

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

SECOND SERIES

No. 53

August 2011

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THE GLORY OF THE LORD

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MJK I was touched this morning, when we sang hymn number 181 -
Glory, Lord, is Thine forever.

Then it says -

But thy glory, all transcending,
Is the light that shines in heav'n.
Thou art greater, glorious Saviour,
Than the glory Thou hast won.

Then that we just sang hymn 371 -

Brightness of th' eternal glory.

The brethren can help, but I was touched by the thought of the glory of the Lord. I think we get in Matthew God's view of the glory of His beloved Son. I suppose we can say that the disciples did not enter into it to its fullness, nor can we enter into the fullness of the glory of God, but we get touches of the glory of God; and there in Matthew "a bright cloud overshadowed them, and lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying, *This* is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight". Then, in the Acts, we see in Saul a man on a course opposed to God but the light, a light out of heaven, comes in. I wondered if the apostle had some sense of the glory of God here. I do not know if this light would have meant as much to him if he had not seen Stephen at the stoning because certainly Stephen had a sense of the glory. He says, "I behold the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God", Acts 7: 56. There must have been some sense of the glory of God with Stephen certainly. Seeing that glory, the apostle Paul comes away as blind, but as the Spirit of God comes in his eyes are opened up that he might be enlightened in relation to this. As he gives the account we read - Acts 26 is the last recorded account that he gives of this occasion - the light gets brighter, and I suppose as we go on in our lives here as committed to the things of God, the light would grow brighter and brighter. Paul says, "a light above the brightness of the sun,

shining from heaven round about me”.

Then I thought maybe we could get some touches here in Corinthians with this thought of the unveiled face. I suppose it is a very different sense of the glory of God than what would have been there for Israel. Moses had to come down, and his face had to be veiled, but for us it is an unveiled face; so we can see the greatness of the glory. Although as I mentioned I do not think we can see it in its fullness, we get a sense of it and we can apprehend it. I think that Ephesians maybe helps with apprehending it "with all the saints". Then what we have in 2 Corinthians 12, I think, is probably the greatest sense that the apostle ever had of the glory of God. But then it was not seen here, it was heard, was it not? - "he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable things". So I suppose that the hearing of the glory of God would tie in with what he had seen in relation to the glory of God with the Son coming in. I thought it would all culminate in Revelation: as we see, it is the glory of God and "the lamp thereof is the Lamb", the One who finished the work. Does that commend itself?

DAB Yes. I am interested in what you say, that what we see in Matthew 17 is the glory of the Father. The Lord says there in relation to the coming day that He would appear in the glory of His Father. I noticed in Luke 9: 26 He also says that He will appear in His own glory, but that is future, is it not? I suppose it links with what you were quoting out of the hymn, that the light shines in heaven; and, while the glory of the Lord will be seen, it will cover the earth and will also cover the sea. It is a very blessed element or phase of the glory of Christ that it is seen first in heaven. It has not been seen on earth yet.

MJK Well, I wondered that. It says in Revelation "for the glory of God has enlightened it". Would that be the culmination? You spoke of the Father's glory and the Son's glory; I suppose the Spirit also has a glory that is revealed in a certain sense.

DAB The Father's glory has been seen in testimony, has it not, in the life of Jesus - "I have glorified *thee* on the earth", John 17: 4. Of course, not many people saw or understood that testimony but the Father was glorified in the life of Jesus, and the Father in turn reciprocates at the resurrection; He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, Rom 6: 4. But that was not public, was it? I think it is very fine to see that, when the Lord appears in His own glory, He will come in the glory of His Father, Matt 16: 27.

MJK So what is the glory that the saints see at the present time?

DJH I have always enjoyed that reference “the lamp thereof is the Lamb”. It seems as though there is that which is beyond us which we will never see, even in eternity, but it is a great comfort I think that that glory will be seen in such a One, a blessed Man. It is affecting that He will be referred to there as the Lamb, is it not? It is the One who suffered. He could speak Himself of the glories and of the sufferings of the Christ, Luke 24: 26. Peter refers to “the glories after these”, 1 Pet 1: 11. Do you think that has some connection with “the lamp thereof is the Lamb”?

MJK It seems that all the glory comes from heaven; it is not glory associated with the earth but glory brought down in relation to that One. Is that fair to say?

DAB It is very precious; it is like a candle, in the sense that the colour of the glory tells you something about the moral character of the One in whom it shines. It is not just a blaze of brilliant white light, but there is a moral character to the lamp, is there not, that tells us that the glory is seen in One who suffered?

MJK We can see that there is that which can be brought into that, as with Moses and Elias and so on, but they were not the ones that the glory was coming from. There is that which we have, there is a certain glory in the moon and the stars and so on in themselves, but what we have is absorbed glory; so it still has its source in the Son of God, does it not?

PMW I was thinking as you read this scripture that “The heavens declare the glory of God”, Ps 19: 1. That is something that is there universally for men generally to take account of, if they care to do so. But for the believer it is the glory of the One who created them. Intrinsically that is opened up through Christ, is that right?

MJK That is interesting because there is a certain glory of God in creation even. As you say, it is that men might believe. It says they will be without excuse (Rom 1: 20), even just because of creation itself. Does it not teach you? There is a certain glory in that I suppose too.

DAB Of course, in Idaho you can see the stars like David could; the sky is full of them. We only see the brightest ones here, but you can imagine the stars you can see as a stage curtain; and then Christ in glory appears you might say in front of that glory - the One who made

them all. In a sense, glorious as the heavens are, they are eclipsed when the Son of Man appears in His glory. As has been said, the Son of Man is the One who entered into His glory by suffering. The creation has not really done that, but the One who is the Creator has.

MJK That is what adds to the whole area of glory, is it not? The Person of Christ and what He has brought in.

PMW That was particularly Paul's testimony, was it not? He says His glory was above the sun. That is part of what He created and His own glory eclipsed that, did it not?

MJK It is interesting what was mentioned about the stars because, when the sun comes out, regardless of where you are, you do not see the stars. That is the glory that you behold. But then He gives a moment for the saints, so to speak, to display some of the glory of God; some of that which He has won. I think that is what is encouraging in the service of God: there is a time when the glory of Christ can shine through the saints.

DJH The stars shine in the night time, do they not? That is in a sense the time where we are. There should be something of the glory that is shining here in the saints before the public manifestation of glory when Christ appears.

MJK That is helpful. You might say that the time in which we live is dark, but there are many lights, there is the encouraging side; "there were many lights in the upper room", Acts 20: 8.

DAB It has been said that the transfiguration was at night: I think you could see that from the reference to "the following day" in Luke 9: 37. But nothing is said about the night, is it? It is just the glory. It is very fine, and it seems to be that there is a kind of foreshadowing of what the Christian's privilege would be. As we have said, the testimony is in the night. But these disciples had a secret which carried them through the night. They had seen the bright cloud and heard the Father's voice. They had seen the Lord as no one else had seen Him.

MJK That is interesting. It says, "And the disciples hearing", v 6. Here there is the thought of beholding, which would be seeing, and then there is the thought of hearing. I think both connect with the glory of God. I had not thought about it much before, but the glory that is mentioned in 2 Corinthians is in relation to the hearing of it. I suppose it would attach itself in a special way to the glad tidings.

FSP The scripture in 2 Peter 1: 17, which is referred to in the note in Matthew 17, says “uttered ... by the excellent glory”. “Excellent” means it excels every other glory but it is *uttered* by the glory. I am interested about being in the body or out of the body; and that Paul talks of *hearing* unspeakable things; I have not noticed that before.

MJK The excellence of the glory refers to the Person, does it not? That is where the excellence is. You see that the excellency of that Person had to be brought forth in Matthew 17, did it not? It could not be left. The other two are removed from sight when Peter tries to draw them in. The excellency was in Christ.

DAB As to Psalm 19, I remember a brother commenting that the first section is the unspoken glory of God. “There is no speech”, it says, no word, no sound is heard, v 3. Then it says, “The law of Jehovah is perfect” (v 7), which is the spoken glory of God. There is the unspoken glory of God and the spoken glory of God. I am interested in this that there is a glory of God in what He says. Say some more about that.

MJK Well, I do not know if I can say much; I was just struck by the thought of it being spoken. We have been given five senses, and I suppose that associates itself with the weakness of the human capacity; but then I think God would affect everything with His glory. There would not be a faculty that we have that would not be affected by the glory of God. We learn much through reading but we learn much through hearing as well. Those things would affect the inner man; it has to come in through one of those faculties.

DJH “Such a voice ... by the excellent glory” has been referred to. It seems that the glory is heard in that instance, does it not? “Such a voice being uttered to him by the excellent glory”, 2 Pet 1: 17. It is the glory coming into expression in the way the hearing sense is affected.

MJK It seems in Acts 9 that those who were with Saul only heard, but he saw and heard; and there was a development of one who was going to carry forth the testimony of the assembly in one who saw and heard.

PFE I was wondering about the first scripture you read, that the cloud overshadowed them. In Acts 9 the light shone round about him; so it is completely encompassing, is it not?

MJK I think that is an excellent word for it; if I understand the glory of God there would not be any shadows connected with it, would there? The only shadow was that it overshadowed the Son of God because

the capacity is not there for us to encompass the whole thing. But really there is no shadow in relation to the glory of God, is there?

PFE I have always been struck by the fact that it shone round about him, "a light out of heaven". That was a person who at this juncture was completely against the assembly of God, and it just shows how God can work. He can work like this today, can He not?

MJK It does not say who these others were with Saul, or whether they were ever affected by the voice that they heard, but what is interesting is that the apostle is blind. He sees it, he knows it is there; God had made the initial work, you might say, in the soul but then Saul does not get a hold of it and his eyes are not opened until the Spirit of God comes in. That is the way in which the glory of God is opened up to us, is it not?

JSH I was thinking that the glory of the Lord was seen outwardly, but is it known by His saints inwardly? Is that where the healing comes into it; it is known in the heart? I think that is what Paul would have had; he had some sense of it in his heart. He had seen it outwardly and yet he had some sense of it in his heart.

MJK The Spirit of God has to come into that matter to know it inwardly. I think that there must have been some impression left upon the young man who was holding the clothes at the stoning of Stephen, because there was a man there full of the Holy Spirit. At least to my knowledge, there is no other man spoken of so much as Stephen in relation to being filled with the Holy Spirit, and he sees the heavens opened up, Acts 7. I suppose that is what would have some real effect on our hearts. But then we have to be hearers and doers.

PMW I just want to link on with your reference to the senses - touch, taste and smell are the other three of the senses. I was just thinking of the reference to the woman who touched the hem of his garment. She knew the power that was there and I suppose had a sense too of the glory of the Lord in that way. The odour of the ointment filled the house (John 12: 3), the smell of that which is really an act of glorifying the Lord on behalf of that woman. There is also a reference, "Taste and see that Jehovah is good", Ps 34: 8. There is an ability there, and I suppose divine Persons would use all of our senses to impress us with the greatness of their Person.

MJK I think that is helpful because the old man could not take any of these things on, could he? But the power of the new man is available in

every sense to be able to apprehend the glory of God. I think with the woman that when she touched the hem of his garment it speaks of virtue, Luke 8: 46 AV. I suppose that would be associated with the glory that was in the Person. It comes in but it is all associated with what can take it up now, and the new man.

DAB This account of the transfiguration in Matthew is especially affecting because it says that He touched them. They saw and they heard, and then He touched them in verse 7, and it stilled their fears. What stilled their fears was the proof in His touch that this was real. The children do that: you present something to them and they want to touch it, and by that they assure themselves that it is real. It stilled their fears, did it not? It was their introduction into what is spiritual, and the Lord was showing them that what was spiritual was just as real as what was physical.

MJK That is helpful, because in relation to healing in scripture they touched them and it is a great matter to be healed, so to speak, in relation to what can be apprehended of the glory of God. It is a personal matter then, is it not?

DAB It is affecting in that connection that the man of faith said “**say by a word** and my servant shall be healed”, Luke 7: 7. He saw an equivalence between the touch and the word of Jesus.

MJK Now you are speaking of faith that comes into it; yes, very good.

DAB Faith and the Spirit.

PFE It is affecting that Paul's first words after this are “Who art thou, Lord?”. There is immediate recognition there.

MJK I suppose that new birth had come in, had it not? Otherwise I do not think he could have said “Who art thou, Lord?” The Spirit of God had not come in until later in the chapter but it was not very long, was it? I think three days, maybe. But the work had begun and it had begun with the brightest of flashes - the glory of God that would go on to affect him for his whole life. I wonder if we sometimes get glimpses of that which help us to press forward.

RMF I was wondering whether you could say something about the voice that came: “*This* is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight”.

MJK I wonder if that would attach itself to what we mentioned at the beginning, the thought of the Father? It is the same glory; that is what is so affecting. It is the same glory, but it is confirmed in the voice of the Father. What do you say yourself?

RMF I think what you say is good. It is probably one of the most beautiful touches in the scripture, is it not? We get the Father's thoughts directly concerning His Son; the One in whom He has found His delight. I was just thinking of that Psalm that speaks of the saints and the excellent on the earth, "In them is all my delight", Ps 16: 3. That glory is reflected in the saints as well, is it not?

MJK That is good because where I once was the thought was presented, 'this is my beloved Son in whom I have found all my delight', but that is not true. There is delight in the saints as well, is there not? So the glory of God spreads out that it might grow in our souls.

DAB Mr Raven speaks somewhere of three stages; mystery and testimony and display, vol 4 p113. I am thinking that, at the Lord's baptism, we get the disclosure of what had been in mystery. We are not told about the life of Jesus up until then: all we know is that the Father found His delight in it. Now this is a comment on His testimony, is it not? And they were not to speak of it until He was risen from the dead; in other words, until it became a matter of display. In a sense we are in the same position, are we not, because they held this in mystery and then it was to govern their testimony; and then they will have a part, as just quoted, in the display?

MJK So much of the glory of God comes out in the saints today, does it not?

DAB That is where the testimony is. We know that Christ is in heaven. It is not clear in the world but the testimony to it should be in His people.

DJH So as to persecuting the saints He says, "why dost thou persecutest me", does He not? He is here. I was thinking that it says, "I am Jesus". Saul asks, "Who art thou, Lord" but the answer is, "I am Jesus". It is very affecting that such an attractive name is used, that attracts us from our youngest days, does it not? He says, "I am Jesus", and yet in such a glorious position!

MJK I wonder if what you said would bear out the side of the touch. He comes in personally, if I understand it. "Jesus" brings in the Man

personally, and it would be in that setting that would bring in His touch.

DJH And yet He says, “whom *thou* persecutest”. So that it was that Man who was being reflected in the saints. It was like the stars we were speaking of earlier, was it not?

DAB Paul says, “I have persecuted the assembly of God”, 1 Cor 15: 9. He had come to it, had he not, that there was something about that vessel that maybe he had never really valued? It was that in which the glory of Christ could be seen.

MJK A thought just came to me as you said that, that the apostle is the one who really sets out the order of the breaking of bread. He brings in the thought of the loaf and I wonder if, as was mentioned, we have the thought there of “whom *thou* persecutest”. It speaks of Him personally, but then you mentioned the assembly of God - He attaches the body of the saints to the Person whom he had persecuted. So then he could lay out a beautiful setting in which we might call the Lord to mind. It is a great picture of the glory of God coming in.

DAB He speaks of it, does He not, in a way that guards the uniqueness of the loaf? “This is **my body** which is given for you”, Luke 22: 19. But then Paul speaks of the saints as a loaf as well? One answers to the other so closely that the same language can be used. It is not to take away from the distinctiveness of what belongs to Christ alone, but to see how fully and gloriously His own answer to that. It is something we learn at the Supper, is it not?

MJK That is what touched me about what you mentioned in relation to “I have persecuted the assembly of God”; he was touched by how closely that whole matter was linked.

DAB He speaks of it as a body; “we...are one loaf, one body”, 1 Cor 10: 17. That is where feelings are, not only felt but also expressed.

MJK I wondered if in Acts 26 we could get some sense of “a light above the brightness of the sun, shining from heaven round about me”. We get some sense of the greatness of this light; the greatness of the glory that belongs to that area.

PMW You get a sense here of the light being specifically on Paul; it was not a light that was flooding the earth. “Round about me” gives a sense of a pocket of light. That was concentrating on Paul in terms of bringing light into his soul, as well as impressing him with the glory. I

think it is important to get a sense that we have individually had that light for ourselves.

MJK I think that is good because, if I understand it correctly, I do not think the others around saw the light; they only heard the voice. So there has to be a work going on in the soul already that can absorb the greatness of that light. There are certain materials that are almost unaffected, but there are other things that absorb light, and other things that reflect it. I suppose we want to be that which absorbs the glory of God. Then, as was mentioned, there is the testimonial side which would be the reflecting of that glory, would it not?

FSP I wondered about Acts 26: 18, “to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God”, whether the intensity of the light which we have been talking about, the excellent glory, was here or whether this was a bit of a lesser thing; or whether we all have to meet the same light as Paul did.

MJK I suppose, in principle, we would have to meet the same light. What do you say yourself?

FSP I think so.

MJK That same light; the light has not changed; “the same yesterday, and to-day, and to the ages to come”, Heb 13: 8. The light of God has not changed.

FSP If that is the case then it accentuates the difference between the power of Satan and God, and between darkness and light.

MJK I suppose that in relation to Satan there is a complete absence of light. He would even seek to obstruct that which is the light. The glory of God overcomes all that.

DJH You get that in 2 Corinthians 4, do you not? “It is the God who spoke that out of darkness light should shine who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”, v 6. The darkness is otherwise there in our hearts but it speaks of the light shining - the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

MJK It is helpful that you mention that; we had a little of that in the week-night reading here. In Genesis you see light is the first thing that must come in, in relation to the dark and that which was void. “The earth

was waste and empty, and darkness was on the face of the deep" (Gen 1: 2); then God says, "Let there be light", v 3. It is the beginning of what was going to open up.

DAB It is interesting that the creation was responsive to the voice of God. My understanding of Paul's companions was that they heard a sound but did not realise it was words, and they certainly did not hear the words. They were less responsive than the creation. That is what our brother is speaking of, is it not, that Satan darkens the heart? But I like what you are saying, that the glory of God in His voice brings light and then life and manhood. All these things follow where God's glory is admitted.

MJK The absence of light brings in the absence of life, does it not? There is no response from plant or animal creation with the absence of light.

DAB The light was the life of men, and you can see in John's gospel how that life begins to appear. It is not on natural or religious lines but directly through His word.

MJK That is helpful because it is after an entirely new order. That is the order which we have to come under to come into the good of the light, because the flesh and that which is after the order of the first man answers to the darkness that has come in in relation to Satan. Then in 2 Corinthians 3 it says "But we all" - I suppose it must be the saints - "looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit". So the Spirit of God is what makes this real to our souls. That is why you get Moses having to veil his face: there was no power there with the children of Israel to be able to answer to the glory of the light that was being shown; but now I suppose this would be associated even with the veil of the temple being opened up and God having come out. There is a transformation but again it is that which answers to the second order of man. It is really Christ.

PMW We read this chapter on Thursday night at our reading in Plumstead and it was commented that, in this last verse - the emphatic "we" - Paul embraces the Corinthian saints with himself in having an appreciation of the glory to which they had been called; and Paul was endeavouring to rekindle their affections following this epistle.

MJK That is helpful because even the saints can grow cold, but you

mention the rekindling of it, the glory of God being kindled in the hearts of the saints.

DAB There is a very close connection here with what was quoted in Acts 9, 'Who art thou, Lord?'. That Lord is the Spirit of the new covenant, is He not? The Spirit of God quickens, but the Lord Jesus and His glory are what underlie this wholly new relationship with God. Paul may not have been very intelligent on the Damascus road, but he now knew what he saw on the road as the kernel for a wholly new spiritual relationship with God that eclipsed and transcended the first covenant.

MJK He was really able to start unfolding what he had seen. I suppose that is normal for us each one. We might get light that we do not understand at first - that will happen but we are not to despair. Three accounts in relation to the glory end up with a glory above the brightness of the sun and, as you come into the good of it in the power of the Spirit of God, these things open up. Say a little bit more about it attaching to the new covenant though.

DAB Well, we were speaking in the house about the blood, and it changes everything. The shedding of the blood of Jesus is the foundation of something entirely new. So we have always to remember how much we owe to the blood of Jesus.

MJK So the blood is what goes into the holy of holies, is it not? It is what is sprinkled there, witnessed before God, that we might be accepted.

RMF It says here that we are "transformed according to the same image from glory to glory". Could you help us as to what it means to be transformed? I have just noticed that the note speaks of 'transfigured' as in the scripture we read in Matthew 17.

MJK I am not sure that I can say much; it is that which has come in which has been changed. I suppose in a sense it is an entirely new form.

DAB We are sometimes content with 'impressions', as we speak of them, are we not? An impression may be received but by the time I get home it may be gone. What we are speaking of in transformation remains; is that the difference? It is not just words, but the affect of the glory is abiding?

MJK That is helpful, and I suppose that is why we can go back to what was said in relation to the "we". There had been an impression left on the saints, and that is what he was going to come back to.

DJH I was noticing the word, "we all, looking on the glory of the Lord". That is something to be seen, but then it says, "according to the same image" - that is something substantial, is it not? An image is something concrete, something substantial. So there is to be a real effect on us as we are "transformed according to the same image from glory to glory". That would be something that would be seen in the saints?

MJK That is helpful, because the 'transformed' and the 'image' must be two things that go together. An image is generally something that takes its looks or its being from another. We speak of an image of something; this would be being transformed into the same image from glory to glory. I think it would be fair to say the image of Christ is to be the impression that is left upon us.

DAB In 1 Corinthians 15 it says, "as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly one", v 49. That is the transformation wrought by resurrection, is it not? What Paul seems to be speaking about here is that there is something intermediate, that that heavenly character should come out in testimony. The heavenly One should be represented here.

MJK Say more about that.

DAB Well, we do not know what we shall be, we do not know what the body of glory will be, but we bear the image now in some sense, do we not? We are not angels; we are in a condition that is still suited to earth; but morally and spiritually we should bear the image of that heavenly One.

MJK So it takes on the features of the heavenly One. It may not be the thing itself exactly, but the features of it.

DJH The final position will be that when we see Him we shall be like Him. "We shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3: 2): that is finality in relation to this; that is the final change.

MJK Then it is no longer just the features, but it is the matter itself.

RMF This intermediate stage was seen in Paul, was it not? It says in Acts 9, "And straightway in the synagogue he preached Jesus that *he* is the Son of God. And all who heard were astonished and said, Is this

not *he* who destroyed in Jerusalem”, v 20-21. There was an immediate transforming effect on the life of Paul.

MJK That is the thought of transformation; the very One whom he had rejected and had sought to stamp out was now the One whom he was preaching.

JSH This brightness and the glory remained with Paul. I was thinking of what you were saying earlier, that there is the need of the Spirit; that brightness never changes, does it? It might seem to dim because of what I am in myself but it is only from my side; from His side the brightness is always there, and always will be there. That is where we need the Spirit now to keep us occupied with that One and keep that brightness before us.

MJK I suppose we ought not to despair if we do not quite feel the same even every Lord's day. We get impressions of the glory of God but we go out into the workplace, or different things in the week, and it might fade in our souls. The resource that you mentioned is always there; the resource is always there in the Spirit that we might be brought back to the brightest point. Mr Stoney says 'The Lord never forgets your **brightest** day, although you may; and you are sure sooner or later to go **back** to it', vol 6 p267. That is quite a place.

DAB “I remember for thee” - God says about Israel - “the kindness of thy youth... when thou wentest after me in **the** wilderness, in a land not sown”, Jer 2: 2. God never forgot the day when Israel packed up and followed in the wilderness. He never forgot the day when they gathered the materials for the sanctuary, did He? He never forgot the day when they entered into David's praise.

MJK Once they came into the land, every time they had a battle they had to come back to Gilgal. The thought was to come back to the highest point, that the flesh was gone, completely removed and now you are going to be in the enjoyment of the brightness of the glory of God.

DAB They never went back to Egypt. A lot of sorrows entered into the history of Israel but they never went back. Paul never went back down the road, did he? In a sense there is a full stop; God will always keep us to what He has brought us into.

MJK That is an excellent way to put it; He will always keep us in what He has brought us into. You might say you slip back a little but then

come back to the point of departure, and then His desire is that we may move forward. They had to stop sometimes in the wilderness, but then the cloud and the pillar of fire moved again. Sometimes they had to wait on the people.

DAB Are we to understand from Revelation that it will always be in Christ that we see the glory of God? He is the Lamp.

DJH That is what I thought. It is very wonderful that we shall not be lost in that sense. There will always be an object for our affections and our occupation; it will all be seen in that blessed One, One who has suffered in order to bring such a position about.

MJK It is interesting what you mention. We talked a bit in the home about the thought of our occupation in glory or in heaven, and I wondered if 2 Corinthians 12 would actually help in relation to that because it says "which it is not allowed to man to utter"; and you are to hear once you take up with the glory of God. I suppose you are so fascinated with the glory of God that we can leave any utterance to Him. There is not going to be any glory to another in that scene. We are not going to be occupied with any other man; it is going to be occupation with Christ. He is the Lamp; there is no other light. He is the Lamp, and there the glory of God shines in all its brightness. I suppose there are indications in Scripture of a continual outflowing of praises, but it is praises for that blessed One. That is what should affect our hearts now.

DAB There is a kind of closed loop here. Paul obviously understood what he was hearing, but he was not to take it away to utter. It did not belong to earth, and you are suggesting that that is what heaven is like really. There is a fulfilment and satisfaction from being engrossed in what is heavenly. It does not allow us to dip back into history and the vicissitudes of the way.

MJK If Paul had been allowed to utter it, it might have become idolatry to us but, as to a coming day, I think that is helpful. The thing is made complete; there is no room, the vessel is completely full. With what? The glory of the Lord.

DAB God is very final: He rolls things up, He wipes things away, and so on. But He is able to enclose His people in their occupation of what is heavenly.

RMF Mr Stoney pointed out that this revelation that Paul had was not

unique to Paul, vol 1 p4. It is "a man in Christ", and open to any one of us, is it not? He does not claim an apostleship or anything; he just says, "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago". We are all "in Christ"; this revelation is open to any one of us.

MJK So we can each have impressions of Christ that would stay with us. I do not know about other people's experiences, and I cannot say that I have had them often, but there have been times, particularly in the service of God but not limited to that, when I have had those kinds of impressions that I could not say what it was but that it was sweet.

London

28th November 2010

Key to initials (London unless otherwise stated)

D A Burr; P F Eagle; R M Fry; D J Hutson; J S Hutson;

M J Klassen, Aberdeen Idaho; F S Pittman; P M White

PHILIP OF BETHSAIDA

Robert F White

John 1: 43-46; 6: 5-7; 12: 20-26; 14: 6-11

I have been interested recently in noticing how the Lord deals with Philip in this gospel. We do not read of the Lord's dealings with him in the same way in any other gospel, but in the verses we have read in John we might trace, in the way that the Lord deals with Philip, a certain course of instruction, leading him into the knowledge of the Father. He was a good Jew, you might say, an orthodox Jew, but the Lord leads him along a certain moral way as He would desire, I believe, to lead each one of us. He takes us up where He finds us and leads us in our soul exercises into relationship to Himself, and to bring us to know the Father. It is a great and blessed thing to know the Father. How wonderful it is that the Father is known in this dispensation in this distinctive name of grace, and that we can be brought to a knowledge of that blessed, eternal One and find that we have not only a knowledge of Him but a relationship to Him and that, I believe, brings stability into our souls.

So in chapter 1 it says that Jesus finds Philip. He is the only one in this chapter whom the Lord finds in this way. Others find *Him*, but Philip was marked out in that the Lord Jesus finds him. Many of us will remember that in this gospel the Lord does things Himself which in other gospels are attributed to the disciples. For example, the Lord Jesus finds the young ass Himself in this gospel, chap 12: 14. In other gospels the disciples go and fetch the colt at the Lord's bidding. We are in days, I believe, when the Lord Jesus is doing things distinctively Himself. He may do things through others in His grace, but I think we may say that we are in days when the Lord Jesus is finding us individually. Have you some experience of being found by Him? Has the Lord put His hand upon you in that way and found you? It says, "and Jesus finds Philip, and says to him, Follow me". What a word it was. Think of the Lord Jesus finding this particular person, Philip. He was going to be an apostle but it says that he "was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter". Already Andrew and Peter had some experience of being with the Lord Jesus in this day of which John writes, but the Lord does not delegate to them the service of finding Philip, although you might think that He might have done so. He finds him Himself. They were of the same city, but the Lord finds Philip

Himself. Others may have influenced you in your pathway as a believer, but I think it is a blessed thing to have some sense that you have been found by the Lord Jesus individually. He has found you, and His word to you, as it would be to me, would be, "Follow me", - simple, direct, piercing. This place, Bethsaida that Philip was from was not a very big city, as we would understand. However, it was a difficult city. It is one of the places of which the Lord Jesus says, "Woe to thee", "Woe to thee, Chorazin! Woe to thee Bethsaida! for if the works of power which have taken place in you, had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they had long ago repented in sackcloth and ashes", Matt 11: 21. Think of the character of the cities in which we live and what is going on in them, and yet in the midst of them, dear fellow-believer, the Lord Jesus might find you or He might find me, and He would say to you, "Follow me". No matter what is going on around you, no matter what is going on in the places where you live, no matter if there are rejecters of Christ there and persons who despise Him, the Lord, as it were, would put His hand upon you as He would put it on me in the midst of these circumstances. Mark tells us about a blind man in Bethsaida. You remember that the man in Bethsaida required a second touch; so perhaps it was a place where men featured largely. The Lord spat upon his eyes and laid His hands on him and asked him, "What do you see?". "And ... he said, I behold men, for I see them, as trees, walking", Mark 8: 24. So perhaps Bethsaida was a place where men and the things and the affairs of men loomed large. Such is this world in which we live. What a world it is! The affairs of men are blazoned about on every side, all that men are after the flesh is celebrated, men made popular, men made famous, and women too, earning enormous amounts of money for very little. And yet, in spite of all that characterised the place that he came from, the Lord found Philip and said to him, "Follow me". He was going to lead him, into what is eternal in character in the knowledge of the Father. How wonderful it is to think of that, dear brethren. The Lord Jesus would take us up as well and bring us along with Himself into relationships that are eternal in character. Philip was an instructed man, one who knew the scriptures. How good it is if we are exercised to have a knowledge of the Scriptures! Philip says, "We have found him of whom Moses wrote in the law, and the prophets, Jesus, the son of Joseph, who is from Nazareth". He was a reader of the Scriptures. He read from Moses and the prophets. You are impressed, are you not, with what these persons could say as recorded by John? I am thinking, for example, of what Andrew said, "We have found the Messiah (which being interpreted is Christ)". Think of a Jew saying that to another Jew,

that he had found the promised One, of whom the prophets had written! And here is Philip, who says, "We have found ... Jesus". You might well say the Lord found him first, but how blessed it is to be able to say something about the One who has found you. Philip expressed his appreciation of this blessed One, and the Lord was going to lead him on in his knowledge of Him. I think it is a wonderful thing that, having been brought to Christ, we are brought to One in whom everything resides for God's pleasure and in whom every thought of God in blessing can be known. I might know very little, and I do, but everything is there in Him. So Philip says, "We have found ... Jesus". Have you found Jesus? Philip says, "... Jesus, the son of Joseph, who is from Nazareth", but there is more; there is always more about Jesus, there is more than you have found out already. So how blessed it is to be found by Him! There are three who are found by the Lord in John's Gospel. Philip was one of them, and here he is, he is found and the Lord would lead him on. Has the Lord found you? If so, He would desire to lead you on also.

Now in chapter 6 the Lord is going to try him. Have you been tried by the Lord Jesus? He is going to try Philip; He is going to bring out what he is thinking. Here the question about food comes up, and it says, "Jesus then, lifting up his eyes and seeing that a great crowd is coming to him, says to Philip, Whence shall we buy loaves that these may eat? But this he said trying him", and then you have these wonderful words, "for he knew what he was going to do". The Lord Jesus is never surprised by anything that might come up in your life or my life or the history of the assembly or of your local meeting, or your circumstances, whatever they might be. There is always resource in Him. He knew what He was going to do. It always impresses my spirit that there was never a circumstance that arose in the gospels that found the blessed Saviour unprepared or unable to act. You will remember that Peter says to Cornelius and his household that He "went through all quarters doing good", Acts 10: 38. I think of what might turn up in those "quarters", all the different circumstances and conditions of men that He found, but were there any whom He could not help? And so, as to Philip, the Lord is "trying him, for he knew what he was going to do". I think that is a word for us at the present time. Many things have come upon us in the way of sorrows and testing and trials, and yet the Lord knows what He is going to do in them all. How blessed it is to think of that One who has infinite resource! We are linked with One who has the ability to help us in every circumstance. Faith would

lay hold on that. It says in Hebrews that “he takes hold of the seed of Abraham” (chap 2: 16); that is, He takes hold of us to help us in the pathway of faith into which we have been called. Here in John 6 He takes what is little in itself and uses it to feed this great crowd. It is another of the instances when the Lord Jesus does things Himself in this Gospel. It says, “And Jesus took the loaves, and having given thanks, distributed them to those that were set down”, v 11. The Lord distributes the food Himself. I think, from one point of view, the way that John records that the Lord did certain things Himself that are attributed to the disciples in other gospels, emphasises the greatness of the loss, when He was taken from them. On the other hand, it emphasises the greatness of the provision that He has made in the presence here of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, in the time of His absence. But remember that the Lord always knows what He is going to do. He has infinite resource to bring to bear in every condition. I sometimes think, in that connection, of the One that John sees in Revelation chapter 1. You remember, he hears a great voice and he turns to see One like the Son of man, and he describes certain features of the One that he sees, v 12-16. In speaking to the assemblies the Lord Jesus refers to some of those features, but then, how wonderful it is to think that when He comes to speak to Philadelphia He brings out something that not even John saw! He is called, “he that has the key of David, he who opens and no one shall shut”, chap 3: 7. There is always something more; there is always resource with the Lord Jesus. How wonderful it is to think of it.

So Philip is being led on, and when you come to chapter 12 there is another test when the Greeks come up. Here were persons who had a certain importance in the world of that time. The Greeks come, “these therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and they asked him saying, Sir, we desire to see Jesus”. Now, this might have seemed a very auspicious move. Here are the Greeks, perhaps the most sophisticated people who were on the earth at this time, with all their history of philosophy and art and sculpture and all the rest. This will make something of Jesus, surely. You can almost sense Philip thinking, ‘Something great is going to happen now, the Greeks are coming. He is going to become famous, He is going to become world famous. This is wonderful, the Greeks want to see Him!’. And it says, “Philip comes and tells Andrew, and again Andrew comes and Philip, and they tell Jesus”. How good it is to be able to bring things to the Lord Jesus Himself! There is an answer, and the answer might not have been the one that they expected. They come and tell Jesus, and

He says, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified". How was He to be glorified? He was to be glorified through death. He was not to find glory here amongst men, He was not to find fame, He was not to find a place of honour and distinction here. He says, "Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit". Think of what was before the Lord Jesus at that time; not earthly fame, not the adulation of the Greeks, nor the Romans, nor even of His own nation, but that lonely Corn of wheat which, falling into the ground, dies. Think of how the great fruit was to be secured, secured through the death of one blessed Man, "Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone". There was to be no earthly glory for Him. That time will wait. "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." Where is that glory known? It is known now in the assembly. It says later on, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him", John 13: 31. He is not now glorified universally on this earth. That time will come, but now He finds His place of glory and honour and distinction amongst those who have been secured through His death. How blessed it is to be secured through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Had He not gone this way there would be no life for us, there would be no place for us. We would not have formed part of this "much fruit" had He not gone this way. And then He says this challenging word, "He that loves his life shall lose it, and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal. If any one serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall be *my* servant". So Philip, like ourselves, was instructed and adjusted, not now to be seeking a place of glory and distinction in this world. I trust none of us are looking for a place of distinction here where Christ has been rejected. He says, "If any one serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall be *my* servant". What a One we have to follow! One who has gone this way, who has gone out of sight as far as this world is concerned. The Grain of wheat has fallen into the ground and died. That Grain of wheat would never be seen again in the same way, and it says, "but if it die, it bears much fruit ... If any one serve me, let him follow me". Do you desire to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ? It is open to all of us. Do you desire to do something for Him, to serve Him? Do you desire to yield Him something for what He has done for you? Well, the Lord says, "let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall be *my* servant. And if any one serve me, him shall the Father honour". He is drawing Philip on and He would draw us on into the enjoyment of what is greater and fuller and eternal in character, the

enjoyment of the knowledge of the Father. How precious, how blessed it is!

Then, where we read in chapter 14, He speaks again to Philip. Chapter 14 is an interesting chapter. I sometimes think it is a bit like our reading meetings. You have questions and answers from one and another, the Lord receiving questions and giving answers; not that we can give any answers like this perfect One, the Word, could give. Think of that title, "the Word"! Think of asking a question to the Lord Jesus Christ and knowing that the answer would be perfect! It would be the word of God directly to you, not only perfectly spoken, but conveying a sense of all the blessedness of the mind of God. That is the idea of the Word. Here they were in His blessed presence and they were able to ask Him questions, and the Lord is speaking about the Father and He says, "No one comes to the Father unless by me". How wonderful it is that One has come from on high. The Lord Jesus says in John's gospel, "For I am come down from heaven", chap 6: 38. He has come to make the Father known and He has come to make it possible for us to come to the Father by Him, that we might be brought into a relationship with the Father that is eternal in character. And so Philip says, "Lord, shew us the Father and it suffices us". That might have been a good request, "shew us the Father and it suffices us". Philip now is led on in his exercise. The Lord is not only the One of whom Moses spoke, but now He is the One who can reveal the Father. Would you like to know about the Father? I would long to know more of the Father, the Father's thoughts, the Father's love. The Lord says a wonderful thing here. He says, "Am I so long a time with you, and thou hast not known me, Philip? He that has seen me has seen the Father; and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father?". What a wonderful thing to be able to say! This blessed Man says, "He that has seen me has seen the Father". In other words, all that the Father was was expressed perfectly in the Lord Jesus here below. Perhaps it is going too far to say, and I speak subject to correction, if it had been possible for the Father to come into manhood, He would have been just like Jesus here below. The Father's grace, the Father's love, the Father's care, the Father's words all were seen perfectly in this blessed One here below. There was nothing unknown, you might say, that was to be known as to the Father. He says, "He that has seen me has seen the Father. ... Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?" There is something, I believe, infinitely great in that expression, "I am in the Father and ... the Father is in me". There was perfect representation. No prophet, no man of God,

could have said this, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and that that Father is in me?". That was a perfect representation of all that the Father was, and the Lord Jesus says, "Believe *me* that I am in the Father and the Father in me; but if not, believe me for the works' sake themselves. Verily, verily I say to you, He that believes on me, the works which I do shall he do also, and he shall do greater than these, because I go to the Father". So how blessed it is, dear brethren, that Philip, like ourselves, is led on in his soul progress. We are brought to the Father. We are brought to the One whom the Lord Jesus came here to make known, and when we come to some sense of that in our souls, we are brought, as it were, on to solid ground, because we are in the realm of what has proceeded from divine purpose. When the Lord Jesus spoke to the Father in chapter 17: 6 about "the men whom thou gavest me" He was referring to what was in eternal purpose. How great a matter that is! We have been given by the Father to Christ in purpose. It is something that my mind cannot take in, but I desire to apprehend something of the greatness of it, that we have been given by the Father to Christ in purpose, and everything works out from that. All His labours with us, all that we have experienced of His grace, how we have come to know Him as our Saviour that our sins might be forgiven, how we have been brought to the appreciation of the Holy Spirit given to us, all these things really devolve from the fact that in purpose we have been given by the Father to Christ. How blessed to think that we have been brought into matters which are eternal in character! May our hearts be encouraged as we think of it. For His Name's sake.

Grangemouth

20th November 2010

CLAIMS

Stephen McLaren

Luke 19: 1-22 to “bondman”, 28-38

Galatians 2: 16-21

Ephesians 1: 13-14

The hymn (257) we sang mentioned two claims. One verse said of Christ,

His shed blood upholding the claims of God's throne.

Another verse spoke of being -

... freed from the world and its claims.

The chapter we began with in Luke's gospel speaks about the Lord Jesus claiming a house for Himself; then in the story the Lord Jesus tells there are the claims of the high-born man who came back to see what was due to Him. Lastly there was the claim of the Lord Jesus on the colt. There are many claims we could speak of. God has a claim on you. As the Creator He has a claim on you. I do not know whether you recognise that or not but it is still very true, and many here have trusted in the Lord Jesus and have owned His claim on them. The scripture we have read in Galatians speaks about one man who gladly yielded to that claim - the claim of love - and he devoted the rest of his life to the service of the One who put that claim on him. I wonder if you have ever thought about all those claims. There are many other claims we could speak of; there are the claims of righteousness, and I wonder if you think about those too.

The man we read of in the first scripture, Zacchaeus, thought that he would answer to the claims of righteousness in his own strength. He speaks about what he had done, and of trying to establish his righteousness, but the Lord Jesus speaks to him of a much higher claim than that; and the Lord Jesus would give you to understand His claim on you. When the gospel is preached, people often resort to trying to establish their righteousness on the basis of what they have done, living a good life and so on. I was told of an interesting conversation some while back with someone who was preaching the gospel, and the man he was speaking to was saying, 'Well, you live a good life, you do what you can and do your best, and then when you die you go to heaven'.

The preacher said to him, 'You go to heaven! And how are you going to get there?'. That is quite a question to think about. It is a very valid question, but if you speak about going to heaven when you die, how are you going to get there? What power will take you there? The gospel writer that we have read from, Luke, writes with method. We have read one of the parables in chapter 19. If you follow all these parables backwards, they take you back to chapter 16. There it speaks of two men who lived their lives in certain ways, and when it came to the point of death, there was a poor man who was carried away by the angels into the bosom of Abraham, as it says, which we would understand as being taken into heaven, and there was a rich man who lived another way, and it just says simply that he "died and was buried. And in hades lifting up his eyes, being in torments, he sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom", v 22, 23. It speaks about the chasm that is fixed, v 26. It is a very solemn matter that from the moment you die your eternal destiny is fixed; so if you aspire to being in heaven when you die, then how are you going to get there, as the preacher asked?

Well, every soul who has trusted in the Lord Jesus can tell you the answer to that question. The Lord Jesus has paid the price of the penalty of sin and He has shed His precious blood. His blood has been shed and if you trust in that blood then you are justified: God would justify you. The epistle to the Romans teaches us that, - justified by faith in Christ - and no-one can raise any question as to those whom God justifies. What a tremendous matter that is. It is God who justifies; it is not myself. I do not seek to justify myself. I suppose you could say that Zacchaeus was on that line to begin with; then, how different if it is God who justifies you, and He can do that righteously. We have spoken of the claims of righteousness. God is right in doing that because He can point to the work of the Lord Jesus, that perfect atoning work. By atoning, I refer to the power to deal with the matter of sin and of sins, with my past history, the things I have done wrong, the offences that I have committed. People do not like to talk about sin nowadays. It seems it is an unpopular subject. When you come to the preaching you have to be prepared to face facts, and to acknowledge that God has claims in righteousness, but through faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus and through the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross you can be counted righteous by God Himself and you can know the power of salvation. One speaking of heaven composed a hymn about it, as to conditions in heaven. It says,

Where deceiver ne'er can enter,

Sin-soiled feet have never trod;
(Hymn 206)

So, if you aspire to go to heaven, then would you be happy there? Another has suggested that the natural man would not be happy there in those conditions where sin-soiled feet have never trod, and no deceiver can enter, JND Collected Writings vol 25 p234. It could only be as a cleansed sinner that you could ever enter there, and the cleansing is through faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus. That is God's appointed way. Sometimes you think you can hardly take it in - that God has made such a way, that salvation should operate in such a manner, but it is true. Simply by trusting in the work of Another, the blessed Person of our Lord Jesus, by trusting in His work, you can be counted righteous by God. We can see it as we have read of Zacchaeus. It says others were accusing him, perhaps justifiably, perhaps not, but then he has to do with the Lord Jesus for himself, and that is what we would long for, that you would have to do with the Lord Jesus for yourself because you can only be cleansed and made righteous in the sight of God if you have to do with Him. You have to do with the Lord Jesus for yourself. No-one else can have that transaction but you by yourself. It is a personal matter. Zacchaeus had to do with the Lord Jesus for himself, and that is exactly the same with you, but what to me is a wonderful matter is that the Lord Jesus has come *here*. As someone has said, 'He has come within our range' (JT vol 15 p76), a Man, a blessed Man: He has come within our range; He has come right here. As He came to Zacchaeus's house, He would come right into your circumstances and would have to do with you. We sang,

How ready e'en now is our God to impart
Rich blessings ...

God is so ready that He has made available the Lord Jesus to you, so readily, so easily available to you as a Saviour. All you need to do is reach out in faith and trust in Him. These are the terms of the glad tidings; the gospel that flows out today. He is available to you now, today. You do not have to do some great deed. One scripture says, "Do not say in thine heart, Who shall ascend to the heavens? that is, to bring Christ down; or, Who shall descend into the abyss? that is, to bring up Christ from among the dead", Rom 10: 6, 7. It is not left to you to do some great feat to establish your salvation. The Lord Jesus has done it

all for you. Those claims of righteousness, the claims of God's throne that we spoke about, He has met them and in His work on the cross He has answered those claims fully and glorified them, and now the blessed value and efficacy of His work is available to you to lay hold of.

It says that Zacchaeus made haste and came down, and received the Lord Jesus with joy. If you are reassured and know the blessedness of trusting in the Lord Jesus, and discovering that your sins are forgiven through faith in His blood and in His name, then joy is your portion. It cannot be otherwise. If you are relieved from a burden; what lifting of pressure it would bring. It is like that story that John Bunyan told about the pilgrim with the burden on his back: that burden is lifted. It rolled off his back and rolled away down the hill and is gone forever. That is an illustration of one soul's expression of how the burden of sin was lifted from him and as you experience that moment in your soul, when you trust in Him, surely you would also know the joy of your salvation. Every soul who has that experience knows what that joy is. Joy is a short commodity in the world today. The world is full of sadness and death and pressure and distress and all these kind of things, but God would give you to know the joy of His salvation. It says, "he ... received him with joy", and not only that, further down, "And Jesus said to him, To-day salvation is come to this house, inasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham". That was because he had faith. He became one of the household of faith, and it says, "salvation is come to this house".

Oh, if you have not known the joy of salvation yet already, would that you would know through trusting in the Lord Jesus that it has come to you today because it is available to you today. You can lay hold of it today, and it is here ready and available for you now. There is no doubt about God's disposition, there is no doubt that the Lord Jesus is ready and willing and available to you today, but it is for you to stretch out in faith and lay hold of Him. To me it is a wonderful thing that you can lay claim on Him. We have spoken about claims of God and other claims upon you, but then you can put *your* claim on the Lord Jesus. You can lay claim to the value of His work. Would that you would do that if you have not done it already. It says, "for the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost". Someone said that if you find a piece of litter on the street you do not say it is lost, because it has no value; but if you find a ring or a coin or something precious on the street you say, 'Someone has lost this' because it has value. I can say that to you as in

the sight of God. You have value in the sight of God, and unless you have had to do with the Lord Jesus you are counted amongst “that which is lost”. But as having to do with the Lord Jesus, laying claim in the faith of your soul upon His work, then you are *found*, you are found by Him and you are saved; salvation meaning that you are saved from a lost eternity but, more than that, you are saved *for* something, you are saved for His service.

The next section where we read speaks about things that are committed to one and another by one who had certain rights, who had claims upon them. It is a picture of the present situation. The situation at the moment is that the Lord Jesus has died, died upon the cross. He was put there by wicked men. He died and was buried and, as we know, He was raised again, “raised ... by the glory of the Father”, Rom 6: 4. He could not be held by that power. It says, “A certain high-born man went to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and return”. So the Lord Jesus is ascended and He is glorified. Think of the glory of His present position! It speaks of “A certain high-born man”, and what could compare with the glories of the Lord Jesus, the estate that He has, the honours that are on His brow now as having entered into heaven itself? Think of all that He has done, everything He has accomplished and, you may say, how high-born He is!. What glories belong to Him, and what a place He has now (because it is a distant country). The Lord Jesus is no longer here in this world, but we are here and He is coming back again. It is a certainty and sure as anything can be that the Lord Jesus is coming back again. He will return, and He will return to receive and inherit what is rightly due to Him, but in the meanwhile we are left here in the scene of His absence, and there is what is given to us. The question is, 'What am I doing with it?'. I would suggest that we ask ourselves, 'What is the most valuable thing we have?'. If we consider for a moment, what do we treasure most? Surely every soul that has been affected by the grace of God would say that the greatest thing they have is the knowledge of God and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. What are you doing with that knowledge? It is a tremendous thing; if you have come to know the Lord Jesus for yourself you have a precious light, a tremendously valuable light, which is beyond words. But then, what are you doing with it? It says here, “Trade while I am coming”. Has that light affected you so that it shines out for others? There is an area, too, where the knowledge of God and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus are valued, where you can enjoy the company, where you can enjoy the fellowship and sharing the knowledge of God, in the company

where these things are valued. Then there is a testimony that goes out too. It is a very important matter that there should be a testimony to the claims of God. It is your privilege to take part in that. If you have been affected by the grace of God, it is your privilege to speak to others of that grace and tell others of the God who is so ready to impart blessings, and has done towards you. And, if you share in the privilege of doing that, there is the confession of the Lord's name. Everyone who has sought to confess that Name before men will know the joy that comes into your soul as you do it because that Name has value in heaven, that Name is a precious Name. That is in this area of testimony that is given to that Name. As I say, we are in the time of the Lord's absence and it is our privilege in this time to be here to represent Him and to be here for His glory. There is a time coming when the Lord Jesus will return; very soon He will return. We do not know when He will come back. It could be any moment now and then there will be the time, as we have read of here, when these various bondmen come up and have a conversation with the Lord Jesus about how *they* have done. And what could equal receiving those words from the mouth of the Lord Jesus, as it says in verse 17, "And he said to him, Well done, thou good bondman"? Surely every soul would covet to receive those words from Himself. The Lord Jesus is perfectly fair. I did not read much about the man who laid up the mina in the towel. I do not want to be occupied with him except to say how it makes sad reading, but rather be occupied with encouraging us to be on the line of these first two bondmen.

Then we read further about the section where the Lord Jesus puts a claim on an animal, as it speaks of it here, a colt. It was tied up. The Lord Jesus has a right to every creature, and He has a right to you, and you can put yourself in the place of this claim. The Lord Jesus would claim you for His service. He who has given everything for you; surely you would acknowledge that He has a right to claim you for Himself. All the disciples are told to say is, "Because the Lord has need of it", and how much the Lord has need of you to today! I beseech you to answer to that claim, to acknowledge that He does claim you today for His service, and it is your privilege, your part to acknowledge that claim.

I felt impressed to read this section in the Galatian epistle because it tells us about one man who acknowledged those claims, the claims of love. He speaks about how he previously tried to answer to

the claims of righteousness on the principle of law, and then realised that he could not do it on that basis. That is really the history of the children of Israel. As it says here, “on the principle of works of law no flesh shall be justified”. Then he comes to this point when he says, “I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, *I*, but Christ lives in me; but in that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me”. I thank God that I can say that. This scripture is very precious to me, “the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me”. If someone in your family, a relative, or some other person had given their life for you, you would surely acknowledge the claim that they have for your affection, and it would demand your attention that someone gave their life for you. But the wonderful thing in the gospel is that it is the *Lord Jesus*, “the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me”. Surely such a great and glorious fact would command your attention and constrain your heart to yield to such claims. There is no claim like that, “the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me”. Can you say that? Is He to you the One who has given Himself for you? He says that He **has** loved me. Think of the love that He proved at the cross, love without equal. There is no greater love than the love of the Lord Jesus displayed there. Then, what is your answer to that love? Has your heart bowed to Him in acknowledging the claim that He has upon you? Has your heart bowed to Him? It is not just a matter of mentally assenting to certain terms, or accepting doctrine, or agreeing to follow a certain line of teaching or even just, as men say, becoming religious. That is not the point at all. The great thing in the gospel is that there is a claim of love; you have to find that there is One who has given Himself for you. How tremendous a matter that is! And in giving Himself for you He has shed His blood for you. We have spoken of the value of that blood. It has infinite value in the sight of God, and all the value of the preciousness of the work of Christ, and the preciousness of His Person and His value in the sight of God, is all yours as you trust in Him. How tremendous a scope there is in the work of Christ. The preacher speaks in detail of it every week in the preaching here in this room, and no preaching is quite the same as the ones before because the work of the Lord Jesus and His Person is infinitely great, but then that is the Person who has given Himself for you. May you bow to His claim!

I read last of all in the Ephesian epistle. The writer speaks of those who have trusted in Christ and of being “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance to the redemption

of the acquired possession to the praise of his glory”; so if God has put His claim on you He has put the seal of that claim on you too. I think the gospel would be incomplete without reference to the great matter of the giving of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, a Person of the Godhead, came down at Pentecost following on the ascension and the glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ, and (if received) lives in the hearts of every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. You may find it difficult to understand that, but it is nevertheless true. It says here, “ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise”. The Holy Spirit dwells within your heart, a blessed, divine Person, One who can tell you more and more of the glories of the Lord Jesus and the infinite value and blessedness of His Person and His work. He can tell you the place that He has and He is an indispensable Friend. All these things we can say of the Holy Spirit of God, and that is the One we have been sealed with. He is “the earnest of our inheritance to the redemption of the acquired possession to the praise of his glory”. We speak of claims, and there are many claims, but there are claims of God's glory and these are fully upheld by the Lord Jesus, never more clearly seen than when on the cross. Those claims were upheld and now, as a believer in the Lord Jesus, you can be assured that with the sealing of the Holy Spirit you are made fit for the realms of glory. We speak of heaven, and as a cleansed sinner, a forgiven sinner, justified, and the Scripture speaks of being glorified too, all these things can be yours. May you know the power of them! May you bow your heart to the One who has given everything for you! Surely you would agree there is no claim like that. I would like to impress that on your soul, that the Lord Jesus has a claim on you, God has a claim on you. Would that you would answer to that claim! We spoke briefly as to the claims of the world and surely they would become as *nothing*. What claim does this world offer that compares with a claim like that, the claim of the love of the Lord Jesus for you? May you bow and own it. For His Name's sake.

Edinburgh

27th March 2011