

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 145

April 1985

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THE GLORY OF CHRIST

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M.J.W. We often speak about the glory of Christ, or the glory of Jesus, or Jesus glorified, and I want, with the brethren's help, to examine that so that we understand it better. We are taught that this dispensation - if it is such: it is certainly the dispensation of God's grace - is given character to by the fact that Jesus is glorified. The Holy Spirit has come, not from a humbled Christ, nor a Christ in resurrection, but a Christ in glory. Therefore I think we all need more and more that this glory from which Christianity is intended to take its character in the Person of Christ in heaven and in the glory of God and in the Spirit here (whose ministry "abounds in glory") should mark us. One of the things that impressed Paul, I am sure, was that in the midst of the opposition of the Jews there was someone who took character from the glory that he was looking at. It is wonderful in the Scriptures when you see Stephen stoned. What a tragedy! But there in the presence of that tragedy is Saul sitting by the clothes of those that stoned him, and keeping them, impressed, no doubt, with what he saw in Stephen. I wonder how many impressions Paul had from Stephen, a man who had his eyes fixed on heaven. He was able in that power, and that power only, to resist the opposition which was so strong. I think that Christianity is most wonderful. It should be marked by glory and we should take this glory on ourselves, and it should be seen in us individually and in our local assemblies. We often speak about the city coming down in the future having the glory of God, but the assembly is to have that now. It is to take its character from the present position of Jesus and the Holy Spirit here, whose ministry - let it be rubbed into us - "abounds in glory".

I think we could approach this great matter of the glory of Christ through the new covenant. It seems to me that, if we get the clue of the way that God is towards us in this dispensation, it will help all of us. Is He looking for righteousness from us, which we cannot give Him because of the weakness of the flesh? Or are we rejoicing in the

terms, or rather the spirit, of the new covenant which give character to the dispensation? God wants to be known, and He would forgive iniquities and lawlessnesses, they would be remembered no more.

E.C.B. It has been said that the new covenant involves not only the forgiveness of sins but the giving of the Spirit, which involves that Jesus is glorified. The glorifying of Jesus being in our minds in relation to the coming of the Spirit would bear on what you are suggesting.

M.J.W. That is helpful, because we do not really know God apart from the Spirit, do we? I suppose it will still be true in the millennium that Israel will come to know God through the action generally of the Holy Spirit. But God wants to be known. Do we first apprehend the fact that righteousness now is being ministered from heaven? God is not looking for righteousness from man; may I say He is giving it. It is one of the first things in the glad tidings, that God has a righteousness for man.

E.C.B. That is the beginning of Romans righteousness of God. Mr Darby explains in note that that was a wholly new thought (see chap 1: 17). Is that what you have in mind?

M.J.W. It is. Israel saw the glory in Moses' face and they could not stand before it because they were condemned by it. What that glory linked itself with was the demands of the law and they could not keep the law. Indeed, when the law was brought down by Moses from the mountain what it found amongst the people was idolatry.

H.A.H. Mr Raven linked the new covenant with the second feature in the teaching in Romans 5. Does that help, because there is such a cluster of the ways in which God is towards us in that chapter? "This favour" is the place of favour, and then we boast in hope of the glory of God, that is, in what He is as outshining towards us with His love enjoyed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

M.J.W. Yes. Of course chapter 5 comes after chapter 3. I am a great believer in people being established in righteousness. If only we were all established in the disposition of God in the new covenant, that is, as you say, the knowledge of His love, the

knowledge of Himself and the knowledge that He is not looking for a righteousness from us. He has provided that Himself for man, and He has worked it out in the Person of the Lord Jesus at the cross. God is providing the righteousness; He says "their sins and their lawlessnesses I will never remember any more", Heb 8: 12. And He has given the Spirit that He might be known in the hearts of men.

We start from that anchor, that foundation in our souls, that God is not looking in a condemnatory way at men but is looking at them in order to provide them with a righteousness which in fact finds its blessed expression in Jesus in glory.

A.J.E.W. So the disposition of God of which you speak is towards those in whom He has in mind a great result. It is not a disposition that would lead to unfruitfulness but to fruitfulness. I thought it interesting in that regard that you began with the early part of this chapter, because he says, even of the saints in Corinth, "Ye are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read of all men"; that is to say, they expressed something which was manifest to all. There was a need, no doubt, of addition to it, and proliferation of it, but there was something there which was expressed to all. It seems to give a clue to what the beloved apostle has in mind in the full teaching of this chapter, do you think?

M.J.W. I did think that because, with the law what was written was written on stone. I am sure God would much prefer it in the people, but He did not have it in the people. The second time the stones were brought down from the mountain they were put in the ark. God could see there that there would be One in whom the law would be magnified - a wonderful thing! At the present time, dear brethren, the wonderful thing is that God is looking for a result from men. He loves to write things in men. So that the foundation of it is, as we see in Romans, the establishment of persons in righteousness. It goes on to this blessed truth that we have here, that the new covenant involves the love of God. We know that through the cup at the Supper. To be established in those things is wonderful. But then what God is seeking to do and what He is arriving at in this dispensation is writing on men, making them soft and impressionable

through discipline and through different things that they go through, to form them after Christ, and then to set them a pattern. There is wonderful order in this; you get Romans and then Corinthians; Romans is the resurrection of Jesus, and in 2 Corinthians Paul is leading them on and sets before them the glory of Christ. But before he speaks about that, he has established, or wants to establish, the saints in righteousness, and then that there is a writing going on in them. So he says here: "Ye are our letter".

D.J.H. Would the Supper keep us soft and tender - 'the new covenant in My blood'? The tremendous cost which has been entered upon should be sufficient to affect us so that this righteousness might be available to us and that we might be brought into the favour which was spoken of and be able to enjoy the love of God as shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. But it is 'in My blood', is it not?

M.J.W. Was not the first covenant made with blood? Were there not basins of blood? So when God makes a covenant, blood is involved. That is a very sobering thing. And as to the new covenant it is, as you say, 'in My blood'. I think that is helpful.

E.C.M. A verse in Isaiah says: "I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake", chap 43: 25. What God does is for His own sake, is it not? It is arresting to think that what God has established, what He has done, what is effected through the death and resurrection of Christ, is for His own sake.

M.J.W. That is very beautiful.

E.P. I was thinking of that very verse. At the end it says: "and I will not remember thy sins". All is clear and God has done it.

M.J.W. What a different testimony there would be if we were always in the good of that truth! How bright we would always be! It is not the first covenant. God is not looking for anything from man as such but He is providing all Himself. I know this is objective, but let the brethren get the benefit of this; there may be something that the Lord will work out in us all, some fresh feature of glory that will give the key to the dispensation.

S.D.K.R. Does a covenant bring out the disposition of the person who makes it? We are brought into liberty. You said earlier that the children of Israel were not able to fix their eyes on the face of Moses. Does the knowledge of the disposition and the ministry of righteousness by the Spirit enable us to fix our eyes on our Moses?

M.J.W. That is exactly what I thought, that we need to be established in our minds in the order of the truth. They could not look on the glory because it condemned them, but because we have righteousness ministered from heaven and we are in the good and enjoyment of it - not just on the surface but deeper as we go on - we can look at the glory, and because we are softened by the Spirit, softened by the ways of God in His love, we are formed. What a wonderful thing! Are we all established in the true disposition of God in this dispensation? I wonder. The way we act sometimes amongst the brethren makes me wonder. If we were all in keeping with God's attitude in this dispensation, what glory there would be.

S.D.K.R. In verse 6 of the next chapter the glory shines in in view of shining out. Your exercise is that it might shine in?

M.J.W. Very good; and the shining out, I suppose, was peculiarly apostolic. There was rarely a shining of such purity as was seen in Paul. As we have often been taught, there was nothing in Paul to stop it shining out. As it shone in it shone out; that is why he was so effective.

J.M. Is not the glory of the Lord at the end of chapter 3 a link with the writing on the fleshy tables of the heart? The glory of the Lord is Christ as Mediator of the new covenant making it effective in us. It is not only bringing out the ministry of it, but He is actually making it effective. I understand from those who know Greek that the emphasis is equally on the Lord and on the Spirit; so there is the Lord forming us inwardly in relation to the new covenant and the Spirit forming us inwardly in relation to the new covenant. That, I think, links with what was said as to the Supper, the cup.

M.J.W. That is most helpful, because you can see there that God is going to make the thing good in people. This is what we are all

concerned about - what a lot of trouble is about, objective and subjective. What is presented has been made good in us, and the Spirit is here in the same blessed disposition as God is and consistent with that, to make the thing good in us. But what do you see to be the end in us of that service of the Spirit?

J.M. That is what comes out in chapter 4. I think the shining in is not exactly that He has shone in but that He is in there shining; that is the thing is formed inwardly so that there is' a shining out. So that we have this treasure in earthen vessels. What a blessed thing that is!

M.J.W. Are you suggesting that the shining is not just a question of a mirror reflecting but it is actual formation?

J.M. The light is inside because it has come through the operations of the glory of the Lord and through the Spirit as at the end of chapter 3. We are transformed, it says, "according to the same image from glory to glory". That is inward formation through the service of the Mediator of the new covenant and the Spirit forming glory in the saints inwardly, and it is going to shine out. That is the link with Stephen, is it not, as you mentioned earlier?

M.J.W. That is most helpful. That is what I am driving at. I do not know much about that end of the line, I am more at this end, but I can see the importance of the teaching as getting towards it.

E.C.B. Is not what has just been said confirmed by the simple reading of the verse in which the expression occurs? It says "it is the God ... who has shone in our hearts". We often read that as if it was "into", but it is God has shone in our hearts. Does not Romans lay the basis for that, say in chapter 5?

D.J.H. Is it not figured, too, in Gideon's pitchers? The light was inside: the torches were in the vessels. If we carry that through, it again confirms that it is shining in. The vessel is broken so that it might shine out.

M.J.W. Very helpful!

E.C.B. We are reading on Wednesday night as to the covenant in Isaiah 49 where it says prophetically to Christ: "I will ... give thee for a covenant of the people". That implies that the disposition of God is established in that Person; all His work is essential, but it is in the Person. Hence it becomes available to us.

M.J.W. That is very helpful. Now what is involved in looking at the glory? I know that Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant - that may be primarily in mind in this chapter - but I see shining in Jesus glorified the blessed disposition and shining out of all that God is. Is that the sense of the glory of the Lord in this chapter, that that is to find its counterpart in us?

E.C.B. I would not like to limit the expression 'the glory of the Lord' in the last verse of chapter 3 to what we may be conformed to, because according to John 17 He has a glory which is not ours, and whenever we look on His glory we think of the glory of deity; but He is there as Man and it is our apprehending His glory as Man (although in a Man who is God) that is to effect things in us.

M.J.W. It is difficult from the ministries to apprehend a particular interpretation of this. As you suggest, it can include the glory of the Lord as Son, but it would be wrong to restrict it.

E.C.B. Is not verse 20 of chapter 1 rather like the new covenant? "Whatever promises of God there are, in him is the yea, and in him the amen, for glory to God by us". That verse seems to me parallel to the new covenant, but again I do not think you could restrict it.

J.C.E. Do you think it is a good thing to see that the believer is a part of a divine system, like the trees in Jotham's parable? God has given us a righteous constitution and He looks for righteousness in us in a practical way; but then there is this matter of the epistle - a glorified Christ being written. I wondered whether we were sufficiently aware of that, because people read us better than we think they do. If there is any real consciousness in our ways of being in the light of the glory of Christ, being able to be written on in the power of the Spirit of the living God I think that will help our testimony.

M.J.W. I am sure that is very helpful. I like what you say about the righteous constitution because it is important to lay hold of righteousness. It is not just a matter of light, something I am brought into on the surface, blessed as that is, but what follows is that I am practically righteous, and as the teaching tells us in other parts of Scripture, circumcision is the seal of righteousness. But I am not in the good properly, practically and constitutionally, of righteousness unless I am in the good of circumcision. Is that right? Mr Raven made it even more testing when he said as to the planets, that if a planet is keeping in its course, it is abiding in righteousness. If it goes off on a tangent of its own it is not practically in righteousness.

That is very testing because I may have my will in little things, or even in bigger things; it means then that practically and constitutionally I am not enjoying righteousness.

F.C.M. Does it involve, as you implied earlier, that whilst we exult in what is objective - the glorious making known of God's disposition toward us - if I am to come into the experimental gain of that there must with me as with Paul, be a moral revolution to provide writing material to be receptive to all the new covenant means. That is how we began, is it not? Repentance towards God, Romans 3 all have sinned. God comes in against that disastrous background with the declaration of all that He is towards us in Christ. And do we not have to maintain that moral background of self-judgment and repentance if we are to abide in all the glory and liberty of the new covenant?

M.J.W. I think so; but we do not arrive at these things all at once. The brethren know that about me. There are lots of things I am not in the good of, but I do know certain things and I enjoy them. And as we go on in our lives, in the ways of God He works things out, so that in the older brethren and maybe in the younger too, we cannot limit what God is able to do; there is a real deep working out of the knowledge of God. But I would like the help of the brethren in seeing how it is that the glory of Christ is to give character to us.

F.C.M. Is it not as we are completely cleared from the old - and I think Paul's new covenant ministry would effect that, complete moral

clearance - that we are thankfully and worshipfully receptive to the surpassing glory of the new and can receive it and express it?

M.J.W. Now the glory of Christ can be seen in two ways: one is that Christ is the centre of God's glory, and the other that He is the expression of God's glory. Those are two views that, I think, we need to keep separate, and yet, of course, they are all presented in one Person. Christ is the centre - all the promises of God are in Him; in Him is the yea and amen. God's promises were not centred in Moses, they were not centred in Adam - he was a figure of Him that was to come - David was not the centre of God's purposes or the centre of His glory, nor was Solomon. But here presented in the glory of God is One who is the centre of God's glory; all His thoughts are expressed in totality in that one Man.

E.C.M. "Having this ministry" is not merely objective, because the apostle goes on to say "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassingness of the power may be of God". I thought it is not just to be an objective, it is something that is substantial in the treasure in the earthen vessel.

M.J.W. But we must not lose sight of what is to give character to everything.

E.C.M. So, as was said, it was the result of the Mediator making it effective, so that there is something substantial in the treasure in the believer, in the vessel.

M.J.W. I have no doubt about that.

E.C.M. So you have the outshining of the glory in Christianity in the earthen vessel.

S.D.K.R. Does your illustration of the sun and the planets help? The sun is the centre of the solar system, it holds everything there in attraction to itself; and also the warmth that we get from the sun is the expression of the love of God, in a sense. Does that illustrate it a little bit?

M.J.W. That is helpful. But besides what I have mentioned about all God's thoughts being centred in a Man, what else do we gain from

Jesus as the centre of God's glory?

S.D.K.R. We get into the sunshine, into the warmth of the love of God, do we not? Abide in it - in other words, eternal life.

R.T. What would you say about the veil taken away? It seems a great change: "when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away". There is a Mediator who is able, not only to satisfy God, but is able to work out something in the people.

M.J.W. This is the whole burden of my exercise, that God has been glorified in that Man. If we think of His pleasure, I am sure the glory of Christ involves His utter pleasure in the Man who is there. When we speak of the glory of Christ we often leave out of it, I think, the Luke 15 character of it, the utter enjoyment and pleasure that there is of God in Man who has glorified Him. And not only that, but a Man who has won us a place in that same glory.

R.T. It was fresh light to me that the Mediator is on God's side. I used to think the Mediator took up my case, but the first thing the Mediator does is on God's side, and God is satisfied with Jesus. That same Mediator is able to take up my case and hold me, the veil taken away so that I can look and be transformed by the glory.

M.J.W. So does what we are speaking about involve that I come to realise that Christ's place is my place? And, as you say, the Spirit will make that good in me here, but the objective looking at Jesus and His glory must have a part in it. Say something about that.

R.T. I was wondering about the veil being taken away. There may be a veil of legality, maybe customs, maybe many things, bad teaching, that colour our thoughts about Christ, but when we turn to the Lord we see that everything is established for God in Christ, and that Man then becomes the light of my affections, and by the Spirit it becomes formative, so that we are able to be in the presence of the glory and be changed.

M.J.W. That is very helpful.

D.A.B. Is this transformation that Paul speaks of in verse 18 in a sense an inevitable consequence of looking on the glory of the Lord?

M.J.W. I do not think that a believer can look on the glory of the Lord without being changed.

D.A.B. I was thinking of Paul, that when he first saw the glory, in three days he was turned into a preacher of the Son of God.

Reference was made to a revolution: it was the glory of the Lord that had done that, was it not?

M.J.W. I think it would effect a revolution in us if we apprehended the way in which God is with us in this dispensation, and then the expression of everything in a Man in glory.

E.C.M. That Man who is in glory is the Man who loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. So would it have a real effect upon us testimonially, characteristically loving righteousness?

M.J.W. I have no doubt about the practical side. I am a great believer in being practical, a great believer in it, but I do see the importance of the objective side. If we lose sight of that glory we shall lose sight of the character.

E.C.M. I agree with you, but we must be balanced. We must have the subjective side too, otherwise we shall get out of balance.

M.J.W. You do not know me very well if you think that I am out of balance, because I am too subjective.

E.C.M. I do see the importance that we have perhaps been too occupied with the objective and not given sufficient place to what is subjective, that there is something coming into expression here testimonially, as you say, in Stephen and in Paul, and should be in everyone of us, that we characteristically love righteousness and hate lawlessness.

M.J.W. If Stephen was looking at the way they were throwing the stones at him in their hatred, what would have been the effect on Stephen?

E.C.M. He was looking at the Man in the glory who loved righteousness.

M.J.W. Exactly; that is just what I am saying. You must have something to look at. If he was thinking, these stones are going to hurt, these people hate me; if he thought about that, what would have shone out in him?

P.M. Does it raise the question whether grace is just a doctrine to me or whether I am in the practical enjoyment of it? If I am in the practical enjoyment of the grace of God I will want to be suited to the One who is the Mediator of the new covenant.

M.J.W. I think that is such an important remark. In Mr Raven's letters he said that the way that some brethren had acted towards him was not that of persons under the influence of grace.

P.M. And did he not speak of those who spoke the most about it and expressed it the least?

M.J.W. That is always the test.

P.M. Grace is the greatest power to affect a man to want to be in conformity to the One who is the Mediator or the Administrator of that system of grace. I wonder for myself what I know of it.

M.J.W. So do I. I mean, I am taking fellowship meetings, I feel ill fitted for it; I know what I do know, but I do feel that we are ill established in grace. And we are ill established in the terms in which God is with us in this dispensation and we are often ill in keeping with the glory that is expressed in Jesus and should be expressed in us.

P.M. I think so, but I will not want to look on the glory of the Lord because I am told I should. I only want to look on the glory of the Lord because I want to be near the One who has come out towards me as the Administrator of grace, and I shall see practically in my life that everything is in keeping with the One who has come out towards me.

M.J.W. That is testing.

J.M. God has new power (I say that guardedly) to effect what is in His mind and in His purposes, and that comes out in circumstances where everything is against it, because when you go on to chapter 4

the glory is actually shining out in circumstances that are entirely against the saints; but there is a power inwardly which He has wrought through the looking on the glory of the Lord that maintains the saint in relation to what is heavenly, what is of God Himself.

M.J.W. You mean in the Holy Spirit?

J.M. I think it is both - by the glory of the Lord, and by the Lord Spirit.

M.J.W. That is very helpful.

J.M. We need to see that the glory of the Lord is that of the Mediator of the new covenant, that is really Christ on God's side towards us.

During the 1960s a lot was said about Christ on God's side, but the other bit was missed out; the beauty of a Mediator is that He is both for God and for men, and that is what holds us in our affections.

E.P. It is very interesting that when Moses came down from the mount the comment of the Spirit is that he did not know that his face shone. He did not make it shine, but it did shine. That is because he had been in the presence of God. Is not that the way things work - at least that is my experience - that as we are with the Lord and occupied with Him, something comes out in the testimony (true, the Spirit is operating) that is commensurate with what we are engaged with?

M.J.W. We often at Streatham - not to make much of a brother - used to look at Mr.G. - you would open your eyes in the middle of a prayer - and his face was beaming. Now what was it that was doing that? A believer's face is a wonderful study, he reflects what he looks at. Some people have great big furrows on their brows (they may not be able to help it because of sorrow - we understand that) but what a wonderful thing the believer's face is, and why is it like it is? It is because of what is shining in.

D.J.H. It is not because they are occupied with what they look like though, is it? It says looking fixedly upon him they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. I do not know whether Stephen knew that it was like that, but they did.

C.C.I. Does this show the importance of objective ministry? I should like help, but is not all ministry objective?

M.J.W. I would think so until it was taken on, yes.

C.C.I. Is it like the sunshine that is shining and producing life on the earth, there is something that is answering to a ministry of Christ which is, perhaps, more needed than we realise. I have wondered whether the expression 'subjective ministry' is a right expression.

M.J.W. We will not go into that now, but it would be good to bear in mind what Mr Raven said: This effort to make knowledge entirely objective I regard as very erroneous and tending to destroy the formative value of revelation (see Letters, p.8).

C.C.I. So "from glory to glory" means that it is cumulative; one great matter of glory fills my soul and I am now being prepared for something more which will accumulate. Not that I leave the former glory behind, but a great wealth is being stored up as we are on this great objective line.

M.J.W. As was said, here in chapter 4 is a man who is affected by the glory. He says "every way afflicted, but not straitened; seeing no apparent issue, but our way not entirely shut up". What a positive view! We would just have said, In every way afflicted, would we not? But Paul says, because of the glory that shone in, "but not straitened; seeing no apparent issue, but our way not entirely shut up; persecuted, but not abandoned". What a man!

E.C.B. The 'nots' in those verses were all actual for Jesus - He was straitened, His way was shut up, He was abandoned. We could not speak of Him being destroyed because of who He is in His Person, but we can see the spirit of it. But these things were actual in Him.

M.J.W. Very touching!

E.C.B. Is it correct to say that the centre and expression of God's purpose and glory is man, but the Man in whom He has found it is Christ? I wondered if that helped as to our understanding our coming into it.

M.J.W. Say some more, please. I think it does help.

E.C.B. I think, as you said and rightly, if we say the centre and expression of God's thoughts and glory is in Christ, we may be apt to think that He is for ever beyond us and we can never attain to it, but if we grasp that the centre of God's thoughts was man, and He has found a Man in whom He could set it out, does that not open our understanding that we as men have a place there too?

M.J.W. That is very helpful. Even in John 17, when He asked to be glorified with the glory that He had before, it is as Man He goes in.

E.C.B. In 1 Corinthians it says "man ... being God's image and glory", chap 11: 7. Paul is speaking there of men like you and me. But the One in whom He has found it is Christ.

J.W. There have been things said in ministry as to standing and state. Nothing changes or affects our standing, does it? That is effected by Christ being in glory, and our standing is in Him. But the enjoyment of that requires a state, does it not?

M.J.W. I do not think anyone would question that, I think that is vital. The trouble often is that our lack of enjoyment is because of our state. But we must not stop looking at the objective thing to be occupied with our state.

D.E.R. Tell us how we look on the glory of the Lord.

M.J.W. You just look at it,

D.E.R. I naturally would not look at it.

M.J.W. No, you naturally would not but you have been worked in.

D.E.R. To look on the glory of the Lord, we might say, is a very good thing to do and that Scripture would encourage us to do so, and you might encourage us to do so, but how do we do so practically?

M.J.W. Just by looking. You want to look at Jesus; everything takes character from Him in this dispensation and He is the centre of all God's thoughts.

D.E.R. But our natural eyes will not cause us to look on the Lord, will they?

M.J.W. But we are not natural here, we have been worked in by God, otherwise we would run out as soon as we saw Him; we would say, I am not interested in Him where He is. The very fact that we have been worked on, and the first presentation in the gospel is of Jesus, means that I follow His track to where He is. The Man that has so captured my affections, who died for me, I want to see where He is and I follow Him on that pathway till I see Him installed in glory and I keep looking at Him. Do I?

D.E.R. I think it is only the Spirit who can occupy us with the glory of Christ, and that raises the exercise as to whether the Spirit is free with us, so that He might show us the glory of Christ, which links on with what was said as to our practical state.

J.W. You raised the enquiry as to how we take on the glory. There must be a subjective answer, must there not? There must be a state practically to enjoy my place with Christ. If I find I allow fleshly thoughts, fleshly feelings, my enjoyment of the place and my communion with Him are hindered immediately.

M.J.W. Absolutely. One of the things that we, for myself anyway, feel the need of is communion. You read some of these earlier brothers' ministry, and they say if I get any other sort of thought, maybe about a flower, or about what I should wear for the day, I am out of communion. John brings in the great matter of communion, which is what you are saying. If that is interrupted by anything, even maybe a natural thing, for the moment I am out of the height of that enjoyment.

R.T. Does not Thomas help us as to how it might be affected? He says He would not believe. But the Lord comes in and He says, Thomas, bring your finger here, and he looks at the glory and he says "My Lord and my God", John 20: 28. The state can be affected, can it not? There is no state but what cannot be affected by the incoming of Christ.

M.J.W. That is very helpful.

D.A.B. I was struck during the week that God has not just sent us power but God Himself has come in the Person of the Spirit to keep

my eye on a Man in the glory.

M.J.W. I am sure what was said is right and that the thing is going to be made good here by the Spirit. I must not lose sight of that.

Really we should not need to be talking about this, we should all be clear. We would not have said to Paul, But Paul, surely you understand the subjective side of things. He is talking about the order of the truth.

A.J.E.W. It is interesting that Paul himself, after the Lord had appeared to him, was three days without seeing and neither ate nor drank, and at a later stage in his history, (I do not know how long) he was in Arabia. That points to a certain inward working of what had been opened up to him, leading to the wealth that eventually came out in God's beloved servant.

M.J.W. He says that God "was pleased to reveal his Son in me", Gal 1: 16. What a deep way the knowledge of a glorified Christ reached into him and effected all those moral exercises! I wonder whether we have had a sight of Jesus like that, because the disciples felt the same. When they were on the mount of transfiguration there was a whiteness there "such as fuller on earth could not whiten", Mark 9: 3. They saw a glory there that they felt they needed a purity to be able to sustain. So John says "every one that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure", 1 John 3: 3.

J.M. It is said here: "Therefore, having this ministry", I wonder whether we realise what ministry is; it is an administration that has come in from God through Christ and by the Spirit, and Paul has it; and the result of that is that the hidden things of shame are rejected, all that whole line of things is cleared out and there is a man who is a manifestation of the truth: "commending ourselves to every conscience of men before God". It shows that there is a purity as a result of the ministry of the new covenant.

M.J.W. I think what you say is helpful: if only we could take it on! We do not hear the new covenant much ministered about. Young people, and myself, need establishing in the way in which God is with us in this dispensation.

J.M. The background to this epistle is very interesting. Paul had some very severe things to say in the first epistle, and this second letter is generally an epistle of encouragement. As to the wicked man that they had removed, he said that they were to show their affection to him. All that is governing the spirit of the apostle, so that he is coming out really God like in his attitude, and that is basically what you get in the new covenant.

M.J.W. So you see in Paul in expression what he is seeking to arrive at in the Corinthians.

E.P. When the new covenant is established with Israel on the earth it says "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will pardon their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more", Jer 31: 34. I was thinking of what you said earlier as to everyone, young and old, knowing God; the spirit of the new covenant that we enjoy at the present time, the spirit of it, should really help us in that, do you think?

M.J.W. I have no doubt. What we are saying is cardinal; it may be lower than the full height of the glory that is presented here, but if in a local meeting you had people like that, who did not need to be taught, Know the Lord, but who knew Him, what a wonderful meeting that would be! And what a spirit would pervade amongst the brethren, persons pervaded by grace but being given character to by God!

L.W.B. In verse 18 of chapter 3 it says, "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord". I was wondering whether that meant that when we are together on Lord's day morning (it is a collective thought, is it not?) we are all gazing on the glory of the Lord, and the working out of that would be that collectively there was some expression of Christ in the local company through the week.

M.J.W. I think what you say is helpful because think of what that means to the Father when we come before Him. There is a company of people who have been changed into conformity to the

glory of the Lord. What suitability for the place they are in and how pleasing to God! That is what He is working at, to arrive at in persons here, an epistle of Christ. I am sure what you say is right.

C.C.I. Would it be right to think that covenant relationships are connected with the wilderness where we are here on earth? One has thought very much of two great lines of ministry that were in Mr Taylor's mind, the covenant and family relationships, but this side would keep us completely superior, would it not to all the problems that we have to face individually and in responsibility?

M.J.W. And would keep us from a sense of condemnation. I do think that is important. What use in a local assembly is a poor brother or sister or a child who feels condemned, who feels that they are wrong and maybe other people make them feel it too. I am just speaking abstractly: what use is a person like that? A person in the light of the glory of the new covenant, the ministry of righteousness, and in the light of the shining that is in Jesus would, as Paul is seen in chapter 4, be seen superior to all the things against him.

R.W.F. The spirit of condemnation is like an attempt to reintroduce the veil, that which Christ has removed, is it not?

M.J.W. I think that. Have you any more to say?

R.W.F. I feel the solemnity of it. If there is a spirit of legality, or whatever it may be which belongs to the old - demands, requirements, duty - if I introduce that, then I am really, as far as I am concerned, reintroducing the veil, and I may be doing that for others as well, but the Lord has removed it and He would have it removed.

M.J.W. Absolutely, He wants it removed.

P.M. In the first epistle Paul says it is the least thing to be examined of you, "he that examines me is the Lord", 1 Cor 4: 4. If I feel condemned, what do I feel in the presence of the Lord? What is His judgment?

M.J.W. We have not had it much, thank God, but you know the feeling when you can make a person feel cowed or bring in a spirit of

condemnation amongst the brethren. I believe this new covenant spirit marking us would assist in the healing.

S.D.K.R. Does Mr Darby's expression, 'an accomplished, subsisting righteousness', help? Does the ministry of the Spirit and the ministry of righteousness enable us to behold the glory? Then we go from there into the glory of the Lord, not from degradation to glory, but from glory to glory? Is that how you understand it?

M.J.W. Now this accomplished, subsisting righteousness you speak of: is Christ the expression of that?

S.D.K.R. Yes, as was said earlier, my place is in Him.

M.J.W. I wonder if we realise that. I think that the gospel needs to be lifted to the gospel of the glory. The end of the gospel is not that I am here enjoying the forgiveness of sins and have the Holy Spirit (I know Mr Raven said that is the gospel in a sense), but what the Spirit would draw my attention to is that I have a place in the glory of God in which Jesus is; is that not the gospel of the glory? And my righteousness is there, as we have been often taught about justification, it is not so much for this world but for another world.

S.D.K.R. His place is my place.

M.J.W. What a wonderful thing! And all the shining of that glory is like Revelation where a voice comes out of heaven to John, Come up here. Is not that what the glory is doing, having that effect on us?

E.C.B. While all of us would say, I am sure, that our state ought to be improved, is it not right that we do not have to wait for our state to be improved to look on the glory of the Lord?

M.J.W. I do not think so.

E.C.B. If that were to be so we should not do it until we were in bodies of glory.

H.A.H. The answer is very simple, is it not? If we are conscious of distance or something darkening, the answer is "when it shall turn to the Lord".

E.C.B. I was reading in Mr Coates that if you wish to improve somebody's state, present the glory of Christ to him. I think what was said is right: it is very difficult for us to effect things in one another, but perhaps we can point the way. Is that what you think?

M.J.W. Yes. I do not think it possible - I do not make an absolute statement - for a believer to behold in the true sense the glory of the Lord without receiving some benefit from it.

E.C.M. How do you understand the bearing of the life of Jesus being manifested in our body?

M.J.W. Have we not been taught that to come out like Christ here I need to have a knowledge of Him where He is?

E.C.M. The life of Jesus is manifested in my body and in my mortal flesh. I thought that had some bearing on your reference to the glory that is coming into expression down here.

M.J.W. The life of Jesus is in heaven, is it not? The life of Jesus that was here was actually the life that was given up. If that life is to find its expression in my mortal body it is a character of life that finds its expression fully in Jesus where He is.

E.C.B. It is a very great thing to grasp the remark of Mr Darby's, that the only Christ there is is a glorified Christ.

E.C.M. Actually if that is not in expression here, where is the testimony.

S.D.K.R. Is it true that we get like what we are occupied with?

M.J.W. Yes. You can tell from the faces of some saints where their thoughts are. I remember a sister saying once that even when a believer was dead there was something about their face that was different from that of an unbeliever. There is something different about a believer's face.

A.J.E.W. There is an interesting point, perhaps, in Paul in the most adverse circumstances before Agrippa: "I would to God, both in little and in much, that not only thou, but all who have heard me this day, should become such as I also am, except these bonds", Acts 26: 29.

It is the character and calibre of the man who is there in the most difficult circumstances. It is Christ shining out, is it not?

M.J.W. That is beautiful.

C.B. At the time when the people were bitten in the plague, Moses put that serpent of brass on the pole and those who looked lived. There is now what you have been presenting to us as a risen, glorified Christ in heaven. If we want to live, keep looking.

M.J.W. And as was said earlier, we will not be in the full enjoyment of that glory unless our state is right. I need to be practically righteous, and that is always a test - getting to work on time, for example.

S.D.K.R. The looking on the serpent of brass is really looking on Christ made sin.

M.J.W. Exactly. And the wonderful result of that, a Man made sin, is that there at the cross God was glorified. The bringing together of the whole character of God at the cross, with His love and His righteousness, was effected in the Person of Jesus. God was glorified there, and the Man that glorified Him He has placed in the very highest place of glory. Now, what a place to look - to see a Man there that has glorified God and has found a place for us there!

D.E.B. Verse 4 of chapter 4 refers to the unbelieving. Sometimes we, perhaps, think of that as the pagans and atheists, but it might be you or me.

M.J.W. Yes, I think there is a lot more unbelief with us than we realise. Look at the disciples; they loved Jesus, they knew Him well, but He often had to say, O unbelieving.

D.E.B. It was that that prevented the glory shining for them, was it not?

LONDON

15 September 1984

Key to initials

(All local unless otherwise stated)

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HEALING VIRTUE IN CHRIST

F.E.Raven

Luke 8: 41-48; 2 Kings 4: 18-37

It was while the Lord was on the way to the house of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, that the woman came behind Him and touched the border of His garment. I have no doubt this brings before us that which takes place while the Lord is, in a sense, on the way to come into the world again. There is another circumstance connected with it, viz., that it is related after the casting of the demons out of the demoniac; in that we see the effect of Christ's having already come into the midst of Israel. It brought everything to an issue with regard to Israel; the mass of the people were found to be unclean and they were carried by the power of evil into the abyss, the sea of the Gentiles. A few were delivered but the mass were lost. The Jew has been swallowed up of the Gentiles; he rushed into destruction and is there till this day. After the appeal to the Lord to come into the house of Jairus, and on the way, the woman comes and touches the hem of His garment. She had tried many physicians and could not be healed, but she learns that there is virtue in Christ. Christ was known for a prophet, and the healing virtue will never come apart from the prophet. So in the case of Elisha, there was virtue with the prophet. There is no healing virtue apart from the prophet, that is, from the word of God. If virtue comes to man it accompanies the word of the Lord. The Shunammite, when her son died, had no idea of going to anyone except the prophet. Her husband could not understand the urgency to go to the prophet, but her instinct was right. The woman with the issue of blood knew that there was healing virtue in Jesus, for it was known that Jesus was a prophet.

Even people who in a way distrusted the Lord knew that He was a prophet. See the end of the preceding chapter: "The Pharisee said within himself, This man if he were a prophet would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touched him". He had invited the Lord as a prophet, but when the woman came and washed and anointed His feet, he began to doubt if it really were so. Then the

Lord brings a remarkable parable before Simon, which should have taught him that not simply a prophet, but God was there.

There are three things with regard to the woman with the issue of blood. First, she had heard that Jesus was a prophet, and that healing virtue was there. Secondly, she was healed, and then the Lord would have her to confess to Himself. Thirdly, when she confessed Him He acknowledged her; her faith had saved her. In truth He had saved her, but He says "Thy faith hath saved thee", and then He says "Go in peace". It is a beautiful picture of the ways of God in Christ. Jesus is accessible to everybody. There is no one who has not a claim on Christ; and Christ has a claim on everyone.

It is a great thing to apprehend the fact that everyone has a right and title to Christ, because there is virtue in Him. At the present time, although people do not take it to heart, yet there is a general idea that there is virtue in Him. But the fact is that people do not touch the hem of His garment. There is virtue in Christ, but men must come in contact with Him in order to receive the blessing. The woman had heard that there was virtue in Him, and she did touch the border of His garment. Christ has touched man in becoming a man, but man has to touch Christ; the touch has to be mutual.

There is a general idea that there is healing and forgiveness in Christ for man. If it is so, Christ is the prophet, because God will not heal man without making Himself known to him. Man has lost God, and if God provides virtue for man it is that he may know Him. And hence if there be virtue for man it is connected with the prophet.

There was virtue for man in Elisha; it was with the prophet. We see this in the case of Naaman; there was virtue with the prophet to heal him from his leprosy, but it was to make God known to him.

It is a great thing to get forgiveness from Christ, to touch the border of His garment, to come in contact with Him by receiving the testimony of God. Do not be content with knowing that there is virtue with Christ; many people have an idea of this but do not touch the hem of His garment. You get the virtue by coming in contact. The mind of God, His disposition towards man, will be known to you by the virtue. Simon said justly Who can forgive sins but God? But the

Man that has acquired forgiveness for man is Himself God. He has accomplished redemption that God may be known to man. I ask you, is God known to you? If God had not revealed Himself He could not be known, but He has revealed Himself through Christ and in redemption. If you were to ask me is God known to you? I should say, I know God in Christ. I know what is in His thought towards man. The sun shines for everybody, but there are blind people in the world, and they do not see the light of the sun. I desire that your eyes may be opened that you may see the light of grace that shines in Christ for every man upon earth.

Is God known to you? He may be known and if not known, it is not His fault. It is because you have never touched the hem of His garment and proved that there is virtue in Christ for you. You are in the position of this woman, life is ebbing out if the issue of blood cannot be stanchd. The point is to touch the border of Christ's garment while there is the opportunity. It is universally acknowledged that there is forgiveness in Christ, even in popery you get the idea of forgiveness. There may be differences of mind as to how the virtue is to be gained. I believe it is to be gained by faith; if you touch Christ by faith you will get the healing virtue that is in Christ.

I will now refer to the next point, the confession. This part of the incident brings before us the wonderful interest that Christ takes in man. Consider for a moment who He is: He is God. He knew that the woman had touched Him. You might have thought that in His greatness He would not concern Himself about a woman of that kind, but He was not content until she came to Him. He knew that the confession of Himself would be of great benefit to her and confirm her. Many people want to be hid and not to come to light. That is not Christ's way. He knows everyone that has touched Him, and it is His mind to bring them into the acknowledgement of Himself. There are two steps in this: first, you confess Christ as Lord with the mouth, and secondly, you come into contact with others who do the same.

Circumstances are altered today, but we can confess Christ as Lord, and can be identified with those who also confess Him such. It is a

blessed thing to receive forgiveness, but then there is this further point of confession, and identification with those who confess Him. If there is one in whom is virtue that one is entitled to authority in the soul. There was a disease known in England as king's evil, and it was said that anyone touched by the king would be healed of it. If it were true and a person were touched by the king, the king would be entitled to power and authority in regard to that person. If there is virtue in Christ, and you have been touched by Him, you would say that to Him rightly belong glory and dominion, and if so, you naturally confess Him as Lord, and you would be identified with others who confess Him as Lord. There are many who do not confess Him as Lord, but I am proud to be with those who confess Him as Lord. I am glad to say, Glory and dominion to that Man in whom there is virtue and healing for everyone. That is what God would have. If you are brought into the light of divine grace and would be pleasing to God you are under obligation to confess Christ as Lord with those who confess Him likewise.

There is one point more that I will touch on. Jesus said "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace". That is to my mind very wonderful. The Lord had brought her to the confession of Himself, and that was the best thing for her.

If she had slunk away she might soon have forgotten all she had received, and the Lord did the best thing for her in bringing her to confess what she had received. Then we get the word, Be of good comfort. How can you get that at the present time? By the Spirit.

The Lord gets a word from you, you confess that you have been healed, and He gives you a word; "Be of good comfort". He has all authority, and will, in due time, exercise it, yet He gives this word of comfort to the woman. My commendation to Christ is that I have come to Him as a sinner liable to judgment. He gives the Spirit and says "Be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole"; and then He says "Go in peace".

There are plenty of quacks in the world, and people often attach more value to quacks than to physicians. There are many religious quacks in the world, but only one Physician, and that is

Christ. He is the only One who could accomplish redemption, and acquire for man the forgiveness of sins. Do not have to do with quacks, but only with the Great Physician. He is able to heal any and every moral disease. If you touch the border of His garment you are healed immediately, and the Lord will bring you to the confession of Himself, for the One who could acquire forgiveness for man is the One entitled to authority. I care for the authorities of this world on account of Christ, otherwise I concern myself very little about them.

If you identify yourself with those who acknowledge Christ as Lord, He will make you to know comfort; He will say "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace". What grace this is on the part of Christ! Think of the interest He took in this poor woman, and that He takes in anybody and everybody who touches Him and confesses Him as Lord. Do you confess Him as Lord? Has Christ His own proper place of divine authority in your heart? It is a great safeguard to confess Him as Lord and to identify one's self with those who do so too. There is peace and comfort in that of which the people of the world know nothing.

The secret of healing virtue being in Christ is this, that He is the Prophet who has come to make known to man what is in the heart of God for man. I do not think you can say that you have reached Christ according to the mind of God until you know the love of Christ. You have to reach Him not only in faith but in love. I suppose everyone here has reached Christ in faith, but to reach Him in love is another thing, and that is done when you can say you know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. He dwells in your heart by faith; you see the length and breadth and depth and height, and know the love of Christ, and are filled unto all the fulness of God.

Words of Grace and Encouragement,

Vol.2, pp 314-321, 332-42

THE CHILDREN'S REDEEMER

What an endearing name this is to believers on the Lord Jesus Christ! Redemption is one of those spiritual blessings, every one of

which is ours in Him. A friend said once 'redemption is precious but redeemed is more precious'. He was thinking how important it is to enjoy a blessing oneself and not only to know about it. But knowing the Redeemer is even more precious. He set such a value upon us that He came and gave Himself to purchase us. If a believer should die before He comes again the Lord will not fail to raise the body and change it like unto His own body of glory.

Perhaps you have sometimes thought about the Hebrew children like Miriam at the time when Moses was born in Egypt. They would know how Pharaoh had made the lives of their parents bitter through harshness and had even decreed that new-born baby boys should not be allowed to live. In His wisdom God let these conditions continue and even get worse for another eighty years. It must have seemed as if He had caused His people to be sold to His enemy! But when all seemed hopeless for the nation He stretched out His mighty arm and redeemed them, children and all, to Himself through the Red Sea on dry ground. For the Christian this good news means that he or she and all other believers can say that the Lord Jesus by going through death has redeemed our souls from him who had the might of death. We are therefore not our own "for ye have been bought with a price: glorify now then God in your body".

I remember reading of a celebrated swimmer who attempted to swim across the river Niagara near the world-famed Falls. However, the current proved too strong for him and he was drowned - in the sight of thousands standing nearby but who were unable to help him. He had passed a rock then called 'Past Redemption Point', just a little cape jutting out into the water unnoticed by travellers. Beyond that point no human being had been saved from drowning. On one side was hope and life, on the other despair and death. To every precious and eternal soul the warning is obvious. Have you heeded it?

J.C.Evershed