

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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EXPERIMENTAL TRUTH

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A.C.C. I thought that the deep sleep of the chapter in Genesis would be the experimental and practical side of the deep sleep of chapter 2. It is an interesting thing that the great truths we cherish and utilise in the service of God, and the relationships that we enjoy, all have a practical and a positive side to them. If you take the thought of brethren of the heavenly Man according to John 20, what a privilege that is and we enjoy that, but then in the other gospels we are His brethren on moral lines if we do the will of His Father who is in the heavens and keep the word of God. Then again, what we enjoy in marital relation with Christ, in bridal affections mutually enjoyed, on the experimental and practical side we are His wife here in loyalty and fidelity, caring for His interests. We are sons in privilege and children here under the Father's care and coming out in the characteristics of the Father. I doubt if there is any truth that has not its practical bearing on us. So I thought that the deep sleep that falls on Abram might help us regarding that experimental side of things. The pivot of the chapter is "how shall I know...?" That immediately brings up the practical side. The word of God appears here for the first time in the Scriptures. I wondered if one of the crying needs of the present time is systematic teaching. It is not very profitable just to pick and choose; we should encourage the young, both brothers and sisters, to go in for things systematically and have a build up of experience with God.

A.J.E.W. Do you have in mind the individual side with each and yet a course of things in our assembly occasions that would support it and tend to coordinate what has been learned? It calls for sacrifice, does it not, readiness to spend time and energy in the acquisition of what is so peculiarly precious? But say some more about the systematic side.

A.C.C. Well, Elihu was well accustomed to the word of God; there had been a good deal said before he spoke, but one thing he said

was "God is exalted in his power: who teacheth as he?", Job 36: 22. I think the assembly is competent to afford God the opportunity of teaching, and I am quite certain that that is what is in this chapter. God is the teacher here; He takes Abram in hand to instruct him.

A.J.E.W. The knowledge that you speak of "how shall I know...?" - is not just knowledge in the mind but involves experience. Is that the point you are making?

A.C.C. Certainly. "The Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding", 1 John 5: 20. That is not just to rest in mere objective knowledge but that there might be the subjective side with us. You must have both sides. On the divine side everything is provided for us, but then there is the other side that corresponds with that, which brings about reality in the soul.

D.J.H. I have sometimes wondered whether that is not set out in John 4. As soon as the woman comes to the point, "give me this water", the Lord says to her "Go, call thy husband". Is that not the two sides that you are speaking of? And does it not show the necessity of the one as underlying the other?

A.C.C. That chapter greatly helps what is in mind because it is a question of the believer's body; that is why I read from Romans 8. Abram is the believer here, and he raises the question as to an heir and how he would know. God says to him "This shall not be thine heir" - that was Eliezer - "but he that will come forth out of thy body". Now there is a good deal in that. It is a question of the believer's body and what has to be wrought out in that area.

J.M. As far as Abram's exercises are concerned, he wanted to have the experience of it; but the exercises of the 'how' that you have referred to as deep sleep do not set aside in any way the fact that he appropriated the matter in faith.

A.C.C. I think that is good. It is a question first of all as to how things are to be apprehended. There must be that side first. God takes Abram in hand to instruct him on that line before the matter of the deep sleep comes up. He said "This shall not be thine heir, but he that will come forth out of thy body shall be thine heir. And he led

him out, and said, Look now toward the heavens, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them". Now that is God teaching Abram.

J.M. Is it the apprehension of that by faith that leads Abram into this experimental side? He says "How shall I know...?" - the pivot of the chapter, as you said.

A.C.C. The ultimate in the chapter is that, on the ground of covenant, the saints are coming into the wealth of the inheritance. And that comes up in Romans 8. I do not mean to go on to the ultimate in this reading but just secure this thought as to how, as having an indwelling Spirit, we have the right and capacity to go in for the inheritance.

H.A.H. Is there a similar thought at the beginning of Luke? Zacharias asked in unbelief "How shall I know... ?" but Mary believed, as Abram did here, and says "How shall this be... ?" I was thinking of the way it involved that beloved woman's body and the power of the Holy Spirit.

A.C.C. Quite so. I think the Spirit would draw attention to the importance of our bodies and our being divinely taught as to the truth. They are what we have here as vehicles for the will of God. Reference was made to faith, and that is really like Romans 3, 4 and 5. The younger people should go in for systematic teaching and understand what is involved in those chapters. To me it is like being led out to number the stars. Those three chapters are all from the divine side; we have nothing to do with the great truths in them, it is a question of our being instructed in the greatness of the truths. We need the three Rs; those chapters bring that out.

J.M. Abram raising this question as to 'how' does not in any sense indicate that he was deficient in faith in what God was proposing to him.

A.C.C. Not at all. It is rather like Mary, as has been alluded to; she is fully up to it. The 'how' is different in that connection from the 'how' of unbelief.

E.C.B. Is it in your mind that the question 'how' here relates to possession?

A.C.C. Yes; "How shall I know that I shall possess it?". That raises the question of reality in the believer's soul, and what place the Spirit of God has in view of possession.

S.D.K.R. What are the three Rs?

A.C.C. Redemption, Romans 3; resurrection, Romans 4; reconciliation, Romans 5. Now think of the stars as presenting the truth from the divine side. You say, What had Abram to do with the stars? Nothing at all; he apprehended by faith and he "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness": that is Romans 4. I think we should make more way in our own consciousness and in the meetings for the divine teaching.

R.T. The first verse underlies the whole chapter, and it would be an early and continuing lesson: "Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, thy exceeding great reward".

A.C.C. It is like divine support. There is much to support us and strengthen us in view of taking in divine teaching. In 2 Corinthians 4, where serious exercises come up, there is a double reference to mercy being shewn us. I think in God's consideration and compassion He would encourage us while He takes in hand to teach us. When we come to the experimental side, involving serious exercises, there is all the time consideration on the part of the blessed God - "Fear not".

R.T. Even through these exercises we never lose the sense that we are loved. He addresses him by name: "Fear not, Abram". The horror comes in and all that, but the sense of the love of God is never lost.

A.C.C. Very good.

C.G.H. You were speaking earlier of the assembly. I take it that what you have in mind is that it is the most advantageous sphere in which divine teaching can be imbibed; and the teaching comes

divinely from on high largely through the action of the Spirit in gift, does it not? Would that be the 'how'?

A.C.C. The very first line of the hymn you gave out (No.412) brought up the Spirit's teaching - taught by Him.

W.J.W. The individual side shows that we have to have that experience in a personal sense; we cannot exactly be taught that except by God Himself.

A.C.C. Well, it is the individual side, and that is how we all begin; we learn the lessons individually. God in His grace and consideration for us undertakes to teach us and He would draw our attention first of all to the stars. It brings out in Abram his belief - he believed God. I think that is the intention, that we might be properly grounded in the faith of our souls in the greatness of what God has in mind for us, and the system of things that He has established in the death of Christ. These three chapters in Romans all bring up the death of Christ and the greatness of what has been accomplished in that precious death.

V.E.W. "Look now toward the heavens" is essential before the facing of further matters.

A.C.C. I think that would be right; it is what is presented to us for the apprehension by our faith. That is what comes out here.

J.C.E. Would that be the reason why, as soon as Abram says "How shall I know that I shall possess it God says, Do something for me: "Take me a heifer". God was going to reach something for His own pleasure in it.

A.C.C. I think so; and by that you come on to another line. It is not looking toward the stars it is something altogether different, this is a new lesson. Abram did not have much to do with the stars except to look at them and believe God and the word that God said, but when it comes to "Take me a heifer of three years old" it is a question of what belonged to Abram himself, so to speak. This is teaching on a different line, which is more the subjective line. The objective line is

look at the stars, but now this is another course of teaching altogether different.

F.R.T. Is the more we are conscious of the depth of these experiences - it says "a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, a horror" - not to give us a sense of what objects of love we are? I was thinking of Jacob and the depth of experience he went through in God's disciplinary ways; was it not so all the time that God loved him?

A.C.C. No doubt that would be true. Nevertheless for the moment what Abram is going through is by no means pleasant very serious, deep soul-searching exercises. And through it he must go, but in it all, I believe, there is the sense of divine support, and that is what I would like to bring out, that in the seriousness of personal individual exercises there is through it all the sense of divine support.

F.R.T. I thought that we might wish to escape it but in God's love He sees that we do not escape it.

A.C.C. Well, quite true, I think you must go through it. Abram was a sort of a delineation of what Israel would go through; and it does not mean, because he is that, that others will not go through it. He sets out what Israel would be down in Egypt going through the bondage and being delivered. That does not mean that, because he is going through it, that will remove it for Israel; they have to come through it. And the object is that they might come out with great property, and that is in my mind. I trust that all the exercises the saints are going through, and the deep lessons that are being learned, and room made for the word of God - because that is the great operative principle, the word of God - that out of it all will come much in the way of profit, which here involves the building of the tabernacle. Israel coming out of Egypt with great property involves the construction of the tabernacle in the wilderness. God has in mind that in all our exercises there might be great benefit and property secured in view of His own dwelling. But I do not mean to go on to the fulness of that, save to see that the believer's body is essential as indwelt by the Spirit in view of that wonderful construction.

J.M. This is the prefiguring of what Romans 7 is to the Christian, is it not? And the result of that exercise is that we come out ready for the collective position in view of the securing of what is pleasurable to God collectively.

A.C.C. I hope that what we are passing through is education for us all, especially for the younger brethren. I noticed the other day that Mr Taylor said that the brethren earlier on always came back to Romans 7 and, he added, it may be that we should too. I believe that in all these matters we are going through the Lord has brought us back to that and it is in view of our instruction and the clarification of the truth in our souls. All would admit that it has taken us to the Lord, it has taken us to our knees, it has taken us to the Scriptures, it has taken us to the ministry; there is that much good already. But it is all in view of the believer being here in the conscious sense of his body being indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

That would lead on to the great matter of the tabernacle, a habitation of God. I think we want to be more serious, more committed to the teaching that goes on amongst us and to see to it that the younger people are well instructed in these things. We have the three Rs but there are also three Ds in Romans 6, 7 and 8 - delivered from the world, delivered from the law of the first husband and delivered from the flesh. All this is part of the systematic teaching. It is a great moment when the believer arrives at the fact that he is indwelt by the Spirit.

L.A.B. The number of the stars is to be answered to in the number of Abram's seed. Is that the link, do you think?

A.C.C. Yes, showing that there is a certain balance. That is why he divided these creatures. Let us rest a bit on this matter of the creatures; "Take me". It is a question of what belongs to Abram, that they are his possession; he had to go and find them and he had to be particular about their age. All this detail involves Abram; it is not just something objective or abstract he is right in it, he cannot escape it.

L.A.B. The stars show what God has done Himself, but that is linked with Abram's seed, something that clearly involves Abram personally. What God presents to us in the glory of what belongs to Himself is to be answered to in the believer in a real and practical way.

A.C.C. Abraham is the father of us all: that is in Romans 4. But what about these other chapters? There should be the correspondence subjectively. These chapters would bring that out, for the question comes up in chapter 6: what are we going to say? What answer is there?

A.J.E.W. Do the "three years old" of the beasts suggest maturity and yet the energy of life remaining to pursue things? I was thinking of the sign of formation inwardly in life and power that would bring out the features of true manhood after Christ, and yet bring them to bear in the energy and positiveness which the maturity of a beast of three years would suggest. There is no weakening; it rather suggests the strength which you are leading us to.

A.C.C. That is very good; the heifer had to be three years old and the she-goat and the ram as well - two females and a male. I think it is the operation of the word of God according to Hebrews 4, what it can bring about, separating soul and spirit and things like that; it is very keen, very effectual. I think that what is intended is that we are able to differentiate, not only between good and evil, but discerning things that would be pleasing to God.

A.J.E.W. I was going to ask you about the two separate references to Abraham in Hebrews 11 (see v 8 and vv 17-19). The first seems to set out the basic position in the way in which he developed, but the second speaks of his sacrifice, he delivered his son in sacrifice with the light of resurrection in his soul. He gets through to the light of resurrection, does he not?

A.C.C. Most important; you can face up to the experimental side, with the serious exercises that come up, involving myself, involving my own individuality, in the light of resurrection. Redemption and

resurrection and reconciliation are apprehended by faith and would steady us and strengthen us in view of the most serious exercises.

S.D.K.R. Are you linking the dividing of the animals with what it says in Hebrews 4: 12; "the division of soul and spirit"?

A.C.C. Yes, there is the effect of the word of God and that we are able to put things in their place and have a perfect balance. The word of God would help us in our intelligence, give us light in our souls. Abram is able to put them side by side. I think he is bringing out the principle of a perfect balance between, you might say, what is objective and what is subjective. We use these terms, technical terms, but they help us to understand the divine side and our own side.

D.J.H. He is not told to do it. Does that emphasise that it is the effect of the word of God upon him? By doing it he makes way for what God does later that is the flame of fire passing between the pieces but he does it in answer to the word of God.

A.C.C. That is right. Things are clear in your soul you might say: the light of the stars, the light of these chapters in Romans. But the light that they bring makes things clear to your apprehension. That helps us in view of the practical side. These are wonderful chapters, 6, 7 and 8, where the three Ds come up. The believer, Paul says, is not to be ignorant. The effect of the word of God clears away the ignorance. "As many as have been baptised unto Christ Jesus, have been baptised unto his death" (Rom 6: 3); that is an important matter.

D.J.H. So does Paul come to the division - I with the mind and with the flesh?

A.C.C. Very good; he is able to put things in their proper place. But I think that for our younger people - and I trust the brethren are going with me in this - it is a question of their instruction in these matters, where there is this teaching going on - and we are not to be ignorant. "Are you ignorant that we, as many as have been baptised unto Christ Jesus, have been baptised unto his death?" That is a very important thing.

C.C.I. What would the scaring of the birds away mean?

A.C.C. I think he is considering what is for the divine pleasure, and that he has in his heart that what has been presented is not to be in any way impinged on, it is to remain for God's pleasure.

C.C.I. There is a whole line of things that would be against the systematic teaching which should come under our judgment. Would that enter into the matter?

A.C.C. Certainly, and a whole system of things against the believer. He finds that, but having been baptised to His death that is what you arrive at. You did not do that. You have to arrive at the equivalent of that in the reckoning yourselves dead unto sin. That is only being consistent with your baptism, you reckon yourself dead to the whole scene around you. The younger brethren should take these things in and be alerted by the word of God as to the importance of the things that are held amongst us professedly. I use that word rightly, that what we hold in the way of profession should be arrived at practically by experience.

W.J.R.B. The enemy is set against this; would that be the birds?

A.C.C. Surely. But the whole world's system is against the believer; that is the point in Romans 6, but he is reckoning himself "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus". That is a wonderful thing; although it is only reckoning there, that is what he is doing with his mind.

R.T. What you refer to is in view of walking in newness of life. Is that what this chapter is leading on to, that is the newness of life marking the steps of Abraham?

A.C.C. Very good; and that brings a certain emancipation and relief to your soul.

F.M.K. Is there an important 'd' in Colossians 1? It is what the Father has done - "Has delivered us from the authority of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (v.13). Is that where we get our bearings from?

A.C.C. That is what the Father has done. Our side comes up later in the epistle, and the complementary side of the truth is always the testing side. It is a question of mortifying our members "which are upon the earth". That is the complementary and the most difficult side, the experimental side. But they must go together.

W.J.W. Do you think that, as we apprehend that the Lord Jesus in His death went this way for us, it would strengthen us to go through the moral exercises that you are suggesting, that we might arrive in ourselves at something substantial that corresponds to what God has wrought out in the death of Christ? The Spirit is set to that.

A.C.C. I think we all would admit that it is as we have some experience and arrival at things by that principle that we begin to discover that there is reality with us. Your reference to the Lord's death is very good. I think that "as the sun was just going down", is Gethsemane, and "when the sun had gone down" is the cross, and I would encourage the younger brethren to ponder the Lord in Gethsemane and at the cross.

J.M. What would you say about the horror of darkness?

A.C.C. I think, as I said earlier, that is the other side of the deep sleep of chapter 2, where there is no such thing. That was before the sin question arose. But this is different, it is a question of what it means and the exercises you are going through, but in it all, I believe, there is the sense of divine support.

J.M. In chapter 5 you get the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us. That is a great support as we go through these deep subjective exercises. Do you think this horror of great darkness involves that the believer goes through experimentally something of what sin really is to God and the way in which He has dealt with it?

A.C.C. I think so. It is alarming enough to realise that the whole system around you is only sin. You see the necessity of reckoning yourself dead to it and alive to God in Christ Jesus, sin not reigning in your mortal body but "your members instruments of righteousness". So it is not only that you are in the light of God's

righteousness in chapter 3 - that is great - but your members now are on that line, instruments of righteousness, in the scene of evil, in a world given over to it. To arrive at the fact that the world is full of evil is bad enough, but to arrive at the thing in yourself! Ah, that is a lesson to learn is it not?

J.M. I think that is the deeper lesson. It is not only, as you say, that the whole world lies in that system but you find that very thing in yourself, and there is no capacity in yourself to deliver yourself from it. That is what this horror of great darkness really means, does it not?

A.C.C. Yes, and you find that you are totally weak in the presence of it. The man in Romans 7 is not a wicked man, he is a weak man and a wretched man because of that.

J.M. Is he not a person who has been led in his experiences by the Spirit to seek to be pleasing to God, to answer to what is presented to him in faith, to what he is in the divine sight? But what he is finding is the extreme weakness in himself.

A.C.C. That is just the truth. Get your eye on the Deliverer; the Deliverer becomes the Husband. You cannot transpose these things. While the idea of the husband comes in at the beginning of the chapter, it is a great thing to wake up to the fact that you have a marital, affectionate link with Christ. Is not that a great thing? I think Mr Raven is choice about that: he says that Romans 6 is like Peter leaving the boat, Romans 7 and 8 is the Lord gives you His hand. Wonderful thing! You get the sense of the Lord's hand in the presence of utter weakness. You want to do what is right, you want to do the will of God, and yet you are utterly weak, you have no power, and there is the hand of Christ. That is the hand of the Husband.

R.T. He gives him His hand here when He says "Know assuredly", does He not?

A.C.C. That is very good. That is a real thing to arrive at on the experimental line.

S.D.K.R. Is the fire the power of God coming into the situation by the Spirit? It passed between the pieces: is that the experience of Romans 7 - the analysis ?

A.C.C. Well, I think it is that God is now appropriating this sacrifice that Abram has made. I daresay that the smoking furnace and the flame of fire had their fulfilment in the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. I think that God is indicating that there would be ample provision for Israel in view of arriving at Canaan, but it means, I believe, that God is appropriating this as being pleasing to Him. Their being laid out by Abram is the effect of the word of God.

E.C.B. Is it of interest that this severe experimental side portrayed in this chapter comes in in connection with the heavenly presentation of the truth? It does not come in in chapter 13 where it is earthly.

A.C.C. Very good. In the light of that it is a great point in systematic teaching to see that God has arrived at things and established them, and now it is a question of how the believer is going to arrive at what God has arrived at.

E.C.B. For us it is that God wants us for His own sphere, and the moral exercises are to bring out in us the understanding of what is suitable and what is unsuitable to that sphere.

A.C.C. That is just the truth.

D.A.B. Is it very encouraging that God has actually kept the promises in verses 14 to 16 of Genesis 15? If we pass through exercises it is a source of assurance to us to look at a scripture like this and see that, if God says He will do something, He will.

A.C.C. Yes, that is surely right.

F.R.T. Do you think that Mark in his gospel would show how deeply he went through the experience as recovered, having got away from the truth? He refers to the Lord on the cross, that He was crucified at the third hour, and then he refers to the sixth to the ninth hour when there was darkness over the whole land. Then after the resurrection he says "the sun having risen", chap 16: 2.

A.C.C. I think Mark would help us in the severity side of our exercises and would encourage us to contemplate the Lord in Gethsemane and at the cross. He also provides a woman of whom it says, "she knew in her body" certain things had taken place (chap 5: 29). She went to Christ, she proved His hand so to speak, and she knew in her body that power had gone out of Him to her. I think that is a great encouragement, having to do with the Lord; that is Romans 6, you go to the Lord, you are for Him, and He will give you power to face up to the exercises.

L.A.B. And in Mark you have the detailed transactions of the Lord with both the blind man and the deaf man. Does that not emphasise what you are saying, that these are things known by way of experience in the soul? Thus Mark can write only about one Man.

A.C.C. That is good. I have noticed that he is quite brief in many things but with those cases there is a good deal of detail. He shows the Lord spending time over them; He puts His fingers in his ears and He touches his tongue. It is the hand of Christ.

L.A.B. Those persons would not have had the slightest doubt in their minds or in their hearts that they had come in contact with the One whom Mark speaks of, Jesus Christ, Son of God. And that is "How shall I know...?" You really do know on this experimental line of things, do you not think?

A.C.C. That is the point, yes.

C.C.I. Is it a point that Hebrews 12, which speaks very much of chastening, finishes with "Our God is a consuming fire"? Is it over against Hebrews 11 which is the light of what is in heaven, that there is something working out in the experiences of the saints by way of chastening? "Our God is a consuming fire" is not a penal matter but rather an encouraging matter, that all that is connected with that order of things is being consumed.

A.C.C. That is very good. It shows how in Scripture things are put down side by side. That is important in regard of right teaching, systematic teaching, how things are presented and have to be understood.

R.H.B. Is it right to say that these things are reached experimentally when we are ready for them? To what extent is the experimental side which you have emphasised as so necessary, brought upon us, as it were, by God Himself or to what extent is there responsibility on our side in relation to it?

A.C.C. I think this chapter brings out Abram's exercises regarding things. Give me an heir, he says; that is one thing. Then, "how shall I know...?" I think he is really concerned and I would take that to represent that he was ready for it and laying himself open to this instruction, this experience.

R.H.B. If there was exercise of heart with us on our side after the truth, would God give the state to receive it in the way of passing us through these exercises?

A.C.C. But the very exercise that we might have, I suppose would come about by His own action. After all, what He is concerned about is our coming out with great property in view of the building of the tabernacle. He is thinking about His dwelling amongst the saints and His service proceeding. So He would exercise the saints in view of that. But I think you have to come through the thing experimentally and reach the Spirit of God dwelling in us individually, and our bodies being available to the Spirit in view of chapter 12 of Romans where, having offered our body, we arrive at the point of being one body in Christ. That is a great thing to arrive at.

D.J.H. Would the exercises on our side be the effect of the word of God? It would prepare us and bring us to the point where we would be ready.

A.C.C. Do you not think that we are pretty casual? I speak for myself. We are not serious enough about things. You take the false religions there are, how serious people are who belong to them; if you are doing business with them and it was prayer time they would stop the business and say their prayers. Yet, here we are, with such light and such great truths that God has presented to us for our apprehension, and we do not go in for them too much. I do not know whether you would agree with me.

D.J.H. I would. We say sometimes that the word of God brings us into the presence of the God whose word it is. Well, do I realise that?

A.C.C. We have these kind of meetings and we have our readings locally; what is going on really? We assent to the truth and we bring in parallel scriptures but what effect is the word of God having amongst us? We ought to get more serious about things.

J.M. Mr Raven's remark to Mr Taylor on Romans 5 is very illuminating in that respect. When he was ministering on the new Head Mr Taylor said that, if He is the new Head, I can claim Him for myself, to which Mr Raven replied, You appropriate Him if you have strength of heart enough for it.

A.C.C. Very good; we need that. It could well be stimulated amongst us.

F.R.T. The great work among the nations, begun through Peter, was preceded by Peter going up the house to pray at the sixth hour. Would you agree that we need to be more specific about the private side?

A.C.C. Yes. I am not saying there is philosophy taught amongst us, but sometimes the way what is set out is as if it does not matter too much. We want to be more serious in the presentation of the truth and, too, in taking it up.

W.J.R.B. Does Paul set it out in speaking of combat? (see Col 2: 1).

A.C.C. Yes, he is an example to us. He is also a delineation; even so, it does not mean that others will not go through it, but he is, so to speak, in the forefront. And he was in dead earnest; and we need to be in dead earnest. In these days of infidelity and idolatry we want to be far more committed in affection for Christ and for the truth.

R.T. It was as the sun was going down that this deep sleep and horror came upon him. Would that allude to a certain corresponding depth in Abram? Would it relate to the scripture: "that one died for all then all have died", 2 Cor 5: 14? You wonder at times if the reality

of the fact that Christ died - the sun went down, there was darkness - really lays hold of us.

A.C.C. That is the point, I believe. The four gospels are unanimous about the place being called the place of a skull. Paul introduced that teaching early in Corinthians, the teaching of the place of a skull, the death of Christ for the utter removal of all that man was, his mind and capacity.

R.T. There was a time when there was nothing, there was darkness until Christ rose, and that was the new light, and it is from that new light everything stems.

A.C.C. Very good.

D.E.R. God would love to give us experience with Himself, but on our side there is need for the scaring away of these birds, because we do not like the side of overcoming and displacement. Maybe we feel resentful towards the person who speaks faithfully to us. But where there is the scaring away of the enemy's attempt to prevent our getting into the gain of what God has in mind for us, we shall prove what God will bring us into.

A.C.C. I think that reality is the answer to much that comes up. When the great spurious system presents itself to us - that would be Romans 6 - that where there is reality in our souls and we are committed to the death of Christ, there will be no danger of any infringement on the divine rights.

J.A.T. So in Psalm 51 David says "Behold, thou wilt have truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom" (v 6). I was thinking of the dividing of the animals. We can go along externally, but we know what it is to have sin working in us and we have to judge it in the light of the death of Christ; in place of the sin God would have the truth in us, would He not?

A.C.C. No doubt that is a fact. And too, the Spirit, as in Romans 8, dwelling in our mortal bodies: let that come home to us. Surely Christ will be there if that is the case, and the truth will be there. To come back to the scaring of the birds: the younger brethren should

know how to do that. I think the light of the gospel and the help of the Spirit would come in to chase these things away. The Lord cured the woman in Luke 13, she was bowed down, occupied with nothing else but the sin system. The Lord made her straight, brought her into line with Abraham. She was a daughter of Abraham, she had that title, but now she is a daughter of Abraham, you might say, experimentally, she is made straight. He believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Then the Lord brings up two parables: first the man putting seed in his garden and it became a great tree and the birds of the heavens lodged in its branches. Now, here is this woman; what would she do in the presence of this great system which makes allowance for all kinds of wrong and evil doctrine, misconception of the truth and all that? Being now a daughter of Abraham, set up in righteousness, she would scare them away, they would have no place in her mind. Then He speaks about a woman putting leaven in three measures of meal. That answers to Sarah. The woman made straight is not only a daughter of Abraham, she is a daughter of Sarah. Sarah had to knead with three seahs of wheaten flour (see Gen 18: 6). The Lord would capacitate us by experience to be able to meet these things that are extant in our time. The younger people have to do with these things, we are surrounded by them; and we are capacitated by the Spirit's power to judge these things that they might have no place with us.

C.G.H. I am very much with you in the line that is before you and I feel that more emphasis among us on systematic teaching is very desirable. And it occurs to me that we do not give enough place to the interpretation of Scripture.

A.C.C. That is important too, that there should be a proper interpretation of it. And there is light in the temple that that might be true and that there might be purity in what is presented, purity in the doctrine, pure beaten olive oil for the light. The lampstand itself was pure, made of pure beaten gold, and the oil for the light had to be pure, pure beaten olive oil. Mr Taylor said in this city in 1946 (I suppose many of us can go back to those meetings) that the Berean coming first in the seven men in Paul's company in Acts 20 would

ensure the purity of the ministry and the doctrine. It is good to keep that in mind.

P.M. Is the reference to the fourth generation to encourage us that Christ is to have His supremacy in the soul in order that there may be what is collective?

A.C.C. That is very good, supremacy, meaning it should be a constant thought with us. In Romans 7 it speaks about bearing fruit to God. "So that, my brethren, ye also have been made dead to the law by the body of the Christ": that is a touching allusion - "made dead to the law". This is the means by which it has come about, that the whole claim of the law has been loosened. It has not been by a legal separation or by divorce; it is absolute, it is by way of death. But what a touching allusion; "by the body of the Christ"! You cannot keep the emblems at the Lord's supper out of that. It may not be the highest thought but it is a very important one, that you are made dead to the law by the body of the Christ "to be to another". The supremacy of Christ is a great thing to have in your heart by way of experience, the One who delivered you, that you are waking up to the fact that you have an affectionate marital link with Him, and there can be no fruit for God apart from that. All else has been tried before, but you must bring in Christ as raised from among the dead before there can be fruit to God.

P.M. And must that not be worked out morally in the soul before I can powerfully enter into what is collective?

A.C.C. I think that is right. You can visualise the wonderful time it would be for God, and for us of course, for His people to be coming up collectively, each of them having Christ in their heart and having gone through this experience, the Lord having His proper place. And that is not a mere ideal, that is what is before God to accomplish.

C.C.I. Can you distinguish for us between the Spirit dwelling in us and of Christ dwelling in us?

A.C.C. It is simple to see that the Spirit being in us, Christ is there.

C.C.I. Another Man is displacing the first order.

A.C.C. Yes. In John 14 you get that "we will come to him and make our abode with him" (v 23), with the individual. That is in virtue of the Spirit being present. The Spirit will always provide a sphere for Christ and for God.

C.C.I. Do you think the woman in John 4 really had Christ in her as a result of her enquiry as to the Spirit?

A.C.C. Yes, that is what we would understand. It is a question of what the Lord granted to her in the gift of the Spirit.

C.B. The birds seem to be distinct from the animals: "the birds he did not divide". Is there any thought connected with that?

A.C.C. I was hoping someone might help me about that. At any rate God was so pleased with what Abraham did in his intelligence in not dividing the birds that He laid that down as law for the sacrifices later on.

C.B. Would it be in any way connected with the Spirit? I am thinking of the dove.

A.C.C. Yes, I thought that the allusion to the turtledove might introduce some thought as to the Spirit. There is certainly no division in the Spirit, and we hold to that - one Spirit, one body; that exists. The very fact that there is one Spirit means there is one body.

J.M. There is no corruption or anything of that order belonging to the Spirit. In John 3 new birth is something in the believer that is incapable of breakdown. Might that link with the birds? As you go through these exercises that you have been speaking of in that section in Romans there is that in the believer which is of God and which is incapable of any breakdown or any attachment to the sin system.

A.C.C. Quite so; the work of God is that in itself.

E.C.B. Is there a connection between God's Spirit in us and great property?

A.C.C. That was my connection really.

E.C.B. I came across a remark the other day - I think it was by Mr Stoney - that while we are here we have nothing except the Spirit of God, because everything is in the Spirit.

A.C.C. Yes, very good. He says, too, about Romans 7, you learn that you are nothing; and he brings out how that we are not inclined too much to think of ourselves as nothing, and he quotes Mr Darby's translation in connection with what Job said: "I am nought", Job 40: 4. But then, do you not think it is in the light of that and facing that, that you arrive at the thought of great property? You have nothing, you are nothing, but great property comes in afterwards.

E.C.B. Have we to arrive at what kind of man God can give the Spirit to? It needs a vessel suitable for the Spirit. Israel was to come out with great property; and is not our possession of the Spirit paving the way for the present habitation of God?

A.C.C. That is what I thought. And what a wealth! I would like to encourage the younger brethren with the realisation that their bodies, as it says elsewhere, are temples of the Holy Spirit. What wealth is there! And what capacity to go forward to the meetings, to the assembly and make them real! I think we want to aim at reality.

E.C.B. I entirely agree with you in that; it brings up the need for power amongst us to make these things effective. It is remarkable, is it not, that God is going to take account of our mortal bodies because they have had the Spirit in them?

A.C.C. That is right; and to come now to what they are, before he raises them, the Spirit of God taking His dwelling there - a wonderful thought! That all points on to the complacent conditions God seeks for in His tabernacle.

E.C.B. That really takes us beyond the wilderness experiences, for instance into Ephesians, a habitation of God in the Spirit.

A.C.C. That is right. Genesis 15 takes us right on to the possession of the inheritance, but Romans gives the light of things; it does not give you the realisation of them maybe in their fulness, but you see what is in God's mind and you set yourself for that.

E.C.B. Does it not come back again to the teaching of Mr Stoney's that the real test for us is related to what is heavenly and there will be exercises in us because what is heavenly is God's intention for us. The enemy is content if we surrender what is heavenly but if we go in for it God will see that we are exercised to be suited to it.

A.C.C. Very good. I think it is most important that we realise what our bodies are in view of. We each have a body and that body can be the greatest of vehicles, it can be a vehicle for the Holy Spirit.

W.J.W. So would you think that the exercises of Romans 7 help us to distinguish between flesh and spirit and to understand that God is not working with the flesh now, that that line of things has been tried out and tested and terminated finally in the death of Christ, and that He is working in relation to the Spirit, the new man, the new order of things?

A.C.C. I think the exercises are essential in that regard, and to arrive at the fact that God does not look at us any more as being in the flesh. You are no longer in flesh but in Spirit. That is the second numbering. The first numbering was in view of the wilderness, the second numbering is in view of the land, and that is how God takes account of us. Let us get God's viewpoint: how do we regard ourselves? That will help us on the experimental and practical side and you say to yourself, I am going to give myself to this, have the Holy Spirit dwelling within me and I am going to give Him dwelling conditions. And God will appreciate that thought and love you for it, because that will eventuate in greater room for Him in His own dwelling. Let us keep that in mind. Let our meetings take on that character, that we sit together for the divine pleasure and that the teaching is going on.

C.G.H. We want diligence with purpose of heart.

A.C.C. That is a good note to finish on.

LONDON

17 September 1983

Key to initials

(all local unless otherwise stated)

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"MY NEIGHBOUR"

A.C.Craig

Luke 10: 28,29; 1 Samuel 15: 28; 2 Samuel 4: 4; 9: 1

In our family reading this morning we considered the Lord saying that they that are whole have no need of a physician, but those that are sick (see Mark 2: 17). How sick this world is! The whole world is ravaged with moral sickness. And it was said this morning by someone that you can have an appointment at any time with the Physician who can cure and heal. In some places you have to make an appointment to see a doctor and maybe wait a long time, but not for this physician, Jesus. In John 3 He is available by night, in John 4 He is available by day; He carries on His services night and day; you can have an appointment with Him at any time.

What this world needs is a neighbour. Jesus has become the neighbour and that is what I want to speak about. Two men, poor creatures, who would have them, who would have any of them? Who would have had you, who would have had me, poor cripples of the fall? You may remember that Jeremiah was told to buy a girdle and put it upon his loins and go and hide it for a while by the Euphrates; and afterwards he was told to go and find it and when he

brought it out from that hole in the rock it says "it was good for nothing", Jer 13: 7. What am I? What are you? What were we? Good for nothing. What we need is a neighbour. Jesus has come in, dear friends, as a neighbour. Who would have taken up your case? You were not worth it. Who would do it? Moses could not be a neighbour, or Abraham or David; only Jesus can be. We were desperately in need and could do nothing to help ourselves. Jesus has come in and taken up our cause. A lawyer will not take on any case unless he is sure of his fee. Who would take up your cause? Jesus has done it. Who is my neighbour? That is the question the lawyer put. The Lord told him: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and... thy neighbour as thyself". And he tries to get out of it and said, Who is my neighbour?

The Lord unfolds this wonderful parable in connection with this man who fell. Mephibosheth, five years old, fell. It does not say his nurse dropped him; she took him up and fled, it says, but he fell. Man is in his fallen position because of his responsibility. The fall brings up the whole question of responsibility. But then who has come in? Jesus has come in, He has come in to take up our cause. That little Babe in Bethlehem's manger was He who sat on heaven's eternal throne. Look at Him coming down past the archangels, the myriads of angels, and there He is in Bethlehem's manger. Who is He? God over all blessed for ever. But you say, It is only a babe. Never mind that. He can change His position, change His circumstances; He cannot change Himself, He is still the same Person, over all God blessed for ever, the upholder of the universe; "upholding all things by the word of his power", Heb 1: 3. You say, Who is doing it when He is lying there? He is doing it, He is still doing it. What did He come in to do? To take up your cause and to take up my cause. That is Luke's gospel. Luke begins earlier than the other gospel writers; he presents a Babe in the manger. In Matthew it is a Child in the house, but in Luke a Babe in the manger. How quick is heaven to announce the One who is coming in to take up our cause! That is Luke's gospel; He has come in on man's side, He has come in on our side, on the side of the sinner, the side of the

needy. In John's gospel He comes in on God's side: that is another matter. But in Luke He comes in on man's side and that is why you find Him as a Babe in the manger. How attractive! How appealing! How winning! Coming in, He said, I have come to do Thy will, O God, a body hast Thou prepared Me; and going out of the world He said, My body for you. In between His coming in and His going out is that wonderful pathway. Everything that God ever desired from man was there in Jesus; there was not a thing that God wanted from man that was not found in that blessed One - every footstep, every inward movement, all about Him inwardly and outwardly all so pleasing to God. There was never a Man like Jesus. Oh, how wonderful He is! How attractive! He wants to have to do with you to take up your case in your need, in your desperation; in your good-for-nothing state, and mine, He will have to do with us. Oh, what grace!

But then the groundwork for the divine approach to meet every question outstanding in your history of responsibility and mine necessitated His death. There He is in His wonderful life so pleasing to God, but that will not meet your condition, your responsibility. That blessed One has taken up your liabilities, what you are responsible for, what I am responsible for. We have sins to be taken account of, they have to be met. God having to do with us in taking up our case involves all that we are responsible for. God cannot ignore our sins. As coming in Jesus fully understands the situation and has undertaken the whole question. You remember, when Naomi's inheritance was to be redeemed, the man who had the first right of redemption said he would do it. But then Boaz said Ruth is involved. Oh, well, he says, I cannot touch it, not when she is involved. He did not mind taking on the redemption of the inheritance but when Ruth was involved, a Moabitess, he says, I cannot touch it. But Boaz steps forward and says, I will do it. That is what Jesus has done. He did not shy away when the question of our sins was involved. Thank God He did not! He went on to the cross, He has taken up your liabilities, what you are responsible for. What were you responsible for? What are your liabilities? I know what

mine were: death, burial and the judgment of God. Death is a penalty; "in the day that thou eatest of it thou shalt certainly die", Gen 2: 17. And then "dust thou art; and unto dust shalt thou return", Heb 9: 27. That order has been reversed in the Substitute; first of all He under takes to remove the judgment, and He did. Think of those three hours of densest darkness at Calvary when that blessed holy Man was on that centre cross and the whole vortex of the judgment of God was descending on Him, on that defenceless head! There were two malefactors, one on either side of Him, with all their sins, but ten thousand times more sins were on Jesus than on them and not one of them His own. Mine were there: 'All my sins were laid upon Him, Jesus bore them on the tree, God who knew them laid them on Him And believing I am free'. That is the way of it. He was there for those three hours exhausting that judgment, all that was due to me, due to you. Are you a believer? Are you prepared to believe? Was He your substitute? I cannot say it for you but I can say it for myself, He was my substitute. Was He yours? Come into it, I say to you, claim Him as your substitute. It is only as your substitute that He bore your sins. He was the Substitute, my substitute. He took what was due to me, and in faith I accept the fact that He bore what was due to me in the way of judgment and I will have boldness before God in the day of judgment. It has all passed already; it will never happen again so far as I am concerned, and every believer in Jesus can have that wonderful knowledge by faith, that the judgment is passed.

Think of the sufferings of Jesus, that holy One, His holy soul recoiling from it all in Gethsemane and bearing it at the cross, and the One who has met that liability. He has met more than that, He has met man's state as well as his responsibility. That was not forgiven; God comes out on the ground of the death of Christ as the Substitute meeting the liability of judgment and offers forgiveness, but the man that was the cause of the sins He removed entirely from His sight. So there was the judgment of God, there was the penalty of death that has been met too.

There was a time in this world's history when there was no death in it but man brought it into the world: "by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death; and thus death passed upon all men", Rom 5: 12. Because *Adam* sinned? No, you must not say that, that would not be the truth. "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned". A penalty only comes on those who do wrong. You cannot blame Adam for your penalty. We blame him for death being in the world, that was his responsibility, he did not by his disobedient act, but the death penalty passed on people because they sin. "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned". What a history! What a situation! Did Jesus meet that penalty? He did; He went into death to liquidate, to remove, that penalty from off His people.

The second part of the penalty was "for dust thou art; and unto dust shalt thou return", Gen 3: 19. Jesus did not return to dust, He never could, but He went into the tomb to meet the second part of the penalty that lay on you and me, man's liabilities. There is not one that He has not met. He does all things well. He has met everything, the whole ground is cleared. He comes alongside of you tonight and He wants to be your neighbour. Would you not have Him? Is there a heart here who would resist or refuse Him entry? Have your heart's door wide open and let Him enter!

So here is a lawyer and he is asking who is his neighbour. Jesus says, A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. That is just man's history; he goes down and he falls into the hands of robbers. He fell; think of that! He is the result of the fall and he is half dead. Who would have him? He is good for nothing. Ah, says the Samaritan, I will go for that other half. What a view divine grace takes of the sinner! The priest and the Levite pass by; they have a look at him and on they go; they cannot help the man. It is not that they would not, that is not the point; the fact is they cannot, he is beyond them and beyond all that the law could do. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God having sent his own Son, in likeness of flesh of sin...", Rom 8: 3. The Samaritan coming down there is not happening to go down, he is on

a journey. Where is he journeying to? To Calvary. The brother in closing the meeting praying for the gospel spoke about divine purpose. Divine purpose enters into the gospel. He purposed to save me. That is Luke 14, compel them to come in that My house may be filled. Divine purpose is in that. He is journeying. He comes up to this poor man who is half dead. Who would have him? Who would take up his case? Not that lawyer - by no means. The Samaritan has compassion on him and comes up to him and pours in oil and wine and sets him on his own beast. How wonderful! You say, I cannot walk. You might have thought that that priest and Levite would have helped him. Keep the commandments: that is what the hierarchy would say; Rome would say, You do penance. Think of that man endeavouring to do anything to help himself! He could not; he 'was beyond all human aid. It needed divine intervention and that is the Samaritan. Had that man in the ditch - a Jew I suppose - met that Samaritan in ordinary life he would have spurned him. If he is going to be helped it is pure mercy. That is the gospel, dear friend. He put him on his own beast. He is no more needing props to hold him up; he has been given power to carry him along.

Now I come to Mephibosheth. What a history he had! He is one of the people in Scripture of whose history you get an outline, right from when he was five. As I said earlier, his nurse took him up and fled and he fell, and from that time on he is just a cripple, just good for nothing. He is useless. Who would have him? In that verse in chapter 15 of the first book Samuel says to Saul, the kingdom is rent from you and has been given to thy neighbour who is better than thou. Oh, dear friends, there is a neighbour better than anybody. Jesus is the Neighbour who is better than anybody - better than thou. I want to show how He is neighbour to one of the most unlikely, most undeserving, as we are, of cases. What a history you could trace down from Saul - an enemy to David, bitterness, animosity, hatred, persecution; and David says, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul? I want to be a neighbour to him. Oh, the grace of the gospel! Oh, the grace of God! Oh, the goodness of the

heart of God! Oh, His desire to bless, His desire that all men should be saved! I want to be a neighbour; is there any left? Ziba speaks up: Yes, he says, there is someone but he is no good to you, he is no good to anybody. David said, We will see. Ziba says, He is lame on his feet; he is no good for your army, he is no good for your council, he is no good whatsoever, he is a cripple. Oh, dear friends, what condition men are in today! The ravages of sin, the result of the fall, what degradation! Can divine grace meet all that? It can. There is nothing in this world, no state or condition morally, that the gospel cannot meet. Grace will meet it by the gospel. David says, I do not want him for my army or for my council, I want him for my family, I want him for my table. How great that is! What goodness! Someone said about the Lord Jesus that while He was here, He was instinct with goodness: Think of that, instinct with goodness, it just came out. That is what the gospel carries on - just this fulness and richness of blessing: "that I may show the kindness of God". It says, David sent and fetched him. We spoke out the man put on the beast. As I said, all the religious leaders today have their own ideas about things. You come so far and I will meet you, that is what the leaders of religion say today. Not David, not God; a neighbour does not do that. He sent and fetched him all the way from Lodebar. See that royal chariot going over the Judaeian plain, through the Jordan up into Gilead and standing outside the door where this cripple was. All the way, not halfway, that chariot went; David sent and fetched him. Is that not grace? Is that not goodness coming out? Mephibosheth, looking out of the window, might have thought, Well now, David wants me, what does he want me for? Retribution? Does he want to punish me for my history, my grandfather's history? He would look at those men on that chariot, and say, They are fine looking men, they have the new covenant in their faces, I will go. And he gets into the royal chariot. He probably would have been helped into the royal chariot and he comes to David and David says, Mephibosheth. Oh, the urgency of divine feelings! I wish I could convey that more. I believe it is the telling thing nowadays. We are all able to say plenty perhaps - but just to bring divine feelings into the gospel! That one word 'Mephibosheth'; there is no record of Ziba

telling David his name but David knows. Dear friends, He has known your name since the night you were baptised when your father stood with you in his arms to give you to the brother who baptised you to the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has not forgotten it, He knows your name from that moment on - Mephibosheth. How did He know Zacchaeus' name? Nobody told Him. That little man up the tree - "Zacchaeus", He says. Oh what He knows! He would be your neighbour, that is the point. David is neighbour to Mephibosheth. What feelings! He says, I am going to restore to you all the land of your father. He was not entitled to one thing at all but David restores everything to him and brings him in and sits him down at his table as one of his own sons. Is that not wonderful? That is the gospel. The chapter closes by saying that he was lame on both his feet. It would have been sufficient to say he was lame on his feet because that would have covered both of them, but "he was lame on both his feet", a complete total wreck. The fall was complete, it could not have been worse, lame on both his feet, and yet there he sits at David's table in the enjoyment of all the goodness that is in David. That is our position now. There will be no lame feet in heaven. We may have lame feet here but we are in the enjoyment of the blessings that relate to David's table here and now, nothing reserved, all laid out for our enjoyment. Poor cripples of the fall: all the goodness of God is available to us! It is available on the principle of faith and your committal to it - a believer. I will tell you what a believer in John's gospel is; it is not believing a text - not at all; a believer in John's gospel is one that commits himself to Jesus; it is like your wedding day when you say, when the question is put to you, I will. That is a believer in John's gospel - I will; you commit yourself to a Person, commit yourself to this Neighbour who has come so near, taken up your liabilities and provided so much through His precious death for our enjoyment here and now. Exercise faith in it, for His name's sake!

NEW YORK

15 May 1983

EXTRACT

To what extent are we moving in the consciousness of the love of Christ, and under the impulse of it? We sometimes take the letter of the truth, right as it is in its place, and surround ourselves with it and repeat this part and that part, and it brings a challenge to us. But is there a golden thread of love for Christ running through as we do that? Or are we motivated, do we get impulse from something else? Do we want just a conformity to something? Love for Christ would not be satisfied with just a conformity. What is precious to Christ will be the acceptance of His commandments, as He said Himself, significantly, in John 14: 15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." But let it be, as that scripture suggests, the result of active, constantly active, affection for Him. Many of the matters that come in amongst us really raise with us the simple question, 'Do I love Christ?'

A.J.E.Welch

Toronto 1982

THE CHILDREN'S UPWARD WAY

Read Psalm 129. This shows *confidence* in God. Even in their youth the people who trusted in Him had suffered much from those who scorned them. But they confided in Him and sang "Jehovah is righteous". Believing children are often mocked when at school but, knowing the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' they are able to bear it and even to pray for those who are unkind. God observes and recompenses all.

Psalm 130, This is *contrition* which means that the psalmist was fully repentant of his sins' He wrote of God "But there is forgiveness with thee' that thou mayest be feared". In the Christian pathway we must always remember that we are vessels of mercy. We have redemption through the blood of Jesus and are now His own possession.

Psalm 131. David had the *consolation* of being humble-minded before God. This flowed as it were out of the experiences of the previous Psalms. He sang "My heart is not haughty". It is full of moral beauty that he also longed continually after a greater knowledge of God. This longing is always answered.

Psalm 132. This is a much longer Song than the others. Its theme is *consecration* or devotedness which should begin as soon as we come to know the Lord. David had heard of the ark of the covenant when in his childhood's home' He longed to make a suitable resting place for it. His words were "I will not give sleep to mine eyes" until I find out a place for Jehovah. This place was in his own heart! The ark was a wonderful type of ark was a wonderful type of the holy person Lord Jesus of the Christ who dwells in the affections of His own people. The Song is a triumphant one.

Psalms 133 and 134. These represent *congregation* and *completion*. As the people came towards the end of their pilgrimage they sang, How pleasant it is for brethren to dwelt together in unity!" It is still so and the blessings of eternal life are thus shared. The former of the two Songs dwells on blessings received from God; the

latter celebrates the completion of the pilgrimage in praise and blessing to Him, "Behold bless Jehovah, all ye servants of Jehovah". Do you enjoy singing His praises?

J.C.Evershed

NB This piece appears in consecutive issues – see No 128 (November 1983) and No 129 (December 1983)