

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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Contents

"ANOTHER WAY"

PREACHING

THE CHILDREN'S VALUE

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"ANOTHER WAY"

James 2: 24-26; Matthew 2: 1-12; Acts 9: 1-5, 18-20

C.F.D. These scriptures have been selected having in mind to direct our attention to the thought of 'another way'. Earlier in the week some of us were impressed with what James has to say about the practical working out of faith. He tells us that "faith without works is dead", chap 2: 26. He brings forward certain vivid examples of persons who worked on the principle not only of faith but of works also. He points out that what Rahab did was not only by faith but that she was justified on the principle of works, and the way that came into expression was that she sent forth the messengers "another way".

In Matthew we have the magi who came to Bethlehem. They come to acknowledge Christ and there is divine intervention so that they depart into their country another way. The divine intervention is in view of the protection of Christ and of the whole system which the Lord would set on and to which the enemy was immediately opposed. But they returned according to divine instruction another way.

I thought that Saul in Acts 9 was one of the outstanding examples in Scripture of one who was converted to another way.

The chapter begins with Saul still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, but there is the intervention of heaven. Saul is converted and, instead of opposing Christ, it says that "straightway in the synagogues he preached Jesus that he is the Son of God" - a change from one way to another way, an outstanding example of one in whom God wrought, to show what could be done to change a man from one breathing out threatenings and slaughter to one who was prepared to die for Christ. I thought we could be encouraged and strengthened in looking at these scriptures.

A.J.E.T. Saul had started out seeking to persecute any who were of 'the way', the Christian way. Is that for us what another way

becomes? There is just one way to God, is there not?

C.F.D. Yes. It is a wonderful thing to see that the Christian way came into expression in Christ, but then it was extended in the apostles and seen vividly in the Acts, bringing out how Christ came into expression in men. It was an entirely new way.

E.W. Was Bartimaeus the blind man directed that way? It says "And he saw immediately, and followed him in the way", That is the Christian way, is it not?

C.F.D. Yes, and following Jesus in the way certainly involved the suffering way. Bartimaeus would have been one who was prepared for that. It is a great challenge for us today, both old and young, whether we are prepared for the Christian way to which you refer.

E.W. Is it not remarkable that it was Mark who wrote "and followed him in the way"? He had learnt what that way was; he went out of it but was recovered.

C.F.D. A recovered man could write about the perfect Servant who never for one moment of His life deviated from the way of the will of God.

M.J.W. It is a different way from what we would choose naturally; and we have to be changed as well, do we not? Paul is a good example of that.

C.F.D. I thought he was. There are examples throughout Scripture of persons being turned around and set on another way, not the way of the flesh or of the eye, naturally speaking, but the way of faith. The way of faith is a great test to us at the present time, but it is another way. I believe that, if we are to be with Christ and in the testimony at the present time, we have to be prepared for another way.

E.C.B. Do the first two scriptures to which you have referred bring out that another way is protective and protected?

C.F.D. Very much so. Maybe you would say more about that.

E.C.B. In the actual history in Joshua, the people of the land wanted to kill these messengers but Rahab sent them out another way and they were protected; it is the same with the magi. It says in the Proverbs that "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man" (chap 14: 12); but there is a way that the vulture's eye has not seen (see Job 18: 7).

C.F.D. Yes, I think that is a good way to approach this first scripture. Joshua sends out the spies and, as they get to the area to be spied out, they find faith there; God has gone ahead of them and provides a means of protection. It was really the protection of the testimony for the moment, because I suppose the two spies would show how faith was to be operative in the overcoming of the city.

D.A.B. The other way which Rahab knew is actually described in Joshua. She said to them "Go to the mountain, that the pursuers may not meet with you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers have returned; and afterwards go your way", chap 2: 16. Is that, in a sense, a description of the present day, that as far as the public position is concerned the time for the Lord to take up his rights is future: but there is an area in the mountain where the spiritual character of that day can be anticipated?

C.F.D. I think that is good. It is interesting that she tells them to go to the mountain. It think that helps us to see how faith is moving in another way, but it relates to a realm of protection. She has insight into this. It is a line of things which belongs to another world and I believe our protection lies in relating ourselves to that. I think it is the Spirit's realm.

D.A.B. You read at the beginning of Matthew, but in a sense we have it also in the beginning of Luke that the people who are spoken of there were in the hill country; that is, they were morally apart from the course of things that was under the influence of Herod but were receiving something from heaven.

C.F.D. Yes. Luke is very helpful in that regard; you have the hill country, showing that there is a line of things that the faithful are

relating themselves to in another world, and that is where our safety lies.

R.T. There is a very striking reference to God's sovereignty in each of these persons that you have spoken about. His sovereign movements bring them into the way. Is that something which needs to remain with us?

C.F.D. I think it should; it would help us to hold on to that. A brother last night was speaking of God's sovereign ways with him individually and I think that we all ought to be able to say that. We get hold of the fact that everything begins with God. Everything had its start in Christ - chosen in Christ before the world's foundation (see Eph 1: 4). That is a point to hang on to in a time when stability is much needed. The saints are under much pressure: the brethren would feel it here - the scattering, the fewness. We need to hold on to that which represents a line of stability.

R.T. A great deal of tradition has been introduced into the public position, but the sense of sovereignty delivers us from that; does it not? Our link is with God, He moved first and He is committed to keep us in the way.

C.F.D. Very good. That helps us.

J.M. Does faith help us to see what is in the divine mind? Therefore it would teach us how we can be protective and work through this other way?

C.F.D. I think it would, faith operating in us. Faith has come much before us in our part of the world lately. The disciples said "Give more faith to us. But the Lord said, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye had said to this sycamine tree, Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea, and it would have obeyed you", Luke 17: 5,6. It would help to teach us the way of God.

J.M. The passages in Matthew and James link very much together. Rahab "secreted them under the stalks of flax", Josh 2: 6. It shows, does it not, that there was a person who was in relation with God and working out the principle of righteousness; therefore she could

protect the testimony of God. Is that something very much needed at the present time?

C.F.D. Very good. It is interesting to see how Rahab had the household in mind; she made the spies commit themselves to protecting the whole household when the time came for the children of Israel to come into the city. I think that that is where faith is operating: our households need to be strongholds of faith where we feel safe.

D.J.R. Does the way have a clearly defined objective and a well signposted path? Faith would lay hold of that.

C.F.D. Yes. Tell us more about its distinct objective.

D.J.R. I was thinking of the words of the hymn (No.139): 'For the Lord has Himself gone before; He has marked out the path that we tread'. He is the object of it, and the One who had led in it.

C.F.D. Yes, and He is the power to maintain us in a pathway of faith, because it is not an easy pathway. We know that to be so but it is a pathway which is being maintained by divine power. We have access to the divine power that is needed to maintain us in faith in another way.

D.E.R. Is it the way out of Jericho and out of Jerusalem, out of the social and religious spheres but into the spiritual realm?

C.F.D. I think it is. Jericho, as you are indicating, represents the world and its attractiveness, so there was a penalty in rebuilding it. It seems to me that that whole line of things is to be overcome in the believer's affections and in his mind. It was the first great object which had to be overcome as they came into the land.

J.McK. Reference has been made to the path that the vulture's eye hath not seen. It is interesting that that comes in Job where he is speaking not of height but of depth. Is that another distinction that marks this way, that there is moral depth about it, and does that not result in the works you refer to?

C.F.D. I think it does. God's way is in the deep, in the sea (see Ps 77: 19). There are the deep things of God. It is the way that has

been marked out by Christ before us. He went into depths that we will never experience as meeting the foe, but with ourselves I suppose it is the depth that we go through testimonially in our exercises, our families and our localities. We experience what it is to go through deep waters.

J.McK. I wondered whether one of the distinctions of the way is that it is substantial - every other way is superficial - and whether sovereignty to which we have referred results in a substance which has its own distinction, so that the people who are walking in this way are different.

C.F.D. That is to be a known thing testimonially. I think it shows itself in the Acts where it says "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch", chap 11: 26. I believe they represent what you are speaking about; another way is seen in people so that something is coming out which represents the features of Christ.

W.S. In a practical sense do you think that, while we are speaking of another way, we have to begin with another Man? I was thinking of that beautiful passage in Acts - that there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved (see chap 4: 12) - and it leads on to our knowing something of entering into another world. The Lord sets things on; He has something far superior for the saints - "your life is hid with the Christ in God", Col 3: 3.

C.F.D. That is important, because in the gospel we begin with another Man. We know that we have been chosen - we have been reminded of the sovereignty of God - that we have been given the gift of faith, that new birth has taken place, but we have to begin with another Man, and I desire that that other Man might become increasingly attractive to all our hearts. I think that greater attachment to Christ is needed amongst us.

P.M. In that connection would you say a word as to what the Lord says, "I am the way", John 14: 6. Does it involve a Person?

C.F.D. Yes, the way was in the Person: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life". The Lord could say that at a very important juncture in

what He had to say to His disciples. He was the full representation; everything that could be known of the way was set out in Christ's life.

E.C.B. Is it of interest that in Joshua the security of the spies depended on Rahab, but later the security of Rahab depended on the spies?

C.F.D. That relates to the security system and the protective system which you referred to. She protected them, and I suppose in that protection there is the wonderful outshining of the knowledge of what God was going to do testimonially in relation to His people. She was protecting that and wanted to have a part in it - one of the most unexpected persons in the city. At the same time she gets word from them that they, when the moment arrived, would protect her and the household.

E.C.B. The expression used to be common in the world politically, but there is a system of mutual security in this other way, is there not?

C.F.D. Very much so. I believe that this is an area where we want to tie the strings a little bit tighter, because I feel that we have become a little slack and allowed our guard to drop so that possibly our households are not the secure sphere that they could be.

E.C.B. I think that that is right. What you are saying is salutary and timely. We need in a certain sense to push back the frontiers of the world a bit, do we not?

C.F.D. I think that that is a good way to put it.

E.C.B. Rahab sent the spies out by another way; how do we send one another out another way?

C.F.D. I believe that we can send one another out another way by relating ourselves to divine things as the saints come into our homes. We can relate ourselves to the area of faith, to the area where the truth is maintained, where things are preserved and protected. If we can push back the frontiers of the world from our households, the saints will find a protected sphere of things.

E.C.B. It says in Isaiah "This is the way", chap 30: 21. It is interesting that Rahab sends the spies out another way. In Matthew it is intuitive, they went to their own country another way; nobody told them to do that.

C.F.D. They had divine instruction not to return to Herod, did they not? I think it is important to look for that. I believe that, as we make way for divine instruction in our households and in our localities, we are going to find that the other way becomes increasingly attractive and increasingly clear to us.

J.A.T. Is there anything to be learnt from where Rahab lived? It says "And she let them down by a cord through the window; for her house was upon the city-wall, and she dwelt upon the wall", Josh 2: 15.

Was it a place of security? Security in our households and in the local position would help in setting the saints on another way, a way of security. I believe that, at this stage, Rahab would have been clear of the world and of what her history had been in all its shame, but she was now relating herself to a better world.

E.F.W. The result of Rahab's faith has a very good ending. She was brought into the royal line, was she not?

C.F.D. Yes; you are referring to the genealogy in Matthew.

F.R.T. Is another way the straight way to which Peter alludes (see 2 Pet 2: 15)? In the day of weakness in Judges they went by crooked paths. You get the house side at Philippi: "come into my house" (Acts 16: 15); everything was transparent there, was it not?

C.F.D. That is a good word for us, the principle of transparency. I think Rahab would be setting that out at the point that we have been speaking of: everything was in the clear. I believe that more and more we need this because, with the swinging of the pendulum, we have become lax and have allowed things which we would not have allowed 40 or 50 years ago. I believe we need to tighten up on the strings a little bit so that things might be more in accord with the mind of God. In our localities we must maintain the principles that govern the house of God.

J.W. Did Aquila and Priscilla help Apollos to go another way when they took him to them and explained to him the way of God more exactly (see Acts 18: 26). Would they not only set out Paul's way of teaching but do so in their own lives?

C.F.D. I think so. It has been said that we cannot take the brethren beyond where we are ourselves. I think that Apollos would have seen an example in Aquila and Priscilla which would have represented the way of God to him. It has been suggested that our greatest influence is what we are in ourselves; it is more than what we say.

I.L.G. In the midst of Babylon Daniel's exercise was to have pulse and water and it benefitted his companions. Then in the end of his history he is directed to go "thy way". He had made God's way his way.

C.F.D. That is a very good suggestion. You see the power of God with those men because they considered for God. At the beginning they took a good stand.

T.J.B. It says as to Rahab, "when she had received the messengers"; they are not described as spies here. I thought it linked with what you were saying as to what can be gained as the saints come into our houses. I was thinking of Lydia "whose heart the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul" (Acts 16: 14); there is a sense in which she received the messengers in respect of what the Lord was setting on distinctively. Do you think that would help us to progress on this line?

C.F.D. I think that is very suggestive. Lydia certainly was in line with what the Lord was doing - "whose heart the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul" - showing that her affections were being worked upon by the Lord. Her heart was becoming the way, I suppose, and eventually her house is the place where Paul and his company stay.

V.E.W. Were these messengers carrying wonderful secrets which needed protection?

C.F.D. Yes. And do we not?

V.E.W. I was thinking of the wealth that was with them. The wealth that is with the saints today needs protection.

C.F.D. Yes, we need to know what to protect. I think we need energising about the gospel. We have allowed it to slip in our affections and have lost the initiative as to it. I think Paul shows how the initiative is to be regained.

V.E.W. The magi too would have been carrying back wonderful secrets. Paul himself also, and then he opens them out to those available.

C.F.D. So where Christ was in Matthew was to be held a secret. It was for the protection of that blessed Child. I think that every believer should have a secret. There should be something in the way of mystery about a believer that persons in the world do not really understand; there is something about them though that is very different.

D.E.B. Would you care to be a bit more specific about the matters that you say we would not have allowed 40 years ago that we might be allowing now. If we had some clearer idea of what you are speaking about we might be able to put things right.

C.F.D. I think it is something that we all need to look into as to what we allow, for instance, amongst our possessions. The issue of the radio, for instance, was settled 40 to 50 years ago and yet it has been revived, the enemy has revived it. Maybe if it is not in our house we might have it in our cars. This is just one thing. The re-appearance of this shows that we have allowed the invasion of the world to come into what we ourselves hold under our control. We cannot control what is in the office or in the restaurant, but we can control the sphere over which we do have control and in that area I think we should be more protective and keep the world out. Do you agree with what I am saying?

D.E.B. I am sure I do.

J.M. I was wondering if Matthew helps us because, in chapter 1, you get Joseph who is a righteous man, unwilling-to-expose; then in chapter 2 you get the star, the divine light, and the magi answering to divine light. Are these two things that we are to follow - righteousness and the light that has been given?

C.F.D. I think that helps us. So these magi were open for the divine communication. Which one of us here would not love a divine communication, to be near enough to the Lord to know what He is saying.

J.M. Joseph actually moved another way, did he not? There were certain things that he had in mind, but being characteristically a righteous and unwilling-to-expose man, he pondered over things and another way came into expression.

C.F.D. Yes. I think those characteristic features to which you refer are features that we should desire from God.

D.A.B. It says of Rahab that she shut the door and opened the window. Reference has been made to her house on the wall. The city's sin had been her business and the door was open to anyone in the city before, but she had to shut that door and open the window; that is, she would on the one hand exclude what was coming under divine judgment and on the other hand open not only her heart but her house to what was coming in with the people of God.

C.F.D. The window open is suggestive of what we had in Daniel. Daniel was a man who prayed toward Jerusalem, which speaks of an assembly outlook. He had a clear line all the way through to Jerusalem. I think that that indicates what we need to have in our hearts.

S.D.K.R. Would you say a little more about what you said earlier as to the losing of the initiative in relation to the gospel. I feel that if we were helped on that it would help us in this 'other way'.

C.F.D. I agree with that. If we can go to the Acts and see how Paul moved, I think it would help us because, as we know, Saul was still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the

Lord. He was on a certain way and it was a way of unrighteousness, a way of slaughter, a way of consuming what was of the Lord, ravaging the assembly: but the Lord intruded. You love to think of the Lord coming down to have to do with the conversion of that man. But then after he is converted, after he gets the Spirit, the first thing he is said to do is straightway to preach that Jesus is the Son of God. Nobody told him to do that, as far as we know. He seized the initiative, he set the thing out himself and he straightway preached that Jesus is the Son of God. I think that is what we need to regain.

E.C.B. In Matthew 2 the magi have a treasure for Christ. In 2 Corinthians 4 we have a treasure for men.

C.F.D. That is fine; we have a treasure for men.

E.C.B. That is the gospel.

C.F.D. Yes, exactly. My thought is that if we really hold it as a treasure for men, why is it that we seem to be slow in setting it out?

E.C.B. I am glad you refer to this. I expect you will have said, as I shall say, that one feels condemned oneself in it, but I think there is a great need amongst us of a more outgoing spirit. In 2 Corinthians 4 you cannot help the light shining. It is there. I think we have become somewhat more closed up, even in relation to the gospel, than we should be. I say this of myself as much as of anybody.

C.F.D. I think it is an area where we need to be revived. There is never a Monday that goes by in our localities when we are not appealing to the Lord for recoveries, in our own families and generally amongst the saints. We are turning to the Lord all the time for recoveries. I believe what the Lord is getting at is for us to seize the initiative and go out and present this treasure to men.

F.R.T. Do you think that Thessalonians helps: "for the word of the Lord sounded out from you", 1 Thess 1: 8? If we are an expression of it individually, householdly and meeting-wise, the word of God sounds out and there is an expression of it there.

C.F.D. I think so. We have the preaching in our rooms, but then how many strangers come into our rooms during the course of the

year? Generally we have the brethren, to whom we preach on the Lord's day. But we have a treasure. Is it not something that we should be concerned about, and seize the initiative and present this treasure to men?

E.C.B. It is obvious that you have the same kind of prayer meetings that we have. Those of us who were in Bombay have been greatly struck by the fact that over the course of some years, not weeks, 1,000 people have come into the preaching in the house. What other place is like that anywhere, and what makes the difference?

C.F.D. What do you think makes the difference?

E.C.B. I think what you are saying is right that we have lost the initiative. One does not wish to speak of an individual brother, but there is an initiative there and we have, as you say, lost the initiative. I believe that an emphasis on exclusivism - there is what is exclusive that is right - has made us very closed up, and we have somewhat lost the courage to go out to people because of our own history.

C.F.D. I think that, and I think we want to judge our history and then go on the way. David said to Solomon his son "be strong, and do it", 1 Chron 28: 10. This is where we are, I think, at this time of the testimony. We may say there are only three of us in the locality, or only five or 20, whatever it might be, but I believe, beloved brethren, that, if we are moved in our spirits by the glory of the glad tidings, we will be seeking to seize again the power in the presentation of the word of God to men.

S.D.K.R. Are you thinking that there might be some return of the going out in the open air preaching?

C.F.D. A brother was telling us last night that he preached, and others too, in the open air from 1933-1959. What has happened since 1959? The gospel has not changed. The Man in the glory has not changed. The power of the Spirit has not changed. Where is the change? What has happened?

S.D.K.R. A good deal of reproach has come in and maybe that has hindered us. But we should really get over that, and I think that if we

were more energetic to preach in the open-air it would greatly help us in this 'other way'.

C.F.D. I feel that very much myself. When we are out there we are not preaching brethrenism, we are not preaching some kind of so-called religion; we are out there just to present Christ as an object of faith. That is the Acts of the Apostles. The Acts is primarily the preaching of the glad tidings; that is where you have it set out. I think it was Mr Raven who said that Romans is the doctrine of the gospel, the four gospels are the exemplification of the gospel and the Acts is the preaching of the gospel. In the Acts we get men who seize the initiative and I think we want to be a little more active. If there are only a couple of brothers in the locality, let us seize the initiative and take the word of God to men.

J.S.P. Is Philip an example for us? He was directed to go to a place which was desert, but he found one man and he preached the glad tidings of Jesus to him.

C.F.D. I think that Philip is an outstanding example of that. He was not told to preach. We know that scattering came in, and the persons scattered went and preached; they took the initiative. Philip goes down and he just starts to preach and then he continues to preach and eventually the Spirit speaks to him. Heaven takes the man on. Heaven took the man on because he exercised the initiative. If we get out and work at this matter, I think heaven will take us on and help us.

G.C.B. What is your impression of preaching Jesus, that He is the Son of God? All God's thoughts are centred in Him.

C.F.D. That was a new departure in the preaching. Peter did not preach that, did he? That was left for Paul. To preach that Jesus is the Son of God is a great subject. You can see Paul's seizing the initiative involved immediately that he was presenting as an object of faith none less than the Son of God Himself, a divine Person.

E.F.W. The Lord brought the blind man to that, did he not? "Thou, dost thou believe on the Son of God?". "And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?", John 9: 35-36.

C.F.D. He worshipped, did he not?

E.C.B. You might say Paul preached from John's gospel.

C.F.D. Yes, exactly. That is really the greatness and the glory, the dignity of the Son of God.

D.A.B. Could I ask you to say another word about what you referred to as to our prayers, because we often pray, as you say, for the recovery of our brethren, and the way the prayers are expressed implies that a general recovery is in mind. If that is so, the Lord, speaking very simply, has not answered those prayers, because there has not been a general recovery. Do you think that we should have more in our thoughts, without forgetting our brethren, those who are not even converted. I think it is true that in Mr Darby's time most of those in fellowship were not converted when they came in touch with brethren.

C.F.D. I think that that is a very interesting point because Paul says "supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made for all men" (1 Tim 2: 1), not just for the saints. We love all the saints, but then prayers are to go up for all men. You can see that God is reaching out to all men. I think that involves what you are speaking about, that we go beyond the bounds of those we have known and are reaching out to get God's thoughts about all men, because God desires that all men should be saved.

D.A.B. That includes men who are at an extremity, does it not? If we take the younger generation, in a moral sense they are largely at an extremity because they have no real knowledge of God, they perhaps do not know their Bibles, they do not pray; many of them are far away and Satan is corrupting the whole generation. That might enter into our prayers too, do you think?

C.F.D. I think so very much. I believe if we catch the feelings of God we would be much wider in our outlook.

D.E.R. I think it comes back to what you were drawing attention to earlier as to our works. It is not the doctrine we hold. The Lord in the addresses to the churches in Revelation says "I know thy works",

the practical state of things amongst the assemblies, and that is what the Lord is looking at amongst us at the present time I believe.

C.F.D. That is an interesting reference. Therefore, as the Lord is looking, what is to be seen? Really the reproduction of Christ in the soul of the believer is the great thing that should be motivating us, but this is to come into practical expression every day of our lives. In the work-place or wherever it might be, in our schools, this is to come into practical expression. Christianity, according to James, is a very practical thing.

T.J.B. As to our being inhibited by past history or by past failure, Saul preached Jesus that He is the Son of God and everybody said "Is not this he who destroyed in Jerusalem those who called on this name, and here was come for this purpose", Acts 9: 21. The history was there, was it not, and in one sense that remained, but Saul increased the more in power; he was now in another way.

C.F.D. He proved from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. He is generating power by his link with the Spirit of God and his knowledge of Jesus and his link with heaven. Paul was a man who had a very peculiar link with heaven. The Lord evidently appeared to Paul more than once.

T.J.B. So while we have to bear the responsibility of the history, and we cannot get away from that, there is no reason at all why that should inhibit the power in the testimony of the glad tidings.

C.F.D. I think that. 'Inhibit the power in the testimony' is a good way to put it, and yet you hear it said these days that we have come under so much public disgrace that we should be a little reluctant to go down to the street corner; but the fact of the matter is that this should not hinder us at all. We are presenting a Man, we are presenting Christ. There has been no breakdown in Christ.

B.W.W. It should not hinder our being outside our meeting rooms, those of us who have them, and inviting persons in, should it?

C.F.D. You give out tracts at the door, do you not?

B.W.W. I have done. I think where we have meeting rooms we should be able to do that and have tracts, as you say, for those who are not prepared to come in.

C.F.D. A single tract has converted many, I do not doubt. We had that experience locally. A woman said to us, I had been looking for Jesus and I found a tract in the gutter and I read that tract and I received light in my soul, I came to know the Lord. A lot of us have lost the initiative in the open-air preaching. How many localities have an open-air preaching, or how many of us preach in the openair? What is wrong with seizing that again?

B.W.W. There is nothing wrong in seizing it; it would be right.

C.F.D. The gospel is still being preached. That is a vital thing. God has done some amazing things in the preaching of the gospel in America.

E.F.W. He is doing some here. In Colossians it says "Walk in wisdom towards those with out, redeeming opportunities", chap 4: 5. Do you not believe that the Lord would put opportunities in our way?

C.F.D. I do. We should pray for them. It is vital that we do what we can privately, but I believe where we have grown slack is that we let down the preaching in the open-air. In most localities we do not have it any more.

E.C.B. We generally pray for everywhere that the gospel is being preached.

C.F.D. So do we. That includes chapel or wherever.

E.C.B. I think we have to be rather careful about expressions that imply that we are the only people who have the real gospel; we may speak as if we were. If we do not preach, God will take up others.

God is already using others, far more than he is using us, and we therefore need to keep our hearts very wide as to what God is doing.

C.F.D. That is right, very wide. I believe we are getting help in that direction to see what God is doing toward men, because the word is going out and thousands are receiving it. (It may be a gospel of relief but God is using that for the salvation of the souls of men.)

E.C.B. Where did you begin? With relief, with forgiveness of your sins? That has become popular to you.

C.F.D. I think that it should become increasingly popular to us.

J.M. One thing that is very exercising in this connection is that we need the gospel among ourselves. We need to be very wide but we need to be steeped in the gospel; our relations together ought to be on the line of the gospel. Maybe the Lord would help us then to be wider in our outlook and have some success in it.

C.F.D. I think that what you say is helpful and that it is true. We need very much the glad tidings amongst us. Many times we sit down at the preaching and, maybe unintentionally, relegate the glad tidings to the young people. The fact of the matter is that we who are older, I feel, need the preaching of the word of God possibly more than any. We need it ourselves so that we can set things on in a more formative way locally.

J.M. You hear things said and things done in administration that rather indicate that we need help ourselves in relation to the glad tidings. I think that what you are raising is a very prophetic line.

E.C.B. Nor does it matter if the preacher occupies the whole hour.

S.H. Is the preaching that Jesus is the Son of God the gospel of the glory, and Paul's own gospel? Does it not affect the saints when preached?

C.F.D. It does. The preaching of the Son of God was Paul's glad tidings; he immediately preached that. Peter had not preached that; it is left for Paul. It is interesting how the Lord leaves certain things for certain persons. Peter did not have it all; it was given to Paul to complete the word of God. He had a gospel which he spoke of as being entrusted to him (see 1 Tim 1: 11).

SUNBURY

18 March 1989

Key to initials

D.A.Burr, London; D.E.Burr, Redbridge ; E.C.Burr, London;
G.C.Bywater, Buckhurst Hill; T.J.Burr, Sunbury; C.F.Dadd, Plainfield;
I.L.Gray, Bristol; S.Hewison, Dorking; J.McKay, Woodstock;
J.Mitchell, Bexley; P.Munn, Barnet; J.S.Pugh, Maidstone;
D.E.Remmington, St.Albans;D.J.Roberts, Gillingham; S.D.K.Roberts,
Croydon; W.Shephard, Bedford; J.A.Turner, Chippenham;
A.J.E.Temple, Sunbury; R.Taylor, Barnet; F.R.Turner, Bournemouth;
B.W.Ward, London; E.Wakefield, Sunbury; M.J.Welch, Sunbury;
V.E.Wraighte, Gillingham; E.F.Woodford, Dorking; J.Wright,
Redbridge

PREACHING

John Harthill

Matthew 20: 29-34; 1 Peter 2: 9, 10

In reading these scriptures, beloved hearers, I have been thinking especially of the journeyings of divine love from heaven to earth, and the movements of Jesus here "who went through all quarters doing good, and healing all that were under the power of the devil, because God was with him" (Acts 10: 38), and then ultimately of that path that led to the cross. Jesus is on that way here in this scripture,

that way that led to death, and there are these two men by the wayside. I suppose that is a question of God's mercy; here they are where Jesus is to pass by. I think we have all known that experience. In the mercy of God we have been placed where we could hear the glad tidings. In that sense today Jesus is passing by. These two blind men in all their need heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. These men were affected. Clearly they had heard about Jesus. I think they set out two persons with whom God was working. They "cried out saying, Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David". Just think of two men yet unblessed and yet they could say to Jesus, "Lord, Son of David". How did they know? No doubt they had heard about Jesus and they had already been affected.

They felt that, if Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, this is our opportunity for blessing. I suppose we have all come to that point in God's mercy where we heard the message, realised that Jesus was passing by. "The word is near thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart", Rom 10: 8. How near blessing is when souls are conscious that Jesus is passing by. So there they were in their need. They could do nothing for themselves: that is what we all have to come to. But, oh, the scripture says so touchingly, "for we being still without strength, in the due time Christ has died for the ungodly" (Rom 5: 6), for every one of us, for indeed we were all in that category, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God", Rom 3: 23. It says "For scarcely for the just man will one die" - that goes on among men - but when we were yet enemies - when we were enemies indeed - "we being still sinners, Christ has died for us".

God commends His love towards us - think of it! God's love, so great, is reaching out in its fulness towards all men tonight. What a God we have! As He looks out upon men He is not willing that any should perish, He would have all to come to repentance, He would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. That is the God we have to do with. That is part of the glorious message of the glad tidings that such provision has been made for men, how God in Christ has met man's great need.

Here Jesus is going forward, passing through Jericho, going on the way to Jerusalem to die. "Him who knew not sin" (2 Cor 5: 21): think of that blessed Man in that pathway of moral beauty and perfection! How touching it always is that Man was made sin, He who knew not sin, made sin. Think of Him there at Gethsemane: "not my will, but thine be done", Luke 22: 42. How often we have heard these words, but they never fail to affect us in our hearts. So, clearly, the Lord Jesus as He moved on was anticipating His death in which He would complete that glorious work of redemption, meeting the need of men for everyone who felt that need; and these two men felt their need. They were very conscious of their need. They cried out. There were those who sought to rebuke them, to keep them back, but they would not be held back. They were in earnest, in earnest about their souls' salvation. That is how it would be said tonight. They were earnest about their sight. They knew that Jesus of Nazareth could effect healing and blessing for them and they cried out. Jesus said, "What will ye that I shall do to you? They say to him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened"; and it says, "Jesus, moved with compassion". Think of the divine compassions! How great they are! Think of that incident when Jesus was coming into the city of Nain! It says, "a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother", Luke 7: 12. Think of how Jesus was moved with compassion at that time! The bearers stopped and Jesus said, "Youth, I say to thee, Wake up". Think of this glorious Saviour of whom we sang, the One indeed who is the Son of God. It says in the beginning of Romans, "marked out Son of God ... by resurrection of the dead", chap 1: 4. The Lord Jesus in His glorious greatness can deal with death. Think of that: man's extremity indeed! Here is one lying in death and the Lord Jesus in power says, "Youth, I say to thee, Wake up". Here again, as these men cried, Jesus was moved with compassion and touched their eyes. That is something for our hearts! I think it would mean that He identified Himself with their condition. He has done that, He who knew not sin. He "bore our sins in his body on the tree", 1 Pet 2: 24. He has identified Himself with our position and our need. All is vicarious. He had no need to die. How well we know that. The Christ of God had no need to die,

but He died for you and me. He bore our sins in His body on the tree; His precious blood was shed that the scripture might be fulfilled, "without blood-shedding there is no remission", Heb 9: 22. Oh how full the glad tidings are! What a message! How much there is in the work of redemption, meeting every need of man. God was glorified in the death of Christ; His dying, His burial, His resurrection, was all vicarious - "delivered for our offences ... raised for our justification", Rom 4: 25. Think of the wonderful work of redemption, that we are justified in a Man who is out of death - "raised for our justification". The scripture says again beautifully: "being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus", Rom 3: 24. "In Christ Jesus" - that is the Man above. I like to think of that: redemption is in the Man above! How safe it is! How safe it is for every needy soul tonight as the glad tidings are preached, as souls become conscious of their need and become real about it, that they are not going to miss the blessing. Jesus is here, ready to bless. Jesus touched the eyes of these blind men - I may say, calling them "out of darkness to his wonderful light". Think of that: in the darkness, blind, but He touched their eyes "and immediately their eyes had sight restored to them". Beautiful! Think of the call of God in the glad tidings tonight! How we desire that many needy ones would be conscious that Jesus is passing by. These words move us tonight, almost two thousand years after this incident. He is there above. At that time those immediately near Him were the persons to be blessed, but think of Him tonight, exalted, the One who is out of death, exalted a Prince and Saviour and He is available for all men. Oh what a message!

There is no other hope for man, "for neither is there another name under heaven which is given among men by which we must be saved", Acts 4: 12. Think of that! Only in Jesus, that glorious Name, that worthy Name! And so as you follow on here it says, "their eyes had sight restored to them, and they followed him" - "they followed him". Well, that is very affecting. The Lord Jesus says, "he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of

life", John 8: 12. Oh, think of what it is to come into "the light of life"! Think of the wonderful light!

That is why I read the next scripture: "who has called you out of darkness to his wonderful light". As you follow Jesus you come into this "wonderful light". What a pathway it is! It is Jesus of Nazareth here, a testing pathway, a lowly pathway, a pathway of reproach, involving suffering, but what a pathway of blessing it is! "They followed him". Think of the wonderful change that comes in as you follow Jesus. It is a walk in "newness of life". The scripture speaks of being identified with Him in the likeness of His death in baptism, and then it goes on to speak of how He was raised by the glory of the Father, and then how we should walk in newness of life (see Rom 6: 4). It is a complete change. The next chapter speaks about "newness of spirit", Rom 7: 6. What a change in those who are married to another "who has been raised up from among the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God " (v 4). Think of the pathway we are on! The next chapter speaks about having the spirit of God's Son whereby we cry, Abba, Father. We have a link with God by the Spirit, the wonderful gift of the Spirit. How precious that is! The gift of the Spirit is God's gift; we receive the gift of the Spirit. How dependent we are on the Spirit of God! The Spirit of God is the power to walk. We can walk now in the power of the Spirit in a way that is pleasing to God. Think of the multitudes today! We speak of the awful decline, the departure from God, the moral corruption, the lawlessness and the vandalism of today. It is constantly before our eyes. Yet on the other hand think of what it is, that God is bringing a redeemed people through. Soon the Lord Jesus will come into the air to receive us to Himself. What a blessed prospect we have! God has a people here - it speaks of that in the second scripture I read: "who once were not a people, but now God's people". There is no doubt that these two who had their eyes opened and followed Him very soon found their part amongst the people of God. I believe that is the mind of God. As souls get blessing today it is not a question of moving alone. God sets the solitary in families. The mind of God is that we link with His people. We remember the Lord

Jesus in the breaking of bread. We come into happy fellowship. That is how we speak today, and that is our experience today too. I think that is how these scriptures would work out: "who were not enjoying mercy, but now have found mercy". Well, we can look back on these days when we "were not enjoying mercy". I am sure we would all say how empty it all is in this scene, how empty is the pathway without the enjoyment of mercy, God's mercy reaching us and our coming into blessing through the work of Christ. How it changes things from "not enjoying mercy" to finding mercy. That is the position with each one of us here tonight, that we have found mercy, and, indeed, we are enjoying mercy day by day, we who are called out of darkness to his wonderful light, "who once were not a people, but now God's people". Here it says "that ye might set forth the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness to his wonderful light". That is these two blind men, "called ... out of darkness to his wonderful light". That is you and me tonight, "called ... out of darkness to his wonderful light", that we "might set forth the excellencies of him who has called us out of darkness to his wonderful light". Is that not a great favour? What a favour! What blessing has come to us! Those who have been blessed have received the forgiveness of sins, have received the Spirit of God and are enjoying mercy. What blessing it is! We are proving it day by day, week by week - the blessed favour we stand in with God.

Then there is privilege in the path of testimony; it speaks here of "a kingly priesthood": "ye are a chosen race, a kingly priesthood". Think of that! The "kingly priesthood" is here in testimony, setting forth "the excellencies of him who has called us out of darkness to his wonderful light". Earlier in the chapter it speaks about "a holy priesthood" (v 5) and I should just like to say a little about that. It speaks of us as coming to the living stone "yourselves also, as living stones" having come to Christ the Living Stone "are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood". This is the inside position, the position of God's praise. That is what we are called to, not only for the showing forth of the excellencies of Christ, but really the great matter of being called is that we should find our part in God's praise.

That has been occupying us today, the praise of God. We began with that this morning,

'Praise ye the Lord, again, again,
The Spirit strikes the chord.'
(Hymn 142)

Think of what God is having today, think of these responses "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ", and we as a privileged people are called out of darkness to this wonderful light in order that we should find our part in these glorious matters, carrying the testimony, as we had today, to finality. Things are almost over. What a day we are in, just right at the end, at the glorious finish. So much is failing in the world today, but what God has in mind cannot fail. So when the Lord Jesus will come into the air, every blood-bought saint, everyone having the Spirit, will arise to meet Him in the air. Oh how glorious it is, a glorious finish! We sing sometimes:

'A great assembling shout 'twill be,
An answer meet to Calvary.'
(Hymn 345)

We have been speaking about the dying of Jesus, the great work of redemption, what a glorious work it is - the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! He is taking it away for faith today; soon He will take it away by power: "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world", John 1: 29. We shall soon be caught up to be for ever with the Lord. What a finish! Surely we would desire in an increasing way to be filling out our part in the praise of God and to be filling out our part in the testimony, carrying the Lord in testimony to the finish. Oh, it touches my heart to speak about it, but there it is, how the Lord would seek to affect us that we might be increasingly here, having His coming always before us, constantly before us, and yet filling out our part in these glorious matters in the testimony and in the praise of God. May it be so, beloved brethren, for His Name's sake. Amen.

CUMNOCK

THE CHILDREN'S VALUE

We all know that a thing is not prized only because of what it is, but also because of its usefulness. In a dry and barren part of the world there is a small plant, called the Pitcher plant, which may not seem at first sight to be very useful. Just before rain falls, however, it opens out a kind of bag which not only collects the precious water, but remains wide open enough for thirsty birds and small animals - or even a weary traveller - to drink. Thus the youngest believers on the Lord Jesus can, by the Spirit, refresh the spirits of others. The scripture instructs us to "open thy mouth, and I will fill it".

There were doubtless many children amongst the Christians who received the epistles of Peter. One of the first things that he wrote was that they had all been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, so this reminded them that they had each one the same supreme value to God. They were therefore to treasure and love one another and not just pretend to do so. The gift of the Holy Spirit enables the believer to do this out of a full heart.

As a babe Moses was "fair to God" which means that he was not only a beautiful child but was valued by God because of his great work which was foreseen by heaven. One thing that parents think of in faith at a household baptism is that their child may be converted and in time be useful to the Lord. This is something like Samuel being lent to Jehovah for service all his life. It was in the heart of his mother to give him but, very tenderly, God allowed her to continue calling him her son.

The Lord used a little child to teach the twelve apostles the important lesson of being humble. He set the child in the midst of them and then took it into His arms. Thus He was not only a wise Teacher, but also a loving Shepherd. In one gospel account Jesus called a little child to Him. Have you heard and answered such a happy call as this?

J.C.Evershed