

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

SECOND SERIES

No. 159

June 2020

CONTENTS

**What Has Come From
Christ's Death**

Page 1

Appreciating The Holy Spirit

G Bruce Grant

Page 13

The Panoply of God

Peter S Barlow

Page 19

The Sprit Glorifying Christ

Andrew Martin

Page 25

WHAT HAS COME FROM CHRIST'S DEATH

Genesis 2: 21-25

Revelation 21: 1-6

PM I was affected this morning by singing hymn 152, which speaks of what has come out of the death of Christ. I wondered if we might get some impression of that in our enquiry together and see how each divine Person operated in relation to the death of Christ. We have some suggestion of that in these verses in Genesis: "Jehovah Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall upon Man; and he slept". It speaks of what the Godhead was working out in relation to the securing of its purpose, which could be secured in no other way than through the death of Christ. There is what the man did; "he slept". Then Jehovah Elohim brought the woman to Man. We may draw on other passages to show the greatness of what has come out of His death.

In Revelation there is a setting in which God will tabernacle with men and in which men will be at perfect liberty. God Himself will put His own touch upon men to set them in liberty, "he shall wipe away every tear". He will remove the sorrows that have entered into the responsible path which will by then have been completed, and He will remove every tear; He will set man in perfect liberty with Himself, He will tabernacle. I wondered if we might get some impression as to that and see the importance and the value of the death of Christ, apart perhaps from the sin question, important and necessary as that is. There was what divine Persons were working out for themselves through the death of Christ.

AEM That is very good. Is there a link with what we had yesterday as to the way that divine Persons did not react to circumstance; they were carrying out the divine intent in this thought that "Jehovah Elohim **caused** a deep sleep". Is there a link there?

PM I think so. The fact that this comes before sin came in would give us some impression that it was ever in God's mind to secure His end in a way that man would never have chosen, that One divine Person should come into manhood and go into death. Apart from the meeting of our need, the important thing was the meeting of God's need; the purpose of God flowed from His heart. I think it is important to lay hold of that. It was the heart of God that necessitated His purpose. His purpose was not that He would have man in flesh and blood, not even Christ in flesh and blood. He was not going to have man in that

condition, perfect as that was in Christ, but He was going to have Man according to Christ in a world of new creation.

AJMcK The detail of the translation we have is wise, and I wonder if it bears on what you are saying. This verse 21 begins with the word “And”, not 'so'. It helps us to see that what God did was not a reaction to there being no helpmate found for Adam. God was not simply responding to finding something missing. The matter was all in God's mind, that this course had to be followed in order for God to secure what was in His heart and in His mind.

PM What was in the purpose of God was never going to be thwarted because of what Satan brought in. God was going to carry His purpose through irrespective of that; and He was going to have an answer in a glorious vessel to the Man who was not now in flesh and blood, in that wonderful condition in which He moved here, in which God found His delight. But He looked on to the moment when He would have Christ out of death: “Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone”, John 12: 24.

RDP You made reference to “Jehovah **Elohim**”. What is the significance of that?

PM I was thinking as to the greatness of God Himself, operating in view of the securing of His purpose. Jehovah Elohim is a plural name.

RDP It struck me that that was added. It could have just been 'Jehovah caused' but it is “Jehovah Elohim caused” as if it is a particular view of Jehovah in His operations.

PM I think it is to give us some sense of the greatness of God, that no power was going to thwart what He was going to accomplish. Jehovah Elohim operated for Himself.

RDP I was thinking of what you were saying as to the Godhead: there is a certain mystery as to the Godhead, Christ coming into flesh and manhood; and you also made reference to the Spirit. Underlying all this are the steady, definite, unruffled, and unchanged thoughts of God; not diverted or hindered by man's inability or failure or circumstance. The Godhead was moving in relation to its great end. Is that what you had in mind?

PM Yes, that is helpful; the supremacy of God lies behind all that He has done.

RSB In the previous paragraph it says, "I will make him a helpmate, his like", Gen 2: 18. The will of God came into it right from the very beginning. Would that link with what you are saying as to before there was any need on man's part - "I will"?

PM Very good; bringing out again the purpose of God. He was going to have an answer in a counterpart to Christ. Think of the Lord Jesus having a helpmate, a counterpart, one in whom, as we have in Psalm 22, He could sing the praises of God, v 22. That counterpart was necessary: "in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises", Heb 2: 12. Divine Persons had nothing less in mind than that, immediately the Lord Jesus was out of death, there would be an answer to God in a way that there had never been before; and it would be in the midst of the assembly.

JRW What do you understand by "built the rib"?

PM Does it give us an impression that the assembly is *of* Christ? This was substantial. The rib was substantial; He took the rib and built it. Jehovah was the first builder. He built it because there was to be what was entirely of Christ in the assembly,

JRW It is confirmed by what Man says: "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh". It is of Him. We are taught that the assembly is heavenly in origin and destiny. I sometimes find it easier to understand destiny because that is brought out in Revelation, but what about origin?

PM She is heavenly, because she is of Him; we have been taught that she is heavenly in origin, in character and destiny; and the character relates to what was built. Not only is she of Christ, but she is like Him. Man could say, "This time it is bone of my bones".

JRW It is an answer to His longings, to His love, to His desires that is entirely suitable.

PM Think of the Lord Jesus as Man needing a helpmate. We might just ponder that. In one sense, He needed nothing, being who He is in His Person, Himself giving life to everything; but as Man He needed a helpmate and He has one through His going into death.

GMCK There seems to be quite a lot in this about the expression, "This time". "This time it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh". God works that way. He brings something in before to bring out the wonder of His final thought. The suitability of the woman is intensified by what had come before which has its own place. We have first a picture of

Christ as Head of the creation - Adam gave all the animals their names. This served to intensify the suitability of the woman.

PM "This time" would give us some impression as to the feelings of Christ. He has been given to be Head over all things. His headship is wide; He is Head of all creation. Think of the greatness of Christ. It is not exactly His dominion which satisfies Him; what satisfies Him is what answers to His heart. He is Head over all things to the assembly.

DJMCK There is nothing wrong with the first creation, nothing deficient, but there seems to be what is more appropriate in the second. We had yesterday about God taking away the first and establishing the second, Heb 10: 9. There is nothing wrong with what is in the first, but the second is what would always be God's fullest thought.

PM The creation from the hand of God was perfect but it could not answer to the heart of Christ. The death of Christ was necessary in order that there might be an answer to the heart of Christ. It struck me that the whole of the Godhead was involved in that. He "who by the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God" (Heb 9: 14); the Spirit was involved in this way in the death of Christ. Think of God not sparing His own Son but delivering Him up, Rom 8: 32. The whole of the Godhead was involved in relation to the death of Christ. What a moment it was. Mr Darby said the cross is the centre of the history of eternity, Synopsis vol 3 p361.

GAC What has been referred to is a very particular thing. This whole entity which was to be built looks on to what was compatible in every way with Christ in this setting. The feelings, the understanding, everything; is that something that we need to appreciate?

PM I am sure of that. With the animal creation it was formed by a word, but when we come to the assembly it has been built detail by detail. The capability to respond and to appreciate His love and answer to it was all built step by step in the forming of the assembly, typically from the rib taken from the side of Christ.

GAC This that we know as "my assembly" (Matt 16: 18) is very near and precious, and completely compatible and suitable. It is so special to Christ. We should get a glimpse of that for our own understanding.

PM I think so. We need to be careful in the way we speak because we can enter into deep waters in these matters. "This time it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" would really link with what we have in

Ephesians 3 that the assembly is “in Christ Jesus”, verse 21. We have been helped in the good teaching to see that that is more than unity. It is oneness, entire oneness: “the assembly in Christ Jesus” is one divine concept, and in the purpose of God it has been secured through the death of Jesus. There could have been no answer for the heart of Christ apart from the death of Jesus. The assembly does not have part with Him in the condition of flesh and blood into which He came; that condition had to be laid down. That was typified in the manna in the golden pot that was laid up before God in all its distinctiveness, Heb 9: 4. We could not have part with Him, and the assembly could not have part in that condition. He says to Mary, “Touch me not”, John 20: 17. She had known Him in flesh and blood conditions but He says, “Touch me not”. He was now in a new condition as out of death. The assembly has no part with Him in flesh and blood, but she has part with Him now in the condition in which He now is; united as one.

RDP It is interesting that the Man was said to be created, Gen 1: 27. He “formed Man, dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and Man became a living soul”, Gen 2: 7. Here you get the thought of *building* a rib, which suggests almost a process. The Lord says, “on this rock I will build my assembly” (Matt 16: 18), as if there was a process. In the creation of man we do not seem to have what was developed: it was creation. But this idea of building enters into the formation of the assembly. I wonder if it has any bearing on the present time, and the time coming at the end of God's ways.

PM Is that challenging to us because it is to come into expression in the way in which we move here? No particular company can say that they are the assembly. We have to be clear about that, but we seek to walk in the light of it, and the features of what is being built are to come into expression in our local companies. Is that what you are thinking?

RDP I am asking really. We are in the building time in that sense; “I will build”. He built the rib. There is what is absolutely basic, not from the dust. Woman was not made from the dust; it was wholly of the Man. He built the rib that He had taken and He brought her to Man. There is that aspect of the assembly, the bride for Christ and seeking a bride for Christ.

PM The building is still proceeding. There is what is here. When the Holy Spirit came, the house of God was established; the assembly of God was here. Yet as far as the personnel are concerned the building goes on. Paul could address “the assembly of God which is in

Corinth” before a broken day. The assembly of God in Corinth was there, but what you say is important; as far as we are concerned as the personnel, the building goes on and the building goes on in view that assembly features might come into greater expression.

RDP The scripture refers to the Lord as going into death: “who, in view of the joy lying before him, endured the cross”, Heb 12: 2. That joy was a prospect. It was something - whatever that involved, a very blessed thing that the assembly has been formed not just as a painted picture, but something that has gradually come in and through process been built. The Lord presents it as, “I will build”.

PM In the early chapters of Acts you get persons being added to the assembly. You made an inference that Man became a living soul, but that is not said as to the woman. Does it link with what we have in John 14 as to the Spirit's day? In that day: “because I live ye also shall live”, v 19. The assembly's life is in the life of Christ; that is where her life is. Because He is living she is living. I remember Mr Lyon saying that if Christ no longer lived the assembly would no longer live either. She lives in His life.

AJMcK That is life out of death. I was wondering about this “deep sleep”.

PM A “deep sleep”: think of what it meant that He should go that way, not in relation to sin, but that He should go into the very domain of death itself. It is His own action, “he slept”.

AJMcK I was thinking about what was said about what has been built; divine feelings as to the depth of sleep. Those divine feelings are what enter into the building. In the building there is what perfectly answers to the feelings of the Godhead that you are bringing before us in relation to the depth of the sleep. This gives us a view of the quality of what is now for Christ.

PM Yes we have to speak humbly as to that. I am sure what you are saying is right. There is here upon earth that which, as indwelt by the Spirit, shares the feelings of the Lord Jesus, and feels as He feels. We are to be exercised to be formed in that. Matters have come up among us: do I feel as He feels as to these matters, do I get resentful or do I get bitter, or do I feel as He feels? What sorrow He knew. These things are to mark us; Mr Lyon spoke of 'broken-hearted churchmen'; we are to be of that character.

JRW The hymn writer said -

To win Thy bride what depths of woe were Thine
Scorned and betrayed, beset by powers malign! (Hymn 99)

Does that link on with your thought?

PM It does very much. It gives us the impression of how set Satan was against the Lord going the way He did. If he could turn Him aside from that path of perfection, there would be no heavenly response for the pleasure of God.

AEM Does it bear the thought of the completeness of the work that was done? There is no element of Satan's domain or his power that has not been defeated by this One who, of His own accord, slept.

PM I am sure we had reference to it yesterday: "Lo, I come", Heb 10: 7. He came to go that way and He defeated Satan. He says, "I became dead" (Rev 1: 18): He became what He had never been before. Death works in us; it never worked in Him. He became dead. He could not be held by it; He broke it entirely.

AEM What would you say in separating the two thoughts from the beginning of the reading about Jehovah Elohim causing it?

PM I was only thinking of the way in which the Godhead was involved in the Lord going this way. The Lord Jesus says, "I have a baptism to be baptised with", Luke 12: 50. Think of Him accepting that from the Father's hand, that He would go that way in order that there should be an answer. Isaiah 53 has been quoted: "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", v 10. The Godhead was working unitedly; one of the Godhead here in manhood. The Godhead working unitedly in view of an answer that would be there for God eternally.

AEM That is very helpful: "they went both of them together", Gen 22: 6. There are feelings involved in that.

RDP We sometimes find the scripture difficult to understand that "it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath subjected him to suffering". I was thinking of this matter of causing. The idea of causing something to happen seems to suggest the gentle sustained unchanging effect of something which is not like a direct command. It may involve a whole multitude of things really, causing.

PM The One who was going this way was no less than the One of whom it says, “*he* spoke, and it was done; *he* commanded, and it stood fast”, Ps 33: 9. He could not do that in relation to the securing of the assembly. He had to go into death.

RDP It is interesting too, the causing involves the idea of His coming or His being sent: “Lo, I come”. You get the impression it was in relation to what was mysterious in relation to the whole divine purpose, the sending, in relation to that pathway of service, and the immediate identification of the Spirit in that, which is underlined by “I come”. The causing seems to be very precious.

PM I was thinking of that in the night, as to the Lord being sent and Himself coming. He was sent as being in a position of subjection and obedience. You could not take it back to before the incarnation. He was on equality with God before the incarnation, but it was as Man that He was sent because He was here as an obedient dependent Man.

WBMck You referred to the heart of God, in purpose. I wonder if you could say something as to the affections of God in relation to this. The affections of God are in building something for the pleasure of Christ.

PM It was a necessity on God's part that there should be an answer for Christ and for God Himself, which is what we have in Revelation 21. It was the necessity of His heart. It was not just for the display of His holiness, although it will be that, but it was the necessity of His heart, and therefore in Revelation 21 it is the movements of His heart in which He moves to set persons at perfect liberty in His presence, so that He might be the Object of all, eternally. What a God we have come to know!

WBMck Love must have an object to dwell upon. The two scriptures you have read, one at the beginning of the Bible and one at the end, show that God ever had in His mind to reveal His heart, that He might secure an object for it.

PM And therefore this “holy city”, which is in the millennial presentation, has the glory of God (Rev 21: 10), suggesting that it is really formed in the divine nature.

RMck That is why it comes from God? It is not of the earth. I was thinking of what was said as to the assembly's origin; this city is not an earthly one.

PM It could not be earthly because it is one with Christ. He fills it. In

the millennial day there is no need of the lamp (chap 22: 5), no need of the temple, chap 21: 22. The Lamb is everything in this city; He fills it. How wonderful! Here it is for the pleasure of God. We had some sense this morning that, not only were we at perfect liberty in the presence of God, but that God Himself, we must speak carefully, found His joy in having men near to Himself, and will do that eternally. He will tabernacle with men.

JRW What is involved in the preparation? It says, “prepared”. I suppose there is certain finality about that here, but what is involved in preparation?

PM It says, “prepared as a bride”. There are young sisters here that could tell us what that means. A bride, I assume, in all the preparation she makes has one thought before her, and that is to be for her husband, and that is what has marked the true history of the church, the assembly. Her one thought has been to be for the Husband.

JRW That is helpful. I was thinking of the work of the Holy Spirit at the present time entering into the preparation. I would like more help to understand it. We think typically. The servant had bracelets and gold to adorn Rebecca, Gen 24: 22. The Holy Spirit would work in that sense in preparing the bride. We have the thought of “the friend of the bridegroom”, John 3: 29. The friend of the bridegroom “rejoices in heart”.

PM I was thinking of Genesis 24 because Rebecca is given those adornments and precious things and, having received them, she says to those that she was with, “I will go”, v 59. She had a sense of the man who was in another place; she said she would leave the one where she was. As far as we know she never returned; she says, “I will go”. We can imagine that what permeated the journey to Isaac was that he was speaking of His master. She had said, “Who is the man ... ?”, and he says, “That is my master!”, v 65. I believe that was the character of the journey; and is that not something like the preparation we are speaking of, that Isaac (Christ in type) became everything to Rebecca and she was entirely ready and suited to be with him? Her affections became bound up with his. It says, “Isaac led her into his mother Sarah's tent ... and he loved her”.

JRW Preparation involves that our hearts have been attracted to Him. As we are occupied with Him, we can only be attracted to Him.

PM If our hearts are attracted to Christ, we will throw away all the

things that are out of keeping with Him. We will discard them; “laying aside every weight, and sin”, Heb 12: 1.

RDP The scripture says, “his wife has made herself ready” (Rev 19: 7), which would perhaps link with what you are saying. Rebecca emerges from the family setting there in relation to what is down here. The journey was made in the company of the servant - typically of the Spirit. I wonder if “his wife has made herself ready” involves the presence and company of the Holy Spirit. That getting ready process involves another divine Person. Another thing that came out of the death of Christ, apart from dealing with sins, is the coming of the Holy Spirit. The smitten rock would indicate that; the water flowed as a result of the rock being smitten, Exod 17: 6. The death of Christ was necessary that the Spirit might come. It seems to be a very vital part of this preparation.

PM I am sure of that. In John 7, “the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified“, v 39. It had to be from a glorified Christ that the Spirit came.

Telling her of all His glory,
Giving grace and power (Hymn 295).

What a service has been rendered by the Holy Spirit coming from a glorified Jesus. He loves to speak as to the lowly pathway; His joy also is speaking of a glorified Christ.

EGMcK I was thinking of what answers from the assembly in intelligence. The Spirit has His part in that. We know the Spirit's power and presence, and the Spirit moves us to respond in accord with God's mind and Christ's affections.

PM It gives us some sense of the greatness of what the assembly is, as wrought upon by the Holy Spirit; a vessel in which are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; think of a vessel that has that. Israel does not have that; Israel had light, and the light that they will come into will be glorious, but the assembly as wrought upon by the Spirit is a vessel in which is hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. That comes as a test as working things out down here; is it man's wisdom or is it the wisdom that comes from above which is formed in the assembly?

AEM Why is there in this section, in such a glorious section, this emphasis on wiping away of the tears and things that will be removed

forever?

PM What impressed me just pondering this is the delight that God has to set every soul in perfect liberty without anything that has brought in sorrow or grief. We know that sphere of sorrows, and at times we are able to share those of others, but all those sorrows will be wiped away. All things are of the God who has reconciled us to Himself. This is a totally reconciled, perfectly complacent, atmosphere. Everything has come from God Himself, and all that we have entered into here, and the sorrows that we have borne, which may not always be because we have done wrong, but sorrows that we feel because of what has come in, will be removed; there will be nothing to cause us to think of anything other than the enjoyment of the divine presence, and what God has wrought through His ways with us.

AEM That is helpful, God Himself.

ARH I was thinking about what we had at the beginning of the reading about “Jehovah Elohim”. The note to Genesis 1: 1 is useful; “In the beginning God”: the note refers to 'the Supreme' or the absolute existence. That very One, His heart is love to me; He will bring these things to pass.

PM That reference refers to the supremacy of God. There used to be a hymn -

Evil's challenge long permitted
Met by thy supremacy.

(Hymn 56 in 1951 Little Flock Hymn Book)

You can read right through between these two passages we have read, that Satan's challenge long permitted has been met by the supremacy of God, and yet that supremacy of God is not keeping us at a distance in this passage in Revelation 21. It is causing us to be near. You cannot wipe away a tear at a distance. A father does not do that; he takes a child into his arms and wipes the tears away. God will do that Himself: how wonderful it is.

AJMCK He does it Himself and for Himself; is that the thought? There is what we will know, and that is blessed, but “God Himself shall be ... their God”. That is what He is doing for Himself.

PM Yes, we did not sing it this morning, but it was in the hymn that our brother gave out -

No tear-filled eyes then left to chill the joy
Of new creation's bliss without alloy! (Hymn 61)

Think of the joy that God will have to tabernacle with men where everything is according to His holiness and according to His nature and He will find delight in setting men in liberty:

This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it, Ps 132: 14.

RDP It is interesting to me that it says, "I will tabernacle". You spoke about essential wiping away of the tears. You have to get very close, and so with the tabernacle. The tabernacle was relatively small compared to the expanse of the wilderness. It was very small, very close and confined. You would not have needed mechanised transport to get from one end to the other; short steps would do. It is interesting that God uses that idea: "the tabernacle of God"; He will dwell. It is not only near, but in close quarters. He says somewhere, "I went about in a tent" (2 Sam 7: 6), as if there was something that God found in that that was very close to His heart.

PM It is difficult for our human minds to understand what it will be like, but there will be myriads upon myriads and every one will be as close to God as everyone else. How wonderful. Not 'some lone place within the door'.

Witney

3rd November 2019

List of initials *local unless shown otherwise*

G A Coull, Aberdeen; A R Hutson, R S Hutson, Bedford; P Martin, Colchester; Alistair J McKay; Duncan J McKay; Eddie G McKay; Garth McKay, Manchester; Rob McKay; Will B McKay; A E Mutton; R D Plant, Birmingham; J R Walkinshaw, Maidstone

APPRECIATING THE HOLY SPIRIT

G Bruce Grant

Acts 13: 1-4; 16: 6-8

Romans 8: 12-17

1 Corinthians 12: 11

John 13: 34, 35

We spoke in the reading about appreciating Christ. I am thinking now about appreciating the Spirit; I feel for myself I greatly lack in that. It has been said that the Lord is the Man He is because of who He is; there could never have been a Man like the Lord Jesus unless He was in His Person God. He has brought into Manhood all that God is in His nature and His moral attributes: He was a unique Man altogether.

It is also true to say the Spirit is the Servant He is because of who He is. That I find important because it gives me confidence in the Spirit: He is the Servant He is because of who He is. We could only have a Servant like the Holy Spirit because He is, in His Person, God. So I read the first two scriptures just to bring out how the Spirit can act from Himself, because he is God. We read in the previous occasion, "whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak" (John 16: 13): that is absolutely true. The Spirit would never move out of that place He has taken in the economy of love. It is also true He is a divine Person and He can act Himself. There are a number of references in the New Testament where it brings that truth out, for instance in Acts 13. We can see how in the broad scope of the testimony in Acts, the Spirit is in charge. In this scripture, there were good local conditions, and it gave liberty to the Spirit: "And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me now Barnabas and Saul". That was the Holy Spirit speaking Himself, and He said, "Separate me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them". "Separate me" - the Holy Spirit was selecting these two. Then it goes on to say, "They therefore, having been sent forth by the Holy Spirit": that word "by" means that He was the source of the sending forth, The different Greek words are brought out and explained in note a in Matthew 1: 22. This is one of those instances where the Spirit is the source of the action, and that brings out the glory of His Person. The Spirit was selecting these two persons and they were "sent forth by the Holy Spirit", not by the company: the Holy Spirit sent them forth. The company had fellowship with them, "having fasted and prayed, and having laid their hands on them, they let them go". They realised the Spirit's rights in this matter and I draw attention to these first two

scriptures for that reason.

In chapter 16, again, this is “having passed through Phrygia and the Galatian country, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit”: there again the Holy Spirit is the source of that action. They were looking for guidance, but then the Holy Spirit forbids them to go in a certain direction; the Holy Spirit in charge of the testimony. The Lord is in charge as well, of course; and it is interesting that it says lower down in verse 10, “concluding that the Lord had called us to announce to them the glad tidings”. So the Lord and the Spirit are one in operations; but here it is emphasising the right of the Holy Spirit, because of who He is in His Person, to forbid Paul and Silas. I think it is important to understand that the Holy Spirit has rights because of who He is. He is a Person of the Deity, equal with the Father and the Son, and He can act by Himself. But then, they concluded that the Lord had called them to announce the glad tidings. So, I draw attention to these first two scriptures to bring out that point that the Holy Spirit, because of who He is, can act from Himself.

In Romans 8, I think it is good to have in our affections that the Holy Spirit is the Servant He is because of who He is. Think of His grace coming to dwell in the believer. Here we get light as to the Spirit for those who *have* the Spirit. The apostle Paul is speaking to us about the Holy Spirit, to give us confidence in this Person. He is able to do according to the light that is presented in this chapter: “So then, brethren, we debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to flesh; for if ye live according to flesh, ye are about to die”; it does not say, ‘but if ye put to death the deeds of the body’; it says, “but if, by the Spirit, ye put to death the deeds of the body” - that is the actions of the body as in the flesh - “ye shall live”, live Godward. We have to prove the Holy Spirit in an experimental way: this actually works. So “if, by the Spirit, ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Now, that verse is important: “If, by the Spirit, ye put to death the deeds of the body”. For this to practically happen I think we need right intentions. I know in chapter 7, I have right intentions, but no power to carry them out, but right intentions are necessary. We cannot say the Spirit will do it for us: you have to have right intentions. We have right desires because of the work of God in us. So, we have confidence in the Spirit, and we seek His power. He is far greater than the flesh. I enjoy that scripture in Galatians, “the Spirit against the flesh” (chap 5: 17), and that is always the case. This is essential for all of us. Then we get “for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *these* are sons of God”. We then become leadable by the Spirit of God. It is that great Person we are speaking

about, and that Person is God.

It is important to make sure you have the Spirit. “How much rather shall the Father who is of heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”, Luke 11: 13. Now there are millions of believers who have been given the Spirit, without asking. If you believe the glad tidings and repent, God delights to give the Holy Spirit, but if you are not sure, ask. It is essential to have the gift of the Holy Spirit. You are to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and that is an evidence of appreciating that Person. As we prove the Spirit experimentally it increases our appreciation of that Person. What a lowly service, prepared to come in and dwell in the believer.

Then you get, “as many as are led by the Spirit of God”. The Spirit of God delights to serve in that way, to lead us because we are now leadable: “these are sons of God”. How would He lead us? “But ye have received a spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” What a wonderful thing that is: it is a very blessed thing, these intimate relations, by the Spirit, with the Father. Any time of day or night you can be in the enjoyment of sonship in your relationships with the Father. Experience it for yourselves. These things are to be experienced in the power of the Spirit. Does not that cause us to appreciate this Person who in dwells us? “A spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father”. These things are the essence of Christianity, appreciating Christ and appreciating the Spirit, and the Spirit would always cause us to increase our appreciation of that glorious Man, where He is. He is also serving us so that we might enjoy this relationship with the Father and, more than that, know the Spirit’s service collectively in relation to serving the Father. How the Holy Spirit serves other divine Persons. What this must mean to the Father to have persons who, in affection, are responsive to Himself, reminding Him of His own beloved Son. This is the great height of our blessing, this relationship with the Father. Experience this, dear young believer. Have you got the Spirit? Have you proved it in an experimental way? Having these right intentions, then the Spirit gives us power for the right intentions.

“The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God”. That is the normal service of the Holy Spirit. Have that joy in your hearts, that we are of the divine family. We are cared for by the Father; He has that interest in us as His children. It is a joy to our hearts to have this intimate relation with the Father and say, “Father” to the Father. How close that is! The Spirit is the power for that so, “The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit.” I say it again, that depends on: “put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” It gives the Spirit that

liberty to bear “witness with our spirit.” We know that inwardly; we are not dependent on the text of scripture to know we are children of God or sons of God: we know it experimentally. The children of God are here in an adverse scene to uphold the truth as to God. That has been the issue right from when Satan, the serpent, put into Eve the lie as to God. The testimony has been as to the truth as to God, and Christ has come here to fully make that known, and His children are here to uphold the truth as to God, to represent God in His moral features; John in his epistle brings that out. And we are here also in the care of God: therefore, if that is the case, where Satan, the god of this world, is deceiving men all the time and we are holding the truth as to God as children of God, we are bound to meet opposition and suffering and reproach. So “if indeed we suffer with him” we will “also be glorified with Him”, reign with Him; we will be heirs with Him. The Lord is waiting the Father's time: He will ask the Father for His inheritance and the Father will give it: He is waiting that time, and we will be heirs, joint heirs with Him. But now is the time of suffering.

But in the suffering, “See what love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God”, 1 John 3: 1. The emphasis there is not so much on the children, but it is the *love* of the Father, in giving us that place. There are distinctions between children and sonship; children is the provisional setting. The place of sonship is heaven: the condition of sonship is a glorified body, and we enjoy that relationship now. What we are as children will go through in a substantial way as born of God. It is very interesting: if we read further down in verse 21, “in hope that the creature itself also shall be set free from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God”. But earlier it says, “For the anxious looking out of the creature expects the revelation of the sons of God”, v 19. The “liberty of the glory of the children of God” is as sons of God. These two features are brought very close in this scripture. Mr A J Gardiner was once asked ‘what is the distinction between children and sons’; and he said they are brought very close together, *Readings and Addresses on Eternal Life* p129 Sonship is the eternal thought and that for the Father's pleasure, God's pleasure. What blessings we have been brought into and the Holy Spirit gives us the feelings and affections proper to that relationship as sons of God. Enjoy it, dear fellow believer; it is God's thought for us in purpose.

I read 1 Corinthians 12 to bring out again that “all these things operates the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each in particular according as he pleases”. It is the sovereignty of the Spirit, because of

who He is. He gives “the word of wisdom” to one, and “the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit”, 1 Cor 12: 8. The Spirit operates: “the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each in particular according as he pleases”. That is important: this is a figure of the human body here, as a picture to help us to understand the body and how He gives one, one ability, and another, another. This is very important because it cuts right across the will of man. If the will of man enters into these things by men choosing persons to function however high or however low in the scale, it is not of God: this is the divine way of things operating. The Spirit gives to one or another because of who He is; He has this ability and right to do this, the sovereign action of the Spirit. Here we see the supremacy of the Spirit in relation to ourselves; not in relation to His relations with the Father and the Son, but in relation to ourselves. It can be nothing else but that, that the Spirit has the supremacy in relation to ourselves; He is God. We see it again in “the Spirit searches ... the depths of God”, 1 Cor 2: 10. Only the Spirit can do that, and that is in view of our help, our being brought into the light and good of these things. He searches the depths of God: they are not in ourselves, that is the depths of God, and He does that. He knows what is in the depths of God, and He brings it out for us. The thoughts of divine love - eternal, heavenly, blessed things.

I read in John 13: but what I have in mind here is that also in chapters, 14, 15 and 16, the Lord Jesus refers to the Spirit. It is the Lord's foresight as to what we would need for the time of His absence; He knew what we would need, and there are two things the Lord prominently brings before us in these chapters. One is that we would need the Comforter, the blessed Holy Spirit, as the Lord is no longer here personally. The other thing which the Lord weaves in with that is “love amongst yourselves”. These are two things He brings in a number of times in these chapters. He also draws attention to the Father, and He speaks to the Father and had His own relations with the Father. It is not so much what we would do but what the Father would do in answer to our prayers.

The more I give place to the Spirit, the more I will appreciate my brother. Because I need help from my brother, the Spirit speaks to him, the body functions and love appreciates that, and love makes way for one another so these two things are linked together for the time of His absence.

This is a special time we are in; there will never be another time like it. The Lord says in regard of Himself, “the things concerning me have an end”, Luke 22: 37. The Shepherd was going to be smitten and

the sheep were going to be scattered (Mark 14: 27), and how He felt that. There had been a little circle round Him that He appreciated, and they appreciated Him; that was coming to an end for ever in the way that He enjoyed it then. The Lord is no longer in flesh and blood conditions with a little circle of lovers around Him! The things concerning us have an end similarly. What we are enjoying now will not continue forever; it could end tonight. Do I appreciate it? The Lord has given us brethren to walk with; He has set us together. Those around the Lord enjoyed it, and the Lord enjoyed their company; they enjoyed communion together. Similarly, we are set together, and the Lord is our object, and the Holy Spirit is serving us, but this is a unique time. Do I fully appreciate this provisional setting that we are in? It will come to an end. Appreciate it as long as we have it! Of course, we are looking for the Lord's return. That is the hope of every believer, but there is something special about the present time. The day to come will not be like this; everyone will acknowledge the Lord then; everyone will own His worthiness. We are in a special time. It is interesting that nearly all the assembly has been formed in the time of reproach, "the reproach of the Christ" (Heb 11: 26), the difficulties, burdens, problems. But what precious times we enjoy together; each of us looks at one another as "the fruit of the travail of his soul", Isa 53: 11. What each one of us has cost Christ, each one indwelt by the Spirit, each one set in the body. How great these things are! There is nothing in the world like it. We sometimes sing:

Soon shall this service cease (Hymn 109).

That could be at any moment, and the Spirit and the bride will say, "Come" (Rev 22: 17) - we are saying it already - to the Lord Jesus. Think of it: a divine Person here and we with the Holy Spirit in unison saying, "Come"! And then His service here will be completed, and the church and the Holy Spirit will go, but as long as we are here we have the faithful service of the Holy Spirit, "that he may be with you for ever", John 14: 16.

I feel for myself I need to appreciate the Holy Spirit more and give more place to Him, to appreciate Him individually, and in this collective setting. What a Servant He is! He is the Servant He is because of who He is. May the Lord bless the word!

DUNDEE

27th October 2018

THE PANOPLY OF GOD

Peter S Barlow

Ephesians 6: 10-17

Beloved brethren, this well-known scripture has been before me. I believe I have heard it being used in an occasion like this a number of times in this locality; but there are three things that struck me and as thinking over them, I felt free to say a few words as to them. My thoughts relate to “Put on”; “take to you”, and “stand”.

Now we might have suggested that what should have come first in relation to the panoply of God is to “take to you”, then to “put it on”. But the Holy Spirit through the apostle records it this way round. I believe what it shows is that the whole panoply of God, the whole armour, is available to every believer. It is available, it is God's, it is from God Himself, and is available to every believer. But there is more to it than the simple matter of putting it on. I wondered whether the thought of “take to you” gives the impression - and I speak for myself first here - that whilst I may have the armour, there is the need for me to enter into what that armour really means. It would have been very simple for David to have put on Saul's armour, as it was far too big for him. But it would have been of no protection for him; it was Saul's armour. The armour *he* had was knowing what it was to go forth as prepared of Jehovah to meet the Philistine, what God provided for him. He had not just put it on, but taken it to him as seen in all God's preparatory ways with him leading to facing Goliath.

Here it is an armour that is to be put on. Why are we to put this armour on? Our warfare is not against flesh and blood - such is the warfare that is peculiar to the day we live in, particularly in this country, beloved brethren. We are privileged, as was remarked in prayer, to enjoy liberty in gathering together but there is apathy all around us. Here our warfare is “against principalities, against authorities, against the universal lords of this darkness, against spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies”; it is that which is more powerful than mere flesh and blood, more subtle. It has been said respecting the language that Paul uses here, that he clothes the enemy with titles of 'impressive dignity' (CAC Outline of Joshua vol 6 p47); what a solemn warning to us. We see at the very beginning that the serpent was deceitful and subtle; he did not outwardly attack Eve in the garden of Eden; he said, “is it even so, that God has said?”, Gen 3: 1. He brought

in doubt, brought in something that created doubt in the mind of woman; I believe that is what the enemy is doing very much today. He is bringing in doubt, bringing in questioning, bringing in compromise, bringing in an attitude that says, 'Well, those are the old things: today is different, we need different things. Things do not mean the same today as what was taught by those of old' - speaking of those that were used of God in recovering us to the truth. Beloved brethren, it becomes very important, that we must stand. That is why I feel exercised to draw attention to the words "to stand". Over these past few years we have known that various attacks on the truth have been subtle, but we have been given the strength to stand.

What has much struck me recently, is what has been said, that God always gives testimony to a thing before it takes place. I have proved this recently with a recent reading meeting as to the young and the old going on together. Shortly afterwards, a matter came up directly with me which needed to be faced which challenged this truth. We have also had recent occasions as to fellowship. We have been much occupied with the truth of fellowship, and I believe we have learned a lot from it over these past few years. Why, then, did God see fit to give us an occasion on fellowship again? I think it all has to do with standing; what is needed is "to stand"; stand and be established in relation to the truth. We get one of David's mighty men in a plot of ground full of lentils, 2 Sam 11, 12. It said the people fled from the Philistines; the sophisticated character of man, the mind of man coming in. It said the people fled but one mighty man stood and by him "Jehovah wrought a great deliverance".

We need to stand. God has given us all the armour that we need to stand, but there needs to be a working out of this armour, beloved brethren, because the enemy attacks for he knows his time is short. He is subtle, subtle and undermining, subtle in causing the letting go of things. Remember a reading in this place where it was brought before us that what came in at the beginning was the breakdown of relationship between man and woman. That is what the enemy did. These things are subtle to break down relationships. Now "Stand therefore, having girt about your loins with truth". That is where the apostle starts; the truth is not to be let go of. The thought in relation to girt about your loins with truth would suggest something of depth, vigour and energy. It has got to be held onto in the heart; it cannot be held in the mind; I have got to hold onto it: it has got to be formed in me, "girt about your loins with truth", something that is established and firm

on the sure foundation. I feel much challenged about this for myself as over recent years I have known these things but they have not been formed in me. I would not claim they are now fully formed in me, but I have come to have a greater appreciation of the truth and the reality of them. The need is that I should be girt about with truth; you need that to stand. If my grasp of the truth is weak, held in the mind, distracted by other things, how can I stand? The enemy will soon find that chink, for he is subtle and will bring something in that will cause me to doubt and fall away.

Then “the breastplate of righteousness”. Now I struggle with the word 'righteousness'. It has often been said 'It is what is right'. But if I apply my mind to it, it becomes what is right in my own eyes. There is the well-known description given by Mr F E Raven, that 'Righteousness ... is the maintenance of fidelity in every divinely appointed relationship' (vol 15 p207), and that got me thinking. It sounds complicated, but fidelity has to do with faithfulness, obedience; holding fast - not letting go, not slipping. That is fidelity in the divinely appointed relationship. What is that for us? Would that not be “holding fast the head”, Col 2: 19? Is that not seen in that God has established everything in Christ as the Centre? Is it not seen that everything for God begins with Christ? Everything has been established in that One. “For the rest, brethren, be strong in the Lord”; that is what we have; that is where we can find our resting place and it flows out in all our relationships, beloved brethren. We see how with man the subtlety of the enemy has brought down right relationships. Consider the chaos even in the creation because things are out of right relationship with one another. But everything that is held for God is according to the divinely appointed relationships of God. That is what we need to hold on to and is to be found in our every relationship; primarily in relation of what is due to God, and in our relationships with one another, but it must be in all our relationships. Be it at work, be it at school, be it in the home, how can I be holding fast to what is due to the Lord if I am compromised by having a relationship with an association that belongs to man? They are incompatible; you cannot have that; it must be compromising and I must let it go, avoiding it, lest it become another chink for the enemy to get in in order to destroy and to spoil.

So we have here, “shod your feet with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace”. I suppose that will raise a question with me as to my walk. Is it tending towards peace? Am I living in the joy of the gospel or am I one of those that goes around looking lost and feeling I

have lost something because I have given myself to Jesus? There could not be anything better than giving yourself to the Lord Jesus, with the result there is to be joy and peace. That should be my walk and way, walking in the joy of the gospel so that not only am I called to preach the gospel, but I should be a living witness and exponent of it in my walk here. It brings a joy and a glow that I can be that, does it not? But it is no good if I am not keeping my eyes centred on and occupied with the glorious One whom God has established, because it all flows from that.

Then, “the shield of faith”. The shield of faith is important as there are the inflamed darts of the wicked one. It is not just to cover a particular part like the breastplate, the breastplate of righteousness. Affection underlies righteousness, love underlies righteousness, and it is protecting it. The shield of faith is given for the protection of the whole body, wherever it is needed. Maybe there is a weakness coming in in relation to righteousness: well, the shield of faith will rise to that and turn aside the darts of the wicked one because if that dart finds a place, it is a fiery dart. If it finds a place you think of what it can get into, what it can destroy. Beloved brethren, the shield of faith is important. Faith is important: faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and all that He has done.

We “Have also the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit”. Now I see there is a link between those two. The helmet of salvation does not so much relate to our eternal salvation, because that is untouchable; that cannot be touched. Once you are saved you are saved for eternity; that salvation is untouchable. This has to do with our current salvation in this scene, and I speak really for myself because I do not know all your circumstances, but for myself I think this is something to increase with me. I do not think it is exactly that you are saved practically from everything at once; you have to work it out and come to it. I pick on two things as examples if you will bear with me, because they have a big place with me. One is sport; and the scripture that comes to mind in relation to that is the two armies that faced each other. The two leaders there said, “Let the young men ... make sport”, 2 Sam 2: 14. What was the result of that? They slew each other - that is not salvation. I know what it is for these things to occupy my mind - great sportsmen, sporting events, or whatever it be - it hinders me and distracts my thoughts in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ; it begins to absorb me. So, beloved brethren, I need the helmet of salvation to meet that.

The other is books. I love books and reading, but I see an increasing danger in that for we see how the subtlety of the enemy has come in as books have been made so readily available. The reading of books in itself is not wrong, and when relating to divine things, is a positive benefit. However, the enemy has made available that which easily distracts from divine things, fills our minds with that which is not of Christ - more so now in their being more readily available. All these things are liable to allow the subtle operations of the enemy. We have recently touched locally as to Othniel. He took Kirjath-Sepher and that was the City of the Book, Judg 1: 11 and footnote. He took it, and what was the result of that? He received Achsah as his wife; in type we can see that the features of the assembly were more precious to him than all the world's learning; most wonderful. But what did she desire? She desired the upper springs and the lower springs, v 15. I think that gives some impression as to the Holy Spirit. That is why I believe these two things go together. Salvation - "the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word. As we know what it is to get free of these things it gives greater room for the Holy Spirit to work and to operate to bring me into the enjoyment of things that are unfailing and precious.

The height of Paul's ministry is this epistle from which we have read, the epistle to the Ephesians. It has been said (see J B Stoney vol 2 p42) that this and the epistle to the Romans are the only two doctrinal epistles setting out the truth, not exactly in a corrective way. In Ephesus, Luke in the Acts records that "they that practised curious arts brought their books of charms and burnt them before all. And they reckoned up the prices of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver" (chap 19: 19); naturally speaking a very large value. This giving up and complete destruction was for their salvation in that city, and it is to that place that Paul was given of the Spirit to open out the height of the truth. Beloved brethren, I think these give little illustrations, little examples, to encourage each one, to get free of this world's offerings in knowing the helmet of salvation, to get free of the mind of man, entertainment and the philistine mind, its sophistication and learning. The enemy is bringing these matters into the things of God, but if I have got on the helmet of salvation I can get free of them all as the helmet becomes more and more real, the sword of the Spirit becomes more powerful to me, and the Word of God becomes more precious to me.

It brings us back to the need to gird ourselves about the loins with truth and to be maintained in righteousness. All these things go

together, beloved brethren, and they are given of God. What God looks for is that we might take them up, through experience, through working them out, that is in the power of the Spirit and before Him. So it is, "For the rest, brethren, be strong in the Lord"; it is the Lord - divine authority; and all these other authorities, they are nothing: the Lord has destroyed them for us. We have His authority to stand, to stand fast until He comes.

Well may it be the portion of each and every one of us.

Sunbury

18th April 2019

THE SPIRIT GLORIFYING CHRIST

Andrew Martin

John 16: 14

Hebrews 2: 5-10

The Lord Jesus refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit in this verse in John's gospel. The Lord Jesus was here as a Man, but He was a divine Person in the form of a Man. He was speaking about another divine Person who was going to come. One thing that was true of the Lord Jesus in His pathway here was that He never glorified Himself. In relation to one of His official glories it says in the epistle to the Hebrews that "the Christ has not glorified himself", chap 5: 5. I think that would be true in relation to every glory, that He did not glorify Himself. In chapter 8 of John's gospel He speaks about not seeking His own glory, v 50. Here He speaks about the Holy Spirit coming and He says, "He shall glorify me". That is the impression that has been with me as I have been pondering this occasion, that there is a divine Person whose mission here, and whose objective, is to glorify Christ, that blessed Man whom we know and love. He has been glorified by none other than One who in Godhead glory is equal to Him, but still in wonderful service and grace glorifies Him.

How does the Holy Spirit glorify Christ? The Lord Jesus went up on high, having completed the great work of redemption on the cross; He was raised and He went up on high. Perhaps one of the first things that took place in heaven was that He spoke to the Father about the saints so that the Holy Spirit should come. He promised His disciples He would do that. He said, "I will beg the Father, and He will give you another Comforter", John 14: 16. Think of the Lord Jesus coming out of death having vanquished its power, having annulled every power that was hostile to God, having effected the great work that none other could effect, upon the cross. As having come out of death and gone up into glory, His first occupation is the saints who are down here; speaking to the Father about them. He knew the need; He knew that we would need a Comforter. We would need One who could help us down here to take up our affairs. The Lord Jesus knew that and that was one of His first priorities, as having been raised and ascended up on high, to speak to the Father. We have to be careful how we speak about divine Persons: it is not that there was any need for any persuasion as to the matter - divine Persons are one, but as having ascended up on high His great affections were bound up in the saints

and He begged the Father to send the Comforter.

What the Holy Spirit does is remind the bereft saints here of their Lord. They were totally bereft when He went into death, but when He was raised, then they knew that He was greater than any other power upon earth. "All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth", Matt 28: 18. He was going on high; what were they to do here? They were to remain until they had received His promise, the promise of the Holy Spirit. I wonder how much they realised just what that would mean. The Lord Jesus assured them of this, "He shall glorify me". The Holy Spirit having come, His normal service and His primary mission is to attach our hearts to the Man in heaven. That is the normal service of the Holy Spirit. "He shall glorify me", the Lord says, "for he shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you". Who does He receive it from? He receives from Christ. The Lord Jesus on high is ministering to His assembly; we read about that in Ephesians 5: 29. We thereby see divine Persons working together; and the Lord Jesus providing what the assembly needs. The Holy Spirit receives what is of Christ and announces it to believers here. How precious it is to consider these things! Two divine Persons constantly working, in order that saints down here should be attached to Christ and that they should know Him; and know Him not only as He was in His humiliation, but know Him in glory, the One who was here displaying every feature of moral excellence that is possible to be found in a man because He Himself was the very expression of all that God had looked for in man. Not only was He that down here, but He is that where He is now. He remains the same; every feature remains.

As to what is displayed in Him morally, nothing has changed. Death could not change Him; the sufferings did not change Him; resurrection and glory have not changed Him. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and to the ages to come" (Heb 13: 8); now in glory at the Father's right hand. The highest place has been given to Him. I love to think of the Father inviting Him to take that place: "Sit at my right hand, until I put thine enemies as footstool of thy feet", Ps 110: 1. The Lord Jesus has done the work; He has overcome every power. The Father will see to it that every adverse power is to be made the footstool of His feet. You think of the greatness of that, and now He is on high. The Holy Spirit serves to attach our hearts to Him. He is the Centre; He now has glory that He could not have had on earth. He was given glories when He was raised up into heaven. The Father exalted

Him and made Him both Lord and Christ. There were those who acknowledged Him as Lord, and those who acknowledged Him as Christ when He was here. Now in glory, He has officially been made these things: Peter says, "*he* is Lord of all", Acts 10: 36. He is the One whom God has as the Centre of another world; the Centre of a world that is for God's pleasure. This poor world will be disposed of, but He is the Centre of a world where God's pleasure will be eternally, and He remains that. By the Holy Spirit coming down, there is that upon the earth by which He is known as the Head. He is the Head of the body. God has given Him to be Head over all things to the assembly.

There are those who take account of Him in His glory. This is on account of the Holy Spirit being here. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that allows us to take account of Him in that way. The Holy Spirit here would unite our hearts with that blessed One where He is above. The Lord Jesus is on high and the Holy Spirit here is glorifying Him: "He shall glorify me." The Lord Jesus is specifically speaking here of the Holy Spirit's work: "he shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you". What is the effect of that? What is the effect of the Holy Spirit's service here? The effect is that there is something formed in men women and children here which is like Jesus. You think of that in this poor world where sin is abundant on every hand and men are departing from every thought of God - not only personally, but even officially and nationally; men are forsaking every divine thought and every divine institution as fast as they can, and think it not good to have God in their thoughts. Yet in the midst of this there is something going through that man cannot affect: they cannot affect the work of God in the saints. It is what the Holy Spirit produces. He takes persons whom the Lord Jesus has secured in His death and He forms something in them. Every time that we find pleasure in doing what is right in the sight of God, there is simple evidence that there is something formed in the soul that is like Jesus. Think of what it means that Jesus is being glorified in the lives of believers here. He is being glorified and that is the effect of the Holy Spirit. It is not only what the Holy Spirit tells us, but the effect of His work is that Christ is glorified in the hearts of men, women, and children here, people who seek to please the Lord Jesus. The Lord is glorified in every such desire. Think of what that means for Him. How great it is that the Holy Spirit would work in such a way, that He should be glorified; it is His desire and His pleasure to glorify Christ. Just as it was the pleasure of the Lord Jesus to be here for the glory of His Father, so it is the Holy Spirit's pleasure that He should be here for the glory of

Christ.

He would attach us to Him and enable us to find our joy in Him. The writer to the Hebrews speaks about Him where He is: “we see not yet all things subjected to *him*, but we see Jesus”. How do we see Jesus now? I used to think when I was a boy that it would have been nice to have been here when Jesus was here. Perhaps we used to sing,

I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How He called little children as lambs to His fold,
I should like to have been with them then.

Jemima Luke (1841)

We have a greater advantage than that; we see Him now by faith. God gives us faith in order that we should take account of Him. It is a gift that God would give, and He takes delight in any one who is concerned about that matter. One thing that God loves to do is to give gifts to those who ask. Many of us at some stage in our lives may have been quite concerned as to whether we really had faith, or whether we had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. God loves to give to those who ask. The Lord Jesus tells us that; He says, “But of whom of you that is a father shall a son ask bread, and the father shall give him a stone? or also a fish, and instead of a fish shall give him a serpent? or if also he shall ask an egg, shall give him a scorpion?”, Luke 11: 11-12. God is not like that. He would give you more than you ask for. You can ask for something and God gives you much more than you ask for. The blessings of God are so great. The heart of God is so great. If we are not sure, we can ask Him to give us faith so that we are able to take account of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus has been here in this scene, in this difficult world; He has passed through it. He was not changed by it externally; He passed through it and He has now ascended up on high, still the same; and by faith we are attached to Him. Not only by faith; I have been speaking about the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit would attach us to Christ; and He is another great gift of God; a divine Person: we must never forget that and must be careful how we speak of Him and be careful in His presence. He is here on the basis of gift. Think of One so great but here on the basis of gift. God gives His Spirit to those who obey Him and to those who ask.

It is by faith and by the Holy Spirit that we see Jesus; we have

our link with Him where He is. We know He is exalted, He is crowned above, but the Holy Spirit gives us a living link with the Man in heaven, who is One to whom we can turn at any time. He is not One who is remote; He is One who has been here; He has come into our circumstances. He knows what we pass through and He knows our needs. The greatest need of all is the need of our souls, the need when we felt ourselves away from God. It is a terrible feeling when you realise that you are away from God, but there is an answer to that. The Lord Jesus has done the work. He has tasted death; He has been through suffering. What sufferings He has known! He has known the sufferings of the cross; He has known what it is to be rejected by men. He has known violence; yes, He has known that. He has known what it is to be forsaken by those whom He loved; yes, He knew that. He has known what it is to be entirely alone. He has been through all these things, has been through sufferings that none of us could ever know, and what it is to be so alone that He was even forsaken of God. What a terrible moment that was, when not only was He forsaken by His own who were here, those whom He loved, not only that; He was forsaken by God Himself. You think of the awfulness of that time: there were His enemies, standing around mocking Him. They did not believe that He was Son of God; they did not believe in the greatness of His Person. As far as they were concerned, they thought that they would be better off without Him. That is what people think today; they would be better off without religion. They thought they would be better off without Christ. They taunted Him saying, "If thou art Son of God", Matt 27: 40. "He trusted upon God; let him save him now if He will" (Matt 27: 43); "if He will": they taunted Him with those words. I suppose they forgot at times that they were quoting the prophets and the psalms, even Psalm 22, "Commit it to Jehovah", v 8. "Commit it to Jehovah", they said. Maybe they did not even care that they were quoting what was prophetically stated of them. "Let him save him now if he will".

At the end of those three hours, the Lord, perfect in His humanity, publicly acknowledged that the God upon whom He had relied through all the days of His manhood had indeed forsaken Him. He had to acknowledge publicly that God had actually forsaken Him. Why was He forsaken? Men saw no value in Him; Peter could speak about the stone cast away as worthless, 1 Pet 2: 4. That is what men saw, but why did God forsake Him? He forsook Him because of you and me. He forsook Him because the whole matter of sin and our sins had to be answered for to God. Someone had to give account to God

for the sins of each one of us who have their faith in Him. By having our faith in Him we can have the assurance that our sins were included in what He bore on that terrible cross. The Lord Jesus was forsaken of God and He went into death. As having died, His precious blood was shed, the testimony to that life having been laid down; the blood so "precious". That is the only word we use regarding the blood. There is no other word that is suitable for us to use in relation to the blood; it was precious blood, precious to God, precious to every believer below. How precious it is! Why? It is the basis on which everything has been secured. Everything for God and as that blood was shed, God's rights were fully met. The Lord Jesus as going into death has dealt with every matter for God. Everything that was offensive to God has been put away and now He has been raised, raised by the glory of the Father.

He is now ascended up into heaven and has been crowned with glory and honour; the Father has glorified Him. You think of the place that God has given Him: no other place is great enough for Him; the Father has given it to Him. He glorified God on the earth; the Father has glorified Him now in the light of a completed work. How right it is that it should be so. It is a matter of righteousness that the Father should do so. It was more than a matter of righteousness; the Father's affections were involved in it. You think of the Father looking upon His own beloved Son, having undertaken all that He did in view of securing an answer for the Father's own heart. The Father could hardly forbear to give Him the highest place in the universe; He has gone beyond the created universe. He has gone up above all the heavens that He might fill all things. The Holy Spirit's service now is that He should fill all things, including our hearts. I am sure that we all have some place for Him in our heart. The Holy Spirit's service is in view of Him securing the first place. He will have it publicly. When He comes down again, He will have that first place and He will come out publicly. After the saints have been called away to be with Him for evermore He will come out publicly. He will be seen and wondered at in those who believe, and He will be glorified in the whole universe. There will be no power to stand against Him then; He will come out in military might and cleanse this whole earth of evil and His kingdom will be established.

In that day men will seek His glory. The prophets speak about "that day". You read a prophet like Isaiah or Jeremiah and they use the expression "that day", many times. They were looking on to another day. The believer is looking on to another day, the day of His appearing with all those who love His appearing. The apostle speaks about "when

he shall have come to be glorified in his saints” (2 Thess 1: 10): personally glorified, but glorified in the saints. The whole universe will take account of what He has secured in believers everywhere. They will take account of His work, not then obscured by the conditions in which we now are. That work will all be like Him; it will be Himself all over again; you think of that. That work is there now; that work is progressing. I remember a dear brother once coming to my locality, and he said, “When I get home, my brethren will ask what I found here. I will say, 'I found Christ'”. That is Christ in the saints. The Holy Spirit's service is that Christ should be glorified by being reflected and seen substantially formed in the lives of believers here. He shall be glorified thus and in a coming day He will be seen by the whole universe. They will wonder at it. The earth will never have seen anything like it before. He will be acknowledged for one thousand years. Men will gravitate towards the divine centre. In Isaiah it says, “it shall come to pass in the end of days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on top of the mountains and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob”, chap 2: 2, 3. They will flow unto it. He will be glorified. In the meantime, He is to be glorified now.

I feel that the test is, how much is He glorified in testimony today? When the saints are together, we can draw on the work of God in one another, but when we go out in testimony amongst men, do they see Christ? Do they see the features that were seen in Him? How foreign to us naturally are the features that marked Him. The One who magnifies Him is the One who has the power to give expression of His features even while we are here.

That is the simple impression I have, that the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ. We cannot add to His personal glory; that is beyond us, but He glorifies Him in the affections of the saints and He glorifies Him by forming a true expression of Him in men, women and children like ourselves even while we are here.

West Norwood

12th January 2020