

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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“THAT WORLD, AND THE RESURRECTION”

Luke 20: 27-40

Ephesians 4: 8-10

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AM It is not in mind to go into the detail of these verses in Luke 20, although we must be free as we are led in this occasion, but what is in mind is verse 35, and particularly the words, “that world, and the resurrection”. Scripture refers to three worlds in relation to the earth. Peter tells us of the old world (2 Pet 3: 6), which was destroyed by flood, and the writer of the Hebrews refers to the world “to come, of which we speak”, Heb 2: 5. Between those two worlds we have what Paul describes in Galatians as “the present evil world”, (Gal 1: 4); the Lord Jesus “gave himself for our sins, so that he might deliver us out of the present evil world”. But there is another world and that is my message for this weekend. There is another world and there is a blessed Man who is the centre of it and who fills it with Himself.

In the passage in Ephesians, the Lord Jesus came into this world, and He suffered and died. He went to the lowest parts of the earth, He went where no mere man could ever go, but He is now “ascended up above all heavens, that he might fill all things”. There is a world, a universe that He fills, and He fills it with Himself.

In Revelation 21, we see the eternal scene, everything secured for God. “The holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”; and then a loud voice out of the heavens saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall tabernacle with them” - that is the other world in finality. That world exists and we can touch it, and I hope that in this weekend we will have the experience of touching that world in our spirits. I wondered if in this reading we could concentrate on how there is a world that is filled with our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us concentrate our minds on Him. That might lead us to consider how it can be that there are those who are accounted worthy, and those who have part in that world and also how we are preserved now in relation to that world; but for this reading let us just concentrate on the Lord.

KDD That is a good exercise because everything around us is occupied with another man, but the world that we are concerned about - the world that we are looking forward to - is filled with the Lord Jesus Himself. There is no other object for the believer.

AM And the Lord Himself is maintaining everything; He upholds “all things by the word of his power”, and is now exalted in another scene and it is a scene in which we are to find our part. We will eternally, but we are to find our interests there.

KDD The world that people are generally occupied with is coming to an end but the world that you are speaking about grows brighter and brighter as the day draws nigh.

AM Yes, it does. It grows brighter in the hearts of the saints. We can see that; we speak to the brethren, we have occasions such as this, and our local meetings, and so on, and we see that something of that world that is set before us is meaning more to us than it did a little while ago. It should do, and may that be increased until the Lord comes!

DMW Why do persons deny the resurrection as we have here?

AM People cannot accept the thought with the natural mind of what is not bounded by death. The natural mind cannot go beyond death. They also cannot accept the fact that there is One who is there that they are going to have to meet! That was not perhaps what you had in mind but help us.

DMW What you are saying is most helpful. This world will not have another Man.

AM No, and the world will not have anything of God. It says as to the Holy Spirit, “whom the world cannot receive”, John 14: 17. It “cannot” receive it. The Lord Jesus is a Man of another order; and it is not just that He did not fit in, but it was not possible for Him to fit in.

PWH Is it in your mind then that occupation with that world helps us to take on the characteristics of Christ?

AM Yes, He fills that world. As we are occupied with Him as He is, we will come out like Him as He was. It is no good trying to imitate the Lord in His life down here because that would be mere human effort; it would be making something of me if I could imitate Him! But we are to be formed after Him, and that is brought about by occupation with Him as the centre of another world outside of this scene altogether.

TRC Has it not been said that in God's ways He first created a world and put man in it; but in His purpose, He has a Man and that Man is to fill another world that you are drawing attention to?

AM Yes, the contrast is very clear. There was a world in the beginning of Genesis; first light came into it, and then there were waters

gathered together in one place, and then vegetation appeared. Well that is good, but what kind of a world is that? And then later there were the birds, the fishes, the animals, and that was fine, but that is not intelligent creation. Then there was man, the great thought that God had in mind; all His thoughts centred in man, and He created a sphere in which man could live and prove His goodness. But when you come to a spiritual realm what would there be without Christ? There would be nothing. He makes the world by His being there!

JD Paul laboured at Corinth to emphasise the truth of resurrection; the best the Greek philosophers could offer was to deny resurrection. But in Matthew the Lord says they greatly erred “not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God”, chap 22: 29. Say some more on the knowledge of the Scriptures and the power of God to apprehend what is in the realm of resurrection.

AM If there is to be progress with us from the moment of our conversion, it is essential that we take in the Scriptures; we are to read them. The Scriptures are the word of God. You may say we are pushed for time, and we know that. Some of us used to go to work and the mornings were a rush. You might have only a few minutes in the morning to drink a cup of coffee and leave for work. Well how long did it take you to drink a cup of coffee? You can read while you are doing it. Read something, something from the Scriptures! And before you do so, turn to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to speak to you while you are reading, and you will get something. I find that is a help, whether you have time on your hands or not. Ask the Lord and the Holy Spirit to speak to you while you are reading, and you will get to know the Scriptures in a different light. The Old Testament is not just a history book. The Scriptures are full of life. But then the power of God is available and that power works in us, “the surpassing greatness of his power towards us ...in which he wrought in the Christ in raising him from among the dead”, Eph 1: 19-20. You see the power of God in its extremity at that point, but that same power is available to us in the gift of the Holy Spirit. Is that not wonderful!

TRV So Peter could say, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast words of life eternal”, John 6: 68.

AM Yes, that is after general departure. It does not say where those going away went. What was their objective? Was it this world or that world? Peter had special light from God, and he says there is One who is the Man of God's choice, the anointed of God; then He is the Man for

me!

KNP Are those that are counted worthy those that have received Him, and have a right to be children of God, John 1: 12?

AM Yes that is right. It seems unusual that the saints are referred to as counted worthy. If you search the Scriptures for the word 'worthy' you will find that the majority of instances of the word refer to being worthy of death, and that is what we are! By nature, that is what we are. What wonderful grace that God could take account of believers, as those who are worthy of something else, something outside this scene of death.

DMW Therefore is resurrection not only the power of God but also the pleasure of God?

AM Yes indeed. The glory of the Father was involved in that and that involves His love and all His attributes, but think of the pleasure of God in raising Christ. It will be the pleasure of God that we are raised! How can it be for the pleasure of God that we should be raised? It is because the believer has a work in his soul that is entirely in keeping with Christ and is for the pleasure of God, and God will claim it for Himself.

DJK I wondered if the incoming of the Lord Jesus in Luke would link on with your thought of the approval of the One who has another world for God? When the heavenly hosts were stirred, it says, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men", chap 2: 14. Previous to that it says, "for to-day a Saviour has been born", v 11. Would that link on, the heavenly hosts seeing a Man that was going to come in in another world for God? How would that link on with our approval?

AM Do you think that the angelic hosts were communicating to us what was occupying heaven at that time? That was a most extraordinary event, a most stupendous matter, that a divine Person should actually come into manhood. No wonder heaven was rejoicing that God was acting in such a way! And as believers here desiring to please the Lord and follow Christ, we should see that our thoughts should be in keeping with divine thoughts, with the Father's thoughts.

DJK I was thinking about this when you spoke about a world filled with the Lord Jesus Christ and the effect of that upon us. The heavenly host had observed the created world already, but you wonder if they thought of something greater that was to come, and when the Lord

Jesus came in, they saw that.

AM Mr Darby wrote about the praises of the heavenly host,
More just, those acclamations,
Than when the heavenly band
Chanted earth's deep foundations,
Just laid by God's right hand.

(Spiritual Songs - The Man of Sorrows)

It says, "the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38: 7), when the earth was founded. Mr Darby says that the incoming of Jesus gave rise to 'more just' acclamations.

OWK Would you say more about the foundational side of this? Paul brings it out in Corinth, along the lines our brother mentioned in regard to believing in the resurrection and those who would deny it. Would you say something as to the foundation of what this would be for us?

AM Resurrection itself is a foundation. It is new ground on which God works. The Lord had His disciples - the apostles particularly, but there were other disciples who were with Him - and He had joy with them, but they were in flesh and blood conditions. All that they were was subject to failure, to breakdown. Eventually they would all die, but in resurrection God has established a new order of things altogether, established in Christ. It is the same Jesus that they knew, and He went to great lengths to demonstrate that at the end of Luke. He was the same blessed One, but His was another order of Man and He was in another condition altogether. He was in what we might call a spiritual condition. In resurrection, God has established an order of manhood in which we can have part. We could never be united to Christ in flesh and blood conditions, but in resurrection there is another order, another condition in which we can have part. Does that help?

OWK It is really interesting to see how the foundation of the believer in Christ depends upon Him rising from the dead. He is associated with that world and no longer in flesh and blood. So many of the disciples would have seen Him having risen. They had watched Him die and they were afraid, but then once they had seen Him risen, they were in complete confidence; they had complete faith. They were able to follow Him while left in this scene regardless of all that was to happen to their bodies; their complete devotion was seen after that.

AM Everything was settled for them after that. We read of Peter

and his adjustment and so on, but everything was settled in Christ risen. Now in Christ ascended everything has not only been settled but there is power for testimony to go out. Testimony goes out about an exalted and glorified Christ; that is what the testimony is. Resurrection is the basis for all that.

RBC Paul could say that if Christ is not raised then vain is the preaching, 1 Cor 15: 17. The basis of it all is the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

AM Yes. In resurrection we see the Lord Jesus as the object of the Father's pleasure having accomplished the whole work. The whole moral question has been settled and we have our confidence in that blessed One risen, and as ascended He is at God's right hand for God's eternal pleasure.

PBK So is it right to say that He had to come into this world in order to deliver us out of this world? So we are no longer citizens, but we are foreigners and sojourners; we are citizens of another world.

AM He had to come in. He took up everything that lay upon man in this world - the whole question of sin and all the weaknesses and everything that attaches to man in the flesh: He bore it all! Think of that, one blessed Man, who in the greatness of who He is was able in perfect manhood to take on every burden and condition that lay upon man. He could take it all on Himself and thus the whole matter could be dealt with. It would not have been morally possible for God to have acted from heaven to absolve man of his responsibilities or of his condition in any other way; He had to come into manhood's condition to take it all on. And as such He is there as the One who sympathises with us. He knows our weaknesses. What a blessed thing that is to know that there is One who understands us better than even the closest links of nature.

SWD He says in Revelation, "Behold, I make all things new". The scripture speaks of how this body of mortality must put on a body of immortality (1 Cor 15: 53), that which is suitable for another world.

AM These are essential matters, are they not? It "must needs ... put on immortality", the apostle says. Just as Jesus must come into manhood, so He must die, and so He must be raised and glorified! The final condition of change for us is an essential matter, and it renders us perfect, even as to our bodies for that world.

JD In Revelation, it says, "Blessed ... he who has part in the first resurrection" (chap 20: 6), and I was thinking of the current bearing of

resurrection as Paul tells us in Colossians, “If therefore ye have been raised with the Christ, seek the things which are above”, chap 3: 1. Would you enlarge on that?

AM The first resurrection is not simply the first as a matter of time; it is the character of that resurrection. So, “the first-fruits, Christ; and then those that are the Christ's at his coming” (1 Cor 15: 23): that is the first resurrection. Even after the rapture, there will be those who will be martyred on account of their testimony, and because they pass through death, the character of the first resurrection is theirs, Rev 11: 11. But then the word in Colossians, “If therefore ye have been raised with the Christ” is something that I lay hold of now in faith. Faith is an essential thing in Christianity; absolutely essential. So first of all I know my sins forgiven - that is through faith; then I become aware of my sinful state, what I am as a man, sinful flesh. And then I see that Christ has died, and I associate myself with Him there in faith, that what I am has gone in the death of Christ. But then He has been raised, and faith would lay hold of that as well; so there is another order of life, and I am to be held in relation to Him according to that.

TRC You said at the outset that you wanted us in this reading to be occupied with Christ. Help us in that. The Lord Jesus has a right to be the centre of that world, but He has a moral right to be the centre of that world too.

AM Well, that was what is in mind in Ephesians, “He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens”. We are speaking about the Lord Jesus, a divine Person, so we must be careful, language is limited, but He has demonstrated His moral worth, His moral qualification to be the centre of God's world because He has taken up everything for God in perfect submission to the will of His God and Father. He has demonstrated everything that God ever looked for and He has proved His moral worth in doing that in a way that honours God. It might be too common to say (J B Stoney vol 2 p302) that God was obliged on that account if for no other reason, to establish Him as a centre of another world.

TRC I think that is fine. The Lord has a right in that sense, He that has ascended, He did it Himself, but then the other side is that He was raised by the glory of the Father (Rom 6: 4), so that the Father's delight is in that One. I was thinking of the glory of the Father entering into the resurrection of Christ; it was in view to place Him in the centre of this world that you are speaking of.

AM Yes, it was. You can hardly speak of that world without the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

MTH You were speaking of language and is that the power of the word “wherefore” in Philippians 2, “Wherefore also God highly exalted him”, v 9. God was obliged, speaking carefully and reverently, to highly exalt Him!

AM It was for that reason. He went down, “becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross”. For that reason, God has highly exalted Him.

CJMCK Peter also speaks of the One “whom heaven indeed must receive”, Acts 3: 21. Is it also helpful to see that the place that the Lord Jesus was afforded here as rejected determines our position here, and the place that He has been given there determines our position there?

AM Do you not think that the Ethiopian eunuch found that? “He was led as a sheep to slaughter, and as a lamb is dumb in presence of him that shears him, thus he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment has been taken away, and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth”, Acts 8: 32-33. His life could not be prolonged here with sinful men; it was impossible. What a glorious thing what Peter says is, “whom heaven indeed must receive”.

AML The reference was made to “seeking the things above”: would that lead us to the gospels? I was thinking of John 21, all the things that Jesus did if they were written one by one “not even the world itself would contain the books written”, v 25. The world would be filled with all these actions and words of Jesus Himself.

AM That is an interesting reference. We may misquote that scripture and say the world could not hold the books written, but it actually says, “not even the world itself would contain”! This world will not contain the testimony of Jesus; it cannot, and it will not. But heaven “must receive” Him. Think of all those records being stored in heaven. Not one word of His fell to the ground.

DCD I was looking over John 17, and there are a few references there as to the will of the Lord; it says in verse 16, “They are not of the world, as I am not of the world”. Later on it says, “I desire that where I am they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory”, v 24. I was wondering if it would be right to say that the Lord had that other world that you are speaking of in mind there? To behold His glory is really making Him the centre.

AM And in that wonderful prayer the Lord says, “I come to thee”, v 11. Think of what that meant to the Father that there would be One who would be the centre, not just personally, but the centre of everything that was for God's pleasure. Down here the world is going on to its destruction and yet there is a world where Jesus is. In John 17 this world is against the Father, but there is One who is entirely in accord with the Father. The Father has ensured that He is the centre of another world.

LJG Hebrews 1 would link with your thought. I was thinking as to what is said there: “God having spoken in many parts and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days has spoken to us in the person of the Son, whom he has established heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (v 1, 2), and so on, and all that is filled out there. I was thinking as to the purposes of God in that way and to what we have been brought into in this time period, this dispensation of faith. It is the Son, but it is God having spoken, God Himself, the deity of Christ in that way.

AM Yes indeed, that passage is a remarkable one and there is great scope in one verse, “who being the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance”, that is what He is, “upholding all things by the word of his power”, v 3. Think of the greatness of the Creator! It goes on, “having made by himself the purification of sins”; that is what took place in this world down here, the great work that He accomplished, “set himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high”: think of where it led to. But it involves the greatness of such a One as He that it should be done.

LJG I looked earlier as to God's longings for what is brought in there, as to resurrection. I was thinking as to it being for those who die in Christ, although naturally dead, if they have fallen asleep, it is in view of being raised. Our brother mentioned the power that comes in, but also the worthiness of those that have fallen asleep being raised up. I was thinking of the fulness of the resurrection. It is all under God's control.

AM That is a beautiful touch, a very comforting touch for believers, falling asleep! It said that of Stephen, “And having said this, he fell asleep”, Acts 7: 60. It is the gentle grace of the Lord Jesus coming into a scene of weakness, and it is in view of a new power centred in another Man.

KDD As to these features of the Lord Jesus that we have been speaking about in connection with another world, do you think when He

says, "On this account the Father loves me", John 10: 17, it is because it is displayed in such an attractive way?

AM He was always conscious that He was the object of the Father's love. There was what was absolute, "thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world", John 17: 24. Before God had begun even in creation love was there. But think of the affections of the Father being drawn out in One who was prepared to lay down His life. He says in that gospel, "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", chap 10: 18. What mortal person could say that? And He immediately adds, "I have received this commandment of my Father". Subjection in manhood seen in perfection there!

JD You referred to the three worlds, the old world destroyed by the flood, the present evil world, and the world to come of which we speak. These are three things, and then in Revelation "I saw a new heaven and a new earth" wherein dwells righteousness. I think it is the word '*aeon*' that refers to the age or the character of things. Would you connect the world to come of which we speak with the millennium?

AM I think that is what it refers to, a thousand years, and being a thousand years it will come to an end, but there is another world that will not come to an end.

JD How would you explain what we have in Revelation, the new heavens and a new earth: is that an actual place? Then Peter gives its moral character, "wherein dwells righteousness", 2 Pet 3: 13.

AM I think the new heavens and new earth refer to what is eternal. We are not told everything, there is a certain mystery, but the present creation is going to make way for the earth that He had in mind and the heavens that He had in mind. Throughout Scripture we find that it is God's thought that heaven and earth should be connected. Take Hosea for example, "in that day ... I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the new wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jizreel" (chap 2: 21); heaven and earth are in connection. There should not be the dislocation that there is between heaven and earth - eternally there will not be, but at the moment that other world has been established and our hearts can be engaged with the One in whom it has been established.

VMK We have been speaking as to the new world, and I was just wondering about the character of it. We have been speaking about life

and obviously in man's world life is a completely different thing. I was just wondering if the character would be life eternal.

AM Yes, when we are together, and our hearts are set on our Lord Jesus and the sphere in which He is, we touch eternal life. That is really the experience of eternal life. Our relationships in Him are eternal; all that we have as centred in Him will go through into eternity. I think eternal life is something we can enjoy here as touching that world where He is.

VMK Yes, that helps. Quite often we speak as to eternal, "this mortal must needs put on immortality", but life eternal is something that we can enjoy now.

AM "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him may not perish, but have life eternal", John 3: 16. That is for every believer, but to enjoy eternal life in a scene where we are living, in the midst of this present evil world but apart from it, is a great blessing for the believer.

DMW So in the millennium it is not a perfect state. But the devil will be bound, and death will be dispossessed; so eternal life will be manifested in the millennium.

AM Yes exactly, that character of life. Although as you say it will not be perfect, and there will be decline, and the end of it will be very sad; but that character of life will be there, and Christ will maintain man in that character of life for one thousand years. That is a great triumph!

DMW During the period of faith which we are in, death is active, but the contrast to that is found in believers who touch eternal life in a heavenly way, and the truth of the Person whom God has made Head over all things now "to the assembly, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all", Eph 1: 22, 23. So not only do we escape judgment but we have a new existence.

AM That is one reason we should be occupied with the Lord now because it gives us the experience of what that new existence is. If I was just relieved of my sins, where would I be? I would need something else. As a sinful man I was occupied with this world and the things that are in it. If you take my sins away and my fleshly desires, what have I got? I have nothing in this world; I need to have another world.

DMW So therefore resurrection requires a new Head and new beginnings. It is not natural genealogy as the Sadducees tried to lay

out; our genealogy begins from death.

AM Yes. And Mary of Magdala got that! At the tomb of Jesus she had nothing in the world; not even an angel could affect her. A godly Jew would have been prostrated before an angel, but there was this woman in the character of a widow who had no means of support in this world at all and an angel appeared, but she turned from him. It was not the Lord!

ASP I wondered if you could help as to the thought of new creation in that world. How does that link?

AM Well, new creation is an extensive matter because in that world everything is new creation. What does new creation mean? New creation is in every believer; "So if any one be in Christ, there is a new creation", 2 Cor 5: 17. If you turn to the Lord Jesus and you have accepted Him as your Saviour and Lord, received the gift of the Holy Spirit, the fact is that God has worked in your soul. That work is what Scripture refers to as new creation, and it is a marvellous thing because it is on account of that work that when you meet another believer you immediately are drawn to them; you have a link. The whole of that world is new creation, and it is what speaks of Christ. New creation is really Christ formed in the saints.

ASP Yes, and it is really in the purpose of God from before time was. So new creation is really God's purpose.

AM Yes, it is. So in Ephesians 1 it was in God's purpose "that we should be holy and blameless before him in love" (v 4); that is in new creation. It is a blessed matter.

WKC You mentioned receiving things in faith earlier. To what degree do you think the second malefactor understood something of what we are talking about? The one that said to the Lord Jesus, "Remember me, Lord, when thou comest in thy kingdom", Luke 23: 42.

AM I do not know that he could have understood much, but one thing I can say is that he had faith in the Person! And that is the crucial thing, that we have faith in the Person of Christ. He had an understanding that the Lord Jesus would have a kingdom; there was a kingdom of which Christ was King. The sign on the cross said, "This is the King of the Jews", Luke 23: 38. I think it would have been quite clear to that malefactor that the Jews who were around the cross did not represent the kingdom of which Christ was the King. I think he must have understood that there must be some other kingdom.

WKC I was thinking how he was focussed on the Person. It is what you said at the beginning; it is a wonderful thing to have the Lord Jesus as the primary focus in our lives.

JD I was just thinking that, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men", John 1: 4. We often relate that to the gospel, the initial blessing that comes to man by faith in Christ; and then the Lord says, "I am the resurrection and the life", John 11: 25. Then there is the impartation that we have life through faith in Christ. Would you connect eternal life with what it says about Him, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men"?

AM There was what was distinct with the Lord. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men"; what was seen in the Lord Jesus here brought to light what was in man. For many it brought out what was evil. There was a certain perfection of life in the Lord Jesus that some were attracted to; some received Him. He becomes the life of those who receive Him. There is a certain distinctiveness about "in him was life". I think He becomes our life.

DMW That is a lovely contemplation, and leads us to that Person, and what was intrinsic in Him appeared in this world; he that follows Him "shall have the light of life", John 8: 12.

PWH It involves the manifestation of that life, that brought forward the light; the manifestation of His life brought forth the light because men were in utter darkness before that.

AM Yes, so He could say of Himself, "I am the light of the world; he that follows me", John 8: 12. It is following the One who is the light by which we are kept and preserved.

DMW I might say that what was always in Him appeared and "the darkness apprehended it not", John 1: 5. It was not even moved by it. Eternal life is connected with His incarnation would you think: "which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us", 1 John 1: 2?

AM I am sure that is right, that life which was with the Father in John's first epistle. And the apostles could take account of that. There was such a thing as the apostle's fellowship. Think of the favour that the apostles had; they could speak to each other about things the Lord Jesus had said and done when He was with them, but the apostle John wrote that "ye also may have fellowship with us", 1 John 1: 3. There is one fellowship, but there was that which was special to the apostles. And so they could go out with authority; they could go out as

representatives of the Lord. They had seen Him, and they had heard Him: they knew Him!

DMW Does that support what our brother was getting at earlier? In other words there were witnesses to the resurrection; we are not. “Blessed they who have not seen and have believed” (John 20: 29), and that is the day that we are in.

AM Yes, and in the early Acts the gospel went out on the basis of witness: “And we are witnesses of these things”, Acts 5: 32. There are several references in the Acts to the fact that they were actually witnesses. The enemy was intent on destroying that witness, but he failed. It was not very long before he took James, and he was put to death, and next he took Peter, but Peter was delivered from his hand, Acts 12. There were three events in the life of Jesus that were witnessed by Peter, James and John. They witnessed His power over death, they witnessed His glory, the glory He received from the Father, and they witnessed His sufferings. The enemy was intent on destroying this witness, and there were those three witnesses. One was taken and God preserved two. The testimony had to go on and there was an adequate witness to a glorious Man who received honour and glory from the Father and is now exalted!

MB Where you have referred to in 1 John about the fellowship John goes on to say that he was writing to us that our “joy may be full”, chap 1: 4. I was just wondering if that links with where you read in Ephesians that He might fill all things, that would include the hearts and minds of believers, would it not?

AM “That he might fill all things”. Well, does He actually fill my heart? He should do; He has a right to: it is right that He should! He should fill our hearts and our minds; we should be occupied with Him. The trend of our minds should always be to revert to Him where He is. You have to do your work; you have to do other things. The dear brethren in this place are very busy this weekend, and there are things they must attend to, but the trend of our minds must always revert to Him, glorious Man, where He is!

AML Would the disciples' perseverance in the beginning of Acts lead them to the greatness of Christ? I was thinking of “the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, in breaking of bread and prayers (chap 2: 42); they all lead to Christ and the greatness of the assembly.

AM Yes. He is the centre of it all! The assembly calendar is all

centred in Him. Think of the Lord's day, we begin by remembering Him, and in the final occasion of the day we are proclaiming His Name. Everything is centred in Christ for God.

I just thought in Revelation 21 that we get this wonderful scene; there is a world that is for the pleasure of God. Verse 4 states, "death shall not exist any more, nor grief, nor cry, nor distress". A dear brother once said that we have there the history of the world in four words, 'death, grief, cry, distress', but there is another world, "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall tabernacle with them". No grief there, no cry, no distress, just joy, blessing! That is what is before us, dear brethren! It will not be long; that is our prospect, as becoming free of these bodies to go and have our part in that blessed world where God dwells.

KDD It says, "and God himself". I just have an impression of the reality that the One who desired all this from the very beginning now takes up that place where "God himself shall be with them".

AM Think of all that that involves. God was made known in various degrees throughout the Old Testament; His Creator power, the Almighty God, the fact that He would come into relationship as Jehovah; now He is known to us through Christ as Father -

Our God whom we have known,
Well known in Jesus' love,
Rests in the blessing of His own
Before Himself above. (Hymn 72)

God Himself!

At three-day meetings in Calgary AB

27th June 2025

List of initials:-

M Brown, Bo'ness; T R Campbell, Glasgow; W K Clark, Kirkcaldy;
R B Clark, Aberdeen ID; J Desai, Los Angeles; D C Drever, Calgary;
K D Drever, Calgary; S W Drever, Calgary; L J Gray, Calgary;
M T Holland, Calgary; P W Howie, Calgary; D J Klassen, Aberdeen ID;
O W Klassen, Aberdeen ID; V M Klassen, Aberdeen ID; A M Lidbeck,
Aberdeen ID; C J McKay, Glasgow; A Martin, Buckhurst Hill;
A S Pittman, Grangemouth; K N Pye, New York; T R Vanderhoek,
Aberdeen ID; D M Welch, Denton

WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS

Alan Brown

Malachi 3: 10, 16, 17 (to “prepare”)

2 Corinthians 4: 6, 7

Colossians 2: 1-3

Luke 11: 9, 13; 12: 34

We were all affected by what we enjoyed on Lord's day about the treasure that we can enjoy from divine Persons, and the delight that divine Persons have in revealing it to us as we are interested in these things. As was said, it is not revealed to the natural man at all, however much he might try, but it is available to the spiritual man. We have the Spirit within us, and He would lead us that way. I think it is a wonderful thing to be occupied with how full of treasure heaven is, and how divine Persons must regard us as revealing it to us. That is what impressed me on Lord's day about the treasure hid in the field: what cost divine Persons expended to buy the field, and to secure the pearl, the assembly, Matt 13: 44-46. Does that have an effect on me; and as it does am I interested in these heavenly things that are stored up for us?

I read in Malachi because you can see how God regards those who do what He wants: “Bring the whole tithe into the treasure-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith”. God is willing to be proved if we bring things to Him that are precious, and He will reward us for them - “if I open not to you the windows of the heavens, and pour you out a blessing, till there be no place for it”. The note speaks of 'blessing, to super-abundance.'. So, as we do what we might think of as a small thing for divine Persons, then God is willing to bless us; and it is a return that is far more than we put into it. That is a wonderful thing for me: we might not think we have much, but each of us - if we know the Lord Jesus as our Saviour - can say something about the Lord Jesus, and that is treasure in heaven. We speak about impressions, and that should be treasure. The Father delights in us speaking to Him about the Son: think of the Father's delight in the Lord Jesus, and anything that comes to the Father's presence, to the Father's ears, about the Lord Jesus is treasure, and it has been put in our hearts by divine Persons in the first place. You can see that the return flows from us to God if we are exercised to search it out; and as we are exercised and think about these things, and pray about them, heaven takes account of it.

That is why I read the next section: "Then they that feared Jehovah spoke often one to another; and Jehovah observed it, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared Jehovah ... And they shall be unto me a peculiar treasure" - that note goes back to Exodus 19: 5, 'my own possession'. God wants us to enjoy these things; it is a peculiar treasure to God. That is a vital thing: each one that believes on the Lord Jesus is a peculiar treasure to God. You can see that in the way He is acting; He has acted in such a way in love; He has revealed Himself in Father, Son and Holy Spirit; He has given what is most precious to Him. What a treasure the Lord Jesus is! God did not hold Him back; so what effect does that have on me? I often hold things back, but we know and have proved in our locality that, if we bring in a little impression, a little seed or kernel, and discuss it, as we speak often one to another in our Bible readings, in our homes, in our links together, God takes account of that and it grows into something great in heaven.

In 2 Corinthians, there is another demonstration that God is willing and able to bless us. He is the One "who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". What a treasure that is: that is how the knowledge of the glory of God has been made known to us - in the face of Jesus Christ. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels". We are not much to look at, not much to take account of in the world's eyes, but God sees Christ and that is wonderful. The work of God that is in us, which will go on to completion, and is a precious thing to heaven. It is in earthen vessels; we do not look like treasure outwardly: we are not on display in museums or anything like that; we are not worth a lot in the world, but we are worth a lot in heaven because of how much God has given to secure us. He is willing to show us that glory: "shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God"; so that is what is available for us, and it is "in the face of Jesus Christ". So, if we have a relationship with the Lord Jesus, as our Saviour, our Friend and our Guide, if we have been given the Holy Spirit - what a treasure that is - then He reveals these things to us; He can take of the treasure of heaven and give it to us and help us. There is joy in heaven as we enjoy it.

Then in Colossians, Paul is on the same line: "united together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the full knowledge of the mystery of God; in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge". So, it is available to us, we can go in for

it: in the power of the Holy Spirit, we can enjoy these things together. Think of what there is in each one of us; think what there is in each locality, each gathering that values what God has given. We can take account of “the full knowledge of the mystery of God; in which are hid all the treasures”. So God is willing to reveal these things to us; He has acted in such a way that we can know these things. We know what treasures are in museums: you can see them but you cannot usually touch them because they are behind glass on display, but that is not what heaven's treasures are like; they are much more worthwhile than the treasure in this world. Solomon in Ecclesiastes had all the money in the world and he did everything he could; he had everything and he proved that this world's treasures were worthless. He could have spent all his money in seeking wisdom and doing everything he could, and he said it was all vanity and pursuit of the wind. That is what these worldly treasures are. There are famous treasures and a lot of gold is on display in museums, but we cannot get the benefit of them: we can look at them and think they are nice; but when we dwell upon these spiritual, heavenly treasures, they are eternal. That is a wonderful thing that God gives us. It speaks of the seed falling into the good ground and bearing fruit. You might not think the seed and fruit are treasure but they are treasure in heaven because they speak to us of the Lord Jesus. A little seed springing up: think of what it can bear, fruit a hundred-fold - that is storing treasure in heaven.

I read in Luke to show again how willing God is to bless us: “how much rather shall the Father who is of heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”. That is what we have to do: we have to ask, we have to be interested, we have to ask, seek and knock. Are we interested in heavenly things? If we are, we will be rewarded for it. Then, in the next verse we read: “where your treasure is, there also will your heart be”. That is a test to me: it is easy when we are among the brethren in the meetings to enjoy these things, and we can prove what our treasure is but what about my day-to-day life: where is my treasure, and where is my heart? It is worthwhile thinking of these heavenly things that are forever. Earthly things that are viewed as treasure by us, by man, they will all be done away with. When the Lord Jesus comes in glory the treasure will be on display when the saints come with Him in that day of display. What a wonderful thing to look forward to: there is another treasure to look forward to, the Lord Jesus coming to rapture us.

How abundant God is in blessing us: “blessed us with every

spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ” (Eph 1: 3): what treasures these blessings are.

May we be encouraged for the Lord's name's sake.

Linlithgow

1 May 2025

ENERGY

A Barrie Brown

Judges 1: 12-15

Genesis 24: 64

2 Timothy 1: 6, 7

We have appreciated and enjoyed what our brothers have brought before us already this evening as to what is hidden, and seeking, and the acquisition of treasure. It has just come to me that to seek and to acquire treasure needs energy. Our brothers have referred to the Holy Spirit; He must be the source of our energy and our vitality. To search the Scriptures, you need the power of the Holy Spirit, and also for the acquisition of treasure. In the passage we had before us in Matthew 13: 45 on Lord's day, the merchant would be marked by energy and movement. Digging in the field and all these things would be marked by energy. In that sense you can see God's love of what is vital and in movement. It can be seen in the solar system, or the animal creation; God delights in activity according to Him. It is that same with our Christian experience; things are not to be static. Mr Raven used the illustration of the solar system in his ministry, things in orbit and in movement. It is not to be aimless movement; we are to be in orbit as connected to the Lord Jesus.

We can think of the holy energy that marked that blessed One, One who was wakened by God morning by morning (Isa 50: 4); think of His movements to Sychar's well when He was weary, John 4: 5,6. What energy marked the Lord Jesus. Luke's gospel mentions "on one of the days" (chap 5: 17); the days of the life of the Lord Jesus which were always marked by service, both to His God and Father and to needy men and women and boys and girls.

Then energy marks the blessed Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus too, now where He is. He is sitting "on the right hand of the greatness on high" (Heb 1: 3) but He is not static; His love is in movement. We know his feelings - He is "a great high priest" (Heb 4: 14), but then what energy will mark Him as He moves. What energy will mark the Lord Jesus when He comes again to this scene. The prophet tells us that "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives", Zech 14: 4. He will be active in blessed, holy energy for the remnant, active too in the millennial day. Then the time when God will be all in all (1 Cor 15: 28) will be an eternal day of peace. But there will be movement in

response. So we can see that God delights in energy. The question would be for each one of us, who have our faculties and our hands and our feet, through God's grace to one extent or another, 'What am I doing with the energy that has been given to me?'

We read of two sisters, Achsah and Rebecca. They were both marked by energy. They both sprang down from the animals that were carrying them. My simple thought is that they were both marked by energy. We do not get their ages: they must have been relatively young because they were getting married, but does that vitality, the energy and agility of love, mark me? In one passage we also have the activities of Othniel; he was marked by energy too: he overcame Kirjath-sepher, the city of the book. There was the burning of the books in Acts (Acts 19: 19), unholy, charmed energy had marked the people there. What drew the people apart from their charms and their books and whatever else was the great thoughts of God. The wonderful hidden things are available and if we go in for them, God is not behind in helping us. He supplies the energy as we lay our hands to these things. There is also to be energy in moral activity, we are not to be slack in seeing to moral exercises, and that clears the way for the acquisition of treasure and going in for the hidden things. These springs would no doubt bear on this question, helping us in our moral exercises, but too helping us as to what the upper springs represent.

And then in Genesis, Rebecca springs off the camel. What motivated her to do that? Typically, it was the service of the Holy Spirit, the One who has all the treasures of the Master under His hand. The whole journey with Rebecca might have been spent speaking with Rebecca about Isaac, the heavenly man; what delight and joy the Holy Spirit has, what energy the Holy Spirit has. It says,

Behold, he that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep, Ps 121: 4.

Divine Persons are never marked by weakness or lack of energy; they are always there. How many thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of people may be praying at any one time. Many believers will be praying at any one time; there are indeed also those crying out for salvation, but there will never be a closed ear from divine Persons in this dispensation. What activity comes in from the divine side towards the repentant sinner. In Luke 15 you have the energy of love. In type, as a result of the Holy Spirit speaking to Rebecca, who may represent a believer, she was so energised and so drawn to Isaac by the description

given by the servant that she sprang off the camel. And she was so comely and ready to be with him. Consider the activities and energy of the Holy Spirit at the present time, attracting the personnel of the assembly to the Lord Jesus to respond to Him in energy. Rebecca, another young person, used her energy in the right way. It is a word to me. Ecclesiastes says, "remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth", chap 12: 1. When we are younger we do have more energy, and vitality; we remember things better. That is a word for me as to what I have done with my time and natural energy. We can be building and contributing to the world's system but, whilst we need to make our way through and be righteous, let all be desirous of contributing to the things of God, seeking out the hidden things.

In 2 Timothy 1, the note *e* says, 'The whole subject of the epistle is energy in the darkening state'. I was struck by that. What can we say about 'the darkening state'? In a sense we cannot exactly influence the general outward public position although we would feel it. We can pray for right government; we can pray that further light may come to all believers. We would seek the spiritual prosperity of each one, here and all believers. It is for me to take responsibility to be marked by energy. Paul says, "I put thee in mind to rekindle". What can I say as to "the putting on of my hands". That was possibly specific to Paul. We may not do so much of this nowadays, but certainly there can be rekindling.

If anyone here is feeling perhaps a little jaded or lacking in spiritual energy we can appeal to the source, because it is God, God Himself, that blessed One, all-powerful, omnipotent, loving, knowing, gracious. He is able to rekindle us. We need rekindling. We know what it is to perhaps have our energy sapped. God is able; He "has not given us a spirit of cowardice". Paul often uses the analogy of athletics in his writings. He was one who pursued, and you need energy to pursue. We have been given this spirit. It is an interesting reference; it is not exactly to the Holy Spirit, although no doubt He would be intimately involved in our energy. It is the character that would mark the believer, one "of power" - power is available; "of love" - we can each one of us exercise love; love towards divine Persons, love towards one another. Then "of wise discretion" - again, the note is helpful: 'A quiet, sound, or sober mind', note *f*. Energy in the world would not generally be marked by what is quiet or sound or sober. It is often a great outward display. It says of the Lord in the prophet Isaiah, "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street", Isa 42: 2. What a beautiful moral example He is in every way to us. This may be a

demonstration of how our energy is to be channelled. Others may think we are quiet, not prominent; I am very sure such may be marked by great energy in the things of God.

Well, may we prove the energy that comes to help us in the acquisition of treasure and going in for and finding the hidden things, and proving how eminently satisfying God's things are. What we have had in our brothers' words this evening, following on from what was brought before us in the reading on Lord's day, has proved to be very satisfying. Brothers and sisters no doubt have been following and sharing impressions, and that takes energy. They could be using their time to do other things. How delighted God is to see energy, or the faculties of our mind, that could be spent in other ways being spent in the things of God. That is a great part of God's inheritance in the saints.

May we be further encouraged and blessed for God's glory, for His Name's sake.

Linlithgow

1 May 2025

PIETY

Alistair M Brown

1 Timothy 3:14-16 to “in flesh”; 2:1-4; 4: 7,8; 6: 6

All these scriptures refer to piety. It is remarkable how much the apostle has to say to Timothy about that subject in his first epistle. There is a very interesting address on piety where these scriptures in 1 Timothy were read, and it is well worth reading, A J Gardiner, 'Piety and Other Addresses', p1.

We are reading 1 Timothy at home and these verses impressed themselves upon us. What we have had earlier this evening as to the Lord being our Model has also come to mind. It says of the Lord Jesus in Hebrews that He “offered up both supplications and entreaties ... with strong crying and tears; (and having been heard because of his piety)”, chap 5: 7. The Lord Jesus is a Model for us in piety.

Some light might be shed on that by the expression that is used here in our first scripture that “the mystery of piety is great”. That is a reference to the incarnation, to the Lord Jesus come in flesh. God, existing in uncreated light whom no man has seen nor can see (1 Tim 6: 16), has become incarnate in Christ. He was found in figure as a Man (Phil 2: 8), meaning that the Lord took a body. That is described by Paul writing to Timothy as the mystery of piety being great. How great it is that God should come into manhood, that Christ should be found here as a Man in the reality of everyday circumstances of human life, although He Himself blessedly unique amid these circumstances, but a real Man demonstrating piety. He demonstrated many things; among them was piety. As Peter says, “leaving you a model that ye should follow in his steps”, 1 Pet 2: 21.

Piety has been described as bringing God into our circumstances (F E Raven vol 4 p52), into everyday things. It is not something that is particularly for the meetings; it is to characterise our lives. Piety characterised the life of Christ. What does it mean? It would be a very interesting thing to think about and to enquire into. Dependence characterised the Lord Jesus, dependence on His Father, as has been brought before us already. It is such a central feature of manhood according to God. The Lord Jesus demonstrated dependence, and not only that, He defines manhood according to God. When God looks at us, He looks for features of Christ. He sees perfectly what we are.

Not only does God see what we do and what we say, which others can too, but He sees what our motives are and what is in our hearts - what we think and feel as well as what we say and do. When God looked on Christ, He found perfection in all that He thought and felt as well as what He said and what He did. What God saw in that blessed Man was glorious. You could never exhaust all that God saw in Christ; but He saw perfection and piety. For men that is a mystery. A natural man cannot understand Christ but by the Spirit we take account of Him, and He is attractive to us. He draws out our affections.

We have been impressed this evening by the love of the Lord Jesus for us. My desire is simply that we might be impressed by His piety - by His dependence, His lowliness, His meekness. All of these features come into piety, and they were found perfectly in Christ. Of course, piety for us involves things that were not involved for the Lord because of His perfection. For example, piety involves self-judgment; I speak for myself. The Lord Jesus did not need to judge Himself because there was nothing whatsoever in the Lord that deviated from the will of His God and Father. There is always present in me what would deviate from the will of God. That is why we need the Spirit's help to judge ourselves. In Christ there was nothing like that. He remains a wonderful, perfect Model.

In chapter 2 of Timothy where we read, it is "a quiet and tranquil life in all piety and gravity". Gravity means there is not lightness, nothing whimsical. Not saying, 'What will I do today and what will I do tomorrow?'. That is just my will, and that is what lightness is an expression of. "Gravity" is the opposite in this context. Piety and gravity would go together in bringing God's mind and will into my circumstances; and also, as has been said before, arranging my circumstances so that God can come into them. That is something for me to think about, and I would suggest for all of us, because this is an exhortation. "I exhort therefore, first of all", Paul says at the beginning of chapter 2. These are matters for exhortation, but the person who gives the exhortation must start with themselves. A Christian's *life* is to be marked by "piety and gravity", not just for a few hours a week but our whole lives. We are not the judges of one another's piety, but God is. His assessment of that is perfect because He sees everything, and is entirely fair in His assessment.

Piety relates to what is moral. A pious person, in a consistent and organic way, affecting their whole lives, accords with God's view

and gives Him pleasure: it is pleasing to God. Piety practiced also provides conditions in the heart and in the life of a believer in which the Holy Spirit's help can be experienced. If we want to be pious, which is Paul's burden in writing these things to Timothy - that the younger brother should want to be pious and be intelligent about what piety involves - then we need to make room for the Spirit. If we do not do our own wills but God's will, that immediately makes room for the Spirit to come in. How important that is.

As I give the Spirit room to work, I am taking away barriers to His operating in me; and He helps me to subdue my own will so that God's will might prevail. If the Spirit has room to operate, that promotes spirituality, which is essential if we are to enjoy the spiritual blessings that God has prepared for us, has purposed in His heart for us. It has often been said, and it is true and is very important to prove in our Christian experience, that what is moral underlies what is spiritual. It has been said that you can have a house that has a bottom storey, a ground floor, without an upper floor; but you cannot have a house that has an upper floor and no ground floor. You cannot have what is spiritual without a moral foundation; it will mean nothing, and will be without substance. Piety is an important aspect of what is morally consistent with Christ and God looks for piety in us, in every believer. Piety gives the Spirit liberty and that promotes the enjoyment of spiritual things together. These blessings flow from a "life in all piety and gravity".

Where we read in chapter 4, there is a reference to exercising ourselves unto piety. That suggests it needs hard work. The apostle then contrasts piety, and the exercise of ourselves to piety, with bodily exercise. What he says is that some physical exercise promotes good health, it profits for a little, and then he says, "but piety is profitable for everything" - a remarkable statement. I do not think you find anything else in Scripture that is described as profitable for everything, but piety is; and what the Scripture says is true. I need to think about that.

Piety also has "promise of life, of the present one" (that is the lives that we live here), and of the coming one. That is interesting, is it not? Piety has some relation to our eternal condition, to our coming life. Piety might appear to have little to do with eternal conditions, because then there will be no evil to be judged or flesh in me to be overcome; there will be a wholly new creation. But the apostle says that piety has promise of life that is to come. In the life to come, we will be occupied

with and enjoy spiritual things. Piety in this life gives us the capacity to enjoy spiritual things: our spiritual capacity is being formed now and piety is vital to that. We may think of piety as a moral feature, and so it is, but if we are exercised unto it our spiritual capacity is enlarged. So piety is profitable for everything - a remarkable matter.

In chapter 6 we get that very simple, pithy verse: “But piety with contentment *is* great gain”. Piety and contentment are preservative; they save us. Piety is also associated with salvation in chapter 2, where we read. Leading a life of piety and gravity “is good and acceptable before our Saviour God, who desires that all men should be saved”. I suggest there is some link between piety and salvation, but it cannot be our eternal salvation because that depends on the blood of Christ and having our faith in Him; how vital that is. It must refer to present salvation - salvation from the present evil world. The world has rejected Christ, it has its own sinful way of thinking and speaking and doing, but piety delivers the believer from the way of the world. That is really important practically.

We will not need to be delivered from these things when we are in eternal conditions because they will not be there. They are the result of sin in the race, and Christ will have dealt with them all, and they will have been judged and removed. But we have to overcome things of the world that appeal to us at the moment; we should desire to be delivered from them. Piety is absolutely essential to that, and helps us to be contented with our present circumstances. The Lord Jesus was content with the circumstances in which He was: we speak reverently. He did not seek a place among men; He did not seek anything except the will of God and the glory of God. He set aside what people thought of Him; it did not motivate Him or guide His actions. He followed in complete dependence and in joy the will of His God and Father. He was and is a Model of contentment and piety. My simple exhortation to myself and to all of us is that we might be found following that Model, in His footsteps.

Piety is great gain. We might think we need to have a certain standard of living and all that kind of thing, and we have to work hard to achieve it. We certainly need to fulfil righteousness and it is good to have some resources that we can use to help one another, but the great gain, according to what Paul says here, is “piety with contentment”. It leads to peace, satisfaction and happiness. These are all things that the world does not have, but the believer has them through piety.

This is a very practical word; let us through piety enjoy our blessings more, for the Lord's name's sake.

Word in Ministry Meeting

Linlithgow

7th August 2025

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF CHRIST AS PRESENTED IN THE OFFERINGS

Paul A Gray

The burnt offering - the distinct and unique preciousness of Christ to God. The fact that what is inward is particularly taken account of shows that God's delight was as much in what Christ was, as what He did. The washing was to emphasise the perfection of the offering, not to remove anything extraneous. It was not eaten by the priest or the offerer, but the skin of the burnt offering was for the priest who presented it. But we do not find this until we come to the law of the trespass offering, where we discover that the worth of Christ clothes the priest who offers in relation to the holy things of Jehovah, the commandments of Jehovah, and the restoration of relations with the neighbour. The law of the burnt offering teaches us that the fire on the altar was not to go out; we also learn that the burnt offering would be on the hearth all night until the morning, reminding us that God begins with the evening and ends with the morning, and that the work of Christ is maintained in all its unchanging value and blessedness throughout the whole of the dispensation, even when darkness is all around.

The oblation - the personal attractiveness of Christ as the One who was here for God. The oblation does not involve death, although it does relate to suffering for righteousness, so it relates to what was found in the life of Christ as Man here. It is food for Aaron and his sons; we see that the spirit of sonship is formed *in us* - while sonship is conferred *on us* by adoption - by feeding on the blessed manhood of Christ. One distinction between the manna and the oblation is that whereas the manna is available to be eaten immediately and is not offered, the oblation is prepared, thus demonstrating the need for exercise in order to produce food that can be offered to God, as well as eaten. We learn from the law of the oblation that it has the same status as the sin offering and the trespass offering - we too are brought to appreciate that Christ's life is to be valued as well as His death.

The peace offering - Christ as maintaining what is due to God in relation to the fellowship. This is not readily understood without looking at the law of the peace offering, which tells us that "all that are clean may eat the flesh" - it is intended to be shared. We see in 1 John 1:7 the distinct connection between the blood and the fellowship, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and

the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin". This is the present character of the peace offering, enabling the fellowship to be maintained even if failure does come in, and has to be judged. All rests on the perfection of the work of Christ. It is worth noting too that the law of the burnt offering tells us that the fat of the peace offering was to be offered with the burnt offering - Christ is maintaining the fellowship not only for us, but for God; the fellowship of God's Son is not just for us, but for the pleasure of God, Who called us into it.

The sin offering - Christ as dealing with the whole question of sin, as well as sins. The sin of inadvertence is specifically brought into relief here, and hence the Lord says, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do", Luke 23: 34. In immeasurable grace, He extends - speaking from the very cross itself - the sin of inadvertence over the whole dispensation, knowing that the cost of such grace would involve that He Himself would be made sin, and would bear our sins in His body on the tree. This is the offering that restores priesthood to its proper place, restores the "whole assembly", restores the prince, and restores the people of the land. Where sin abounded, grace has overabounded. It is not until we come to the law of the sin offering that we find that the priest who offers it for sin shall eat it: the need for self-judgment is paramount for the maintenance of priesthood.

The trespass offering - Christ available for the maintenance of all that is due to God, covering (as noted above) the holy things of Jehovah, the commandments of Jehovah, and relations with the neighbour. It is striking that the law of the trespass offering covers not only the skin of the burnt offering, but also repeats certain injunctions as to the oblation. It would make clear that feeding on the Manhood of Christ is necessary for the maintenance of what is due to God.

The law of the offerings also includes the offering of Aaron and his sons, which had not been referred to up to this point. This comes in before the law of the sin offering, the trespass offering and the peace offering, suggesting that the rights of God must be upheld (the burnt offering) and the priesthood formed morally (the oblation) before the sin offering, the trespass offering and the peace offering can properly proceed.

Finally, Leviticus 7: 37 says, "This is the law of the burnt offering, of the oblation, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecration offering, and of the sacrifice of peace offering ...".

There is one law because there is one Man before God, and one standard. That Man is Christ. May it be so with us.

Note

On page 31 of the July 2025 issue (No 220), the reference in F E Raven should have been volume 13 p142.