

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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CONTENTS

The Ark
Page 1

The Lord Jesus as Priest
David Spinks
Page 21

THE ARK

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Exodus 25: 10-22

Joshua 3: 1-6

1 Samuel 4: 1-11

1 Chronicles 14: 13-17; 15: 1-3, 16-18

DS It will be obvious from the scriptures we have read that I mean to take up the thought of the ark, and we may get some help together in relation to it. The ark in the Old Testament is one of the greatest types of the Lord Jesus. It has different titles, the ark of God, the ark of the testimony, the ark of the covenant, and the ark of Jehovah; and that has been related to the four gospels (CAC vol 6 - Outline of Joshua p16), showing the scope of all that was carried out by this Man, the Lord Jesus, for the pleasure of God. The ark was at the centre of the tabernacle system, and everything stood in relation to it. All the tribes and the children of Israel were centred around it, and when it moved they moved, but I think there is something to learn as we keep Christ at the centre of everything, as God did it of old; it is something we have to learn, to see the glory of this blessed Man.

We read in Exodus, which is a well known portion of scripture, as to the making of the ark, the structure of it. It was made of acacia wood, and it was overlaid with gold, bringing out the perfection of the manhood of Jesus, the durability of the One who was here in relation to the will of God. He was the One who endured, who stood against the enemy, but One who moved in relation to the will of Another; who moved here in dependence. He was the One, as it speaks of it here in type, overlaid with gold, who demonstrated in every manner and every action what was in the heart of God. It is a wonderful contemplation therefore to see this blessed Man as One who was here in relation to the will of God. Then there was the mercy seat of pure gold; there was nothing of man in that: it was all of God. How beautiful a matter it is to see that God found His righteousness in a blessed Man, One who fulfilled it, One who worked everything out here and glorified God here in going into death. How we can ponder these wonderful attributes that were seen in our Lord Jesus. We can get some help as to the detail of this chapter, but I think it helps us as we ponder it, to see the glory and uniqueness of our Lord Jesus. It is something we, young and old,

should seek to do, to follow that blessed Man, and as we follow Him the glories that belong to Him become more and more to us, and help to take us away from the trivialities of this scene.

If we follow we will come to this portion of scripture in Joshua where they are ready to cross over. Here it says "there shall be a distance between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Ye shall not come near it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore". I think there is something to learn in that, and we can get help together. As the believer seeks to move in relation to the attractiveness of Christ there is something distinctive about the two thousand cubits, and I think again as we ponder Him we shall move and be attracted in this way of preparing to go and follow Him. As we know, the Jordan represents our death with Christ, and as we go through that we come into a wonderful inheritance! We come into something that God has in His heart for us, so that we may learn and move in relation to it. As we follow the Lord Jesus in our pathways here, and as we go through the Jordan, not only do we become followers of Him, but we become guardians; not only do we love Him, but we love what He loves. That is something that the believer has to learn, not only to love the Lord Jesus, but to love what He loves.

And sadly we see in 1 Samuel how the ark is taken, because of the corruption of the priesthood. God had committed things into the hands of man, and sadly it had been lost sight of. You see much of that in Christendom today, where the name of Jesus and the things of God are put on as a veneer but underneath there is not the real love for Christ, or desire to protect who He is and what He holds in relation to the will of God.

That is why I read finally in Chronicles because every true heart and every true lover of Jesus should seek to bring the ark back to its true resting place, bring it back to a place where it should be! The tent here was a provisional thought; it was a provisional thought in the wilderness; it was here until the temple was built, and it was until Solomon built the temple that the ark stayed here; it is a temporary idea. It is an idea of where the ark had its resting place, and where there was a resting place the singing began: the service of God can commence when Christ is at the centre, and He is given His real place, and when

He is given the only place. I wondered if we could look into these scriptures to see the uniqueness of the ark and how we can seek to bring it back, as God brings out in 1 Chronicles.

PAG What you are saying about its distinctiveness is important. You had an impression about the link with the four gospels and I wondered if you might open that up for us a little.

DS It just brings out the scope of the manhood of Jesus, as standing in relation to the One who came here to do the will of God. He displayed something of all that was in God's heart, of the One who was here as a true Servant. He also displayed something of the wonderful covenant relations that man could know and which He enjoyed Himself; I think that is brought out in Luke's gospel. But then I think the ark of God has been said to be John's gospel, bringing out the glory and uniqueness of who He is in His own Person.

PAG I think what you say about John's gospel is helpful. In Exodus 25: 16 it says, "And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony that I shall give thee". It says at the beginning of John, "In the beginning was the Word", chap 1: 1. Do you think God is coming into expression in that way in this blessed Man?

DS Yes, surely; God is fully expressed in Christ; every attribute of God was seen in Him. He displayed every characteristic feature that was of God Himself and God found pleasure in that blessed Man; the Spirit could rest upon Him. No other man was here like Christ was, and it is helpful for each one of us to ponder and contemplate the uniqueness of the manhood of Jesus.

JAB The ark itself, which would speak so much of Christ, was in its literality an inanimate thing, but verse 22 says, "there will I meet with thee, and will speak with thee". I am thinking of what was quoted, "In the beginning was the Word". Does God have in mind that, as we come and take our bearings as it were from the ark at the centre of everything, divine communications can flow? And from one point of view that is why the Lord Jesus came into this scene, that God might communicate with His creature and He had that in type in this chapter, did He not?

DS I think that is very helpful. There is a Vessel by which God could communicate; He could make known to man His feelings in relation to him and He could relate in that blessed Man, a Man who had feelings in

relation to man. These things were seen perfectly in Christ, and I think we see in the scope of the four gospels the way that the Lord came out in relation to His own; He came out as feeling the relation to man in sin, He came out in relation to how God felt as to it, but yet this glorious Man is none other than God in His own Person. These things help us to appreciate the ark and its uniqueness, do you think?

JAB I am glad of what you say. We are gathered today for teaching and fellowship and encouragement, but we are gathered to listen. The “thee” in verse 22 was Moses, and he went in there and he heard what God said to him from the mercy-seat. And we are gathered, with every one of us, I trust, having some exercise to hear what the Lord would say to us today through what might be said about Him from these types. We should all be waiting to hear something, because that is what Moses did when he went in.

DS Well, I think where there are those who have affection as Moses did, and seek to hear the Lord's voice, He would speak to us. He would speak to every heart here today as to the attractiveness and uniqueness of His Person. And if He speaks to us, then it is in view of us following Him. The ark is at the centre of God's operations; it is Christ at the centre of everything for God now, and if we see Him there, we will see everything that God is doing and it will help us and attract us in our pathway here.

JCG Do you think the gold without and the gold within brings out the glory of who was here? The glory of the Person! But is it not a tremendous matter that the small dimensions of the ark bring to us how God has come into these circumstances in the Person of Jesus, that He might come near to us; as we have quoted, “there will I meet with thee”. It was a tremendous stoop, was it not?

DS I think what you say is helpful; that is the way that God has sought to come in to communicate to Man. When He came in He was seen as “a babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger”, Luke 2: 12. What was there, the Holy One of God! How wonderful a matter that is to ponder that this is the way God saw fit to come near to His creature, so that His heart could be made known, and that man could understand the heart of God in such a lowly way, in such an attractive way in One who was not at a distance, but One who understood, and who desired to draw near to, man; these features were

seen in the ark.

JCG John in his epistle stresses that: “that which we contemplated, and our hands handled, concerning the word of life”, 1 John 1: 1. But he recognised the glory of the Person as has been referred to in his gospel.

DS It is good for each one of us, and for the younger ones, to understand that the Lord is near to us. You know Him as your Saviour, and that is a wonderful thing, and I think this is a step further as coming to appreciate Christ as the ark. You need to work moral exercises out to see that this is the only Man, this is the only Man before God, a different order of Man, a different character of Man altogether; and it would behove each one of us - and I say to my younger brethren, that you should seek to leave every other man aside, and to follow this order of Man. If you do you will be lifted up, encouraged, directed, and you will come to see God's appreciation of this order of Man.

GAB Say a word as to the fact that the mercy seat is of pure gold; the ark was acacia wood covered with gold, but the mercy seat is solid gold: what does that mean?

DS I am sure you can help, but “pure gold”: there is nothing of man here; this is all of God! That again carries something of the dignity and majesty of the Person that was here. It speaks at the beginning of Romans of how God has come out to man in pure mercy; because of the Man who was here righteously in relation to the will of God, God has a basis to show mercy towards men. But that really is as there was One here who was fit to carry such a vessel; the mercy-seat fitted perfectly on top of the ark.

GAB Well, there were other elements in the tabernacle system where acacia wood was used, so that features of that precious manhood of the Lord Jesus have to be carried out in the saints, do you think? But as to the mercy seat being pure gold, it is just what is divine, is it not? And the cherubim looking down upon it seemed to suggest what was divinely perfect; God was complacent in it. Perhaps it might relate to John's gospel?

DS Yes, that is helpful; I like what you say as to complacency. The heavens opened upon this blessed Man, and the Spirit descending as a dove upon Him, came complacently on Christ, Matt 3: 16-17. I think there is something distinct about this blessed order of manhood which it

behoves every one of us to ponder, and to see the distinctiveness of it, to recognise the glory that belongs to the ark. But the Lord is a real Man, and that is something that should attract our heart, and it is something that the Spirit would help us all to do, to seek to follow the ark, to see the glory of it, to see the glory that is in Christ. I think it would help us to see the paltriness of things in this world, help them to fade and disappear.

RG It is interesting that when the ark finally found its resting place in the house it says the staves were drawn out, (1 Kings 8: 8 see footnote). It tells us there too that the cherubim not only covered the ark but they covered the staves as well, v 7. Do you think, linking on with your thought as to the gospels, that God would claim the gospels in that sense not merely as a history of the life of Christ but as a divine pronouncement that would serve to bring out His mind?

DS I think what you say is very helpful. So that it shows the current speaking of God, does it not? It is not just a matter of what is written down in history by four men, but it is something that is current to the believer and the Spirit would help us at a time like this to make these things living to us, and to see that this is the blessed Man who has ascended into heaven, this is the blessed Man who God has found His delight in. We see in Chronicles how everything is brought back and I think that everything ascends to the praise of God if Christ is in His rightful place.

NJH The faces of the cherubim are opposite to one another, “toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be”. The word “turned” is in brackets which is rightly so because they are turning from nothing else; their total occupation is on the ark, is that right?

DS Is it to do with the protecting of the rights of this blessed Man, who He is? This Man is unique and God will do everything to protect who He is in His Person.

NJH The rights of God are recognised in this blessed One. It says, “toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be”; as if it is a characteristic view; they are not turning from any other man, there was nothing anywhere else, but the rights of God are recognised: it is as it were this blessed One where their faces are to be. Is that right?

DS Very helpful. Again it would encourage us to see that God can

recognise this Man and so can we! God recognises His rights, and God is not looking at any other because this is the Man that solely carried through everything for God's glory. And it is a contemplation for us to ponder Him and to keep our eye upon Him.

JTB As to the reference to the mercy-seat being of pure gold, the blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, was it not? I wonder if it linked with "in whom we have redemption through his blood", Eph 1: 7. There is perfect consonance between the Person and the blood, the blood and the One to whom it belongs.

DS It shows the value of the sacrificial work of Christ in relation to this blessed matter, so that God has a righteous basis to come out in mercy towards men. Everywhere you look in relation to Christ there is something distinct; there is something glorious to take account of. I think the more we look at this blessed Person the more glories come out; we will never exhaust them!

JTB In Numbers 10 the ark took the initiative; it set forward "to search out a resting-place for them", v 33. Really is it love's consideration that the Lord Jesus typically would operate in such a way? Do we find that at the moment, the Lord taking the initiative in many things to find a solution and a resting-place for us?

DS I like what you say; it says in Joshua, "go after it ... ye have not passed this way heretofore". I think in the day in which we are, where things are broken down in Christendom, it is wonderful to see that there is One who takes the initiative, taking the lead in bringing everything for the glory of God, and His doing that includes the saints. It includes you and me because really as we take up our inheritance I think we see in Chronicles that God receives His. It has often been said that as we take up our enjoyment of Christianity God receives His, and I think we see that in 1 Chronicles.

DCB Mr Darby says;

We see the Godhead glory

Shine through the human veil, (Hymn 188);

I was wondering about that in relation to the dimensions of the ark. It would remind us of what there is that there is something always blessedly beyond our ability to comprehend.

DS It would hold us in a state of worship. In relation to the

movement of this blessed Person, we sometimes sing:

Blessed Man, and yet divine (Hymn 147).

We can contemplate and we can take account of Him and who He is in the greatness and beauty of His manhood but there is always that which is beyond us in this blessed Man.

DCB I suppose from a human point of view, these dimensions, the one and a half and the two and a half cubits, might seem somewhat peculiar: why would it be like that? But it shows something of the glory and majesty of the inscrutability of Christ, does it not? “No one knows who the Son is but the Father”, (Luke 10: 22), but then there is One who has a complete view of the ark, who saw the acacia wood which no one else did!

DS I like what you say; there is One who has a complete view of it! He is the One who put His full trust in this blessed Man and committed everything into His hand: “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand”, John 3: 35. He committed everything into the hands of this blessed Man, and God had confidence that He would carry it through to His glory.

JCG In Psalm 110, David seemed to have light as to the incoming of Christ; it says, “Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand ...”, v 1. When the Lord presents that to the Pharisees He says, “If therefore David call him Lord, how is he his son?”, Matt 22: 45. It brings out the mystery of the fact that God is with us, Emmanuel, would you say?

DS I think that is helpful; it is confirmative what is being brought in as to the glory of who this Person is. There is a mystery, and there is something in this blessed Vessel, the Lord Jesus, which is always going to be beyond us. I think what has been said helps us. I think that brings out again the matter of the two thousand cubits: it is something beyond the believer, but we follow and worship, following as taking account of the glory of who is there; and as we follow there will always be something more distinct that will come out in relation to the blessed manhood, and the blessed glory of who is here, the Lord Jesus.

TCM We referred to verse 11 about the overlaying with pure gold inside and outside, and inside comes first. I wondered if there is an illusion there to God's intrinsic delight in His beloved Son. And if God is satisfied with that One, surely He is able to satisfy every living soul.

DS I think we see that in these thirty years in communion with His Father, (there are only three and a half years public service), which you may say are part of the inside, which is what He found His delight in, but then this blessed Man came out in public service, and the heavens opened upon Him, the Spirit rested upon Him, and there you can understand a little as to why God has chosen such a Man!

AB I wondered if the way that Paul speaks in Romans 3, “whom God has set forth a mercy-seat, through faith in his blood” (v 25) would underscore what you are saying. Mr Darby has got a very interesting footnote as to the two aspects of the great day of atonement, which are interesting in relation to that.

DS I think what you say is helpful: God has set Him forth as a mercy-seat through faith in His blood. Again it is the glory that belongs to the Lord Jesus; this was the only Man who righteously fulfilled the will of God, the only Man who God has confidence in, and the only Man giving God a reason or a means where He can come out in forgiveness, and mercy towards His creature. The mercy-seat upon the ark is a wonderful study.

In Joshua; they had “not passed this way heretofore”. I think this is encouraging for us as we take up our Christian path, that we are always in movement, we are always moving in relation to the ark; and as we move always in relation to the ark we will reach God's purpose, we will see things as God sees them and find another glory that belongs to Him that is unique to Him. This is not the Lord Jesus in His death in a sacrificial way; I mean that it is not in relation to our sins: this is in relation to the majesty of the Man who is going into death. I relate it a little to what we had in Edinburgh a few weeks ago, “I am the resurrection and the life”, John 11: 25. This is the One who was going in to destroy death, to break its power forever and to come out with those who had faith, on the other side; it is wonderful to ponder Him and to take up life with Him on the other side, and to come into an inheritance. I think the ground changes as we go through this path, we not only love Him but we love what He loves.

AMB In relation to where you have read in Joshua 3, is it interesting that the people had to hallow themselves in verse 5; “Joshua said to the people, Hallow yourselves”? I wondered if that would connect with what you are bringing in; there really had to be some degree of

conformity between the people and the ark, and how much more that should be with us as believers in and followers of the Lord Jesus, do you think?

DS That is very helpful as to conformity, that as we follow this path the attributes that are so perfectly seen in the Lord Jesus start to come out in the saints. As we work our exercises through Romans we start to take on the character of the acacia wood, we start to take on these wonderful moral features that were seen in Jesus Himself and these are features that God can take account of. Here this is our death with Him; this is a people who say that they want nothing else, but to be where Christ is, and they are features that God can take account of and approve.

AMB I wondered whether what you have been bringing before us as to our death with Him being seen in the ark going through the Jordan would lead to hallowing or sanctifying, and what is in view is saints coming into the power of life that is in Christ, and for us that is by the Holy Spirit, is it not? But the result of that is affection for Christ, conformity to Him, and following Him into the land.

DS Yes. I think it is good when you see progress being made in young believers who are following the Lord Jesus, and with all of us, but especially with the young. We are living in difficult days and it is good to see young ones who take on these moral attributes, that they come out like the One who they follow and their desire is to go in to see the Lord Jesus where He abides. "Follow me", He says, and there is a great attraction to a person who loves the Lord, and then he comes on to this ground to not only love Him, but to love what He loves.

JCG Do you think the hallowing is connected with the pausing of three days? It says they "lodged there before they passed over. And it came to pass at the end of three days". We need to pause in relation to the aspects of the death of Christ that affect us so that we are able to judge ourselves and move over into privilege, do you think?

DS I think what you say as to pausing, to take account of the death of Christ and see the enormity of what a work it was, and the greatness of the Person who has brought it to pass. The more we ponder the sacrificial work of Christ, where He has been in death, the greater will be the appreciation in our hearts of the opening up of all that has been brought for us as we ponder His death.

JCG Well, if we apply it to ourselves Paul says in Corinthians, “let a man prove himself, and so eat ...”, 1 Cor 11: 28. We have to eat the Supper and understand the way Christ has gone in view of the new and living way. It is the only way we can understand entering into privilege properly, is it not? We appreciate Him, not only in His priestly service but as the Minister of the holy places, because what was in view was that they were going into the land.

DS I like what you say as to proving himself “and so eat”; it does us all good to take account of this in order that we may be in a right state to enjoy this on the other side of death. This is not a once-only matter, but it should be something that should be consciously in our exercise, that we should have the desire to go over into the land, go into an area which is of privilege where the purpose of God can be enjoyed. There are things that are eternal which can be enjoyed, and we can enjoy them with the blessed Lord Jesus Himself.

JSS Do we all have to have an individual view? It is interesting it says, “the officers went through the camp; and they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark ... then remove from your place, and go after it”. This is a very large company, you might have thought practically if only a few followed the ark everyone else could go with the crowd, speaking simply, but the important thing was that they all individually looked on the ark, and that led to unity, did it not?

DS Very good, what you say is very helpful! This matter leads to unity, but we must take it up individually. How this is a test to every one of us, how much do I love the Lord Jesus? Am I prepared to follow Him? Am I prepared to follow Him to where He has been? But I cannot follow Him until I see something of the glory of what He has accomplished as going into death for me. I did not work this matter out; He did. I did not go this way; He did! But, as I say, I am prepared to go in order that everything may go out of sight, and to enjoy something of the land conditions as here on the other side of death. This is the Lord's desire for every true heart, but what you say is helpful, that I need to do this individually, to go after it. Is it attractive enough to me that I follow, that I leave everything behind and do it? It is an exercise.

RG A little later Joshua says, “Hereby shall ye know that the living God is in your midst”; that is a very important thing, is it not? It is not just an objective knowledge of God but it is the God who is able to bring

about change and lead us on in the presence of whatever may arise, do you think?

DS Yes, I think so. So it is a very encouraging matter, is it not? There is One who will lead us on whatever exercises may come upon us. This is a matter that we follow through attraction; we must be attracted to Christ, and again I ask all of us, and especially our young ones, if we are attracted to the Lord enough to leave things behind here. The enemy is very busy, and he brings many things in before us, not just our young but all of us, but is the Lord Jesus so attractive to me that I am prepared to leave them, and see the glory of what He has secured as going into death, abolishing the power of death? I liked what was brought in in Edinburgh as to “I am the resurrection and the life”; it is the Person and the glory and the majesty of the Man who was going that way.

RG Do you think there is the side in which we need to make room for the Lord to work? We need to make way for His operations, give Him scope, if I may say so reverently and He will operate; He will answer the exercises of the saints.

DS Surely; the Lord will answer every true heart. Where there is true affection the Lord will answer it, and where there is the individual exercise we will find as we follow Him we will come into unity. Every heart and every desire and every footstep we make in relation to Him we will all come in together. This is a wonderful triumph of divine Persons that people are moving together in relation to the Lord Himself.

JAB Do you think we see it in John 1? John the baptist was “looking at Jesus as he walked”, (v 36); it aroused the disciples' interest, and then they ask, “where abidest thou?”, and “they abode with him that day”, v 38-39. Do you think that every expression of affectionate interest in the Lord Jesus will be answered by that nearness? I know in Joshua there is a distance, and we know what that means, but as we move towards Christ He would bring us into His presence and we get something there that we cannot get in any other place.

DS I think what you say as to “where abidest thou? He says to them, “Come and see” would be the answer today to those that love the Lord: “Come and see”. And as moving in this way we come to the Jordan and we see the glory of the Person and He would say, “Come and see”: come and see what He has abolished, come and see the

victory that He has triumphed, and come into the area of the land where His rights have sway.

GAB It is important, do you think, that is says, “Ye shall not come near it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go”; “**must** go”; there is no alternative? I think that is important because the mind of man might suggest that different aspects of religion are all admissible and so on, but there is only one way into the heavenly inheritance. We may decide otherwise at our cost, but this is the way, the only one; there is no alternative.

DS Very good; there is only one way and they had not gone “this way heretofore”, showing that it is meant to be for each one of us a matter that we take up once; it is not a matter that they go in and enjoy it, and come back out, and go on with their own self-will and do as we wish, but as we are attracted to our Lord we will go. This is a once-only journey, speaking carefully, that we go in, and we follow Him and we will never look back.

DAB I was thinking as to what has come in as to what these persons saw; so it is important to have our vision clear, do you think, to be able to see the movements of Christ? In Hebrews 12 it is “looking stedfastly” on Him, v 2. These persons would have to do that if they were to recognise the movements of the Lord. Do you have some impression as to that? It would have been quite easy for these persons to have become distracted.

DS I think what is coming in is helpful as to the movements of the Lord, and again it is a test to every one of us; we need to look within our own hearts and to ask 'Is He attractive to me? Do I want to follow Him?'. And then if we do the Spirit will help us to take up this journey in order that we move through the Jordan and into the area of prosperity where there is abundance of joy, where there is life, and where Christ is the Centre.

DAB I was thinking of this expression that you have referred to several times, “for ye have not passed this way heretofore”. Now that might have been quite a challenge to these persons, but do you think when our faith is active, and our love is fixed on that blessed One then we will move as the Lord moves, and He will take us into that heavenly abode that you are speaking of, that wonderful inheritance? This is open to every one of us, the question is whether I am attracted into that,

and whether I have a desire to go over and enjoy it.

DS Do you think the Lord would take away all fear in relation to the journey that we have to make in relation to it? He would strengthen our faith, He would show us something of the way; He would hold us and attract us and keep us in relation to going into this area where there is something further. Even naturally, if you read something that you seek to follow and understand, you would turn the page to see what is to follow, and so it is like that in relation to the glory of Christ, you keep going in and you see something further of the glory of the Lord Jesus.

NJH It is always confirming; I was thinking the stones that were left in the bed of the Jordan would be a confirmation to them that it was right to leave their place, but when they see the stones taken out of the Jordan they would see it was right to follow the ark!

DS As you say it is confirming, and every step that we take in faith the Spirit of God would confirm us in, in taking the right step, and something further would come into our view. And we would seek that today for every one of us, that something further of the glory of Christ would open up into our view. So again, to go back to what our brother said, which I think is very helpful, we should move together. That is the Lord's interest I am sure, in a difficult day when there is darkness around and where there are many lords and many gods, but there is only One who can bring us in and sustain us and hold us together.

KJW Has it not been said before that these movements in Joshua are like the movements in Colossians? I had in mind: "If therefore ye have been raised with the Christ seek the things which are above", chap 3: 1. That is like what we have in this passage is it not, going over Jordan? They did not go through Jordan, they went over Jordan. There is another realm that comes onto view where "the Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God", and so on. Is that what is in mind, that we have our minds and our affections attached to that Man who is above?

DS Yes. I like what you refer to, "things that are above"! So these things sustain you in relation to another realm: when you walk through the wilderness, you are sustained here in the wilderness. When I go over the Jordan in this aspect I myself am gone, nature is gone, everything of the flesh has gone, and now I have another Man in another world; and the Spirit sustains me in that - "have your mind on the things that are above", v 2. When you see these things, they are

spiritual things, but you are sustained in them and you are lifted in your heart, and you see the things in contrast to what you have left behind.

We should move on to 1 Samuel, not to dwell on it too much but just to show what has happened as things have been committed into the hands of men; things fail. Nothing ever fails in Christ and never shall, but things fail if put into the hands of men. And sadly the ark is taken. God allowed this matter of course, and I think we can see that in Christendom today, man seeks to use the name of Jesus in Christendom in the many churches there are, but it has put men in the place where Christ should be, and that is very sad. This is the place that is only for one Man; and that is for God's Man, but sadly when things are committed into the hands of men they fail, and that is a lesson for us to learn. We see the corruption of the priesthood; someone has said when the priesthood goes the ark goes, and here we see what happened and that came to pass.

JCG There is a need for us to be morally sound. These sons of Eli were taken up with what was for themselves, but it says in the previous chapter that "Samuel lay in the temple of Jehovah, where the ark of God was", chap 3: 3. They were not concerned about the ark; they were only concerned about the sacrifices and what was for themselves. A moral background - meaning that we are occupied with the ark as in Joshua - brings us to save loss in conflict, do you think?

DS You see the great contrast in Samuel as one who had feelings in relation to the ark and one who frequented the presence of God. We see in the two priests here, Hophni and Phinehas, those that did things for themselves. They had their own mind and their own thoughts and what was for their own prosperity in mind, and God never supports that when we do things for our own means in the things of Christianity. This is something that may provoke great anger to divine Persons, when we take up divine things for our own means and our own pleasure.

AMB Are the moral features that we see in Hannah at the beginning of this book the antidote to all of this?

DS Yes, say more, that is very helpful.

AMB Well, I was just first of all thinking of Hannah's contrite spirit, her broken and contrite spirit, and her tears; and then her desire that the best that was of nature - thinking of the son that was to be born - she

would dedicate that to God. She really dedicated herself, did she not, out of a contrite spirit; she dedicated herself to God, and that has its application to us, do you think?

DS Very helpful; as you say as to Hannah, she had a sorrowful spirit, she felt the circumstances that were around, and we should do likewise, but she wanted a man-child that she was going to commit to God. Everything we have, in that sense, as we understand and see something of the glory of the Lord Jesus, we should really commit to Him and to God, in order that things should be maintained righteously, and maintained rightly for God.

AMB And God is able to use that in a way that we might never expect. I am sure Hannah did not expect that Samuel would go on to be the great prophet in Israel, and God did not let any of his words fall to the ground, but God was able to use her commitment and her own repentance and sorrow.

PAG This section in 1 Samuel really throws into emphasis the importance of what we have been speaking of in relation to our death with Him. In Romans 6 our death with Him means that we walk in newness of life, in Romans 7 it means that we serve in newness of Spirit, but when you come to Romans 8 it says “but if Christ be in you, the body is dead on account of sin, but the Spirit life on account of righteousness”, v 10. It is not that I am claiming Christ but rather that He has claimed me!

DS That is a very good word, and a good way to put it, not that I am claiming Christ, but that He is claiming me! And that again is the ground that we take, that He has claimed us, that we belong to Him. And I have moved from the sphere of my own nature and everything, all these ties are all gone, and I now belong to another; and if I belong to Him, I hold the rights that belong to Him, and I seek to be here as someone who protects that which is precious to Him.

SD I wondered if the Lord on the mount of transfiguration is perhaps an example. Here we have these two men who have the audacity to stand by the ark. The ark is the focus, and they have no business being there. Is there something in that? Peter wanted to make different tabernacles, but the objective is Christ.

DS Yes, the objective is Christ! Wherever you bring in man to the

things of God it puts Christ out of context, it diverts from the blessedness of that Man, sets Him aside, but as was just said He is the only Man. I come to it that I belong to Him. I think it is an important thing that has been brought out, that these two men here seek to do something in a holy atmosphere, for their own good. As we see at the end of the passage that we read, death comes in; God has to bring in judgment where there are those who do not seek to regard the ark properly, in that context.

DCB So we see that God always entrusts the ark into holy hands. You see how there is safety in it, God has that in mind, that there should always be holiness associated with what would carry His testimony forward.

DS That might take us on to our last scripture because I think we see in David one who had right instincts and right feelings in recovering the ark. He was a man who had failed, but now he came to understand that the ark should be brought back to its rightful place. It would never be brought back to Shiloh, which was the place where things failed, but it was brought to Jerusalem which was God's original thought. It is a wonderful thing to see that God's original plans and thoughts never fail and Christ is always at the centre of them. David established the kingdom and when the kingdom is established there is a place where Christ can be brought in and given His rightful place. Everything is there in subjection, there is order, and then in that order there is a place for Christ to be given His rightful place.

DCB You see that these persons, the Levites, who could carry the ark, therefore become the persons who can take on the service of song.

DS Well, I think again the Levites who carry the ark are going back to God's original thought. We see earlier as to the new cart, that was not the way it should have been transported, but this is according to Moses, this is according to God's original thoughts and God's original thoughts never fail. David got some impression as to that, that things should be brought back, brought back to somewhere specific. And here was a tent, and a tent is a provisional thought, and we have that today, that it is a provisional thought, because we await the day when Christ will come and will reign on this earth. It is wonderful to have a desire to be among a company who provide an environment where Christ can have the first place, and that is where the singing is, that is

where everything is in place, and that is where the service of God goes on.

JCG In chapter 14 David enquired of Jehovah, of God: is that an indication that he is near to God and dependent on God? And if matters come up in relation to opposition, as the Philistines were, we need to be with God in relation to His word first so that we understand the way that He will move. Independence of movement is the contrast to that, is it not? We might move independent of God, but David is enquiring of God and therefore he knows that this is the right way.

DS So in dependence on God the Philistines were defeated, whereas before the Philistine was overcome that was man in independence. But now we have a man who is dependent on God who takes direction, he goes in relation to where he should go, and the enemy is overthrown and David is given his rightful place. David is a man who sought to understand the heart of God and it is helpful in every exercise that we should seek to understand God's heart and be governed by what He says, and then in every instance and every time the enemy will be defeated. It is wonderful to understand that we cannot do things on our own, but we can do them as under God's direction.

JCG I thought of the earlier reference to the staves carrying the ark. The people knew that the ark was there, and it is important that Christ is with us as we move. I know that it is wilderness conditions in that scripture, but the staves suggest that the carrying of the ark is with the people, and if the ark is not with the people then there is going to be trouble, is there not?

DS Yes, it is good to see that the staves represent those who are exercised to carry the ark. And as carrying the ark you would always have the mind of God. If you were right in relation to carrying the Lord Jesus and moving in testimony through the wilderness then you will always have the mind of heaven in relation to every matter. I think what you bring out is helpful.

NJH God designed the place for the ark in the tabernacle, but here what is needed for the temple is prepared by David. Could you say something about the difference please?

DS Well, you can help. I suppose the first thought is that it is God's

original plan that the Lord should come in and He should have a place, but here I think David is a type of the believer, and he is a type of a believer who gives Christ His place; and really this stands in relation to God's thoughts. We always know - speaking reverently - the place that God gives Christ: He is in the Centre of every operation for God; but it is a wonderful thing when the believer comes to it, and I think David is a type of the believer who gives Christ His rightful place.

NJH Priesthood in our dispensation depends on the new order, does it not? The priestly family depends on the new order; I thought David was coming into that, the new order of man coming out in David that could do the preparation for the ark in an intelligent way.

DS So that as we follow the ark there is a formative work and you see and begin to understand what is God's desire in relation to what is holy and what should be kept for this blessed Man. It is not just something that we hold in a casual manner, but it is something that is holy, precious to God, and, do you think the priest in that sense has these feelings?

PAG What do you think about this reference at the end of chapter 15: 15, "as Moses had commanded according to the word of Jehovah"? Do you think that along with what has been spoken about as the priesthood, what is apostolic also enters into this? I was thinking of Paul's word in 1 Corinthians 11, "For I received from the Lord, that which I also delivered to you", v 23. We have responsibilities in relation to what has been delivered to us through the apostles; and it all leads to Christ.

DS I think what you say as to the authority that has been given, and how things have been handed down, these are precious things; they were precious to the apostles, they were precious to the twelve, and should become precious to us, do you think? And I think it is wonderful to see that there is an order here, "And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God upon their shoulders, with their staves upon them, as Moses had commanded according to the word of Jehovah".

At the end of verse 18 it speaks about the doorkeepers and the singers. I think the more we protect the rights of God, the more we see the things that are precious, and keep out that which is not according to it, there will be a greater answering note in the service of God. The doorkeepers and the singers were the same numerically; so that what

there is in the service of God answers to those who seek to protect the ark in all its preciousness.

JAB All of this is that there might be more for God in response; as Christ has His place - and we see that in Chronicles, the singers and the musicians are as one. So that really the whole of our conversation this afternoon if we take it in with the help of the Holy Spirit, will flow into what, Lord willing, we will enjoy at the Supper tomorrow morning, and that is the whole point of it. It is not just so that we might know more about typical scriptures, although that is helpful, but it is that our hearts might be more responsive to divine Persons, is it not?

DS I think what you say is very helpful, and we begin to learn that. There is a hymn that we sometimes sing;

And to know the blessed secret
Of His preciousness to Thee. (Hymn 277)

These people here would know something of the blessed secret of the preciousness of the ark. We come to understand something of what Christ means to God and the more we see of it the more we should seek to follow, and we will only follow if we protect His rights in the world that has cast Him out.

Grangemouth

11th November 2017

List of initials:

A M Brown, Grangemouth; D A Brown, Grangemouth; D C Brown, Edinburgh; G A Brown, Grangemouth; J A Brown, Grangemouth; J T Brown, Edinburgh; A Buchan, Kirkcaldy; S Duthie, Aberdeen; J C Gray, Grangemouth; P A Gray, Grangemouth; R Gray, Grangemouth; N J Henry, Glasgow; T C Munro, Grangemouth; J S Speirs, Grangemouth; D Spinks, Grangemouth; K J Walker, Dundee

THE LORD JESUS AS PRIEST

David Spinks

Hebrews 4: 14-16; 7: 25-26; 10: 19-23

John 13: 3-14

I spoke a few months ago as to the matter of the priest; it is something that has been on my heart, and I seek a little help from the Lord to say something as to it. I think it is something that we need to understand in a greater manner, so that we rely and lean on the Lord Jesus in this wonderful character.

At the beginning of this epistle, the Lord Jesus is spoken of as the Son, and He is the one who inaugurated this wonderful system of Christianity; not only does He inaugurate it, but He is the one who sustains it. That is a wonderful thing to take account of, the One who inaugurated it, who brought it to pass; the blessed Lord Jesus who it speaks of in the beginning of Hebrews, who is the effulgence of His glory, the expression of His substance, the One who created the heavens, who made the worlds. It goes on to say, "and upholding all things by the word of his power", Heb 1: 3. That might be in the physical universe, but I think it is true in the moral universe that He upholds all things by the word of His power. I think there is great comfort, great grace, and great help for us today to see not only that the Lord Jesus brings things to pass, but He sustains it all. He sustains it all in His might, and He sustains it all in His love. He upholds each one of us as a real and loving Man.

We need our hearts and our affections uplifted, and we need to look upwards - I say that for myself. We are passing through a difficult day; we are passing through exercises, but it is wonderful to take our eye away from the earth and see things as they are in heaven, see a Man who is seated at God's right hand in heaven, and see a Man who sympathises for the people of God; see a Man who cares for His people; a Man who has been here in like manner to ourselves, sin apart. This is a blessed Man who cares, and who sympathises, and who is able to sustain every saint here in this room. That is a wonderful encouragement. It is a wonderful thing to know that the One who is your Saviour is also your Priest; One who is your Lord and Master is also your Priest. I wonder if we can take that in. I say to my younger brethren today, lay hold of this matter, that the blessed Lord Jesus, the

one who is your Saviour, is the One who can hold and sustain you all the way home.

It has been said, in relation to the Priest, that you need to put your hand into His hand and never take it out. I think Peter, as walking on the water, failed in that matter and so do I, so do all of us. We need to put our hand into the hand of the Priest and never take it out. His hand is always available to every saint, but is my hand ready to go into His? I think it is a friendship; it is something that you trust. Do I trust Jesus enough? Do I trust this blessed Man enough to know that He can sustain me whatever exercise I pass through? Do I put my hand into His hand and never take it out? Dear young believer here today, you may be wondering what is going on. You may be wondering what is going on even in the circumstances around you, at your work, in your household, or even amongst the saints. I would encourage you to look upwards and see how things are working out in heaven. See the Man who has gone into heaven, and see the Man who is able to sustain you as One who has feelings in relation to yourself. How wonderful and glorious a matter that is. How wonderful it is to see that this blessed Man, who was here in a condition of flesh and blood, who was tempted, who was sin apart, is able. The Lord Jesus is not only glorious and great in His own Person, but He is a real Man; He feels for every one. He feels for everyone in this room. He has sympathy for you in the exercises and trials through which you pass, but not only does He have sympathy for you, He is able to carry you through. I think that is wonderful to know. We feel for one another, but it is a greater thing to know there is a blessed Saviour, a blessed Priest in heaven that is able to carry you through every exigency in which you pass.

It is a wonderful thing today, dear brethren, that we can rely on this blessed Man, who, it says later in this epistle, has gone into heaven for us, Heb 6: 20. How wonderful and great a matter this is. There is a blessed Man who lives in heaven, ever living to intercede for us. He holds the saints in His heart. The high priest had the names of the tribes on the shoulder pieces and on the breastplate, and every name is there. The breastplate is encompassed in gold and has the seal on it, and it is never taken away. How wonderful a matter that is. Your name is there; my name is there; every true believer that loves Jesus is there. And He is able to carry you through. He is able to sustain you, and give help to those who pass through many exigencies - think of those

passing through pressure in their bodies. He is able to give you the grace that you need, to carry whatever your exercise is. He was one who passed through here; He passed through this scene like you and me. He was tempted, but He was sin apart; the enemy never ever had an inroad into this blessed Man. Not like you and me, because the enemy has inroad into us, and we fail. I would like each one of us to lay hold of this, that we do not need to fail. Sometimes I say to myself, 'Well, I have failed'. If I laid hold in a greater understanding of the glory of who this Man is as Priest, I would never fail. I would never fail because He will carry me through. He will sustain me, and He will sustain me in relation to the place where I can come in and sit down and understand something of the heart of God. That is a wonderful thing. He sustains me in the testimony. He sustains me, I believe, in every exigency through which I pass, and He knows what I need. "Having therefore a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession". He has passed through the heavens; there is only one Man could do that. There is only one Man who could go back into heaven. And that is His place. It gives us some indication, some touch in our heart, of who this blessed Person is - Jesus the Son of God. He is a real Man, but He is no mere man. He is divine, and He is glorious in His own Person. This blessed Man has the ability to sustain us. How blessed a matter that is. "We have ... a high priest ... able to sympathise with our infirmities, but tempted in all things in like manner, sin apart". Think of the Lord Jesus, as being tempted by the devil, tempted by the enemy. Think of Him in Gethsemane; He was sin apart. This blessed Man is distinct, unique, and beyond compare. He was different than every other man. Let us lean on Him; let us lay hold of that, and this blessed Man is able for you and He is able for me. He is able to carry us. "Tempted in all things in like manner, sin apart. Let us approach therefore with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace for seasonable help". Whatever the season may be, the Lord is able for it. He is able to come in, and He is able to bring in the comfort. He is able to bring in the grace and He is able to sustain those who need it.

There are many today passing through infirmities in their bodies; He is able to bring in comfort. There are many exercises on the hearts of the saints. He is able to direct the saints in relation to God's thoughts, because another thought of the priest is that he sustains the

saints in relation to what they are in the light of the purpose of God. He does not sustain us in our self will, but He will sustain us in our weakness. If we are all honest with ourselves, we all have a will; we go and do things we ought not to do. I do not think we will get the sustaining grace of this great High Priest in that, but if we feel our weakness, feel what we are in our weakness, and cry out to the Lord Jesus, He will sustain us. That was Peter in the boat; he walked on the water to go to Jesus. He had faith to see the Man who would see him through every exigency. And he walked on the water through faith, but he took his eyes off the Lord Jesus, and he began to sink. How often we take our eyes off Christ. We take our eyes off that blessed Man and we begin to sink. He cried out, "Lord, save me", Matt 14: 30. Maybe we need to do that tonight. You need to put your hand again back into the hand of the Saviour, and know what it is to rely, in your weakness, on One who never fails you - to rely upon the One who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and to the ages to come", Heb 13: 8. You are to rely upon One who will keep you through every exigency through which you pass, and sustain you in the light of what you are, as a son of God. How wonderful and glorious a matter that is.

He sustains you because you are part of the divine family; that is true of every saint here. Every saint here is a son of God. Every saint here, in the eyes of the Lord Jesus, is dignified. And He seeks to maintain you in the dignity of what you are in the eyes of heaven. That is a wonderful thing to take account of. The Lord Jesus is the Son, and it is through sonship He came into priesthood; that underlies His priesthood. So He knows something of what the dignity and the relationship is that is due to God, and how we are meant to be held in relation to our walk here as sons of God. I say again, do not think for one moment that you can do your own will and find the comfort and strength of the Saviour as a Priest. He will recover you, yes, he may do that; He might bring in discipline to pull you back, but you will never know the comfort of the Priest in doing your own will. You will know the comfort of the Priest if you go on, feeling your dependence and your weakness. It is a wonderful thing to go to God and cry for help in whatever you need. Weakness in the eyes of the world, in the eyes of men, is failure. Weakness before God acknowledges that He has abundance to come in and support you. He will support you in whatever you pass through. He will hold you; He will maintain you; He

will succour you through every circumstance, and He will keep you above the circumstance. And He will give you the grace to walk here in the dignity of what you are as a son of God. I think that is wonderful. Every believer who has faith in Jesus, and who has the gift of the Holy Spirit, is a son of God. That is a wonderful thing. Do not hold yourself at some low level, dear young friend, dear fellow believer; do not hold yourself down somewhere where you are not dignified and not able; you are one of the sons of God; you are dignified. You are able to be taken alongside and loved as Christ is loved; that is how the Father views you. And the Son, who is a Priest, seeks to hold you in the dignity and majesty of that relationship. We use failure as an excuse; I do anyway. We do not need to fail because there is One who can sustain us in our infirmity. This blessed Man it speaks of here is “able to save completely those who approach by him to God, always living to intercede for them”.

I wonder if I could ask every soul here if you have asked the Lord today to intercede for you, to come into your circumstance, whatever that may be, and to help? He is “always living to intercede” for me. This is a living matter; it is something that is current today as it was yesterday and will be tomorrow. This blessed Man is holy; He is separated. It speaks of the matter of holiness; He is one who knows good and evil, actually willing good and not evil. There is something distinct about Christ, something distinct about this blessed Man. He knows good and evil perfectly. What evil there is in the world; what corruption there is. Lay yourself in His hand, and He will keep you in the dignity of what you are, and strengthen you to see what is right and what is wrong, what is morally right in this world, what is according to God in this world; and He will sustain you and maintain you, and He will help you on your way.

He will give you guidance as to what you need; He will open your eyes to who He is. Think of the two walking on the way to Emmaüs; He opened their eyes, Luke 24: 31. “*He* made out as if He would go farther” (v 28); the Lord as Priest will go as far as you need Him to go. He would go with you all the way, and would go even farther. He would take you by the hand, and if you are exercised, He would lead you. He is like a shepherd in that sense; the shepherding and the priestly character of the Lord Jesus go on together. Think of the ninety-nine in Luke 15: He leaves them, and goes off, and finds the one sheep;

He puts it on His shoulder, and He brings it back to the house. You might be lost for the time, but you are not lost in the sight of the Priest; you belong to the company. Maybe you are not functioning as you should; maybe you are not enjoying Christianity as you should; maybe the Priest will come in and touch you tonight, and put you on His shoulder. It shows the strength of His love. The shoulder pieces and the breastplate are held together; the strength of His love and His affection go together. What strength there is in Jesus; what strength in this great High Priest. It does not matter where you are.

I believe we would be encouraged tonight to look up. A blessed Man in heaven is feeling for you in your circumstance, and is able to come and meet you. I say again, put your hand out. Put your hand into His hand, and He will guide you, and keep you, and keep you in relation to the purpose of God, keep you in relation to what you are as dignified in the sight of God. He will strengthen you and keep you all the way home. We speak of Him as an 'all the way home' Saviour: this is Christ; He is a wonderful High Priest. This is something that has been on my spirit a while, because we need Christ. We need Him in this function because we are passing through difficult times. We are passing through times of exercise. We are passing through matters which are concerning the saints; leave yourself in the hand of the High Priest; leave yourself in the hand of One who cares for you. He will guide the saints together; that is another beautiful matter. We sometimes waver and wander; the Lord will only lead His saints in one direction; He will keep the saints together. The number twelve has the thought of administration, and that was on the breastplate - He is holding the saints together in unity on His heart. When we see things as Christ sees them, as we are led as He was led, He will teach us to see things as He sees them Himself. We need to follow, and we need to hold on because then we can see as the High Priest sees, in the dignity that He holds us in; we see things as God sees them. We view things from a different aspect and we move in the light of that. Let us be encouraged; let us be uplifted. Let us hold on to the greatness and glory of what divine Persons are doing at present in this dispensation, and let us move.

That first scripture stands in relation to our help. In chapter 7 in relation to the Priest, He is holy, and He is harmless, and He is undefiled. He is approachable; there is an approachable character in

Jesus. Do not be afraid, dear young believer. He is harmless, and He is undefiled. We touch things; we see things; we go to things which defile us. There is no defilement in this blessed Man. He will hold you in relation to the purpose of God, and He will sustain you in relation to the purpose of God. He will hold your heart. He is unique and beyond compare. Not only does He help us in our trials, He will help us as feeling for us in the trials through which we pass. He has gone into the holy of holies. Somebody said, I read, and it affected me, that you do not go into the holy of holies to speak - you go into the holy of holies to listen. I thought that was very interesting. You go into the holy of holies to listen, and you come out to bear praise in the assembly. It affected my heart to think of that. You can go into the very presence of God and you can see things as God sees them; there is no variableness here. There is nothing to distract here. We go in with a pure heart. We must go in with right feeling; we must go in with right desire, and go in to listen. I wonder, I say again to my own self, do I go into the presence of God? In the past dispensation the high priest went in once a year for his own sins and the sins of the people, but we can go in at any time. What a blessed matter that is. This blessed Man has gone in once; He has established an eternal redemption. We can go in at any time, and as we can go in, we can listen. It says of Asaph in the psalm, he went into the sanctuary, and there he understood, Ps 73: 17. Maybe you do not understand; maybe I do not understand; there are many things we do not understand why. Go into the presence of God and sit and listen, and He will give you direction. He will give you help. He will let you see the glory of the relationships that are established there. I think you come out and you answer in the assembly. What a blessed matter that is. May every heart here be encouraged by that, to see that we go into the presence of God, the very presence of God Himself where we can sit and we can listen.

And we can come out - I think you come out a worshipper, and you come out with some substance in your soul. There is something added of character, there is something added of colour, something added in vibrancy to the service of God, by those who have gone in, and sat at the feet of God, speaking reverently - sat and listened to what God has to say. There are many elderly ones here today, and you can see and you can tell those who have been there far more than I have ever been, but I get some touch in my soul that there is something to

sustain the believer today as we see things as God sees them. And we come out and the answer is in the assembly, to God.

Well, may we be encouraged. May our hearts be thrilled to see that this blessed Man has made a way in for us. How wonderful a matter it is that we can approach, through “the new and living way”. We can approach through that, “in full assurance of faith, sprinkled as to our hearts from a wicked conscience, and washed as to our body with pure water”. We need to be right, in accord with the divine presence; it is a holy presence. We need to wash, need to be sprinkled, need to be clear in our conscience of everything else. We need to go, I say again, and sit and listen. I think if you listen, and you are in dependence, and you are feeling your need, and you are pure in your thoughts and in your motives, God will answer you; and if God answers, I think there will be something in your heart that will be wrought for the glory of God. That is the priestly side of the grace of Jesus; if He is a priest, it is due to each one of us that we should be likewise.

That is why I read in John 13; not only is He a Priest and carries us right into the presence of God, but He shows us the manner in which we can take up priesthood and how we should care for one another. This is something that we should do more often, and especially in the days in which we live. The enemy is attacking the saints, and he is attacking relations with one another. I believe this is a matter which will help. Am I low enough, or am I too great to go low and to wash the feet of the saints? The Lord was showing this matter by example. Wonderful matter, that this blessed Man - who He is in the greatness and glory of His Person! - was prepared to lay aside His garment, and to put on a linen cloth. He was prepared to lay His glory aside, and here He was prepared to wash the feet of His disciples, as He had walked through a defiling scene, where He had been rejected. We are in an environment in the meeting where He is loved and adored, but as we go out of that door, and as we go to work, or wherever we go, that Name is rejected; it is counted as worthless - the world's system places no value on that Name. How wonderful that was then, when this blessed Man was prepared to stoop down. He is prepared to show, by the way of example, how we ought to wash one another's feet. I say for myself, we need something of the character of a priest who would take this matter on, that would go and wash another's feet. Am I prepared to go down? Am I prepared to go down so that I can wash, and bring someone back?

Bring back someone into the area where they can be responsive in the praise and worship to God, and to the Lord Jesus Himself. The Lord Jesus will always show us how we should do things. That is another wonderful trait of this blessed Man. As a Priest, He will show us the way in which things are done. I sometimes go and do a matter, I jump in, I barge in, I maybe do things which upset someone. The Lord will never do anything that will upset a soul. Are we prepared to go down? Am I prepared to go down? Am I prepared to wash? The enemy is seeking to bring in anything that will spoil things for God. He is seeking to bring in things that will distract you, and take you away from the wonderful matters of Christianity and from the service of God. It is a wonderful matter to be a priest therefore - to seek to have these exercises, that I care for God's people as He does. As we take the hand of Jesus, as priests, we will learn how He cares for His people, and we will care for them as He cares for them. This is my simple desire, and my impression, dear brethren.

I just close, reading from Romans 8: 35-39. This is a wonderful portion of scripture. It says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? According as it is written, For thy sake we are put to death all the day long; we have been reckoned as sheep for slaughter. But in all these things we more than conquer through him that has loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord". Well, I think this would encourage every heart that, wherever you go as you go out through the door, when you go to your work on Monday morning, take courage from this, that you can triumph over the world, and triumph over the enemy, as knowing that nothing can separate you from the love of Christ - tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or sword. We do not have some of these things in this country nowadays, but there are those who were prepared to be persecuted for the name of Jesus. How great, or how strong is my love for the Saviour? He will sustain you through every exigency, everything that you pass through, but not only that: "we more than conquer through him that has loved us". There is a triumph for God, I believe, in a saint who overcomes, who walks through this world as cast out. You might be rejected; you might

find there is no place for you at school when you confess the Lord's name, but you triumph over the world. There is recompense for you because the Priest will sustain you. He will give you the grace to move through this scene until the Lord Jesus shall come. Let us be encouraged.

Let us look up, and see things that are being sustained in heaven. There is no breakdown there, no failure in heaven. There is no failure in God's thoughts. The failure lies with me; the failure lies with those who have to hold these things - and that is myself, but there is no failure with Christ. Let us hold on to these wonderful and glorious matters. Let us hold on to the Man who will sustain us all the way through and let us go into the presence of God, to find and to listen to what He has to say.

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

Grangemouth

11th November 2017

