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Contents

GOD'S ANOINTED MAN

"YE ARE CHRIST'S"

CHILDREN HUNGERING AND THIRSTING

GOD'S ANOINTED MAN

Luke 4: 16-32; Acts 10: 34-38; 1 Samuel 2: 1,10

R.F.W. These New Testament Scriptures which we have read refer to the Lord Jesus as God's Anointed. The passages are well known, and I am sure the subject has been considered many times, but I thought it would be good to look at it again and perhaps get some impressions of the greatness of Christ as the anointed Man. It struck me in reading it that Luke brings forward this matter early in his record in the gospel. The Lord, in beginning His public service in the section we have read, brings forward this scripture which refers to Him prophetically; and in Acts, where Peter presents the gospel, I suppose we could say formally to the nations for the first time, he brings the truth of the anointing forward also. So I suggest that it would be good if, as early as possible in our histories as believers, something entered into our souls about the Lord Jesus as God's anointed Man. One way that we can view the thought of the anointing is that God has committed Himself fully to one blessed Man. I think that is something that it is important to get into the soul, that God has committed Himself fully to one blessed, glorious Man.

The anointing would speak of that, and we should therefore be exercised to know what kind of a Man God has committed Himself to. The gospels, by the Spirit, would help us to get impressions of the kind of man that the Lord Jesus was, by the things that He said, the way that He spoke and the way that He acted. The verses which we have read in Luke refer to the words of grace proceeding out of His mouth but also describe Him doing certain things, so that not only in how He spoke but in the way things were done there was the expression of grace, the expression of the anointing. I suppose our desire would be to get underneath the words - the word 'anointing' or any other words in the Scripture - and see the meaning that the Spirit of God intends us to draw out. That was my desire in bringing forward these scriptures.

J.C.E. Is the anointing for a distinct purpose? It may be a long purpose, but it might be something special for any time. I was

thinking of the distinction between that and sanctification. A believer is sanctified, and it speaks of the Lord being sanctified and sent, but anointing, in my mind, has something specific in view, probably service. The sense of anointing would be separating to it.

R.F.W. Yes, I think so. The anointing, as we have been taught, implies dignity and power in the person anointed. I suppose the Old Testament helps us in the way that the subject is brought forward there, to see that God intended to convey something of the distinctiveness of the anointing in His mind. Various persons were anointed, as we know, the priests and the kings, especially Aaron and David, and then we have prophets too - Elisha, and I suppose we could even say Isaiah from the scripture that is quoted from his prophecy - but no one person in the Old Testament combined all the features that were expressed. When you come to the Lord Jesus it says that the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form as a dove upon Him; I suppose that every feature seen in the Old Testament relating to the anointing was gathered up in that.

D.B.B. Would Simeon have had some impression of that, that he should see the Lord's Christ?

R.F.W. Yes. What a wonderful expression! When he saw the Lord's Christ he said "now thou lettest thy bondman go, according to thy word, in peace", Luke 2: 29. The Lord's Christ: this is the One who would take care of everything for God perfectly. So Simeon could go in peace. Every divine thought would be secured by this blessed One. Everything for God was held and secured by Christ. I suppose that is involved in the thought of the anointing. God commits Himself to this Person in view of being represented.

S.D.K.R. I was thinking of your reference to committal. I think that the first time anointing is mentioned in Scripture is Jacob anointing the pillar; he committed himself to his vow. Of course that is a little different thought, but I think the thought of committal is very good, connected with anointing. God has committed Himself to that Man.

R.F.W. Yes, I think we would learn that from the reference in Acts: "who went through all quarters doing good, and healing all that were

under the power of the devil, because God was with him". That involved God being committed to Christ, and God was perfectly represented in Him. The reference to Jacob is interesting. Where did he get the thought of anointing the stone? What did it mean to him? It meant something to his soul, did it not?

R.W.F. Was it your thought that we should understand the divine intent and meaning in anointing? In this scene men are distinguished despite what they are morally, but Christ is anointed because He is altogether worthy.

R.F.W. Yes. I think the anointing brings in something that is of God. It is something that is not in man's heart or mind or system, something that is of God. It seems that the Lord in this section is quite deliberate in pointing out this matter at the start of His service, in Luke's account.

J.M. Is He both the anointed Man and the Man anointed?

R.F.W. Yes; what is the difference?

J.M. Thirty years of life had gone before this chapter in Luke. It is significant, is it not, that He waits for that thirty years before He goes out in public service, so that He goes out as the anointed Man. But then He is also the Man anointed. In that thirty years of private life all the fragrance of that precious life actually came out, and God came in in relation to that in the anointing, do you not think? These two things are very closely connected, are they not?

R.F.W. Yes, I think they are. The anointing, as has been said, involves character, but I suppose with us the thought of anointing would involve a change of character. If we take this matter on ourselves it would involve that we have to learn from Christ what the anointing is. The Holy Spirit coming on Christ involved no change of character in Him.

J.M. Exactly the opposite; there is complacency, everything there was infinitely pleasurable to God, and the anointing is the evidence of that.

E.C.B. It says "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured", Exod 30: 32. Is that bearing upon ourselves? In Jesus there was that as to which no question could be raised. Is it of interest that in the scriptures you have read, while in Luke 4 it does say "has anointed me to preach", these scriptures are not related to any particular office. The anointings in the Old Testament were for the priest or the prophet or the king - an office; but is the emphasis in these New Testament scriptures on the Man?

R.F.W. Yes, it is wonderful to think of that. This Man could fill any office, could He not? The anointed Man was suitable, and is suitable, as we know, to fill every office perfectly. Sometimes we say the office makes the man, do we not? But think of this blessed Man! It gives you a wonderful thought, that God had a Man here who was capable of filling out perfectly every thought that He had.

F.C.M. Even His physical actions are referred to, that "he stood up", "found the place" and "sat down" and began to speak. What a blessed thing to see a Man whose every movement and action bespoke the grace of the anointing!

R.F.W. Yes, it is striking the way this section is written. You might wonder why all these movements of the Lord Jesus are referred to.

"He entered, according to his custom, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read ... and having unrolled the book he found the place"; and "having rolled up the book, when he had delivered it to the attendant, he sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon him". The anointing as seen here involves not only what was said but how He did things. There was an impression conveyed in the way that He did things which bore testimony to this holy character of things.

E.P. As anointed He would be doing things for God.

R.F.W. Yes, indeed. We have often noticed that in reading this quotation from Isaiah He comes to a point and stops. It is the mind of God for the moment, is it not? It is the inauguration of the dispensation of grace. He stops at a certain point.

E.P. In that sense He is distinguished personally, is He not? There is that remarkable reference in Exodus 29 where Aaron is anointed apart from blood first (see v 7). When he is identified with his sons there is blood, but first of all, where he is anointed the oil is poured upon him, there is no blood. Do you think, in that sense, that he represents in a remarkable way the person of the Lord Jesus, distinguished on account of His own worth?

R.F.W. Quite so. The Lord Jesus was great enough as Man to be anointed. He was great enough for the Spirit to descend upon Him in this way, quite apart from the question of blood. We are given the Spirit, are sealed and anointed, but that is subsequent to redemption.

J.C.E. They probably wondered when He was going to stop unrolling the book. It was right at the end of the book; what it must have meant to the Lord to go past what is now chapter 53 for instance! You spoke of the Lord choosing what was current. In those earlier chapters there was what was past in the way of sorrow and evil in the people and in the nations around, also the prospect of the world to come and other matters, but the Lord just goes on in His skill to this place, which would represent in a special way God's grace towards the needy.

R.F.W. Indeed. How wonderful to think that such a scripture could be read, not only in word but in power, because there was One here capable of putting this into effect.

R.T. It would seem that the very place, Nazareth, was chosen for this. Does all that emphasise the power of the anointing in these very circumstances?

R.F.W. Yes; say more about that.

R.T. It says "he came to Nazareth, where he was brought up". They said "Is not this the son of Joseph?". There was unbelief and the belittling His person, but the anointing is not affected by that; it still functions in its power, does it not?

R.F.W. Yes, I was thinking about that. It would appear that the Lord did not have one convert in this synagogue. It goes on to say "they were all filled with rage in the synagogue". He displayed this wonderful feature, but the terrible spirit of murder came out and they would have cast Him down, but it says that He "went his way". I think that would be a feature of the anointing. The anointed Man has a certain way, and He goes on in that way in the grace and power of the anointing, despite this sort of thing which had come to light. Would that be right?

R.T. It has been said before that He derived nothing from this scene when He came but He brought everything with Him. I think what you said as to the anointing as conveying dignity is most important, that we are not affected by the conditions but we are able to be superior to them in all the grace of that anointing.

R.F.W. Yes. What a test that is! We tend to react to things as they affect us, and we are, I suppose, specially affected by personal antagonism, but the anointed Man was not affected in that way; He went His way.

S.N.C. And also the manner in which He spoke. He affected men's inwards Godward, so men bore witness. They never heard anyone speak like Jesus. I think that is the character of things we need.

R.F.W. Yes, exactly; something better, something that obviously does not proceed from man, something that bears the divine character, the divine stamp.

H.A.H. In that connection, do you think that, although it says He began to say "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your ears", the fact that it says before that "the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon him" indicates that the very way He read the scripture bespoke that?

R.F.W. Yes, it is wonderful to think of it. There was something so attractive. They must have heard the Scriptures read before, and perhaps they even had seen the Lord Jesus before, but on this day there was something distinctive, something special there, was there not?

H.A.H. No-one had read it as He could read it, could they?

E.C.B. Do you think there is some special significance in "he has anointed me to preach"? That is to say, the preaching is to be the expression of the grace that came in with the anointing. Does it involve the presentation of God in His present disposition?

R.F.W. Yes, the preaching would convey something of the feelings of God. God was coming in and taking account of everything, not leaving anything unresolved or unattended to. "To preach glad tidings to the poor ... to preach to captives deliverance, and to the blind sight, to send forth the crushed delivered, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord". What wonderful glad tidings!

E.C.B. Do you think the oil of joy, which is referred to later in Isaiah 61 (v 3), is an impression of the anointing coming on those who receive the gospel?

R.F.W. That is very good. I think Isaiah was pleased to get that message. In the next section (v 10) he says "I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall be joyful in my God". He had a wonderful message, and it thrilled him.

E.C.B. Do you think the anointed preaching should have that as a normal effect in the persons who hear it?

R.F.W. Yes. It has often been said, if the preaching does not cheer up the preacher, how can it cheer up those who hear it?

B.W.W. In your opening remarks you spoke of the need for us all to have some deep, definite impression of this Person, which I think, to those of us who live in this place, was particularly interesting, because we have been speaking about the need of that kind of thing with every one of us, something real and deep that will hold in relation to our knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

R.F.W. Yes. I thought it was interesting that Peter should present the anointed Man to that Gentile company to which he preached.

You might have understood why the Lord should refer to this when speaking to a company of Jews who were perhaps familiar with the idea of the anointing from the Old Testament scriptures, but it is

striking that Peter brings it in in Acts 10 in a definite way, so that from the very beginning the Gentiles might be impressed by the fact that God had committed Himself to this blessed Man. How important it is to get an impression like that in our souls!

D.J.H. Peter would not claim anything for himself. In verse 26 he says "Rise up, I myself also am a man". That is all to point to the distinctiveness of the anointed Man is it not?

R.F.W. Yes, very good. "He went in, talking with him," it says, "and found many gathered together", and that whole preaching of Peter's is full of Christ. The many personal references to the Lord Jesus, right through that address that he gives, would concentrate their attention on one blessed Man.

D.A.B. Do you think the Holy Spirit comes in so quickly in Acts 10 so that they might have the capacity to appreciate what Peter was saying? Luke 4 emphasises that it was the place where He was brought up, and yet they had never really noticed the quality and character of the Man that was there. Do we need the Holy Spirit, therefore, for that, and is it something we might also look for early in our spiritual course?

R.F.W. Yes; that is a test to all of us. It is a fine thing to see something of spiritual character coming to light in persons in the place where they have been brought up, to see something different coming into evidence in the souls of young believers, something that bears the divine stamp.

D.A.B. I was thinking that it is the Holy Spirit that makes the difference. The reception of the Holy Spirit gives us eyes to see the Man that you are presenting to us.

R.F.W. Yes, if the Spirit is made room for. It says about Samson that "the Spirit of Jehovah began to move him at Mahaneh-Dan" (Judg 13: 25) which was, I think, his own locality.

F.C.M. Do you think that while it is quite normal for us to feel in ourselves weak and dependent, we should have an increasing experience of what the anointing is? The Lord Jesus says "The

Spirit of the Lord is upon me". He must have had the blessed consciousness of the resource and power of that divine Person. That should give character to our speaking, should it not?

R.F.W. Yes, I think that is helpful. The Lord was pointing out that this was what was coming into evidence in His service, so that it might be recognised to be what it was. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me". It is an exercise, in reading the gospels, to understand what is being presented to us, to understand what the Spirit of God intends us to draw out of the incidents that are recorded.

J.M. I wondered if Paul likewise went to great pains in the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians to ensure that it was inculcated into the minds of the brethren there that what was of import was not of man but what was of the Spirit in view of the anointed vessel. I was struck with what you said earlier, that something was coming out in Luke 4 that was not of man.

R.F.W. Indeed! I think it is important, because there is perhaps a tendency to take on things that are not of this character. The divine intent is that we should be maintained at the level of the anointing so that this character of things should be in expression amongst us.

R.T. You said earlier that this scripture had been read often, but they had never heard these words: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your ears". Does that bring in the power of the anointing, that it is there present now?

R.F.W. Yes, indeed. Who else could say that with any power? We may say things, but who can say things with power? That would involve the anointing, would it not? The thing said in dignity and power carries weight; it carries its own credentials with it.

E.C.B. Is it still called 'today'?

R.F.W. Yes. Go on.

E.C.B. I was thinking of what our brother just said. 'Today': this character of 'today' lasts down to now, does it not? Is not that the

way God is to be presented to men now, and to be manifested among us?

R.F.W. Yes, very good.

E.C.B. I often think that one area of testimony that we neglect is our testimony to one another.

R.F.W. Say more about that.

E.C.B. Well, we often speak about the testimony and we think about evangelical activity so far as we engage in it, and we think of what we convey to people who are, we venture to say, 'outside', but we always have a testimony to one another, and whether that is of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is a test as to whether the anointing is on me.

R.F.W. Yes, I think so; that what I say, and not only that, but the way I say it, bears this character; there is a certain grace in it that is in accord with the grace of God expressed in this dispensation.

H.A.H. Colossians makes many references to 'the Christ', and it is in that epistle that Paul says "Let your word be always with grace, seasoned with salt", chap 4: 6. I wondered whether that bore on what we are saying.

R.F.W. Yes, I think so. The reference at the end of the section we read is helpful. A murderous spirit of things comes out in the synagogue and it says "they cast him forth ... and led him up to the brow of the mountain upon which their city was built, so that they might throw him down the precipice". Satan is against this feature of the anointing. He would have had them throw the Lord down the precipice. He would seek to cast down that spirit of things, and those who manifest that spirit.

D.E.R. The Lord was still speaking in grace under the power of the anointing when He was stirring up their consciences, which brought to light the animosity of the flesh.

R.F.W. Yes, indeed. He says "of a truth". "Grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ", John 1: 17. The anointed Man speaks in grace; He does not give up the truth at the same time, does He? But

it is wonderful the way the Lord takes when this spirit of opposition manifests itself. I think we have to face up to the fact that sometimes things manifest themselves that are not of this character, and what is it that comes out then? It says "they led him ... that they might throw him down the precipice; but he, passing through the midst of them, went his way, and descended". It is a lovely touch, I think: He descended. They would have cast Him down but He descended.

He took a way out that was open to Him. It involved that He descended but it was the way that the anointed Man took in these circumstances. A way is made for His service to continue. He "descended to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbaths". He finds another outlet for His service of grace.

R.W.F. In the spirit of grace of the anointing He spoke the truth, which had its effect upon their consciences, clearly. The reaction was by way of attack, do you think? Is that a way of distinguishing between the speaking of the truth which is under the grace of the anointing, and fleshly activity?

R.F.W. Yes, we know what we are. We maybe recognise things in ourselves. Rage: have you ever expressed rage at a brother? Well, that is hardly the spirit of the anointing, is it?

H.A.H. Is it very interesting that the last verse before that reference to rage refers to Naaman, the Syrian? He went away in a rage, but then later "Then he went down", 2 Kings 5: 14. It is this going down that we were speaking of.

R.F.W. Very good.

J.C.E. Too, do you think that there was readiness in Capernaum to hear Him, for although He was anointed to preach, He was there to teach as well. I just wondered if the formation which came with teaching was possible there because they received Him. The Lord could preach in Nazareth, but there did not seem to be the work of God there that would warrant teaching.

R.F.W. No. We need the teaching, do we not? We need to go on with the teaching, especially in our localities; it needs to be persisted

in because we do not learn quickly, do we? We have the Spirit to help us in that connection.

R.T. He went His way; you have referred to that. It would go right on to the cross. Do you think the anointing really shines in the capacity to suffer, and in these suffering circumstances shows God's will and His grace?

R.F.W. Yes, indeed. In the holy anointing oil (see Exod 30) the leading feature was myrrh, which brings out that feature of suffering. It is the spirit of Christ; He was prepared to accept suffering, prepared to accept being misunderstood, prepared to accept being shut out, but He found an outlet for His service to continue on that blessed way.

E.C.B. Do the last words which you had read (verse 32), "his word was with authority", show that the words of grace themselves have authority?

R.F.W. Yes. The dispensation was inaugurated with authority, was it not? Grace has its own blessed authority over our souls. There is nothing like the authority of grace.

E.C.B. The scripture you have read in Acts, "anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power", is the authority of grace, is it not?

R.F.W. Yes; that is, it is the authority to establish what is of God in this dispensation in the way in which He has asserted Himself. That is grace. The scripture the Lord referred to goes on to speak of "the day of vengeance of our God", Isa 61: 2. The anointed Man will introduce that day too, when the time for it comes, but now, as we see, the mind of God is that the dispensation is established in grace. That is sufficient to carry this day through to its conclusion.

E.C.B. Is it not the case, too, that the day of judgment of our God is introduced in order that a world might be established in which grace reigns through righteousness?

R.F.W. Yes.

D.J.W. The verse referred to in Acts 10 goes on to speak of "healing all that were under the power of the devil". In Luke 4 you see the

Lord setting free persons that were bound, from all that would hinder. Is one service of the anointing that it would free us from all that would hinder us having our part in God's service? Power is seen in that, is it not, to separate us from what would hinder us in that way? And is it open for us to serve one another in that way too?

R.F.W. Yes. It is good if we are able to do anything like that. The power of the devil was enormous, but there is a greater power with Christ. "God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power". He "went through all quarters doing good": it says that first before it says "healing all that were under the power of the devil".

F.C.M. I am sure that what you are bringing before us has, as was remarked earlier, a bearing upon us today, because we do face exercises where deliverance is needed, where the acceptable year of the Lord needs in practical experience to come in. I think it is of the greatest encouragement that the Holy Spirit and power are available so that there may be what is authoritative and effective in facing such exercises.

R.F.W. Yes, that expresses my exercise.

E.P. It is interesting that in the epistle to the Romans where that expression comes, so also grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (chap 5: 21), it is in the context of power. The power is the power of death. Then it says: "so also grace might reign". Would that imply that grace would reign in power?

R.F.W. Yes, I think so. It says in Luke 4 that the Lord sat down; He sat down to inaugurate this dispensation. Divine Persons took account of the adverse powers, did They not? They took account of Satanic powers; They took account of what was binding men and They brought in what was sufficient to meet it. They brought in the great feature of grace.

E.P. I find personally that in difficulties we tend to get a bit agitated. The Lord was never agitated; I say that with becoming reverence. He was marked by dignity in preaching, and dignity when He passed through and went His way. Do you think that is consequent

upon the fact, not only of who He is but that there is the anointing too? And as we are concerned we need to realise the power of the anointing and the dignity that properly belongs to us so that we do not get agitated.

R.F.W. It says that He went through all quarters. The different quarters would bring up different exercises, would they not? There were different problems which the Lord encountered in the different areas to which He went, but He was never agitated, as you say.

There was sufficient power to meet every difficulty that might present itself.

E.O. Would the emphasis on the greatness of the anointing be seen in the way David regarded Saul, and the fact that the anointing was never recalled from Saul, because at the time of his death David rebukes the young man, saying that he ought to have feared the Lord as to destroying the Lord's anointed (see 2 Sam 1: 14)?

R.F.W. Yes, I think there is much instruction in looking at David and Saul in that connection. It has been said that David had more respect for the anointing on Saul than Saul had for it on himself.

David always had respect for it. His heart smote him at one time when he cut off the skirt of Saul's robe (see 1 Sam 24: 4). But the anointing, had Saul appreciated it, would have been a protection for him.

E.C.B. Do you think that when Peter speaks here in Acts 10 he is preaching what he had seen. He is not preaching doctrine; he is preaching what he has actually seen in Jesus.

R.F.W. And it came into Peter's soul that what had come into expression in Christ was so great that it must extend out to the nations; it could not be confined to the Jews alone. He needed to be instructed to see that, but I think it must have given him great delight to be able to speak these words to this company.

E.C.B. He might even remember instances that had occurred, recorded for us in the gospels, where, as it says, He could not be hid, and it must reach out to other things. I was thinking of your

earlier reference to the way in which we read the gospels, as to what we are observing when we do.

R.F.W. Yes, I think we need the help of the Spirit in that connection, to get below the surface and see what He intends to convey in the various incidents that are recorded.

R.W.F. In connection with the gospels, were you about to say something about Mark 5?

R.F.W. I was just thinking about that as an example. What difficult cases the Lord encountered in that chapter. There are three cases beyond human help - the man who dwelt in the tombs, the woman who had a flux of blood, and then the girl who had died. Think of the Lord going into various quarters and encountering difficulties there, and you might say, This is beyond Him, how can this be resolved? No-one could bind that man in the tombs. He went to every extreme possible. How was that case to be met? And then the woman with the flux of blood had spent all her living on physicians; and then, you might say the most extreme of all, the girl who had died. We think about conditions in various areas; the Lord knows about these things. You say, How is this going to be resolved or what is going to happen? But the Lord was able to go into all quarters. It seems to me that there is something that we can observe in this feature of the anointing which is able to meet matters, and action in no other character will meet things rightly for God.

J.C.E. Our own anointing would be when we receive the Spirit. I only say that because younger brethren might wonder if there is something further, something special to come after having received the Spirit. The Lord might have prepared one for a certain line of activity but the anointing itself is as receiving the Spirit. God has done it. "He that ... has anointed us, is God, who also has sealed us", 2 Cor 1: 21.

R.F.W. Yes. "He that establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God, who also has sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts".

J.C.E. Yes, I just wanted to make that clear amongst us for the help of the younger brethren. I did not want to interrupt the flow.

S.D.K.R. Would you mind saying a little more as to meeting problems and difficulties in the power of the Spirit. How is that effected?

R.F.W. Well, when difficulties occur, it seems to me (I am only speaking from personal experience, I suppose there are few of us who have not had difficulties, personal difficulties and perhaps assembly difficulties in our lives) that sometimes we too readily cast aside this feature of the anointing, and the dignity and grace and power that it would speak of, and try to meet things in some other way. But it will not do; it will not do for God because He has committed Himself to this line of things, and matters will never be resolved and can never be resolved, on any other line.

R.W.F. It says in Acts 10 that "God was with him". Do you think that that implies divine intervention, and is that implicit in the anointing? Perhaps we could say 'explicit'. In Psalm 2, where there is reference to the peoples and the nations in agitation, and the kings and the princes, and so on, it says "I have anointed my king upon Zion, the hill of my holiness" (v 6). That is the divine intervention, is it not? That is not intervention on the part of one or another who happen to have some precedents in mind, but it is a divine intervention, for which we would look do you think?

R.F.W. Yes; God is never going to change His mind about that.

D.A.B. It says at the end of Mark's gospel that He "sat at the right hand of God. And they ... preached everywhere, the Lord working with them". I suppose, speaking simply, He went where they did.

And do you think that as they came to any matter they would be able to bring in the grace, and indeed the Person, of that anointed Man?

R.F.W. Yes. You might think that having sat down He was inactive, but He is not. He is working with them, and I think that that is very encouraging, because it seems to me that we can count on the Lord's help as we proceed on that line. I do not think He will help us

on any other line, but He will help us as we are exercised. That is why I read about Hannah, because I thought maybe that through her exercises and experiences she came into some appreciation of the anointing, the anointed Man.

E.C.B. If I may refer again to Mark 5 in the way you are speaking of it, it is very instructive because is it not the case that when problems arise everyone appears to try to bind him, and everyone tries to be a physician? In the case of the child He put them all out. It must be Christ.

R.F.W. Very good. Yes, they could not do anything, they were helpless. Their bonds were no good, they were proved to be useless. We may try things (and I suppose we all have, in measure) which in time prove to be no good, they do not accomplish the divine end, what the Lord has in mind.

E.C.B. It is very instructive in regard to that chapter, and the corresponding chapter in Luke, in regard to what you are saying, because that chapter has often been referred to as the way the Lord secures material for the assembly, the man, and the woman and the child, but it must be as the result of His own activity, you might say, left to Himself to bring it about.

R.F.W. Yes, nobody invites Him to help that man; He does it Himself. We were noticing elsewhere that in the middle of that chapter, after He comes back from dealing with the man, He is in a certain position; in verse 21 it says "Jesus having passed over in the ship again to the other side, a great crowd gathered to him; and he was by the sea". He was not doing anything at that time. He was by the sea, but He was there as available to help persons. It says "And behold, there comes to him one of the rulers"; the Man who had subdued that violent man was available, and that is the position, is it not? The Lord is available, He is available to help. So we find these persons coming forward in faith and availing themselves of the help that is there in Him.

H.A.H. Would by the sea involve that He would be available to the whole of humanity?

R.F.W. Yes, whatever the need might be. Think of all the needs of humanity, as you speak of it, but whatever need there might be, He is available to help.

J.R.S. Do you think that 'healing' is a significant word? I was just linking on with what you were saying as to bringing in the anointing. It was in view not resolving but healing.

R.F.W. Healing is a wonderful thing, is it not? What is it that brings about healing?

J.R.S. Is it the oil and the wine?

R.F.W. We tend to think that things heal themselves, but do they? I think it requires the grace of Christ for healing. I suppose that even in the human body things do not heal themselves apart from the power of God; it is divine power doing something that causes healing. But it needs the bringing in of the grace of Christ to effect healing among the saints.

D.J.H. Is this the law of the Christ? I was wondering if what you are saying throws light on that. "Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfil the law of the Christ", Gal 6: 2. Law is the governing principle, is it not? We are governed by the light of the anointing, seen perfectly and absolutely in Christ, but it is to be found in expression in us. Is that the law of the Christ?

R.F.W. Yes, the preparedness to take on burdens came into expression in Him. So we should not stand aside but should be prepared to be involved, to bring in help if we can.

S.D.K.R. Does Psalm 133 bear at all on what you are saying? You have referred to Aaron's head, the anointing; it says that the oil flowed down. I was thinking about the descent to which you referred. It is so easy to have in mind our being lifted up in some way, but the oil flowed down.

R.F.W. Yes; it says "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (v 1); and then in the next two verses you get the thought of coming down stressed. "The precious oil upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, upon Aaron's beard, that ran

down to the hem of his garments; As the dew of Hermon that descendeth on the mountains of Zion". That descending line of things is stressed.

J.M. Would it bear much on what we have been saying as to the way things are done. Is it the influence of the headship of Christ and that character of things coming out into expression, so that things are done in the way that He would do them, and God is rightly represented in that?

R.F.W. I think that is important, because sometimes we may think it is enough to get things done; but that is not enough. What is needed is more than that, that is, that in the way things are done there is the conveying of the mind of God and the grace of the dispensation. We were noticing recently in 1 Samuel 11 that after Saul was anointed a crisis arose. The inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead were under threat and somebody was needed to do something about the situation, and Saul undertakes to act. He is very successful in what he does, but as you read the history you say to yourself, David would never have done things this way. Saul took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces and sent them round, and said: "Whoever comes not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen!", 1 Sam 11: 7. And it says "the fear of Jehovah fell on the people, and they came as one man". There was a kind of unity of fear that was brought about by that action. But that is not the grace of the anointing, that is not the way things should have been done. You might say it was a successful thing, and the Spirit of God credits him with what is done there, I think, and the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead carried the memory of it, but at the same time it is not just what you would expect from an anointed man.

J.M. It is interesting that even the Lord said "if I by the Spirit of God", Matt 12: 28. He was capable in His own person of doing things, but He did things that way. Is that not a great example for us?

R.F.W. Quite so.

J.C.E. Do you think that Hannah found rest in her spirit when she mentioned in her prayer that she would give the child to Jehovah all

the days of his life? I just wondered whether, when we recognise that God has a view far beyond what we might have in our own minds, we would get rest of spirit.

R.F.W. Yes. There was a time when Hannah had not rest of spirit.

She was in bitterness of soul, it says, and prayed to Jehovah and wept much. Later on she comes into rest. I wondered if that might help us, because I think that conditions arise which bring us into this kind of soul difficulty. My impression is that Hannah is the quiet sort of person who feels matters deeply. We have many like that. We have sisters and others, persons who may not be active, who feel matters. There were great difficulties; she had a rival, an adversary who was provoking her. She had a husband who really was not sympathetic with her exercises and, as we know, the priesthood in that chapter was completely out of line with God's thought; and who was there who felt the way things were? Well, Hannah felt things.

What I have been thinking about in that connection is that difficulties arise and exercises arise, in our lives, and they arise in our localities, and it is very right to feel things and to get to God about them, but the point of definite help in Hannah's history seems to come when she makes a vow. The difficulty that arose in this locality resulted in her making a vow, a special kind of committal, and from that point she gets great help.

R.W.F. Do you think that God sometimes, perhaps more than sometimes, allows difficulties in order that there might be more committal with us?

R.F.W. Well, it would help if we could only look at things that way; the tendency (I only speak personally) is to say, Let things go.

H.A.H. Does the reference to all his days (see chap 1: 28) look right on to the full result of his ministry, and is Abigail, another woman who came forward at a crisis, really the answer subjectively to David?

R.F.W. Yes, indeed. What comes into view through all this in Hannah's prayer is the idea of the anointed, God's anointed: "he will give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed". I

thought that Hannah had great enlargement of soul when she came to this; and I think that these things that arise, these difficulties, are intended to bring us to an enlarged appreciation of Christ.

R.T. She says that "He keepeth the feet of his saints" (v 9). Is that not like confidence in the anointing? "For by strength shall no man prevail".

R.F.W. Yes, very good. "The wicked are silenced in darkness". In Hannah's prayer you see how God turns things round, do you not? You see how God has His own way of working things out, and what seems to be great and important at one time God can turn into nothingness. He has His own way of working matters out in view of exalting the horn of His anointed.

E.C.B. Is it of interest that when Hannah reaches that point, the man that God is going to exalt, she stops?

R.F.W. Yes. She starts off with "my horn is lifted up in Jehovah" but she does not stop there. She goes right on to see God's anointed exalted. That is a far greater thought than her horn being exalted.

That is just what I wanted to draw attention to, that these exercises which arise are intended to bring us to an appreciation of this wonderful thought as expressed in Christ, and to see that when He comes into matters and takes them up for God everything is secure.

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Key to initials

(All local unless otherwise stated)

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"YE ARE CHRIST'S"

R.F.White

1 Corinthians 3: 21-23; Mark 9: 41; 1 Corinthians 15: 20-23

I would like to say a word about the blessedness of belonging to Christ. This scripture that we read in 1 Corinthians 3 says "ye are Christ's". How blessed it is then to be together at this time and to know that we are Christ's. I would like to think that everybody here belongs to Christ. It is the most blessed thing imaginable. I would like to present that to you in speaking of it at this time. We have been speaking in the reading about the Lord Jesus Christ, the anointed Man. How attractive that thought is! I think we have been enjoying that idea, the Lord Jesus as the anointed Man. That is what the Christ means, the anointed One. How blessed to think that there is one Man who was great enough to bear that title, God's anointed!

So we are together at this time as those who belong to Christ. We do not belong to a club or a political party, we do not belong to any group or any man-made organisation. We are here as those who belong to Christ. How wonderful that is! How blessed! Our security rests in it, the security of our souls rests in this, that we belong to Christ. I suppose we can understand that sometimes men join clubs and associations, and things which give them some confidence, some strength, as they think, in the face of all the troubles and pressures of this world, but we can derive no strength and no comfort and no assurance from things like that. Our comfort, our resource, our security rests in this, that we belong to Christ.

How blessed it is! And I say again that I would that every one in this room was assured of it. You may remember that, at the beginning of the Acts, they preached the glad tidings that *Jesus* was the Christ.

How fine that was, that *Jesus* was the Christ! The Jews were looking for the Messiah; they were looking for an anointed man, and when you come to the Acts the glad tidings was that Jesus was that Man, Jesus was the Christ. Would it not be a terrible thing if some other man was to be the Christ, if one of the chief priests was to

have been the Christ? Would that have been glad tidings? But the glad tidings was that Jesus was the Christ, the One who went about doing good and healing all who were possessed of the devil, for God was with Him. That is the One who is the Christ, and that is the One to whom we belong.

Now Paul writes to the Corinthians to bring the greatness of this thought before their souls. I have sometimes wondered what it would have been like to be local in Corinth. I suppose most of us know something of local difficulties, as we term them. We know something of personal difficulties, the exercises that come into our souls as believers individually, the conflicts that occur in us in the pathway of faith. But we know something, I think, more difficult than that even, and that is exercises that enter into local assemblies.

Many of us, I am sure, have felt like the psalmist, that we wished at times that we had the wings of a dove, to fly away and be at peace (see Ps 55). But what would it have been like to be local in Corinth? I do not think any difficulties that have occurred in the history of any locality in recent times, even I suppose since the beginning of the revival, have been anything like the difficulties that occurred in that locality. Satan brought in these things too early, because Paul was still there to bring in what could set them aside, and he brings in, to adjust and to help, great and glorious features of the truth. There was a tendency at Corinth to make too much of men, there was a tendency for things to be sharply divided along lines which favoured one man as against another. That is in this chapter. One would say, I of Apollos, I of Paul, Paul transferring these things to himself and Apollos for the sake of illustration, but he brings in something to set aside that, this great truth, that "ye are Christ's". I wonder if I could say it again, that the greatness of it may enter into our souls: we do not belong to any man, we belong to Christ. Our allegiance, our loyalty, is to Him; our faith, our hope is in that blessed Man. How important that we should understand that, that it should enter our souls! We will all perhaps be flattered, we will all be tempted in our lives; we will all perhaps find that we have preferences, we may find that some suit us more than others. These sorts of things arise, but

we belong to Christ. That is the great and over-riding thing in all our lives. He says "ye are Christ's". He is the One who is to have the first place, the first allegiance, He is the One to whom we belong. How wonderfully the scripture presents it.

In this epistle it tells us that we have been bought, bought with a price. He has paid a price to secure us, so that we might know that we belong to Him. So how wonderful these verses are! He says "all things are yours. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things coming, all are yours". How could you understand these verses, these things that he speaks of: Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas? I suppose they would have been leading servants at that time. Paul and Apollos they knew well, I do not know whether they knew Cephas; they would have heard of him, Peter, the leading apostle. These great servants had been responsible for bringing the truth to them. He says, They are yours! "Or the world, or life, or death" - you could think of nothing more vast than the world, nothing more powerful than death. How all-embracing it is to think of "things present, or things coming, all are yours". Why are they ours? Because we are Christ's. The Lord Jesus is in control of all these matters. Soon the world will be His, indeed it is His. Soon He will come out and take possession of it. He is the Heir to it; it will be His, and we will share with Him in that. "Or life, or death": who can speak of life as the believer can? Does life belong to the unconverted? Perhaps we think it does; but no, dear brethren, life belongs to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Or death", think of death, the power that it exercises over men's lives. Who can speak of it in this way, as belonging to them? Only believers in the Lord Jesus Christ can take this matter up. "Things present, or things coming": can men speak of things coming? They fear to think of the things that are coming. They look around, they take account of all that exists, and they see what is developing in the way of lawlessness and evil and violence in every country, and they fear as they think of things coming. But we have no fear when we think of things coming, because we know the One who is coming for us, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He says "all are yours". How

great then the believer is from this point of view as belonging to Christ!

So the greatness of it is brought before our souls in this scripture, that we might understand and measure everything from that point of view, and know that our allegiance is to this blessed Man. "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's". How wonderful to contemplate these, in a sense, simple scriptures, and to see how things really stand, and to get a sense of perspective, a sense of the relative importance of matters looked at from this point of view, that we belong to Christ first and foremost. How blessed!

I read the scripture in Mark 9 in order that we might be exercised to recognise this feature in each other, and if possible to help it on, to encourage it, to refresh it. It says that "whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward".

How good it is to be able to recognise one another from this point of view: "ye are Christ's". I know that when we are younger we tend not to look on the brethren from this point of view, but surely it is an important thing to learn to recognise what is of Christ in one another, and to be set for the furtherance and refreshment of that blessed element. This chapter is a deeply interesting one - as indeed every chapter in Mark's gospel is - but in this section what the Lord speaks of arises out of a reasoning that had come in amongst the disciples.

It says in verse 33: "he came to Capernaum, and being in the house, he asked them, Of what were ye reasoning by the way? And they remained silent, for by the way they had been reasoning with one another who was greatest. And sitting down he called the twelve. When this reasoning came in amongst them the Lord sat down and gave some deliberate instruction about this matter. The element of competition had entered into the minds of His own. I think we grow up in a world that is marked in every feature of it by this element, the element of competition. It impinges upon us from our earliest days, as soon as we go to school, perhaps before that, even in our families, even in our childhood, this element comes into life, this element of competition. And as we grow up we see that the

world really operates on this feature. It could not really operate apart from it; that is the world as it is. In every feature of human life the element of competition exists, whether it is in school, in business, or in any other range of human endeavour, all man's work is jealousy of his neighbour (see Eccles 4: 4). The feature of competition introduces uncertainties and insecurities into persons' lives. I suppose we can remember, those of us who are not so old, the insecurities of our teenage years. We feel for our younger brethren who are going through these years. It is sometimes a time of great insecurity in our lives. We look around and we see others, and everybody seems to be doing better than we are. We look at one and we look at another; we are insecure. What gives us security, I think, is a sense of belonging, and there is nothing like a sense of belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ to bring in a wonderful element of security. So in the Christian circle, properly speaking, we come into an area of things in which competition does not exist. The body of Christ as Paul speaks of it in Corinthians is an area of things where there is no competition, where every element works together for the upbuilding of the body.

So the Lord takes, it says, a little child, and sets it in their midst, "and, having taken it in his arms he said to them, Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receives me. How blessed to be a little child in the arms of Jesus! What a place of security! There is no competition there; no adverse or evil power could affect this little child in the arms of Jesus. Would it not be better to be a little child in the arms of Jesus than the greatest man or woman in this world? Think of that! Where would you rather be? Would you rather be in the place of greatest pre-eminence or in the arms of Jesus? And that is our position as believers. We come into His arms, His affections. How interesting then, how vital, to be able to detect, especially in our younger ones, elements of spiritual life, evidences of their belonging to Christ. I suppose those of us who are parents are concerned about our children, that it might become evident that they are of Christ. Earlier in this chapter you get a man who was exercised about his child. He is called "the young child" at

one stage (v 24). What this incident brings out is that we are cast on the Lord Jesus to work; as parents we are cast on Him to work in our children, to operate there to bring about features of life and to attach them to Himself. On our part what is called for is faith. The Lord says "The 'if thou couldst' is if thou couldst believe: all things are possible to him that believes". Here was a man in an extremity of desperation about his child. He says he "has a dumb spirit; and wheresoever it seizes him it tears him, and he foams and gnashes his teeth, and he is withering away" (vv 17,18). What anxieties, what exercises, what concerns parents may carry for their children! We may not see any evidence, perhaps, of life there, spiritual life; there is nothing to indicate, perhaps, that there is anything there yet, and our faith is tested. We are cast on the Lord Jesus Christ to work.

When the Lord deals with this child it is interesting that He brings out something that the father did not know, or anyone else - the child's deafness. The Lord says "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him". The Lord deals also with this feature of deafness. We may address words, we may address pleas, we may address the best of advice, perhaps, to our children at times, but are we not cast upon the Lord to open that ear? But the teaching is that there is to be faith with us. He says "if thou couldst believe: all things are possible to him that believes and immediately the father of the young child crying out said with tears, I believe, help mine unbelief". How blessed that we can bring, in this sense, even our lack of faith to the Lord and ask Him to help us.

Having said that, I want to bring it forward, and point to this young child in the arms of Jesus, this young believer brought to life and now in the arms of Jesus, and what is to be done? How is that life to be nurtured? How is that element of life to be encouraged amongst us? This chapter contemplates that we can be a help to one another, or alas, we can be a snare. The verse after that which we read says "And whosoever shall be a snare to one of the little ones who believe in me". I think we need soberly to take account of matters from this point of view, that our concern might be to further this feature, that we might refresh what is of Christ in each other and

not in any sense be a snare. He says "whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye are Christ's". I think that that can take many forms. Many of us have experienced, I suppose, from our earliest days the kindness of the brethren, expressed in numerous ways, many more ways than we can recount. It is really on this principle, persons desiring to further; and promote what is of Christ. It would enter, I suppose, into every aspect of our contact with each other, that we should seek to encourage, to set forward this feature. How blessed then to learn to take account of each other and value each other from the standpoint of belonging to Christ, and to seek to further, to refresh, to encourage what is of Him. There is a reward attached to it. It says "he shall in no wise lose his reward". How wonderful! I think it has been said that the idea of reward in Scripture is to encourage those who have made a step, who have made a start; the reward is brought in to encourage them to go forward. May we be helped to understand that there is a reward attached to the furtherance of this feature amongst us, especially with respect to our dear younger brethren. What pressures they are subjected to at the present time! We take account of our younger ones growing up, and we look at the world in which they are growing up and we see the snares on every side, the difficulties, and yet they belong to Christ. How blessed that is! How good then to be set to encourage that, to foster that, to preserve that; not in any sense to divert it, but to preserve it.

Sometimes when difficulties come in amongst us the young, alas, are casualties, but may our desire be to further this blessed feature as we see it growing. How lovely to see features of love for Christ, of desire to be faithful to Christ rising in the souls of young believers, the souls of every one of us, old believers too; how good to foster that and to set it forward, to refresh it. We will find that we ourselves are refreshed in doing so.

Well, just to refer in closing to 1 Corinthians 15 - this wonderful chapter which, as we know, brings out in such a distinctive way the truth of the resurrection. It is a wonderful thing to think of this, that God has taken account of everything, of every power that might be

ranged against us as believers, and He has made arrangements (if we may so speak) to set aside every power, to secure us entirely for Himself. We get that expression in Romans 3: 24; "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus". That, as I understand it, means that through the work of redemption the Lord Jesus Christ frees us from every power. There is Satan's power; there is the power of sin, but then there is this other matter of our mortal and weak condition, that we live in bodies which are subject to death, are subject indeed to decay. God has taken account even of that matter as it affects His own. He has made provision to bring in something to set it aside.

Believers may come, alas, under many influences, they may come under wrongful influences, but the Lord Jesus Christ will not give up in any sense His claim, and He will set aside every influence, every power, that we might be entirely for Himself. This chapter takes account of the power of death and shows how God has already operated in respect of Christ, and will operate in respect of the bodies of His own, to set aside even that power. We await "the redemption of our body", Rom 8: 23. How blessed to think of that! Think of the things that come in now that affect the bodies of the saints. How much pressure there is in that respect, but how comforting to know this, that God has taken account of that and He intends to set aside even the power of death as it may affect the bodies of His own, to set them free. So it says "But now Christ is raised from among the dead, first-fruits of those fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by man also resurrection of those that are dead". How wonderful that little verse is there, inserted just where it is, between the statement of the truth of Christ's resurrection and the great general effect of that in that great exercise of power: "For as in the Adam all die, thus also in the Christ all shall be made alive".

How blessed to think that it is by Man, that Man; "by man also resurrection of those that are dead". How comforting it is to know that by Man, this blessed One to whom we belong, has come the answer to that matter also. So it says "But each in his own rank, the firstfruits, Christ; then those that are the Christ's at his coming". I think there is something wonderful in that statement, "those that are the Christ's at his coming". How blessed to be amongst that

company, "those that are the Christ's". How many will be numbered there He knows and God knows. "Those that are the Christ's": we have been taught that it goes right back, it includes all those who have died in faith. How blessed to think that every one will be there, every one who belongs to Him. Alas! we live in days of breakdown here publicly. We have experienced much in the way of reduction, even numerically, in those available to us in the fellowship. We have seen, alas, our brethren come under influences that are not of God.

We have seen alas, persons turn aside; but how blessed to contemplate this, that a time will come when every power must give way to the power of Christ, and those that are the Christ's will come forth, the whole number complete, every one there secure, never any more to be in any way harmed or in any way threatened, "those that are the Christ's at his coming". Does it not thrill your heart to know as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ that you are one of this great company, "those that are the Christ's"? How wonderful! We were not that way once, we were sinners, lost and undone, "having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2: 12), but now we belong to Christ, as believing in Him, and we will have part in this great company that will come up when the Lord Jesus comes, "those that are the Christ's at his coming". Every one will be there, secure.

How blessed to think of it! Who could find all the redeemed who have died? But all belong to Christ, all are His, and every one will come up in this great company, all that belong to Christ at His coming. May it encourage our hearts to know that we belong to Him even now and will do throughout eternity, for His Name's sake.

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17 October 1987

CHILDREN HUNGERING AND THIRSTING

Probably no one reading this page has ever experienced hunger and thirst in the same way as children living in countries where famine and drought are now known. We can, of course, form some idea of the suffering that this must mean and can thus feel and pray for them. From this too we can realise what it meant for the prophet Amos to have to foretell a famine, not of bread or thirst for water, but a famine of "hearing the words of Jehovah". No doubt this was God's strange work in judgment at that time but it makes us value all the more the fact that He is now constantly speaking in grace. The question is - Are we hearing?

The Lord Jesus is Himself "The Word". Scripture tells us that in these days God "has spoken to us in the person of the Son". This speaking unfolds to us the holy affections between the Father and Jesus, and teaches us that all that God has to say relates in some way to the Person of our Lord. You will remember that of the few actual words spoken from heaven in living language were these: "*This* is my beloved Son in whom I have found my delight" at the baptism of Jesus, and "This is my beloved Son: hear him" on the holy mountain.

Proving that there is now no famine of divine speaking we read that the Lord, in the sermon on the mount, used the word "Blessed" at least nine times. Older children may have learned that a great poet wrote that the quality of mercy is 'twice blessed', and this is true. But the word of God rises infinitely above the best of human sentiments in the range of blessings in His heart for us His creatures, through our Lord Jesus Christ. In our everyday life, whether at school, at home and in the things that we think and talk about, there is a special word for believers; "Blessed they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled". We have all thought at some time 'I suppose I ought to do the right thing', and this is good but you can easily see that this does not rise to God's noble thoughts for the believer to whom the Holy Spirit has been given. Do you practise righteousness?

J.C.Evershed