

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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SACRIFICE - FELLOWSHIP AND THE FAMILY

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W.D. I thought we should look at what is sacrificial as bearing on our Christian associations, firstly in regard to the fellowship, then in regard to our family life, and then as to unity in our local relations.

With regard to 1 Corinthians 10 we should be affected by the way in which the apostle approaches this matter. He says, "Wherefore, my beloved..."; it is a unique expression in Corinthians: "my beloved". It seems that in approaching this matter the apostle was touched in his affections, that the beloved saints there should understand that the fellowship which they had been brought into was sacrificial: he refers to the blood and the body of Christ.

J.R. This has been referred to as the fellowship of the death of Christ and would have its bearing upon us as believers, would it not?

W.D. Yes. This matter of fellowship is important and we want to approach it as sensitive to the implications that it brings up, having our affections engaged so that we bring to bear upon the matter some moral power and weight.

D.L.S. We might sometimes insist on the terms of the fellowship but the apostle is seeking to draw the saints affectionately in their movements in regard of it.

W.D. Yes. These chapters are governed by the authority of the Lord, His commandment, His rights in that way; and yet ministerially in it - and I trust that we can catch something of his spirit - Paul seeks to carry the brethren with him in that affectionate way, that the truth might carry them.

R.S.R. So that love is the motivating power; it is interwoven in these passages we have read together. Does that not help us to be cemented together in our sacrificial relations?

W.D. Yes, it is a bond, is it not? In Christian associations you need a bond; it is not like human fellowships. Love is a great matter and it

would greatly elevate us if we approached it that way.

R.S.R. I wondered with regard to your opening remark - where the apostle says "Wherefore, my beloved" - whether his own affections would move towards the Corinthians at this point in order that they may arrive at the truth.

W.D. Yes, and what stirred his affections was that through his ministry and service he had brought them the light of this wondrous fellowship, the fellowship of God's Son, and what was idolatrous was intruding into the glory of that, and he felt it. We should feel it because it is a matter in which the enemy is unrelenting, and has been all the time; he is unrelenting if he can lower in practice the dignity of the Christian fellowship.

J.D.G. Would the appreciation of the cup help us in the maintenance of the sacrificial side? He says "The cup of blessing which we bless"; he approaches it from a dignified viewpoint and appreciation.

W.D. Yes, there is point, is there not, in that the cup in chapter 10 precedes the loaf.

J.R. He refers to both the cup and the bread. It is as if what is involved in partaking together of the Lord's supper would be preventive against idolatry.

W.D. Yes, and has its bearing on what is public. In chapter 11 have we not more the inside matter leading up to the service of God? But the blood coming first, "The cup of blessing which we bless", seems to affect us that our walk should be in keeping with that holy sacrifice, the blood being poured out. Is that what you had in mind?

J.R. Yes, it is the bearing of it. You can see that Paul could never contemplate any believer not breaking bread; it is part of the Christian life and fellowship. But then what is involved in it and the bearing of it needs to be laid hold of by us and affect us in our daily lives.

W.D. Yes, I am glad you say that. We express pity about persons who absent themselves from the Supper, and we rightly feel it, and we rightly regard their loss, but what about us who do take the

Supper? Paul is saying in effect, You take the Supper, but is the dignity and sacrificial meaning of it governing you in your walk and practice?

A.T. Does divine jealousy underlie the chapter?

W.D. Yes, Jealousy as to what has been secured in such infinite cost in the blood and the body of Christ.

A.T. It lies in God's love, does it not?

W.D. That is right. Every religion in the world apart from Christianity is just a system of ethics and has no foundation in the sacrificial love of a divine Person.

A.C.C-g. Does the blood coming first show the sacrificial side? That is the order of the offerings, is it not? The blood was taken up first and then the sacrifice was made; that is, the costly side is intended to affect us.

W.D. That was why I thought that the bearing of the teaching was that the sacrificial side was to affect us. Is there not a link with "We have an altar" in Hebrews 13: 10?

A.C.C-g. I am sure there is; the blood was carried in, but then there is the bearing of the other side.

W.D. Yes, "go forth to him without the camp".

A.C.C-g. That is right. This costly side of the sacrifice is to affect us in our walk, in consistency with the fellowship.

C.A.G. Would it not relate to what we have in 2 Corinthians 5, "the love of the Christ constrains us" (v 14)? I wondered whether we do not need to have a deeper sense of that. Is that not really what you have in mind, that things should have a positive and powerful effect with us, not just to treat the truth nominally and formally but that it might be vital and living?

W.D. Yes, and to move in the fellowship as under the Lord's authority, and yet affected by its exclusive character. We have a right to use that word 'exclusive'.

A.C.C-m. Would a sense of the holiness of God give us the sensibilities as to what is not compatible with the fellowship? Was there a lack of holiness at Corinth?

W.D. Yes, we might become careless in our walk. We would seek the help of the Spirit continually to keep near the death of Christ so that the sanctifying effect of it would preserve us in holiness and compatibility with the fellowship into which we have been called.

P.H.B. Would it be right to say that this reference to the communion of the blood of the Christ and the communion of the body of the Christ shows that the service of God is not confined to the Supper as we come together on Lord's day? Would it not have its bearing on our practical relations together?

W.D. Yes, it involves our committal to the truth and to the fellowship. The reference to the blood being first confirms what you say in that it was the full committal, the blood being poured out, of the Lord Jesus.

Jn.M. Why does he use the term "the Christ" here? Earlier on, in regard of marriage for instance, it is 'in Lord'.

J.R. Is not "the Christ" the centre of an order of things? He is the anointed. Mr Clapham spoke about God's holiness: it is an order of things that is holy for God, is it not?

W.D. Yes; and then it means, according to the teaching we have, that locally at Corinth, as anointed by the Spirit, there was what was representative of God, persons walking in the dignity and glory of that holy fellowship: "so also is the Christ", 1 Cor 12: 12.

J.N. Paul presents the cup first.

W.D. Yes, that is what we have in mind, and particularly these days when exercises are carried universally as to bringing the brethren back to the standard of the truth; and I would say the standard of the truth is as it is in Scripture. We hear an expression sometimes such as 'That is contrary to Mr Taylor's ministry', but that ministry was based on Scripture, and to nullify the truth of the fellowship in any sense by suggesting it is only a ministerial interpretation of a certain passage is serious.

W.L. Would "the cup of blessing" be the same as what he refers to later, "the Lord's cup"?

W.D. Yes, I am glad you refer to that. "The cup of blessing which we bless" is as if your affections are drawn out as you do it, and you take account of the whole range of blessing which you have been brought into as a believer, as partaking of the Lord's supper, what it opens up to you, and you bless it.

W.L. So you cannot really have the enjoyment of "the cup of blessing" without the recognition that it is also "the Lord's cup".

J.R. Do you think "which we bless" and "which we break" becomes characteristic of persons? There is a word in the next chapter: "the eater and drinker" (v 29); that is, they become drinkers and blessers of the cup and partakers of the loaf.

W.D. You mean that in their practice they are blessing. It brings out that the Lord's table in 1 Corinthians 10 is not the table that is in the centre of the room. I know it is all right for us older brethren repeating these well known statements, but do all the younger brethren understand that the Lord's table in 1 Corinthians 10 is not the table that is in the centre of the room?

J.R. It seems to me that the idea of "the Lord's table" is very like, as you said, "We have an altar". It goes on to say in verse 18, "Are not they who eat the sacrifices in communion with the altar?", referring to the old economy in Israel. Then it speaks about the Lord's table; it is the idea of that kind of fellowship, is it not?

W.D. Exactly, and the fellowship does not exist only on Lord's day; that is chapter 10. There is every weekday when you are not under the scrutiny of the saints. Does the cup, the blood, have its bearing upon you, blessing it?

A.J.G. The whole of this epistle is written in the light of the local assembly in Corinth. Would we bear that in mind as we read the passages? I was wondering about this reference to Christ, whether it would remind us that these things are enjoyed in that position.

W.D. Yes, and there is no greater testimony in a locality than to see a company of saints walking in the dignity of the Christian fellowship, regulated by the immense cost at which it has been established in the blood and in the body of Christ.

H.B. Has the table in chapter 10 not been linked in ministry with the table in Psalm 23: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies" (v 5)? That is the area of 1 Corinthians 10, is it not; an area of contrariety, and therefore the need for the fellowship of His death?

W.D. Yes, and so the spirit of blessing marks you; you are buoyant; you do not say, Well, the fellowship involves this and that restriction. We know it does, of course; but "a table... in the presence of mine enemies": your heart is full of blessing and you are superior morally to the order of things around you in the dignity of the Christian fellowship.

H.B. Does the fellowship of His death work out in conformity to His death as in Philippians 3? It seems to me that conformity to His death is something that is wrought out tangibly.

W.D. Yes, that is good. Using an Old Testament illustration, Mephibosheth, in the absence of David, was true to the fellowship.

R.S.R. And all the privileges connected with David's table were made good to Mephibosheth. "And Mephibosheth", says David, "shall eat bread at my table continually... as one of the king's sons", 2 Sam 9: 10, 11. I would like you to comment on verse 17: "Because we, being many, are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of that one loaf".

W.D. Is that not a reference to our joint responsibility as in fellowship? It is the reaction of our public walk and the bearing of it on the one loaf, one body. It says "Because we, being many are one loaf", that is, the fellowship is one, and it is the spiritual consequence of having sought the privileges of the fellowship that there is responsibility given to you.

R.S.R. I wondered too if it would suggest our appropriation in love of one another.

W.D. Yes, I think it does.

J.R. Would the partaking of that one loaf be the tangible expression of the communion in which we are? I mean the words 'communion' and 'partake' are not the same exactly; partaking is the practical, tangible part we have in the expression of this communion to which we belong, is it not?

W.D. That is right. So it is a system of things in which there are no dormant partners so to speak. You partake of the privileges, you partake of the responsibilities, and that is the fellowship.

J.R. Paul uses the word "we" in verses 16 and 17. He uses what belongs to Christianity to have a bearing on the locality at Corinth. In verse 15 he says "Do ye judge what I say"; it is what is characteristic of Christianity, is it not?

W.D. So "We have an altar": the "we" are the persons who have the light of Paul's teaching.

J.R. It belongs to every believer. Whether every believer understands it is another matter, but "We have an altar" would be the Christian altar.

S.Y. Does this impress upon us every Lord's day morning that, as we partake of the emblems fresh committals are to be made each day of the week. I was thinking of Ruth's committals to the Lord and to the fellowship.

W.D. That is a very good illustration and, as you say as your affections are stirred by what sacrificially comes before you in the loaf and the cup, you make fresh committals. So it is good in the preaching sometimes to bring that forward as a stimulus to the committal in that way.

J.R. Would you say that there is certainly plenty of room for making fresh committals, but the fact that we come to break bread is an expression of the fact that we are committed?

W.D. And a committal means that we seek the grace and help of the Holy Spirit to maintain the dignity of that fellowship.

H.W. The importance of this chapter is to be seen if we are to enjoy the second part of what you have in mind for us, the enjoyment of the family. I mean the idea of one loaf, one body. The Corinthians were in danger of being divided. There is no room for what is partisan in the fellow ship. The enjoyment of the family side is based on the removal of that.

W.D. Yes, that is good. I often think of the little gatherings in Australia and New Zealand; they are thousands of miles away from their brethren but you think of the work of God in these beloved brethren that, despite their isolation, the dignity of the fellowship and its glory has such a hold on them, and they are exercised to see that all that is requisite for that fellowship is maintained. You could only think of such a thing in the power and energy of Christianity, because no human bond could do it.

H.W. And it leads on to chapter 11. You may be in few ness of number but you have a large outlook when you look at the loaf - "one body".

M.B.T. The mind of the Spirit in this chapter is to protect the Lord's supper so that there does not need to be a lot of adjustment when you arrive there.

W.D. Exactly, and it is good to see to matters so that when we come to break bread the transition is easy.

M.B.T. Paul is at great pains to get the brethren right and to keep them right in their affections and in their associations, so that he would not have to say anything, you might say, corrective in a normal way, do you think?

W.D. Yes. When you balance your business books on a Saturday, sometimes the job takes a long time because you have let the work lag, but it is good when you arrive at Saturday and start to balance your books spiritually, that all you need to do is to draw the two double lines and that is finished, you are ready for the Supper.

J.S. I was just wondering if this reference to "the body of the Christ" would remind us of a body that was held here sacrificially for the will of God. Do you think, if you get a company of persons each one of whom is prepared to be regulated by the will of God, it greatly simplifies the working out of things together in the fellowship?

W.D. I am sure that is right, and that is what is before us in the loaf peculiarly, that He did the Father's will. Psalm 40 gives us the inlet into the Lord's feelings in that: "To do thy good pleasure, my God" (v 8).

J.M-I. I was thinking of the cup that the Lord accepted from the Father. Would the cup affect us in that way?

W.D. Well, we think of these things. It adds tone as we ponder the sufferings of the Lord in Gethsemane and contrast it with "the cup of blessing which we bless".

R.S. Would there be a link with Mark's gospel where "they all drank out of it", chap 14: 23? And then it says "And having sung a hymn, they went out to the mount of Olives" (v 26), which would be the Spirit helping us, bringing in the fellowship of the Spirit. While Mark does not give us the remembrance side, you feel that Matthew and Mark are two basic gospels.

W.D. Exactly, and bearing on, shall I say, the formative side in those two gospels?

R.S. So what you are bringing before us is the glory of the fellowship.

W.D. Yes, that is right. Could we have a look at John's epistle now? The family side of things is very choice and these are areas - the fellowship and the family side - which the enemy is unrelenting in his efforts to undermine. In these passages the sacrificial side is seen because he says "Hereby we have known love, because he has laid down his life for us; and we ought for the brethren to lay down our lives".

J.R. That is an obligation, is it not: "We ought for the brethren to lay down our lives"?

W.D. Yes. How would you say currently we could lay down our lives for the brethren?

J.R. It seems to me it is not exactly actually dying; it is living for the help of the brethren. And while it would be continuous, there must come a moment in our lives when we decide to do this. You were speaking about committal; there must come a moment when we lay ourselves down in that sense. That would be an act that would be continued, do you think?

W.D. Yes, and it would involve sacrifice on our part.

E.J.J. It is not optional in that sense.

W.D. No, that is right; and yet this great sacrificial matter is on a basis of love: "He has laid down his life for us". It takes Christianity out of the trammels of legality and shows us that what can motivate you is the example of divine Persons themselves.

R.S.R. Would it suggest too that the brethren are so great in your eyes that there is a preparedness to lay down your life for them? It points up the greatness of the brethren and how we view them.

W.D. How we view them - I think that would be right.

D.R. What would you say about verse 14: "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren"? It seems to be a definite landmark reached in soul history.

W.D. Do you think that may have some link with the Supper?

D.R. I am asking for help, but I think what you said earlier is important that it is not a system of ethics we are called to but we are bound together in affection. It seems to be that at some point you arrive in soul history at the fact that you love the brethren, and you are able to know something, that you have passed from death to life. That life would be for service to the brethren, do you think?

W.D. Yes, and that "we love the brethren" is one of the prime qualifications (I use the word guardedly) for partaking of the Supper. In the days when we used to interview the younger brethren, one of

the points that we assured ourselves of was, 'Well, do you love the brethren?' 'Yes, I love the brethren.' 'Well, you are all right.'

D.R. It is a very good sign.

J.N. You spoke yesterday of excess in Christianity. Do you think we would see it in this? Has it not been referred to as fulfilled responsibility?

W.D. Exactly; and "he has laid down his life for us": you wonder how extensive that expression is. It would undoubtedly point directly to His actual giving it up in death, but you also think of the Lord's three and a half years of ministry and service. Think of Him in John 13, laying down His life in principle, and the way He served His own. I think that supports what Mr Jim Renton has said as to how you can define it, that it is a constant matter in that way.

M.B.T. We get the expression in Philemon: "for love's sake" (v 9); Paul asks Philemon to do it "for love's sake".

W.D. Yes, and just as the Lord Jesus did it towards His own, what was in His heart. It was for His own He died: "having loved his own", John 13: 1.

M.B.T. It opens up a whole area of thought as to why you do things and your motive for doing them.

E.J.J. Do we not get that here too: "Beloved, if God has so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time: if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us". Is that not something very elevated and divinely grand?

W.D. That is good; and in the passage read you will see three sacrificial matters called attention to. It says "God has sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" - that was a great sacrificial act on the part of God; and He "sent his Son a propitiation for our sins"; and then it says "the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world". They all stand related to this matter of loving one another. No human philosophy could impart a spring of love to you like that.

S.Y. Is this a suggestion of shepherding in our localities - "we... ought"? Do you think there is more room for that?

W.D. Yes, there is always room for these activities, and it involves laying down our lives sometimes. As John tells us, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep", John 10: 11.

R.J.C. Is this service completely unofficial? I was thinking of your reference to John 13; did not the Lord, in laying aside His garments, get near to them unofficially?

W.D. That is right, and it comes from love; "love is of God", it says. It is not natural in that sense, it is of God and it brings out the glory of His work.

R.S.R. Do you think that Paul exemplified it to the saints at Corinth when he says "Now I shall most gladly spend and be utterly spent for your souls if even in abundantly loving you I should be less loved" 2 Cor 12: 15? His motives were pure, not only spending his substance but being spent, laying down his life for the brethren.

W.D. Yes, and he would no doubt be affected by these divine transactions.

R.S.R. We may do it to have some return, but Paul was pure in his desires for the saints at Corinth.

J.D.G. Is "laid down his life for us" one aspect of the vicarious work of Christ? It is "for us".

W.D. That is right, and it involves that He took on the whole burden of things. I think that is why the apostle brings in the fact that He "sent his Son a propitiation for our sins". You wonder at the apostle bringing in such a gospel touch in this setting. It seems to be apart from the general train of the teaching, and I think it is just to remind us that when we were sinners and had no claim at all and did not deserve mercy, that God acted this way. It should affect us in that way.

J.D.G. I wondered if the idea of a father is really in his heart, a fatherly touch on John's part to bring it forward. As you know, he

brings forward fathers, young men and little children; he has a touch that unites us all together in relation to the great matter before us.

W.D. Very good.

J.H. Is it right to think that this is the love that we begin each week with: "Hereby we have known love"? It is a challenge to our hearts as to whether we do love the brethren. I was thinking of the example of Mordecai and Esther in what they did sacrificially - Mordecai first and then Esther was called into it and comes to it, "if I perish, I perish" (Esth 4: 16) - that it is love for the brethren that would move you to act in this way because of the way Christ has acted for us.

W.D. Exactly, and as Mr Robert Renton says, the holy dignity with which we would regard them.

H.R. Paul speaks about Prisca and Aquilla in Romans 16, that their service was not only for him but for all the assemblies (see v 4).

W.D. Yes, "who for my life staked their own neck". That was fine, and it opens up the fact that a sister has part in this service.

J.D.G. Esther that our brother has brought forward might display the Old Testament type of what you suggested.

W.D. Yes, it does. The one I was actually thinking about was Joseph. "God has sent his only begotten Son into the world": that touch of affection puts you in mind of Jacob's regard for Joseph. Is this rather like Jacob sending Joseph out from the vale of Hebron? (see Gen 37: 14).

R.S. Yes, I think that would be right. As Mr Harthill says, it is not only that you have a sense of the Lord's love at the Supper, but how much He is appreciated and known every day. That helps you to maintain the brethren too in your heart as you appropriate them; as Paul says, "Phoebe, our sister" (Rom 16: 1); you appropriate them in that family setting.

J.R. It is quite affecting that, according to this verse in John's epistle, the Lord thought us worth while laying down His life for. The question is whether we regard the brethren as worth while laying down our lives for, do you think?

W.D. That is right. It links with what we said as to the dignity of things in 1 Corinthians.

J.R. I do not want to be too negative but if we were persons who regarded our brethren in this way we would avoid being too critical of them.

W.D. Exactly. There are two things that help you positively in the passage. The one is that you are begotten of God; that is, that the work of God, the divine nature, is there in you; and secondly it says "he has given to us of his Spirit". We might get critical sometimes and say it is a hard job, but there are two things there: you are begotten of God - you have the divine nature - and you have the Spirit.

J.M-r. In Acts 15 we have the comment of the Spirit as to Barnabas and Paul: "men who have given up their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v 26). Was it the love of the Christ that underlay the expenditure of these men on behalf of the saints?

W.D. Yes, and it was exemplified in their service to the brethren.

J.M-r. The test is in our localities where it is to be worked out in a positive way.

W.D. It means that you have to make full room for the activity of the divine nature in your soul; and then it says, "he has given to us of his Spirit": that is a unique expression.

J.M-r. Would much of that laying down of your life be unseen? It would be your own links with the Lord Jesus and with the Father that would underlie it motivating you in anything you do.

W.D. Yes. "But whoso may have the world's substance, and see his brother having need, and shut up his bowels from him, how abides the love of God in him?" I would judge that to give to a brother in need would be a sort of unseen service.

R.S.R. Do you think, if we set ourselves to see the saints as the Lord views them, we would be more prepared to lay down our lives for them? We know each one of our local brethren intimately but we view them as the Lord views them.

W.D. Yes, and to support what you are saying, this passage relates to the activities of God in sacrificially giving up His beloved Son in order to give an expression to divine love; and the divine nature which is in us enables us to act this way.

J.H. Paul must have appreciated what Epaphroditus had done. He says of him, "venturing his life", Phil 2: 30.

W.D. Exactly, he ventured his life.

C.C.I. Referring again to Joseph, he says in relation to his brethren, "God sent me before you to preserve life"; then he also says "So God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive", Gen 45: 5,7. Is it in your mind that Joseph went through this long process and his love for his brethren emerges in that he gets them into that place of blessing?

W.D. He went forth from the vale of Hebron as sent of his father, and he was there freighted with his father's feelings; but they would have put him to death. Yet despite that, at the end of Genesis you see the wondrous skill in which these twelve diverse characters are brought together and love in them has been worked out. The number twelve shows how love can be active and worked out, but its greatest test is administration.

C.C.I. Did not Mr Taylor say in relation to keeping the unity of the Spirit that we should give time for it.

W.D. Time for it - that is good.

H.M. Is feet washing administrative? Do you think we could do more of this?

W.D. It is an administration of love certainly.

J.R. As to administration and unity, if an administrative act is taken, to maintain unity it has to be accepted unless it can be proved wrong. In order to maintain "the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace" (Eph 4: 3) an act taken by a locality for instance would have to be accepted unless it can be proved wrong. What do you think?

W.D. I would say that that is incorporated in church teaching, and whatever your views may be - and you may have very strong views about it, and some of us have very strong views about some matters - the fact is that you have to carry these strong views into the Lord's presence and bear them there, and as Mr Taylor said, the day will come, 'The Lord will show who is holy' (see Vol 12, p.26).

One just thought of this passage in Philippians as bringing out the same touch of sacrificial glory. It is quite a remarkable epistle and in these sentences the apostle is no doubt reflecting on the way in which the Philippians had expressed themselves towards him in their gift and in their prayers and their support. In comfort, consolation, fellowship and compassion they had been a wonderful company to him. They had expressed their love in many a tangible form, but he says, Above all that there is this matter: "fulfil my joy, that ye may think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking one thing; let nothing be in the spirit of strife or vain glory but, in lowliness of mind, each esteeming the other as more excellent than themselves; regarding not each his own qualities, but each those of others also". It is as if the Lord is urging us on to what is '*par excellence*'. The apostle brings in the sacrificial stoop of Christ Jesus to promote that unity for which he longed. Our administration may have a quality about it in love in consideration for the Lord's interests universally in the way of giving, but he says "in lowliness of mind, each esteeming the other as more excellent than themselves; regarding not each his own qualities, but each those of others also. For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus".

R.S.R. I have often been impressed with this passage. If he had spoken only of the mind of Christ Jesus, that would have been wonderful, but that mind to be amongst us, as the footnote says, brings it to a very high level and should be worked out locally amongst us.

W.D. Yes, particularly when their level of assembly administration was so great. You would have said it was so good that it would have

been well nigh perfect; but he says, Now, you know, this is the matter, to make me fully happy be at one among yourselves.

EDINBURGH

Key to initials

H.Brown, Kilmarnock; P.H.Buchan, Peterhead; A.C.Craig, Airdrie; A.C.Clapham, Manchester; R.J.Campbell, Glasgow; W.Dickson, Edinburgh; A.J.Gaskin, Aberdeen; C.A.Gray, Helston; J.D.Gray, Edinburgh; J.Harthill, Glasgow; J.Haggen, Washington; C.C.Ikin, Southend; E.J.Jarvis, Torbay; W.Lamont, Cumnock; H.Macfarlane, Dundee; J.Marshall, Edinburgh; J.Mair, Cullen; Jn.Munro, Grangemouth; J.Newberry, Hamilton; D.Robertson, Cumnock; H.Reid, Buckie; J.Renton, Edinburgh; R.S.Renton, Edinburgh; D.L.Stewart, Edinburgh; J.Strachan, Dundee; R.Swan, Edinburgh; A.Thomson, Lochgelly; M.B.Thompson, Aberdeen; H.Wilkinson, Manchester; S.Young, Lochgelly.

DEATH AND LIFE

C.F.Dadd

Luke 8: 40-42, 49-56; 7: 11-17

If there was a person in the city of Toronto today who had the power to raise the dead, what an amazing amount of activity there would be, trying to get into his presence. There is nothing that has greater grip on people than death; there is nothing that people try to avoid more than death. Many go about in bondage all their lives through fear of death and without Christ; I do not suppose there is anything to be feared more. Death is a terrifying thing without Christ. Somebody said to me one day, It is so final. I said, Yes, it is so final, if you do not know Christ. It is something to think about soberly.

We have been speaking in the reading about the matter of death, and the knowledge of One who is more powerful than death.

Death is very powerful. It was God's penalty at the beginning; God said "in the day that thou eatest of it thou shalt certainly die", Gen 2: 17. God was the first one who spoke about death. Then what happened? The enemy moved in and seized the power of death, and he used Cain as an instrument to kill his brother. That is the enemy operating as having the power of death. Well, that was a great matter because it looked on to the death of Christ, and as we know, Cain is a type of the Jew, Abel is a type of Christ. There came a time when in type the power of death was taken out of the hands of the devil; it is a great thing to get the good of that in your soul, that the power of death has been taken out of the hands of the devil.

Many of us have loved ones that lie in death, physically at the present time, their bodies are in the grave. It is a sobering thing.

But it is a marvellous thing to know that there is Someone who has the power to penetrate death. We have heard this many times and we have spoken so much about it in our lifetime, that maybe it becomes a little threadbare. But just let our minds dwell on it for a minute, that we have been introduced to Someone who has the power to penetrate and overcome the power of death. He did that at the grave of Lazarus. Lazarus was a man maybe in his thirties or forties but he died, and he was in the grave, and his sister said to the Lord "he stinks already" (John 11: 39), the power of death bringing in this terrible situation. Jesus said "Did I not say to thee, that if thou shouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?".

Beloved brethren, if we believed, and moved according to the principle of faith, we would see more of the glory of God. How much of the glory did we see this morning? The scripture says "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face", 2 Cor 3: 18.

Now that is to be peculiarly experienced at the Supper. It brings about a change in us. You get a glimpse of the glory of the Lord and you change. Maybe a lot of us are too attached to this present course of things and we do not get enough of the impress of the glory of the Man that belongs to another world. The glory of Christ and the love of Christ would entice us over to something better. If you have something better than what the world has to offer you will give up the world in order to enjoy it. Yet we hang on to the things around us because the tendency is to be earthly minded, and the enemy wants to play that up. He has a lot to offer. The pleasure of sin is a very real thing; that is what scripture says (see Heb 11: 25).

The world is very enticing; it has all kinds of things; the enemy has an array of things that are extremely attractive and he has a desire to hold people by its power. That is what he does. That was the whole force of Egypt; the children of Israel were captive in Egypt; they were still God's people but they were in Egypt, and God intended to bring them out just as He intends to bring you and me out of the world. He went through a tremendous process to do it, but then the time came when as the result of the passover lamb and the power of God, the people were delivered out of Egypt. And do you know the first thing they did? - they sang. If you get somebody coming into the good of redemption, or being delivered from the power of the enemy, the effect will be that he can sing. Singing is a very important matter to God because it involves the most elevated side in His service. Do we all sing? Or when we open our hymn books do we just sit there and let the brethren sing? The evidence that a person is redeemed and is delivered out of the power of the world is that he can sing.

They sang the song of redemption. It is a very fine song too, because it was the commencement in Scripture of the service of God. The initial thought of the service of God is Exodus 15. But too they prophesied. Here are persons just delivered from the world; Moses gives a lead and they sing, they sing about the power of God

and they see the evidence of the power of God with the enemies strewn on the seashore. Could you do it? Can I do it? No, but God did it; He had power over the enemy. And there they were, and they sing, and they prophesied in their song. When is the last time I prophesied? When is the last time you prophesied? Can you prophesy in song? Here are redeemed persons; you might say they just came under the effect of the death of Christ and the first thing they do is sing. It is a fine occupation to use our voices in song to God. My song shall be about Jesus. Some of us maybe use our voices in many other ways, but can we use our voice in extolling the One that for us has broken the power of the enemy and the power of Egypt? And do not go back into Egypt. You can go back into Egypt, but in order to get back there you have to pass the cross of Christ. I remember somebody years ago saying in the preaching, As you go back into Egypt, if that is what you are minded to do, as you pass the cross take a good look. Just take a good look at the Man that hung there. Going back to Egypt is very easy, and, it is one of the first things the people wanted; they said to Moses we had it good in Egypt and now you have brought us out here to die. They said we have no water; but Christ came into the situation. Moses found wood which speaks of Christ and he threw it into the waters and they became sweet (see Exod 15: 25). I just wonder how sweet things have become for us as we are related to Christianity. How sweet are they? Are you happy?

Are you honestly happy? Do you find it a happy thing to sit down with your brethren? Do you find it an easy thing to gather? Our brother, in the announcements this morning, spoke about the gatherings of the saints which are before us for the week. Do you find it an easy thing to gather? I believe as we have found the water sweet we will find that it is easy to gather with our brethren.

Here in this scripture is a man who is very interesting. He is the ruler of the synagogue and he has a child about twelve years old. Let us take a look at this father for a minute. Some of us are fathers; we have sons, we have daughters. One thing that strikes me about this man is that he is protective, he is concerned about the welfare of

his twelve year old daughter. She is about to die and he knows this. Now, as we speak about this beloved brethren, let us try to get the moral impact of it. Here is a man who is concerned about his daughter and he knows where to go for help. Help is going to come into your household for your children from Christ. Help will come in from Christ because He has what is needed, He has the power. He says to this man "Fear not: only believe". He is speaking to the father of the child who is about to die. The Lord had feelings for this man and He could see that he had faith, and the man understood where his help was going to come from, and he related himself to Christ. I tell you, relate yourselves to Christ as to your family.

Maybe you are doing that, maybe you are doing it very effectively, I do not know; but I say, You should relate yourselves to Christ regarding the salvation of your family, because our families need salvation. So he goes to the Lord. It is a great thing to be sensitive as to the conditions in our households. This was happening in his house and he knew about it. Sometimes things can be happening right under our own roofs and we are not aware of what is proceeding. But this man knew; he "besought him to come to his house, because he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying". That is a test to us, to be aware of what is proceeding within our own house, and this means that we have to be in nearness to our children. This generation gap does not belong to Christianity. The generation gap is very apparent amongst men - the disregard of parents, disobedience to parents, all this is very current in the world, but it should have no currency in Christianity, because we have the word of God that regulates us as to our parents and our feelings as to our children.

This man knew something, he was not an ignorant man, and one thing he knew was that he could get help from Christ. So he comes to the Lord beseeching Him to come to his house. Then the word comes that she is dead. "While he was yet speaking" - that is the Lord Jesus - "comes some one from the ruler of the synagogue, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead: do not trouble the teacher". But the Lord knew what He was going to do; John 6 teaches us that as

the Lord proceeded. in testimony He knew what He was going to do.

It is a great thing, beloved brethren, if we can be near to Christ and have some indication from Him as to what He is going to do.

Nothing ever catches Him by surprise like it does you and me, and the Lord is in perfect control, it is His assembly. He knows exactly how things are going to proceed. My test is, can I be near enough to Him to have some indication from Himself as to what He is doing? And as He proceeds can I be in a position where I can be preserved and maintained according to His will? Or do I take the stance that if something happens that that is the end for me? - any more trouble amongst the brethren, that is the end for me. That is not the language of faith dear brethren, that is not the will of God, that is my own will coming in. I am exerting my own will, whereas my concern should be to relate myself to the One who has paid the great price in order to secure the assembly. So He comes down, and there is a lot of weeping and lamenting; maybe it was very sincere but the Lord said to them "Do not weep". First He says "Fear not", then He says "Do not weep". Then He puts them out, and then it says, "But *he*, having turned them all out and taking hold of her hand, cried saying, Child, arise. And her spirit returned, and immediately she rose up; and he commanded something to eat to be given to her". The child is brought into life now. What would the experience of the child have been? I do not know whether she had been dead an hour, or five hours, or twelve hours. What would her experience have been? The Lord comes and raises her up out of death, and He commands something to eat to be given to her. She is a child, and now, you might say, she is returned to the household to which she belongs, and the Lord commands - He does not ask anybody here - the Lord "commanded something to eat to be given to her". What do you think the diet would be that the Lord would have in His mind? If the Lord came in here, and you spoke to Him and said, Lord, I have two teenagers, what about their diet? What shall I give these young people? "He commanded something to eat to be given to her". Now He is speaking "as to intelligent persons: do ye judge what I say".

That is what Paul says to the saints at Corinth, 1 Cor 10: 15. The Lord commands that something be given to her to eat; that is the

responsibility of the parents. So you begin the day, and what kind of diet do you give the children? They have to live physically so you give them breakfast. Maybe some do not like to eat breakfast, but you try to get them to eat. Why? Because you know it is for their strengthening, for their good. But what about the diet that the Lord is talking about? He is talking about spiritual food. Why did the child die? Did the Lord not know about it? Could He not have stopped that? Yes, He could. What He is pointing to may be in your household. He does not go into detail but the inference is there that there was something that has allowed the article of death. He commands them: You give them something to eat, He would say to us. What do you give them when the day begins? Do you start with something spiritual? If you are on a starvation diet you will soon show the evidence of it. You are not going to deceive the Lord, and I am going to tell you something else, you do not deceive the brethren either. You might for a while, maybe some of us have known what it is to try, but not for long. You know the diet that Daniel and his young friends had; it was pulse and water. The keeper of those men said, Oh, you cannot do that, I will get into trouble, you will look thin, you will look run down. In ten days their faces were fairer and fatter than all the rest who were partaking of all that the world had to offer them. The world had plenty to offer - the dainty food, the wine - but beloved brethren it will bring in spiritual malnutrition. The word here was, the Lord "commanded something to eat to be given to her".

In chapter 7 it says "And it came to pass afterwards he went into a city called Nain, and many of his disciples and a great crowd went with him. And as he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was carried out". They were carrying this man out to bury him. The Lord comes into this situation, as He wants to come into your situation. He wants to come into the situation of every one of us. Maybe He has not been successful up to now, and the only reason is because you and I have kept Him out, otherwise the Lord would come into our situations. Luke says he is a man, so he is a responsible individual, not a child, not a twelve year old; and you and I are responsible as persons that have come along a certain way,

and we have to answer to God. This man was being carried out and the Lord felt the situation very keenly, because his mother was a widow and this man was her only son. Now the Lord is very feeling, and He entered into this woman's circumstances. The widowed condition of this woman drew out the feelings of Christ. The Lord wants to enter into our circumstances and our feelings as to matters. He wants to feel things, He wants us to feel the exercises of the assembly. I was struck some years ago when a brother visited us locally; he said, If I was in this locality for a week or so I would know where you stand; all I would need to do is listen to you pray in the prayer meeting. This woman was widowed, she was feeling bereft, and we want to develop such feelings. We have widows in the assembly to develop the widowed feeling in the local gathering. That is what it is to be in the course of the week, the development of a widowed feeling, because our Head, our Husband, has been cast out; He has been rejected by men and killed. There has just been a murder in this city. Christ was murdered, and we want to get the feelings of widowhood, beloved brethren. This woman had the feeling of widowhood and the Lord was affected by it. Here they are, walking out of the city carrying the body, and the Lord came up and touched the bier and they stopped. I can well imagine that the eyes of every person were focused on Christ. What is He going to do? Maybe some were saying, Who is this Man? Who is He that He should come up and stop the bier? He says to the woman "Weep not". Did you ever weep? Did you ever weep because of the testimony? He says to this woman "Weep not; and coming up he touched the bier, and the bearers stopped. And he said, Youth, I say to thee, Wake up". Now that is fine: wake up! What a word that would be to us - wake up! The Lord introduces us into a sphere of liberty and love, where things are peaceful and restful. I am thinking of the assembly time primarily. What did the liberated ones on the shores of the Red Sea, redeemed out of Egypt, do? - they sang. It is a great thing to sing. You might as well get ready for I do not doubt that you will sing in the coming day.

This man began to speak. You know, he never spoke like this before; he has been through death and has come out, you might say, as the result of the touch of Christ. He has come out the other side with the Man who has power over death; He broke its power, He broke its power in this man who sat up and began to speak. I would love to know what he said but scripture does not tell us. The opportunity comes every Lord's day for us to speak in a way we have never spoken before, just to bring in a fresh touch. You might say things that are very similar, but the fresh touch that comes in at the service of God is the way you have never spoken before. It is fresh, it is new, it is living. Why? - because you are related to a sphere of things that is living, living because Christ lives. He has been through death, He has broken its power, He has broken the power of the grave. This is what happened with this young man; he sits up and began to speak. It is a fine thing when we start to speak as persons who have come through death. What a contributory power he would be now in the locality! This experience would produce a man completely different from what he was, and that is what Christianity does. We bring in what is fresh and living. Why? - because it is part of another world, it is part of the world that relates to Christ and His resurrection: "that world, and the resurrection", "sons of the resurrection", Luke 20: 35,36. What a fine thought! and this is what he would be locally. And they all glorified God. He gave him to his mother: think of the man being given back to his mother, a widow! What a support he would be in the household! What an influence for good he would be among the saints!

So, beloved, let us be like those who have had to do with Christ, have had His touch and have come into life, and are here now as supporting all that Christ is setting on. My own things now, legitimate though they be, are subservient to all that Christ is setting on, and what we have is the evidence of life and vitality in the city of Nain, which we need in all our localities. May it be so, for His Name's sake.

TORONTO

28 May 1978

THE CHILDREN'S FORGIVENESS

The word 'scape-goat' is often used in a light way for a person who is made to take the blame for some folly or wrong-doing of other people. But it has a much deeper meaning in the older translation of the Bible. It was the goat that was sent away to a distant and unknown place bearing on its head the sins of God's people at the yearly day of atonement. It happens, however, that the idea suggested by the word is that the goat escaped, whereas the true meaning was that it was sent away or even went, as if of its own accord. Thus the Lord Jesus offered Himself as the sin-bearer - once for ever. The Scripture says of Him that He "bore our sins in his body on the tree" and that "he bore the sin of many".

I remember hearing of a Jewish boy named Simeon who, when quite young, read in a book that his ancestors of long ago had known what they did when they placed their hands on the head of the scape-goat and thus transferred their guilt to it. The thought rushed into his mind that he too could transfer his sins to another. Soon, when he heard that God had provided a Saviour for mankind, he said, 'Then, God willing, I will not bear my sins on my own soul one moment longer; for I see that God laid them on Jesus'. I have often thought how young Simeon or any other believer if he or she had lived in Old Testament times would earnestly watch that goat go away completely out of sight.

The three hours of sin-bearing at Golgotha seem in one sense a very long time because of the intense suffering. At the end came the loud cry - the central one of the seven speakings from the cross - "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?". In another sense we are made to wonder that the time, concentrated as it must have

been, was enough to account in detail for every sin of every forgiven person.

At the day of atonement there was also another goat, actually the first of the two. This one was slain as a sacrifice and its blood, type of the precious blood of Christ, was carried into the holy presence of God to make atonement, or covering, for the guilt of the people. Without shedding of blood no sins could be remitted, that is sent away, and Jesus, The Son, "made by himself the purification of sins". It is very touching to our affections that whereas Adam was driven out of an earthly paradise on account of sins, Jesus came freely out of a heavenly paradise to take up the same matter and to settle it to the glory of God. Have you the peace of knowing this?

J.C.Evershed