

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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ACCESS TO THE FATHER

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RT Paul writes in the epistle to the Ephesians that through Christ “we have ... access by one Spirit to the Father”, chap 2: 18. It is quoted almost every Lord's day and it was thinking about that verse that led me to this section of scripture. It is a wondrous favour that has been conferred upon us that we are brought into a living system of things, so that we may have access to the Father, where grace is expressed in all its fullness.

This section of scripture reminded me of the passage of the ark going through Jordan; it says the ark stood firm in the midst of the Jordan until all Israel had passed over, Josh 3:17. And this section of scripture would help us, dear brethren, to pass over. Things here occupy so much of our attention, and bring so many sorrows, but I am assured of this that if we knew and lived more in divine favour our sorrows would be far, far less. There was a time in the history of most here, where we tried to put things right here through regulation, but we come to learn that things will only be right here as we know our place there, in the Father's presence. I think that is a thing to take to our hearts, that there is a fixed position and we will never work things out here unless we are working from a fixed position. I would like to meet Naphtali; it says about Naphtali he was “satisfied with favour”, Deut 33: 23. Can you say that? He was satisfied with favour, and the next thing is that he is “full of the blessing of Jehovah”.

The Lord begins in this section about leading us to the Father by washing our feet. He says, “Unless I wash thee, thou hast not part with me”, and “Do ye know what I have done to you?” I would ask every one of us, dear brethren, to ask that question of yourself as we proceed; do you know what Christ has done to you? You say, 'Well, He has saved me from my sins', but much more than that is in His mind; it was to rest on these disciples that He had washed their feet. He would remove every speck of dust from their feet, anything that would hinder from their having part with Him: “Do ye know what I have done to you?”. That was to free us, not from sinful things exactly, but from things that would hinder us having part with Him in the Father's presence.

The other scriptures will lead us on as to how it is to be worked out, through the grace of Christ and in the power of the Spirit, to come to

the Father. There is a great range in these passages that we have read, but I think if we could just begin with: "Do ye know what I have done to you?". I remember an address in this city on sonship by Mr McCallum, and he said at the beginning, 'We often speak about laying hold of sonship, but I want to speak tonight of sonship laying hold of you', and that is a very blessed matter. Does the sense of divine favour in "what I have done to you" lay hold of us? If it did there are many places we would not go, there are many things we would not do, because we have come into divine favour. When the King of Sodom tempted Abraham with very great things he said, 'You cannot add anything to me; I know what God has done to me', Gen 14: 17-24. The priest met him there with bread and wine; Abraham says, 'What more can I want?'. What can the world add to you? Can it satisfy your longings if Christ has touched your heart? There is only one thing that will satisfy your longings, and that is being in the Father's presence and in the joy of His love. I trust as the reading proceeds we will keep that in mind because that is what He goes on to in the passage we have read, "to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God". Such blessed words had never been heard by human ears, but there they are: "my Father and your Father ... my God and your God".

We begin with feet washing, a very gentle thing, but the Lord says it is to continue. Maybe the greatest hindrance about feet washing is that I do not feel the need for my feet being washed. Maybe I think I am quite a good Christian, my sins are forgiven, I am quite satisfied with my arrangements that I have, a good job, nice family. I might well settle in that, but that is where you need feet washing to come into the sense of "what I have done to you", and that is to lead us into divine favour. I trust the brethren will open this up.

NJH I was thinking of your reference to the ark as introducing a fixed position, and in John's gospel the Lord starts from the fixed position. But here He is now relating His own to that fixed position through the feet washing; is that right?

RT I enjoyed that touch before I came to the meeting, the thought of the ark going into the Jordan and standing there, Josh 3: 17. But that was not the object, that was the way; "I am the way", that was the ark in the Jordan but it was until they all had passed over, and this reading I trust will help us to be more ready to pass over. They would have come to Jerusalem far quicker, and David would have been there, Solomon would have been there in all his glory far quicker, if they had realised

quicker what we now see in “what I have done to you”.

NJH So the feet washing would remove the wilderness and its effects, would it not?

RT Yes, it makes us comfortable in the divine presence. Dear brethren, are we all comfortable in the presence of Jesus? Are we all comfortable with the Spirit being with us and in us, are we all comfortable in the Father's presence? I do not say these things to hinder us; these are practical exercises to bring us into the enjoyment of “my Father and your Father ... my God and your God”.

Well, the Lord begins here. I do not want to go into the details; many questions will come up: how does it happen? where does it happen? Well, it happens very simply! I think Anna was a feet washer. Anna “spoke of him to all those who waited for redemption in Jerusalem”, Luke 2: 38; speaking of Jesus is a great part of feet washing. We could do with it in our houses, dear brethren. You may ask, “Where does it happen? Some say it is in the meeting, some say it is there or here, but it can happen in our houses as we speak about Jesus. We are lifted up from our sorrows and domestic problems when we come to think about Christ, and come into divine favour.

JDG I think what you said about feeling the need for feet washing is necessary. I think that myself: we cannot avoid in some way the path we are going through, to be affected by the circumstances around us, but with the relief of refreshment, you get a touch of Christ.

RT Well, give us some of your experience.

JDG I think we have experienced it in our lifetimes. It was a great day when I realised that I needed it, and it was a great day when I realised it was in view of having part with Him in the Father's presence.

RT I think that is a great thing. We are not sensitive enough. We get accustomed to reading the newspapers, we get accustomed to handling things at work, maybe we have to handle these things, but there is a lot of defilement from every quarter. Satan is very, very active and that brings up the need for feet washing. I think what you say is right: do we feel the need of it? Coming to the meeting; I remember a brother in Kirkcaldy told us the singing of the first hymn brings us into touch with eternal life. I think that is very fine. It may come through a hymn being sung, it may come through meeting the brethren, greeting one another in the name of the Lord Jesus. We get freed from things

that may have disturbed us in our minds and even in our affections, as Christ comes onto our view with some sense of what He has done. I think these disciples would often say, 'You know, He washed my feet'. How descending the love of Jesus.

NJH It is the Lord's objective that is presented in feet washing, is it not? What is done personally by Him here, or by a saint, is that right? What I was thinking is that He gives the objective and that objective remains, it is Christ's objective, not any advantage for us in feet-washing another, but presenting Christ to them; is that right?

RT Well, I think it is all part of His service to make us at home in the Father's presence, to enjoy sonship.

RJC This is one of the 'oughts' of John's writings; "ye also ought to wash one another's feet". There is a certain desire to have the brethren free and in the divine presence, for their own blessing but for the divine pleasure too, do you think?

RT I think that if we are exercised about it we will get it, and it is available. If I am not ready, another is ready to bring in a touch of divine favour that lifts me above the annoying things, things that may be gritty, and may annoy me and disturb me, to set me at rest.

JCG In Ephesians the blessing is "taken ... into favour in the Beloved", chap 1: 6. In chapter 2, do we realise that as we are raised and seated with Him in the heavenlies, verse 6?

RT We will come to that, I hope, but that is what the Father is doing. In this reading I am thinking about what the brethren are doing, what Christ is doing, and what the Spirit is doing. And I trust we will get help to touch what you are saying, what the Father is doing. And He does it as through Christ, by one Spirit. The whole divine economy is active, dear brethren, to bring us to be at rest and at home in the enjoyment of divine favour.

JCG We are accustomed to making way for the Holy Spirit in relation to moving over the Jordan, and into the heavenly blessing, but are you stressing that we need to be in touch with the Lord in relation to it, and in relation to everyday matters?

RTI Is that not what He says: "Let not your heart be troubled"? That was feet washing, you may say, "ye believe on God ... In my Father's house ..."; there is the Lord directing us away from all the sorrows,

assembly sorrows, a lot of burdens that are protracted unnecessarily through not enjoying divine favour, and here they are all settled, "In my Father's house".

In that bright home of love divine,
The Father's house on high, (Hymn 144).

What a sense of that the Lord is bringing to them. He says, "Let not your heart be troubled ... In my Father's house ..."; He says 'There is something there that sorrows can never touch':

Where deceiver ne'er can enter,
Sin-soiled feet have never trod; (Hymn 206).

The Lord is telling them that He is going there, but He was not going alone; He is taking us in with Him and in divine thoughts we are seated in the Father's house enjoying His favour; but then the circumstances of life press on us, and I think that is where the Lord's service comes in, and the Spirit's service.

RFW There would be an immense difference between this world and the Father, would there not? The Lord was to depart out of this world to the Father.

RT Yes, it is so beautiful, is it not? You get a sense of His dignity. I have often thought about all that was pressing on His spirit in this section. He is finished with the world in one sense, but think of what was pressing on His spirit as to Gethsemane and the cross; but nearest His heart were these dear disciples, and He was telling them of where He was going. It was not to be an unknown place; He says, "I go to prepare you a place ... that where I am ye also may be". Wonderful grace that He should communicate to us, that while He was leaving He was not forgetting.

JAB What does having "part with me" mean?

RT "My Father and your Father ... my God and your God"; He had never said those words before. He is guiding them gently along to hear words they had never heard before, that they will have part with Him before the Father. What would you say?

JAB It involved nearness to Him, "with me", but it is more than that, is it somehow sharing in our experiences the joy that you are speaking about? It may be a different context but Peter says, "he has given to us the great and precious promises, that through these ye may become

partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust", 2 Pet 1: 4. That is the context, the background, you have been speaking about, that there is something of the divine nature that we can have part in as knowing Christ in this way; is that right?

RT That verse was in my mind; that "ye may become partakers of the divine nature": what a favour! That is sonship in its fulness. It is being at home and at rest in the Father's house and that is what He has done to us. "That ... ye may become" is now, dear brethren, in these circumstances, so that we turn naturally to the Father. The divine nature would be that there is something working in me by the Spirit, and by the service of Christ our great high Priest toward us, that we may remember that, that we "become partakers of the divine nature"; what a favour!

GAB It says, "as I have done to you"; when this service is rendered does it not bring Christ before the soul? It is being done in the same way as He did it.

RT Yes, that is where we learn it. We learn everything from Christ; anything that is of any profit that is going through. And then He speaks of the foundation of it - maybe we have not said enough about it, but the foundation of it all is that we love one another "as I have done to you". We all know each other naturally far too well, and people get down, they speak about how depressed they have got, how far away they have gone, what things they have done, as if we would not do them, but that is not this. This is a question of "as I have done to you", as we have received divine forgiveness, divine favour, divine blessing, we are to be communicators of that as knowing what Christ has done to us.

TDB The Lord Jesus sets out throughout the section what He knows and He desires that they should come into something of what He knows.

RT Well, this is 'knowing by experience'. We have all known how our sins have overwhelmed us, we have all known what it was to have our sins forgiven; He did that, but the same grace has touched our hearts as our brother has reminded us, that we may "escape the corruption that is in the world" having become partakers of the divine nature. You cannot have it without knowing it, and you are not a believer in Christ in the joy of salvation unless you know it, consciously; and what we know becomes a regulating feature in the way we move

here in our pathway through divine grace.

DBR Our brother raised the matter of “part with me”; it is a very precious thought of being “with me”. It is not only that we have been blessed by Him but we have been blessed with Him. I wondered if it would be a great exercise with each one of us to be conscious of our link with Christ, and our place with Christ. You were saying earlier that we will not really function here until we know our place there; there is a great deal of importance in that, do you think?

RT Absolutely! And we grow into it gradually, I suppose. I have often quoted the brother who came to see that he was a saint in purpose before he was a sinner in practice, and the practice never altered the purpose. These meetings are to stimulate us in knowing that we have a place in divine favour, a cloudless favour that will never be dimmed, but the joy of it now comes through our links with Christ and the Spirit to bring us into the conscious sense and enjoyment of the Father's love. Maybe we will have another reading, and we will speak about the Father.

DBR It is a wonderful thing to appreciate that He took our place when no one else could take it, but it was all in view of sharing with Him in His place, is that the idea?

RT Very good; that is chapter 13 before chapter 14! The great end of the feet washing is that we might know that we have a place in the Father's house, in Him. It brings us back, dear brethren, to this, we cannot get away from it: “ye have love amongst yourselves”. If you want to know what that is read 1 Corinthians 13, and beloved Mr A J Gardiner used to say repeatedly, 'When you read Corinthians 13, instead of “love” in verses 4 to 7, put ,I': 'I have long patience, I am kind, I am not emulous of others, I am not puffed up, I am not seeking my own things', and that tests you as to how much love you have. Love is the basis, and that is what the Lord expresses in chapter 13, condescending love, but now in John 14 we have got ascending love, but we must know the one before we know the other, and here it is; it says, “Let not your heart be troubled”.

JSp Would this bear on “he that sanctifies and those sanctified”, Heb 2: 11? There is the special place of Christ, He is the Sanctifier, and we are brought in as those sanctified, “all of one”.

RT Yes, to be at rest! It is to bring us there to the Father, is it not? It

says, “will ... sing thy praises”, v12. We are free from these limitations and the service of Christ is going on today, to free us from those limitations that we may know and enjoy the favour of being with Him in the Father's house. It says, “I go to prepare you a place”; we could well understand Him going there, since He deserved to be there in the right of His Person, as well as what He did, but here He says, “I go to prepare you a place”. Now in chapter 14 we know our place there, know what it is that He has prepared that place, and then He says, “and if I go.... I am coming again and will receive you to myself, that where I am ye also may be”. What an expression of divine love!

NJH So “part with me” must be the basis of collective movement, is that right?

RT Yes, but it is done individually; go on.

NJH We come into it individually, but it is the basis of moving together in the divine service.

RT I think that chapters 14, 15, 16 and 17 are bringing us collectively together; it is bringing us in. Chapter 13 is basic, and love among ourselves, dear brethren, is basic to us entering together. He has gone there before us, “I go to prepare you a place that where I am ye also may be”.

DBR Do you think that what you referred to as to Joshua, the ark going through Jordan, and the people completely passing over would open up real concern for one another, and love for one another, that would desire all to be involved in this great movement towards the Father? You see love amongst yourselves in that way.

RT Yes; so maybe it needs a little water, a touch of the towel, to stimulate one another into this favour. They used to say a good rub of the towel helps the circulation, and so it does. The Corinthian epistles are full of it; full of the water and the towel. Paul did not adjust Corinth through his apostolic authority; he adjusted Corinth through his love for them and his thoughts about them as divine property. He brought in throughout Corinthians - I am always impressed with it - touches that are Ephesian in character. “Ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified” (1 Cor 6: 11); He “has been made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption”, 1 Cor 1:30. These are features that you would never expect in the Corinthian setting, but there they are; he brings divine light and divine favour into their

circumstances, so that they might know what He has done to them.

QAP Ephesians 5 refers to “the washing of water by the word”, (v 26), and the nourishing and cherishing, (v 29); does the personal service of the Lord Jesus continue, as well as His example to us to serve one another?

RT Yes, He is carrying it on, but that is “washing of water by the word”. He goes much further there; it is nourishing and cherishing; that is what we will get as our feet are washed, as we have love working among ourselves. Nourishing and cherishing is what He is doing in these chapters. He is nourishing and cherishing them that they might be at home with the Father.

RGr Do you think that the way that the Lord appeals even to Laodicea would bear on this? He says “if any one hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him”, which I suppose is chapter 13, but go on to “he with me”, Rev 3: 20. There is nothing less than that in His mind, do you think?

RT Well, that is right. If we miss our feet washing He may have to be a bit more severe the next time. I suppose that is Laodicea; He had to be a bit more severe to them. They had missed their feet washing, they had missed some of the meetings, missed singing the hymns together with the brethren, missed speaking about Christ in the home; maybe these things had got a little bit dulled, and now He says, 'You are puffed up'. It is very near to us, is it not? You can get puffed up and forget about the feet washing, forget about His love, His great desire to have us where He is, but if it laid hold of us, “I go to prepare you a place I am coming again and shall receive you to myself, that where I am ye also may be”. That is the whole result of our wilderness pathway, to be where Christ now is, and to be at home in His presence.

PAG Is one of the things that the Lord has done to us to show us the Father? I was just wondering if the way that the Lord loved His own was really a demonstration of the Father's love in practice.

RT Yes; I was impressed in reading through this that as the Lord brings us in in chapter 14, some of which we read, He refers to the Spirit. He is going away and He is coming again, but He says that the meantime will be filled out in the Spirit's grace, and He proceeds as we have seen in some on these verses. The Spirit is sent by Christ. He has asked for the Spirit to be with us; the Spirit goes forth from with the

Father (John 15: 26), and He comes Himself. Another divine Person has come to maintain us until we reach the Father's house in its fulness, would you say?

PAG So the demonstration of divine affections is in the way in which divine Persons have moved to make them known. Is it a great thing to think that divine Persons actually serve us?

RT Yes, and a demonstration of it is in the saints. It says that He will come and will bring demonstration to the world, that is a public thing. But the demonstration of the Spirit here, and the demonstration of Christ being in glory with my name on His breast, is that the Holy Spirit is here with you and in you.

DBR In chapter 14 Philip says to Him, "Lord, shew us the Father and it suffices us". What would you say about that?

I wondered if Philip had some understanding so that he says "it suffices us", as if he was reaching forward to something. Each of us would be tested by what you are bringing in, but do you think that we should have some sense of what is available so that we are sufficed with it?

RT I think that is just what the Lord says. He says, "Am I so long a time with you, and thou hast not known me"; that would come home to us would it not? Have we learnt that if we have seen Christ we have seen the Father? Think of these things that He did: He said Himself, it was the Father that did them, chap 14: 10. So companionship with Jesus, dear brethren, will soon bring us to realise who the Father is. But in answer to the question here, He says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father unless by me". The Lord puts us through His hands to bring us into the practical enjoyment of 'sonship laying hold of us', does He not?

JCG Do you think that what precedes that, "ye believe on God, believe also on me"; the strengthening of our faith, underlies what the Lord is revealing? Our strength of faith would help us to fasten on to what the Lord's words are.

RT Well, tell us how to strengthen our faith.

JCG It is communion with Him particularly, what would you say?

RT Well, we would not keep away from the meetings. Is that not a great strengthening to our faith? Prayer meeting, other meetings; I

know the importance of that strengthening our faith. I may feel the overwhelming burdens, but I see another brother who has overcome, and he can speak to me about Christ. So strengthening our faith is very important but it is in a Person. That is what the Lord is saying here; He says, "I am the way". They wanted some signs; we often want some scriptures and so on. We do not understand things, what is the scripture for them: well, the Lord says, "I am the way". "I", "I am the way, and the truth, and the life". He directs them, not to the details and not to the obstacles, but He directs them to Himself. It is a Person that is the way, the truth and the life.

JDG He says, "the Father himself has affection for you, because ye have had affection for me", chap 16: 27. So there was Himself, and then there was the Father Himself. He had the Father's name when He was here.

RT In this section the whole wealth of the Father's love and affection is coming out in Christ, and that is where we learn it, is it not? We learn the Father in Jesus.

JDG He had fulfilled that completely and then He commits them all into the Father's hand in His prayer.

RT Yes, He does. We will read that, I trust, later, but here He is directing them.

The door is wide open, dear brethren, because He went in with the saints on His breast. He did not go in alone as He had a right to do, but He went in and He took the saints with Him to our place above. Without the enjoyment of it, dear brethren, our way here will be a wilderness journey with sorrows after sorrows, but the way through the wilderness was seen in Caleb, that he had the land in his heart, Josh 14: 7. And that is what the Lord is really bringing to these persons; He is showing them the way in: "No one comes to the Father unless by me". It is through Christ by one Spirit we have access to the Father, Eph 2: 18.

DBR Is it the inwardness of Christianity? I was thinking about verse 20: "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you". I wondered if passing over we are brought into the inwards of Christianity.

RT Three times over in these chapter He speaks about "in that day", chap 14: 20, 16: 23, 26. The fullness of everything has opened up

because Christ went into heaven with the saints on His breast. That has opened up heaven as it had never been before. He is not there alone, but He has carried us in His affections into that place of favour and now the Holy Spirit has come, another divine Person, to maintain us with the power; the power is in the Spirit to enjoy that place of favour that Christ has opened up for us in the Father's house.

JAB What does the Lord mean when He says “because I live ye also shall live”? You referred earlier to His words, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life”, and we sometimes think of that as a grand statement of truth. But is that to become our experience too, that because the Lord Jesus is living, we can live and have that character of life.

RT A sceptic asked a brother, 'What would happen if you woke up some morning and found it was all a myth?'. He replied, 'I would fall to pieces'. “Because I live”; He lives: I live. The brother added, 'I was speaking to Him this morning'. Someone was trying to say it was all a fable, but there was a man that in simple experience had been speaking to Jesus that morning; how could anybody say it was a myth? “Because I live ye also shall live”.

JAB He lives for us, does He not? It has already been referred to, He is serving us. He always lives to intercede for us, Heb 7: 25. He lives to appear before the face of God for us, Heb 9: 24. It is wonderful!

RT He died for us, but He lives for us. I think that is a fundamental thing to have in our hearts, that He lives for us. Therefore we view Him as our great high Priest. He has gone in with the saints on His breast, and this passage of scripture was written by one who was leaning on the bosom of Jesus, chap 13: 25. I think if we leaned more on the bosom of Jesus we would very soon see our name on that breastplate, and that is what is going to regulate us, and dignify us, and give us power through the Spirit's grace to be here in the enjoyment of our place above.

JDG It says there, “I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you”. That was the verse that liberated JND, I often think about that.

RT Tell us about it.

JDG I do not know if I can say much, but that is what delivered him. He realised the liberty; I suppose there is sonship there, us being in Christ and I in you. Can you help us as to it?

RT I am glad of what you say about Mr Darby, that it brought him into the liberty that he was given in the divine economy of the Father, the Son and the Spirit all active, and very soon we will be in new bodies. And so it is to affect us in our pathway here.

JDG It just always appealed to me to search out the depths of it, what it was that touched him; it liberated him from all around, penitence, and everything else, and set him free in the divine presence.

RT Well, it is by the Spirit that is enjoyed, is it not? Another divine Person has come to make the reality of that true in a practical way in my heart and in my life, “ye in me, and I in you”.

JCG If we experienced increasingly 'Christ in us', would it help us to understand His coming to us in relation to the supper? The state that we have, us enjoying Christ in us, would you say?

RT Well, you will never enjoy “Christ in you” unless you enjoy you “in Christ”.

JCG Help us to understand the difference. Is “in Christ” that I have a standing before God in Him; but then am I working practically to display these features: that is, Christ in me?

RT And how did I get into that place? He took me in! He forgave my sins, He gives me help day by day in the exercises that come up, Satan tempting me at every quarter, but I have a place in Christ, that nothing, dear brethren, - nothing - can disturb. It is a settled place of favour in Christ. Then if I dwell on that the Holy Spirit is here that there may be an expression of Christ in me. I think that is the great work of the Holy Spirit, to form Christ in our affections.

DCB Mr Stoney brings in the thought in his ministry of union with Christ personally, relating to the verse here, “In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you”, vol 2 p170. Would you help us on that thought?

RT I think the Lord is referring to the Spirit's day, is He not, that a divine Person has come? There were forty days when in heaven there was the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Lord was there and the Spirit came from that atmosphere, of what Christ had accomplished. What days they must have been in heaven, Christ having accomplished all that work! And from that place of divine favour the Spirit has come bringing that favour to be in us. It says of the Spirit He

will be “with you”, and it says He will be “in you”. And He is in us as we make more room for Him, make room for Him to occupy us not with ourselves, with our sins, but with the place that we have in divine affections.

RGr Do you think the experience that Rebecca had would bear on this? There came a point in her history when it was said to her, “Wilt thou go with this man?” (Gen 24: 58): that related to the Spirit. The Spirit is often represented as an influence like wind, or water, or rivers, but do we have to get a substantial impression of who the Spirit is, and His greatness, and entrust ourselves to Him?

RT Yes, indeed. The Lord is conveying that here too, is He not? He says, “I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you”. I suppose that would be by the Spirit, would it? The orphan position is felt, but it is filled up by the Spirit maintaining us in the joy of our heavenly portion. So the Lord goes on to say, “These things I have said to you ... but the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name ...”. That is a very interesting verse, “whom the Father will send”. There is the Father's affections; He saw us here, poor feeble creatures, and the Father sent the Spirit. I think we have read the scriptures that cover it all. The Lord sends Him, the Father sends Him, and He comes Himself. A divine Person, the Holy Spirit of God, put Himself in a position through His affection for us, where the Father would send Him in Christ's name, and Christ would send Him as thinking about us.

RGr Do you think then that “part with me” would involve an understanding of the relationships that divine Persons have with each other?

RT Indeed, and They are One. One God, the Father of all, one Lord, one Spirit, and it is all expressed today in that the Spirit comes here as a Comforter. He says “the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name”; now, think of what Christ had been to these men during those three and a half years. What Christ had been to them! He was everything to them, but He says that the Spirit will come “in my name”. The Father sends Him, “in my name”.

PAG The Spirit is referred to as the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph 1: 13), and it says in Acts “having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which ye behold and hear”, chap 2: 33. Would that suggest to us that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit is part of the purpose of God?

RT Oh yes, it must have been. God was never taken aback by public breakdown. The Lord here is looking at the sin question being forever gone! It had not been met yet, but He is looking here at a day. "In that day"; He says that three times, that is the Spirit's day. He will bring the whole wealth of heaven to bear upon us in our wilderness path that we may not be overwhelmed by it, do you think?

PAG Yes, and I think what you say about God not being taken aback is important. God is proceeding with what He always had in mind, and He always had in mind that the Father should receive from sons what was really worked out by divine affection, do you think?

RT Well, the breakdown happened because I lost the enjoyment of my place in divine purpose. That is something that has never been interfered with. That is Naphtali, as I said; "Satisfied with favour". He was not seeking a great name here; in principle he says, 'You can add nothing to me, I have got all I need and enjoy in the presence of Christ'. So that the Spirit comes to be all that they need: the place that Christ had filled in their hearts and in their lives, the Holy Spirit has come to do, that they may come into this good land. It says "*he* shall teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you". When things come up we say, 'Where is the scripture for it?'. But - what is the Spirit saying? The Spirit will never operate outside the area of Scripture - I know that - but what we want to get is, "What is the Spirit saying?". What is the voice from heaven saying? Scripture will substantiate it, scriptures are like the banks of the truth, but the truth is in divine Persons: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life", and that is true, and the Spirit is the Spirit of truth. It is not flowing out of the books (it is there, we thank God for it), but it is flowing out of our living, conscious relationships with a divine Person, the Holy Spirit of God.

I was impressed that the Lord was going away, and He speaks about Himself in the Father's house, but most of the time from this He is speaking about the Spirit, that there is a divine Person here maintaining things to the Father's pleasure, maintaining the saints too in the joy of their place in divine favour.

NJH He says, "It is profitable for you that I go away". This had never taken place before, the Spirit coming personally, another divine Person. And while the way the truth and the life was in Christ the power of entering into that way and truth and life was in the Spirit; is that right?

RT It is an added touch, is it not? The Lord had been here but now

there is an added touch. The Comforter is sent of the Father, He has brought the Father's things within our reach, within our hearts, and He has brought the glory of Christ, having come in Christ's name, there is not only what Christ was here, but He brings in the name that Christ has above, the Son of the Father's love. The Spirit has brought all that to bear on our hearts: a regulating feature in our pathways here.

JSp He "bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God", Rom 8:16. How close He has come, into my very soul, showing me of these things.

RT We could never have known "my Father and your Father ...my God and your God" without the Spirit's work in our hearts, and He has brought it, has He not? That is very sweet to think of. Divine Persons have thought about everything and they have voluntarily moved into the position of Father, Son and Holy Spirit that the saints of this dispensation might be enriched and edified, to soon take on bodies of glory and be at home to be eternally with Him.

NMcK In John 14, the Lord goes to prepare our place, there is a place there for us, and He has gone in there to take it for us, but does the feet washing and the Spirit mean that we are to be prepared for that place?

RT I think that is right: the Spirit has come, the Lord went into to prepare the place, the Spirit has come out to prepare us for the place. It is very important to lay hold of the place; it is in the Father's house. It is not a name in this world, it is not anything here that man can give; the place we have in divine affections is out of this world, but it is in the Father's house.

DBR Do you pray often to the Spirit?

RT Well, more than I used to. And I would say the Father means more to me today than ever He did. And I am very conscious of being on Christ's shoulder, one of His own. It is a simple thing, dear brethren, a very simple thing, but the Lord leads us through the exercises of this life that we may come to know Him better, a Comforter, a Saviour, a Friend, a Father. To think of the names that divine Persons have taken, names of love; Father, the Comforter, Saviour, Shepherd. What names! The very names themselves convey to us the greatness and grandeur of divine thoughts about us; may we be the more ready, dear brethren, to be exercised to have our feet clean, to be able to walk with clean feet and unfettered hearts into that realm of divine favour that is

already prepared for us for Christ's name's sake.

DBR It says, “for he abides with you”; the Lord left, He had to leave, but the Spirit abides with us. It seems to me that it would appeal to the youngest believer here that we could turn at any time to the Holy Spirit.

RT “That he may be with you”, that is objective; but “shall be in you”, that is subjective, is it not? And it will be His last touch will it not, at the rapture; it will be “on account of his Spirit which dwells in you”, Rom 8: 11. Beautiful touch that is: He will be here with us all the time, and He will go with us at the rapture. He will be with us eternally: there will never be a time in the Father's house without the Spirit being with us! We will be in bodies of glory, but divine Persons will be there in all their grace and love towards us so that we are really at home in it.

Glasgow

5th October 2013

Key to initials:-

T D Beveridge, Kirkcaldy; G A Brown, Grangemouth; D C Brown, Edinburgh; J A Brown, Grangemouth; R J Campbell, Glasgow;
J D Gray, Edinburgh; J C Gray, Grangemouth; P A Gray, Grangemouth;
R Gray, Grangemouth; N J Henry, Glasgow; N McKay, Glasgow;
Q A Poore, Swanage; D B Robertson, Cumnock; J Spinks, Grangemouth; R Taylor, Kirkcaldy; R F White, Londonderry

MODELLING AND IMITATING WHAT IS RIGHT

Jeffrey A Oberg

1 Peter 2: 13-25, 3: 8-16,

Philippians 3: 8-21

3 John 1-14

At the end of the last reading we had reference to the matter of witness and the Lord speaking about the Spirit witnessing to Him; and that we are to be His witnesses. We are to bear witness as well; witness is really another word for testimony. The word testimony is one we use a lot, and we may wonder what it means. Well, I think very simply it means Christ - it is something where Christ is seen. And the question that I have is whether I am in the testimony or not. This is a very important question for each one of us to answer and seek to understand, whether or not we are in the testimony. The testimony is going on somewhere in some and, beloved, I want to be among them. We would credit all here in the room with wanting to be among them. The testimony is not just attending meetings. You can attend meeting and not be in the testimony. To be in the testimony, beloved, we must be like Christ, not just know about Him, but be like Him. That is how Christ comes into expression and how He is witnessed to. The testimony is there, where Christ is, where He is borne testimony to, because of what is there substantially in persons like you and me.

Well, how do we become like the Lord Jesus Christ? The obvious answer that we would all probably immediately say, and it is right to say it, is that we need to be occupied with Him. That is the first thing, and to feed upon Him. So, in the four gospels, you have the wonderful opening up and exemplification of all the features that God found pleasurable in a Man, in the Lord Jesus Christ. What a testimony is there in the gospels. We can read the Scriptures and see it illustrated for us tangibly there. In the epistles we have teaching. In the book of the Acts we have the actual establishment of the testimony substantially here in persons. The unfolding of the truth comes out in the epistles, but in the gospels you have the illustration of it. You see it there in a Man, a glorious Man. He is the One we want to be like. There was a brother my age locally with us who was taken to be with the Lord in December this past year. The last thing I remember him saying in his preaching was that he wanted to be like Jesus. Is that your desire, beloved? Do you want to be like Jesus, or are you content with being

like you are?

I thought it might be helpful to see practically some features from these three apostles in addition to being occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ. We can really get hold of something if we see it in persons. And I think in these persons, Peter, Paul and John, you see the testimony of Christ worked out. There are also some very wonderful thoughts that they bring in that I would like to refer to, but the primary thing that I want to speak about is imitation and modelling. In some ways, the idea of imitation may seem a negative thought to us. There are those that imitate things that are not right. They are like play actors; but that is not what God has in mind. He has in mind imitating what is good and what is right, as we have in Peter. Peter, as we know, is the one who brings in the truth of the kingdom of God. So in these passages we have subjection and suffering. If we want to be like Christ, these matters must be understood and entered into by us. I like Peter because he was prepared to be adjusted. He subjected himself to what was right. He brings in this truth of being subject to every human institution. He goes on and speaks about the relationships between husband and wife. What I wanted to touch on was that he brings in this truth of subjection, and links it with suffering. I believe that it is important for us to understand that the enemy is working in the public arena at the present time, to break down every feature of what is morally right. Beloved young people, you will face it in your work life or your home life, but especially I think as we go out and have to do with men in the world. There are principles working, things that are against what is right, real wickedness, that we have to face. And how do we face them? It is in not simply by being subject to principles but it is by standing positively for what is right. It means saying with a good conscience that I cannot go along with what is not right instead of taking the easy road out and just going along with the crowd. Beloved, we need to stand for what is right. Regardless of what everyone else does, we need to do what is right. The attacks against the institution of marriage and all that is coming in publicly at the present time in relation to that are a very serious matter. Standing for what is right is not engaging men in public debate, but is maintaining a good conscience and seeking to honour the Lord.

It will involve suffering for the Lord's name's sake. I feel that the Lord is speaking to us about the suffering, perhaps not bodily suffering, but suffering for righteousness' sake. The Lord suffered at the hands of

men for righteousness' sake and we need to be prepared for that in the public setting and in our localities. We were referring to the matter of fellowship and these things come in subtly. We can talk about the truth and understand it mentally, but the real practical working out of it is another thing as you stand for what is right, not dogmatically asserting the truth, but in a very humble way submitting to the Lord in the circumstances in which He places you in your locality, in your home and in your work place. And in doing so God will come in and give you support. Here in this passage we read that we are called to suffer. That is, it is not something that just happens to us; it involves divine intent that we should suffer. It is as we are true to the name of the Lord, and suffering for righteousness' sake, that we will be sustained and kept in it. Peter brings in the example of the Lord Himself. He says the Lord Jesus is a model, that is, He is a copy to write from, someone you can follow and see. Here is One who always did what was right. Peter would insist on this, not just that it is there in Christ, but that it should be in us as well.

So he goes on in chapter 3, after referring to subjection and suffering, to say "be all of one mind, sympathising, full of brotherly love, tender hearted, humble minded; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but on the contrary, blessing others, because ye have been called to this, that ye should inherit blessing". Is that not something? We have been *called* to blessing. Are we blessing others? We do not want to be a burden or a care; we want to be a blessing. Have you been a blessing? You can be a blessing by doing good. So he says, "suffer for righteousness' sake", not being afraid of what other people will think. As we are growing up, we begin to be concerned with what others will think. Well, what we need to be concerned about is what the Lord Jesus will think. And to consider for Him, and as you do so, He will come in and stand by you in relation to what you are going through. You may be ostracised but He will stand by you and give you the courage to go forward. So Peter says, "sanctify the Lord the Christ in your hearts, and be always prepared to give an answer to every one that asks you to give an account of the hope that is in you, but with meekness and fear". We are not required to argue with people and confront people but we would in meekness and fear speak about the hope that is within us. Beloved, do we have that hope in us that we can give expression to?

If we turn to Paul in Philipians, he is another example and he brings before us the great truth of the assembly of God. The two things

that I wanted to speak about briefly with regards to Paul are his preparedness to suffer the loss of all that he might gain Christ, and his heavenly-mindedness. That is what is to be imitated from this scripture. Paul refers to those who were walking in the same way as he was - that is pursuing the heavenly calling, the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. Have you set yourself for that, and will you become one who is going in that direction, that persons can follow in the same steps? That is how the fellowship works out in practical terms, as you find others that you can go on with. How encouraging this is that Paul speaks about, that he counted "all things as loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all, and count them to be filth, that I may gain Christ". He was set that he wanted Christ and nothing else. Beloved, is that your desire? Is that my desire? Do not be content with mediocrity and just leaving things the way they are. I think that the Lord would encourage us through examples like this to go in for these things and to pursue. Paul says, "Not that I have already obtained.... but I pursue". He says, "As many therefore as are perfect, let us be thus minded" - as those that are mature - "and if ye are any otherwise minded, this also God shall reveal to you". In other words, it will become apparent. "But whereto we have attained, let us walk in the same steps. Be imitators all together of me, brethren, and fix your eyes on those walking thus as you have us for a model". So Paul was saying that you can see persons that are going on rightly, and you and I probably know such persons, perhaps in our families or in our meeting that are going on rightly. Beloved, imitate what is right in them. Do not fixate upon what you may perceive as wrong, but see what is of Christ and link on with it and go on with it. So he goes on to say here, "for many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is the belly, and their glory in their shame, who mind earthly things". The contrast that Paul presents is between those who are heavenly-minded and those who are earthly-minded. That becomes apparent by the way persons live. We should be encouraged to live here as those who are pilgrims and strangers. It struck me recently in reading through Deuteronomy how often God speaks about the stranger, and He speaks about loving the stranger. I think that is something that is very precious, that we should love and be encouraged in relation to persons who are set for the Lord in such a way that they do not have anything here, but they are set in relation to

another world and that is what Paul brings before us. So that is the imitation of Paul.

Next we have John, who brings before us the family of God. Peter brings out the kingdom of God, Paul brings out the assembly of God, and John brings out the family of God. One of the persons John speaks of in this context is Gaius. This beloved brother was another person who exemplified features of Christ to be taken up by us as relating to the matter of hospitality - doing good in that way. If I could just say, I think it is something we need to be encouraged in. Gaius entertained persons who came to him and John commends him for doing so. He says, "We therefore ought to receive such, that we may be fellow-workers with the truth". These types of meetings are very encouraging and it is good to see the brethren together in this way, but let us not forget the matter of travelling amongst the brethren; seeing how the saints get on in their own setting and proving this matter of hospitality. Being like Christ involves how He would do things and Gaius understood that. It says in another passage that he was the "host ... of the whole assembly", Rom 16: 23. He took care of persons. I think there is nothing like being in one another's company to build each other up and to encourage our hearts together. We see each other at these meetings and that is good, but it is also good to get around amongst the brethren generally and across the globe too. There are some areas that get a lot of visitors only at certain times of the year. I think the Lord would encourage us to go when there is no one else around, when you can bring in encouragement, help and blessing to the saints in their own place. We are not to imitate evil like this other man Diotrephes was doing. It says he would cast out of the assembly those who would entertain in this way. Yet here is this faithful man Gaius; he is going on *regardless*. He is going on and he is taking care of the saints of God. Let us go on beloved brethren through this passing scene, following these practical examples.

I think God would bring to us these different features. In Peter, it is subjection and suffering. Though it is not all suffering; we are to enjoy the fellowship and that is what John brings in. With Paul it is whole-hearted committal to Christ, losing everything and having his mind set on the things above so that everything else faded into the background - there was nothing else for Paul. Some people may say Paul was a controversial figure, but he was single-minded in pursuing the heavenly calling and going in for those things. Nothing else mattered to Paul. He

loved the brethren and he cared for them, while his focus was on the high calling and the pursuit of it. Then John draws attention to Gaius and imitating what is good in hospitality and the practical care of the brethren. If you lay yourselves out for the saints, God will see to it that you are rewarded in other ways. He would bring in spiritual blessing. May the Lord just help us and encourage us to seek to become like Christ. I think the minute that we settle down and do not become concerned about this we are in great danger, beloved. I do not think it matters how old you are or how young you are. It is not a question of age. It is not a question of whether you are a brother or a sister. Let us be like Christ, let us follow in His steps.

What does that mean? How do you do that? You want to find where the Lord is? You can ask as the person in the Song of Songs did -

Tell me ... Where thou feedest thy flock,
Where thou makest it to rest at noon, chap 1: 7.

It says,

Go thy way ... beside the shepherds' booths, v 8.

He is where He feeds the flock. It is not a question of an ecclesiastical position. It is a question of finding where the Lord is, and He is where what is right is maintained. The truth is maintained livingly in persons, like ourselves. That is what is so attractive about these three men. They are persons like ourselves. The Lord Jesus said in relation to Peter, "I will make you fishers of men", Matt 4: 19. The Lord made Peter what he was. Peter made a lot of mistakes, but God used him. Who was the first of the disciples that the Lord appeared to after He was raised up from among the dead? Paul says, "he appeared to Cephas, and then to the twelve", 1 Cor 15: 5. Do not opt out because you have failed. God would strengthen you to be here and to be established in your soul. He says to Peter, "when once thou hast been restored, confirm thy brethren", Luke 22: 32. Beloved, that is a very wonderful activity, and that is what Peter did - confirmed his brethren. He brought to bear the truth of the kingdom of God in such a way that it opened the way for the ministry that the Lord brought in through Paul. That is why I referred to Peter first; he set the stage, you might say. The Lord uses him to help the brethren to be prepared for what the Lord would bring in as light from heaven, the glorious things of Christ and the assembly through Paul: "Things which eye has not seen, and ear not heard ... which God has prepared for them that love him", 1 Cor 2: 9. Oh what

unfoldings of the truth there were through Paul, but it requires first coming into the gain of the kingdom, the teaching that Peter brought in. The Lord used him and He restored him. He could also use a man like Paul, who had been an opposer. You may be here in the room, but not be too sure about things; but there are persons who are opposed. Saul of Tarsus was a religious man who knew everything about what he thought was right. He may have known the Scriptures backwards and forwards, but he was against Christ. And the Lord came in from heaven and made him a vessel that could be used in a glorious way, to establish the truth of the assembly, to bring in the light from heaven. He would have him sit down with persons whom he had persecuted before. Who else but God could do such a thing as that, beloved? Paul was like Christ. I am saying this because Peter failed, and yet he too was like Christ; not in his failure, but he learned from what he had gone through. Saul, a religious man, had it all figured out. He understood things mentally. It is not a question, beloved young people, about acquiring academic knowledge; it is a question of understanding the truth, holding the truth in love and allowing it to become part of you in order that Christ comes into expression in your life. In Acts 20, the elders of Ephesus came down to Paul and were moved. They were touched when he said “they would no more see his face”, v 38. From the Corinthian epistle, it appears that some persons were speaking ill of Paul, saying that his presence was weak, 2 Cor 10: 10. He would not have been much to look at. Do not judge the brethren by what they look like. Judge them by what you see of Christ. Authoritative ministry is what is borne out in the lives of those who minister it. Paul says, “knowing of whom thou hast learned them”, 2 Tim 3: 14. Timothy would have seen the way Paul lived. He would probably have gone into Paul's tent and seen how Paul conducted himself. He saw the testimony of Christ lived out practically in this brother. He was a person like ourselves and yet Paul was an elect vessel. The Lord can use anyone here in this room. He can use all of us.

John could not always speak about himself, but he refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Beloved, do you know the love of Jesus in that way, to be so conscious of the Lord Jesus that you are prepared that everything to do with you is lost sight of and that all that is before you is this glorious Man? That is what John grasped. He goes right through. The Lord says, “If I will that he abide until I come”, John 21: 22. He went through all kinds of difficulties. How? Because he knew the Lord Jesus. And John, I might add, was one to whom the

Lord entrusted His mother, chap 19: 26, 27. What can He entrust us with? We want to be like Jesus. We want to be like the Lord Jesus Christ and that is a constant daily exercise. In some sense; we will be the last to know if we are becoming like Christ, but others will see it. The key is to keep on doing good, to imitate what is good. Be models, beloved young people; this is not just for older brethren. Peter does say to the elders, "but being models for the flock", 1 Pet 5: 3. I remember how older brethren would come and minister the truth and we would have older brethren in the home, but they are not there any more. Now it is a question of what is there with me. I can say, 'Well, I remember this brother or that brother and what they said in the meeting'. And I think of these young people sitting here and I wonder if they have an opportunity to hear such things from us? What is there of Christ in me? Am I taking responsibility to become like Jesus, because the testimony is maintained *in persons*. It is not an abstract idea. It is substantial and real, but it requires persons who are committed and devoted to Christ. It is a constant daily exercise and a matter of walking in the Spirit. Being free from everything else. So we sang at the beginning,

Now Thou art training,
Setting me free

From all that hinders,
To dwell with Thee.

(Hymn 419)

That is happening now. The Lord is training us. In Deuteronomy 8 God says, He "led thee through the ... wilderness" and then He says, "that he might humble thee", v15, 16. That is the wilderness experience. It is a wonderful thing to be able to enjoy the great things of God, but the training ground is in day to day life both individually, in our households, and in our gatherings. There are things we may wish would go away, but God would use them. Sometimes things keep coming up, one time after another, and you wonder why. I believe it is because the Lord wants us to be so dependent on Him that we are relying on Him and not on our way of resolving the issues. It is not a case of saying this precedent applies here, and this precedent applies there, instead of asking, 'What is the mind of the Lord?'. Paul says, "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2: 16) - the thinking faculty, the very way that Christ is thinking; that is what the assembly has. There is a danger of becoming occupied with what is local to the detriment of what is universal in the truth of the fellowship. We may think we can do something and it will not affect everyone else, but it does. We need to

see that we are linked together, linked together vitally in the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ. What I do matters because it affects others. It involves Christ and the assembly, the greatest creature vessel that heaven or earth will ever know. It is going to come “down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God”, Rev 21: 10. All that wonderful glory is being worked out now in the assembly in different places and parts. God is working things out and He is going to have a glorious universe, centred in Christ with persons like Him. It is a matter of present conformity, not just a future matter. We will have our bodies of humiliation conformed to His body of glory and we will be like Him in that sense. The Lord Jesus is a Man in heaven, and He has a glorious body and we will have a body like His. We will be like Him then. But we need to be like him *now*. Why? Because God is seeking to render a testimony here to Christ in the hearts of the saints.

May God encourage us. Think of divine Persons in the economy converging in relation to this matter of what is for God here. I want to speak carefully, but our immediate responsibility is not what will be in heaven but what is worked out in the sphere of testimony. God has come into it, in Christ, in a Man, and demonstrated wonderful love. And the Father has been made known and the Holy Spirit is here. If we want to be in the testimony rightly, then we must be like Christ.

May God bless the word.

Warrenpoint

5th July 2013

GOD'S GIVING

David J Hutson

1 Timothy 2: 1-7 to “apostle”

Mark 10: 45

Matthew 26: 28

Luke 11: 13

In Timothy, Paul gives the immense scope of the gospel at the present time, something that we need to bear in mind. It speaks more than once in this section of “all”. We are to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings for *all* men. I find that is a test to me as to giving thanks, making intercessions for all men, but that is what we are exhorted to do. There is much that we can give thanks for, but we need to have all men in our prayers in view of what God has in view for them, for it says later that God will have *all* men to be “saved and come to the knowledge of the truth”, and then “God is one, and the mediator of God and men one, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for **all**”. What a tremendous scope there is in the gospel. You hear of some men, and we know of some in history, and you wonder whether it was possible that they could be saved, but such is the work of the Lord Jesus, such is the wonder of God's heart that there is not a man, woman or child on earth who cannot be saved. It is wonderful, the scope of things that there is in the gospel. It says that He “desires that all men should be saved”. How wonderful that is! That is God's desire. I feel myself how much more I should be with God in that desire. How evangelical we would be, if we were with God in His desires that all men should be saved. How ready we would be to give a word, to point to Christ in order that men might be saved, knowing that in doing so we are with God in His great heart of love, desiring “that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth”.

And then it speaks of the glory of the One who has effected everything for Him, “the mediator of God and men one, the man Christ Jesus”. There is a note in relation to “the mediator”. It says He “gave Himself a ransom for all”, that is ‘a ransom in place of’ all. He has taken the place of everyone who puts their trust in Him, but here it is everyone: “who gave himself a ransom for all”. “The man Christ Jesus”, the blessed Saviour, One who in Himself “is over all, God blessed for ever” (Rom 9: 5), and yet He Himself, knowing the heart of God as none other could know it, has come here to earth, has become a Man, to make that

heart known, to make that love known, and to secure those whom God had His desires in relation to that "all men should be saved". Oh what a glorious Person He is, "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself"! You might say, He held nothing back. It speaks in another setting of the merchant who went and sold all whatever He had - that was for what He should obtain for Himself, but here it is what He would secure for God: He "gave himself a ransom for all, the testimony to be rendered in its own times". What a wonderful time we are in, these extended times, two thousand years, and the gospel has been preached all this time. We speak of dispensations, and this is the longest recorded of the dispensations. What a witness to the fact that God desires that all men should be saved. He has made the provision in the Person of His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the shedding of His precious blood, that men might be saved, and, in order that men might come into the gain of it, this wonderful time has been extended. What it will be for God when it comes to a close! How terrible it will be for men. Think of what God will have eternally when He is surrounded by men who know Him and love Him, who know His love, every one like Christ, like the One who has come out from Him in order to make His heart known. How wonderful that will be, and yet God is waiting, holding things in check at the present time in view of men being brought into the gain of all that He has in His heart of love for them.

So I just want to make that point: the wonder of the present time in which we are, the wonder of what has been accomplished; and although at any time God can close up this scene, men being away from Him and refusing the glad tidings which have been preached for so many years, yet God is still waiting in patience, waiting as we sometimes sing,

God waits in grace with hands outstretched to bless
(Hymn 123).

What a God He is, and all on the principle of what has come from His own heart. It is a lie in the world that God is a God of demand and so on, but I have read these scriptures because they all speak of giving, wonderful giving. There could not be greater giving than the giving of God. The Lord could say, "If thou knewest the gift", or the giving, "of God ... thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water", John 4: 10. How wonderful: "would have given thee living water". Think of the wonder of that, "If thou knewest the gift of God", or the giving of God. God is a Giver. Oh that we could convey

that to men generally, that God is a Giver, and He has to give that which none other can give, and what He gives is for man's eternal blessing, and the Lord Jesus Himself has His part in this, as it says, "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself". He could not have given more, but such was His love that He would not give less, but He "gave himself a ransom for all".

But the gospel comes so that we might get the gain of this, so that we might accept it for ourselves, because the other scriptures I have read do not speak of "all men". That is why I read them, and it is something we ought to bear in mind. If you have not come to know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour you need to realise that these things - whilst they are available to all - are only to be known by those who have put their faith and trust in Him. So the Lord Jesus speaks of the way in which He was here Himself, and He speaks of His being here: "the Son of man" - that is the Lord Jesus - "did not come to be ministered to, but to minister". He came here to serve. How wonderful that One who as to His Person created the universe, came here as a Man to serve, not to be served but to serve, "and give his life a ransom for many". He does not say here, 'gave his life a ransom for all'. We need to see that. He "gave himself a ransom for all". The gospel is available through the work of our Lord Jesus for all, but the life is the virtue and value that was there and that is only availed of by "many". The gospel comes that each one under the sound of it might reckon themselves among the many for whom the Lord Jesus came and gave His life. It is available to all, but it says, He gave "his life a ransom for many", and many will be secured. I trust each one here will be secured for the pleasure of God eternally through the work of the Lord Jesus when He gave Himself a ransom for all, as being among the many who have put their trust in Him.

Again, when He speaks of His precious blood, He says, "For this is my blood, that of the new covenant, that shed for many for remission of sins". Everybody's sins will not be forgiven. It says elsewhere "through faith in His blood", Rom 3: 25. Thank God if we have been given faith in the precious blood of Jesus, and in the efficacy of it before God to cleanse us from every sin: "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin", or 'every' sin, 1 John 1: 7. Thank God if we have been given the grace and the faith to put our trust in that precious blood and its value as before God. We may say, 'Do we think enough of it?'. Well, who can fully value that precious blood but God Himself? Think of that word that we often speak of that He said to His

people of old, “when I see the blood, I will pass over you”, Exod 12: 13. Your sins and mine, beloved, are not forgiven because of our valuation of the precious blood of Jesus. They are indeed forgiven because of our faith in that precious blood, and some valuation that we have of it, but the full value of it is seen by God Himself: “when I see the blood, I will pass over you”. Wonderful things these are to be under the shelter of the precious blood of Jesus. The gospel goes out today so that it might be known by everyone under the sound of the word, indeed so that, if it were possible, everyone might come under the sound of the word and might come to know that they can put their trust in the Lord Jesus as Saviour and in the value of His precious blood, and come into the gain of the forgiveness of their sins.

Then there is in this further, wonderful giving: the Lord Jesus has given Himself, His precious blood has been given, and, in order that we might come into the enjoyment of all that God has in His heart for us, He has given the Holy Spirit. Some of us have been speaking of the things that cannot be fully realised by us, but they are “Things ... which God has prepared for them that love Him” (1 Cor 2: 9), and in His love He has provided for us and we have here that it says, “how much rather shall the Father who is of heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”. So one has been thinking of that, beloved, in relation to this preaching, that everything is here on the basis of divine giving. It is not a question of the law, 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not'. The only requirement is simple faith in the Lord Jesus, simple faith in the value of His precious blood, and simply asking in relation to this wonderful gift that the Father has to give. I notice that it does not say that the Father who is of heaven gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask *for* Him, but “to them that ask him”. I think if you ask Him it shows you are dependent upon Him, and God delights to find persons who acknowledge their dependence upon Him, and you might say He answers that by giving them the Holy Spirit. How wonderful that is, because what He sees in them is something that He saw in all its absolute perfection in the Person of Jesus. How wonderful that Jesus was here as a wonderful, glorious Man in dependence upon His God and Father, and now God sees others here in dependence asking Him because they feel their need of Him. How the Lord Jesus could be here as asking the Father. What a wonderful study that is, to see the way the Lord Jesus was here in dependence, and as God sees you here in dependence upon Him and sees you here as asking, He would crown, you might say, what He sees, His work there in you, by giving the Holy Spirit. He gives the Holy

Spirit to those that ask Him. There is liberty in asking if you are not clear as to having received the Holy Spirit, but I believe it is because He crowns His own work, what He sees there of the character of that blessed and glorious dependent Man when He was here, and He crowns it by giving the Holy Spirit. Oh what a Giver God is!

That is all one had to bring before you tonight - the wonder of it that God is to be known as a giving God. The Lord Jesus, the wonderful Giver, gave Himself a ransom for all, His precious blood has been given for many for the remission of sins. Each one can put their faith and trust in that precious blood and in the Saviour whose blood it is. You can come into the gain of that precious life of Jesus which was laid down in order that we might come into life on the other side of death, and the Father would delight to give the Holy Spirit as we are found here in dependence. The gospel brings in all that God has to give; how wonderful that is! God is not making demands. His desire is that "all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth", and the way into it is by simple dependence and simply acknowledging your need of a Saviour, and putting your trust in the Saviour that God has provided. He has given everything on His side, and for us it is simply to receive it. Oh what a God He is! May more open their hearts to receive what He has to give as a result of the preaching today. Amen.

Loanhead

11th August 2013