

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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LINKS WITH CHRIST

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A.J.E.W. The experience of our direct links with the Person of Christ has been in mind this past week particularly in reference to what takes place in formation in us as those direct links with Christ are experienced. The presence of the Lord is a wonderful point in the expansion of what is developed and formed spiritually in any one of us. The word of God is always a great point of increase and formation entering into our prophetic meetings and occasions of ministry, but the more extended experience both personally and in the assembly of our relation to Christ is paramount. I feel assured that the Lord would promote and deepen those relations as He is about to come. The forty days is a most interesting period to review, the time in which the Lord was here after He arose, when He was, it seems, exclusively engaged with His beloved disciples and with what would answer to divine purpose. He was not seen by the world, He did not come into any situation that would have that in mind, but the scripture shows how He pursued His connections with His beloved disciples. The endings of the gospels taken together relate to this and give a rich area of instruction, and the beginning of the Acts reminds us of the way in which the Lord was amongst His own, being seen by them during forty days. We are not given a long account of individual occasions of seeing Him; He was seen by them during forty days, as if the mark of those forty days was just that they saw Jesus. The disciples were marked off in that time as those who had seen Jesus, just as Mary is likewise marked off. It is a great matter to have that as a characteristic, that we have seen Jesus.

That would not just relate to initial experience but to the whole continuance of our course - persons who have seen Jesus. The Acts helps us too by the qualification for the twelfth apostle when reference is made to all the time in which the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day in which he was taken up, including both the days of His flesh, as we speak of them, and also the forty days, that it was needful

especially that the one appointed should be a witness with the others of His resurrection, a witness of it, and the whole line of thought there would enlarge to us the point of acquaintance with Jesus out of death. The glorious Man who met death and is out of death is perfectly, personally free to move and to act, to tarry if He please with His own without any limitation of the exact circumstance in which He might be known. I thought we should see how much ground is covered briefly. Mary has a certain shadowy apprehension as to Jesus, her heart is just yearning for Him personally, and her experience with Him, just alone as it seems, is a point from which a great deal moves out, in a certain sense the whole testimony moves out from that point because the record goes on to the time when the Lord sent out His disciples - "as the Father sent me forth, I also send you". So that a great deal of ground is covered quickly and the Spirit would impress us with that, that in this remarkable area of direct relationship to Christ there is scope for ground to be covered very quickly in view of what the Lord would wish for His own heart in view of God's great end. Her point is a simple one in the sense that the youngest and the simplest lover in Christ and submissive to Him, and having the Spirit, can touch something of what we have in this first passage. The point would be to find stimulation from the Lord Himself to seek out such experience as this at every point in our history, to get into the presence of the Lord. He loves that we should.

F.M.K. It was a wonderful service the Lord rendered to Mary, was it not? She was quickly lifted out of the atmosphere of weeping and death into a sphere of joy and life with Him.

A.J.E.W. And we have the same Lord and this wonderful service of His. He is so remarkably simple and yet so quickly fruitful, but we need perhaps to stop a little and think about it. We have often read the latter part of the passage we turned to, but I suspect there is a need to get some impression of the earlier parts to see the yearning in the heart of Mary not just for facts about Jesus but for the Person, she sought Him and her tears related to that, and as you say the Lord serves her, if I could use the expression with reverence,

with remarkable efficiency. He is brief and pointed and yet the fruit of His service is immediately and very delightfully available to Himself.

R.L. Does the touch that John gives at the beginning of this gospel help? He says "he came to his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he the right to be children of God", chap 1: 11, 12. I was thinking of the Person and our being ready to receive Him at any time.

A.J.E.W. That is very interesting because His own received Him not: that is the Jewish position, it is marked off in that sense; they received Him not, a plain and direct statement, but there were those that received Him. What a wonderful point to come to that the Lord is received! It would enter into our assembling for the Supper, that the longing is there that Jesus may come. It is a unique occasion and yet not the only one in which we may know His presence. The Supper must be kept at its own heavenly level and the uniqueness of that time must be guarded as the scripture guards it, but we can go into the presence of Jesus at any time and we would look for some manifestation of His presence in any meeting. The personal side of what the Lord is to us is, I think, something that He would strengthen especially in view of His coming.

G.A.P. She says "my Lord". Is that an indication that she had received Him, that her affections embraced Him personally?

A.J.E.W. That is very important because we see in Mary's case that the Spirit is emphasising the personal side which must exist, which must be kept current. There is much that relates to our relationships together, what we speak of as our collective relationships, both with John and with Paul, but this passage would emphasise to us that the personal side is there, and I think it right to impress upon all of us that the personal links with God's beloved Son must be kept fresh.

The link needs to be strong and frequently reverted to and the presence of Jesus sought out especially, maybe, at times of personal crisis which was the case with Mary; she had come to a time of personal crisis. The Lord resolves it remarkably quickly and

effectively, and the fact that she was cloudy - and those that have helped us in the truth have all commented on the cloudiness with Mary at first - does not disqualify her from fitting at once into the great scheme of what the Lord is doing, and filling a unique place in it - because she carried a unique message at a unique time - but it was Mary who did it.

G.A.P. Is that personal touch also seen very wonderfully when Jesus says to her "Mary"? That was a direct communication to her and to her alone.

A.J.E.W. That is the Lord has before Him the person He knows, He delights to affirm how He knows her. The way in which He just expresses her name is very suggestive that the Lord is reminding Mary of His perfect knowledge of her. She had a history with the Lord, she knew the power that had cast out seven demons, and now the point is not the seven demons but the Person who cast them out.

G.A.P. Is that the difference between His seeking us and our seeking Him? We sometimes sing 'He sought me, and He found me' (Hymn 367). He did it, I did not do it, and that reaches right into our affections, that He should seek me and find me. But is this something further, that we seek the One who did that?

A.J.E.W. I think we would need the experience of both sides, but the Lord will never fail us as we seek Him genuinely. Where the heart is simple and upright in seeking out the Lord I believe He will never fail us, but He loves to reach the point where He can disclose His own feelings about the matter, particularly of course in our collective relationships.

G.A.P. We can see, as we have been here these few moments together, the wonderful blessedness of the experience, but how can we get ourselves into the way of it?

A.J.E.W. The need of definiteness about it is clear; that is, speaking practically, get on your own and go to the Lord and speak to Him. We need to be, maybe, more spontaneous in this; and whilst having holy habits in this connection, that is times that are set apart for prayer, there may be a need for greater spontaneity just to turn to

Him at any particular moment, but the Lord loves the personal, affectionate side to enter into things. He delights in His love to furnish an answer to dire need which sometimes arises on our side; there has been much evidence of that in recent months - the acute need that comes from things the Lord has allowed. But there is the instinctive turning to the Lord, not just because of the need but the sense that He is entering into the matter that occasions the need, and that He has in mind to use the occasion to promote a link with Himself and enrich it to a point where it has never been experienced before.

R.L. He said to some earlier in John "ye will not come to me that ye might have life", chap 5: 40. He brings in life. Peter realised this - "to whom shall we go?" Does He bring in life in relation to every matter?

A.J.E.W. It is good to bring that in because life is something that is very precious to Christ, precious to God. He delights to find life appearing in us; but life is not, as those that have gone before have often reminded us, a question of doctrine but is something which stands by itself in our experience. Coming into life is that we get to the Lord. I want to make this point a very simple and direct one bearing on every one of us, that the Lord may have more opportunity to furnish the deepening, not only through discipline that we all have in different ways and different measure, but to deepen us spiritually to reach a point of appreciation of Himself and the glory of His Person, and the place and part that we have with Him in heaven.

D.J.H. Is it noticeable that she does not answer the question "Whom seekest thou"? I wondered whether He was the only object of her heart because she goes on immediately to speak of Him - "if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him". That could refer to none other because He was the sole object of her affections.

A.J.E.W. One glorious Person only was governing her mind. In these complicated days our minds get a good deal cumbered about with many details of many things, we live in demanding times in that sense, those of us particularly who have to work, but can we keep

the Lord as the single object, the point of yearning of the heart? Are we always ready for this delightful touch from Him? Are we ready to say, as Mary did, Rabboni? Beautiful rejoinder on her part: Rabboni! It is not just 'Rabbi' which is a slightly lower level of thought, more religious in its context, it is 'Rabboni' in the sense that she has found the Teacher, One who will instruct her about anything and everything. She has discovered One that she has only to seek out to find an answer to any problem. That is a wonderful discovery, and it is discovered as the link of affection with Christ is in fresh and full operation; we find we have discovered in the Lord's grace a Rabboni.

D.J.H. We sometimes sing of this desert dry and this sad, empty place (see hymn 228). This tomb was a sad, empty place for Mary and the world is such to us as He is the object of our affections.

A.J.E.W. And that wilderness experience is part of our education and it is used of God in that connection. What I believe the Lord would strengthen is the positive side of experience with Himself that is leading to the fuller apprehension of what is spiritual, and the fuller enjoyment of what is spiritual with immense consequences for enrichment in what we speak of as the service of God. The positive line of these experiences is to be noticed. The side of discipline a loving Father brings in in the perfection of His wisdom, and we recognise how much we have, through His grace, reached through discipline which we might never have reached without it. But there is the side of positive experience with Christ and in the Spirit which promotes spiritual formation with us, and Mary is very quickly in view as a person in whom in principle, at least, spiritual formation is taking place.

G.A.P. Is that why the Lord says to her immediately "Touch me not"? He wanted to introduce her immediately into that spiritual order and elevation marked by His ascension.

A.J.E.W. It seems she learns very quickly on that point. There are things that the Lord does need to tarry over or to emphasise strongly, and although that point is crucial, absolutely crucial, our links with

Christ are with Him beyond death; they are not with Him in relation to what He was down here before He died, our links with Christ relate to Him beyond death and to a whole heavenly order of things brought into view in Him in resurrection and glory. It is a crucial lesson but it is not extensively dwelt on in detail; the Lord is passing on to something else. That is a fine thing in our instruction when the Lord can pass on to something else which is fuller and richer in its bearing, showing that the learning process has been thorough. That, I believe, is manifest with Mary, the learning process is thorough, she is learning quickly. We know how Mr Taylor reproached us once that we had been slow learners (see Vol 61, p.251). Mary is learning quickly.

C.C.I. Would this enter into the Lord's quickening service? I would like to be like Mary, a learner. It says in Acts "he presented himself living", chap 1: 3. Is this the beginning of it? When He says "Mary" is that a quickening touch? And when He breathes into His disciples is that a quickening matter?

A.J.E.W. He uses her name: it is a quickening touch in the specially personal sense. This is not exactly what we get in the later verses, it is something which has Mary in view, something which is the Lord's gracious loving touch upon her as the immediate object of what He is saying and doing. You feel the need of understanding these personal relationships to Christ in which He would have us rightly with Him in view of what follows.

C.C.I. From a practical point of view it can be instantaneous.

A.J.E.W. Yes, that is it. So it is a wonderful thing to move on quickly in the presence of the Lord, and it is wonderful what He gives you. You find at first perhaps that your mind is full of other things, you have had the worries of the day maybe to attend to; but you get into the presence of the Lord and stay there a little. It may not at first be too easy to enjoy the link in any full and distinctive sense but stay in His presence and speak to Him about it and it is remarkable what He is able to effect and what He is able to open up to us; not of course the fulness of what is opened up to us in the assembly but

reaching on into what belongs to the assembly so that we can move on into the assembly and be quickly and effectively available there to fill out the whole range of heavenly thoughts that are in view in that choice vessel.

A.J.K. It would seem that, on the other side, Peter and John missed out on this because they did not wait.

A.J.E.W. Well, of course, they were two prominent men, and the Lord was very soon to use them at a critical time most distinctively; but what was happening in those men at this time the Lord knows.

We sometimes have to leave that side of things; it is a very instructive passage in that sense. Peter and John do not shine at this time but it appears that they very soon got right and that without doubt they would be present when the Lord came in amongst His brethren. So it just shows that the Lord has His inscrutably skilful way with every one of us and He would have us to understand that to make room for it. That does not set aside my responsibility in reference to my brethren or their responsibility in reference to me, but the Lord has His way and His skill.

H.A.H. I wondered if the fact that verse 11 begins with the word 'but' is not only in contrast to what Mr Knight draws attention to but showed that Mary's exercise (which from verse 1 shows that she had nothing else before her that morning) was not yet completed.

A.J.E.W. Exactly, and you would like to feel that there is the 'but' in our histories in this positive sense that she has; it seems that she has a distinctive impression to wait and she does wait, and she comes into a great deal on the principle of waiting.

F.G.M. Do you think that we each need to get this personal touch, maybe through a crisis, so that we can enjoy what there is collectively?

A.J.E.W. So it quickly moves on to what is collective and the Lord sends her on, you might say, in advance and gives her an opportunity of getting among the disciples with something that actively concerns Himself. It must have been a wonderful experience for Mary to come among the disciples and deliver this

message, and it must have been a wonderful experience for them to have received Mary and to have received the message. I do not want to be fanciful but it is clear that an element of experience of the most distinct kind would enter into that.

G.A.P. Was it a spiritual apprehension of Mary's, as getting the direction "go to my brethren", that she goes to the disciples? She would have understood on a spiritual level what the Lord Jesus had in His mind as to where she was to go.

A.J.E.W. It is a very striking thing because the Lord had not much spoken about His disciples as brethren, but she knew to whom He referred. He is viewing His disciples on new ground now; they stand in this relation to Him as out of death, the whole matter of redemption complete. There is a relation now of a positive kind which the Lord can name, they are not just persons having to do with Him, they are persons in relationship to Christ. That is a great point to stabilise us in our experience, that we are no less than brethren of Christ. It is not that they claim anything, He delights to own them, as if the Lord would impart a lustre to all these relations in which love would hold us and give us to tarry in them and rightly enjoy them but come under the formative power of the presence and touch of Jesus. The Lord has skilful ways of bringing about a work of formation in His saints, but this is remarkably positive one, to get into His presence; and He has something to say to you and something to give by way of impression by the Spirit, and it affects us and brings about something that is formed in the person.

E.C.M. She would never be deprived of Him again in the link she had now spiritually with Him. Is that not important?

A.J.E.W. Quite so. It must have been a wonderful thing for Mary to be kept in the sense of that as the Lord went into heaven and as the Spirit came, because the Spirit having come and taken up His place in us in the house there is the immediateness of our link with Christ up there in mind; there is no question of His position up there involving distance from us. The Spirit is able in the marvel of His service to bring us into immediate relation to Christ so that we speak

to Him simply. It might even be a cry of sudden need but we speak to the Lord, and the Spirit brings us into the sense that our relation is with Christ. Wonderful thing! is it not?

E.C.M. And that is a wholly spiritual relationship here. Paul said "but if even we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know him thus no longer", 2 Cor 5: 16. Is it a question of how we know Him now?

A.J.E.W. That is right. There were those who knew Him after the flesh. We have spoken of two of them in the Acts who were brought forward in view of the twelfth apostle; they had had to be with them all the time from the baptism of John till the time of His taking up. But now the important thing is that they do not know Him after the flesh as in the days of His flesh but they know Him beyond death.

E.C.M. You referred to the forty days in which the Lord Jesus came in and went out among them; Paul saw the Lord; he says "have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" 1 Cor 9: 1.

A.J.E.W. There are two sides, what a soul may seek out in relations with Him and what He in His own place is carrying forward for the divine pleasure. The two fit together perfectly in Mary's history, and they will fit together perfectly in our history. But you feel that the Lord comes into our collective relationships as leading on in various respects to help us forward and to sustain us in the service of praise, taking His place as Minister of the sanctuary. So you have the two sides, the urgent desire with us to seek, yea and to find His presence, but then the blessedness of those relationships in which He personally in glory is prominent as leading the saints on in reference to what is for God's pleasure.

R.L. Does not God bring out His own feelings in this way early on? In Exodus 19 He says "I have borne you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself" (v 4). The deliverance and the work in them was in view of being brought personally to Himself in relation to His pleasure. The Lord's own desires in that way would affect us.

A.J.E.W. It is to widen our horizons to embrace the fullest thoughts of divine purpose, fruit for God. You feel that the Lord is doing that.

It may be that some of us have been sluggish but the Lord is active to widen our view that we may see the majesty of His Person in reference to the whole extent of the divine pleasure, and come into some experience and appreciation of that. I feel the Lord is pressing upon us, in our links of affection with Him, what He is personally, and the way in which we are to appreciate Him in the glory of His manhood, while still holding in our minds and affections who He is. The way in which the truth is opened out, the mind of God opened out, the divine feelings opened out in the Person of Jesus relates to the glory of His manhood, and how we may learn things from Him, speaking reverently, because He has taken a place and retains a place in manhood so that we can learn from Him in the most direct sense. It is not just a question of an address or a setting forth of the truth in word; the fact that He is in manhood involves that we can learn from Him though He ever remains who He is in the glory of His Person. That is wonderful grace!

A.J.K. Did those two on the way to Emmaus have an experience which brought them back? They were not told to come back but they came back to the collective side of things.

A.J.E.W. That whole long chapter is very instructive in what we are saying. It is another of the sections of Scripture that deals with the forty days, and we see there how a situation which, from the human view could quickly disintegrate, is brought into oneness in the service of Christ. Those two were going away; why did they go? Scripture does not say, there is no cause given why they went. Sometimes we take turns in our lives which have no plain purpose related to the divine interest, and yet of course the Lord would, in His grace, bring those two back, and He brought them back. Things began to happen when He brought them back; and although the rest of the disciples maybe were not just too clear, the Lord Himself comes in and makes everything clear in the wonderful expression of His grace. I suppose John's account of what took place in the forty days would relate more to what is normal experience, whereas Luke's account deals in a sense with conditions in which a certain

cloudiness and doubt and uncertainty have come in. The Lord is able for both.

F.M.K. The Lord's own words here, "I ascend", were a help to Mary. Had those two going to Emmaus lost sight of that?

A.J.E.W. How we need to keep it in mind and not, as you say, lose sight of it, because the Lord is embarking on the greatest matters, and after this disclosure of Himself He sends them forth, and breathed into them. "He breathed into them, and says to them, Receive the Holy Spirit": a remarkable pattern, as it has been spoken of. The Lord would impress us that the way in which the Spirit was on Him is the same Spirit in the power of which we go forth - one of the most affecting features of the Spirit's activity.

D.A.B. Does it help to refer to a verse in Acts 4 where the council recognise Peter and John that they had been with Jesus? I was wondering whether there was a correspondence with Moses, that the frequenting of the presence of God had caused a certain glory to shine out in him.

A.J.E.W. I am sure that is right, and it would develop in the right and spiritual sense what has sometimes been spoken of as personality; so that the saints are persons of dignity characteristically but every brother and sister is different, the adorning effect of the work of God is seen in different ways in each. We have had instruction from time to time on spiritual personality, and what you are speaking of would develop that personality; and if there is personality spiritually in a person it is for the divine pleasure, it is not to mark off that person before men.

G.A.P. Does not the glorious aggregate of this experience shine in the assembly?

A.J.E.W. I am sure that is important. The time seems to run on quickly when we speak of these precious things but your word aggregate is a very useful word because you can look around this room and think of the aggregate of what there is precious to Christ in a company like this with all the immense variety of experience which is represented in persons old and young. It is one of the most

stimulating things in reference to serving the saints in the ministry of the truth to think of the wealth there is in the aggregate of the company and the way in which the Lord can increase that through the experiences of every one severally.

G.A.P. Does the experience with Himself yield what is like Himself? It is all-glorious.

A.J.E.W. That is why I ventured the comment on His abiding in glorious manhood, that the features that appear are like Himself. By being like Himself it relates to what He is as Man; there are features which, being men, we can understand brought out in their perfection in Jesus, shining gloriously and affecting us.

Now we should just have a few moments on the second scripture to call attention to the fact that the main purpose of that chapter is to refer to ministry and the quality of ministry which Paul and his companions stood for. It is not Paul only, as an apostle; he says "not that we are competent of ourselves", that is he links his companions with him, "but our competency is of God; who has also made us competent, as ministers of the new covenant". It is a kind of ministry that is up-building in its bearing and leads to the uniqueness of experience which is recorded at the end of the chapter where the Lord personally comes into prominence and where there is a change brought about among the saints; "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit". That is there is an effect; it would be hard maybe to define the effect save its essential character, that it is from glory to glory. It is not an effect which is brought out by contrast but rather by the principle of accession; that is, there is something greater brought about. From whatever point we have reached the presentation of the Person of Christ He is able to bring about something greater - from glory to glory.

C.C.I. You spoke earlier of the formation that was with Mary. Is this transformation connected with that idea?

A.J.E.W. Yes, it is the glorious side of it; that is, the saints take on what is spoken of as glory. We may not be able to limit it, or to define it any more closely, but it is glorious and you see the saints as bearers of glory, and increasing in that connection as they are beholding the glory of the Lord. You feel how normal this is, that the saints should become greater in this sense as having to do with Christ; but there is no other way proposed for this-from glory to glory than by beholding the glory of the Lord.

C.C.I. Would you think it very important to keep to objective ministry as there is a subjective result as this matter is carried forward in ministry?

A.J.E.W. That is why I turned to this chapter because the early part of it is to emphasise the quality and character of Pauline ministry, that there are new covenant ministers. They are bringing to bear the full efficacy of the work of Christ and all that has issued from it for the pleasure of God, in view of those persons being instructed and secured, formed according to God to find their place in this remarkable realm, this transformation.

G.A.P. Is the receiving of the Holy Spirit vital to what you are saying? Would it involve our giving full scope to Him in view of apprehending the ministry that comes in His power?

A.J.E.W. Exactly. You feel that the Spirit has a delightful way, in inditing the Scriptures, of keeping His out-of-sight place, and yet many scriptures there are that clearly pre-suppose the indwelling of the Spirit and some knowledge of Himself, and that would be clear in these Corinthian letters. The gift and indwelling of the Spirit are pre-supposed in very much of the teaching and this is certainly part of it.

E.C.M. Is that confirmed in chapter 4? "Therefore, having this ministry", and then "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassingness of the power may be of God" (v 7).

A.J.E.W. Quite so. So the surpassingness of the power just bows the heart. You are made to realise all that God is working out in this positive and fruitful sense; that His power is operating and

the surpassingness of it to bring about an answer which befits His own glorious thoughts.

MAIDSTONE

28 August 1976

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LINKS WITH THE SPIRIT

A.J.E.Welch

Acts 7: 54 -60; 13: 8-10; Revelation 1: 10,11

I want to refer especially to the Holy Spirit to bring out the distinctive time in which our part is in the testimony, and the leading thought is to point out that God's great thought for men is that they should move in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is not just a question of the Spirit being received but of the Spirit having full and unhindered place in every one; and in the sense of what I have mentioned we see that God's greatest thoughts for man are being brought out into expression in this present time. The time in which the power of evil is still to be met, the time in which the greatness of what God has reached in His saints, in the assembly, is brought out in the precious fact that the powers of evil are met, as this history in the Acts would show, and as we could humbly say more recent history would likewise show. The great root of the whole matter, on our side anyway, lies in the fact that there are men who move in the Spirit, and I speak of Stephen and of Paul and of John, men who were signally marked off as used of the Spirit of God to further God's dispensation which is in faith. It is a great point for meetings such as these that they further the dispensation, that something is effected, something remains with all of us which goes through, in the sense of what is formed of God, into eternity, and this involves in the most intimate sense the presence and service of the Spirit, and it involves the place that He has with every one of us.

Stephen appears very soon after this time of the Spirit began, and his service as it is recorded is very brief. He was not a man who was marked off previously in the time when the Lord was here; he comes to light as bearing this very feature that he was full of the Holy Spirit. Chapter 6 records it of him very significantly: "they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit" (v 5) and then others. He comes under our notice very briefly; the time of his service was not extended but he really represents in one man the whole spirit

and character of this time in which we are, showing how quickly, through the Spirit, God can so affect a man that he can set forth something distinctive in that person. God is able for that. What a comfort it is, when oppressive circumstances come, to reflect each of us severally that God will bring out in those circumstances something in me that commands the approval of heaven and renders testimony to man. That is what happened with Stephen, and it is to show what the Spirit of God is able for in each one of us, and He will bring out, I believe, in these closing moments, even when those available to Him may seem to be few, the distinctiveness of how the Spirit Himself is able to bring out the greatest thoughts of God in men. So Stephen is before us here under intense pressure and eventually, as we know, martyrdom. He retains his composure, he speaks clearly and definitely, and the key to the whole situation is what is said of him again: "being full of the Holy Spirit". Here is a man now that God has brought into great matters and the way in which he pursues those matters and is in them becomes a distinctive mark of what God is able to do in a man. How attractive this is, dear brethren! From a human view-point this scene was a disaster; our human minds would say 'think of a man like Stephen being lost to the testimony'; but the One who is in charge of the testimony is perfectly able to conduct His testimony in the way that becomes Himself. Let us remember that, beloved brethren. We are in the hands of God in all these matters; His way is not our way. To secure large numbers in a certain outward prominence is something that God has shown not to be His way; but the thought stands, and is to appeal affectingly to us, of what the Spirit of God can bring out if necessary in one person distinctively. So Stephen is remarkably presented to us. Where were the other disciples? There were other disciples; where were they? The Spirit of God gives us no clue as to what the apostles were doing or what the other disciples were doing at this critical time. He brings to a focus the case of Stephen and intimates that He has something to bring out in Stephen, and when we review the remarkable address that Stephen gave to the rulers, and see how he dwells on Abraham and Joseph and Moses and David, we begin to get a clue as to what the Spirit of God is at in this

section, singling out those distinctive men in the course of the earlier history of God's testimony in Israel - Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David. Those four men are specially presented to us in Stephen's address as if he by the Spirit picks out from the earlier history these outstanding persons in whom God has brought out so much that is distinctive to Himself, not of course in the time of the Spirit, but persons in whom nevertheless God wrought according to the dispensation in which they were and in which they shone. How Abraham shone! How Joseph shone! How Moses shone! How David shone! Each of those men was in personality and power with God and distinctive in power in the testimony. As we review these things does it not make us long to be in the current of the Spirit so that God can bring out something distinctive in us and adorn the assembly with persons that are moving characteristically in the power and the distinctness of the Spirit's movements? That is to become very attractive to us, peculiarly so. Now Stephen having delivered himself of that remarkable word, having shone in the testimony in the presence of these men who stood against him, he is retaining his composure, he is in the midst of suffering, he is the objective of man's hatred on a large scale, and he fixed his eyes on heaven - "having fixed his eyes on heaven". That is the mark of a man who is moving in the Spirit to fix the eyes on the whole point from which everything originates for those of us who love God. He is not fixing his eyes on those who are casting the stones, he is not fixing his eyes on the high priest or those who serve with him, he fixed his eyes on heaven. That is his action, yet in what power was this his action. He was a man filled with the Spirit and it was in the power of the Spirit that he fixed his eyes on heaven. How steadying such an experience is, to fix the eyes on heaven, find that heaven is determining things; even when the power of man seems to be at its height heaven is determining things. He fixes his eyes on heaven and he sees Jesus. We are told twice what he sees, the Spirit gives us an account of it and then he gives us an account of it, but in both cases what is emphasised is that He is at the right hand of God; that is to say, Stephen is in touch with the point of power; whatever men may say, whatever men may do, Stephen is in direct touch with the

point of power, and here is a man full of the Holy Spirit equal to the whole situation bearing upon him and bearing upon man. What does he bring out? The spirit and character of Jesus. Even in his dying how like Jesus he is; we have often commented on that but it is vital in respect of what we are saying. What kind of manhood is the Spirit bringing out in men as He uses them? The Manhood of Jesus. Even in his suffering and being slain this man in perfect composure, sustained manifestly in the Spirit's power, is bringing out what found its perfect expression in the manhood of Jesus. "He cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge". The details are all of deep interest but I read this section to bring out the great point of what the Spirit puts into a man, and how here we have a man relatively briefly in the course of the testimony but bringing out in himself its finest features. I believe in a certain sense God is working out matters similarly at the present time. We find that persons recovered come quickly and powerfully into the course of things that God is supporting; it is a mark of this present time. God is showing us what He can do through the Spirit. But I seek to call attention to the Spirit as the power by which all is carried through for Him self.

Now chapter 13 is a very great chapter in relation to Paul. Paul and Barnabas had been sent out from Antioch. It was a remarkable time in assembly history, a time when the assembly was taking character in its local relations at Antioch, a time when Paul was being raised up for the distinctiveness of the service that he rendered as an apostle, a time as we have sometimes noted in which Paul is said to have a company - "Paul and his company" (v 13). It is a peculiarly Pauline chapter preparing us for the heavenly course of ministry which Paul rendered. Then an attack comes; Elymas the magician opposed them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith. It is at the most promising points of history that the attack comes. It is just one man, a profane man manifestly, that is launching an attack that would cut at the root of all that the Spirit of God is doing; but Paul meets it - "filled with the Holy Spirit, fixing his eyes upon him, said, O full of all deceit and all craft" -

clearly discerning the enemy's power and the character of its operation and meeting it. God came in to meet it of course in His own power, but Paul is the instrument that He uses to bring power to bear on this man that would stand athwart the whole course of the testimony of God. So it speaks of Paul as filled with the Holy Spirit.

How the Spirit of God is before us afresh in this instance, and in other instances in the Acts where certain ones are said to be full or filled with the Spirit, seven instances I believe; the dear young people can follow them up and find them. Well, we have to ask ourselves what instances are there of something like this today? I have no question but that the Spirit is in powerful operation. I have no question that the Spirit of God has those that He can distinctively use. In that sense we look for great things to take place, not things that are outwardly manifest to men in general but things which are understood in their place in the testimony to those who stand in it.

Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit. I bring it in not to dwell upon it at length, because so much might be said as to Paul and the Spirit, but here he is meeting the opposition that attacks at the most critical time as his ministry is beginning to come into expression, not only in the utterance of it but in the fruits of it. It is this that the enemy is bent against, not only the expression of the truth but the answer to it; and hence Paul deals we might say very summarily with this man. Given wisdom of God, no doubt, as to how to meet the opposition, but the opposition is met and the testimony goes on. What is it that meets the opposition? A man filled with the Spirit so that the testimony moves forward. There is to be something akin to this, dear brethren, at the present time when things appear which would stand athwart the course of the testimony. The answer lies in a man or in men who come in in the manifest full power of the Spirit to meet the situation. Is there such a man? We have to raise these challenges. Each of us has to say for himself, Am I such a person? This is not without its bearing on the sisterhood in the sense in which the Spirit has free course among the saints, but especially on responsible persons. I would say to such affectionately, Is there such a thing as being so in the Spirit's power that there is capacity to meet the opposition that the testimony unhindered and increasing in

wealth and power may go forward to its glorious conclusion? There is a great challenge in that at the present time.

John is not exactly said to be full of the Spirit but he records an experience which he is able himself to describe: "I became in the Spirit on the Lord's day". I need not say how much was unfolded to John in consequence of this, how the whole termination of everything, as to an understanding of it, is entrusted to John as Christ's bondman, for the sake of His bondmen to whom He would entrust what His mind is. It is wonderful to realise that amidst all the darkness and confusion of man's world at the present time the mind of God stands in all its perfection. This book shows us what it is and how it proceeds. It is a uniquely stabilising book of scripture at a time such as the present when everything in men's affairs seems to be riddled in confusion; read this book and you get the sense there is One on the throne who is holding everything. There is One on the throne whose will is prevailing in every circumstance, there is One on the throne nevertheless in whom grace is shining out and securing its fruit so distinctive in view of eternity. There is One on the throne who is securing, to answer to Himself, a vessel which comes down at the close in the character of a city having the glory of God. John sees that and is given an understanding of all these things. What an unfolding! You marvel at the detail in which John can record it and yet you have to say it is the Spirit in that man. You see how John, unique in his nearness to Christ as He was here, having his place in the bosom of Jesus, is unique likewise in his relations with the Spirit. He says "I became in the Spirit on the Lord's day". Now that is a challenge to us too, both as to the fact of his becoming in the Spirit and the time when he became in the Spirit. Do we know what it is to be abstracted from things here and in the power of the Spirit be engaged with what is of God essentially? Are we ready to be carried through a sequence of figurative events which bring out divine supremacy? Are we ready to enter sympathetically and in affectionate feeling into what God is doing right down through the course of His dealings with men to secure a rich result? What do these things mean to us? We may say, Who is equal to them? Who

can read and understand this book in the amazing detail which marks many of the visions which John sees? The Spirit is able. It is not exactly said that John was full of the Spirit; it refers to his position in relation to the Spirit from his side: "I became in the Spirit on the Lord's day". He records an experience; and what is our experience, dear brethren, of the blessed Spirit and His power? We would be very cautious to use exactly the words that John uses, but can we be abstracted in the power of the Spirit from the course of things here, sometimes relatively trivial things, and become engaged with what is essentially of God? What a portion! It is very extensive in its bearing, touching the local assemblies and the place that the Lord has in them, reaching on to the ultimate triumph of God over every power of evil, reaching on to the glorious victory and manifest answer to God Himself in the city as it comes down; but all these things are to be opened up to us in the Spirit. So how richly equipped we are, beloved brethren, in this time of the Spirit. How wonderful it is to see men moving, acting, speaking in the Spirit's power, bringing out as they do so the greatest of divine thoughts, showing to us that the great thought of God for man, in view of His reaching His end in man, is by the gift of the Spirit, and bringing out that the holding, the cherishing of all that God is carrying through for Himself rests in the hands of the Spirit and in those who know what it is to be 'in the Spirit' and to come into the present course of His mind. May our links with the Spirit, dear brethren, be strengthened, may our appreciation of the Spirit be enriched, and something fresh that answers to Himself be found in every local assembly as the Spirit has a place that He would seek in these closing moments, for His Name's sake.

MAIDSTONE

28 August 1976

WHAT IS YOUR OCCUPATION?

J.C.Evershed

Genesis 47: 2, 3 to "occupation"; Psalm 45: 1

We have spoken, dear brethren, of the ministry bringing a challenge. So I have read these verses in the book of Genesis to bring forward this further challenge - as to what our occupation is; that is, of course, what is the objective that we have in view in all that we are doing? Then from the reading of the verse in Psalm 45 you will understand that it is not exactly to engage our thoughts with ourselves but rather to promote the necessary self-searching and help that we need in order to have an enlarged, richer and ready knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

Joseph had brought five men of his brethren here before Pharaoh. They represented the whole of his brethren, so that I think it is right to say that all of us here are now before God in a definite way; we have been brought here; we have been called and assembled together. The question that Pharaoh asked was "What is your occupation?". It seems as if it was his regular question, because Joseph had already warned his brethren that Pharaoh would ask it. So it seems that we can take it to ourselves that it is a regular question that God would raise with us. When we come to the older persons like Jacob the regular question seemed to be "How many are the days of the years of thy life?" (Gen 47: 8); as much as to say, You have had plenty of days: what about them? I thought it was as if He would say to me, What have you to show for your twenty-five and a half thousand or so days? But whatever we can say or show, we can say with Jacob, "the God that shepherded me all my life", Gen 48: 15. But then to all of us He would say "What is your occupation?". We do not know whether Pharaoh spoke individually to Joseph's brethren but they answered quite rightly that their occupation was that of shepherds; in other words, they were accustomed to be engaged in their father's work. Their fathers had done the same thing and they had done what their fathers had been

doing, and that, as we know, was one of the oldest occupations in the world. The two oldest occupations in the world are husbandry and shepherding, and I think that they would largely represent to us what the Father's business is. As we know, the Father is engaged in planting. I would like the young people who know the Lord and have the Spirit to realise that they are plants of the Father's planting. We are all that, and are sheep of the Father's tending too. The Lord Jesus cared for the sheep, He took them as His own, but they were given to Him of His Father. These men answered rightly when they said they were engaged in what their fathers had done, and evidently Pharaoh was satisfied.

But then shepherding, important as it is (and we have often been reminded how necessary it is to shepherd the young ones - although young ones can take part in shepherding the older ones, as David and Joseph in their 'teens) is only one occupation of many. There are others which are equally essential, and I think one of the most important is road-mending. It is one of the first mentioned in the New Testament, and the only quotation from the Old Testament which is brought in by each one of the evangelists is "Make... a highway for our God!", Isa 40: 3. Now are we in the occupation of making a highway for our God? It was John the baptist's ministry, we say, and it certainly was. Another thing we might say is that it is the kind of work they give to convicts to do. But if a convict could make a good road, what kind of a road, do you think, would a pardoned convict make? And that, dear brethren, is what we are. We are forgiven convicts, not escaped convicts. We have escaped certain things: "the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet 1: 4); but then we are convicts set free because there is no conviction outstanding against us. An expression that I very much enjoy is this: "The Lord's freedman", 1 Cor 7 : 22.

Well, in this occupation we need to have the objective in view. The great point, as I said, is that a highway should be made for our God. Perhaps you say, He can make His own way; and He can and does, but think of the privilege of making a moral way suitable for God to move in in what He is doing in the testimony now, at this very

time. Luke gives information as to how to do it. We may not understand much about it, but he tells us that the first thing is to fill up all the low places. Are there some deficiencies we find in our souls, our souls' history? Well, those things have to be filled up. Are there any hills or mountainous places that have to be brought down, ambitions or anything of that kind? They have to be made level. Are there any crooked places? Oh, we find those, do we not? He says, Make them straight then. If there are rough places - I suppose we would have to acknowledge that too - he says, Well, make them smooth then. (See Luke 3: 5). How is all this to be done? It is by the activity of the Holy Spirit and by our setting our minds to what is the objective in view, that there might be a suitable way for God to move in us and amongst us. The highways are in the heart as the psalmist says: "They in whose heart are the highways", Ps 84: 5.

I think all this has a good deal to do with dealing with evil, which is a matter that comes our way. The fact that Paul was able to shake the viper off his hand shows that there is a way in which a certain completeness of dealing with evil can be obtained. It may sound a lot to say that, but the Lord said "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out" and so on, Matt 18: 9. He said in effect, Be urgent about that matter. If there is an offence, have done with it, and have done with it absolutely. I am convinced dear brethren that what we speak of as a mixed condition in ourselves would become very much less mixed if we were to take that more seriously and deal with things in a definite way. Isaac was able to get out of the region of the Philistines by digging the wells; by continuing to make way for the Spirit he was able to out-distance them. How fine it is to be able to get out of the way of the Philistines! Also one of the writers says "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas 4: 7) and we are glad to take that up as a word of Scripture, but always remember what comes on either side of it. On one side it says "Subject yourselves therefore to God", on the other "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you". So that the scripture gives us ample means of dealing with evil in order that we might be able to have this highway for our God.

Another occupation which would probably sound more congenial is fruit-growing. I used to wish, when I was in an office, that I could be a fruit-grower instead; then I discovered that I could work in an office and grow fruit. In fact, I found that I could grow fruit and work in an office. You can grow fruit in a school, or a kitchen, and you do not need a garden for it. You do not even need a flowerpot, but you do need an earthen vessel, and there is no better earthen vessel than the only one you have, the one that God has given you. It may be rheumaticky or one where the nerves seem to vanish when you most need them; nevertheless God has placed His treasure in earthen vessels and it is in view that there should be fruit for Him. We should enjoy it ourselves, I have no doubt, but the point is that there should be fruit for Him. And the Scripture again tells us just how to do it; page 1291 of this handbook tells us exactly. The Lord Jesus said "He that abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit", John 15: 5. Can you think of a happier or a simpler way of being pleasurable to God than abiding in Jesus and His abiding in us? It sounds almost too simple to be true, does it not? Of course, the Father's discipline comes in as well where needed in order that there should be more fruit, so that the whole system is one that gradually increases, not that withers and dies away. I have often thought of the scripture in Deuteronomy where the man has to come with a basket of first-fruits. We each have a basket; it is the same thing as the earthen vessel. He comes and sets down his basket with his first-fruits before Jehovah, and he worships; as we know, it is the only mention of worship in the whole book of Deuteronomy, which speaks of our relations with God. We are not looking at our basket exactly and saying, Well I have a wonderful display of fruit here; we are thinking of the greatness of God, and that is what we need to have more in our souls. But I think, from His point of view, there would be two important things there: one would be His appreciation, another His scrutiny. He would say, as it were, in looking into your basket, I can see the fruits of repentance; I am very glad to see that. I can see in your basket that my discipline has had an effect upon you and you have borne the peaceable fruits of righteousness. But then He might also have to say, On looking

through your fruits I do not see all the varieties of the fruit of the Spirit; there ought to be nine there, but I do not see them all. He would surely be able to see the first three, love and joy and peace (see Gal 5: 22). There is nothing, I suppose, without those. But He might say, There is a very poor specimen of self-control, or, a very poor specimen of kindness. He might even have to say that one variety was missing altogether. I believe we need to think of these things, that what God looks for is fulness, and He gives the increase. It is not by effort that fruit is produced. Certain cultural matters are necessary, and the Scripture helps us as to those, but what is produced is produced by the power and operations mightily within the believer of the Holy Spirit, in order that there might be fruit for God.

Well, another occupation is trading - I mention these things to show that Christianity is a full-time matter, and all these occupations are to go on at once. The Lord said "Trade while I am coming", Luke 19: 13. Have you thought much about that - trading? Perhaps you say, I am not a business man, I shall not be able to make any profit.

I will give you a little encouragement. In the parables where people were given money, everybody who did something gained something. The only one who did not gain was the man who did nothing with what he had, and he even lost that. So that is an encouragement that we should trade with what has been given to us. We have often been reminded of simple instances of trade amongst believers, the exchange of impressions of the Lord Jesus. As someone has said, if two persons exchange a dollar, all they have is a dollar left, but if they exchange impressions of Christ each has two and so it goes on increasing, and that is the way profit is made.

A brother was telling us recently of those mentioned in Romans 16, as those who had made profit with what they had been given.

They had supported the work of the Lord; one had done one thing, another something else, and there they were presented as persons who had made profit in their trading. But here again the Scripture gives us instruction as to how to trade. Take piety: if you want to make profit in divine things there is nothing like piety, because the

Scripture says that "piety is profitable for everything", 1 Tim 4: 8.

Bodily exercise and the things we need for our bodies are all good in their place, but "piety is profitable for everything". Therefore, if I might put it in a simple way, you cannot go wrong. Piety, being a matter of bringing God into our circumstances, is not only to be applied when they are disagreeable or uncomfortable, but there is the vital necessity of bringing God into our circumstances when they are prosperous; otherwise we might find that the enemy could make us independent, and then we should gradually decline into worse things. But then, if you want to make piety doubly profitable, mix it up with contentment, because the scripture says that it is then *great* gain. Therefore, when you come with your mina you will be able to say your mina has gained a large amount because "piety with contentment is great gain", 1 Tim 6: 6. Well, these things are simple but they are essential. In a way they lie at the very threshold of Christian life; yet at the same time they penetrate and are in the whole texture and structure of Christian life, in order that when the Lord comes we may be able to say, 'Now, there is something for *Thee*, Lord;' not just what I have done but, '*Thy* mina has gained so much'.

Now, there is another occupation that we ought to be engaged in, and that is athletics. Paul was engaged in it. He speaks of quite a number of instances of it, not only the foot-race, but he speaks of wrestling and of boxing. He even had to deal with his flesh, not as one might shadow-box or fight the air, but what he was doing was a serious thing with him. Not that our bodies need to be pummelled or anything like that, but it is that the workings of flesh within us, and our own wills, need to be taken in hand in a very real and definite way. Paul, as we know, spoke in a very drastic way of how he dealt with the principle of flesh in himself. He spoke of wrestling; wrestling with sin. That may, perhaps, not be a normal thing with a believer, but nevertheless we have all kinds and classes amongst us and we go through various experiences and it may be that some wrestle with sin. I suppose the man in Romans 7, as we call him, was wrestling against sin. He found the principle of it in him, but found release and

got the upper hand when he discovered that the Lord Jesus was on his side, and he said "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord", Rom 7: 25. Paul was running, too. Are we running? I remember reading that in the ancient games you could not even put your name down unless you could prove that you had trained solidly for two years. I think that is a point for us, not that we need to leave things for two years or anything like that, but it shows the importance of practice, or if I might put it in another way, of habit; there are those who through habit have gained a moral stature and are able to assimilate strong meat (see Heb 5: 14). Well, Paul was running, nothing was hindering him. I was much struck once when in the course of business I had to go in 1948 to one of the Olympic games villages. I got into conversation with an East European who knew some English and I said 'I suppose you have to be very careful, do you not?' 'Oh, yes' he said, 'I would not even speak to you if you had been smoking'. I thought, Yes, you have a scripture for that: "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh", Jude 23. And that man was so keen, that anything that would have the slightest deleterious effect upon him he would not indulge in but would avoid. Paul was like that, but it was not only that he was avoiding certain things. That is one feature. But he says as it were, 'When I am running I am always looking off to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, the One who has been in the path before me. He has been in it perfectly but He has met every obstacle that I have to meet'. Others have done the same too in measure and there is a great cloud of witnesses, but nevertheless he says "Looking stedfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith", Heb 12: 2. So that these things will not occupy us with ourselves. While we see the importance of all these activities, the object of them is always outside of ourselves. If it is trading, we are thinking of profit for the Lord when He comes. If it is running, then we are looking at Him where He is, having passed through and sympathising with us in all that we pass through.

I read that verse in the psalm because as the note reads, 'I say what is my occupation touching the king'. What he had busied himself in, his occupation, had been leading and tending always to

an appreciation, and a fresh, vivid, accumulated impression of the One who was the supreme object of his heart. We have spoken of affections. Does the Lord command our affections? We would, of course, say, Yes, He should do. But then we can stimulate ourselves as to the measure of it so that our occupation leads us to a deeper knowledge and understanding of the glories of Christ. This psalm is very full, as the heading shows. It is not only one of the fifty-five instruments in the hands of the chief Musician; and it is a great thing in itself that He has a variety of instruments upon which He can call.

He is not only the chief Musician in the sense that He conducts what is being done or played, but He has to do with the tuning of the instruments as well, and that is a most important matter. A musician, I am told, will never take up an instrument just as he left it before, and that is one reason why we have our discipline. It is the Father's discipline but the Lord is in it. The Lord comes to us in it and it is in order that there might be greater, better suitability to our taking part in this great praise system of which He is the leader, the Minister of the sanctuary and the Leader of the praises. Other features of the heading I need not go into; they have their importance but what I had in my mind was that the psalmist's heart was welling forth with a good matter. What a good thing it is if that is so with us! As Mr Coates has said, Do we realise that it is possible for us to say something about Jesus in a way that has never been said since Pentecost? And this man had something fresh to bring forward, and his tongue was the pen of a ready writer; not a hasty writer but a ready writer. And that is a feature that we need, dear brethren, in our occasions of gathering and in all matters, that there should be readiness with us to bring in what is of Christ, and what is harmonious with what He is doing, in order that it might exalt Him.

One might have read the rest of this psalm, wonderful as it is, but as we read it we can see that the writer's impressions are full of wealth, freshness and vigour; they extend right down to the time when Jesus will come in and take up His rights here, His glory being seen and known of all men and the assembly will be known as with Him.

All that God has been doing and is doing in this time will come out into display, and the psalmist is saying, I have all that in my heart

and it is just welling forth with a good matter, all centred round the person of the King, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ. May He bless the word, for His Name's sake.

LONDON

19 February 1977

THE CHILDREN'S PATHWAY

Scripture always looks for what is good and also shows how it is brought about. Thus the book of Proverbs tells us that even a child is known by what he does, whether it be pure and right - not whether it be good or bad! The same book also says that a child trained up in the way he should go will not depart from it when older. The colt-foal of an ass on which the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem was too valuable to its owners to be allowed to wander. It was therefore tied as near to the house as possible and was thus ready for the Master's use.

There is always a right way for the Christian, young or old, and where there is faith it gradually becomes clear like a country path on a misty day. Some children may have been into what is called a 'maze' where the only way out is impossible to find by looking down or around. But on looking up we discover a guide who can see all the paths with all the people in them, and who will direct us if we keep looking to him. Thus it is that our Father who is in the heavens has promised to guide us with His eye upon us.

On a stretch of road near Land's End a traveller loses and regains sight of a church nine times. The traveller's way is up and down but the building itself never moves and each view of it brings it nearer, revealing something new about it. But on the road of life the believer is able by the Holy Spirit to look stedfastly on Jesus - and each day's run makes Him greater in his eyes, giving a fresh view of His glory.

The way of a ship in the midst of the sea was one of the few things too hard for the wise man to understand. The Christian on the voyage of life, however, steers by a kind of 'compass' which is always attracted to the Person of his Saviour. He must, like a mariner at sea, be very careful that other things do not prevent his 'compass' from pointing true. A sailor also knows his way at sea by the position of the sun in the heavens. But whereas he cannot always see the sun, there is never any reason why the believer

should not see Jesus crowned with glory and honour. Are you one of the many who do this?

J.C.Evershed