

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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RIGHTS

D.Robertson

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It is in mind, dear friends, to say a little by the help of the Spirit on the thought of 'rights'. It is something we hear a great deal about, persons pressing on every hand for what they term their 'rights': rights of majorities, of minorities, of individuals, human rights - there are so many. Men speak of ecclesiastical rights, of political and social rights, women fight for their rights, equal rights are talked about now. This person in Luke 12 poses a similar kind of question to the Lord; he really raises a question as to his rights, and the Lord in the skill of divine grace shows what He thinks about man's rights.

It is something that we all have to come to, as to what rights we have. There was one man who said "What further right ... have I?" (1 Sam 19: 28); he had come to that, and it is in God's mind that you should come to it, as to what right you have. This man says to the Lord: "Teacher, speak to my brother to divide the inheritance with me". He was prominent in his own thoughts and had in mind to get the Lord's support to establish what in his mind were his rights.

Think of the wonder of the Lord's word to him! The vessel of divine grace is speaking in Luke and says "Man"; He looks at the man, I believe, as God would look at him. Here is a man and God is not in his thoughts, but God is in the thoughts of the Lord Jesus and He looks at the man and in effect says to him, I am not here to advance your rights or anybody else's rights, I am here to advance the rights of God. You do not hear many people speaking about the rights of God, but here was the vessel of divine grace, and He was here to speak to men about them, in His grace and in His wisdom, and in His compassion too, because that comes out in the gospel. The Lord is not using His right arbitrarily even though He would have been justified in doing so; He is looking at the man in grace and He says "Man"; and then He begins to unfold this parable to them to show where the pursuit of what man thinks is his rights would lead him.

Have you ever thought about that? The whole world is going after its

rights. Trade unionists employ men full time to look after their rights and they spend endless days - and I believe they spend them honestly many a time - seeking for further what they call social rights, human rights and the rights of the workers, and at the end of it all there is one common end and that is death.

It says in The Proverbs "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the ways of death", chap 14: 12.

Friend, I would raise this question with you, What way are you on? Is it the way where you usurp what you think belongs to you? The end of that way is death. How pointed is the Lord's simple illustration for you! How simple God makes things for men! God is not reasoning with men today; it is not a day of reasoning; I think that is a faulty thing that is sometimes presented. God would speak to men and He would be reasonable with hem, He would seek to get them to listen, but it is not in God's mind to reason with man and come to terms with man; God has set the terms of man's blessing; He has established the ground of blessing in the death of His own Son. Here the Lord in simplicity unfolds this picture of the futility of the course these people were on. This man speaks out of a crowd; that is always dangerous; nobody is ever blessed as speaking out of a crowd. Divine grace always separates you and gets you by yourself; even though it might be that a crowd is milling round you, divine grace in wisdom has a way to separate you and speak only to you, as He would speak to you now, friend, and raise the question, What way are you on? Are you clamouring for your rights? What rights have you? And even though you have rights, where is the pursuit of these rights going to lead you?

Here is a man, and he is obviously wealthy, successful in business, and he comes to the point, "What shall I do?" Think of the words of the Lord here: "The land of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly. And he reasoned with in himself saying, What shall I do?" I wonder if you have come to that point, What shall I do? Well, he determines what he is going to do, "for I have not a place where I shall lay up my fruits", this is what I am going to do: "I will take away my granaries and build greater and there I will lay up all my produce

and my good things; and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much good things laid by for many years; repose thyself, eat, drink, be merry". That is all very well as it goes, we can say some very nice things to our own souls, but do we really tell our souls the truth when we are seeking our own rights? God always tells the truth. He says that very night "thy soul", God getting inside of him. God can do that when no other person can come in; God can come in and speak right into the soul. The furtherance of man's rights always appeals to intellect; not so the gospel of God, it comes from the heart of God and it reaches into man's soul; "Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; and whose shall be what thou hast prepared?" How simple! And we may say how reasonable! If man would only stop and think; and that, I believe, is one of the great activities of divine grace, to get you to stop and think. One of the enemy's great weapons is to keep man in constant turmoil, constant activity, filling him, blinding his thoughts. The word says "so that the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine forth for them", 2 Cor 4: 4. There comes a time I believe, and maybe there will come a time for you today, when God will just say, What about it? I want you to stop and think. I often wonder what the result was of the Lord's word here. We are not told, but I think the Lord in the simplicity of divine grace, and in the wisdom of it, just shows us the futility of persons who seek to pursue what they think rightly belongs to themselves.

We read in chapter 18 of this gospel of another man who went into the temple; he was not looking for his rights; it says he would not as much as lift his eyes to heaven. Does he say, Help me to get possession of what belongs to me? No; God be merciful to me, the sinner. That, dear friend, is what divine grace would bring about; it would bring a man to the simple greatness of a moment in his soul's history when he is able to say, I have no rights. All the right I have is that God should judge me because I am a sinner, a sinner in His sight; and the only thing I can do then is to fall back on the mercy of God: God be merciful to me, the sinner. What I am saying could so easily be lost on any one of us, for we are in a world of hurry and

men are clamouring after advancement. Even bigger words are used; engineering and words like that are no longer any use, it must be technologist and so on; they are clamouring for advancement and to attach glory to themselves. If one day you are a checker the next day you are an inspector. Man is always in a constant pursuit to advance himself and to appear better than he really is. But God has His own way to get right through; the armour of man is apparently in his pride. I like that verse:

'The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave'.

That is man's pursuit and its end. One man long ago learnt it when he said "all is vanity and pursuit of the wind", Eccles 1: 14. It is just like a breath, it is gone. Another man, in searching soul history, speaks of his days. How he had fought for his rights, for his righteousness, and how he thought he was standing for what he really was! He says "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope", Job 7: 6. How futile man's way really is! God in divine grace continues to speak to man; in grace He speaks in such a way as man can understand. As the Lord says here: "it is not because man is in abundance that his life is in his possessions". I was struck some time ago, when visiting an old brother in hospital, in a terminal ward where there was no hope of persons getting better. I looked down that ward and could see persons being nursed, poor, rich, old, and some of them not so old, all different kinds, yet with one thing in common: "it is not because a man is in abundance that his life is in his possessions". You may say how levelling the thing is. How levelling the Lord's word here must have been as it came in the wisdom that marked the vessel of divine grace, the power of it coming home into these person's consciences, as I trust it will come home into ours; because it is not only unconverted people who seek after their rights ; alas! often converted people seek what they think are their rights. What further

right have I? It is enough for me that my Lord the King has come back in peace to his own house (see 2 Sam 19: 30).

God has established His rights in mercy in Christ. I now want to speak of that. In Luke 22 the vessel of divine grace is proceeding towards the cross and He comes to this momentous point in Gethsemane where He is in direct conflict with Satan, and Satan is rolling in upon Him all that it would mean to take up the question of sin in the presence of God. This is a tremendous moment, the Lord Jesus proceeding here in grace, ministering God's grace, ministering God's attitude of blessing towards men when God could have summarily brought in judgment. When the Lord Jesus came into the world, came down from the glory, God's blessed Son, He came down, not to judge man but that man through Him might be saved (see John 3: 17). God had in mind that man should be saved, not set up here in relation to his own rights but set up here in salvation as apart from sin, as apart from the course of sin, set up in relation to God in blessing. Think of the blessed God acting in such a way! Here is the blessed Man who is going to take up the whole question of good and evil. He is going to take it up not in relation to man's rights but in relation to God's rights. He is coming face to face with the enormity of what He is about to go through. This section is worth pondering; I believe there is great soul benefit for the Christian who reads it prayerfully and sees what is involved. It comes to this point when the Lord says "not my will, but thine be done". "Not my will": you think of the rights that the Lord Jesus had; He was God, He "is over all, God blessed for ever", Rom 9: 5. The rights of Deity belong to Him. He could say "Before Abraham was, I am", John 8: 58.

Think of who this Person is who is saying "not my will"! Mr Darby says so blessedly, 'It was not that He had not a will; the glory is that He did not exercise it'. It would be wrong to say that He never exercised will in manhood; He did so for man's blessing. When that leper came to Him and doubted it He said, I will: "I will, be thou cleansed", Mark 1: 41. What an action of a divine Person in manhood with a guilty leper before Him, a man who was heinous to society, and yet a divine Person in manhood says "I will, be thou

cleansed". Think of the glory of that! and here He is faced with the enormity of what it was to have to do with a holy God about sin. He had a will, but He says "not my will". The rights of creation belonged to Him; He made it all. Scripture says there was not one thing made that was not made through Him, He had given it all being (see John 1: 3). Think of the rights that belong to Him! and yet what you see in this chapter is the sacrifice of everything that belonged to Him that He might surrender to the will of God in relation to the establishment of God rights, not in judgment, not because of what man was, but because of what God was morally. His rights in judgment existed morally because of who and what He is in His own Being. God would have been absolutely righteous in completely destroying the whole scene when it was said that He "repented that he had made Man on the earth, and it grieved him in his heart", Gen 6: 6. God, because of what He was, could have acted judicially and closed up the whole scene, and He would have been righteous in doing it, but His heart and mind came out in relation to the salvation of men, the recovery of man for Himself; and that could only be done in one way, through the work of the perfect Saviour who had no sin of His own.

There was no blemish in Him, there was no spot in Him; He never did, He never said, a wrong thing. Think of the glory, the choiceness of the manhood of Christ! Think of all those offerings that God had used to look forward to what would be seen in Christ! They all fall short in the light of the perfection of Christ. Nevertheless the indication in them is clear - they were to be perfect, without spot, without defect and to have no blemish upon them. They had to be of that character, not chargeable with any offence. That was all seen in Christ; He was perfect in sinlessness. It was not exactly innocence; it was that He was perfect in His sinlessness. The angel said to Mary as to Him: "the holy thing", Luke 1: 35. It was not just His actions but what He was through and through. Paul, that great Christian, could say "by God's grace I am what I am" (1 Cor 15: 10), but the Lord Jesus did not say that; He said "Altogether that which I also say to you", John 8: 25. It was not a question of grace, He was that intrinsically.

Here in Luke 22, in that holiness of soul that belonged to Him, He is contemplating what it was to face the matter of sin before God. Mr Darby says, in that beautiful poem 'The Man of Sorrows':

'I pause: - for, in Thy vision,
The day is hastening now,
When, for our lost condition,
Thy holy head shall bow'.

It was not a question of any lost condition in Him, it was a perfect condition. That is something, my friend, that must lay hold of you if you are to understand that the salvation that Christ has secured for you is a perfect salvation. The condition that He laid down in order that sin might be judged was a perfect condition. God judged in Him what should have been judged in the sinner. Think of the enormity of that! All that heap of evil that is spoken about in Genesis, pile after pile, all that accumulation of sin and guilt, God in holy wrath poured out His judgment as regards it on the head of Jesus until it was exhausted. Exhausted - is that going too far? If there had been one tiny corner left unjudged there could have been no preaching of salvation to the sinner. Praise be to His Name He endured it all! His own blessed testimony as He hung on the cross was "It is finished".

What a joy enters into your soul as you apprehend that, the divine light given to your soul that the whole work is done! An old hymn says 'Done is the work that saves'. Done! And who has done it? The Person who could say "not my will, but thine be done". This was not a person seeking the relentless pursuit of his own will; it was a Person in holy submission to the will of God going through with it in order that God may be glorified. Have you ever wondered at the God-glorifying power of the death of Christ? Have you ever marvelled as you read the words, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Think of the holy power of such a question; it is intended to reach into your soul. Where is it answered? Where is the result of it to be seen? It is to be seen in the heart and soul and life of every repentant sinner. The fruit of it is seen in repentant sinners, in persons who can say, God forsook Him in order that I might never be forsaken.

These are very real things and I trust we are all in the gain of them. God is eager that we might get into the gain of them now, that we might not skip over them lightly - and treat them merely as things that we have heard often, but God, I believe, would underline them and make us listen to them and be affected by them - "not my will, but thine be done". What holy submissiveness! It says of the Lord elsewhere that He was "obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross", Phil 2: 8. He suffered there for you and for me.

The believer can say, He took my place there, He was there vicariously. One of the great attacks of the enemy has been to ridicule the idea of vicarious suffering. You get it constantly when you speak to men. The result of the enemy's sowings in the mind is to raise the question, What can a man hanging on a cross do for me? The sufferings of Christ were such as to give God a right to bless every man, woman, boy and girl and free them from their sins if they will only bow to the Lord Jesus Christ and accept Him as their Saviour. Now that is the truth, and such is the glory, the magnificence, the effectiveness and the value of the sufferings, the death and the blood shedding of Jesus, that the believer who is in the light and joy of it can say "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin", 1 John 1: 7. All sin - it is all taken account of. God has judged in Christ the whole question of sin and taken account too of every believer's guilt, settled and solved it all there in the death of His own Son, and He has raised Christ - "who has been delivered for our offences and has been raised for our justification", Rom 4: 25. Then too He has given Him glory, as Peter says (see 1 Pet 1: 21), so that your faith and hope might be in God, not that you should be pursuing your own rights. It is a futile thing for men to be seeking their own rights. The secret is that God has exalted Christ that our faith and hope might be in God.

Now when we come to Revelation it is a question of taking up your rights, not now the rights that seem to belong to men in a sin-torn world but divinely-provided rights. God has provided these for every Christian, for every lover of Jesus, for every one who has been given life through His name. God has provided a great system for

blessing and He is saying, Go in for that, it is your right. Now this is one thing that a believer has to establish his right to. It is not taken up on church ground as men speak of it; you could not enrol as a member of this. Even though your name was on the roll of every church in the country it would not mean that you have ever eaten of the tree of life or that you have ever known the joy of coming into the city. It says about the Spirit's service typically in the Psalm that He brought them forth by a right way that He might bring them to a city of habitation (see Ps 107: 7). Think of the way that the Holy Spirit is striving with believers in the midst of all the confusion today! What is His mission? What is the divine end? What is God's thought to be reached for the believer in the Spirit's striving? It is that the believer might take up what is rightly his. What I would raise with you is, have you taken up what rightly belongs to you? If you desire to do so there is a divinely accredited way, and that is to wash your robes. It is not only that you are covered by the blood of Christ that came from His side, the blessed side of Jesus - thank God for that, it will stand eternally - but what about the water that came from the side of Jesus? Are you using it? If you are not using it you are foolish. The scripture says that the fool knoweth not the way into the city (see Eccles 10: 15). If you want the way into the city, into the joy of the fellowship, into the merriment of the house, come by the way of the water and wash your robes and you will be blessed: "Blessed are they that wash their robes". Not so many years ago, not so many days or even hours ago, they are doing it all the time and they are brought into an area where the tree of life is . You say, What is that? What is it there for? It is there that you might experience sustained life, life in the Son. I spoke to a believer recently who said, Life was imparted to me about twenty-five years ago when I believed in God's Son. It is not God's thought to impart life to you years ago and then just leave you; you need the tree of life that you might be sustained in life day after day. When you become an old person, as you boys and girls might grow up to be, may it be said of you as can be said of many today, that even in old age they are still vigorous (see Ps 92: 14). Why? Because they are eating of the tree of life; their souls are feeding on Christ, they have come the moral way and are washing

their robes, keeping their communications with the world short. They are doing what needs to be done righteously and are keeping their associations right, they are eating of the tree of life and are going in by the gate into the city. What a right belongs to the believer! I say to you believing friend, Are you taking it up? What are the gatherings of the saints like to you? Are they formal? Begin to wash your robes, begin to come into this eating system. What an eating system this is! The tree of life available in all its richness to feed upon. You will find as eating of it that things are a different colour and that there is a gate, and that gate always leads one way, it leads into the city, the city that God has provided for the believer's blessing; He is the God of the city. It says elsewhere typically that the name of it is "Jehovah is there", Ezek 48: 15. It is the way to the divine presence. O that we might learn it better! It is the moral way, it is the right that belongs to every true believer. Alas many are not exercising it, they are pursuing their rights in this world. Many of our beloved brethren are merged in the religious and political systems around, thinking that they can make the world better by their integrity. The only way for Christians is to wash their robes and they are blessed in doing so; they feed on the tree of life, they go in by the gate and the gate provides the way into the city. May we establish our right and continue to do so and be found in life and vigour in the divine system. It is far better than trying to return to what the Galatians were returning to, a system of man's devising. Paul gives it its right name, he says it is weak and beggarly, it is bondage. May God bless the word.

AIRDRIE

2 October 1977

BLESSEDNESS

A.McBride

Psalm 1: 1-3

It has been well said that the first two psalms give the key to the whole book of the psalms, because they speak of Christ, bringing out the blessedness of the character of Christ in manhood here and in glory. The whole book, therefore, would be illuminated for us. As we go through the various books of psalms and the exercises peculiar to each book, we can see how the blessedness of Christ runs all the way through. One has been exercised as to how we might be preserved in freshness in the testimony. I suppose all of us would readily acknowledge that we are not always as fresh as we would like to be. As we feed on Christ the exercise would surely be that something of the character of what shone in that blessed Man here in the will of God, ever green, ever fresh, ever delightful to the eye of the Father, would be with us, consciously with us.

It speaks of the blessedness of the man marked by these moral features which were seen in such perfection in Jesus in manhood here, complete separation from all that was defiling. Holiness was intrinsically in Him in virtue of who He was - never ceasing to be what He was by what He became - precious thought! But as a man He preserved Himself. He set Himself in that way, beloved, to be pleasing to the Father. This reference in verse 3, as to the tree planted by brooks of water, is specially in my mind. It is an illustration used by the Spirit to highlight the preciousness and the fruitfulness and the freshness of the life of Jesus, and that, beloved, surely should be highlighted in those who love Him. "He is as a tree planted by brooks of water". We can think of the life of Jesus. We can think of all the precious features that enter into it, but I should like to use this verse to apply it as to where we are in relation to this order of life which surely would be for the pleasure of God. We had a touch on Lord's day as to how divine Persons would highlight certain features at a particular time for Their own pleasure. I have an impression that, perhaps in this place at least, we are being challenged as to whether we are being maintained in freshness of affection for Christ, whether all that is precious to Him is precious to

me, whether the testimony to our absent Lord of whom we sang is being maintained in freshness in me, whether there is this fruit in me that would at least contribute to the continuation of the testimony in the vigour and freshness that should mark it.

So it says “as a tree planted by brooks of water”; not just one brook but “brooks of water”. We were reminded on Lord's day in the preaching that the believer's beginnings are in the death of Christ.

Oh, what a brook of water that is! just to root ourselves in that in our affections, to appreciate that our beginnings are there in the death of the Lord Jesus, in His having removed all that belonged to us morally, so that we have a new beginning according to God in the death of that blessed Man. Brooks of water! Can we draw on that, beloved? Day by day can we draw a fresh appreciation of the One of whom we sang, the One who has suffered and died for us, and the One who blessedly now lived for us.

We have also been reminded of the value of the Scriptures, what they are in themselves as the word of God, the one reliable thing in that sense in this scene today, the living word of God. What a brook that is! to find a source of refreshment, a source of supply out of the Scriptures themselves, to read them not only for knowledge but, as Mr Stoney said, to learn in them God Himself (see Vol.12, p.232). Prayer: think of that brook of water! Do we pray enough, beloved? I am challenged myself as to this. Do we pray enough as to our own things, but enough pre-eminently as to the things of God, as to the continuation of the testimony, as to the welfare of the saints and in relation to their correspondence with Christ? Then the value too of the blessed Spirit Himself, One given to us in love to be the source of our being maintained in freshness in our links with God. Then you find too the brooks that flow as we assemble with the saints. How delightful *that* is! These rivers of water, how precious! We can find roots there, beloved. How great it is to find the divine supply.

So there is what comes into evidence, the fruit and the leaf, because there is this drawing from that which is living, vital, from the divine source itself. We want to see more, surely all of us, of the fruit

in its season; that is, whatever the requirement of the present time, there would be a fruit for it, there would be something as the fruit of exercise, the fruit of occupation with Christ, coming out. There would not be famine or blight among the saints but fruit in its season. "And whose leaf fadeth not". How we delight in the greenness, the freshness of the leaf! As we think of the Lord Jesus we can think of the value and preciousness of viewing His blessed life and what it was to God, giving off its own fragrance, its own freshness, and to see that marking the saints. It speaks somewhere (see Ps 104: 16) of the trees of Jehovah, which would mean that there would be a collective expression in the testimony of what came out in the preciousness of the life of Jesus.

May we be concerned that we are putting roots down into what is profitable and that they are being fed, so that this leaf and this fruit and its season is preserved. We know that if there is a blight the top shoots go first. Let us be sure that there is this fruit and this greenness, this freshness that would be for the delight of the eye of God and for the prosperity and preservation of the beloved saints.

GRANGEMOUTH

9 October 1979

THE MIND OF THE LORD

A.C.Craig

Isaiah 42: 1-4; 50: 4-11

I have thought for quite a while, beloved brethren, of the importance of having the Lord's mind. There would not be anything, I suppose, to equal that in a day of such independent thinking. I thought to draw attention therefore to Himself as the One who was here and who had the Father's mind. Learning from Him we could get help for ourselves as to how we might have the Lord's mind. It says in Genesis that Jehovah said certain things in His heart (see chap 6: 6). I suppose He must have said something to Noah about his grief of heart, though we are not told, or it may be that there was no one to open up His heart to at that time. But immediately the Lord comes in, a Man of another order, the Father could open up His heart to Him. There would not be anything that the Father would hide from Jesus here in manhood. He would no longer just say in His heart; it was a public declaration: "in thee I have found my delight", Mark 1: 11. He is not saying it in His heart now, it is a question of Him making it known publicly. It was to the Lord Himself on some occasions, but on other occasions it was a public matter, as at His baptism. The Spirit came on Him at that time, so there is both the declaration of the Father's pleasure and the action of the Spirit; and that seems to be in this first scripture; "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth! I will put my Spirit upon him". Notice that: it looks as if it was because of the delight that Jehovah had in His servant - "I will put my Spirit upon him". No doubt the Spirit came upon the Lord of His own volition too, but there is also the side of the Father who would delight in putting His Spirit upon Jesus, and I believe there is a great deal of instruction in that for us. You might say it would be for service, and no doubt that is what is in mind here, that the servant is being set up as anointed by the Spirit in view of service. It is wonderful what it says about him: "he shall bring forth judgment to the nations. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street", and other things predicted of Jesus, but we would have to trace it all to the Spirit. It is in the grace and power of "my Spirit", Jehovah's Spirit, that the

servant is carrying out these wonderful things; it is prophetic and points forward to Christ.

So that is the first point, that we must trace everything back to the Spirit; He is the One who would capacitate us and fit us for functioning administratively. This is quoted in Matthew's gospel (see chap 12: 18 21) which is the gospel of legislation, and also the assembly coming into it, where things have to be carried through down here on the earth as in heaven. Heaven's mind is to be carried through, the Lord's mind is to be executed in the assembly, and that could not be apart from taking everything up by the Spirit. It is significant in fact that the Lord Himself is anointed with the Spirit, and what He would do, so to speak, is done in the power of the Spirit, a divine Person Himself setting out the pattern for His people as to how things are done by the Spirit. Wonderful things are said about Him as to the grace and power of His service: "he shall bring forth judgment according to truth. He shall not faint nor be in haste, till he have set justice in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law".

Think of that! That is a wonderful touch - "the isles shall wait for his law", or as Matthew translates it, "on his name shall the nations hope". It is not exactly Israel itself, but "the isles shall wait for his law". Wonderful that all will look to Christ! He is the One who has the divine mind; He will have the divine mind then and He will carry everything through for the divine pleasure.

Now in chapter 50 what is specially in mind is "The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of the instructed". This is something else and refers to what Jesus is *given now*. In chapter 42 it is "I will put my Spirit upon him", but here "The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed".

Wonderful that! Wonderful features of dependent manhood shine out here. It is not so much stressed in the former scripture but it is stressed here. That is a fine touch: "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed". Think of the Lord Jesus, blessed Man! He was dependent about everything

even to wakening up in the morning, so to speak. He did not wake until the Father woke Him, and He woke Him with some word in His ear. We must admit that the Lord had the Father's mind. I think John's gospel brings that out, although I think this fits pretty much with Luke also. Nevertheless John shows that the Lord was here not to do His own will but the will of Him who had sent Him (see chap 6: 38). He also said "I do always the things that are pleasing to him", chap 8: 29. He had the Father's mind.

There is nothing greater, I feel beloved brethren, than to have the Lord's mind. We may know His disposition regarding the dispensation, but that is not exactly what I mean by having His mind. I have no time to illustrate it from persons in Scripture who could be brought forward to show how they had the Lord's mind in matters but I think that every one of us would confess there are often times when we maybe cast about in a dilemma and do not just know what the Lord's mind is. What I am trying to show, dear brethren, is the way to it. It is set out in Christ Himself and I am sure that the person who traces everything to the Spirit, whose activities are all by the Spirit, and who is in such dependence as set out here, would have God's mind. It is wonderful, the features of that man in chapter 42 added to this here: "The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious". Who could stand up in the face of that? "I was not rebellious", there was not a trace of self-will in Jesus, if you sought evidence of it it was not there. We can be rebellious, we can be rebellious without showing it, that can happen in our spirit, but "I was not rebellious". It will be wonderful to be near to Him eternally, a blessed Man like this. "I turned not away back". If you review the whole history of Israel, where they failed, where they were rebellious, where they turned back, it is all taken up in Christ and it is shown that He is the perfect One, the perfect dependent Man. "I gave my back to smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. But the Lord Jehovah will help me". That is very fine.

Now I want to come to these two verses at the end of the chapter. This is where I get my point that it fits ourselves: "Who is

among you that feareth Jehovah, that hearkeneth to the voice of his servant?" We have seen how He has been endowed with the Spirit - "my Spirit"; we have seen the dependent features and qualities of the Man who trusts in God, not any evidence of His own will working independently of the Father's will; He was not rebellious. He is the One whom God has set out that we have to listen to: "Who is among you that feareth Jehovah, that hearkeneth to the voice of his servant?" What a servant! "He that walketh in darkness and hath no light": who of us has not been there? It may be that we are there pretty much in the day time, maybe all day, we just do not know. I do not think that the walking in darkness and hath no light is self-will; it is just the fact that they do not know what to do or where to go, they do not have the Lord's mind; I think it means that. They walk in darkness and have no light. The Lord never walked in darkness; He always walked in light. He was the solution to the darkness: "let him confide in the name of Jehovah, and stay himself upon his God".

We all feel the problems at times and would like to be more definite and have the Lord's mind; this then is the way to it: "let him confide in the name of Jehovah". Confidence in God is the first great thing.

What a servant He has put before us to study, for us to get the gain of! Let us get the gain of His word, have confidence in Him - "confide in the name of Jehovah". It will save us from running here and there, wondering this and that. Let us take on the features of the One who has the tongue of the instructed, not only dependent but trustful and restful. "The Lord Jehovah will help me"; "let him confide in the name of Jehovah". It is for us to have more confidence and trust in God and be simple about it. Then this next point: "and stay himself upon his God". How would you do that? God is fixed, His servant is fixed, He is not cast about, He is steady, He is like a rock; indeed in this prophet He is the Rock.

In what is brought out in these two scriptures, dear brethren, is the solution to getting the Lord's mind. How simply everything will unfold and work out as we have that! I confess that I have coveted for myself just to have the Lord's mind. Then it adds "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire". Who is it that kindles a fire? There is darkness

and no light; well now, “kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and among the sparks that ye have kindled”. How poor that is! What a poor substitute, dear brethren! Who of us have not tried this, some contrivance of our own? We kindle a fire that will give some light - a fire does not give much light - but that is not the light that comes from Jehovah's Servant. Compass yourself about with sparks: what is a spark? All active for a moment, bright, and in a second dead; that is what a spark is. There is no steady illumination from a spark. “Walk in the light of your fire, and among the sparks that ye have kindled”; how different to “confide in the name of Jehovah, and stay himself upon his God”! I believe as we seek communion, dear brethren , and get to know in a better way the Lord and the Father by the Spirit's help, we will be in the gain of having the Lord's mind and there will be no attempt at any innovation or human contrivance; we will walk in the light of His countenance and the knowledge of His might.

AIRDRIE

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THE CHILDREN'S BELIEF

When the Lord Jesus spoke of the “little ones who believe in me” it may be that he was including in His thoughts even the great apostles. But He had been speaking about little children so we can understand that it is never too early in life to have faith in the Saviour - to believe in Him and not only about Him. Actually even infants were brought to Jesus for blessing. Some may have been very shy,

some even frightened at first by being brought before the Teacher and His disciples. But how could anyone, young or old, resist the love and tenderness with which He met them? I remember a newly-converted man saying that his greatest sin had been that he had spurned the grace of God. He became, however, a trophy of that very grace!

Like Timothy, many children who read this have had the favour of knowing the “sacred letters” as they grow up. With him it was the Old Testament but we can tell that he had come to know the Lord Jesus because he is called a disciple when we first hear of him. The children we read about in the Gospels knew the Lord in humble form, whereas He was known to Timothy and is known to us as glorified in heaven. The conversion of Timothy may not have been as vivid as that of the apostle Paul but the effect of it was clearly seen in his life. It is always right and good to accept the word of God as truth. Do not, however, be satisfied just to say 'yes' to it, but seek a personal word from the Lord Himself such as made Timothy and others His personal followers, living and working for Him. Perhaps you would like to hear about a poor boy named Tom who wished to do something for the Saviour in whom he had come to believe. Tom was a cripple and was so weak that he had to be always in bed. He had no Bible until a friend gave him a shilling - now five pence - with which someone bought him one. The shopkeeper said 'Tom could not have spent his money more wisely'. Tom's bed being at the window by the roadside it was easy for him to write out texts, fold them up and drop them out into the street below. No one knows how many people may thus have read a little of the word of God but certainly one gentleman did for he found a text lodged in the band of his hat! It read “I must work the works of him that has sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work”. This man was a believer who had for long forgotten his Master but this text kindled in him a new desire to serve Him. Thus the little seed bore its fruit. Perhaps the question is good for us all - Am I working for Christ?

J.C.Evershed