A WORD
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THE LAMB OF GOD

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RHB It will be evident to the brethren from the scriptures read that what was in mind for our consideration is the designation of the Lord as "the Lamb of God", the expression used by John the baptist, and "the Lamb", the expression used by the evangelist. These references are exclusive to John's ministry; they do not feature in the ministry of the apostle Paul, but they feature in the writings of the apostle who wrote particularly for our day. It is not to say that all the Scriptures are not relevant to our day - they are "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come", 1 Cor 10: 11. But the Lord specifically said of John, "If I will that he abide until I come" (John 21: 23), and I think it is generally understood that his writings were the last of the scriptures written.

I simply read these verses in Genesis because the question is raised right at the beginning, "where is the sheep for a burnt offering?". I think there is a sense in which that question must have continued down the centuries until the incoming of Christ; exercised persons must have wondered as they thought about it, where could it possibly be found? What offering could there be that would meet the requirements of the throne of God? I think that question is answered by the Baptist; he says in John 1, "that he might be manifested to Israel, therefore have I come", v 31. I used to think of the Lamb of God as a title that was particularly Jewish, but He is said to take "away the sin of the world", not just the sin of the Jewish nation. There was something much greater than was limited to Judaism in the title of "the Lamb of God", and it brings out that He is God's provision: "God will provide himself". As we think about this designation of the Lord, it seems to convey something as to the mystery of His Person, of the incarnation.

John in his gospel was bringing out that He was a divine Person here in manhood, but the Baptist, although he appears in the New Testament, is really the last of the Old Testament prophets and according to the words of the Lord, the greatest of them, Luke 7: 28. He speaks of the Lord Jesus as "the Son of God". There are many titles in this opening chapter - He is spoken of as "the Word" (v 1), "the Lamb of God", "the Son of God", "the King of Israel" (v 49), and then at the end He speaks of Himself as "the Son of man", v 51.

The passage in Revelation is intended to affect us, that John is weeping because no one is found capable of opening the book. His attention is drawn to the lion, but what he sees is “a Lamb standing, as slain”, and that view brings out this great song of response that we sang about in our first hymn (No 286), which was quite confirmatory. The elders are there; and the whole heavenly company break out in this note of adoration to the Lamb. We might get some help together as to what is involved in Him “standing, as slain”. And then the scriptures close with “the Lamb's wife”, which seems to confirm that it is not simply a Jewish expression; the paschal lamb may well have been in the speaker's mind but the assembly is so described as “the bride, the Lamb's wife”. We read of “the marriage of the Lamb”, and then this moment when what comes onto view is something that answers in every way to what was expressed in Christ. I hope the brethren will be free to develop these thoughts because I really would like the spirit of enquiry with us as to it and certainly feel the need of understanding these things more myself.

DAB There are a number of occasions in the Old Testament where lambs are introduced: there was the passover you have mentioned, and there is another occasion in the history, a dark day when a sucking-lamb was produced (1 Sam 7: 9), but that only throws into relief “the Lamb of God”. I was wondering whether it is clear from the scripture that relationship with God must be on the principle of sacrifice, but that He has made the sacrifice greater than anything anyone else could offer.

RHB Yes, I think that helps. It was so from the beginning. When Abel brought an offering to Jehovah, he understood that. He brought an offering “of the firstlings of his flock, and of their fat”, Gen 4: 4. He would have heard about God clothing his parents with coats of skin, that there could be no approach to God without sacrifice, and what a sacrifice! What a life was sacrificed, a life in flesh and blood condition, the like of which has never been seen before or since.

JRW Can you say a little as to the expression you drew attention to, “God will provide himself”? It struck me as you spoke that it is not a side we consider too much, but what is involved in God's provision?

RHB It is provision for Himself. It must involve the purposes of His love. God was not going to be defeated in what He had set His heart upon. It was necessary that there should be what would meet the case. The hymnwriter says -

But the objects of that favour
Were in chains of bondage bound;
Guilty sinners must be ransomed,
And the lost must needs be found. (Hymn 133)

There was a great challenge as to how God could make His heart known in all its fulness, without in any way comprising His essential integrity. If God simply proceeded to bless men without sacrifice it would be condoning what was evil, which is unthinkable. God has provided Himself because nobody else could provide it.

JRW I am glad of what you say. We often think of the scripture in Philippians as to the Lord Jesus emptying Himself, being found here in figure as a man, and so on (chap 2: 7), which is what He did, but I think what you are drawing attention to, as to God's provision, is most important, and probably relates to what you are saying as to the Lord Jesus as the Lamb; it is God's provision.

RHB And His provision for Himself has involved the blessing of men, but God was acting to satisfy the needs of His own heart.

QAP Is there a link with the way Paul speaks of this in Romans 8, "He who, yea, has not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him grant us all things?", v 32.

RHB Yes, and also with what John says in chapter 3 of his gospel, that "God so loved … that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believes on him may not perish", v 16. God *gave* His Son - Peter emphasises that in the first preaching, that although He was taken by wicked hands and crucified and slain, He was delivered up "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God", Acts 2: 23.

DAB That knowledge and counsel was not simply that a provision had to be made, but it addressed in the most intimate detail what that offering would be, and who it would be. It is not by chance that He is referred to as a "Lamb", is it? That was light given to John by God, that conveyed what God's counsels had in view.

RHB Yes, say a bit more about that; I think it is helpful.

DAB We must not think of the matter simply as transactional. We talk of 'a provision', but for God it was something that had become dear to Him, not only in time - although it was - but in purpose.

RHB Yes, I think the special character of the One who bears that

name is brought out. John says, “A man comes after me who takes a place before me, because he *was* before me”. In Revelation 5, there is a great search made, “in the heaven, or upon the earth” (v 3), as to who would be found worthy to implement the will of God. Who is worthy? And it says, “no one was able in the heaven, or upon the earth, or underneath the earth”. This should arouse our interest, the very special character of the One who is designated as “the Lamb of God”.

DAB What is emphasised is “worthy”; no one was *able*, but no one could count themselves *worthy* either, could they?

RHB And His worthiness is given in that chapter. He has overcome; “the lion which is of the tribe of Juda” has overcome - every other had been overcome, but here was One who could not be overcome.

AAC Would you help us as to why it was a lamb? The thoughts of the lion and the lamb go together in our understanding, but God has chosen part of His creation which may not immediately have come to our own minds. It speaks of something which is small and yet develops our affections.

RHB The note tells us that the word “lamb” here in Revelation - “a Lamb standing, as slain” - is 'diminutive'. I remember speaking to a brother who owned a lot of land and sheep and spent his life looking after them. He said to me he thought there was no creature that suffered so much in its life as a lamb, or a sheep. And he went through the various things that are done to it to preserve it, that are quite painful; and how in the open it is attacked and injured, and finally, slaughtered. And whereas other animals might create a tremendous disturbance, the lamb just trembles. It does not run away. This brother said he thought it was such a suitable designation for the Son of God because of the acceptance of suffering. I wondered if in “the Lamb of God”, as the Baptist speaks of Him, while there is what is sacrificial, the fact He goes on to speak of Himself as “the Son of God” seems to suggest there is more than that in the title.

AAC That is very helpful and shows the way in which God's thoughts are very different to our own. The ways in which He manifests Himself to us are very different to our own. I like what you suggest as to John 1, and it comes out in your other scriptures; there is so much more than may naturally meet our mind, but God is pleased to use this title through scripture to keep our affections alert.

RHB Yes, it would be good if our affections were kept alert as we

speak of it, because this title is meant to touch our hearts; it is not just mental information. It is intended to pull at the heartstrings. It is remarkable that the prophet said of Him, "he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and was as a sheep dumb before her shearers, and he opened not his mouth", Isa 53: 7. John brings that out at the end of his gospel, how the Lord was silent before Pilate: having witnessed the good confession, He was silent and Pilate wondered at that, that He was not begging for His life as other men would have done. Men took Him and scourged Him and treated Him as they would, and there was no reaction to that; He was not provoked. How easily I find the flesh rising in provocation at some insignificant slight, but with the Lamb of God under such intense provocation, enduring "so great contradiction from sinners against himself" (Heb 12: 3); there was nothing to come out but what was intrinsically there, which was His perfect goodness.

AAC It speaks of His perfect, holy integrity.

PM I wondered why the first reference is to a burnt offering. Does it link with what you are saying as to what John saw? There was something of that character that was delightful to God that had never been seen anywhere else. The hymnwriter says -

What odours choice He smelled (Hymn 268).

RHB It is helpful. The burnt offering involves our acceptance in Him before God. I thought that entered into "God will provide himself". He wanted men to be before Him holy and blameless in love. How was that to be achieved?

DAB-w I wondered if you would say a word as to how Isaac could take account of the wood and the fire but not the sheep? It might link to what the last remark was bringing out.

RHB It says twice in the verses we read that "they went both of them together", but of course it is only a type and like all types it does not match the great antitype, because Isaac was ignorant at this point; that is why he asks the question. The Lord was not ignorant. When He made the commitment, "Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will" (Heb 10: 7), He made that commitment in the full knowledge of what it would involve. In His life and among His own He prophesied as to it in its detail and awfulness.

DAB The Spirit of Christ is seen in them both together. We see Isaac's submission, and the carrying that has been referred to; and

then there is faith in God and the adherence to His will, and faith in the resurrection, all of which we see as features of the spirit of Christ in Abraham, do we not?

RHB That is very good; it was laid upon Him, the fire and the wood. The Lord speaks of His yoke, what was laid upon Him. At the end He could say, "I have glorified *thee* on the earth, I have completed the work which thou gavest me that I should do it", John 17: 4. What a work that was, but it was laid upon Him. "*He* stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9: 51), in the knowledge of what was before Him.

AM Would you say that only He could know truly what that fire was? He was to bear it; Isaac was saved from it. He was to bear it in all its fulness, the fire of God's judgment. And throughout those thirty-three and a half years, He was fully conscious that that was what was before Him.

RHB Yes, there was that side of the forsaking and the shedding of His blood, the laying down of His life so essential if every thought of God was to be established on the basis of unchallengeable righteousness. The scripture says that He "offered himself spotless to God" (Heb 9: 14), "an offering and sacrifice … for a sweet-smelling savour", Eph 5: 2. That would be the burnt offering side of it, do you think?

PM I wondered that. What He carried in His spirit in those years, all the pathway that He trod, every moment, was delightful and pleasurable to God. That must underly the sin-offering character of His work.

RMB Can you say something about this reference to Him taking "away the sin of the world"? It does not say 'sins' of the world. What does that mean "the sin of the world", and how has Jesus taken it away?

RHB I would like help on that, but the first thing that strikes me about it is that it was removed from under the eye of God. We live in a world where sin and sins are rampant; sin has not been taken away *yet* from the eye of man. I suppose the opening of the book in Revelation involved removing all the consequences and the effects of sin, but it was taken away from under the eye of God through His death and burial.

NCMcK It is remarkable that that title is used, "the Lamb", in reference to that. Sin was to be removed from before the eye of God, all that tainted His creation and His creature, by a Lamb!

RHB It is amazing. I had the impression, and I am just putting this out enquiringly - I hope to be adjusted if I am wrong - but it seems to me there is what is sacrificial in relation to "the Lamb", but "the Lamb of God" seems to involve more than that, the side of who He was in His Person. It has been said that, when God came into the world, sin had to go. The Scriptures do not record anybody actually dying in the presence of Christ. Mr Darby says,

> Disease, and death, and demon,
> All fled before Thy word (Hymn 189).

Every manifestation of sin, whether through death, or illness, or disability, or demon possession, had to give way before Him. The demons knew as they were cast out who He was, when others did not. There must be some suggestion in it, especially as the Baptist goes on to speak of Him as "the Son of God". There is some reference to the mystery of the incarnation, that though He was a real Man and He came into that condition to die, "God was in Christ", 2 Cor 5: 19.

JRW John the baptist says earlier, "In the midst of you stands, whom ye do not know, he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to unloose", John 1: 26. He says that, and then the next thing he says is, "Behold the Lamb of God".

RHB He says, "I knew him not". This had to be revealed to him by "he who sent me to baptise", did it not? It is very interesting that the two persons in the scriptures that identified the Lord as the Son of God in His life here did so by revelation. John the baptist says, "he who sent me … *he* said to me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on him, he it is who baptises with the Holy Spirit". And Peter says, "*Thou* art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering said to him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed it to thee, but my Father", Matt 16: 16. It was a divine revelation. I wonder whether the baptism of the Spirit of God is involved in God providing Himself with what He sought, and sin being removed, taken away.

RMB Would it be alright to suggest in connection with what you were saying earlier as to His Person, and this matter of taking away the sin of the world, that we can see that the great foundation of all of that must be His sacrificial work? But do you think it would also go on to include His judgment work, and possibly also His new creation work?

RHB The One who was the Sacrifice was the only One who was

capable of opening that book, seal by seal. As you read what happened as those seals were opened, it is awesome, the literality of how He moved on God's behalf to clear the whole scene judicially of every effect of sin. In the bride, the Lamb's wife, the holy city, we see that something has been brought to light that is entirely in accord with God's purpose.

RMB If we were to ask the question why it is that He alone is worthy to take up these matters, is it because, having faced that matter in all its fulness in His sacrificial work, He has proved that He is morally qualified to take it up in His judgment work?

RHB Yes, I think that must be right. Every other man contributed to the sin of the world, but He took it all away. What a thing that is; what a thing it is for God. I think it also has a personal bearing, that as He is received into our hearts and the gift of the Spirit is imparted, the effect of what is described here in a universal way is to be known in the soul of the believer.

RMB You called attention to the great search that was made, and it includes heaven, does it not? It says, "no one was able in the heaven, or upon the earth" (Rev 5: 3); so it is not only sinful men, but even unfallen angels were found not to be worthy. And the only way we can account for that is by the fact that Jesus is the One who suffered. He offered Himself as a sacrifice and bore the judgment of God, and on that basis, He has proved that He is equal to taking up every other question for God.

RHB In that character He is "the lion which is of the tribe of Juda". It says in Proverbs, "The lion … which turneth not away for any", chap 30: 30. You think of the pressures that were brought to bear upon that blessed Man, the full horror presented to One who was intrinsically holy of what it would involve to be made sin; these pressures that we can scarcely understand, were brought to bear upon Him, to turn Him if it were possible from the fulfilling of God's will, but He turned not aside for any. So, you get the lion character underlying the feature of the lamb.

DAB The taking away does not leave a void, does it? He does not only have the first place in all things, but He fills all things. If you look at any other man, the less space they occupy the better, but here is One whose moral worth is ordered and purposed by God to fill all things. I suppose the abode that the disciples ask about was somewhere, even then, where that was so, where He filled all things. Your exercise might

be that if He is going to have that place universally, and I have the light of that, then I ought to accord it to Him, is that right?

RHB Yes, God is going to head up all things in the Christ. The fact that He was the Son of God was proved to the Baptist by the fact that the Spirit descended and abode on Him. That was what arrested his attention. The Spirit of God had come upon men in the Old Testament and given them power, in Samson's case, superhuman natural power, Judg 16: 28-30. In another place, David said -

> The Spirit of Jehovah spoke by me,
> And his word was on my tongue, 2 Sam 23: 2.

We read of the Spirit coming upon persons, but what was arresting to the Baptist, was that the Spirit descended and abode on Him. In this blessed One there were restful conditions for the Spirit of God to abide.

GEW The One who we are speaking of filled the heart of God. We have had as to the burnt offering, and you referred to the “sweet savour”, and in Leviticus it is a “sweet odour”. That odour was for God, was it not? I was thinking of what was referred to, when there is a great battle, we often see what is left is great destruction. In contrast to that, the One who is “the Lamb of God” is the One who has filled the heart of God. We would desire that at this very moment He would fill our hearts.

RHB Yes, I think that is the desire of these gatherings we have for fellowship, not just that they should be for our mutual interchange, valuable as that is, but that Christ might have a place with us. I think it has been said that the Baptist here sets out really what ministry should be. He draws attention to Christ. It is remarkable the persons that do that in John's gospel, and the result is movement towards Him. When it is exclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God”, the persons who heard that wanted to be with Him and to know more about Him, where He lived, where that life found its rest. The woman in chapter 4 went and spoke to the men about what she had found, and they were moved to go out of the city to go and find Him for themselves, v 29. At the end of the gospel, John the evangelist says, “It is the Lord” (chap 21: 7), and immediately Peter throws himself overboard to move to where Christ was. I think it is a remarkable setting out by John, particularly for our day, how ministry is to function and what its result will be; how we can judge of what comes from the Lord. We are called upon as we are here to judge whether what we hear is simply a brother speaking, or whether it has a source in heaven itself. One way of judging that is whether it

drawing my heart to Christ. Is it having that effect?

DHB I was thinking of hymn 256 -

O Lamb of God, still keep us
Close to Thy pierced side.

His designation as “Lamb of God” is to attract our hearts to Him, is it not?

RHB It is; it is not a designation we use much although it enters into our hymns. I began to think about this when I came across a comment of Mr Raven's. Somebody asked him whether it was appropriate to worship the Lamb of God, and he said, if the whole heavenly company, including the saints of the assembly, are seen doing that, in Revelation 5, there cannot be much wrong with doing it now, FER vol 5 p22. It may not be the highest light in which Christ is known by the assembly, but I think there is something immeasurable in it, and something that is intended to move us inwardly towards Him.

RJF This is not the presentation of the Lord at a distance, is it? In Revelation 5 He is there “in the midst”, both of the throne and the living creatures and in the midst of the elders.

RHB What would you say as to this figure of the “Lamb standing, as slain”?

RJF I always think of it as a reminder of the pathway that the Lord has gone, in order that not only should He have that place before God, but so that the others should be around Him.

RHB I think that is good. It is a strange figure, “standing, as slain”, it seems to convey something of His victory, His triumph over death. We have spoken of what He endured, what He came to do and what it involved; but it is this view of the “Lamb standing, as slain” and taking up, as only He could, the effectuating of the will of God in the earth, that causes this immense outburst of praise. It is not commanded; it is not that God is asking for it. It is a spontaneous reaction as He comes onto view, it cannot be held in, it results in this spontaneous outburst, and it is a new song.

PM Does the “Lamb standing, as slain”, suggest that He has laid the moral basis in His suffering love for all that He will execute in His power and glory?

RHB It says, “the power which he has to subdue all things to himself”,

Phil 3: 21. That subduing power is exercised at the moment in grace; the goodness and grace of God is what leads men to repentance. In the face of what is wilful, sinful, the grace of God is exerted in the heart of man to bring about a change of heart. In the day that we are speaking of in Revelation, a King shall reign in righteousness, princes will execute judgment; there will be no doubt and no weakness, as He acts on God's behalf to remove everything that is opposed to God Himself.

JRW Would you say something as to the "seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God"?

RHB The "seven horns" seem to suggest perfection in power, the power that He has to subdue, and all sorts of lawlessness are subdued and dealt with by Him. What we see as this book unfolds, and the judgments are measured and executed, is how it brings out the nature of the heart of man. People blaspheme God under the pressure, but He has the power "to subdue all things". We can see why God has given all things to be under His hand, "All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth", Matt 28: 18. There is of course only one Holy Spirit; I think the reference to the "seven Spirits of God" has been connected with the passage in Isaiah 11: 2.

JRW That helps tremendously. We are speaking of these things that are embodied in "the Lamb", and there is a certain mystery in relation to "the Lamb", and at the same time the greatness and glory of the Person who has that title. The Spirit would help us to explore that mystery a little and get some fresh impression of it.

RHB There will always be what is immeasurable about the Person of Christ; there is a mystery attaching to the incarnation which is beyond us. We just have to accept what God reveals to us; that God was manifested in flesh. People have tried to rationalise it and argue round it. These things are profound and they cannot be compassed by the human mind, neither are they intended to be, but the Spirit of God can give us an apprehension of the glory and the greatness of the Person of whom we are speaking so that He might be enthroned in our hearts. The passage in Isaiah brings out that seven-fold idea, "the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah", chap 11: 2. That is what marked Him as a Man here; He was "heard because of his piety", Heb 5: 7. We had meetings recently on piety and spirituality, and that was seen in the Lord. However blessed

and intimate the relationships that we are brought into with Him, we must always be preserved in the fact as to who He is, that we might be preserved from over-familiarity, by the consciousness that though He has come so very near in grace, He is and has always been, a divine Person. You get that in the Baptist's comment: naturally he might have been His cousin, but he says, "I knew him not". He had the sense in the Person of Christ of what was inscrutable.

RWMcC I was thinking how, in Revelation chapter 1, the Lord says to John, "*I* am the first and the last, and the living one: and I became dead, and behold, I am living to the ages of ages, and have the keys of death and of hades", v 17. There is something very profound about that.

RHB Yes, His death is a profound matter: "I became dead"; it was His own act. Death had no claim on Him. Peter said, "it was not possible that he should be held by its power", Acts 2: 24. There is what is miraculous in that, and those that witnessed it realised that there was nothing like it. When the centurion saw how He died after those six hours on the cross, it was like no other man who had died from crucifixion. He uttered a loud cry as He went into death, and engaged with death and with him that had the might of it. We do not need to be apologetic about our Saviour; He is a mighty Saviour. God has "laid help", the psalmist says, "upon a mighty one", Ps 89: 19.

QAP This reference to "the lamb standing, as slain" has been linked in ministry (J Taylor vol 93 p296) with the Lord's supper although of course we call to mind One who is living. He presents Himself as living in chapter 1, but here He is standing as a Lamb slain.

RHB The Supper really is a great celebration of His triumph over everything that attempted to frustrate or thwart the will of God.

AAC What you have just said links with your last scripture; there is a vessel suited to be described as His wife: when we take account of the exceeding glory of such a One it brings praise to your heart, does it not?

RHB It is a reference to the assembly, "the bride, the Lamb's wife", standing in the closest and most intimate relationship with Him, and displayed with Him. The "marriage of the Lamb" is referred to in an earlier chapter, she had "made herself ready" (Rev 19: 7), but now she is coming down. He came down: "I am come down from heaven, not that I should do *my* will, but the will of him that has sent me" (John 6: 38), He says in John's gospel, and now here you see one who is coming down. I have often thought that "the bride, the Lamb's wife" has

suffered too. She has suffered for His Name; she has an understanding of His sufferings. What disclosures there have been in the circle of the truth as to the sufferings of Christ, the very book by that name is profound (*The Sufferings of Christ*, J N Darby Collected Writings vol 7), as it opens up the depth and fulness of what He suffered. In the assembly there is the appreciation of that, and a moral suitability to be associated with Him. So, you get the city having all these features: there is the wall and there are the gates; there is what has been maintained in a scene of adversity and we should desire that.

AAC That book you have referenced teaches us that we can have a part in some of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, but not all. Such a vessel must have some experience of those sufferings if she is to be found in answer to Himself as having some understanding of that.

RHB I think that is very helpful, that His atoning sufferings were His alone, none of us could enter into that, but what has often been described as His 'martyr sufferings' are something that His own know something about.

DAB It is interesting that it is this character of Christ that the bride has adopted as her identity. Traditionally, a bride takes her husband's name, and this is the name she has taken. Maybe that shows the need for ministry of this kind to help us to understand that. She will testify that He has always been true to her. The Lamb's wife morally has always been true to Him, and has stood apart from the world where He has no place.

RHB It is not only a matter of shewing forth His death but being conformed to it - that is a much deeper matter.

DAB That enters into the detail of what she wears; those righteousnesses are not self-righteousnesses, are they? They are detailed manifestations of what she wishes to be characterised by.

RHB It is not imputed righteousness there, is it? It is things that were done for His sake. We had a word recently, on what was “for our sakes” and for His sake, see *A Word in its Season* No 230. And the righteousnesses of the saints are what has been done practically for His sake.

NCMcK Every aspect of the Lord Jesus, and everything He has done, results in a corresponding answer from glory, does it not? Having the bride is some corresponding answer to that suffering love of Christ. It is

not simply a public glory but there is the glory of having the assembly for Himself, a vessel with a knowledge of His suffering love and sacrificial pathway.

RHB And that experience of it too is very affecting. We often disclaim being called the assembly but say we seek to walk in the light of it. The light of it really is bridal affection. Am I living here in bridal fidelity to the true husband, and like the woman of worth (Prov 31: 10), seeing the advancement of His interests here and bearing His reproach which is an essential part of it? Paul says, "all indeed who desire to live piously in Christ Jesus will be persecuted", 2 Tim 3: 12. It is part of it, but it is the formation of a counterpart that will minister joy to His heart eternally.

RWMcC It says, "I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife", but he saw "the holy city, Jerusalem". I wondered if there was some correlation with "the lion which is of the tribe of Juda" and the Lamb in that?

RHB Yes, I think so; the features are brought out. She is enlightened with the glory of God, and "the lamp thereof is the Lamb", v 23. That is going to be the predominant feature, as it should be now.

Sidcup

30th May 2026

List of initials:

D H Bailey, Maidstone; D A Barlow, Sunbury; R H Brown, Maidstone; R M Brown, Strood; D A Burr, Sidcup; A A Croot, Sidcup; R J Flowerdew, Sunbury; A Martin, Buckhurst Hill; P Martin, Colchester; R W McClean, Grimsby; N C McKay, Glasgow; Q A Poore, Swanage; G E Wallace, Sidcup; J R Walkinshaw, Maidstone.

"HE MUST INCREASE"

Mark B Grant

John 3: 29, 30
Colossians 2: 19
Ephesians 3: 14-21

Recently, locally, we read in the epistle to the Colossians and the verse, "but Christ is everything, and in all" (chap 3: 11) struck me. It struck me because I felt the test of it but also the blessedness of it; that Christ should be everything and in all. I was considering it and wondered how that is going to actually happen. How is that to be true of me, or of us together, both perhaps locally and universally, that Christ is to be everything and in all?

In the scriptures that I have read, the first two speak of increase, and the last one in Ephesians speaks of "being rooted and founded in love". I wondered if we could look at these scriptures in relation to Christ being everything and in all. It would begin first of all with us individually. John the baptist is a remarkable man. The Lord Jesus Himself says there was no one greater born of woman than John the baptist, Matt 11: 11. Think of the Lord Jesus saying that. John was then, from the previous dispensation, the greatest prophet. His ministry was to prepare the people for the incoming of Christ and to bring about a state so that they might be ready to receive Him. It was a ministry of repentance. The scripture says, "Make straight the path of the Lord", John 1: 23. So his service therefore must have been the greatest.

You cannot think of a greater service for a man than that - it says he was sent from God - to prepare the people to receive the Lord Jesus. Of course, we know the history. "He came to his own, and his own received him not", John 1: 11. John was also morally great. The way that he appreciated the Lord Jesus is quite distinctive. In the previous sections in this book, the gospel according to John, John the baptist was engaged in his service and he says in chapter 1: 26, 27, "In the midst of you stands, whom ye do not know, he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to unloose". That was what John the baptist thought of the Lord Jesus. He appreciated the Lord Jesus. He appreciated who He was, and it says, "He it is of whom I said, A man comes after me who takes a place before me, because he *was* before me" v 30. So he appreciated who the Lord Jesus was, but

he also appreciated what He was going to do. He says, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”, v 29. So, he appreciated morally all that the Lord Jesus was going to do.

Then he says, “I beheld the Spirit descending as a dove from heaven, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not; but he who sent me to baptise with water, *he* said to me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on him, he it is who baptises with the Holy Spirit”, John 1: 32,33. He appreciated what the Lord Jesus was going to introduce. Think of that: the light that John had was remarkable, but then it says, “Again, on the morrow, there stood John and two of his disciples. And, looking at Jesus as he walked, he says, Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples” - that is disciples of John - “heard him speaking, and followed Jesus”, v 35-37. So, his ministry in service was to point persons to Christ. He was not serving for his own glory or for his own ends. It was all for Christ and that is a wonderful thing.

I wondered if we see in the ministry of John the baptist examples of some of the ways in which, “He must increase, but I must decrease”. It is probably as well to say that there is no suggestion at all in “He must increase” that there is going to be any increase in relation to the Person of the Lord Jesus. That would not be a right thought at all. The Lord Jesus is ever the same. He is God in His own Person. There is no increase or decrease or change with Him. This is entirely in relation to our appreciation of Him: as we appreciate the Lord Jesus in some of these different ways it would have an effect upon us, and it would make a change in us. There was a remark of Mr C A Coates in his ministry that I found tremendously encouraging; he said that no impression of Christ can ever be obliterated, vol 7 p136. So, if you have an impression of Christ you can never lose the effect and value of that in your soul. You might forget what was said, you might forget the terms of what was said that caused you to have that impression, or what you read, or it might have been something in relation to the atmosphere of an occasion, but whatever it might be, if you have an impression of Christ in your soul the effect of that is eternal. That is a wonderful thing. We sometimes use the expression 'the work of God'. That would be the work of God in your soul and it becomes part of you. It is actually in you and that is what the Spirit is doing at the present time.

John says, “I beheld the Spirit descending as a dove from heaven, and it abode upon him”, chap 1: 33. Think of the complacency of the Spirit, a divine Person, resting on Christ. And then it says, “Upon

whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on him". The Spirit would *always* draw attention to the Lord Jesus. He did so in this account that we have here; He marked Him out. This had never happened to anyone else. The Lord Jesus Christ is unique in this. At the present time the Spirit would do that - He would draw your attention to the Lord Jesus Christ. We need the gift and the power of the Holy Spirit and we need to engage our minds and hearts actively with the Holy Spirit so that we are attracted and drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was thinking about how this increase would happen. Well, it is simple to say that it is occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ. That is simple to say, but then the test comes to me, do I do that and how do I do that? How much do I actually engage my mind and heart with the Lord Jesus Christ? There is a scripture in the Proverbs that I might just refer to. It is put negatively but we can look at it positively. It is in Proverbs 23: 7 and it says, "as he thinketh in his soul, so is he". We sometimes separate our mind and our heart, or our mind and our soul, and speak about them as if they are different things, and, of course, in the scripture there are distinctions, but this reference says, "as he thinketh in his soul". So I think that that shows that what we engage our minds with has an effect on our souls. And if you think of it positively, if we engage our minds with the Lord Jesus, in some way, it will cause our affections to be stimulated in relation to Him. It cannot fail to do that.

I cannot think of any time when I have engaged my mind with the Lord Jesus in some way that I have regretted, and that has not had some positive effect. It may have caused exercise in my soul; it may have caused me to see something in myself that is not right or that needs to be judged or needs to be put aside or given up, but then the positive side of it is then Christ becomes more to me. So, "He must increase, but I must decrease". I did not want to say too much about the decreasing side but, of course, as we are left here the flesh is always in us, and it is always active to try to hinder what is for God and it is always raising itself up. This increase is most certainly nothing to do with increase in relation to what we are naturally or according to the flesh; that would be pride, and we know that the first sin that we are told of was pride. Satan lifted himself up in pride and then he fell. And then the next one we are told about is that Satan lied, and then man and woman disobeyed God. We belong to a fallen race; so, we cannot build up anything on what is of the flesh. What is on this increasing line must be of Christ, and it must involve the work of the Spirit in our souls.

I read the previous verse in John 1; I do not have too much to say about it, but it is John that is speaking. "He that has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices in heart because of the voice of the bridegroom: this my joy then is fulfilled". I thought it showed that it was the things that relate to Jesus that gave John the baptist joy and satisfaction. Men spend a tremendous amount of time doing things so that they might be happy; they pursue happiness and think that the acquisition of things- whether it be wealth or whether it be experiences and that kind of thing; and these things are in us all, but if we are looking for soul satisfaction and joy is only ever going to be found in Christ.

Revelation 21: 6 says, "I will give to him that thirsts of the fountain of the water of life freely". That would be an exercise for me. Do I thirst for Christ? Do I thirst for the knowledge of God? That scripture shows us that if we do the water of life will be given freely. There will be nothing held back from the divine side. Do I seek after it? God is the rewarder of them who seek Him out. This increasing line with us really comes down to individual exercise. I was thinking, too, of what Paul says to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4: 13, "Till I come, give thyself to reading" - "give thyself". Then he says, "Be not negligent" (v 14), and then he adds, "Occupy thyself with these things; be wholly in them", v 15. That is the apostle Paul speaking to Timothy, one for whom he had much affection, and he is encouraging him to go in for divine things. I would just say about some of these things, for example, reading. If you read to find Christ, when you read you will most certainly enjoy it, and it will be for your blessing and it will be for the blessing of others too, because reading comes before exhortation and teaching. So we might look to be a help to others, but we will not help others beyond where we have progressed ourselves. Paul is exhorting Timothy in a very full way. "Give thyself"; "Occupy thyself", and "be wholly in them". That is really how this increase would happen. And I feel the test of it myself. How much time do I actually spend with my mind and heart occupied with the Lord Jesus? There are so many things that will come in to take up your time; but even when you are busy, and I say this to myself as much any, even a few quiet moments, what a difference it can make; that is my own experience anyway. You might not have much time in a busy working day, but a few quiet moments, what a difference it can make to your mind and to the state of your soul. The Lord is faithful, and the Spirit would love to give you an impression of Christ. The primary service of the Holy Spirit is to show us the things of Christ and also to

bring things to our remembrance. It is wonderful what is possible in the power of the Spirit.

In the scripture we read in Colossians, the previous verse to where we read says, “Let no one fraudulently deprive you of your prize, doing his own will in humility”. It goes without saying that we will not increase in any way in relation to the things of God doing our own will, and I feel the test of that myself immensely. But here, while it is put negatively, we can view it positively again, that “holding fast the head, from whom all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God”. So, what is “holding fast the head”? Well, it is Christ who is our Head and we are to hold fast to the Head. You cannot think of much more full expression of being attached to someone than to hold them fast. And “from whom”, that is from the head, “all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands”. And it “increases with the increase of God”; it is worth just drawing attention to that the increase is of God. Paul refers to that. He had planted, Apollos had watered, but it is God that gives the increase, 1 Cor 3: 6. So for any increase in relation to Christ, that He must increase, it is God that gives the increase. But we are to be exercised in relation to it.

And then here it is “all the body”; so that would widen out from ourselves individually. Of course, what is individual underlies everything that is collective but here it is “all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands”. So, that is something that everyone can be involved in because the joints and bands are not prominent. In a human body the joints and bands are not seen but they are what makes it work. And in Ephesians it speaks about “every joint of supply”, chap 4: 16. Everyone can be engaged in this in some way. We have spoken about receiving impressions of Christ ourselves individually, but we can share those impressions. It might come down to practical matters as well. It might be something very practical. In John's epistles it speaks there about laying down our lives for the brethren, 1 John 3: 16. If our lives are devoted to one another, then that would tend to this increase, this ministering and being united together by the joints and bands.

And then the Lord Jesus says, “Blessed are the peace-makers”, Matt 5: 9. Think of that. Think of how that would tend to us being united together, those who are peace-makers. What an asset a peace-maker is in a local place. The effect of peace would tend to this - being “united

together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God". I think it is such an attractive feature to be seen in our localities, for each one to be engaged in this way in some measure. You might not feel you are able for much. Just on from where we read in Ephesians it says of the Lord, "Having ascended up on high, he has led captivity captive, and has given gifts to men. But that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth?", chap 4: 8-9. What movements of the Lord Jesus! "He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens, that he might fill all things", v 10. That, you might say, is expansion of Christ being everything and in all: "that he might fill all things".

He has ascended up above all heavens that He might fill all things. But then it is from that place "*he* has given some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints", chap 4: 11. So, you might not feel that you have very much, and you might not feel that you have gift - and I did not want to focus on the gifts so much as the fact that each of these gifts and services are different, distinct in some way. I wanted to use that to illustrate the point that each one of us might have something different to do. We might not do something that someone else does but it is, "for the perfecting of the saints; with a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ", v 12. And that word "edifying" is similar to building up. So that would cause increase.

Then it goes on to speak of "the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ", v 13. Then it goes on to say, "we may grow up to him in all things, who is the head, the Christ", v 15. So that is in relation to this increase; it is growing up to Him. It is not growing up in any other way. If it is anything else it is not the increase of God. "From whom the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of each one part", v 16. So there it is: "each one part". That is every part of the body and that includes every single one of us. That is a tremendous encouragement: "works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love". It has often been said that in a human body it is blood that circulates but in Christ's body it is love that circulates. Love for the saints is something that everyone can have and can express. It does not require gift or some great service.

And in Ephesians 3, I read these verses from verse 14 because

of the setting of it, Paul is praying about this. We can pray in this way. I would not suppose that my prayers would be as effective as Paul's have been, but we can pray in this way for one another, for the saints. That was not really what was in my mind, but it just came to me that Paul says these things when he bows his knees “to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”. What blessing Paul desired for the saints. The verse that was in mind was “that the Christ may dwell, through faith, in your hearts, being rooted and founded in love”. If there is going to be increase we need, each one of us, to be rooted and founded in love.

I was in a high rise building recently, perhaps on the 25th floor, and there was another high rise building to be built next to it. I looked down out of the window; they had not laid the foundations, but they had dug for them, and it surprised me at how deep the foundation was. But, of course, because it was to be a high building they have to go down. It is a poor illustration but really if we are going to increase we need to have roots and foundations in love. “Being rooted and founded in love”; it would bring stability into our souls and it would bring stability into our local places, and it would bring stability universally if we are rooted and founded in love.

There are two thoughts here. One is 'rooted', which is like an organic idea; roots would imply that there would be growth, and then there would be fruit. And then foundations would imply that there would be something that would be built; it is more of a structural idea; and both of these things are in love. In relation to being rooted, that might involve our enjoyment of divine love and enjoyment of divine things. It is a wonderful thing just to enjoy divine things. There are exercises, and there are moral exercises that we have to go through, and there might be exercises in our circumstances in some way, whether it be individually or in our households or wider. We can enjoy divine things and enjoy divine love. It is a wonderful thing - for example, if you hear ministry or you read ministry or you read the scriptures, just to enjoy it. It is a simple thing to say but it is true. God would intend for us to enjoy His things, and to enjoy the Lord Jesus, and we can do that at the present time. We will spend eternity enjoying Christ. What will we do in eternity? There will not be formality there; there will be the enjoyment of Christ and His love forever. So we can enjoy things at the present time.

And then “founded”. We have spoken already in relation of the edifying of the body of Christ. God is building both individually and in

relation to the assembly. He is building His work up. As we said earlier in relation to an impression of Christ, that is a real substantial thing and that would be part of the building on these foundations. And then what will be seen is in that holy city. That is when all of God's workmanship will be seen; what a wonderful thing that is. But that is going on at the present time, and really God is on the line of this increase. There is our side in relation to decrease. We need to judge what we are, and we need to not only have a judgment of what we are but be freed from what we are. So, we think of ourselves less. That would be part of this decrease, but positively my exercise for myself and for us all is that we might be on this increasing line, that He must increase and that I must decrease. And that needs to be built on these foundations and these roots in love.

And then it goes to speak of "in order that ye may be fully able to apprehend with all the saints". Think of how wide that is: "with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height"; what expansion there is. "And to know the love of the Christ" - is there anything greater than this? - "to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge". It includes the love of Christ for us, but it also involves the love of Christ for His God and Father, and we are brought into the secret of that. It surpasses knowledge; so we can never encompass it and we will never exhaust it and we cannot comprehend it all, but we are to know it. That means that we can enjoy it, but also be formed by it. Therefore, we know it because it is in us; it is actually being formed in us. That is a wonderful thing. But then, "But to him that is able to do far exceedingly above all which we ask or think". So, we can be confident in divine Persons in relation to our growth.

I was speaking with some brothers after the reading, and it was mentioned in relation to the scripture in Philippians 1 that Paul had confidence of this very thing, "that he who has begun in you a good work will complete it unto Jesus Christ's day", chap 1: 6. We can be restful in relation to these things as we have our confidence in God. Of course, it involves exercise and energy of affection, and actually engaging our minds and hearts with the Lord Jesus. But God is going to complete that work in each one. What a wonderful thing that is. We spoke in the reading about Christ's work being completed but He is going to complete a work in us individually, and it will be seen in a coming day in the assembly.

I trust that these words might be for our encouragement, to be

on this increasing line; and it says, “to him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus”. That is the objective or the end in view, that there would be response for God and that God will have His portion.

May the Lord bless the word.

Edinburgh

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CERTAINTY

Paul Martin

John 3: 14, 15
Acts 2: 21
1 Corinthians 15: 25, 26
Philippians 2: 9-11

I hardly need to say that we are living in very uncertain times. Whatever aspect of the world you look at, everything is uncertain. I was talking to a man this past week who was worried, and he said the only certain thing that there is, is death. In one sense that is true, because it is the wages of sin, but there is no uncertainty in the gospel and these verses that I have read speak of what is certain.

It is a wonderful thing that God is speaking today; not only of what He will do, but of what He has done and the One who has done it. There is nothing uncertain in that. The Lord Jesus, in coming here, came to do the will of God. There was nothing uncertain in the movements of the Lord Jesus. He came with a purpose and, right at the beginning of His public ministry here in John 3, He speaks of what He is going to do, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, thus must the Son of man be lifted up". The only answer that there was and is for the condition of man lies in this blessed Person. He was no afterthought with God. No, the blessed God knew right from the beginning, even before sin came in, that He was going to bring in His Son, who would effect the work of redemption; that everything would be secured through that blessed Man. Nothing has fallen short of what God desired. We had reference this morning to His purpose and God's purpose is as good as done. The purpose of God flows out of the love of God. If God purposes, nothing can stay it, because He is God, nothing can stop it proceeding. Right from the beginning of time, God had in view this blessed Person, His only begotten Son. He spoke to the serpent; He said the woman's seed "shall crush thy head", Gen 3: 15. Yes, He was looking on to our Lord Jesus who was coming in, a glorious, blessed Person coming into this scene, moving here amongst men, not with uncertain movements.

You think of the next chapter in this gospel. It says, "he must needs pass through Samaria", John 4: 4. He had to do that - why? Because He was looking for a sinner, a woman who was at the lowest point that a sinner could go. She had had five husbands and was living

with someone who was not her husband. The Lord Jesus knew it all. Was He going to write her off as no good? No, He must needs go that way so that He might speak to that woman, set her free from the bondage of her sins, and cause her to become a worshipper. Could that be for her? Yes, she is one of the earliest persons that He secured in His pathway here according to John's gospel. The woman had a history, but He was going to meet it all. How was He going to meet it? He was going to be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. The One whom I am speaking of, our Lord Jesus, is none less than the Creator of the universe: "he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast", Ps 33: 9. Could He not meet the whole question of sins by a word? Could He not deal with Satan by a word? If you and I were to have salvation and come to know not only that our sins were removed, but that God's love was towards us, it required that our blessed Saviour should go that way to the cross and be made sin on our account -

If sinners ever were to know
The depths of love divine,
All Calv'ry's weakness and its woe,
Blest Saviour, must be Thine. (Hymn 431)

What He could do in His power, and by a word, was wonderful and we are left to worship as we think of it, that one divine Person could speak and the whole universe came into being. But the way my Saviour went was to the cross, dear friend, and He was lifted up out of the earth. It was not possible that He could die on the earth.

He had glorified God on the earth, and He had to be lifted up out of the earth, but He was going to meet the whole moral question that had come in between God and man. It is not that God caused the distance; man brought in the distance; he hid himself. Have you ever hidden yourself from God, conscious that you are a sinner? You are not acceptable in His presence in your sins. Adam felt like that; He hid himself, when the heart of God was such that He was walking in the garden seeking the company of man. Think of the feelings that lay behind the call, "Where art thou?", Gen 3: 10. Where art thou? He may say that to someone sitting here today: where are you in your soul? Are you saved or are you lost? There is no other alternative, dear friends; you must be one or the other. Persons say, 'God gives you a choice in the gospel'. God is not giving man a choice in the gospel. No, He "enjoins men that they shall all everywhere repent", Acts 17: 30. He is

not giving man a choice; He is giving man a responsibility to answer to His love and to answer to His call, “Where art thou?”. He would say that to you and to me tonight, Where are you? Where are you in your soul in relation to God?

If that distance was to be removed, it required that One should bear God's judgment against sin, against that awful thing that has come in and run through the whole human race. Millions and millions of persons have sinned, and sin has to be judged; and it could only be judged in the person of our Lord Jesus: “Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us”, 2 Cor 5: 21. What an amazing thing that is. You think of that blessed Person, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners” (Heb 7: 26), but think of Him being made sin. We can hardly understand it. But, if God's love was to be known by us, it was necessary that He should go into the distance and bear the judgment of God against sin. It could not be judged any other way than that He should be the Sin-bearer and the Sin-offering. What a Person the Lord Jesus is, hanging there upon the cross. Think of those words - we have to be careful in repeating them, because of the feelings and agony that lay behind the utterance of them: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”, Matt 27: 46. He had never known a moment in that pathway in which He was not in communion with His God and Father. There in those three hours which - if I might speak reverently - must have seemed to our Lord Jesus like an eternity, so awful were they that He cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”. Dear friend, He did it because of me, because of what I had done: can you say that, that 'He bore my sins in His body on the tree'? Not only was sin judged, but my sins, every one of them. I could not count them all; I can count only very few. He knew them all and He bore every one in His body on the tree.

We read these scriptures, and if we are not careful, we pass over them lightly sometimes, because we are so used to them, we may pass over them unfeelingly. You think of what it meant that He bore my sins in His body: what that meant to Him! Not only did He bear my sins, but He bore the judgment of God against them, and removed them entirely through His precious blood. It is a wonderful thing to know the Saviour and to know the work, to know that that precious blood was shed for sinners as we sometimes sing, 'shed for rebels', Hymn 167. Can you say, 'It was shed for me?'. Have you ever put your faith in the blood and person of the Lord Jesus? Can you say that blood was shed

for you? Dear friend, I speak feelingly.

We have in the book of Acts, “neither is there another name under heaven which is given among men by which we must be saved”, chap 4: 12. We must be saved: I cannot tell you to leave it until tomorrow; I could not do that. There was a well-known evangelist in America who said in his preaching to come back next week, and tell him if you believe. For many of that congregation there was no next week: the city in which they were was burnt by fire, and many, many lost their lives. That evangelist said, 'I have never dared to give an audience a week to think of their salvation since'. Dear friend, we cannot say to you to leave it until tomorrow: today is the day of salvation; “To-day if ye will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts”, Heb 3: 15. I plead with you; there is no other name. You can put your faith in the name of the Lord Jesus, the one who has been into death, the One who has born the judgment of God. Not only has His work removed my sins, but He has also removed the penalty for sin: “For the wages of sin is death”, Rom 6: 23. He has borne that penalty and removed it for the believer. You may say that death is everywhere, but for the believer death is not a penalty anymore; it is not the judgment. Death becomes a doorway into the presence of the Saviour. It is a wonderful thing that He has borne the thing itself and the wages as well. What a wonderful Saviour Jesus is.

If you do not know Him as your Saviour, turn to Him today. He is waiting for you. As He went that way in John 4 to seek that woman - went that way for one soul - so today He is seeking in Buckhurst Hill for one soul, that you might put your faith and trust in Him and might know Him as your own personal Saviour. We have referred already to these words that were uttered at the beginning of the dispensation, “for neither is there another name under heaven which is given among men by which we must be saved”. That scripture does not suggest that there is a choice. There is no choice. God is not giving man a choice for going on in their sins; no, He has blessing in mind. Everything that He does comes from His heart, and He has blessing in mind. Salvation involves not only freedom from what I am and what I have done, but the doorway into eternal blessings, to know the love of God. He is commending His love to us. He is doing that tonight, commending “his love to us, in that, we being still sinners, Christ has died for us”, Rom 5: 8. What a God: He is commending it, He is saying, 'This is how much I love you: will you accept it? Will you accept it tonight?'.

I read in 1 Corinthians because there is no uncertainty as to this

blessed Person who has done the work. He has been exalted at the right hand of God. Yes, that is where He is today; He is there as a Prince and a Saviour. He is not on the cross, not in the grave. The grave could not hold Him; He broke its power. The watchman was there to see that no one rolled the stone away. The One who was in the tomb was the object of the Father's love. The Father came and raised Him from among the dead. He has exalted Him at His own right hand. He is a wonderful Person there in the presence of God. He is there for you, dear friend; He is there for you tonight. He is "always living to intercede for" us, Heb 7: 25. How wonderful that is. He is there because He knows when you confess His Name. Confession of the name of Jesus is important. "For with the heart is believed to righteousness; and with the mouth confession made to salvation", Rom 10: 10. The Saviour is there in the presence of the Father. He hears you confessing His Name and He mentions your name to the Father. What a wonderful thing that is. You say, 'That is just in the Bible'; but it can be in your heart too. You can know it, dear friend, the consciousness of knowing that the Saviour is so interested in you when you are confessing His Name that He confesses your name before the Father and before His holy angels. All the resources of heaven are available to the person who aligns themselves with the Lord Jesus. While you are in a scene from which He has been rejected, all the resources of heaven are there to strengthen you and encourage you in the scene in which men may deride and mock. The One who was mocked and derided more than any is there; He knows exactly how you feel and He mentions your name to the Father. What a wonderful privilege.

How the believer has resources that this world could never provide! The believer has the resources that come from the heart of God. They are available in this blessed One who is living now and He is reigning. We have had already today that "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand", John 3: 35. Yes, nothing is out of control. If there was not divine control, matters in this world would be awful, awfully out of control. Everything is under control; you can have the assurance of that. The Lord Jesus allows things to run a certain course, but only so far. Soon the presence of the Spirit will depart from this scene. The Spirit is here indwelling believers. That is another wonderful resource that the believer has, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Who is the Holy Spirit? He is God. Where is He? James tells us that He has "taken his abode in us", James 4: 5. Think of that, a divine

Person come to dwell in your heart and in mine. How wonderful that is. We are living in the greatest day that there has ever been, when a divine Person is here dwelling in the hearts of believers. Have you received Him? Have you been conscious of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit? Perhaps you have never asked. I can say this with assurance: you could not have the gift of the Holy Spirit without being conscious of it. He changes things in your life. He helps you to turn aside from the things that once occupied you, that were against God. He helps you to turn aside from all that. He fills your heart with the love of God. Indeed, it says, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit", Rom 5: 5. That is a wonderful experience. Maybe, when you are on your knees speaking to the Lord Jesus or speaking to the Father, you get a sense that that love is towards you in a way that you had never realised before; and the Holy Spirit loves to do that. He sheds it abroad in the heart. He occupies the believer's heart with Jesus, the One who is seated on the throne. He occupies you with Him because you are united to Him. That is a wonderful thing, to know that you are united to the Man who is reigning at the present time, and will reign. That blessed One has manifested and proved His love for you in a way that no one else could ever do. He loves that you should find Him as the object for your affections because He loves you.

The gospel is so wonderful because it is about a Person who is so glorious. This blessed Person, "he must reign". It is not just that He may: He must; the One who has been so low, the One that went down, as it says in Jonah, "went down to the bottoms of the mountains" (chap 2: 6), is the same One who is now at the highest point of fame in God's universe. He reigns. He would love to reign in your heart, dear friend. It is wonderful when He has that place, when He fills the heart and has that place not only of authority - as true as that is - but authority with love. How wonderful that Saviour is. "For he must reign until he put all enemies under his feet". He is going to have that: very soon believers are going to be caught up to be with Jesus. We are going to meet Him in the air. I find it so wonderful that I am very soon going to see the face of my Saviour: it may even be today; I am going to see the face of my Saviour and actually hear His voice. Believers are going to be caught up and we are going to be with Him forever. Then after a short period He is going to come out over this earth and He is going to reign publicly. Evil then will be banished. The scripture says, "A king sitting on the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes", Prov 20: 8. It will flee from before Him. He will introduce righteousness and peace on

an earth where lawlessness and violence have prevailed. He will introduce righteousness and peace and there will be a time upon the earth that there has never been before. The Lord Jesus will be reigning. The believer looks forward to that, not only to His coming for us, but for His public vindication when every knee will bow. The kings on their thrones will get off their thrones and they will lay their crowns at His feet. They will acknowledge that He is far, far more worthy to reign than they ever could be. They will acknowledge that that blessed One is the One who alone is worthy. How wonderful to have the joy of acknowledging that now. We are not sitting on thrones, but we can set aside what we are and bow at His feet and tell Him that He is worthy to reign publicly in a day to come. I desire that He might reign in my heart now. One could write -

'Tis the truest joy and blessing
Jesus as our Lord to know,
Here to yield Him full allegiance
Follow in His steps below. (Hymn 111)

It is, dear friend. I know just a little of it. It is the truest joy to know that Jesus has control and rule in the believer's soul: “he must reign until he put all the enemies under his feet. The last enemy that is annulled is death”. He has already broken its power. Yes, but He will introduce the universe where death will never enter again; it will be gone. What a wonderful scene it will be, especially for the believer. It will be a sad moment for the unbeliever to be left behind when the Lord Jesus comes to take His own.

Dear friend, it is a wonderful thing that the believer will know what it is to have eternal bliss in the presence of Jesus: “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow”. It will be every knee - heavenly, you think of heavenly beings; maybe we have not seen them, but they will bow the knee to Jesus, at the mention of His Name; earthly beings - we know what they are; and infernal beings, beings that we have never seen; even they will bow the knee to Jesus at the mention of His Name: “at the name of Jesus”. I do not want to be fanciful, but I have often thought that in the world to come, persons may be walking down the street, maybe in Buckhurst Hill, and the name of Jesus will be mentioned and persons will bow down, bow the knee and say that He is worthy to be Lord. Every knee shall bow. The whole earth and the scene in which we are will have to acknowledge that that blessed Person is the only One who is worthy to reign.

Well, dear friend, the gospel comes to you and to me: does He have that place in my heart? Have I bowed the knee to Jesus, accepted Him as my Saviour, and put my faith in Him? He will never let you down. I have let Him down many times, but He has never let me down. How wonderful to put your faith in someone who will never let you down, whose work, and the effect of His work, will stand not only for time but for eternity because God is satisfied with all that the Lord Jesus has done, and He loves the One who has done it.

May the Lord bless the word, for His Name's sake.

Buckhurst Hill

17th May 2026

Three volumes of ministry by Bert Taylor are now available - entitled, 'The Waiting Time and Other Ministry by Bert Taylor'. They can be ordered at www.lulu.com – as paperbacks or e-books; or downloaded as e-books from www.awiis.com. Two more volumes will follow in due course.

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