

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

SECOND SERIES

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CONTENTS

Crossing The Jordan

Page 1

Christ's Person, His Work and His Glory

Jim T. Brown (Grangemouth)

Page 20

The Sufferings of The Present Time

Andrew Martin

Page 28

CROSSING THE JORDAN

Joshua 1: 10-11; 3: 1-6, 14-17; 4: 4-8, 15-18; 5: 2-3, 9-12

Colossians 2: 9-12; 3: 1-4, 16-17

Ephesians 2: 11-22

DJH I trust we may get help together in relation to the crossing of the Jordan. It is noticeable, and it must have some significance because it is in the Scriptures, that there are two or three references in these chapters to three days. That would take us back, I suppose, to think of the beginning of 1 Corinthians 15, “that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he was raised the third day”, v 3-4. Everything that we have in that sense relates to the death and burial and resurrection, and indeed glory of our Lord Jesus. I just say that by way of introduction, but the thing to see is the victory that is here, in that whilst the scripture speaks of going *through* the Red Sea, we have here that they go *over* the Jordan. There seems to be a special sense of power in that but nevertheless there is the reference in chapter 4: 7, “That the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah; when it went through the Jordan”; so that we go *over* because He has gone *through*.

Then we often speak of Colossians as being on the way. We do not get “has raised us up together and has made us sit down together in the heavenlies” (Eph 2: 6), but it is like being over the Jordan and in the lodging place, and we note that they celebrated the passover there, which I think gives a link with where we began to read in Ephesians. It says, “Wherefore remember that ye, once nations in the flesh ...” and so on. I think in that sense the remembrance is like the celebration of the passover when we get over the Jordan because it leads on to the great thoughts of God in relation to being reconciled to God in one body by the cross, speaking again of the blood of the cross. So it is a kind of résumé of the things that we have been speaking of during the course of these readings, but leading on to “a habitation of God in the Spirit”.

We can have reading after reading on these chapters in Joshua and on these chapters in Ephesians and Colossians, but I trust the brethren will bear with just reading these scriptures, the extracts, and maybe we could do a bit of homework to get the fullness of it, but do you think we could work something out from this under the guidance of the Spirit?

JCG Undoubtedly. It is a wonderful move of triumph of Christ seen in

the type of the ark going through the Jordan. What was in your mind as to the preparation of the victuals? Perhaps you can help us on that just before we look at the main section.

DJH I had not thought much as to that but it seems as though there is the need of strength in some way to take this course, but I would be glad to hear what others say. Do you have any thoughts yourself?

JCG Do you think that the Spirit of God would give us a constitution that we might understand what it is to be “buried with him in baptism” and then raised with Him, as Colossians brings it in? We need to have the inward constitution as you brought in in earlier readings.

DJH I think that is good. I think what you said in relation to earlier readings that these exercises as to the bearing of the death of Christ that we have had would form in us a moral constitution which would be able for going this way, and going over into what relates to the purpose of God.

JSp Is the thought of being strengthened coming through, do you think?

DJH I thought so. Say more as to that.

JSp Well it is the great culmination of all divine operations, is it not? We will have power to enter into these great things of God which were there before the foundation of the world.

DJH Yes, I thought that was it, “strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man”, Eph 3: 16. It would be something of that in view of this.

WL Remind us again, please, about your thought that in Hebrews 11 it is the passover, the Red Sea, then the walls of Jericho. Jordan is not mentioned.

DJH It is a question of faith there, is it not? “By faith they passed through the Red sea”, Heb 11: 29. There was nothing to see. The way was made for them and they could go through, but Jordan is when you see the ark. Christ as to where He is at the present time is before us as we go this way. Of course here the ark is in the Jordan, but for us it would be Christ glorified, would it? But for the walls of Jericho, again it was a matter of faith.

WL Is it the importance of keeping Christ predominantly in our

view?

DJH Exactly. It is the only way in which we shall get through, is it not? Again, in a different context, it is “looking steadfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith”, Heb 12: 2. It is a great thing, and “we see Jesus ... crowned with glory and honour”, Heb 2: 9. We must keep Him in view in all these exercises.

RFW Would it be in order just to ask you to open up for us what this type of the death of Christ means?

DJH Well, you tell us something, please.

RFW I suppose every aspect has its own distinctive character, but there is no pressure here like there was at the Red Sea, is there?

DJH So we have often been told that we go through this by way of attraction. They could be said to have been impelled through the Red Sea by fear, were they not, but here they go through by way of attraction.

RFW I was wondering if these other aspects of the death of Christ that we have been considering would be a bit like the victuals for us; would they, to give us strength to consider this blessed aspect?

DJH Yes, and as we go through - or as we pass over - it is in the light that He has gone through and has taken away the power of death. We have noticed earlier, “that ... he might annul him who has the might of death, that is, the devil”, Heb 2: 14. All this would be involved. The death of Christ is one great matter. There is so much involved in it, is there not? We have been reminded often that the Red Sea and the Jordan coalesce so that we speak of the matter in Romans 6 relating to the Red Sea, then it goes on to relationships with Him. We often refer to the teaching that the Red Sea is His death for us and the Jordan our death with Him. It has also been said that Romans 6 relates to the Jordan, and I suppose it would be right to say, too, that you cannot have one without the other, but this aspect of it that you have enquired about is the fact of our own death with Him. When He died, we died, and then we are set free. And again this element comes into what we were speaking of this morning in Romans 7 that He has died; we cannot die to the law ourselves, but He has died and we die with Him so that we are then set free by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. It is difficult in a sense to view these things separately, do you think? I would be glad of the help of the brethren in this.

RDP The crossing of the Red Sea seemed to be a matter of urgency, but this seems to involve preparation, the victuals and the three days; there is a certain element of teaching, instruction, preparation of Joshua and so on. What do you see the difference between the two?

DJH You are asking me hard questions! I was hoping we would get help together. The Red Sea was a question of escape really, was it not? It was what they were saved from. We have often been reminded we are not so much to be detained in relation to what we have been saved *from*, but it is what we are saved for and what we are saved *into*. So that the sooner we get saved from these things the better. It is a matter of urgency, is it not? We cannot get anywhere until we are saved from, but then there is the question of what we are saved in view of, and that comes into view in relation to the Jordan.

JRW Is it of note that when they pass through the Red Sea the waters were a wall to them on the right hand and on the left? In relation to the Jordan it is when the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the waters of the Jordan, they fled back as far as Adam.

DJH That is very good. It shows the difference. As we were saying, there was danger at the Red Sea that they were fleeing from, and the idea of the wall seems to suggest that there is what is protective in the sea itself that divided them from the enemy that was behind them; but, as you say, in the Jordan the water is gone. It is completely clear. It is significant that the name Adam is introduced here. It seems as though the whole history of man is completely removed. That man has no more to do with it, the waters have gone right back that far. The whole history has been cleared so that we might pass over into what relates to the purpose of God. Is something of that in your mind?

JRW Yes, the presence of death and the fear of it is very evident in relation to the Red Sea, is it not? There was not one house in the whole of Egypt in which death was not present. That included the houses of the children of Israel except that there, of course, the death was that of the lamb. Then when they went through the Red Sea the fear of death was there. When the Red Sea returned it killed all the Egyptians, all those that were there, but it seems as though the fear of death, and death, have been dealt with completely in relation to the Jordan, do you think, and that really because One that is stronger has gone into it?

DJH Exactly.

GAB In respect of both the Red Sea and the Jordan, it says they went over on dry ground. What do you say about that?

DJH Would that relate to what it says in Hebrews that He tasted death for every thing, Heb 2: 9? We have to realise what it is as we go through, particularly the Red Sea, when the water is there on either side, but He has gone that way. We have the ark here standing in the midst of the Jordan. But say more yourself.

GAB It just seems to emphasise the absoluteness of what has been secured through the death of Christ in going that way.

DJH That is right.

JCG Would that link on with what is in the mind of God at the very outset when in the restoration of the creation He divided the waters and said "let the dry land appear", Gen 1: 9? That was for the purpose of God, and now in the triumph of Christ the people are going to enter into their inheritance. That is the intention of this wholehearted committal as following the ark, is it not?

DJH Yes, that is good. It is interesting that reference you make, "let the dry land appear". In a sense the dry land appeared here. That was in view of the fruitfulness of the earth; the next thing was the green herb, was it not? So we hold all these types together, "that we might bear fruit to God", Rom 7: 4. What is to be secured for God is really the great end in it all.

JAG Would the preparation and the eating of the victuals strengthen us to see that the waters have gone? "He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells in me and I in him", John 6: 56. I think that has been linked somewhat to the victuals and then, "As ... I live on account of the Father, *he* also who eats me shall live also on account of me" (v 57); that is away over Jordan.

DJH I think that is very helpful to see that. John 6 is a wonderful chapter of food, and I think it would have some bearing on this. I think as to what you say about the feeding there, it has been said it is strong meat. It is also said, of course, as to the Gospels being strong meat so that Christ would ever be kept before us. There is ever inexhaustible food for us in that blessed Man.

JAG "From that time many of his disciples went away back ... Jesus therefore said to the twelve, Will ye also go away?" Peter says, "to

whom shall we go?”, John 6: 66-68. He got the gain of the victuals, you might say.

DJH Yes. Now tell us about standing firm in the midst of the Jordan until all the people had gone over. How do we apply that?

JAG I think we should have some impression of it at the Lord's supper because we come to the Supper, as was pointed out this morning, from an area of eternal life and we prove the Lord comes in; and it is obvious that death has gone.

DJH Yes, I am sure that is right, and there again we begin with the Lord's supper and, as we were reminded, we move in relation to the matter of eternal life and the worship of God.

AGM At the Jordan “the waters stood and rose up in a heap, very far, by Adam”; I think it is about twenty miles. When you go into the Jordan to cross the only thing you see is the ark and the priests standing. I was thinking of what we were saying as to the Supper. There is only one Person there before you.

DJH Exactly. Death has gone back more than just twenty miles.

JM In what we have been considering so far in the death of Christ, there has been suffering connected with it; but that is not connected with the Jordan, is it? The Red Sea is the way over into the wilderness, but this is the way over into God's abode.

DJH Yes. I have pondered that a bit, the fact that in the passover and the brazen serpent particularly, we get the side of suffering. It is not so marked in relation to the Red Sea, but it could not be apart from the way Jesus went. I think we have been reminded that at the Supper we are not so much occupied with the sufferings of Christ as with the death of Christ. That would enter into what you say because we are about to pass over in that sense.

JM I think that is a very important statement, because I notice that sometimes there is a good deal said about the sufferings, a good deal said about dealing with sin, but the death of Christ at the Supper is more the Jordan character, is it not? It is really the way over, and we go over with Him into God's abode.

DJH Yes. And would it be right to see the same, too, in referring to Ephesians? “Wherefore he says, Having ascended up on high, he has led captivity captive, and has given gifts to men. But that he ascended,

what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens, that he might fill all things”, Eph 4: 8-10. It speaks there of His descending into the lower parts of the earth, not a question of suffering there. I am enquiring. Is it right to think that descending into the lower parts of the earth is more His death in the aspect of the Jordan? Would that be right to say?

DBR I was thinking that in what we have considered previously we see Christ as a Victim, but here He is the Victor. That is really John's line, is it not? Christ entered into the sphere of death as Victor and death is dispersed, the power of death is dispersed. I was wondering if it is important to see that, while it is our death with Christ, in verse 4 the uniqueness of Christ entering death is really brought before us in the two thousand cubits.

DJH That must ever be kept before us. The distinctiveness of that blessed Man must ever be kept before us. No other could go this way. As I said, this is the only reference to going *through* the Jordan. It says that the ark went *through* the Jordan. That would relate to His descending into the lower parts of the earth, would it not? Only He could go that way, but it is that we might go *over*. We go *over*; we do not go *through* in the scripture here, do we? So that the victory is ours: “but thanks to God, who gives us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ”, 1 Cor 15: 57.

RT There comes a point in John's gospel where He says, “Rise up, let us go hence”, John 14: 31. Is that like this, that we follow in attraction the way He is going into heavenly relationships? Egypt is far gone, and the wilderness is behind, and there is a great avenue opening up to us if we follow.

DJH Yes, and is that not said in relation to, “but that the world may know that I love the Father ... Rise up, let us go hence” so that there is an objective in view, is there not? And then, as out of death, “my Father and your Father, ... my God and your God”, John 20: 17. All that is in view when He says, “Rise up, let us go hence”.

RT These three days mean a full committal, do they? You may say that the moorings are cut, and we are now following into the land that God has prepared for them that love Him.

DJH Exactly.

JBI Is it interesting that it is “in your midst” - “Jehovah will do wonders in your midst”? It is a privilege, is it not, and do you think really it is for the assembly and for our affections?

DJH Yes, it is wonderful that, the way in which God was among His people even at this time. We had that also, “The place that thou, Jehovah, hast made thy dwelling”, (Ex 15: 17), looking on, of course, to finality, as we read in Ephesians as to “a habitation of God in the Spirit”, even at the present time.

JS The Lord says, “I lay down my life that I may take it again”, John 10: 17. He has got in view His going through death and having others associated with Him on the other side of death.

DJH Yes, He tasted death for every thing, which I suppose would relate to what has been said as to the complete clearance that has been made. It was for every thing, was it not? We acknowledge it and accept it thankfully for ourselves, but we have spoken earlier in the reading as to the way a time will come when death will exist no more. He has tasted death for every thing, and we have that reference in the hymn,

And love that, giving all, secures
The universe for God. (Hymn 171)

There is the breadth and extent of it; you get the four dimensions, length and breadth and depth and height. It is beyond us really to understand.

GCMcK We are enabled to enter into a realm that is beyond death; so it is really a realm that is beyond flesh and blood. We are still in flesh and blood conditions but do we enter through this exercise into another order of things where in the Spirit we leave even what is of nature behind?

DJH That would all relate to the circumcision of the Christ, which we read of in Colossians, and here they had to be circumcised before they could go any further, do you think? They were through the Jordan but all that which related to the testimony, the reproach of Egypt, all that related to that order of things, had to be completely cut off.

EFW Is there something in the fact that Joshua was commanded to go? That is authoritative, is it not? To prepare the victuals it was not only needed but it had to be done, but in chapter 3 he speaks, and speaks to the priests. We come really, as was just said, to a spiritual

sphere where reverence is needed.

DJH I think that is right, yes, and all would relate to our going through on the principle of attraction. We are not exactly forced through but I trust what we are saying will have its practical effect upon us, that we are in fact attracted so that we might move in this direction, and recognise what might be involved in the cutting off of all that relates to what we are according to nature.

JW I wondered if we get some impression here of the formidable force that there was at the Jordan. It says in this verse that it “is full over all its banks throughout the days of harvest”. It was a force that could not be underestimated, but one blessed Person has met all that it speaks of. I thought we might get some impression of that after the Supper, do you think?

DJH I think that is good. That is referred to twice, is it not? It says, “and when they that bore the ark were come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (and the Jordan is full over all its banks throughout the days of harvest)”. Then, as you say, in the next chapter, “when the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up on to the dry land, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place, and they flowed as previously, over all its banks”. It is the power of death here, is it not?

The power of death was broken
In Jesus' death of scorn. (Hymn 290)

would come to our minds.

PJM There is another touch in John's gospel, “When therefore he said to them, I am he, they went away backward and fell to the ground”. You get a sense of His majesty, and what was the point of it? The point of it next is, “if therefore ye seek me, let these go away”, John 18: 6, 8. It was no threat for them; He bore it all.

DJH Exactly. You see something of the two thousand cubits there.

PJM I thought that. We sing,

None could follow there, blest Saviour (Hymn 298)

but the intention was that the others would follow after.

TM The preparation was on this side of the Jordan.

DJH Yes. Well, we have been speaking about wilderness experiences, have we not, and all this would enter into the preparation? We cannot bypass these things. These exercises we have been speaking of as to the passover and what it signifies and coming through the Red Sea, and then the matter of the brazen serpent; these things cannot be bypassed.

TM Is it like John 13, where the Lord is preparing His disciples? John 13 has been likened to this side of the Jordan. He is preparing them for going over Jordan, chapters 14 to 17, where there is nothing but enjoyment involving the whole purpose of God.

DJH I think there is something in that, yes.

WMcK I was thinking about the practical effect of the three days and the lodging place, and comparing it to these three days we are having together, and we should have a sense, the experience really, that the Lord has been acting in us inwardly in view of our going over the Jordan tomorrow to have part with Him, as was referred to, after the Supper.

DJH That is good. I think it is always good to relate these exercises to the Supper. It is the starting point of every week, is it not? Of course, there is in a sense what has gone before in that, "But let a man prove himself, and thus eat ..." (1 Cor 11: 28) but, as together, the Supper is the great starting point, and therefore these exercises would all relate to that.

WMcK And I was thinking that we need to have a sense that not only has Christ been before us objectively in these meetings, but He has been acting in us inwardly with a view to our having power to cross over and be with Him in a deathless scene.

DJH Yes, I am sure that is right. That is really, I believe, the exercise the Lord has laid upon me that there should be something working inwardly with us in view of our moving forward into these realms which relate to the purpose of God.

RG Would that be the bearing of this verse, "Hallow yourselves; for tomorrow Jehovah will do wonders in your midst"? It is what we have gone over. There should now be the power with us to hallow ourselves in the light of what we have experienced over these last three readings, and now for tomorrow "Thou shalt see greater things than these" (John 1: 50), and we will enter into greater things as we pass over tomorrow, do you think?

DJH Yes, the “greater things” are the other side of death, are they not? It seems as though the brethren have got liberated somehow. We cannot all get in today in this reading! There must have been some effect from the previous reading!

MJW I was wondering where the Holy Spirit comes into all this because He comes into the question of circumcision does He not, the power for it? But from your previous reading and its value from Numbers 21, we need to carry the Spirit forward; and yet He is not obvious in the teaching here. Would you help as to that?

DJH Well I think what you say is really the answer to it, that it is not brought in here, but again these exercises that we have been speaking of earlier cannot be bypassed, and it was not until we got to what is typified in the brazen serpent and that order of things being finished there - “condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom 8: 3) - that the Holy Spirit comes in bringing liberty and movement. Now it goes on to where we are going, does it not? I think, when we go through these exercises, we need to see that the whole matter is cumulative and we carry forward what we had before. It is not particularly mentioned here in the Old Testament but the thing is there in our experience in Christianity, and the Holy Spirit is with us in view of our going through into the enjoyment of the purpose of God.

PM Would the officers going through the camp perhaps be a type of the Spirit drawing attention to the distinctiveness of Christ, “When ye see the ark ... then remove from your place, and go after it”?

DJH Say more as to that. I would appreciate your thought as to the officers going through.

PM I wondered if these verses were preparatory for the experience of quickening in the affections of the believer. We enter upon a land in which death has no part but it is worked out through quickening in the affections, Christ having His place distinctively and the Spirit drawing attention to Him in all His glory.

DJH Well, that is interesting. You are suggesting that the officers going through might be some reference typically to the Spirit? It certainly is so that the Spirit has gone before in our own experience, has He not, in bringing Christ before us in that way? We see that in Romans 7, it is the answer to the whole matter there, but because of the way He has been.

JS It says that “Jehovah magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel”, chap 4: 14. Would that have some bearing on it? I wonder if the Spirit would help us as Christ becomes greater inwardly to us.

DJH Yes, I am glad you referred to that. I would like to understand it better. Perhaps you could say more, but has it not been said that Joshua is spiritual leadership, Num 27: 18?

JS That is how I understand it, the result of it. It does not exactly call attention to the Spirit. It magnifies Joshua, what Christ is inwardly to us, do you think?

DJH Yes, that helps.

JCG Does this confirm ministry that we have had as to it being the Lord's supper? We gather together and it is the Lord's supper. He is before us primarily in relation to the way that He has moved to bring us into the purpose of God. There were suggestions that we should speak to the Spirit early in the meeting, but the Spirit Himself indicated that it was the Lord's supper, and that the ark is really prominent therefore in the way in which we respond in worship.

DJH Yes, that is good, and I am glad of what you say because I think we want to get away from any sense of ritual (for want of a better word) in relation to the Supper and the service of God. I feel for myself, and I am sure the brethren feel it, that we get to a certain point at the Supper. The Lord comes in and we are enjoying our relationships with Him and some touch as to union and what the assembly is to Him; and then we feel, how could we get this apart from the service of the Holy Spirit? Surely we must render something to Him on the way, and how can we go any further without His strengthening us in the inner man? Surely, you might say, you cannot do other than respond to the Spirit. It is not because there is some ritual order, but because you feel that is the way your heart moves, does it not?

JCG Exactly.

JDG Does the material that comes out of the bed of the Jordan become the material for “a habitation of God in the Spirit”? I was thinking of the stones out of the bed of the Jordan. Does that material become useful for “a habitation of God in the Spirit”?

DJH It says “built together”. You build these twelve stones together, do you? Is that what you are thinking?

JDG It is only what is out of Christ's death that is equal to forming "a habitation of God in the Spirit".

DJH And we are viewed in that way as out of Christ's death, viewed as in Christ Jesus, but then there are twelve stones that are there to this day. The whole matter has been settled, and what we are according to flesh, that is there, and death has covered it.

JDG These stones were in the bed of the Jordan. We are looking around and we see the stones that are out of the bed of the Jordan here today.

DJH That is right. It is assuring, is it not? How do we know that those stones are in the bed of the Jordan? I think we prove it experimentally because it says, "they are there to this day". Well, you could see the ones on the bank; but you could not see the others, but it says, "they are there to this day". The whole question has been settled absolutely.

JAG "We have been buried therefore with him by baptism unto death", Rom 6: 4. That would be the stones in the bed of the Jordan, would it not? What is out now is new creation.

DJH Yes. We had better get on to the New Testament.

WL Before we go on, why is the covenant referred to in relation to the ark?

DJH I was hoping someone would say something about that! It is noticeable that it is "the ark of the covenant" or "the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth".

WL Does it mean that the whole matter must result in our relationships with divine Persons?

DJH That is very good, and it is what God Himself has committed Himself to and therefore the question is, what am I going to commit myself to?

DBR If I could ask before we go on, why are the priests so prominent in these chapters, for instance in chap 3: 8, "And thou shalt command the priests", then it is "where the priests' feet stood firm" chap 4: 3? I thought it might be what the brethren have been saying as to the inward state that is really needed in us to have part in this great matter, do you think?

DJH Yes, and would it be right to say too, as we have often been reminded, that it is one type, the ark? Speaking literally it was an inanimate thing and it needed something to move it, and the priests were those who bore the ark, but there would also be in it, as occurs to me as you are speaking, that the priests are concerned as to what is for God, and whilst we speak as to the way made for us to go over, what is in mind is that God Himself is the Objective. Speaking simply, that would be in the mind and heart of Christ in view of going that way so that there would be what would be secured for God.

DBR I think it would indicate also the depths of divine feelings. It speaks about the soles of their feet. The whole thing was met in power but feelingly. It must have been a tremendous moment for God when the Lord went through what the Jordan speaks of, and it must be a tremendous thing for God to see the saints going over the Jordan, do you think?

DJH Yes I am thankful for that, the reference to the soles of the feet. As I said, it is not exactly here the suffering side, but nevertheless it was the feeling side.

WL Would it involve what was referred to earlier, the Lord tasting death?

DJH I think it would. It is very wide, is it not? I think, as going through these meetings, we are made to realise the tremendous scope involved in this.

WMcK I was going to say that the priestly thought is reflected in the saints at Colosse, "holy and faithful brethren in Christ", Col 1: 2. Then, with regard to what was being spoken of earlier, the Spirit is implied although only mentioned once. Where it says, "quicken ... with him" and then, "raised with him" would be the stones out of the bed of the Jordan and nothing needs to be added for, "ye are complete in him".

DJH Yes, that is good, "buried with him in baptism, in which ye have been also raised with him through faith of the working of God who raised him from the dead". It is put that way because while we are still here we are not actually raised, are we? We shall be raised, and again this comes into Romans 8, "shall quicken your mortal bodies" (v 11), but at the moment it is "through faith of the working of God who raised him from the dead". It occurs to me that that might relate to Paul's prayer at the end of Ephesians 1 where he speaks in such a tremendous way of

the power in which Christ was raised from the dead. It almost seems as though he uses all the words he can in the vocabulary, “what the surpassing greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of the might of his strength, in which he wrought in the Christ”, v 19-20. But it is that power which is “towards us who believe”. That would be something of this, “through faith of the working of God who raised him from among the dead”, and we have to know that as a present thing. Paul's prayer is that we might know it at the present time.

NJH If we have faith for it, the Spirit immediately comes in and attaches itself to it. It is, “ye have been also raised with him through faith of the working of God who raised him from among the dead”.

DJH Yes, we prove it at the present time by the Spirit. In Romans, where we get the quickening of our mortal bodies, it will be these actual bodies, will it not? But now by faith we prove the power. There is a hymn that speaks about that,

E'en now we taste the love,
And know the mighty power,
By which we'll rise to realms above
When waiting time is o'er. (Hymn 225)

It is what we prove at the present time, but it is the same power that will actually raise our mortal bodies.

NJH So quickening is a conscious matter. It is not exactly by faith, as I understand it, it is a conscious matter, the actions of the Spirit.

DJH Yes, it is the actions of the Spirit, and does it not relate largely to our affections?

JCG Do you think that these exercises lead to rest and complacency? It speaks about “seek the things which are above, where the Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God”. Is the idea for all of us to come into an area of peace and restfulness? Is that important to let us enjoy the presence of Christ by the Spirit?

DJH I think it is, and we think of what John said, “and we have contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father”, John 1: 14. I think we need to be just restful and contemplate sometimes. There is so much, but it is noticeable there, “have your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth”. It is not 'not on the things of the world' because that is gone, that

is left behind when we are over the Jordan, but in Colossians we are raised with Him, while we are not yet seated in heaven. We are on the earth, and I think it can be something we need to take to heart; our mind is not to be on things on the earth. There is so much that relates to the earth which you might say in a sense could be spoken of as legitimate, what is material, not exactly part of the world's system of things, but what is of the earth. That can hold us, can it not?

RT So the people went over to stay, did they not? It was not a weekend visit but it becomes a base of operations. The word of the Christ then can dwell in us richly if we are drawing from the base.

DJH Yes, that is very good. I think we need to be reminded of that from time to time. We have spoken about the Lord's supper and what we move over into in spirit in a very real way together, but in a sense then we do not just come back, do we? We have been speaking of what is cumulative. Fresh experiences each Lord's day should strengthen us in view of going forward, should they not?

RT When the priests came out of the sanctuary they were freighted with the graces of what was inside, were they not?

DJH Yes, indeed.

JM Where you have read, the section goes on to say, "and your life is hid with the Christ in God"; so while we are on the earth in the flesh and blood condition, that is not where we live. Our life is hid. It is not on public display yet but it is hid there "with the Christ in God". A wonderful thing that!

DJH It is wonderful. I would like to understand it and know it more by experience. I trust all this is helping us and might help our dear brethren who may be struggling, and perhaps some may have got through the struggle as a result of what we had earlier. Some have been saying that they have enjoyed the readings so I trust there is fruit from them in that, but as you get through, then this is what you get through into, and you get the clearance of these things which would otherwise detain.

JSp These words define the borders of the land. It is distinctive, is it not? God would let us know what belongs to the land and what belongs to the earth and keep things in their proper place.

DJH That is right, yes. We are still here, and we have to be practical,

and so that is why I read later in the epistle. There is much that is practical in the next two paragraphs as to putting to death your members, and so on, but we have a basis for that because we have already put off that man, but we are to, "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth" (v 5), so that it says, "In which ye also once walked when ye lived in these things. But now ..." (v 7), so that we are living in a different order of things altogether, are we not? Then we are to put on the features which are seen so blessedly in Christ Himself, "And to all these add love, which is the bond of perfectness", v14. And then I just thought of these two verses. As I said earlier, how simple Christianity is! "And everything, whatever ye may do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him." Now, if I have some project in my mind, can I relate it to the testimony of our Lord? Can I relate it to the name of the Lord Jesus? And if I am successful in it, can I thank God the Father for it? It solves everything, does it not?

JAB Would this show us that the reality of spiritual experience that you are talking about in this reading is no less real than the reality of moral exercise that we have been occupied with in previous readings? We need to consider them in the sequence in which we have done, but what we are speaking about now as to where our lives are hid should be as real to us as these other things. Is that right?

DJH Yes that is right. This is reality, is it not? These exercises that we have been speaking about earlier are so necessary, and they are all leading up to this. We have spoken earlier about objectives, but they are all leading up to this so that we might know even now what it is to be living in relation to another sphere of things altogether. We do have to touch what is down here because we are still in these conditions, but nevertheless our life is not here. As we have said, our "life is hid with the Christ in God". It is not a matter of what condition we are in but, "If therefore ye have been raised with the Christ" - well, that is the truth anyway, but have we realised it? - "seek the things which are above ... have your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth; for ye have died and your life is hid with the Christ in God". That is a statement of fact, but the thing is to realise it by the Spirit.

JAG It is almost related to what is called, "the kingdom of the Son of his love". That would be extensive. If you live there and Christ is dominant, "giving thanks to the Father, ... who has delivered us from the authority of darkness", which I suppose would involve the Jordan, "and

translated us”, which is a tremendous change, “into the kingdom of the Son of his love ... who is image of the invisible God”, Col 1: 12-15.

DJH It is tremendous! What a presentation of this glorious Person in that chapter!

JAG As our brother says, it is a tremendous place to live in.

DJH Yes.

RWF We have something to sing about, do we not? That was so after the passage through the Red Sea, the song of the redeemed, and then, “Rise up, well! sing unto it”, Num 21: 17. Now we have, “singing with grace in your hearts to God”. Is that the inward result coming into expression? We should not be shy of that, should we?

DJH I think that is right. I was speaking to one or two after that previous reading. I think the way that last hymn was sung was terrific, was it not? We have had some good singing here, but that hymn, I really felt brethren were putting everything into it,

Man of sorrows!” what a name ...

Hallelujah! what a Saviour! (Hymn 426)

You feel that the brethren's feelings were in that.

WL “Do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus” would be very embracive. At home we came across a reference of Mr Stoney's to doing all things in the name of the Lord Jesus that would even involve what kind of tie you wore (vol 2 p191).

DJH Well, quite soberly, as you know it has been said that we should not sit in the meeting like we sit in a railway train (JT vol 43 p513), and that we should be governed in the way we sit and what we wear when we come into the assembly.

DBR Give us a touch on Ephesians.

DJH In Ephesians I was impressed that this verse that we started with, verse 11, might really takes us back to the passover and would relate to how the first thing they ate when they were over the Jordan was the passover, “Wherefore remember”, and he goes on to speak of the blood. I know the blood here is more than simply deliverance from judgement in Egypt. It goes further than that, but I did just wonder, and I would be glad if you would give your own impression. In one sense we are told to forget the things that are behind (Phil 3: 13), that is these

things are not to detain us. We are to press on and these things are not to detain us but, on the other hand, "Wherefore remember". When you get over you remember the passover, you remember the very basis, the very root of where you started, but that does not hinder you from going on to being "built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit".

DBR I become more and more thankful and more and more appreciative of the grace of God. I was reading some older ministry, and in a book of Mr Alfred Gardiner's, Mr Ephgrave pointed out that the literal meaning of Ephesus is 'full purpose'. That links with the crossing over Jordan. It is the gateway into the full purpose of God, do you think?

DJH Yes, indeed. You must start there, and when you get there you remember, 'Well, this is where it all started', and it brings you back to the death of Christ and what it was in that respect. But it goes on, and there is the matter of reconciliation that we have not touched on, but it all comes in here and we were speaking earlier about the way we view one another as in Christ Jesus. You see, this is how we can do it, because all that difference, all the enmity, the fact that you are a Scotsman and I am an Englishman, all that kind of thing, it is all gone, and it is gone at such cost, "that he ... might reconcile both in one body to God by the cross, having by it slain the enmity; and, coming, he has preached the glad tidings of peace" and so on This is the gospel of the glory, is it not?

Grangemouth 16th August 2008

Key to initials

GA Brown, Edinburgh; JABrown, Grangemouth;
RW Flowerdew, Sunbury; JAGardiner, Aberdeen;
RGardiner, Kirkcaldy; JD Gray, Edinburgh; JCGray, Grangemouth;
NJ Henry, Glasgow; DJ Hutson, London, JB Ikin, Manchester;
W Lamont, Cumnock; AG Mair, Cullen; T Mair, Cullen;
PMartin, Colchester; GC McKay, Glasgow;
W McKillop, Ormond Beach; J Mitchell, Chester;
PJ Mutton, Walton-on-the-Naze; RD Plant, Birmingham;
DB Robertson, Cumnock; J Spinks, Grangemouth;
J Strachan, Dundee; R Taylor, Kirkcaldy; JR Walkinshaw, Maidstone;
J Webster, Fraserburgh; MJ Welch, Newport; RF White, Londonderry;
EF Woodford, Dorking

CHRIST'S PERSON, HIS WORK, AND HIS GLORY

Jim T Brown (Grangemouth)

Philippians 2: 5-11

Revelation 19: 5

Revelation 22: 1-3

I desire, beloved friends, to speak about Jesus. I could speak of no greater; I could speak of no other. God Himself has chosen the theme of the glad tidings, and the subject is Jesus. The glad tidings are proclaimed in order that we may come to an appreciation of Jesus, if we have not already done so, and if we have, that we may come to a greater appreciation of who He is and of all that He has done, of all He has accomplished for us and for God. We sang of Him:

Christ's Person, His work, and His glory (hymn 53).

I think these verses we have read in Philippians chapter 2 give some impression of His Person, His work and His glory. The glad tidings are wonderful. I believe Paul, when he penned these words, was thinking of his own personal experience with the Lord. He does not write the epistle to the Philippians as an apostle exactly, although he was that and had apostolic authority, but I believe he is writing as a believer in the Lord Jesus. He is writing as one who is enjoying his precious, personal link with his Saviour. Interestingly he begins, "Paul and Timotheus, bondmen of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and ministers; grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ", chap 1: 1, 2. I believe these features in verse 2 relate to the fulness of God's glad tidings: "grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ".

The grace of God is made known through the glad tidings. When Christ came in, it was grace upon grace: "for of his fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace", John 1: 16. We are told in the beginning of John's gospel that "the law was given by Moses: grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ", John 1: 17. When Christ came in, He gave character to the present dispensation, which is one of grace, one of love, one of mercy.

So here Paul is writing as one who is in the enjoyment of his Christian blessings. He is writing as a Christian. He says in chapter 1: "For for me to live is Christ", v 21. I believe that that is normal Christianity. It may not always be the experience of Christians; but I

believe that that is normal Christianity: “For for me to live is Christ“. I believe that Christ had such a place in Paul's affections and such a place in Paul's life, that what shone out in that apostle, that wonderful servant, was Christ.

Here where we read in chapter 2, a delightful section of scripture, presenting in its fulness the truth of the glad tidings, he says, “For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, subsisting in the form of God” - that is His Person, the greatness of His Person. That One who came here as a babe in Bethlehem's manger was, in His Person, God. He never ceased to be God. That boy of twelve who was found in the temple amongst the doctors of the law, “hearing them and asking them questions” (Luke 2: 46) in His Person was God; that One who went down to Nazareth and was in subjection to His parents, in His Person was God. Does that not cause your heart to wonder and adore, that that One in His Person was God? I believe that in the greatness and glory of His Person He is an object of worship for our hearts. That One who went to the mount of transfiguration in His Person was God. That One who went to the cross of Calvary and there hung and suffered and died and shed His precious blood, in His Person was God. He suffered as a man; He was here as a bondman; He took a bondman's form. That thought has laid hold of me today that He was a bondman. He took a bondman's form. There was absolute devotedness in His life to the will of His God and Father. Everything that He did, everything that He said, every step that He took, was in perfect obedience to the will of His God and Father and in perfect communion with His God and Father; so great, so glorious was the perfect pathway of Jesus.

You think of Jesus day by day fulfilling the will of His God and Father, coming into contact with men, men in their need, and in the grace of His humanity, the grace of His dependent humanity, meeting the needs of everyone with whom He came into contact. How wonderful! You think of the way in Luke's gospel He went through, village after village, city after city, meeting the needs of mankind. That is why He came, beloved friend. He came to meet *your* need. He came to meet *my* need. If you need a Saviour, Jesus is presented in the glad tidings as a Saviour for you, a Saviour for me - I trust everyone of us can sing these words,

Christ is the Saviour of sinners,
Christ is the Saviour for me;

Long I was chained in sin's darkness,
Now by His grace I am free. (hymn 122).

Can we all sing these words and mean them? That may be more of a test because that involves our appreciation of the work of that blessed and glorious One.

Well, He went on to the mount of transfiguration and there the Father's voice was heard, "*This* is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight; hear him", Matt 17: 5. I trust in the glad tidings today we may hear Jesus, we may hear words that attract our souls and attract our hearts more to that blessed and glorious One.

"Who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God;" - why? Because He was God - "but emptied himself, taking a bondman's form". He committed Himself without reserve to the fulfilment of the will of His God and Father. That involved His going right on to the cross of Calvary. His perfect life was great; His perfect life is a matter for admiration for every one of us but the perfection of His pathway could do nothing to secure our blessing. His perfect life could do nothing to secure our salvation. It required the cross, the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. He went right on to the cross. On the way He went into Gethsemane. That was a time when His holy soul recoiled from the immensity of the work that lay before Him. He said, "My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; but not as *I* will, but as *thou* wilt", Matt 26: 39. Glorious perfection, glorious subjection to the will of His God and Father! Does that not attract your heart to Jesus, the fact that One so great, so glorious, was prepared to go that way on your account and on mine? He was taken by the hands of them who hated Him and hated Him "without a cause", Ps 69: 4. We have said it so often before in the preaching but the glorious perfection of Jesus drew out the imperfection in the lives of men. The love of Jesus drew out the hatred there was in men and He bore it; He bore our sins in His body on the tree. I trust, dear friend, you can say 'Jesus bore *my* sins'. I thank God I can say He took away *my* sins. Mr. Cutting could say in his poem,

My sins are all gone in the depths of the sea.
They were carried down there by the Man on the tree.

Can you say that? I trust that before this meeting finishes, you will be able to say that Jesus has borne *my* sins in His body on the tree. He suffered so ignominiously there at the hands of men. But not only did

He suffer at the hands of men, He suffered at the hands of a holy God. Isaiah says, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin", chap 53: 10. The soul of Jesus was made "an offering for sin". Think of that; and on that account He was forsaken by His God. The hymn-writer says -

Did Thy God e'en then forsake Thee,
Hide His face from Thy deep need!' (Hymn 302)

Think of that cry of agony from His soul: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?", Matt 27: 46! "My God", He cried, and there was no answer. Why was there no answer? Because at that very moment, Jesus, the perfect, holy, sinless One was made sin. The One who was the perfect offering had been made the sin-offering. He suffered the forsaking of His God on your account and on mine. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see a seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the fruit of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied", Is 53: 10, 11. Is there something in your life which can satisfy the heart of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ? He has gone by way of death in order that this may be so. May you put your trust and faith today in the completed work of the Saviour and be able to say that Christ bore *my* sins in His body on the tree!

Then it says, "subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied himself, taking a bondman's form, taking his place in the likeness of men; and having been found in figure as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross". Jesus went that way of His own volition. He came here and He came to die. He went that way of His own volition. The Lord Jesus Himself says in John's gospel, 'No one takes my life from me'. Wicked men had to do with the sufferings of Jesus, and His crucifixion, but he laid down His life Himself. "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it again. I have received this commandment of my Father", John 10: 18. Jesus went into death in obedience to the will of His God and Father, but He went that way of His own volition in order that God may have a righteous basis whereby He could come out in blessing to the whole of mankind. You can rejoice in that, that blessing is available, the forgiveness of sins, salvation is available to all men! The work of the Redeemer has been completed; His blood has been shed. Thanks be to God for the

blood of Jesus! It involved an active hatred on the part of man. As the soldier took his spear and pierced His side, it says, “and immediately there came out blood and water”, John 19: 34. The blood and the water flowed from the side of a dead Christ. The blood was necessary in order that men might be cleared judicially and the water flowed from the riven side of Christ in order that men might be purified morally.

So He became “obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross”. Not only did He hang there on the cross of Calvary, but, having died, His blood was shed; and He went into the grave in order that the man of sin and shame might go out of sight for ever from the presence of a holy God. The burial of Christ is an essential part of the glad tidings, an essential part of the work of Christ, but then it says, “Wherefore also God highly exalted him”. The One that we proclaim as a Saviour today is a living and glorious Saviour. We do not only preach a crucified Saviour, although the crucifixion was necessary in view of moral cleansing. The blood of Christ was necessary in view of the work of redemption being completed. But we present a living and glorious Saviour, One who has been “raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father”, Rom 6: 4, and now is seated and crowned at the Father's right hand in glory. What a place He fills! “Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and granted him a name, that which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow”. I trust everyone in this room today will bow to the name of Jesus. What a name it is! Think of the renown of that name, the renown there is in Christ! How great, how glorious He is! Well, that is the One who came here as a bondman, that One who took a bondman's form.

Then the apostle says, “For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”. If we have a demonstration in the glad tidings of the going down mind of Christ, it is that *every one* of us should go down. For us that involves repentance: “repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ”, Acts 20: 21. Where we have read from verse 6 on relates to what Christ has done, but there is a responsibility upon you and me to repent of our sins, have to do with God in relation to our sins, and to be maintained in the spirit of repentance. I wonder if every one of us has repented. Dear friend you need to have to do with God in relation to your sins. The sinner who refuses Christ, the sinner who refuses the Saviour will one day meet that same One as a judge before the great white throne (Rev 20: 11) and the result of that is too horrendous to speak of, even to contemplate. Just think of sitting in gospel preaching after gospel preaching, hearing the appeal of divine

love and the appeal of divine grace, and finding yourself in a Christless eternity. As another has said, there is no blood on the great white throne; no blood, nothing to which God can look in order to effect cleansing, in order to offer forgiveness and salvation. Persons who appear before the great white throne will be condemned, condemned to a Christless eternity. That is too awful to contemplate! Let us be sure today, *today*, let us be assured right now, just where you are, that you have a personal, living, vital link with the blessed Saviour whom God has provided. "For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus". Let the going down mind that marked Jesus be found in you, dear young friend! And if we are left here for a short time yet, I believe the divine intention is that we should be marked by the spirit of the bondman. The bondman is answerable to his master. The bondman does the things which he hears from his master. The bondman does the things he sees his master doing. The Master is Jesus and I believe the divine intention is that day by day we should be in personal contact with the Lord Jesus, get His message for the day, get His orders, you may say, for the day. He is the One who would regulate our lives. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord", (Rom 10: 9): the confession of Jesus as Lord involves submission to the authority that there is invested in that blessed and glorious One. Peter says in his preaching at the beginning of the Acts, "God has made him, this Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ", Acts 2: 36, and I believe that, if God has made Him Lord, it is in order that we might submit to the claims of His Lordship, to the claims of His throne. If He has made Him Christ, He has a wonderful vessel in the assembly which can answer to every desire and longing of His heart. Christ wants you for His assembly.

So where we read in Revelation 19 it says, "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his bondmen". If we accept Christ, and as we begin to take on some of the features that were portrayed so perfectly in Christ, we recognise the need to submit ourselves to the claims of His throne, it says, "Praise our God, all ye his bondmen". As we become bondmen of Christ, as we become bondmen of God, I believe that the answer is praise, praise to the heart of Christ, praise to the heart of God. "For Christ indeed has once suffered for sins the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God", 1 Pet 3: 18. That is God's great objective in the glad tidings, not only that we should be forgiven our sins, great and glorious as that is, but that we should be found here as worshippers of God. So it says, "And a voice

came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his bondmen, and ye that fear him, small and great!" The Lord is looking for an answer from your heart. If you put your trust and faith in His finished work, He will have it eternally and God will have an answer from your heart eternally, but the divine desire is that you should answer to His heart of love now.

And then in chapter 22 it speaks of the day to come: "And he shewed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, going out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of its street, and of the river, on this side and on that side, the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, in each month yielding its fruit". Just think of the possibility of feeding upon Christ! The Lord's word to the overcomer in Ephesus was, "To him that overcomes, I will give to him to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God", Rev 2: 7. The paradise of man has been closed up and been closed up for ever. Man will never again enter into the paradise of man. The way to the tree of life in the garden of Eden was guarded by "the Cherubim, and the flame of the flashing sword", Gen 3: 24, but the tree of life now is in the paradise of God and it is available to persons such as you and me. "I will give to him to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God". So here we have the tree of life "in the midst of its street, and of the river, on this side and on that side, the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, in each month yielding its fruit; and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations". We can feed upon Christ during the short time which is left to us.. It says, "and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him". That word servant is the same as bondman and "his servants shall serve him" conveys the idea of worship. That is God's great objective, that we, sinners, as away from God, should be brought into the wonderful nearness of relationship with Himself. As I have said, Christ has gone that way in order that God's heart may be satisfied with the praises flowing out from the hearts of men. May you be amongst them! The day of eternity will be filled out with persons who are just like Christ, who have the stamp of Christ upon them, persons who are just like Him. There was a reference made this afternoon in the reading to Luke 15 where in relation to the younger son the Father there says, "Bring out the best robe and clothe him in it, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet". It was a time of rejoicing, because what the Father saw in that repenting sinner typically was Christ. When God looks upon the believer, what He sees is Christ.

Well, may we just come into the glorious blessedness of these precious things by way of repentance, know the blessedness of our sins forgiven, and have a present and eternal relationship with that blessed One where He is in glory! May it be so, for His name's sake!

Edinburgh

20th July 2008

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE PRESENT TIME

Andrew Martin

Romans 8: 18

I do not think Paul would belittle the sufferings of the present time at all in what he says here. This is set in the context that we suffer with Christ. It just struck me as I was thinking of this verse that there are two things, “this present time”, and what is coming. The present time is characterised by suffering, and what is coming is characterised by glory. I feel unqualified to speak of suffering. Paul was one who knew what suffering was in his life, in his journeys, in his activities in the work of the Lord. It all involved suffering. If we read the Acts of the Apostles we can read of some of the sufferings that it entailed. If you sit down with an atlas and read the Acts, and just think of the conditions of the day, you realise just how much the apostle must have borne as he journeyed to promote the testimony of our Lord. And we can turn to Scriptures such as in Corinthians and see what was involved for him, “the sufferings”, he says, “of this present time”. It involved, “in journeyings often, ... in perils of robbers, in perils from my own race, ... in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness” and so on; he lists a great catalogue, and then he says, “Besides those things that are without, the crowd of cares pressing on me daily, the burden of all the assemblies”, 2 Cor 11: 26-28. You might say, 'How much could one man bear?' but the apostle was motivated by pure love for the Lord and a desire to serve Him, and would endure anything in his body. “The sufferings of this present time” are what the saints endure in their bodies, and in their souls and in their spirits. For him it involved persecution. He felt the persecution of the Jews, and I suppose towards the end of his life persecution from the authorities. That was for Paul part of “the sufferings of this present time”. We do not have persecution in this country from the authorities or from others. Young people, when they seek to be faithful to the Lord Jesus, may have to experience mockery. That is something which is very real. That enters into “the sufferings of this present time”. There are those who have experienced much in the way of sorrow on account of the testimony. There are those who have families that do not have anything to do with them. That is part of “the sufferings of this present time”, this present time, the day in which we are. It may be a different character of suffering, and of course there are the sufferings in the bodies of the saints and they affect us all. They affect every one of us. The

affections of the saints are moved. We have our part in creation, that is to say in experiencing the things that afflict men and women and children. We have our part in that. We are not immune from that, but such sufferings are felt, felt by those who have their part in the body of Christ and that gives them a peculiar character, part of “the sufferings of this present time”, feeling with one another. “And if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it” (1 Cor 12: 26), and we feel for one another in the sufferings that there are in the bodies of the saints. 'Frailty and weakness', you say, 'well, that is just part of humanity'. Yes, but there are feelings. There are feelings among the saints as entering into all these things, “the sufferings of this present time”. As the saints enter into them in a feeling way it increases the affections that there are among the saints. What a blessed thing it is to have part in such a circle where affections for one another are enhanced by the experiences that one and another are going through, “the sufferings of this present time”.

Ananias was told that the Lord would show Paul how much he must suffer (Acts 9: 16), and the sufferings that he endured in his experience were probably extreme compared with most of us, but then he was shown something else, was he not? He says, “I know a man in Christ”. He was caught up, he was shown the glory. He says he heard things and he says that there are some things that these bodies cannot contain. There are some things they are not suited for. He says “he ... heard unspeakable things said which it is not possible for man to utter”, 2 Cor 12: 2-4. These conditions in which suffering takes place are not sufficient for the glory. He suggests there is something which is so great that flesh and blood conditions cannot contain it, are not even suited to give expression to it, “the coming glory to be revealed to us”. I think that is greater than the Lord's millennial glory which will shine out upon the universe. That will be magnificent. The whole earth will see it, the whole earth will be filled with His glory. What a wonderful day that will be when everyone will know Him and none shall say, “Know Jehovah”, Jer 31: 34. All shall know Him in themselves and He will be known from the river to the ends of the earth. What a blessed day is coming on the earth. But this is not just “the coming glory”, but it is “the coming glory to be revealed to us”. You think of what the assembly will enter into. The apostle in this epistle does not develop the thought of the assembly, but “to be revealed to us”. Think of the assembly as entering into that, the glory of divine purpose all being secured and all things being headed up in one blessed Man. Surely these conditions are not suited for it. This was shown to Paul. This was something that he had in his soul.

Well, beloved, that really is what has been impressing me. There is that which is going on today which is contained in the bodies of the saints and in the feelings of the saints, but there is that also which cannot be contained, and will never be contained, in flesh and blood conditions because it is entirely spiritual. It belongs to another world, the world where Christ is the Centre, where everything is headed up in Him and everything is glorious. Well, beloved, may we just be encouraged with these thoughts.

For His Name's sake.

Kirkcaldy

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