

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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THE NAME OF THE LORD

2 Timothy 2: 16-22; Matthew 18: 19, 20; 28: 16 -20

E.M.W. I thought the Lord would help us to speak together about His name and His authority, which two things are not infrequently together in Scripture. It seems to me that, especially in a day of confusion publicly the like of which I suppose has not existed before in the recovery, we should learn to see the importance of His name and His authority. The Scriptures therefore, however familiar, ever yield fresh instruction for us and, as we know, 2 Timothy 2 is specially applicable. Nevertheless the principles set out are not exactly or simply recovery principles but all-time principles, although needing to be emphasised no doubt specially in days of departure. I thought therefore of the naming of "the name of the Lord" and then calling "upon the Lord". The second passage, "where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them", is freely used by various groups of Christians, perhaps freely used by us, but the Lord would exercise us as to the moral point in it. Then it seems to me it would lead to the greatness of that to which we are baptised in chapter 28. There we have the Name, which is as we know the name of God in which He has been revealed, the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, but in that setting the authority of Christ (all authority having been given to Him) and His commandment. I thought that if we are exercised (and every believer should be) about what is suited to the Lord's name and about simple submission to His authority we should find an avenue into the blessedness of the knowledge of God as revealed in the one name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We are baptised, as we have often been reminded, towards, "baptising them to". I think the force of the word 'to' has been said to be 'towards' the Name, as though what is in mind is the knowledge of God and He has been revealed in Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

P.v.d.B. Would the Lord's word to Philadelphia, "thou... hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name", show how the authority and the Name go together?

E.M.W. Yes, that is interesting, the two put together.

P.v.d.B. It seems to lead to the promise to the overcomer that "I will write upon him the name of my God", which is, as you say, the full revelation of God in Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

E.M.W. We should see that, as we recognise what is due to His name and recognise His authority, there is an avenue into the greatest privileges, so that what is proper to the assembly can be enjoyed in the day of brokenness, because our resource is unchanged.

G.W.B. Is it too simple a question to ask what the Name means?

E.M.W. It would not be too hard for you to answer it.

G.W.B. I would like to know what you are thinking about it now.

E.M.W. As we know, it has often been connected with it is His renown. Frequently in Scripture it seems to imply His absence but His name present, that is the renown of the Person and I suppose something of the character of the Person expressed in the Name in whatever context it might appear in Scripture; hence there is what is due to it. It is a matter of grief, or should be, to us (although we often take it for granted) that you find His name or various names attached to things which are really basically infidel and of the devil. You can, as I often do, see printed up 'First Church of Christ, Scientist', the holy name of Christ being embedded in what is infidel. Therefore in His absence, it implies the renown of the Person and what is due to Him, so that our first scripture says quite plainly that he that names the name of the Lord is to withdraw from iniquity, the word 'iniquity' being simply, as we know, what is not right.

E.C.M. How does that fit in with the references in Deuteronomy to the place which Jehovah shall choose to cause His name to dwell there (see Deut 14: 23)?

E.M.W. I had thought of that scripture and the importance of the maintenance of that, because Jehovah constantly refers to it.

E.C.M. Does that involve that there are persons who are walking in separation?

E.M.W. I think so.

S.D.K.R. Would affection for Christ and appreciation of what He has done underlie this? It says "Thy name is an ointment poured forth", Song of Sol 1: 3.

E.M.W. I think that love for Christ is the basis of it not the anticipation of a reward, which is a low motive. It rather suggests the responsibility of persons who name His name to make it evident that they really are consistent with it and recognise what is due to it. How could we possibly associate that Name with iniquity? And yet, if we follow up your thoughts to affection, it is put in the sense of an appeal: "let him". This is something that would be expected as due from one who names that Name. Coming back to Mr Muggleton's suggestion, it has always remained with me that Mr Coates said that whatever the day may be we are never prepared to acknowledge that there is not the place where Jehovah has been pleased to set His name. It is not any place or anywhere; and any believer, wherever he is or whatever he may claim, should be ready to recognise that there is the place where Jehovah has been pleased to set His name.

E.C.M. Why I refer to it is because it is not in every place but there is a place.

F.C.M. Is that illustrated in Saul's conversion? He says "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10) and immediately gets direction to the circle where the Lord was honoured.

E.M.W. Just so, "What shall I do, Lord?". But first of all, "Who art thou...?", then "I am Jesus", so immediately get His precious name. The it is His personal name, not the name of the Lord; he is directed, as you say, to the circle where the Lord is recognised.

E.C.B. Do you think that there are certain scriptures which present the name from the point of view of the advantage to the believer? For instance: "The name of the of the Lord is a strong tower" (Prov 18: 10); "neither is there a name under heaven which is given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12); "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2: 21); but the scriptures that you have brought before us are not merely the

advantage to the believer but the responsibility of the believer. Do you think that that distinction is not always made?

E.M.W. I am sure that is right; hence you find many believers who take advantage of the blessing that is derived from the scriptures you have quoted, but how many are prepared to recognise the responsibility of maintaining what is due to that name in which we may find refuge.

E.C.B. It would almost appear that in this last epistle Paul is meeting just that very thing. So that, for instance, to the scripture in Romans he now adds "out of a pure heart", and he would remind us that it is the righteous who are safe.

E.M.W. That is very helpful, and it is in this epistle especially that he draws attention to it. I thought therefore we need to see the distinction between naming the name of the Lord and calling on the Lord. It is one thing to name His name, and if you name it it is your responsibility to withdraw from what is not right; but subsequent to that in the believer's exercises there is the calling on the Lord which seems to me to recognise the immediateness of His authority, and now I find not simply my responsibility to separate from what is not right but my responsibility to others with whom I walk and - my responsibility to Him as the Lord who is supreme.

F.M.K. Do not the rights of God come in? God has made Him both Lord and Christ and given Him a name that is above every name.

E.M.W. Yes I think so; and we need to keep this distinction that has been drawn attention to that, while there is the side of the blessing that reaches us in acknowledging the name of the Lord Jesus, there is also our responsibility to recognise what is due to it.

E.C.M. Would that come in in connection with the way Paul insists on His lordship in Corinthians? The Lord's commandment, for instance, would bring in responsibility, and then the Lord's table and the Lord's supper.

E.M.W. So you will find that something like forty times in that epistle he refers to the Lord. It shows the essentiality of recognising His

authority. I may separate from what is not right publicly and be proud of it, but it is another thing to get back to the point of departure and acknowledge that I supported and associated myself with those that flouted His authority. That is one of the issues today I think, and in this very city. So the two things must be kept together. Do you think that is a fair comment?

E.C.M. I fully go with what you say.

E.M.W. It seems to be the case that there are persons (and of course you would not despise it) who desire to be separate from what is not right and seem to be exercised about it, but it is vital, I believe, in our exercises that we should get back, as Mr Stoney used to say, to the point of departure; with many it is a failure to recognise His authority.

E.C.M. It has been a humbling matter with some of us to get back to it.

E.M.W. Well, it is to all of us really.

E.C.M. It is a very blessed thing though to find where the Lord is and where His authority is recognised and His Person revered in affection.

E.M.W. That is the point I wanted to make, that it is more intimate and more direct when it says "call upon the Lord". Sometimes it is quoted as 'calling on the name of the Lord' but it is 'calling on the Lord'.

P.v.d.B. Is lordship connected with the kingdom and would that stress the individual responsibility in recognising Him as Lord; but do you think it is essential that we come to Him as Head in connection with the assembly as what is collective? All the divisions and the scattering among saints are really due to not holding the Head, are they not?

E.M.W. Do you not think also that they are due to the fact that there has been insubjection? Somewhere or other man's will has been exercised. It seems to me that any failure that comes in with us individually or collectively can be traced to deficiency in the kingdom.

P.v.d.B. The kingdom is really the protection of the assembly, is it not?

E.M.W. Quite so, that man's will has not displaced God's will.

L.A.B. Is that confirmed in a negative line in that Hymenaeus is said in the first epistle to have not maintained a good conscience, but in this epistle he is overthrowing the faith of some? The maintenance of a good conscience must of necessity be in the recognition of the rights of Christ, and where that is not so the result alas is that persons are turned aside, and not only are turned aside themselves but may be the means of turning others aside which is a very sobering consideration.

E.M.W. I am sure it is, and how much that has been seen in the history of the recovery, that persons have been turned aside through the defection generally of leaders.

J.T-n. Is it always testing to be owning and drawing from the Lord Himself? "If any one desire to practise his will, he shall know concerning the doctrine" John 7: 17. It seems that the line of His authority and name would make the path very easy for us.

E.M.W. It is in itself simple and yet how complex it has become on the face of it. Yet it seems to me unquestionable that where the conscience is exercised and the affections moved for Christ you can always be sure there will be direction from Himself.

G.W.B. Is it interesting that Paul says we must appear before the judgment seat of Christ as well as the judgment seat of God? It is the universality and eternal assurance of the name that God has given Him. You were speaking about persons not being subject; we have all been such; but all that has to be sorted out in our souls.

E.M.W. Yes. Hence the great need, as we have often been reminded, of living day by day in the anticipation of the judgment seat, the light and the power of it, so that everything is clear. I believe we should take up more practically these simple exhortations that we have received in the ministry. Each of us must appear before the judgment seat of the Christ to receive the things done in

the body. Do you not think that many matters would be clarified if we were at the judgment seat, which really means simply in the presence of Christ?

G.W.B. We found there has been a tendency with some to think lightly of the exercise of two years ago, to think that there is not much difference between us now and that could easily be smoothed over, but the rights of the Lord would not allow such an attitude.

E.M.W. I believe it is far more serious than we have realised because, as was said earlier, it was really a rejection of His authority in His own assembly, and any suggestion of 'let us as companies merge because after all we are pretty much on common ground' is a denial of His rights.

R.E.T. Is there skill in the way the apostle speaks of what is of God and the sealing and then goes on to the Name? Is there something that would help us in regard to being kept safe if we saw what is of God and what is sealed that the enemy cannot touch.

E.M.W. I think that helps us: "Yet the firm foundation of God stands". No doubt there is a link there with His purpose and what will unquestionably be carried through despite what may be happening, despite the confusion, despite the defection; as our brother says, the faith of many being overthrown, "Yet the firm foundation of God stands"; it is a great encouragement and will keep us steady. "The Lord knows those that are his"; how many there are, as we have often said, we do not know them, but that is one side of the seal; the other is "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity". I suppose he shows clearly what his genealogy is and shows himself to be genuine.

F.N.S. Would calling "upon the Lord out of a pure heart" be the antidote to smoothing over differences and that sort of thing because there will be an element of impurity if anything that denies His rights and the holiness of His name is overlooked?

E.M.W. It is interesting that, as our brother said earlier, Paul should add that in 2 Timothy. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2: 21), but here it is "out of a pure heart".

I suppose that is a heart that would not willingly hold any motive that is contrary to Him. How many mixed motives appear, how many different reasons we may give for our actions. "Pure heart": I suppose a single eye, it is just for Himself, His interests, His rights, His glory. Would that be a pure heart?

F.N.S. Yes; and I was thinking of another part of Matthew, the pure in heart that shall see God (see chap 5: 8).

H.H. Would you say that Ananias in Acts 9 was pure? He needed adjustment but he called on the Lord twice.

E.M.W. It shows how simple and ready he was for adjustment. It is very evident that he was near to the Lord and was able to commune with Him, almost as in a simple conversation; and yet so ready for adjustment; the Lord says "Go".

H.H. You do not hear his name otherwise but he was ready, as you say, the Lord could use him.

E.M.W. Quite so; he appears on the page of Scripture as useful to the Lord at that moment and then he is left. I have no doubt, as Mr Darby says, his name will be better known in heaven than on earth, and that is so with many; and it is so today I believe. It is not stressing leadership exactly but the way in which simplicity in an individual recognising what is due to the name of the Lord can find where His name is honoured and where His rights are, and can find where that will lead into - what is proper to the assembly.

C.G.H. Concerning the assertion that some might make that things have been looked into and we find now we are on the same ground, cannot we merge? Without the going back to the point of departure, the assertion of being on the same ground would be more apparent than real because morally it would be impossible, would it not?

E.M.W. Yes, and it is a failure to recognise His direction and the fact that He has held the initiative, He has moved Himself. It is not a question of some persons having moved rightly and others subsequently having moved rightly in the same way; it is a question

of how the Lord Himself has been in control and is holding the initiative as He moved Himself.

P.v.d.B. Is not recovery individual? Is that not important at the present point?

E.M.W. That is how I have understood it; so in our passage the first step seems to be, "If therefore one", one, "he shall be".

D.E.R. Do you think we need to be established in the fact that in any division the Lord can only be with one side? There is only one place where the Lord would be free to come company-wise?

E.M.W. I think we need to say that without presumption and I believe it to be the truth. It is not simply that you are claiming to be that company but you are simply stating what is a moral principle. As Mr Stoney said, it is a moral impossibility for Christ to be head of two bodies. Every believer should recognise that as a simple moral principle whatever his exercises may be, even if he claims to be in the one that is in touch with Christ as head. The Lord will help each person that is prepared to recognise that, to find where the power of His headship and the truth of the body is really known.

E.C.B. I have been wondering lately whether in taking up this second injunction in verse 19 we cannot ever dissociate it from the scripture which was referred to: "thy ointments savour sweetly; thy name is an ointment poured forth", and whether much of the sorrowful history of the 1960s is due to the attempting to carry out 2 Timothy 2, as we say, without remembering that His name is always as ointment poured forth.

E.M.W. That is very good. So that while we speak of it as a charter, it is not simply a charter, is it? A charter could be cold and academic and you might follow it, but "thy name is an ointment poured forth" would give it a grace, a charm, an attractiveness. Is that something of what you mean?

E.C.B. Yes it is. The impression came to me in preaching somewhere in this area a little while ago, but I think that a good deal of failure and of the disgrace that has been brought on the testimony

has been due to our leaving out the fragrance of His name when we claim to be acting in the light of it. I venture to suggest to the brethren that we do not do it again.

E.M.W. "Thy name is an ointment poured forth".

E.H.W. Following upon that it says, "Therefore do the virgins love thee"; it is a question of virgin affections, and therefore I am challenged, am I not, as to whether I have these virgin affections for the Lord? I might claim a lot, but what is inward?

E.M.W. "Therefore do the virgins love thee" would very clearly connect with the "pure heart", would it not? And it is the pure 'heart' not the pure 'mind'. Elsewhere we get the pure mind which of course would be associated with it but the fact is he says "a pure heart", which would clearly be the purity of the seat of affections, not taking things up academically or pursuing what is right simply because it is right, but moving under the influence of the love of Christ and in response to that love.

E.C.B. These matters would help us in regard to the point that was just being spoken about, because the suggestion that there is not really much difference between us is really a proposition that dead flies be brought into the ointment.

E.M.W. Just so, causing it to stink (see Eccles 10: 1).

J.T-n. It is noticeable here that there are many vessels. Are we surprised we are few? Many vessels - gold, silver, wooden, earthen, some to honour, some to dishonour. "If therefore one shall have purified himself"; it is coming down to one person, is it not?

E.M.W. I think it shows the depth of exercise involved in it, which of course is a challenge to our affection for Christ. We all like numbers; we have a goodly number here today and we are thankful for all those in the bond of the truth; but numbers in themselves are no evidence of power or of righteousness.

E.H.W. It does not say how many virgins in that scripture in Song of Songs, but they are marked by virgin affections for the Lord.

E.M.W. That is the whole point I think, purity of affection for Himself. So much is based on love for Christ, is it not? I do not doubt the same is true in Matthew 18; "where two or three are gathered together". He could quite easily have said 'Where two or three are gathered unto My name' or 'Where two or three are together unto My name'; but He said "Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them".

E.C.M. Would that fit in with what it says in Malachi, "For from the rising of the sun even unto its setting my name shall be great among the nation s; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure oblation: for my name shall be great", chap 1: 11?

E.M.W. Yes, I suppose it is great in character. It is not so much a question of volume , although of course God will have that in the day to come, but it is rather the character of the thing.

E.C.M. There must be the pure heart for the pure oblation.

E.M.W. Yes, true affection would desire to have things for Him as He desires them to be. So, as we said, we do not take it up simply as a text or academically but out of love for Himself because we desire that there should be for Him conditions that are suitable to Him, pleasing to Him, in which He can in liberty as Minister of the Sanctuary proceed in the service of God.

W.McK. What distinction do you make between 'calling on the name of the Lord' and what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1, "with all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"? The extension of the Name there is significant, is it not ?

E.M.W. Yes, it is in one sense fuller there, yet here it seems to emphasise His absolute supremacy, unqualified. So that, as you know, in the earlier statement 'Master' is 'Despot'. He has absolute rights, has He not?

W.McK. You mean that the name 'Lord' refers to what is absolute, not only because of any position He is given but because of who He is.

E.M.W. I think we need to recognise that. He is made both Lord and Christ which, as we have been taught, refers to Him as Man and what God has done with Him and for Him; but there is what is due to Him because of who He is.

W.E.E. Would there be the power of attraction in "gathered together unto my name"? That would be as a result of love for Christ: "If ye love me, keep my commandments", John 14: 15. Then the authority would set us free from everything which was out of accord such as an unequal yoke or anything of that kind.

E.M.W. I thought so. It is so easy to take things up in what we have called an academic way, but the power of attraction of the Name! "Thou shalt call his name Jesus", for example, how attractive that is in this gospel! Then "Emmanuel... 'God with us'"; but at the same time it must be recognised that there is what is due to that Name.

S.D.K.R. In Deuteronomy Moses speaks of the Lord finding a place where He would set His name there, and then in David and Solomon's day it is located in Jerusalem. The Lord refers to the assembly here earlier. Would the two or three "gathered together unto my name" be assembly persons? It is not just 'gathered in My name', as you were saying, but "unto". Would it cover the idea of the assembly in the affections of the saints?

E.M.W. I think so. "Two of you" would really be two of the assembly. "If two of you shall agree on the earth concerning any matter, whatsoever it may be that they shall ask, it shall come to them from my Father who is in the heavens". You would hardly think of "two of you" asking with selfish interests. What would be in their minds would no doubt be the prosperity of His testimony. It says, "it shall come to them from my Father who is in the heavens". He does not say when; He does not enter into the patience and perseverance and service that may be necessary, but faith would lay hold of what He says: "it shall come to them from my Father who is in the heavens".

S.D.K.R. Then would the "For where two or three" link on with the "two of you"?

E.M.W. I think so; that is why those brethren who have taught us so well have linked verse 20 with the prayer meeting rather than with the assembly meeting, "For where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them". It is not only "in the midst" here, but "of them", that is of the "two or three".

F.M.K. Is this arrived at by what we pursue - "righteousness, faith, love, peace"? Would that lead us on to what you are speaking of now?

E.M.W. I have always regarded that as the necessary avenue into what is proper to the assembly.

F.M.K. There is really no salvation outside of that, we must pursue what is right.

E.M.W. We must. Matthew's gospel is of course the assembly gospel, but the assembly in the setting of the kingdom; so it is protected, and righteousness is emphasised throughout this gospel, and yet not only righteousness but love for Christ; but then, as Mr Raven says, you have great difficulty in separating righteousness and love, and as far as John's writings are concerned, I think he said, you will find in some places they are almost interchangeable because it is right to love.

D.J.H. Could you help as to the reference made earlier to 'the place'? It is in a sense universal in Deuteronomy. I wondered if that bore on Matthew 18, "two of you" and agreeing on the earth, whether that would be the recognition of what was universal; but then the working out of it in verse 20 is local. Could you say something as to 'the place' in those two settings?

E.M.W. I think there must be the recognition of what is universal. That is another great truth that has been broken down, that we are maintaining what is due to the Lord here but they may not over there, which is really setting aside the universality of the place where Jehovah has set His name: Jerusalem was the place in God's mind, was it not? But then it seems to me that, whatever confusion or breakdown may come in, God does not give that up, and while it is

put in a universal setting, at the same time it works out locally, does it not?

D.J.H. Yes, I wondered (not to dwell negatively but just to get the gain positively of history) whether that really was not the main failure in 1972.

E.M.W. I could not say too much about what may have been primary or secondary in that issue, but I think it is right at any rate that it was one of the failures at that time.

R.E.T. Is there something special in the Lord referring to the Father that will provide this? He does not say God, He says the Father. Is there some intimate thought there that would keep us and bring us into the light as assembly-minded persons?

E.M.W. It is "my Father", is it not, "shall come to them from my Father who is in the heavens"? I think it shows the intimate relationship and affections in that relationship between the Father and the Son that Christ's name is honoured here, and there is agreement and a gathering and a togetherness which is honoured by His Father.

Ques. Is it remarkable that Paul should make comment as to the difference that there was between Euodia and Syntyche in Philippians 4, as though the meeting of that breach was something essential for the fulness of agreement and togetherness to proceed rightly?

E.M.W. We tread very softly when we think of Philippians, but that disagreement could quite easily have been a dead fly to which Mr Burr referred earlier. Well, did they agree? But then we must bring it up to date and think of our own localities. He says "if two of you shall agree", and then, "gathered together". I think there is a link between the agreement and the "gathered together". "Shall two walk together except they be agreed", Amos 3: 3.

E.C.B. Is not that why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1, "I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ... that there be not among you divisions"? Paul uses the expression in 2 Thessalonians

2, "our gathering together to him". Or gathering together to His name is what is available to us now, but what is gone on with as gathering together to His name should be consistent with what will suit the rapture?

E.M.W. Well, that is a very challenging statement and I think it is the truth; we sometimes make these statements but then we have to stop to see what challenge they are to us, that we should have now as gathering together unto His name what is suited to the rapture.

What a tremendous statement that is, yet the Lord would exercise us because it is quite obvious that there is a resource in the Spirit to enable it to be so.

E.P. Would that involve the consciousness of His presence, not only the truth of it?

E.M.W. I was thinking that. He says, "gathered together unto my name" but "there am I in the midst of them". What you are thinking is that we should not only have the knowledge of the promise and the faith of His presence but by the Spirit the consciousness of it.

E.P. Yes; and as we experience that it would arouse constant concern with us to bring nothing in that would interrupt it.

E.M.W. Very good.

E.H.W. So that as gathered together to His name there would be the suitable state for His presence: "there am I in the midst". It does not say He comes but "there am I".

E.M.W. "There am I" is rather consistent with Matthew's presentation.- "I am with you all the days". But this verse needs weighing. I well remember in the army a Methodist and a Baptist and a Pentecostal came to some of us and said, Let us gather together unto His name and we shall prove Him in the midst. That is not easy to meet where you find men who may have genuine convictions and be true believers. It shows clearly that we must look into the moral point that the Lord is making in any passage, not just take it up superficially.

E.H.W. We would go back to 2 Timothy, "who as to the truth have gone astray". Should we have to look into that if there was any claim on this line?

E.M.W. I suppose that would be so, I only used that as a simple illustration of the exercise involved.

E.C.B. I think, and I believe you do, that the saints should never allow themselves to be overwhelmed by the greatness of the truth in its simplicity.

E.M.W. I am sure; so you do not say the challenge is too great and throw your hands up.

E.C.B. No, and what astonishes you sometimes is how great simple truths are; it is just the truth that we should not have anything that would be different at the rapture.

D.J.H. May I remind you of what you said to me when we were in the army after a camp reading when I referred to this verse? I received adjustment as to it because you said that our gathering at that time had not been on assembly ground. I was only thinking of the importance of gathering in that light. We might be together but, if not in the light of the assembly, we would not prove the Lord's presence in the same way although we would be such persons.

E.M.W. I think that would be right.

F.P.A.S. What is the bearing of the announcements being in the name of the Lord Jesus?

E.M.W. You mean at the Supper. I do not know that I could add anything to what has been said before about that; but we do get in 1 Corinthians 11, as we have noticed, "I received from the Lord", and then in the night in which He was betrayed, "the Lord Jesus", as though you get the truth of His authority there and also that precious affectionate assembly title, so that everything really is covered by the dignity and grace of the anointing.

E.C.M. You get in Colossians "Do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus" (chap 3: 17); you recognise the authority that is connected with that name.

E.M.W. Yes and the affection too; it is an affectionate title, is it not?

E.C.M. Mr Taylor sen said it is the name that belongs to the assembly.

C.G.H. Could something be said about the distinction referred to just now between a meeting of a few believers who were like-minded and walking in the truth, and their coming together in assembly in a place where the Lord had a representation of the assembly.

E.M.W. I do not remember the occasion but we were at that time in an army camp and we used to come together and read the Scriptures in the evening if we were distant from the meeting; but I think we must recognise what the Lord has established in localities, that is as suggested in Corinthians, "the assembly of God which is in Corinth". At times we were close to the assembly of God which was in Shrewsbury. I think that is the only simple distinction we made, that as coming together in that camp we were hardly on assembly ground although we spoke together about the truth; and I think we do well to weigh over what Mr Taylor sen said, that you cannot put the assembly on wheels and move it round. The assembly in a place is the assembly in a place and it should be maintained there, and the representation of God and the service of God should be maintained t here.

G.W.B. Did you have any sisters at that meeting?

E.M.W. No, which would be an additional indication that it was not on assembly ground, do you mean?

G.W.B. Yes, as the assembly is constituted at the present time sisters would be needful.

E.C.B. Such a meeting would be somewhat on the ground of redeeming the time.

E.M.W. In relation to the last scripture it struck me that despite the fact that it is a broken number the Lord does come to them. As today, there are many that are at a loss what to think. We just have to face that, there are many dear brethren that are at a loss what to think. That is what the footnote says about that word, they hesitated.

We need to pray for such. The Lord is exceedingly gracious despite that, is He not? He says "All power has been given to me". We need to recognise that, and it is in the light of that that they are to go "and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". So the greatness of the economy and the way in which God has been made known in Father, Son and Holy Spirit is to be appreciated, and then the promise of the Lord that He will be with them "until the completion of the age", I suppose that is to the appearing. We can therefore be assured of His presence if there is the maintenance of what is due to His name and 'the Name'.

F.C.M. Is it very comforting that all power has been given to Him not only in heaven but upon earth?

E.M.W. Yes. The Lord could have made up the twelve before He left, but He did not; He left the broken number. How encouraging in a day like ours when the number is broken, and it has been broken again and broken again; but "I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age". That is up to the end, I suppose, of the period of testimony.

F.M.K. Then if we ourselves have any doubts or are with others who have doubts - "some doubted" it says here - we "observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined you". Is that a way of salvation for us at the present time?

E.M.W. I think so. This gospel would help us about that, so that we are not only to recognise His name, as we said earlier, and the benefits accruing, from calling upon it, but we are also to recognise His Person and. His authority and what is due to His name and due to Him.

CROYDON

13 July 1974

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WIDOWS

Ruth 1: 3-6, 19-22; 2: 1; 4: 13-17; 2 Samuel 11: 26.27; 12: 24,25

E.C.B. I wondered if the Lord would have something to say to us as to the widowed condition of things. We feel the way He has worked at the present time so that, while not both in the same locality, two of our beloved brothers are with Christ and awaiting burial and their widows are amongst us. That the Lord Himself has feelings in regard to this we know very well. He speaks plainly as to one who says she is a queen and no widow, as if He would have the feelings of widowhood to be experienced and understood: but out of them comes what is quite distinctive.

It is interesting to go over Scripture; I do not think it is really until Ruth that widows come to light. Genesis is a book of widowers, it is the wives that die. In Genesis 5 the men die but that is not so much to bring before us the death of individuals as the passing of the generations. But Sarah died and Rebecca died and her nurse died, and some of the most affecting verses in Genesis are where Jacob speaks of the deaths of Leah and of Rachel. The idea of widowhood is thus not something that God brings on to our view immediately. He would have us, I suppose, feel the other side of things. But Ruth is a book of widows and it is interesting that Jesus says in regard to the day of the prophet after this that "there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elias" (Luke 4: 25), as if a condition arises in which that peculiar aspect of things is to be experienced. But while the Lord fully understands and provides for the sorrow, He anticipates that something will be secured from it that is richer than what has been before.

Things are very reduced; in Ruth things are so reduced that you might wonder how they could continue at all, but God has a way of bringing things through until He is able to point the way to the Man after His own heart - Obed, Jesse, David. You might have thought in chapter 1 of Ruth that Orpah had done the best in the circumstances. She had gone back to her people, and you would not have thought that Naomi had any people or that Ruth had any

people. You might have thus thought that the position was abandoned, but Naomi had an acquaintance of her husband (see footnote to "relation", not only 'acquaintance' but 'friend'); Orpah has gone back to her people and of course to her gods doing, I suppose, what naturally might have seemed the most expedient thing in the circumstances, and Naomi and Ruth come in the sorrow of their condition in the beginning of the barley harvest, a very fruitful time to come; but they had a friend. I think the Lord would bring before us in relation to things that we experience currently that there is a Friend who not only has the right of redemption, but He is a Man of wealth.

I have alluded to the history in relation to Bathsheba; much enters into that that God has to say to in His government - the verse we read says that what David did was evil in the sight of Jehovah.

But if we could get the positive side of that incident, Bathsheba has to go through the experience of widowhood and David has in some sense to be her comfort in widowhood before Solomon is born.

David had many other wives - chapter 3 tells us the other wives and children that he had - but what God had in view after David was Solomon, not the other children who are mentioned. But before Solomon can be arrived at the experience of widowhood has to be touched. These scriptures are very familiar to the brethren. I wondered if the Lord would give us something that bore on us currently.

E.C.M. Is there a link with the references to widows in Luke? I was thinking of your reference to many widows and then how the widow maintained the prophet; then the widow in Luke 7, and in chapter 21, where the Lord saw the rich casting in their gifts, He saw a poor widow who cast in two mites.

E.C.B. Many of these things fit into Paul's own experiences as recited in Corinthians. "Persecuted but not abandoned" (2 Cor 4: 8), not forsaken although the outward experience may suggest that; "seeing no apparent issue", that is Naomi, "but our way not entirely shut up" is her acquaintance. I think Paul felt even in his day the widowed condition of the assembly. It might be said that the assembly does not touch that yet because she has not yet been

united to Christ in marriage as she will be finally, the Lamb's wife , but the experience of widowhood is entered into in relation to the whole of the public position.

S.D.K.R. Would Anna be expressive of the condition of Israel at that time? I was thinking that there were some results in "a light for revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel", Luke 2: 32.

E.C.B. Yes, even though Anna was a widow for a very long time and there were evidently few left in Jerusalem who were really committed to God's thoughts about Israel, yet she did not depart from the temple night and day. I suppose that that would have a bearing by way of application that, in the circumstances to which things may be reduced, the area of the light and the presence of God is not given up; and as you continue in that light you find, as you say, that a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel does actually come in. It is not that you go on waiting, expecting, hoping for the best: on that day the light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Israel actually came into the temple; she was there and had lost nothing; she was still speaking to those who waited for redemption in Jerusalem and yet she was a widow. I think these things helps us in the way the Lord brings to bear on us the actual condition of death but also in relation to the general experience in the assembly.

T.J.B. Does that experience of the condition to which you refer relate to the Lord's absence or in any sense to the failure that has come in on the responsible side, or both?

E.C.B. I think it relates to both. The failure that has come in on the responsible side is a consequence of the Lord's absence, that persons have not been able to hold in His absence what they would surely see was required for Him if He were present. The woman in Proverbs 31 is not actually a widow but she holds things as if her husband was there, and in the public failure in the assembly things have not been held as if He was there. There is the experience of widowhood in His absence but also in the poverty and smallness to

which things are reduced publicly, yet there is still a Friend who is a mighty Man of wealth.

J.M. Is the spirit of it seen in Philadelphia whereas the spirit of "I sit a queen, and I am not a widow" (Rev 18: 7) is in Laodicea? There is a suggestion of external public poverty in Philadelphia but an inward link with Christ that is exceptionally beautiful.

E.C.B. Yes I think so, and He says that they "shall know that I have loved thee" Rev 3: 9. Now it is clear that from the external condition of things you would not have known that; you would have said 'Well here is Philadelphia, here is this church trying to keep things going', but a day will come when He will make it known that He has loved her; that is when the period of widowhood has been gone through and again she is able to rejoice in being in His company and His presence. I think it bears very much on the present day. An interesting thing as to Naomi is that she says "Call me not Naomi - call me Mara", and according to this book nobody ever called her that name. I think that is very touching. Nobody ever said 'Here is bitterness'; throughout this book she retains the name of Naomi, and that is to characterise things even if we may feel the attenuation and breakdown that exists all round us.

S.D.K.R. It is very encouraging.

E.C.B. Yes, I think we are meant to be encouraged. If you consider the actual condition of widowhood, if you meet a sister who is a widow, you will not say to her, 'Well you must learn what widowhood is'; you will say something that will encourage her. Now that is what the Lord would do with us. He takes us in the condition in which we are and encourages us, and He calls the assembly by the name by which it has always been known - "My assembly"; He does not call it Mara.

E.W. So is the reference to honouring widows, those who are really widows, to affect the assembly? (see 1 Tim 5: 3).

E.C.B. Yes, I think that is to affect us; you are able to penetrate to those who are really widows. We relate that a good deal to circumstances and in its context rightly, but it is a question whether

we can penetrate to what the actual situation of widowhood is. Do you think that?

E.W. Yes, and provide something for those conditions.

E.C.B. That is just it. The list as it is referred to in that chapter has its material side, but it seems to indicate that there is a committal to provision in relation to the widowed situation.

D.A.B. Would you say something as to the distinction between widows and orphans? The Lord says "I will not leave you orphans" (John 14: 18), but He does not exactly make any corresponding remark in relation to what you are bringing before us; as you say, it marks the present character of the testimony.

E.C.B. I think that from His side the Lord does not take account of things as apart from a link with Himself, and as was remarked, the widowed condition is due to His absence; a link with Him remains but the condition arises from His absence. The orphan condition belongs to Genesis. "I will not leave you orphans" is Joseph in chapter 50 of Genesis. He found the family all disgruntled and ill-assorted, all their mothers had died years ago, and now their father dies and they are orphans. Joseph says in effect 'I will not leave you orphans, you come and I will maintain you'. That fits in to Genesis which is not, as I said, a book of widows; but now we come into a book that is a book of widows, and what is provided there is - I like these words in Mr Darby's note - a 'friend' or 'acquaintance' who is wealthy, not just a relation; and that seems to me to be a character of things that is needed in the widowed situation. So the Lord says in John "I have called you friends", John 15: 15.

E.C.M. I was thinking of the psalm regarding the Judge of the widows (Ps 68: 5), how He took account of this condition. In the history of the revival God has taken account of that; we might interpret it that way, do you think?

E.C.B. Yes, I am sure that God has taken account of it. Naomi says in chapter 1, "Are there yet sons in my womb?", but she says that in a particular context. In chapter 4 there are; "There is a son born to Naomi". I think that is because the widowed situation is accepted

from God at its deepest and, that having been accepted, God brings in not only the wealth but the ability to provide for the situation, and out of it there is a son born to Naomi.

E.C.M. That is what I had in mind in that reference to the psalm.

God is a Judge of the widows; He seems to assess the whole matter here in Ruth and bring in fruit as the result of it.

E.C.B. I think that. We speak of body feelings in relation to the way the Lord takes one and another, so that we feel with one another.

The widowed aspect of things is not a situation that people grow out of. We know that as things work out sometimes people marry again, but if you are a widow you cannot stop being a widow of the man whose widow you are; whatever circumstances change, you are still his widow and these things continue; but the Lord comes in in relation to them to bring out of them fruit that is going to be after His own heart. I think that the Lord would seek that from us at the present time, fruit according to His own heart.

J.T-n. It is a question whether we feel the widowhood at the present time, passing through the circumstances; it is something that should always be with us.

E.C.B. I think that side is important and that we carry it with us; yet we apprehend that God has provided for us in a way that will fully meet it. Verse 1 of chapter 2 almost suggests that Naomi had forgotten that she had a wealthy friend. Now we may do that and think that the only solution is to go to our people. Naomi said that in chapter 1, 'You go back, go back to your mothers, they will look after you', and Orpah went "to her people and to her gods"; but there is not brought on to our notice, and perhaps forgotten in chapter 1, this wealthy acquaintance; and God now brings it to light.

J.M. Is the acquaintance on another level? You remarked that the barley harvest comes in at the end of chapter 1, but the word is, weeping endureth for the night and joy cometh in the morning (see Ps 30: 5).

J.T-n. It all comes to light on her return, does it not?

E.C.B. Yes, and when they came back to Bethlehem the whole city was moved on account of it. Now we apprehend that currently. The assembly, or those who walk in the light of it on the earth at the present time, would just about make up a city. In fact there are probably less people in fellowship now than have made up some city positions in exaggerated ways in the past, and therefore we feel the character of things in the city, that is, what corresponds to the assembly. The whole city is moved but it is the beginning of the barley harvest; God is already setting on something fresh.

J.M. The exercises that you refer to are intended to be gone through - the weeping endureth for a night - but the result is that we come practically in our experience on to resurrection, do you think?

E.C.B. Yes I do, and there is the counterpart scripture to that: "He goeth forth and weepeth, bearing seed for scattering; he cometh again with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves", Ps 126: 6. The question is whether we apprehend precious seed in relation to the circumstances of weeping: You really get that in John 12 do you not?

J.M. Yes I think so. You have referred to the actual matter of widowhood and the two instances among us which draw out our feelings. Then alongside of that there is a good deal of pressure in one way or another in many localities that is forcing this exercise upon us, but we need to have the goal before us so that we are not swamped by it.

E.C.B. I think that very much, in fact that is largely what I had in mind, and to get the sense, especially from the book of Ruth and indeed from the scripture in Samuel, that God will bring out of it what is after His own heart and what reaches the highest point that is touched in the service of God. Do you think that?

J.M. Yes. It is remarkable that in both of these sections from which you have read, which deal very largely with these very sorrowful matters, you get the expression, 'Arise, wash thyself and anoint thyself' (see Ruth 3: 3; 2 Sam 12: 20). David did that and went into the house of God, as though the inward side is to be carried in balance with the public side of feeling widowhood.

E.C.B. I think so. Of course in regard to David the natural side and what we speak of as the governmental side is extended because the child is born and then it lives a little while and then it has a lingering illness and then it dies, and it is after that that David arises and anoints himself. So the Lord does not discount - I am not emphasising the governmental and the evil side in relation to David - the side of sorrow through which we are bound to go, but what He will have out of it there is Solomon: "and Jehovah loved him"; that is what He will have out of it.

J.T-n. In John you get that "a man has been born into the world" (chap 16: 21). It is as coming through the exercise that you arrive at that, do you not?

E.C.B. Yes, and in that scripture there is the trouble no longer remembered; that is a very great thing. The conditions that have arisen from the sorrow in some sense remain but they are now able to be viewed from the point of view of what has positively come out of them.

E.C.M. Would that be the male son?

E.C.B. Well, that comes into Revelation (see chap 12: 5). The woman there is evidently alone; and God operates, and indeed the earth operates, to protect her. But I think that we get very positive suggestions in Ruth, the kind of things that, if you had been just looking at the circumstances, you would never have thought were there; and that is what happens to us in things the Lord passes us through, that there are elements in the situation that we never thought were there. How crucial it was that it was the beginning of barley harvest. How crucial that Ruth should go through that harvest and glean along with the young men and discover whose field it was, then that she should mark the place where Boaz lay down. The Colossian exercises in relation to widowhood seem to me to be essential. Then in chapter 4 of Ruth you touch in principle redemption through His blood and sonship.

T.J.B. So we need to grasp that the current experiences through which the saints and the testimony are passing and have passed in

recent times, are all ordered in the ways of God for the working out of something which is precious to Him.

E.C.B. I think that, and not only something that is precious to Him but something that is substantial. In 2 Samuel 12 Solomon is born and he is named; he gets two names but he is named. Who would have thought that that child would one day have such revenue of gold as Solomon had, six hundred and sixty-six talents in one year? (see 2 Chron 9: 13). Think of the wealth that he had! Of course there was a time when Solomon himself did not fully appreciate the wealth and the currency was depreciated because it was made so free, but think of the wealth that came to Solomon. Such was it that you had to distinguish between different kinds of gold: there is the gold of Ophir and there is the gold of Parvaim.

S.D.K.R. In one case it was perfect gold.

E.C.B. Yes; these things suggest to us the fruit that God intends to acquire through experiences of sorrow through which He allows us to go.

S.D.K.R. Would Mary in John 20, be expressive of it? What that led on to in the glory of the service of God!

E.C.B. "They have taken away my Lord" is an experience of widowhood. Then she comes back with very great fulness in that message.

J.M. The message is most touching; "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God"; and He says "Touch me not", that is that there was a relationship established on a totally different platform.

E.C.B. Exactly.

J.M. In regard to what was said, that we might have thought that because of the smallness of conditions the Lord might specially preserve the saints among us, we discover that we are not immune from the things that generally lie upon men: indeed, the Lord is bringing in a good deal of suffering. Is that not to establish what He has as on an entirely different basis?

E.C.B. I am sure that that is right, and we need to be able to penetrate into that area where things are on the level of the barley-harvest. The barleyharvest is "the first-fruits, Christ" (1 Cor 15: 23) and we need to be able to enter habitually into that sphere. I was impressed this morning with our already touching the sphere where the things that God will wipe away no longer exist; and it says, "and death shall not exist any more", Rev 21: 4.

S.D.K.R. Would it be right to think of the Lord Himself experiencing the feelings of this in connection with Israel who had departed from Him, His entering into the feelings of those who are literally widows?

E.C.B. I think so, and hence there are references in the Psalms that would provide language for these circumstances. Naomi says in chapter 1, "Jehovah has brought me home again empty" but it was not true. She might have thought it was true but it was not true, and chapter 4 shows it was not true because, as I say, they said "there is a son born to Naomi"; but she thought it was true. It may be that the Lord allows us sometimes to touch things, as the scripture says, in the bitterness of our soul (see Isa 38: 15) but we may find that our first impressions prove to be untrue. Now it was not true that Naomi was brought back empty; she was externally impoverished. Think of the wisdom that she had, think of the instruction she is able to give to Ruth. These are not from an empty vessel.

E.W. "They came to Bethlehem" is repeated several times. I do not think it says anywhere that she returned to Bethlehem, as though she had gained something.

E.C.B. Yes, I think she had. The first thing she had heard was "that Jehovah had visited his people to give them bread", which was a great incentive to go, but "they came to Bethlehem" is almost as if it is a milestone on the way. It is actually the place where everything was worked out, but it seems as if it is marked as a milestone on her way and at that point she is going to learn that God has already provided everything in relation to her own condition.

E.C.M. What do you understand by "she lay at his feet", and then "Let it not be known that a woman came into the threshing-floor",

and then in verse 18, "for the man will not rest until he have completed the matter this day".

E.C.B. Has it not been remarked before that chapter 3 corresponds largely to Colossians - "mark the place where he shall have lain down" - but in one sense Christ's apprehension of what transpires there is known to Him but not, as it were, to be published, things are gone through secretly and in a hidden way. But Christ does not rest in what is arrived at in Colossians, does He? Colossians leaves us here and Him there, He above and we below. There are exercises to be gone through as to circumcision and His death and so on; things are not completed. The completion of things "this day" necessitates our going on to apprehend redemption according to Ephesians, does it not?

E.C.M. Yes, the full heavenly position. I was thinking that her continuing until the wheat-harvest would involve the heavenly position, the saints raised up together and made to sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ (see Eph 2: 6).

E.C.B. I am sure that that is so. The Lord speaks in the gospel of "his wheat" - in one gospel "his wheat into the garner" (Matt 3: 12) and in another "the wheat into his garner" (Luke 3: 17) - but what He has in view is "his wheat", and I think that is what He gathers for Himself in Ephesians and on the heavenly level of things. As Mr Mitchell said, the area of supply is on a different level from that on which we are characteristically living.

E.C.M. Do you think the threshing-floor experience which you refer to (I take it in Colossians 2 as to being buried with Him and then raised with Him through faith, and so on) has to be gone through in order to reach it? So in Colossians 3 we are to set our minds on things above, where the Christ is; but the full position is Ephesian, is it not?

E.C.B. Yes, and things are set out for us in some order in Ruth as representing the progress by which we come into things. In 1 Corinthians 15 things are presented in a much more immediate way. You sow bare grain and God gives it a body as it pleases Him; that is

compressed into a verse. It almost takes Romans, Colossians and Ephesians to develop that in the epistles, does it not?

E.C.M. Yes, I like what you say.

E.C.B. The fruit of this is in chapter 4: "There is a son born to Naomi". The women say that, they seem to recognise that something has taken place, "the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi. And they called his name Obed". Now it has often been dwelt on that his name means 'worshipper' or 'servant', but the Spirit does not say here 'which being interpreted is worshipper'; what the Spirit says is "He is the father of Jesse, the father of David", showing that God had in view that out of these experiences of sorrow should emerge the man after His own heart.

E.C.M. Do you think too the reference to David would involve the service of God in the most refined features of it, what God has in mind is His own service and what would contribute to that?

E.C.B. Yes, I am sure it does; it is filled out in Solomon. As we know they in a sense merge into each other as the history unfolds; but I am sure that is what God has in mind. It is a very interesting thing to note too that when David comes on to our view in Samuel there is no fault in him, the faults in David come out later in his history. Now that is the fruit of Naomi, that is, a man who is ruddy, of a lovely countenance and beautiful appearance, with no fault in him referred to; that is the product, Christ in formation.

J.M. Is it exercising that in the practical working out of this we have a large element of sacrifice? Boaz has to raise up the name of the dead, not his own name, and he was wealthy enough for that, and then although the son is born to Ruth, the women say it is to Naomi, that is that there was a correspondence in her to the sacrificial spirit that was seen in Boaz. The whole history indicates that what is in Ruth's view is not herself but is really Naomi and the establishment of that line of things under Naomi which is to work out in David.

E.C.B. I think that. When these difficult circumstances arise, as they do in assembly history (take the last four years), we are very prone

to say 'Call me Mara' , but the Lord will not allow a root of bitterness to grow up. What the Lord does is to retain the name of Naomi, that is, 'my pleasantness'. We may foster bitterness which can be expressed in ways that almost sound pious. People speak about their circumstances and you can discern the bitterness in what they say, but Naomi has no bitterness. She seems to touch it for a moment and then to leave it behind, and I think it is very interesting that no one ever called her Mara, that is to say, what God saw in her is what prevailed.

In Samuel we are familiar with the actual details of the history, that David's wandering eye led him into the gravest sin. I was not thinking of that side but that, before Solomon is arrived at, again the experience of widowhood has to be gone through: "the wife of Urijah heard that Urijah her husband was dead and she mourned for her husband". David has been reached but God still had in mind, as I said, not the children of 2 Samuel 3 and not even the wives of 2 Samuel 3; God has in mind Solomon, but he is arrived at after the experience of widowhood has been touched again. "There were many widows in Israel" (Luke 4: 25); it seems as if the Lord who knew all the history draws attention to that, as much as to say, 'You did not realise it at the time there were many widows'. He said to only one of them was Elias sent, but the experience of widowhood has to be gone through again before Solomon in all his glory actually comes on to view.

S.D.K.R. Thinking of Mary the mother of Jesus "even a sword shall go through thine own soul"; (Luke 2: 35); the Lord on the cross says to her "behold thy son" (John 19:26), and John is used to develop the glory of the Son of God. Would there be some link there?

E.C.B. I think there would, the way that Jesus commits her in affection to John and that disciple took her to his own home". Mr Taylor sen said that Mary the mother of Jesus would have impressions of Jesus that nobody else would have, things that she would have seen in Him in the house that no one else ever knew.

He said it is that character of things that is carried over into the upper room (see Acts 1: 14). It is not Mary of Magdala, it is Mary the

mother of Jesus, and John would acquire from her impressions as to what "the holy thing" (Luke 1: 35) had actually been.

E.C.M. That is very interesting. He also connected the widow who put in all her living with the beginning of Acts and what was there in the way of wealth in the upper room.

E.C.B. Yes, and very early in Acts no one called anything they had their own: that is like the widow with two mites.

J.M. You remarked as to 2 Corinthians; we were noticing yesterday in fact how extensive are the references to glory in that epistle, Paul speaking in the first chapter of what he had gone through in spirit with the Corinthians as a result of the first epistle. Do you think that is really this line that you are touching now?

E.C.B. I wondered whether the reference in 2 Corinthians 1 to "so great a death" is not intended to have more impact on us than it does. We relate it to Paul having had to face various very oppressive circumstances in his life but the expression "so great a death" is something that easily fits in our minds into the death of Christ; but then the experience of widowhood necessarily involves touching "so great a death". What greater death can a woman have touched than the loss of her husband? She would say "so great a death" but He delivers us and will deliver, do you think?

J.M. Yes I think so. I wondered too, not to multiply examples, if the way Peter writes his first epistle brings on to view that spirit of widowhood in the way he speaks to the saints, and then in the second epistle he can expand on this line of glory in speaking there of the "excellent glory".

E.C.B. Yes, I think that that side of things is to be brought in to supply us in order that we may not be over-borne by the conditions through which we have to pass. We remarked yesterday upon the need for getting deeper impressions of such scriptures as, "in everything ye have been enriched in him", 1 Cor 1: 5.

E.C.M. It is a beautiful touch here as to Solomon: "and Jehovah loved him. And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he

called his name Jedidiah, for Jehovah's sake". Would you say something about that.

E.C.B. I think that he was attaching the name of Jehovah to the child. The ending 'iah' in these names is a direct connection with God, is it not, and David was marking this child in relation to a link with God. In Jedidiah I think that is what he is carrying through, "for Jehovah's sake". Again I do not think that Solomon is ever called Jedidiah in the scripture, but it is not that that name is replaced but in a sense it is 'called by that secret name'.

E.C.M. Would you link it in any way with the Lord as in the gospels, for instance at His baptism and then the transfiguration: "this is my beloved Son"?

E.C.B. I think it would, that is Jehovah loved Him, or Jedidiah, but David calls him that "for Jehovah's sake". I think it is, as Mr Darby says, 'called by that secret name', not the name that is given to Pergamos but a name that is directly known in one's link with God.

E.W. There is an experience: "she became his wife"; that comes in in Ruth and it comes in here. I was thinking of what we had yesterday as to becoming a man; there is a link: "she became".

E.C.B. Yes I think so; the word 'became' conveys to our minds some sense of gradualness and progress. It is not immediate although it could have an immediate bearing, but I think that the widowhood is transcended in that process of becoming and a new relationship is established now. If you go back to Ruth 2 it is, 'I've found a Friend, O such a Friend' (hymn 187); it is more than what you get in the gospel, she had a relation or a friend. That is what is to be found in the widowed circumstances that the Lord is pressing on us.

E.C.M. Would you connect that at all with the Song of Songs? In the early part of the Song "my beloved is mine". but later it is "I am my beloved's". Would that answer to "she became his wife"?

E.C.B. I think that. So 'And thus He bound me to Him' is something to be touched. There is more in that than just attachment to Christ in the gospel.

E.C.M. To us it is "my beloved is mine". We experience that in our link with Boaz the mighty man of wealth; but then the change is that "I am my beloved's", conscious of the link in union.

E.C.B. Yes, that expression in that hymn, 'And thus He bound me to Him', puts us in mind of the word in the prophet as to the bands of a man (see Hos 11: 4). Now that is what is needed in widowhood, the bands of a man.

E.C.M. And the cords of love.

E.C.B. And that is what the Lord supplies and He is wealthy in the supplying of it.

S.D.K.R. "And David comforted Bathsheba his wife". It is the same word as the Comforter, not only the Spirit here but the Lord where He is as managing our affairs. Is that the sense that the Lord will come in in relation to widowhood in care?

E.C.B. I am sure it is. You will remember that Acts 9 (which is a chapter against the background of persecution of the assemblies) says that the assemblies were "increased through the comfort of the Holy Spirit" (v 31), that is the operation of the Spirit as Comforter sustaining them and supplying what they needed in the persecution that they had been suffering at the hands of Saul of Tarsus.

J.M. Is there a substantiality in David that helps us through these exercises? As we remarked, in Ruth you have the friend, but David is to go through the thing alone here; he goes through it on his own with God. What is substantial in the saints can go through such exercises severe as they may be. What seems to hold David is perhaps typically purpose, and he sees the thing right through, he does not break up in the midst of it.

E.C.B. No, I think that is important and significant for us that it is substantiality in divine formation in us that takes us through these sorrows to bring out this quality of fruit.

J.M. No doubt you have in mind the extension of Solomon into the Kings and the great system of things for God that is established under him linking on with the Ephesian line that you spoke of earlier.

E.C.B. Yes, what Solomon has in view is what is exceedingly magnificent above everything else, but Solomon's mother was a widow, at least she had been through that experience.

J.M. We have been noticing locally in reading Kings that, whereas in the tabernacle system everything speaks of smallness, in Solomon's temple there is nothing small at all.

E.C.B. Except the ark.

J.M. Except the ark, it is there unchanged, but the whole system is one of largeness and beauty and awe.

E.C.B. Yes. I think that we should keep in view what the Lord intends to be produced out of the experiences through which He is taking us all. There are so few of us now that we are all able to enter into the feelings that arise that might otherwise have been confined to a family, we can all enter into it; but what is the Lord going to have out of that? I think that He intends to have something that is distinctive.

CROYDON

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Key to initials

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SOME FUNDAMENTALS - THE FALL OF MAN

God completed His wonderful work of creation, pronounced it very good and looked with pleasure on a perfect scene unmarred by sin, and the man and the woman in happy relations of innocence were in the full enjoyment of that garden of delights. But the scene quickly changed. Instead of God communing happily with Man, we read that He drove him out of Eden and set the Cherubim and the flame of the flashing sword to guard the way to the tree of life. Man had been summarily expelled. What had happened?

Sin had come into the previously fair creation. Man had listened to the voice of the serpent, He had distrusted God, disobeyed His one commandment commandmen, given place to his own desires, and had miserably fallen. Having failed in his responsibility he now had the knowledge of good and evil indeed, but to his own sorrow, for he knew God to be good and himself by his own conscience to be evil. He had become a sinner, and toil and pain and death were henceforth to be the portion of mankind. "By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death", Rom 5: 12.

Men may refuse the testimony of the Scriptures and subscribe to a theory that man is constantly improving himself and his environment and by his own efforts will eventually arrive at a Utopian state. But around us we see the solemn results of the fall of man: suffering and death and increasing crime and violence and corruption. The thirteen wicked things which proceeded out of the heart of men in the time of Christ (see Mark 7: 22,23) are no less in evidence two thousand years later, nor have the sixteen works of the flesh improved (see Gal 5: 19-21). In spite of a more favourable environment, sin characterises man as much as ever; adherence to his own will and resistance to the will of God. Every human being has the witness in his own conscience, if he gives it place, to sin and death and judgment. The conditions of the last days are upon us and bear witness that man's fallen state has not changed (see 2 Tim 3: 1 -7).

The whole condition of man seemed hopeless, but God did not wipe out the human race. Whilst pronouncing judgment on the Man and the woman for their sin and the serpent (Satan) for his instigation of all this, He also announced that the Seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head. In the meantime He clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skin to cover their nakedness, in anticipation of the incoming of Christ and His redeeming work. By His own wonderful plan God would completely deal to His full satisfaction both with the sins of man and with man's sinful state. He would also lay a basis for setting the creation free from bondage in the millennial day, followed by a new and eternal scene entirely free from sin, where "death shall not exist any more, nor grief, nor cry, nor distress shall exist any more, for the former things have passed away", Rev 21: 4. What a triumph for God that will be!

W.E.Ellis

THE CHILDREN'S WISDOM

It is remarkable that a man who described himself as very stupid should write about creatures who are little upon the earth but are exceeding wise. Are we as wise as those four creatures in the Book of Proverbs, chapter thirty?

The ants are those who use every opportunity open to them because they provide their food in summer when it is to be had. Do not be like some persons who had to say that the summer of blessing was ended and they were not saved! A statue was once made, called 'Opportunity'. It was of a man standing on tip-toe, with wings on his feet and long hair on his forehead; but the back of his head was bald. It was as if he stayed but for a moment and whoever met him could seize him; but once passed he could not be caught.

The rock-badger, or hyrax, is somewhat like a rabbit and very timid. But these creatures who are called a feeble folk use the protection of the cliffs which they themselves could never make, but which their Creator has made for them. In fact they make their house there. The lesson which the believer learns from this is that the confession of the name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe. That word means in the older language that he is 'set up on high' which is like a cliff and is a place of safety. The scripture does not say that he ever goes out again!

Then the locusts teach us the importance of fellowship. This does not depend upon having a king who can be seen as their leader. Their God-given instinct gives them a bond together. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in obedient believers gives them a unity which they have to keep in practice. One great way in which fellowship is proved is by breaking bread in remembrance of the Lord Jesus with those who call upon Him out of a pure heart.

The lizard speaks to us of what we call privilege, which means a favour granted by someone greater than we are. Lizards do not defend themselves but, as the scripture says, they are in the palaces of kings. In actual fact it may be that the kings do not like them there! But the Christian, although little upon the earth, has a right to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. He is the King of kings.

Do you take every opportunity of confessing the Lord for salvation and of enjoying the favour of true Christian fellowship?

J.C.Evershed