengthened in them. This way is “of more surpassing excellence”. It is not the way of evil that is pervading this world; it is not the way of wicked things that pervades this world. It is the “way of more surpassing excellence”, to lead us where Jesus is, and to experience what He has to guide us in.

May these thoughts help and encourage us as to Jesus being the Way, for His Name's sake.

Calgary

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