

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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“THE STABILITY OF THY TIMES”

Isaiah 33: 5-6

1 Kings 7: 21

Song of Songs 5: 10, 15

John 14: 25-27, 15: 9-12

Revelation 3: 12

DJK I thought, dear brethren, we might consider in this occasion Him who is “the stability of thy times”. It is a tremendous thing, and I was confirmed in our brother's hymn (Hymn 69), speaking to the Lord Jesus, because we may be at a critical juncture at the present time, where I feel for myself that there is a decision that has to be made. I trust each one of us has made that decision to be here in committal to divine Persons. There is a real exercise, but there is real salvation in coming to the meetings; we are thankful for everyone that attends. The Lord Jesus would want us to recognise that He is the stability of our times. That requires that you make a committal because you recognise that there is Someone there to support you. In spite of anything else that comes into your life, in spite of any other decision to be made, He is there to support you as you commit yourself. What you will find when you do this is that there are others who have done the same thing, which you are extremely thankful for. You thank God for them because God has a wonderful resource in the saints, a resource for Himself and a resource for us too, because we are divine property. Those that know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour come into the gain of that. Indeed every man belongs to God.

I would like us to consider the greatness of the Lord Jesus as the stability of our times. I would like the brethren's help in opening this up in Isaiah, but it seems there came a critical juncture at this point in Isaiah, as the prophet was speaking to Israel. It is as applicable to our day as it was then, “He shall be the stability of thy times”. This was written long ago and it was applicable to Israel at that time; and it is applicable in our time. We might enquire what stability is, and the first thing I would say is that the Lord Jesus Christ is God's righteousness. Stability comes from righteousness. The Lord Jesus as God's righteousness is stability. I think it is clear to any of us that there has been instability ever since Adam. God has taken account of that even early on, and He has brought in One that will be the stability of our times. This is what we might consider in Isaiah.

I read the portion in Kings because this is the setting of the

building of the temple of God, and what is set up there is these two pillars. I want to enjoy what these two pillars mean. One is Jachin - 'He will establish' and the other is Boaz - 'in Him is strength'. These two features mark the Lord Jesus. The name Jachin does not only mean He *is* established; it says 'He *will* establish'. One gives character to everything that is for God, because in Him is stability. He is able to establish everything for God. He is able to establish that in you and me because in Him is strength.

The portion in the Song of Songs is another example of stability and what is unmovable. It does not mention the beloved's feet here, it does not mention his movements, but it mentions his legs as pillars of marble set upon bases of fine gold. Think of what is precious for God in what is unmovable. Now a kingdom has been established through the Lord Jesus that is unmovable because it is built on what is stable. Then we get,

His bearing as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

Lebanon, I understand, refers to the mountains and the thought of elevation comes into that. The thought of the cedars is what is noble. Solomon used cedars in the temple. The beloved here is stable for the bride: stability is brought in here; and then how his desires are for her. We should think of that and know the Lord's desire is for us.

In John, I was thinking more of the effects of stability. We had in the reading in the house this morning the thought of comfort, and I think it would give great comfort to the people of God to recognise the Lord Jesus as their stability. We are in a world that is changing. It reminds me of Mr. Darby's hymn -

No infant's changing pleasure
Is like my wand'ring mind. (Hymn 51)

I thought we could get great comfort from the features that come out in Him who is stable. We have "*my peace*", "*my love*" and "*my joy*". We need to enquire about the necessity of the Holy Spirit in that. In Luke 4 it speaks about Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit: "But Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan", v 1. The features of Him who is the stability of our times are now going to be available to us. How necessary the Spirit as a Comforter is to us, to open to us the things of Christ as John 16 shows; "he shall receive of mine and announce it to you", v 14.

What we arrive at in Revelation is stability in ourselves because

of the Person of Christ. There will be features found in heaven in a coming day, pillars: "a pillar in the temple of my God"; think of the stability of a pillar there. It is all based on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I wonder if we could get help from this?

RG I think it is a prophetic word for us at the present time, especially in current exercises. I can see how stability is so much needed in our lives. Stability involves balance. What you have brought before us is very helpful.

DJK I like what you said as to balance. It is interesting that the references to stability show many features of balance. First of all are "the riches of salvation". Then we follow with "wisdom and knowledge". Then, "the fear of Jehovah shall be your treasure". Would the brethren help me to open that up? It seems to be that these features mark God to bring in the stability and the balance that is so much needed.

APD "Grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ", John 1: 17. This brings in stability.

DJK That is good, can you say more about that?

APD It is an exercise to hold all these things together. Sometimes we stress truth without grace, and sometimes we imagine grace without truth. It would help us to hold "grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ", John 1: 17.

DJK Very good. I was thinking earlier of Him who is God's righteousness, and how it says that "grace might through reign through righteousness", Rom 5: 21. Mr Darby has a note about righteousness without grace but I think it is important to recognise that God's righteousness will prevail, because grace is founded upon it.

JAH It is good to know where the Lord is at the present time, and our relationship to that. He is on high, He has sanctified Himself for us as high Priest, but this relates to us down here. Is that another way to think of this matter?

DJK Yes, I think it is very helpful because otherwise we are on unstable ground.

JAH When we see the Lord we shall be like Him; and everyone that understands that "purifies himself, even as *he* is pure", 1 John 3: 2, 3. That is the present position. He is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners", Heb 7: 26. This is His present position; and so are we in this world, 1 John 4: 17. We are to be like this, are we not? Do

you think this is the reference point?

DJK I am glad that you have brought that in because there is a tendency with the enemy to divert us from that every moment. That is what I would like to gain from this reading: when the enemy comes in like a flood, are we weighted down by what he brings in or do we turn to the One who has been there before? He is the stability.

DFH God constituted man with balance, two arms, two legs; these are all needed for balance.

DJK I am glad you mentioned that because I thought of the many examples there are in scripture, but I was thinking especially of Peter and John and the man at the temple who could not walk; and then it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene that he was able to rise up and walk, Acts 3 1-8. Then we have the woman in John 4; there was an imbalance there, and yet the Lord was able to restore her so that she could say, "Come, see a man", v 29.

GMC I just wanted to ask if the pillars represent the establishment of what is going forward, but in the New Testament we get the idea of a foundation developed.

DJK I am glad you brought that in because we may not have understood the pillars and think they are just for holding something up. When we come to the New Testament, we see the importance of a foundation: "other foundation can no man lay" (1 Cor 3: 11), and then we also get the idea of the corner stone. Everything takes its bearings from the corner stone, so stability is arrived at. Everything from God works downward, yet what is established works upward. Do you think that is how glory returns to God?

APD In Isaiah 32: 1-2, it says, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm; as brooks of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land".

DJK That is exactly what we are saying. We who are established in Christ are based on a firm footing and it is a "great rock".

APD It is a Man and it involves support. There is a Man that is available to us, is that right?

DTH It is the Son of God; it links with what He says, "on this rock will I build my assembly", Matt 16: 18. Say something about this.

DJK Peter is one who came into the gain of that. Peter proved that, so much so that he realised that the stability that was in that rock was enough for the whole assembly. He desires to bring that out in his epistles. He was seeking to address that in his epistles, even to Jews.

DTH He brings stability into this most unstable world, Christ the Son of God.

DJK We were speaking in the car on the way up about the titles of 'the Son of Man' and of 'Son of God. I would like some help on that. I think it is important to take hold of Him being the Son of God because it is what He is for God. Everything is established on a firm foundation because He is God's righteousness. He may be our righteousness, but He is God's righteousness: that is the first important point.

RG On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand. (Edward Mote (c1834)

That would support what has been brought up.

DJK I think that is helpful. The Lord in that portion you brought in asks, "Who do men say that I the Son of man am?" (Matt 16: 13); then He comes back and asks, "ye, who do ye say I am?". It is not so important to the Lord what other men may be saying, as what *I* am saying. Peter is able to answer very affirmatively because he had proved One that was his stability.

KDD Peter asks, "to whom shall we go?", John 6: 68. There was no one else that they could go to who would afford them the stability they needed. There was no one else that could give them what the Lord had for them. They had come to know that in a very real way.

DJK After all the disciples had been through with the Lord, they had proved that stability was with the Lord; and yet their confidence was still lacking. I desire that my confidence in God would be affirmative. I think that comes from knowing Him that is the stability of our times. It gives great confidence to a believer to recognise that God has set everything up in Christ. Everything is set up in stability; it is firm and cannot be moved. I wonder if we can get a greater grasp in our souls of that. It is unmovable! We may sometimes think, 'What is happening, what is taking place? I do not understand'. We can turn to Him who has not changed, who is unmovable. It will give us great confidence.

DTH Do you think that is why Paul wrote the Corinthians that the Rock that followed them was the Christ, 1 Cor 10: 4? The Corinthians

had detached themselves from that stable condition.

DJK Paul was able to attract them back to that in the second epistle; he recognised that that had happened. It is interesting what you have brought up because I was thinking about how Jehovah went before the children of Israel and behind them. He went as a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud. It brought before me how Jehovah was set for His people even in the Old Testament times as their stability.

JRB Paul was working with these saints until we come to 1 Cor. 15: 58, where he says, “So then, my beloved brethren, be firm, immovable, abounding always in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord”. He works through fifteen chapters before he comes to that.

DJK Very good. Do you suppose it shows the patience that Paul had with them? While there was a recognition that there was not generally a stable state in Corinth, Paul patiently works with them to bring them to something.

JRB He seemed to always go with the Lord's word, “I have much people in this city”, Acts 18: 10. That was the basis on which he worked. He was not overcome with discouragement.

DJK Very good. That verse, “I have much people in that city”, has affected me today because the One who is the stability of our times is able for all of that. There is much people in *this* city, and while we cannot be fully with them all and we are hindered in some way, God is not hindered because stability is in Christ. His desire is that we come to know what it is to be firm and unmovable.

JAH It says of Peter in Galatians, when Paul is going over matters, “and recognising the grace given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were conspicuous as being pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship”, chap 2: 9. So Paul was very careful as ministering to the gentiles that he had the support of the pillars. Cephas was the stone; Paul gives him that name there. Unfortunately, in the next section we learn that Peter breaks down. So who becomes a pillar? Paul. I think in 2 Timothy Paul is really a pillar. Am I going to link on with him when everything is against him and everything is against the testimony? He is appealing to the men of God. Paul, Luke and Mark become pillars.

DJK I am glad you bring that in, because it is important to see that, the stability of Christ being recognised, there are people who become

stable, who become pillars. They are set for God here through Christ. So He names them. Are we able to be named as pillars? There are persons who are used of God. The apostle Paul was one of them and you mentioned Timothy and John and Peter and all these persons who are used in that way. It is all based on the stability of Christ.

EJH I was thinking there were one hundred and twenty names to begin with in the church; that whole idea of naming is interesting because of what you and I have in common: we gather to the Name.

DJK That is very helpful. The name 'Jesus' is a personal name. The names of the Lord Jesus, and how they come out, are important to recognise. When you think of a name alone giving stability, there is no other name on earth that can do that.

APD Our brother mentioned 2 Timothy: “the firm foundation” is referred to alongside the departure, chap 2: 19. “The firm foundation of God” is something we can cling to. In the presence of departure, we need something to hold on to in the faith of our souls. Whatever weight you put on that firm foundation, it still remains.

DJK That is very helpful and I appreciate you bringing it in because we were remarking about that, there were actually disciples of the Lord who walked no more with Him. The Lord had to say, “Will ye also go away?”, John 6: 67. That should stimulate us, dear brethren! Will you also go away, or will you turn to the One who is the firm foundation, and recognise there is stability in Him? There are resources in Him; there is something that cannot be moved.

GMC I was wondering about this scripture because Peter says, “to whom shall we go?” He does not say 'where' but “to whom shall we go?”, John 6: 68. There is a personal link there. Stability is not just in a church or a place.

DJK I am glad you brought this in. This links to what was said; what does the Name mean to us? What does the Name mean to me? It is a Person. Stability is found in a Person; the things of God are stable, but they are stable because of Christ.

DFH I was thinking of 1 Corinthians 1: 30 where it says, “who has been made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption; that according as it is written, He that boasts, let him boast in the Lord”. Does this fit into your thought of resource?

DJK Yes, that is very helpful. In all those different aspects of what

the Lord is, righteousness is prominent, is it not? That is the basis of stability, as I was remarking earlier, but then I think these other features would enhance the thought of stability.

PDB The note in Isaiah 33: 6 indicates 'wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times'. It is a slightly different view, but I was wondering if that might link to Ephesians 1: 17 and 18: "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of him, being enlightened in the eyes of your heart". Would that tie in with the idea of wisdom and knowledge being the stability, and the gift and resource? The resource is in a Person.

DJK That is right. It is good that you brought that in because that is what I would like to gain by recognising Him who is the stability of our times: what is available to us; what is available to me. It is important to recognise that everything is established in Christ as the stability of our times, but that has practical effects. I think we are getting over to that side, and the effects and the resources of that are available to the believer. They need to be taken on by us.

JAH It is the principal thing, is it not? The wise woman of Abel-Beth-Maacah went to the people of the city that was being besieged, and in her wisdom she got to the source of the problem, and solved it by wisdom, 2 Sam 20: 15-22. I think it would help at the present time to get to the source of the difficulty, and work from that to solve the problems.

DJK I think that is very good. Solomon felt that, did he not? He cried out to Jehovah for wisdom and understanding, 1 Kings 3: 9. If he was to be any help to the people, he recognised that is what it was going to take. That is what is needed at the present time to help one another. We have to be in the thing ourselves if we are going to be any help to others, and that is why I said at the beginning how important it is that we recognise that our stability comes from Christ, and we know that personally and individually, because that is where it comes from. There is great salvation in being together and we are thankful for that. We want to understand that individually so we can be a help to one another.

JAH What is needed at the present time, I feel, is intercessory prayer from each one of us in matters. It is like the spirit of Daniel, Ezra, Moses and Paul. All of them have a wonderful intercessory prayer. If we are on that line the Lord will come in and help us.

DJK It starts with the One who is the stability of our times. We think

of His own prayers: the Lord says to Peter, “I have besought for thee that thy faith fail not”, Luke 22: 32. This was intercessory prayer; I think we can do this for one another.

DTH You see with Isaiah that he saw that the holiness of God was being attacked. The holiness of God's presence was being attacked and infiltrated. That is why the seraphim say, “Holy, holy, holy”, chap 6: 3. Then Isaiah accepts his own sinful condition, and that of the people, v 5.

DJK That is very good to mention that. Then the thought of holiness enters into the matter of righteousness as well. As we recognise that He is God's righteousness, He is there to maintain holiness.

GDR Would you say a highlight of Peter's history is in John 6: 69: “thou art the holy one of God”. The Lord is probing the depths that He proved were there with Peter.

DJK It goes back to what was said earlier about His title as Son of God. He is here to maintain things on God's behalf, but it is what He is and then what He is able to convey.

DTH The blessing is that “we ... become God's righteousness in Him”, 2 Cor 5: 21. We are right there on the firm foundation.

MJK In Malachi 4: 2, it says, “And unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings”. I wonder if that would go along with your thought?

DJK Can you say something about how that would apply to the present time, because I think it links on exactly with what we have been having?

MJK You have been bringing before us as to a firm foundation, but sometimes we are afraid of righteousness because we may think of it as that which condemns; but here the Sun of righteousness has healing. It is an amazing thought that righteousness has healing.

DJK That is very good. I suppose a believer's soul history comes to a point where he sees Him who is God's righteousness. As you come into the gain of that, you come to a point where you recognise His healing. The resource is available to the believer as he moves where there is opposition and instability. There is a resource, and that is a resource for healing. I wonder what the brethren think of that healing. It is so needed. There is a need for individual commitment but then there is also a need for healing. I think individual commitment brings

that in.

JAH Paul was at about his lowest point in 2 Timothy 4: 11. He says, "Luke alone is with me". Now Luke was a doctor; there was healing: he had such a companion.

DJK Paul avoids speaking ill of any, even those that went away. He spoke firmly about them but his desire was always for recovery and that is involved in this healing.

JAH He says, "Take Mark". His whole idea was that Mark was to be serviceable now.

RG The scripture says, "Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the failing knees; and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned aside; but that rather it may be healed", Heb 12: 12. What do you say about that?

DJK What it brings before me is the patience of God. It is available to all those that are His, but then the desire should be for each one of us to take it up and be involved in it.

RG I remember Mr A B Parker saying many years ago that we always tend to use the surgeon's knife when it is healing that is needed.

DJK That is a word for us.

JRB I was just thinking of Acts 6 in relation to Stephen; it says, "And Stephen, full of grace and power". That brings in balance, as we had earlier. Then it says he "wrought wonders and great signs among the people. And there arose up certain of those of the synagogue called of freedmen, and of Cyrenians", v 8, 9. I suppose that would bring in what fleshly liberty is, but divine principles that governed God's house were ignored. They were disputing with Stephen; and then it says, "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke", v 10. It says later, "his face was like the face of an angel", v 15. How immovable he was in this attack. Christ found expression in Stephen, he became a martyr; he would not give in.

DJK That is very good. It goes back to what we were saying earlier about the features of one who is a pillar. Stephen was able to be firm and immovable in relation to these persons. They could not resist the wisdom and the spirit in which he spoke. Do you suppose those are the features which should mark us as we recognise the stability of our times? Those features are able to be taken on by me, and to be useful. Stephen was used in that way.

APD Do you think the current test is always where the Lord is here, now? He is always on high, He is always on the right hand of God; but where will we find Him here?

DJK My desire is that we might know the Lord as Saviour. We recognise that the penalty of sin has been dealt with and I am in the good of that, but we may not have too much thought of where the Lord is, and what the Lord is doing. The time comes when I recognise that there is nothing here in this world that is for God. The Lord Jesus has died to sin, He has died to the world. Then I recognise that the only way I am going to be maintained is by a heavenly Man. So I want to be with Him where He is, so that I might prove the stability that is available to me.

APD We would not be going away if we realised where the Lord was and were conscious of His presence, and that He is available to us.

MTH I was thinking of the stability in "looking steadfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith" (Heb 12: 2); the note there is helpful: 'looking away from other things and fixing the eye exclusively on one'. We find our stability is in looking away from other things to the One where we can find this.

DJK Very good. I think we would desire to be maintained in that sense because the enemy wants to get our eye on something else. We might get our eyes on all the troubles going on in the world; he may even want to get our eyes on the troubles amongst brethren and have us to be occupied so much with it that we really lose focus on the Lord, but He is there to draw our eyes to Himself. He wants us to recognise that stability remains and will always be in Him, so that we take our bearings from that.

I wonder if that is brought out in relation to the bearing of Lebanon in the beginning of the Song of Songs. I know it refers to the beloved's appearance but it seems to me there is the thought of elevation. Our eyes are to be turned upward.

JRB I was thinking that, when you come to the end of Matthew 28, the Lord says, "All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth ... to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined you. And behold, I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age" (v 28, 30); that is His commitment to us.

DJK Very good; I am glad you brought that in. The stability of the Lord is unmovable and unchangeable, and goes on forever; it never

ends. It is available to us until the completion of the age and we are thankful for that because it is not like the systems of men that will carry you for some time and then they are gone. We are talking about One who will carry us through to the completion of the age. That gives us great comfort.

JAH That passage even goes on to others who have part in the kingdom; it covers not just our age but the coming age. I think that is good teaching for us. There is to be looking and seeing, but working that out down here is a matter of hearing. The Lord has an assessment and position on the seven assemblies, and He says to the overcomer in Revelation 3, "let him hear what the Spirit says to the assembly" (v 13); so that is how we work it out. The Spirit has been given here, so He is the means practically by which we can work things out.

DJK I am glad you brought that out because it brings us back to the thought of the Spirit. We were reminded in the ministry meeting that in one instance in Revelation we get the thought of hearing coming in first, and then the overcomer. Later you get the overcomer, and then the hearing. You can see how necessary they both are. I think it is so important to recognise that the Spirit is now speaking. He receives the things that are of Christ and announces them to us. That is the power that is given to us to be able to be overcomers and to be able to hear.

DTH How do I know that this is where the Lord is? Why would I not go to some other company in Calgary or Edmonton?

DJK I can only speak humbly from my own experience, but if I am looking for the Lord, and I see the presence of the Spirit, and I recognise where the Spirit is free to move; I can see that the Lord is in it. That is where the Lord will be.

DTH The Lord has rights to walk in the Christian profession, but it is a question for us of a little power to maintain the Lord's rights in the place where we are set.

DJK There is an overcomer addressed in each of the assemblies.

DTH They would move in relation to the light that was received.

DJK We are responsible for the light we have.

DTH Mr Darby found that he had to leave the system he belonged to. Young people have to arrive in their own souls - as we all must - at where the Lord is. Peter says, "to whom shall we go?"; in Matthew 16, he says, "*Thou* art the Christ, the Son of the living God". The greatest

place for any believer in Calgary will be where the Lord is livingly known.

GMC You mentioned at the beginning the name of the first pillar that was established, and I was wondering if we grow in appreciation of the stability that is there.

DJK That is good. I would like to get more help in relation to that myself and I certainly have proved that here. You find your resources in One who is able to give what He Himself is. He passes that along; that is why it affected me to think of those features, the Lord saying “I give”; and it is “*my peace*”, “*my love*” and “*my joy*”. These are features that are available to us that He Himself is.

GMC He says in John 14: 27, “I leave peace with you”; then He says, “I give *my peace* to you”. This is what we need to find individually.

JAH I like Mary; she just sat at His feet and listened to His word, Luke 10: 39. I think she was more impressed with just being near to Him and close to Him, listening to His word. Maybe that is a good way to look at it.

DJK I think so. I think that is very needed. I bring that as to the exercise that we had in the home in relation to comfort. He is stability. These features would put us in restfulness. They would set us in movement on one side but they would set us here in restfulness, to see that God has established everything in Christ and that was not just then. That was for the present time so that “*my peace*”, “*my love*” and “*my joy*” are to be proved by us.

DTH Mary of Bethany in John 12 was in the most restful setting you could find.

APD “I leave peace with you” is a legacy as a consequence of His death and His resurrection. There is something personal that is involved in “*my peace*”, and I think it is a beautiful reference to relations we have with the Father.

DJK They were not to fear. Peace brings in something that casts out fear; but “*my peace*” is even further than that. I appreciate what you say about peace being like a legacy linked to what the disciples had proved by being with the Lord Himself. He had spoken to them about going away; but what you say as to “*my peace*” would show how they would be able for His absence.

GDR The natural tendency when you are vulnerable is to turn

towards yourself, but the Lord's desire is that we should really turn to Him exclusively.

DJK I think it is very important. It goes along with my exercises, because I find no stability in myself except as in Christ.

KDD As to John the baptist, at the beginning when he sees the Lord Jesus in John 1: 29, it says, "On the morrow he sees Jesus coming to him, and says, Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world". That was the sin question that you were speaking about dealt with. The second time, however, it says in verse 35, "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". Then we have the Lord's word, "Come and see", v 39. It is really to prove if our view is on the Lord Jesus when coming into His presence; this is what really provides the stability and peace that you are bringing before us.

DJK I appreciate that, because now we see movement with the Lord Jesus walking. In the Song of Songs, He is immovable, but then He is moving and others follow. That is the appeal that I would raise with the brethren here, indeed with each one of us, that we see the One who is immovable, and follow Him. We recognise everything is on a firm foundation.

DCD A few references have been made to where Peter says, "Lord to whom shall we go?". Right after that, Peter says, "thou hast words of life eternal". We were speaking earlier about listening and what we might put our ears or attention to, and I was thinking not only is it important that it is the Lord we turn to, but the words from Him are words of life.

DJK Very good. It is not idle chatter but it is words of life, the resource that is available. As older ones here have proved, the Lord has words of life. It brings comfort and stability to your soul to hear the Lord speaking words of life eternal.

DFH In Revelation, the thought of the pillar is linked with the temple of my God. There is also the reference to what is eternal: "He shall go no more at all out". We are in the waiting time and the value of the scriptures is in the temple of God; I think that provides practical salvation.

DJK I think that is important to bring in what is established ultimately for God. That is why the thought of the kingdom affected me. It is established on the worth and basis of Christ, but it is for God. So it is in

the temple of my God that we see this pillar, something that is unmovable.

APG I was thinking of listening and hearing and of the Lord's own ministry: in Matthew 7: 24 He says, "Whoever therefore hears these my words and does them, I will liken him to a prudent man, who built his house upon the rock". That would be a stable person, one who hears His words and does them. In Acts 17: 11, it speaks about the Bereans, "receiving the word with all readiness of mind, daily searching the scriptures". There was the idea of nobility, and faithful persons.

DJK It is very good to bring that in. That would be the exercise of each one of us, that we hear these words, we make them our own; and that puts us on a firm foundation. It is interesting what you mentioned about the Bereans: first of all they received the word, then they searched the Scriptures to see if these things were so. Stability had already been seen in them when they received it, but then they searched the scriptures to see if these things were so.

RG You can see that stability was in Philadelphia. The overcomer there qualified morally for what came out in being made a pillar. There is something valuable. Not to deny His Name and to keep the words of His patience must involve stability in our souls.

DJK I think that is very helpful. I gathered out of that section that there is obviously something for the Lord, because it speaks about them having "a little power". The little power was because of their stability that they had from Christ. That is the important thing; the foundation is established already but they had their part in it.

DTH I was going to link the "little power" with the greatness of their appreciation of the sufferings of Christ. I am thinking about the younger brethren: we will not find the sufferings of Christ in discussions in the systems of this world. They should be known the most where the truth as to the assembly is maintained in appreciation of the sufferings of Christ. That is the foundation.

DJK The assembly appreciates the Bridegroom as out of His side. Do you think that brings out the true sense of suffering?

DTH The assembly has its own special appreciation of the redemptive work of Christ.

DJK He is God's righteousness.

JAH I suppose Anna would fit in well here. She "did not depart from

the temple” and when she saw the Child she “gave praise to the Lord”, Luke 2: 37, 38. It would be a good thing to think of temple dwellers, those kind of persons all through the Bible who loved the temple. David loved the temple and prepared for it. Solomon built it, but people like Anna and those from Philadelphia loved to be in the temple.

DJK I think that is helpful, but are we attentive?

JAH The “name of my God” is written there. That is very beautiful.

DJK I was thinking of the importance of being attentive. There are lots of things the enemy would like us to hear, and draw our attention. Are we attentive to what the Spirit is saying? Who does the Spirit speak to us about? He speaks to us about Christ. If we are not listening, we miss that. He may use whatever means He will to speak to us, but if we are not attentive we miss that.

RG We need the Spirit to keep us stable. I encourage young ones to speak to the Spirit every day because the Spirit will keep you near to the Lord Jesus always. We cannot be stable without the Spirit.

DJK I agree with that. I have had help recently in relation to Lord Jesus in His stability and what He is, but then there is what the Spirit speaks to us of. He speaks to us of stability; He speaks to us of Christ. It reminds us of the greatness of the Person. He would ever seek to draw our affections and our appreciation to that One.

RG It has been well said that the Spirit is our best Friend here, JT vol 32 p140.

JAH The Holy Spirit came upon Simeon, but Anna seemed to know who Jesus was. She was a temple dweller.

PWH The stability of our times relates to the One who dwells on high; He is bringing it from where He dwells on high. So the only way that we are going to know it is that we know Christ where He is. We are not going to know Him as the stability of our times unless we know Him there.

DJK That reminds me of the words of hymn 34 -

In this poor world thou'lt find no rest;
Then from thy fruitless strivings cease!

PWH God has moved from the most stable area there is, completely different from this world.

APD Why does he say “my God” in Revelation 3: 12? He does not

say 'the temple of God', or 'your God', but “**my** God”?

DJK He says that three times more: “the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God” and “from my God”.

RG That guards the Lord's Person. John 20: 17 is distinctive: “I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God”. His own personal distinction has been maintained.

APD The greatest experience of worship is when we have some sense of Christ's God, being alongside of the One who could say “my God”, JT vol 40 p501. This draws us into a wonderful relationship that is unique and special to Him.

DJK It draws us into what He says. I think that is the important thing that He draws us into it. There is what is unique between Him and His God, but He draws us into it.

APD It is a privilege to draw alongside One who has an infinite knowledge of God; not that we could comprehend it, but there is something personal about His relationship with God.

LJG I was thinking of what you mentioned the thought about what is upright, about the cedars here, I was thinking of Deuteronomy 33: 26 -

There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun,
Who rideth upon the heavens to thy help,
And in his majesty, upon the clouds.
Thy refuge is the God of old,
And underneath are the eternal arms.

I believe 'Jeshurun' means uprightness. I was thinking earlier as to the wings and the thought of healing and comfort. I wondered about being righteous and upright. Then the thought goes on for us of overcoming, and there is victory in that, but there is comfort as well. This scripture was read when a baby was taken by the Lord in this locality. There is the thought of stability and comfort, and I really feel the need of that myself. Isaiah 51: 1 says, “Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek Jehovah: look unto the rock whence ye were hewn”. Sometimes there is a cost in doing the will of God and being righteous. If you think of what the Lord went through, you get the thought of what is eternal. It says again in Isaiah 51: 7, 8: “Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law ... but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation”. What is of God is brought in. These are

eternal thoughts; there is no broken state there.

DJK My desire in an occasion like this is that our hearts may be directed for stability to Christ where He is. That is the only thing that will maintain us in this scene of instability, where there is terror and fear and doubts; because everything has already been established in Christ. It is for us to take account of but it is also for us to prove. As proving that we prove the stability, we prove the wings, we prove the healing: all these are features of One who is not only the stability of *our times*, but He is *God's* stability.

GDR We are not going to be able to discern where He is if we do not keep near to Him. We are not going to be able to arrive at the divine conclusion if we do not know where He is.

DJK I think so, but we can go further than that at the conclusion of every individual exercise. I think the individual level is so important because I want to take account of where He is myself, so that I am firmly established as a pillar in the local assembly. That is what Stephen brought out.

PWH The Lord brings out what is individual: "him will I make a pillar". It links to our knowledge and enjoyment of Christ being with us and speaking to us and forming us; "him will I make a pillar". This all has to do with formation.

DJK Very good. In one sense it is a promise; it is not as though I have to strive to attain it by effort. It is the expression of formation going on in my soul and this is the result in a coming day.

PWH It is a question of whether we allow Christ to form us.

Calgary
14th February 2015

Key to initials:-

J R Bellamy, Vancouver; P D Brien, Calgary; G M Chellberg, Wheaton; A P Devenish, Edmonton; D C Drever, Calgary; K D Drever, Calgary; A P Grant, Dundee; L J Gray, Calgary; R Gray, Calgary; E M Hibbert, Calgary; J A Hibbert, Calgary; M T Holland, Calgary; D T Howie, Edmonton; P W Howie, Edmonton; D F Hugill, Vancouver; D J Klassen, Aberdeen ID; M J Klassen, Aberdeen ID; G D Rosenberry, Edmonton

RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT GRACE

John N Darby

The whip and the scourge may be righteous; but there is no winning the heart of man with these. Nor is it righteousness which reigns among the saints of God, but grace through righteousness unto eternal life. Alas! how many sins that might have been washed away (John 13) have been retained! How many brethren alienated for all time, who might have been won back to God and to us, because we have hammered at the conscience merely, with the heart ungained - with the heart, I may say, almost unsought! We have not overcome evil, because we have not overcome it with good. We have taken readily the judge's chair and have got back judgment; but the Master's lowly work we have little done.

But how little yet do we understand that mere righteous dealing - absolutely righteous, as it may be - will not work the restoration of souls; that judgment, however temperate and true, will not touch and soften and subdue hearts to receive instruction, which, by the very facts of the case, are shown not to be in their true place before God. Man is not all conscience; and conscience reached, with the heart away, will do what it did with the first sinner among men - drive him out among the trees of the garden to escape the unwelcome voice.

Taken from *The Bible Treasury* Vol 15 (1884-5) p380

(this is the source of the quotation on page 3)

THE VALUE OF FAITHFULNESS

Daan Dekker

Revelation 3: 7-13

It is my desire, dear brethren, to say a few words about how the Lord Jesus recognises and values faithfulness among His own. I read this letter in Revelation because it stresses this and also because our beloved brother, whom we will bury, spoke so often about this letter. If I think back on the many conversations I had with him and also in our meetings, I cannot think of any other scripture that he stressed so much as this one, and my dear local brethren can confirm this.

Now, we see in this letter how the Lord Jesus speaks to the assemblies; in the preceding letters in this chapter and in chapter 2, there are certain restrictions towards the assemblies. The Lord is at a distance; He cannot express Himself freely; He has to bring certain negative things to light: but not here in Philadelphia. The Lord can, as it were, open His heart and He can speak to these believers in Philadelphia about the things that are in His heart. He had given them “an opened door”, and it says “thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name”. Without any doubt, this is what our brother was characterised by, and I would like to put it before us all that we also might be characterised by these things. The Lord Jesus is so worthy of it. He longs to have a sphere among His own where He can make His love known, where He can speak about His things. I think you will have noticed that the Lord in this letter says a lot about “my”. The Lord can make things clear to them because they are in full sympathy with Him.

It is also remarkable that the Lord presents Himself in a totally different light compared to the other assemblies. If you read the other letters, you see that the Lord generally presents Himself in the same light as He revealed Himself to John in chapter 1, but in Philadelphia it is in a new light. He is “the holy, the true”; He is the One “that has the key of David”. Beloved, if we are in this light and if we have these desires, we will receive insights from the Lord Himself, things that might not be known in Christendom in general, but where the Lord can be free to express His things and be with His own. How wonderful it is that the Lord says, “I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an opened door, which no one can shut”. Maybe those works were hidden to others, but the Lord knew them. Ministry even might not be obvious in

an outward sense, but many can say that they received blessing from its effects.

We have sung of the coming of the Lord Jesus and our desire for it, and it is especially in this letter that we are directed towards the coming of our Lord Jesus. It says in verse 11, "I come quickly". What a prospect it is to live in the expectation of His coming.

But then He also says, "hold fast what thou hast". Beloved brethren, if we have received anything from the Lord, let us hold fast to it! Without any doubt we can say that the Lord has given us very much, but I am sure there is also a responsibility to hold it fast. This condition here in Philadelphia is so delicate. On the one hand there is the lack of life in Sardis; on the other hand the pretensions of Laodicea, and the dangers are very great. May we be marked by something that marks these believers in Philadelphia. What a promise they get, the promise that the Lord will preserve them "out of the hour of trial"! How much Philadelphia means to the Lord Jesus! It is like Rebecca who comforted Isaac after the death of his mother (Gen 24: 67); it is like the family in Bethany where they prepared a supper for the Lord (John 12: 2); it is like the brethren who dwell together in unity in Psalm 133; it is like the valiant men of David who broke through the ranks of the Philistines and took water from the well in Bethlehem, 1 Chron 11: 18. That is what the Lord desires and what He wants to be seen in this day. Let us not claim anything for ourselves but let us seek that these things may be seen in our personal lives and in our localities!

May the Lord bless His word!

The Hague

6th March 2015

(At the meeting for the burial of Peter van den Berg)

THE OPEN TOMB AND THE OPEN HEAVENS

A Grahame Smith

Matthew 28: 1-6

Acts 7: 54-60

I am encouraged by the hymn that we have sung (Hymn 152), to speak of the two great events that have affected and influenced the lives of millions over the last twenty centuries and are still influencing the lives of millions today. One is the fact that the Lord Jesus is raised. We sang of His sufferings, which all who have come to know Him are so thankful for, as He suffered in their stead - He is a wonderful Saviour. It is a wonderful fact that He is no longer in the grave.

How sorrowful these women must have been as having seen all that had taken place, but love moved them to come to the place where they thought He was. Mary of Magdala had a special attachment to the Lord Jesus. She had had an experience with Him which had set her free from possession by seven demons. She was an extreme case of a person that was held in the bondage and the power of sin. None of us is different; we all need to have a transaction with the Saviour. You can come to the Saviour in your need, as feeling your burden of sins, and you can find One that is able to forgive you righteously; and He will fill your heart as He filled the hearts of these women. They came in sorrow but their sorrow was turned to joy. They came bringing something to express their love and their affection but He was no longer there. What wonderful news it was: "He is not here, for he is risen". The One we sang of as the mighty Victor over death and its power could never be held by its power. He had entered into the grave as its Conqueror, for that work at Calvary had annulled the One that had the power of death, and death itself. He is the glorious One of whom we sang,

Firstborn of all Thou art.

He is the Firstborn from among the dead. We read in another scripture that other graves were opened after His arising and persons made their way into Jerusalem, Matt 27: 52, 53. How wonderful to have our trust and faith in the One that has conquered death and its power. Death is the wages of sin; we have to face that; none can escape that path; but it is wonderful to know the One that is its Conqueror.

For those who do not know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, death has its sting and has its penalty, but for those who have their faith and trust in Him, it becomes their servant. From the very moment when

our dear sister completed her course here, she was immediately in the presence of the Firstborn from among the dead. What a comfort that is, no waiting and no delay. The Lord Jesus could say to the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise", Luke 23: 43. We rejoice in the fact that our sister is in the presence of Christ; she is in the joy of the unspeakable bliss of His presence. She has known what it is to endure suffering; and to have been held in great affection by her family, by all those who knew her, some closer than others. How wonderful to be able to share the same hope. Is there anyone here who has not come to know the Lord Jesus, has not come to know the One who has broken the power of death? The way is open today and I would say, 'Come and let your gaze be centred on this open tomb', as the angel said, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay". I find it very affecting to think that the Creator of the world lay in death, and that for me and you; but He has come out of it, He is Firstborn from among the dead - how blessed that is!

In the second scripture, the man we read of, Stephen, came to light a chapter earlier. He was the first Christian martyr and to him was afforded something very special. I would like your attention to be drawn - not only to an open tomb, but to the opened heavens. If all our hopes relate to this scene, how miserable and unhappy we would be; but every believer in Jesus lays hold, by faith, of that wonderful news: not only has the Lord Jesus come out of the grave but He is risen and glorified. That is what Stephen saw, and he says, "I behold the heavens opened". He had a view right into the place where death, sorrow and sin have no part or place. Heaven is the place where Jesus is, and Stephen bears testimony to the glory of the One who is there; He is ascended and He has been glorified. That is wonderful. The fact He is there in glory, dear friends and brethren, is the guarantee that all He has said and has promised is going to come to pass.

For the comfort of our dear loved ones here, the Lord has said, "I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age", Matt 28: 20. You can rest in that absolutely without any shadow of doubt, and you can prove that love; and He Himself will draw near. How much He loves those that have put their trust in Him; what a place they have in His heart. It is a wonderful promise too, that He said "I am coming again", John 14: 3. He is coming again to claim His own that are living, and coming too to claim everyone who has put their faith and trust in Him who is asleep through Jesus. Our dear sister will hear His voice and will be raised to meet Him in the air. That was the testimony of the angels

as the Lord Jesus went up: they said, "This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, shall thus come in the manner in which ye have beheld him going into heaven", Acts 1: 11. That is the message today: if your hopes are bounded by earth and death, fix your eyes upon Jesus and look to Him the glorious Centre of another world. How blessed - how great and how glorious He is.

There is another wonderful experience that is very precious and is known only by those that are the Lord's, and that is the gift of the Holy Spirit by whom we can know Him as raised and glorified. What a giving God we have, giving His only beloved Son to rescue and secure us from our lost sinful condition. All that has been met in His wonderful work at Calvary, but divine love is expressed too in the giving of the Holy Spirit. It says of Stephen, "being full of the Holy Spirit", Acts 7: 55. He was testifying in the power of the Holy Spirit to what He saw. I was impressed yesterday by the fact that the Lord introduces the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, John 14: 16. We all need comfort today and we can find and prove the help of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter. It has impressed me that the Holy Spirit comforts us in two particular ways. He draws attention to the Lord Jesus as crowned with glory and honour, and fills our hearts with the greatness of that glorious Person; and also He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. He has come to serve you and me and all those that put their trust in the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus came to His own and He could say, "Peace be to you", John 20: 19. There is not a voice in the universe that can disturb that. He is the Prince of peace and He has made peace. May we all, dear brethren, have a sense of the majesty and glory of what God has in mind for us - a heavenly inheritance. Everyone that He has secured here is going to be claimed by this glorious Person. The Lord has taken our sister to be with Himself; we bow to that, and in the waiting time until He comes may our hearts simply be engaged with Him where He is and draw upon those infinite, boundless resources in love that will see us through.

Our circumstances are all different but you can find Him to be an 'all-the-way-home Saviour'. How blessed to be occupied at a time of sorrow with the glory and greatness of One who is our everlasting portion; I trust He may be the portion of your heart.

If, as yet, you have not looked into the tomb, do so I pray; and ask for the gift of faith to have a view into heaven itself and see the glory and the greatness of the Man that is there: how great He is. Soon He is

going to fill the universe, and every knee is going to bow, and every tongue is going to proclaim His worthiness.

How blessed to know these things; the prospect for the believer is wonderful. May these thoughts comfort our hearts at this present time.

For His Name's sake.

Sidcup

19th May 2015

THE COMFORTER AND EARNEST

D Andrew Burr

John 14: 15-17

2 Corinthians 5: 1-5

In considering this occasion, I felt, as our brother evidently has as well, that it might be appropriate to say something about the service to us of the Holy Spirit; and He is referred in these two scriptures as Comforter and as Earnest.

The idea of 'comforter', as we can see from the note here, is someone who takes charge of all our affairs. It has often been remarked that the Lord Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as *another* Comforter, from which we understand, as the disciples surely did, that the Spirit was coming to take up an office and a service to them which the Lord Jesus Himself had rendered. And we learn also from John's epistle that the Holy Spirit has not come *instead* of the Lord Jesus but as well as the Lord Jesus. John in his first epistle says, "we have a patron with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous", chap 2: 1. I think it is very touching that there is One who appears for us before the Father, who has been here in all the circumstances through which we pass. He has been to an occasion such as this. He came as a Friend of the family. He entered into their sorrows as if they were His own; they were. It says that Jesus groaned in spirit. John 11: 33 (note). It was not simply that He felt the effect of death upon the friend that had died, but He felt the effect of death upon those who remained. He felt their sorrow; He entered into it. How much further that goes than the idea of an advocate in an ordinary secular sense of the word, to have Someone who is acting for you, who understands all your feelings and can enter into them. I thought it was very powerful when the Lord, in that occasion in John 11, turned to take up His advocate service. He says to the Father, "I knew that thou always hearest me". What comforting words these would be, beloved, to hear an advocate say that. "I knew that thou always hearest me", he says, "but on account of the crowd ... I have said it, that they may believe", v 42. What a wonderful thing that is, that we have before us in the Lord Jesus, whether here below or now above, Someone whom the Father always hears, and there is not a sorrow, or pressure, or question, or anything of that kind that we cannot take to Him. We find there the solace, and the comfort, the measure, and the resource and the grace that are needed for however we feel and whatever we face in the circumstances where He once has walked

for us.

Then I was thinking, in relation to the Holy Spirit, that Paul says in Romans 8, “we do not know what we should pray for as is fitting”, v 26. There are occasions when we do not know what to pray for. We have such circumstances among us now, when we hardly know what to pray for; but Paul says, “the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”. I hardly feel that I can add to what the scripture says about this mighty service of advocacy that the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit exercise on our behalf in our frailty and weakness here.

In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul is going over the condition in which we are - and we are very much reminded of it at this occasion, the weakness and frailty of the condition, something of which Paul was very conscious. He appeared from his journeys to have been a robust person himself, but he felt the weakness and frailty of the condition in which the Lord's people were. No doubt he had seen many suffering, and in great weakness and affliction. He uses strong words but they are words that convey his feelings: “if our earthly tabernacle house be destroyed”; think of that! What a sad and sober thing it is to take account of the humiliation and dissolution of the body. But when we come to an occasion like this, there are two very important things we need to remember; and they give a stature to an occasion like this. One is that, in relation to the beloved brother or sister whom we have come to bury, that body was the Lord's; their body was the Lord's. All its weakness, all its infirmity, the afflictions that fell upon it, do not take away from the fact that precious blood was given to make that body the Lord's. And it has also been the temple of the Holy Spirit. There is something holy about the body of a saint. How precious it is to consider such a thing; but then, because it has been a temple of the Holy Spirit, according to this passage, there is something else that we can say about it; and that is that it will be changed - not it *may* be changed or it is a hope that it *might* be changed, but the fact that someone has had the Holy Spirit is the earnest that they will also have a body of glory. How glorious that is, beloved. There is humiliation and weakness, there is corruption, there is the loss of vitality; and ultimately, the loss to us of the person themselves, and we feel it greatly; but the fact that that person has had the Holy Spirit is the testimony according to this scripture that it is in God's plan that that body will be clothed with a house that is from heaven. Then the weakness will be all forgotten and left behind, as that person shines as the Lord's property in their body of glory.

May we be comforted, beloved brethren, by these things, for His Name's sake.

Sidcup

19th May 2015

MAN'S WEAKNESS AND GOD'S POWER

Roland H Brown

Genesis 4: 26

2 Corinthians 4: 78

1 Corinthians 15: 43

Reference has already been made by our brother to the weakness and frailty of our present condition, into which the grace and power of the Spirit of God comes. He joins His strength to our weakness, and an occasion like this, I think, is to bring home to all of us the weakness of our condition. In a world where man exalts himself and his abilities, we are reminded of what we are. These passages I have read speak of weakness and they speak of God's power too. Our sister knew weakness; she knew it for a long period of time and she was not the first in this locality to know weakness. We know well that there have been at least two sisters taken before our dear sister from this place, who knew utter weakness and were left in weakness amongst us for a considerable period of time. And the question must arise in our minds as to why that is. James speaks of "the end of the Lord" (Jas 5: 11): what He has in mind in what He allows. That would be for us to search out in our links with the Lord.

What struck me was that when this man was born early in the Scriptures he was called Enosh. The note speaks of weak mortal man, and then the passage says, "Then people began to call on the name of Jehovah". A point was reached in the recognition of what we are, when it was recognised that there was a need for a power greater than ourselves, and God was sought and God was found. This power is proved in weakness. The apostle thrice besought the Lord that the weakness he had might be removed; but the response that he got was that "my power is perfected in weakness"; "my grace suffices thee", 2 Cor 12: 8, 9. Then instead of asking for that to be removed, he boasted in it that the power of the Christ might dwell upon him. Our brother has referred already to his robust constitution, and we know that he was strong before his conversion, in his zeal, in self-confidence. He speaks of himself like that as "an insolent and overbearing man" (1 Tim 1: 13), but he learnt what weakness was, and he learnt what the power of Christ was and the sufficiency of the grace of Christ. Another apostle says, "of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace", John 1: 16. It has been described as the 'waves of the ocean' (JT vol 89 p90), and I believe that that was seen in our dear sister, that she was

receiving from that fulness. I am sure that I am not alone in feeling that I had much to learn from the way that our beloved sister accepted such affliction and such limitation. Never once did I hear a word of complaint, a word of resentment or bitterness; but an acceptance of it with a grace that I believe came from above.

So that, the apostle says, in this passage in Corinthians, “we have this treasure in earthen vessels”. The treasure he is speaking about is “the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”, v 6. What a treasure that is. I wonder if it is enshrined in every heart in this room - the knowledge of God, as it is expressed in the face of Jesus Christ. That is a treasure not simply for time, not simply for testimony, but for eternity; and it is housed now, you might say, in an incongruous place: a treasure so great but housed in an earthen vessel. But the reason is given; it is housed there, the apostle says, “that the surpassingness of the power might be of God, and not from us”. He speaks of God shining in his heart. What a testimony we had to that in the life of our sister, in her weakness. God was shining in her heart. He shone out. Not only that He had shone in; Paul does not say here that God shone into our hearts: he says He shone *in* our hearts. You think of God choosing to shine in human hearts, but it is through the surpassingness of the power of God which is proved as weakness is acknowledged and accepted. One feels the bearing of it. There is much weakness amongst us at present. Do we feel that? Do we feel the need for the power of God? Is the weakness resulting, as it resulted in these persons of whom we read in Genesis, in our calling upon the name of the Lord?

This final passage I think is very affecting because it speaks of a sowing. The body of our beloved sister, which our brother has reminded us belongs to the Lord and, as having been indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is holy. “It is sown in weakness”; that is to come home to us. This is not now for our sister; it is for us who remain. “It is sown in weakness”; we are intended to feel that on an occasion like this. The Spirit of God would impress upon us the reality of what death is, the solemnity of it; but there is a hope that is spoken of here to which no doubt attaches. Though it be sown in weakness it is raised in power. I would like to convey an impression of that. You think of the mighty power of God that was exercised in the resurrection of Christ. It speaks of the might of His strength being exercised, Eph 1: 19. That passage in Ephesians suggests reserves of power in God Himself that were never called upon in the creation. They were exercised in the

resurrection of Christ, and through His resurrection, the resurrection of all His own. Attention has been drawn to His resurrection and His glorification but God has raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together. You say, 'Well it has not happened yet', but the resurrection and ascension of Christ is the assurance of it. And this precious body in which the treasure has been held, in which the work of God has been formed, in the soul, is sown in weakness. There will be no weakness attached to its coming out of the grave. We shall see our dear sister again in very different circumstances from those in which we have known her. The Lord said to his own, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice", John 16: 22. You think of seeing our sister clothed in a body conformed to the image of God's Son, Rom 8: 29. Could anything be more glorious to think of than that? Earthly relationships, of course, have come to an end forever. That is what death is, but we shall see our sister in glorified conditions. We shall know her in a way that we have never known her down here. "I know partially, but then ... as I have been known", 1 Cor 13: 12. You think of what has been formed down here in conditions of abject weakness but all with a view to the eternal praise of the grace of God: "the praise of the glory of His grace", Eph 1: 6. A grace that proved its sufficiency through affliction and weakness will shine for God's glory eternally.

May God bless the word.

Sidcup

19th May 2015

(Words at the meeting for the burial of Mrs Debra Barlow)