

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 48

March 1977

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SPRINKLED AND WASHED

Leviticus 16: 27,28; Numbers 19: 1-13; Hebrews 10: 19-22

A.B.P. These passages are not unfamiliar to us but I felt pressed in spirit to consider them at this time. Leviticus 16 relates to the day of atonement which was celebrated year by year in Israel, but in Christianity we know that the atoning work of Jesus is once and for all. I refer to it to indicate the character of the burning which, as we know, typifies God's judgment upon the order of man that has sinned - the removal of man after Adam's order. It has in view also the present removal of that order of man in us, in view of new creation finding its expression and activity. Numbers 19 bears on the judgment of sin in the character of uncleanness. I trust that we will take particular note of the place in this book where this occurs. Ordinarily we might expect it to be brought in earlier, but it is not brought in until after the children of Israel had almost fully exposed their stiffneckedness, their tendency to turn to idolatry, which is a long history right through to the sixteenth chapter, showing how the flesh came into expression. Numbers 19 is in proximity to the brazen serpent, and also the rock which gave its water; then the springing well which typifies the liberty of the Spirit coming in, after which the people of God journeyed. I mention this to indicate that it is quite clear that the teaching as to the red heifer bears peculiarly on the end of the dispensation. Indeed it is a constant source of surprise and pleasure to observe how many scriptures have a direct bearing upon the end of the dispensation.

We should keep in mind as we consider this type of the red heifer that the water of purification is God's provision, in Christ, for us to cleanse ourselves from all uncleanness. The blood and the water both are essential in our approach to God, as we see in Hebrews 10. Having our hearts sprinkled from a wicked conscience relates to the blood, including the day of atonement; the body washed with pure water relates to the ashes of the red heifer for the water of separation. It should affect us that God has foreseen that at the end of the dispensation there is a great danger of uncleanness coming in

through contact with 'dead' persons - typified in the unbelieving generation which would not accept the gospel of the land brought back by the spies, and those who died under the government of God because they tried to take over the priesthood, and those who died because they lusted. These dead persons whose carcasses were strewn in the wilderness would be, typically, the unclean contacts which we are so liable to allow, and in doing so hinder our approach to God. The enemy, dear brethren, is making a concerted effort to negate the importance of separation.

C.F.D. I think it is extremely important that you should bring this before us. We are constantly reminded that the thrust of the enemy is to bring in mixture and breakdown. Locally we have just read 2 Timothy 2. I believe it is distinctly of the Lord, to sharpen up that whole line of things that Paul brings in to guide and govern us in a day of breakdown. We think of the judicial side as to sin being met by the blood of Christ but the water has a vital place in the necessity for moral cleansing.

A.B.P. Yes, the laver in relation to the tabernacle and the brazen sea in relation to the temple show the necessity for being cleansed as we approach God. It is well to think of the sufferings of Christ to provide a means of cleansing as well as dealing with the sin question as such. It is the same work but who could encompass the extent and the variety of detail that entered into the sufferings of Jesus? Think of His bearing the sins of every one who puts faith and confidence in His work. He bore them in His body, bearing every disease also. It is far beyond our comprehension. It could only be One who, in His Person is God, and yet verily a man, taking on with feeling and intelligent understanding the whole detail. The whole universe of God will be thoroughly purged and cleansed where sin has defiled it. It is a work far beyond our capacity to understand, and yet the Spirit sets forth the truth in many different categories so that we can in some measure apprehend His sufferings and His death.

G.D.W. Did you read the scripture in Leviticus as being essential to understand before we consider the one in Numbers?

A.B.P. It was to consider the fact that the awfulness of the burning of the red heifer is as great as that of the sin offering on the day of atonement. We may regard uncleanness in a relatively casual way but the Spirit of God would bring before us, at the end of the dispensation, its serious character and the tremendous cost by which purification is available. There is a reversion to corruption, unbelief, darkness and violence in the area of testimony, which is liable to affect the saints, but the Spirit of God would bring before us in a fresh way, in the red heifer, the sufferings of Christ in view of our cleansing. The heifer which, as we know, is a female would suggest the ardency of affection and feelings which entered into the holy state in which the One who knew no sin undertook being made sin.

G.D.W. 2 Timothy 2 says "If therefore one shall purify himself" (from vessels to dishonour) he shall be serviceable. Would that imply that the believer would have some foundation in his soul as to how to proceed, firstly in himself, to get clear of defilement? The word 'purify' is used.

A.B.P. That relates to the use of the water of purification. We are to use the water, but we should know the potency of the water in order to value it and thus use it.

B.T. We apply this thought of "a dead person" to living persons who are unclean morally and dead towards God, but at the time the book of Numbers was written they were persons who were literally dead. They died because they were unlike Caleb and Joshua. They did not believe the report - they died governmentally. The persons who were in the good of these scriptures went into the land.

A.B.P. Yes; it is noteworthy that, except for Caleb and Joshua, no one in the whole nation over sixty years of age. That is an indication God would have us, at the end of the dispensation in spiritual energy.

P.W.C. Is not Numbers a reminder to us that God's law never changes or fails? The apostle Paul reminds us of it in 2 Corinthians 6: 17: "touch not what is unclean".

A.B.P. So that it relates to more than a dead person. It might even be a bone or a grave. The bone may be an indication that someone had been dead a long time - the carcasses were strewn in the desert, we are told. So we must not forget things that we may have had a judgment of years ago. Some may say, These people know nothing about old issues. We may lightly excuse our links and relationships with persons who reject certain phases of the truth. I do not speak to condemn but to awaken our consciences so that we do not allow ourselves to be linked on with anything that would hinder us in our approach to God.

C.G. In Isaiah 52: 11 it says "Depart, depart, go out from thence, touch not what is unclean; go out of the midst of her, be ye clean, that bear the vessels of Jehovah". What would you say about bearing the vessels and being clean?

A.B.P. 'Bearing the vessels of Jehovah' was the responsibility of the Kohathites who had to do with service in the sanctuary. In relation to the recovery from Babylon, much is made of the vessels which were for service in the house of God, for pouring out and for measuring the meat-offering and so forth. What is in mind in your reference is the sanctifying of the priesthood.

G.D.W. In 2 Corinthians 6 where that passage is quoted it says "Be not diversely yoked with unbelievers". These are things we have to think about.

A.B.P. There are many scriptures which can be referred to in opening up our subject but we should concentrate on the passages read. If one's impression as to them is of the Lord, we want to get what He would say to us.

E.E.H. Do you have in mind that the scripture read in Leviticus about the day of atonement is typical of something completed by God for us?

A.B.P. Yes, once and for all.

E.E.H. Right. God has cleared and cleansed us but the next scripture is what we do to keep clean.

A.B.P. We are helped to use the water of purification by an appreciation of the specific character of the death of Christ which has provided this means for our cleansing. The blessed Spirit of God will help us to understand the extent to which Christ has suffered and His deep feelings which entered into it, and as helping us to understand this He will then help us to fulfil desires which arise in us, to be clean - to be sanctified - and to be exercised that we do not become unclean.

E.E.H. In other words, He has effected the work of atonement but we have the means in the ashes of the red heifer to keep ourselves clean. Is that right?

A.B.P. Yes. The teaching as to the red heifer is that in His death Christ has provided the means by which we can cleanse and "purify ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear", 2 Cor 7: 1. It is one thing to settle down and rest in the fact that the finished work of Christ in atonement and redemption is a finished one (thank God for that) but it is very important for us to see that in the death of Christ provision has been made for us to purify ourselves.

S.E.H. What is the thought in 'touching': "He that toucheth a dead person"? It seems to suggest a certain sensitiveness on our part. The 'yoke' in 2 Corinthians 6 "Be not diversely yoked" (v 14) seems to be a stronger thing, but here it is just a touch.

A.B.P. I think that 2 Corinthians 6 relates to a definite committal. We apply it, and I think rightly so, to association; that we are bound up with other persons in performing certain things, working together to accomplish a given end. But touching is day to day experience where without pre-meditation we have occasion to have contact with what is unclean. In Numbers 19: 15 reference is made to a vessel becoming unclean because it is not covered and is in the tent where a person dies. This shows how we may inadvertently become unclean. As vessels we need to be covered. The Spirit of God will help us as self-judged to "possess his own vessel in sanctification and honour", 1 Thess 4: 4.

G.D.W. One thing that is so prevalent is the commercial entertainment of the world. Our young people, indeed all of us, find that it has some effect on us. You cannot walk down the street without noticing it. Would this be one of the occasions where we need to keep our vessels covered so that we are not affected by it?

A.B.P. I would say that. I remember the case of a young brother some years ago who obviously was unhappy and not going on well. A brother sought to help him, but he said, You would be surprised at the thoughts that come into my mind and render me unclean. The brother told him, You need not be rendered unclean by thoughts which come into your mind if you judge them; it is when you retain them in your mind and entertain them that you become unclean. The enemy puts thoughts into our mind but the Spirit of God will help us to reject them. Judge them immediately.

G.D.W. We often speak of the 'thin end of the wedge'. Something happens and you get a thought, then you go a little further and a little further, and soon you are in a situation where you cannot enjoy the things of God.

A.B.P. The word of God helps us to divide between the "thoughts and intents of the heart", Heb 4: 12. Satan may put a thought into my mind; if I welcome it, it may become an intent. The Spirit of God, by the word, helps us to discern between a thought and an intent. It is when it becomes an intent and that intent is fulfilled, that I sin.

G.D.W. Would the Lord's own words confirm that: "Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man; but what goes forth out of the mouth". Matt 15: 11. Sin has characterised us if allowed in us.

A.B.P. Yes, the thing finds a place in the heart. The Lord said later, "out of the heart come forth evil thoughts".

O.O.L. Do we not underrate the power of the enemy? We need to study the enemy's tactics more so that when things come before us we can judge them and cast them out.

A.B.P. We need to study the love of Christ more, and take on the feelings of Christ; to understand the way in which He has provided a

means for us to purify ourselves. That is what this chapter speaks of. It speaks of a red heifer, without blemish, wherein is no defect, upon which never came yoke. That is a presentation of Christ that we should ponder. He was without defect; there was no deficiency whatever. The perfection of Christ is emphasised in this type of the red heifer. Red, as we have been taught, suggests how distinctive was the humanity of Jesus. The fact that it is a heifer - feminine - would imply the state, the ardency and depth of feelings. What is emphasised is the distinctiveness of Christ in that respect. He felt every detail of what He went through to provide the means for our purification. The ashes point to the thoroughness with which Christ took on, vicariously, everything that characterised the man after the flesh as represented by the cedar-wood, hyssop and scarlet. God fully dealt with all that in Him vicariously. It is reduced to ashes; ashes which are not lumpy; ashes which can be used for the potency of the "water of separation", for purification from uncleanness - "a purification for sin".

E.E.H. One is struck with the way the word 'clean' enters into this chapter; a clean man, a clean place.

A.B.P. I think it is to be characteristic of us; "those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints", 1 Cor 1: 2. The clean place outside the camp where the ashes are kept may relate to the hearts of the saints in the testimonial position. We have to go to business and do many things in the world, but the fact is that the having to do with things that we must attend to need not render us unclean. There is to be a clean place outside the camp. Normally inside the camp would be clean, but the clean place outside the camp may well be the hearts of those that love the Lord and walk in self-judgment.

G.H. There is a passage in Psalm 19: 9 which says "The fear of Jehovah is clean". What does that suggest?

A.B.P. I do not know, but the fear of Jehovah in a man's heart would cause that man to be clean - a clean place outside the camp.

G.D.P. It is not without point that it says, "leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ", 2 Cor 10: 5.

A.B.P. It is very fine to bring that in; it enlarges on Mr Hesterman's scripture.

E.E.H. What did Abraham do to the birds of prey which came down on the carcasses in Genesis 15?

A.B.P. It says "Abraham scared them away".

E.E.H. Yes, that is the idea. That is the way you get rid of unclean thoughts. You do not retain them. Self-judgment can be a preventative action.

G.D.W. Is there not a danger from influences which are not external, things which intoxicate, things which divert the power of the Holy Spirit or may be substituted for it? There are many things that would fall into that category.

A.B.P. You mean, possibly, books we may read, which may come into our minds in the morning meeting.

G.D.W. That could be one thing, but it may be excessive use of alcoholic beverages too, or tranquilisers. The enemy would use such things to lessen our sense of responsibility. We may need to face some of these things.

A.B.P. Great damage has resulted from unwise use of such things. I think the best treatment for a nervous or an overwhelmed condition is Romans 8: "the Spirit joins also its help to our weakness; for we do not know what we should pray for as is fitting" (v 26). We may feel that we are just being driven, overwhelmed by the sense of responsibility; things have to be met; we are working and working and getting nowhere, and we come to a point where we are just overwhelmed. We do not know what to pray for; we cannot pray. Then the Spirit enters into the matter and "makes intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered". The Spirit feels our condition more than we do. But as the Spirit joins Its help to our weakness our minds are turned toward what God has done for us. He has foreknown us and has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son; and whom He has predestinated, these also He has called; and whom He has called, these also He has justified; but

whom He has justified, these also He has glorified. So that we do know that all the things which were overwhelming us are really "working together for good to those who love God". That is the best tranquiliser that I know of, if we could only take it in. But we must remember that it is the God who searches our hearts who can bring in peace and rest, who can say "Peace".

C.G. We were speaking about our thoughts. Romans 13: 14 says "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not take forethought for the flesh to fulfil its lusts". Taking forethought would be an act on our part, would it not?

A.B.P. Yes. First you must put off - put off the old man with his deeds, then you put on the new. It is an attitude of mind, but it works out practically in our manner of life, so that the features of Christ are seen expressed practically in us.

E.E.H. Would it help us to go into detail in Numbers 19 to see how God would operate to provide the means of cleansing for us? The man in verse 9 gathers the ashes and takes them to a clean place outside the camp. Then he himself has to wash, which shows the urgent necessity for being clean. It is a remarkable chapter, is it not?

A.B.P. It is; I trust we can experience the help of the Spirit. The priest who is mentioned is Eleazar, not Aaron. That may suggest priesthood in the saints, and what is done in the presence of Eleazar is to be understood by us. The Spirit will help us, with priestly feelings, to witness and understand the reason for this terrible burning that the heifer was subjected to. We should note particularly that the priests all "take of its blood with his finger, and shall sprinkle of its blood directly before the tent of meeting seven times". This means that what is happening in the burning of the heifer has a direct relation to our approach to God and our coming together in assembly. It has to have an effect, spiritually, upon our state as we come together.

R.C.McD. What you are saying seems so deep as compared with washing of feet only. Would you open that up or connect it in some way.

A.B.P. In John 13 the Lord said to His disciples, "ye are clean, but not all" (v 10). (That 'not all' would exclude Judas). He had said to Peter "He that is washed all over needs not to wash save his feet, but is wholly clean". I believe the feet-washing in John 13 is refreshment or stimulation in view of having part with Christ. It is at the level of the Supper.

E.E.H. Would that be in atonement - "he that is washed all over... is wholly clean"? The feet-washing would be what has come under our attention in Numbers 19.

A.B.P. I think there is a connection with the Lord's teaching in John 15: "Ye are already clean by reason of the word which I have spoken to you" (v 3). Then in Ephesians 5: 26 it says that He is purifying the assembly "by the washing of water by the word" in view of presenting her to Himself "glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things". That would relate, I think, to His own personal service. What you say is certainly so, that basically we are clean in the sight of God and saved for eternity. But now the practical side of things involves that we maintain a clean condition; and here in Numbers 19 is a man that is clean, but because he has to do with this matter he is unclean until even. That is, there was nothing he needed, so to speak, in the way of cleansing, save as having to do with this matter. And we are having to do with it now. Through speaking about it together there may be thoughts come into our minds as to whether we have allowed uncleanness attaching to the cedar-wood character of the flesh, or the scarlet or the hyssop. If so, we are to avail ourselves of the water of purification.

A.S.H. Why is there a period of time required in verse 7: "And the priest shall wash his garments, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterwards he shall come into the camp; and the priest shall be unclean until the even".

A.B.P. That is interesting, but there is a contrast with what is said in verse 19 where the person is unclean for seven days. The priest is not characteristically unclean; he has not touched a dead person or a bone or anything like that. Having to do with this tremendous

burning arouses priestly feelings as to the fact that we are still in the flesh and liable to sin, whereas the one typified in the red heifer was absolutely sin apart and yet He was *made* sin vicariously for our sakes. Therefore in the spirit of self-judgment the priest completes the exercise in himself: it is "until the even".

C.F.D. Your emphasis on the priesthood is very important. Mr Taylor said that there is a great lack of priestliness amongst brethren generally (see N.S. Vol 61, p.131). If we were more sensitive, in a priestly way, we would be more protective of our own vessels; we would not put ourselves in a position where we are exposed to what is unclean.

A.B.P. We should think of ourselves as vessels which need to be kept covered. Through wondrous grace we have come to know the Lord and have been given the Holy Spirit, but "we have this treasure in earthen vessels". Our chapter indicates that these vessels are easily defiled and therefore we need to keep them covered. How do we cover them?

C.F.D. Would it not relate to our own priestly senses as to what is protective? Reference has been made to things you might be exposed to in the streets. Should we knowingly go into an area where there is unclean literature and expose ourselves to it? Should we knowingly put ourselves in association with persons, or even groups of Christians, with whom we cannot walk? To do these things would be to leave our vessels uncovered, would it not?

A.B.P. I think those would be ways in which our vessels are not covered and something unclean could readily fall into them.

J.A.P. What you are bringing before us is very appropriate, I feel, for me and for all of us. In London we had a remarkable enquiry as to why God allowed evil to continue. One thing that came out of that was that the assembly is to be a vessel of integrity and God has such a vessel here now that characteristically is clean. Not that we do not fail, but here, in the place of evil, there are those who are overcoming and maintaining a clean place to which the Lord can come.

A.B.P. The latter glory of the house, while possibly not in volume, must relate to such an area where the service of God is unhindered. I am sure, dear brethren, that the greatest thing at the present moment is the service of God. Its depth and fulness should be increasing constantly with us, but it will not increase if we do not maintain a clean place. Our approach is to be, as it says: "sprinkled as to our hearts from a wicked conscience, and washed as to our body with pure water".

C.F.D. What you are saying is extremely important. We need to be concerned about an increase in quality. I come in and sit down amongst the brethren: what am I bringing with me? what is my state? how have I been proceeding during the course of the day; what has been my outlook? I believe there has developed a tendency to become a little careless as to this, but that affects the liberty and power of the collective position. I believe the Lord is seeking to stir us up so that we come up to what is potential in each of us.

A.B.P. I feel much the same way.

J.A.P. As to the inquiry you are raising with us, I think we are generally clear about much of the awful wickedness that is abroad, but there is also the ecclesiastical side of things which comes into evidence in the later chapters in Numbers. We might very quickly see that the movie house is an unclean place and you would be defiled there, but then there are other defilements abroad that the enemy uses.

A.B.P. The book of Numbers is very instructive in relation to ecclesiastical error as well as the failure and weakness of the people generally. The way that Moses and Aaron were able to meet these issues enters anti-typically into church history. What we need is to understand things the way that the daughters of Zelophehad did. They realised that there were those who had part in the uprising of Korah, and that their father was not involved in that, having died in his own sin. They had a judgment of that. He was not a rebellious man but evidently he died as one who did not believe the report of

the land which Caleb and Joshua brought back. The daughters of Zelophehad represent a subjective state in the people, a kind of humanity which was the result of being with God throughout all the exercises of the wilderness. They would understand the word that "it is a people that shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations", Num 23: 9. They had a judgment of it, and we cannot intermingle with persons in other companies of believers where there is defect in the truth. They may be happy believers; they may be very devoted according to the light they have; but there is a certain point where our links with such end, and I would say that the service of God is the test.

G.D.W. Does not Paul's expression in Romans 9, that he had "great grief and uninterrupted pain" about his kinsmen, give us a pattern? He had wished to be a curse from the Christ for them but he did not return to them. He speaks about "the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (v 5).

A.B.P. I remember a reading many years ago in Brooklyn when there was an exercise about looseness and fraternising with persons in other fellowships. It was about Jehoshaphat who fraternised with Ahab and when invited to go to battle with him said "I am as thou, and my people as thy people; and I will be with thee in the war", 2 Chron 18: 3. But after the battle a prophet was sent to Jehoshaphat who said "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate Jehovah? Therefore is wrath upon thee from Jehovah", 2 Chron 19: 2. Some may say, They were all Israelites; but the Spirit of God calls them 'ungodly'. We have to take account of issues in ecclesiastical history and the underlying state and condition with which persons are identified.

J.A.P. I am very thankful for this meeting for myself (we have to start with ourselves in regard to being pure). The Spirit of God is speaking to each of us as to our personal conduct when we are not under the eyes of our brethren. Is the Lord helping us to be more clear from the world and the things of the world, and from ecclesiastical error which tests the brethren? Mr Knauss gave a word in London on Lot and his recovery. Abraham did not give up

Lot and God honoured him for that, yet he did not mix with Sodom although Lot did.

A.B.P. Abraham rescued Lot but he did not dwell with him in tents.

J.A.P. That is a very important matter. He recovered his brother, but you are saying he did not dwell with him after that.

A.B.P. Separation is maintained; he had separated from Lot. That did not mean that he un-Christianised him; we do not un-Christianise persons we cannot walk with; we thank God for the work of God in them. Abraham had separated from Lot and when he rescued him he did not bring him back into fellowship, so to speak.

J.A.P. Yes; the responsibility for that would have been with Lot himself. Abraham evidently did all that he could do.

A.B.P. Evidently Lot was unchanged as to the basic issue. The principle on which they had separated still remained. Abraham did not bring Lot back to Hebron and what happened later shows that Abraham was right in maintaining separation.

G.H. Separation seems to be an important matter in God's mind. Very early, in Genesis 1: 4, it says that "God divided between the light and the darkness".

A.B.P. In the recovery from Babylon Ezra said that God had given them a little reviving and a wall. Nehemiah had not yet completed the wall. But God Himself had been a wall round about His people to protect them from their enemies from the time they set up the altar and commenced the service of God. The *principle* of the wall was completely overthrown by those rulers and the people who had married strange wives. Ezra inferred that the principle of the wall was destroyed.

C.G. Will you say something as to what you had in mind about Hebrews 10?

A.B.P. Our approach to God, whether in private or in our collective gatherings. If we expect God to hear us we must be in the gain of the death of Christ, both in the character of the day of atonement and of the red heifer. "Sprinkled as to our hearts from a wicked con

science" would be the blood; "washed as to our body with pure water" would be the water of purification. We could have read in John's gospel, that when the soldier pierced the side of Jesus, forthwith came there out blood and water. That is only written by John; it is not in the synoptic gospels. John's ministry is peculiarly for the latter day, and it only emphasises what we said at the beginning of the meeting, that this character of the death of Christ - the provision He has made for cleansing has peculiar import at the end of the dispensation when there is a return to the corruption of the gentiles after the cleansing of Christianity. Christendom has been cleansed, like the house of the man who had the demon in Matthew 12: 43. But the truth is being given up and apostasy is developing. God is being set aside, and corruption like an old leprosy is taking hold. It is a terrible thing.

C.F.D. I trust that we are grasping what you are saying. It should be a tremendous help to us, and it should help us to differentiate. Persons may have accepted Christ and come under the shelter of the blood, so that in that sense there is an affinity; but when it comes to the working out of the truth, which has always been the issue, we find there is a difference. The truth is our bond. Therefore we should differentiate with the Spirit's help and not be putting a '*carte blanche*' on things and saying, Oh well, we are all happy Christians. We must differentiate in our minds and what you are emphasising should help us in that.

A.B.P. I think the tendency to fraternise is because the sufferings of Christ in relation to cleansing are not understood. I believe it will be found that some persons we may tend to associate with do not understand the side of the sufferings of Christ to provide for cleanliness, to provide the "water of separation".

J.A.P. The Lord Himself brought this question up when He said "who are my brethren?" Matt 12: 48. He raised that question Himself, and He put the truth as to the will of God clearly before His disciples.

A.B.P. I have mentioned a number of times that our links with believers are suggested in the reference to the nails David provided

for the building of the house of God. He set aside a large quantity of iron for nails; but also, in the book of Chronicles which was written in a day of recovery by Ezra, reference is made to the quantity of gold that was set aside for nails in the house. The golden nails were specifically for use in the oracle, the iron nails for the joists and doors, the basic structural parts of the building. These nails, I believe, refer to our links with Christians. I remember Mr Taylor referring to the nails in relation to the man at the beautiful gate of the temple; he held on to Peter and John; that suggests the nails. If I find in my conversation with someone that he is a believer, I rejoice in it and speak with him about the things of the Lord. We have a good time together. That would be the iron nails - the truth on the gospel level. Then when you begin to speak with him about the service of God you find you have no link at all because he knows nothing about the assembly or the service of praise in assembly. You have no link on the golden line. We need to be sensitive as to these links. If you will have nothing to do with a person because he is not in fellowship, that is not right. We should appreciate the work of God as far as we can go. Only the priests had access to the sanctuary and then only as recognising the blood and the water.

J.A.P. This is a matter that tests us at the present time. We must begin with ourselves as to links with believers and persons under discipline. To socialise with them and eat and drink with them is not helping them. The matter of mixed marriages was brought up in London and the brethren showed real concern about it. We are not helping people by having fellowship with these things.

A.B.P. We need the help of the Spirit to be regulated by the truth and not by our feelings. Feelings are right: Paul said he had uninterrupted pain in his heart because of his brethren the Israelites, but that did not cause him to violate the truth.

PLAINFIELD

30 October 1976

KEY TO INITIALS

P.W.C. - P.W.Coombes; C.F.D. - C.F.Dadd; C.G. - C.Grenidge; G.H. - G.Hesterman

S.E.H. -S.Hesterman; A.S.H.- A.S.Hinkson (New York); E.E.H. - E.E.Hoyte (New York); O.O.L. - O.O.Linton (New York); R.C.McD. - R.C.McDowell; A.B.P. - A.B.Parker (New York); J.A.P. - J.A.Petersen; G.D.P. - G.D.Pfingst (New York); B.T. - B.Taylor (New York); G.D.W. - G.D.Ware (New York).

(All local except where otherwise shown).

FAITHFULNESS UNTO DEATH

Revelation 2: 8- 10; 1 Timothy 1: 12 -14; 2 Timothy 2: 1,2

H.W.K. One is impressed with the thought of being faithful unto death. The Lord says to Smyrna "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give to thee the crown of life". This city we are in is named, I understand, after one who was faithful unto death. We tend to think only of those who are faithful at the present time, but I believe we should think more about those who have preceded us in the testimony and particularly of the martyrs. We are not called to martyrdom at the present time, but there have been times when persons have actually been faithful unto death. They could have just denied the Lord's name and their lives might then have been spared, but they were prepared to surrender their lives in faithfulness to Him. I expect all of us have read about the martyrs and all they went through during such times as the Reformation. Now we are not in such times, but we are still in times when faithfulness is required. We have just sung 'How good is the God we adore, Our faithful unchangeable Friend' (hymn 23), so we must first see how faithfulness is set out in God. Paul reminds the unfaithful Corinthians, who were thinking of themselves first, that God is faithful (see 1 Cor 1: 9). Now Paul had a link in the truth with this young man Timothy and knew what there was potentially in him for the maintenance of the truth after his own departure. Therefore Paul would commit the whole truth to Timothy. Paul was concerned that the truth should not be broken up, with various ones carrying part of the truth, but rather that Timothy should be in possession of the whole truth, even as Paul had been, and that he should pass it on intact to faithful men. The basis on which the truth had been committed to Paul was that the Lord had counted him faithful and had appointed him to ministry even though he had been beforehand a blasphemer and persecutor, and an insolent overbearing man. So Timothy was to entrust what he had heard from Paul to faithful men who would be competent to instruct others also, which would involve the handing down of the truth on the line of faithfulness to ourselves.

So we should think about the faithfulness of those who have preceded us in every era of the testimony, with a view to our being more faithful.

D.E.R. The test is not so much in holding the truth in our minds or in terms; it is the practice of the truth which arouses the opposition of the enemy and it is then that faithfulness is particularly called for.

H.W.K. Just so. If we are faithful we shall experience what it is to be rejected by the world, but we shall not know it otherwise.

C.M. It is remarkable that Paul says that the Lord "has counted me faithful". He was conscious in his own links with the Lord that the Lord knew that faithfulness was one thing that had marked him, even if he had not much else to his credit in his past history.

H.W.K. Paul never had mixed motives. Even when he was persecuting the saints he thought he was doing right to stamp out the name of the Lord Jesus whom he truly believed to be an imposter. But after his conversion the zeal of Paul eclipsed the zeal of every other man. His zeal in persecuting the saints was turned to set on the truth of Christianity which had been committed to him and to which he was faithful.

C.M. And the Lord gave him power.

H.W.K. The twelve had been given power personally by the Lord in order to establish Christianity at its outset, but Paul received power from the Lord on high.

C.M. Paul was given power because he was faithful and could be entrusted with it.

H.W.K. Power in the hands of man not under the headship of Christ is dangerous, but Paul could be entrusted with the greatest power.

D.E.R. Paul had a transaction with the Lord on the Damascus road which had completely changed him, and it is our own personal links with the Lord and our affection for Him which will empower us to follow in the path of faithfulness to Him.

H.W.K. It is therefore important that each one of us has a similar transaction, to receive a personal impression of Christ, so as to be faithful to Him. It has been said that infinite love and infinite hatred met on that Damascus road, and infinite love overcame so as to leave the impressions which Paul had.

D.E.R. Do such impressions link with the true riches credited to the company in Smyrna? Such rich impressions are not Laodicean riches.

H.W.K. Yes; so the Lord can exhort that company to be "faithful unto death, and I will give to thee the crown of life". We should think more of the faithfulness of those who have preceded us in the testimony.

C.H.S. Everything is set out for us in the Lord Himself who became dead and lives. It is a question of preparedness to go the way He went, to follow Him and deny ourselves.

H.W.K. Exactly.

C.M. On every occasion that the Lord tells the disciples about the sufferings He is going to meet with in Jerusalem, He also refers to His rising again on the third day. We could not be faithful unto death without being in the light of that.

H.W.K. The ascension of Christ should also mean much to us.

A.C.S. In Philippians 3 Paul refers to the power of His resurrection before referring to the fellowship of His sufferings and being conformed to His death.

H.W.K. The truth of His resurrection would give us power in our testimony here. If we are faithful during the time of Christ's rejection He will be faithful to us and will reward us, not with a physical crown of laurel leaves (such as Roman soldiers used to receive) but with the crown of life in the sphere of life eternal.

C.H.S. He that hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal. It is not easy to hate your life.

H.W.K. No, but it is on the basis of preparedness to be faithful unto death that the truth has come down to us. What was given to Paul

was given to him not because he had ability or knowledge or anything like that, but because he was faithful. Similarly, Paul handed on to Timothy what he was in possession of because he saw the element of faithfulness in that young man. God is now looking for that in us.

D.E.R. There is particular need at the moment to be faithful to the truth committed to Paul, involving the truth as to the assembly. The rudiments of the gospel do not provoke opposition, but the test is faithfulness to the truth of Paul's glad tidings.

H.W.K. Just so. The truth tests us as to our preparedness to be faithful unto death. Take the matter of separation: a person is not popular if he desires to be practically separate from the world. Mr Darby would still insist that separation from evil is God's principle of unity. The standard of the truth remains unaltered by breakdown.

D.E.R. When breakdown has come in, true hearts would rally to stand in the breach more faithfully than ever in order that the ground secured for us might be rightly held.

H.W.K. More faithfulness is required to-day because of the unfaithfulness all around us. We are called to be faithful like the Lord, who was 'Faithful amidst unfaithfulness, 'Mid darkness only light' (hymn 230). God would count upon us to shine in a difficult day. As being possessed of Christ, the believer has a constitution that would enable him to shine like the martyrs. What it must have meant to stand up in those days and fearlessly own their link with the Lord Jesus at the risk of their lives!

C.M. Stephen was an example of one who was strong in grace, for even in his martyrdom he was able to pray for his enemies.

H.W.K. Heaven took account of the close of his days here. He was not concerned to ward off the stones that were coming at him but he was concerned about those who were stoning him, so he prayed for them and then peacefully fell asleep. "The grace which is in Christ Jesus" is available to strengthen each one of us. We have been preserved thus far and now we need fresh grace to keep us true and faithful as we move in the sphere of testimony. We are kept here for

that purpose and we must justify God every day of our lives in that sphere.

C.M. When David was a young man he overcame the giant but, in his old age, faith was not so active (although no doubt it was there) so that the giant was nearly too much for him. So we need to be getting constant supplies in order to be sustained.

H.W.K. What a man David was in the sight of God! He was the one who considered for God and set on the service of praise.

D.E.R. Suffering is something we naturally shy away from, but suffering and glory go together.

H.W.K. If we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him. While we do not experience physical suffering, as some did in the past, we should know something about suffering in our spirits. If we are faithful we shall be rejected and hated.

C.D.R. Paul and Silas were suffering in jail but they were singing praises to God.

H.W.K. What a triumph! They were not in prison because of some crime they had committed but because they were faithful. So Paul was rewarded with the greatest truths. How rich are the epistles from Paul in prison! Because he was faithful the greatest truths were revealed to him. Now wonderful truth has been given to us. It has come down from Christ personally, through Paul, through Timothy, through faithful men to us, and now it is our turn to be faithful.

C.H.S. Faithfulness to-day is, in a way, equivalent to martyrdom.

H.W.K. It is. If we are faithful we shall have the same feelings as the martyrs had and as the Lord had. In John 6, where the Lord is presented as the bread of life, many of his disciples turned away from Him and He felt it.

C.H.S. It is a question of feeding on His death - on His flesh and on His blood - and that is not easy.

H.W.K. We need to make time to appropriate and contemplate Him. When the Lord was here some contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father. How much do we contemplate Him?

D.E.R. The present moment is summed up in Paul's exhortation to Timothy: "Be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner", 2 Tim 1: 8. The Lord is not wanted in the world, and Paul is not wanted in its religious aspect.

H.W.K. And if we are faithful we shall not be wanted; we shall experience something akin to martyrdom as we name the name of the Lord. We should therefore be thankful that the Spirit is here and that evil is held in check. How terrible is that which will take place on earth after the rapture when evil will be unchecked!

D.E.R. The reproach of the Christ is preservation and practical salvation for us, even if it may involve suffering in spirit.

H.W.K. It is. We do not know much about martyrdom in our country. Persons, such as the Pilgrim Fathers, who came to our country desired to be right with God and worship Him in the way they believed to be right; but most of the history of Christendom has taken place in this section of the world where there were actual martyrs, and particularly in Britain which as Mr Taylor suggested, was the cradle of the revival: It is a privilege to be here in the testimony and to represent the Lord, but it is also a great responsibility in view of the light we have and the faithfulness of those who have preceded us. Well, God is faithful and I believe He is helping us, as we count on Him to sustain us and give us power to be faithful.

ST. ALBANS

1 November 1976

KEY TO INITIALS

H.W.K. - H.W.Knauss (Indianapolis); C.M. - C.Middleton; C.D.R. - C.D.Remmington; D.E.R. - D.E.Remmington; A.C.S. - A.C.Stay; C.H.S. - C.H.Stay; (all local).

OUR JOURNEY IN VIEW OF GOING UP

G.D.Pfingst

1 Kings 19: 4-9

One has thought of this word from Jehovah. God uses these occasions to speak to us. His word to Elijah was "the journey is too great for thee" - that was part of the message. At the present time we find ourselves beset with many things. Elijah had known better days in which he had proven God's help; he had been supported in his service. But now things were becoming very threatening, things were not favourable; the people were generally deteriorating and Jezebel was seeking his life, so Elijah had become discouraged and wanted to give up. We too have known better times in the sense that we were greater numerically. We have known strong leadership and support, and have felt the Lord's help in a distinct way, but now things are testing. Elijah thought that the only way was to die.

In the hymn (180) we sang that we might overcome in His name, and be faithful in this scene where the Lord has been. The way out is not the way of death. That was not in God's mind for Elijah though he had requested it for himself. We have been told that at this point Elijah resigned his commission and God accepted his resignation. We do not want to resign, even though we are weak and may have very little gift; we want to press forward. So at this juncture the angel came and touched Elijah as he slept and said "Arise, eat!"; and he saw a cake, baked on hot stones, and a cruse of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. But there was a second touch, and at this juncture we may need a second touch. We have been much encouraged and strengthened by being delivered from bondage, but it may be that we need a second touch.

At this point Elijah got two breakfasts, which is very good fare, and in the strength of that food he journeyed forty days and forty nights, to Horeb the mount of God. It was a long journey, but God knew about that for He said "the journey is too great for thee". In our own strength we cannot go through; it is the strength which comes

from above - meeting with "the help which is from God", Acts 26: 22. That is what Paul experienced. So, even though we find the journey testing, possibly finding it too great for us, the Lord knew that before we did; it is too great for us unless we get the food and drink that God provides. The Lord is putting us through a testing period but He has measured it and knows how testing it is. With Elijah it was forty days - a full testing period - but in the strength of the food which God supplied he reached Horeb the mount of God. And so shall we!

I thought that we might be encouraged to take this journey to Horeb. Moses had been there previously. Now Elijah is there. Both later appear on the mount of transfiguration with Jesus. What a wonderful distinction! What recompense for having completed the journey to Horeb! In that area Moses shone, particularly when he interceded for the people. But Elijah is still taken up with his service, all that he had done, and that he alone was left. What an example Moses is for us! Instead of being overwhelmed by the failure of the people he interceded for them; they were God's people. But with Elijah God had in mind to fit him for ascension. I think Scripture supports that for that is what Elijah was to experience. Even though he had become dejected and despondent, God had in mind to take him up. And that is the glorious hope that we have. But the forty days and forty nights preceded Elijah's ascension. Then also Elijah had to visit certain areas and to cross the Jordan - apparently all needed experience - but it was in view of his going up. Although he had requested for himself that he may die he was being prepared for ascension. What wonderful thoughts God has for His people! They too will be taken up. The Lord is coming to take us to be with Himself "with an assembling shout, with archangel's voice and with trump of God", 1 Thess 4: 16. So we should be ready for the second touch, and the food and drink, in view of being sustained in completing the journey which still lies ahead. It says of Rachel that she died when there was still a little way to Ephrath. There may still be a little way for us to go before we are taken up; and that little way is the test for us, whether we can get to Horeb, the mount of God, ready for translation.

It came to me that we might well get acquainted with these circumstances in view of the imminence of our going up. That is the way out for us. May the Lord encourage us for His Name's sake.

BROOKLYN, N.Y.

14 September 1976

"ARISE, SHINE! FOR THY LIGHT IS COME"

A.B.Parker

Isaiah 60: 1-3

There is an interesting connection between the passage read and Genesis 38, where two children were born to Tamar, one of whom was named Zerah, which means 'rising', the other Pherez, which means 'breach'. A typical connection is that Israel, having had the first opportunity to receive the ministry of the Spirit after Christ was installed at the right hand of God, refused it, drawing back the hand so to speak. The glad tidings were preached "beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24: 47) and Paul invariably went first to the synagogue and to the Jews, but when they rejected the word he turned to the nations. The gentiles received the word. They 'broke forth', receiving the light which reached its height at Ephesus where the whole counsel of God was made known. Pherez 'broke forth', so to speak. Mr Taylor referred to the birth of Pherez as "the power that works in us", Eph 3: 20 (see N.S. Vol. 44 p.460).

The passage we have read shows that Zerah's day is coming, when Israel shall arise and shine, for her light will have come. There will be no drawing back on Israel's part then. God has no pleasure in those who draw back. Therefore, what an appeal this scripture should have in relation to any tendency to lethargy. Paul quoted it in writing to the Ephesians. He applied it to the present moment, saying "Wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee", Eph 5: 14. He refers to *our* light, beloved brethren! He says the Christ shall shine upon *thee*. Israel's light will come soon, when the kingdom is set up and Jerusalem will be the influential centre of the earth and the kings shall bring their glory to it. What a day it will be for Israel when Isaiah 60 is fulfilled! But our light is shining *now*; the Christ is shining upon *us*. O, what light! We may thrill with anticipative joy when we think of the millennial day, but, dear brethren, the *present* is *our* day. It is not as spectacular, outwardly, as the millennium will be,

for that will be a day of public display, in which we will have our part, truly, but the part we have in it will depend upon the measure in which we have taken on the shining of *our* day. This is what will fit us to have part with Christ in the consummation of God's ways with man in flesh and blood. At times God had repented that He had made man; but having given all things into the hands of a Man - the man Christ Jesus - His ways with men will be brought to a glorious completion: God will be vindicated for having created man in responsibility in flesh and blood before He introduces the eternal day.

The present moment, dear brethren, is one of outstanding light - *our* light! It is not characterised by great public demonstration. Indeed our life is hid with Christ in God; but I believe that God presently is preserving a remnant for the heart of Christ - 'a lamp for David' is being maintained and I believe will be carried right through to the rapture. Scripture seems to indicate this. Whether we are in it or not is a question we should raise with ourselves, but I believe that God will see to it that hades' gates will not prevail against a remnant which answers to the heart of Christ; it will be preserved until He comes for His saints. We want to be in it! Let us then be concerned that we do not fall into lethargy, that we do not go to sleep; but if we do, that we hearken to Paul's strong appeal: "Wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee". How urgent he was that none should miss the shining!

Dear brethren, do we want to miss the glory and privilege of the day we are in? Are we going to allow sleep to creep over us? I believe that rather it is our desire that we be maintained in spiritual energy and freshness, so that as we are together our meetings take on fresh life and character and the light that has been recovered to us is truly shining amongst us. Men of God have been used to bring in recovery of the truth - particularly as to the service of God which is the height of Paul's ministry to the Ephesians - and that truth is available to us. The ministry is on our bookshelves. Does it have the place it should have in our hearts? Are we moving on in our

souls in life and increasing freshness? This is the point of the apostle's appeal: that we do not become lethargic, that we do not fall into a folding of the hands, that we do not say, It will not matter if I do not get out to the meeting this evening. Let us support, in the fullest way, the occasions of gathering which are available to us, taking on the peculiarly blessed light that is shining for us in this wonderful day of recovery. May the Lord encourage us in it.

BROOKLYN, N.Y.

8 June 1976

THE CHILDREN'S SAVIOUR

It is God's desire that all persons should be saved and know the truth; in fact a great prophet said that God would come Himself to save us. This became true when Jesus was *born* a Saviour. Both Peter and Paul wrote of Him as our "God and Saviour Jesus Christ" so He is ever *divine*. John even says that He was *sent* as Saviour of the world so that no one need ever feel overlooked in blessing. Then in love Jesus *came* to save those lost through a sinful nature - children as well as older persons - while He even seeks those who in self-will stray like sheep. As a *glorified* Saviour we look for His coming from heaven to change our bodies like unto His own.

The Person of the Saviour gives value to the work that He came to fulfil so that the believer should be righteously saved. The Passover lamb without blemish, and its shed blood, are a sign of this. There must be judgment for sins and Jesus endured this on the cross in a suffering body and in the deep agony of His soul. At that time His thoughts were directed in love to each individual believer through the centuries and He atoned for the sins of saints who had already died in faith. Older children should be able to trace at the close of the Gospels the seven speakings of Jesus from the cross, and consider the order in which they were uttered. The cry "it is finished" before yielding His spirit shows a work completed for ever to the glory of God.

But there is also the continuing work of the Leader of our salvation. His word keeps us from thinking and doing things that are sinful, and He speaks to us in many ways such as by the Scriptures, through our parents and in the preaching of the glad tidings. We need as well to be saved from denying the Master who has bought us; and to confess the Lord's name gives the safety of a strong tower.

Especially do we need to be kept at all times in the communion of friendship with God. When a king or a queen holds what is known as an audience, those people who are called have the privilege of a

brief conversation and then leave the royal presence, probably for ever. But some highly favoured persons will be seen to remain there always. Likewise believers have a right and a welcome through the Saviour to abide in God's presence. Are you always acceptable to Him as well as accepted by Him?

J.C.Evershed