

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 46

January 1977

Contents

[PRAISE IN THE ASSEMBLY](#)

["RICH TOWARD GOD"](#)

[RESPONSIBILITY](#)

[IDENTIFICATION WITH LOCAL ASSEMBLY CONDITIONS](#)

[THE CHILDREN'S MONEY](#)

PRAISE IN THE ASSEMBLY

Hebrews 2: 5-15; 8: 1,2

A.J.E.W. We had some sense this morning of the glory of Christ as giving effect to all God's thoughts, whilst through redemption and the gift of the Spirit we are brought very close to Christ. His personal preeminence is particularly brought out in the sense that what was necessary to establish God's thoughts was taken up and brought to completion by Him. One great line of thought which arises is the way He has set afoot what we speak of as the service of praise in the assembly, something of peculiar affectionate interest to us. As brought to God and brought to know God, and given some sense of our eternal place with Him, it becomes of deep interest to look into this precious service, what we often and rightly speak of as the service of God in the assembly in which the Lord has a place personally so distinct. Indeed we can speak of Him in many respects as having inaugurated the whole distinctive service of the assembly Godward.

To think of God's love (a thought which must stir every true heart) finding an active responsive answer, and that in men, is to affect us. This first chapter we read is full of God establishing His pleasure in men - not in angels but in men. And the One established in the place of pre-eminence is not an angelic being but a Man.

Though in His person He ever remains God, "we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour". We get the idea of what is for God and His praise especially in God bringing many sons to glory: "for it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make perfect the leader of their salvation through sufferings", pointing to the necessity for what touched us as the meeting began this morning; that is, the sufferings of Christ - unique sufferings: His time of suffering finished but the sufferings essential to this precious matter of bringing many sons to glory; that is, bringing into view a company fit to take up, as under Christ, the service of praise. Then we get in the following verses, verse twelve particularly, the way in which the service itself is before

us: "in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises". That is a unique reference, never said in that sense of Israel or of any other company so far as I know. It is "in the midst of the assembly" that the Lord prophetically is said to sing God's praises.

I think we do well to reflect over the wonderful area in which we are occupied towards God and in a responsive sense, our affections active, our intelligence engaged so that what is directly for God's satisfaction is secured. We need ever to remember what wonderful grace it is that He proposes at all to secure His portion in men.

W.A.M. Do you think the beginning for us would be being subject to Him? All things are to be put under His feet and, when they are, He will use everything for God. But we are to arrive at it, not in the way that it will be arrived at in the millennium, but by subjection to Him as we see Him.

A.J.E.W. That is a present reality: "but now we see not yet all things subjected to him, but we see Jesus"; that is, faith embraces Christ as He is and where He is.

W.A.M. Would it result in our subjecting ourselves?

A.J.E.W. It is essential to see that; all things are not yet subjected to Him but there is the area where subjection to Him is the basis of all that goes forth and that is in the company of His saints in the assembly.

W.A.M. So that in certain areas He has to use a rod of iron but you do not get that in the assembly.

A.J.E.W. I thought that was fundamental to what we are seeking to say, so that as we assemble on Lord's day it is to the Lord's supper; that is, submission to Christ is the basis of our entering upon what belongs to the divine pleasure.

W.A.M. There is only one Man that is prominent.

G.H.B. The assembly, the nearest thing to deity, is a suitable companion for Christ.

A.J.E.W. What a wonderful engagement for our minds to realise how close the assembly has been brought!

G.H.B. What a dignified position!

A.J.E.W. How near we come! And how the Lord delights to intimate, by coming to us as He does, that here is a company very close to God, brought as near to God as the creature could be and in relationships which are entirely according to the heart of God Himself - "bringing many sons to glory". The proposal from the start is that nothing less than the place of sons is in mind for the praising company.

G.H.B. To be sons like Him dignifies the saints and we would be careful in His presence, would we not?

A.J.E.W. Quite so. What a matter to answer to the heart of God! What could be greater for man than to answer to the heart of God as knowing what His heart is? I was struck a little by the cup at the Supper this morning: "this cup is the new covenant in my blood", the Lord says; that is, the heart of God is told out and in the shedding of that blood there is the whole matter finalised. The way the heart of God is told out, putting it with reverence and feeling, there is no withdrawal of what is set out in that blood. It is the way God is toward men for blessing; the cup itself is the cup of blessing which we bless and God is reaching His end in man by way of blessing.

W.A.M. So we would have an appreciation, as under Christ, of the new covenant in a way that Israel will not have it.

A.J.E.W. Certainly, because what is brought to us is not the letter of that covenant but the spirit and spring of it in the heart of God. You get the terms of the covenant established with Israel and they will have their own place in the working out of things, but behind the new covenant lies the very spring of it in the heart of God Himself. So the word as to the cup is "this cup is the new covenant"; that is, so far as Christianity is concerned, the whole bearing of the new covenant is set before us in that cup.

G.H.B. So it is to be an easy, known relationship.

A.J.E.W. A relationship which tends to the most blessed sense of peace in God's presence. There is no thought that we are uneasy in engaging in His service or that any doubts should inhibit the outflow of what is for Him, no thought that any kind of sense of distance should come in. That is something which the Lord so feelingly provided for as He rose from the dead and came in among His beloved disciples; His word was "Peace be to you", "Peace be to you". Then a third time in John 20 He says "Peace be to you". The Lord has established peace.

W.A.M. Not only is the new covenant made known in Him but it says here that He tasted death for everything; so death has been removed, the enemy has been annulled.

A.J.E.W. All that relates to God's pleasure is set on what we could speak of as new ground.

W.A.M. These matters would have hindered the service of God proceeding - the enemy, he that has the might of death, and death itself.

A.J.E.W. It is most amazing that God does away with that which is, I suppose of all things, the most commonly found amongst men - the fear of death and the bondage that it brings - meaning that now as a present thing His service is established. It is one thing to think of God having the mighty flow of response in the eternal scene but what this epistle would have in mind is that it is established in the assembly immediately in the presence of all that has stood against Christ and stands against the flow of that service; what is precious to God in an active sense is secured and it is Christ who secures it.

W.A.M. And the company that is equal to it - "those sanctified".

A.J.E.W. Quite so, a company that is in every sense fitted to engage in this service.

A.N.T. So we are able now to sing and to enter into in some measure, 'Of the vast universe of bliss The centre Thou and Sun'. He has His unique place but we with Him.

A.J. E.W. I suppose it is the feature of this time of the Spirit that we are able to anticipate what is yet, in its fulness, to come in. The time of the Spirit is the time of the assembly and it will be one element of the mystery, as we speak of it, that God secures what is for the satisfaction of His own heart immediately. As Christ comes out of death and proceeds among His own, as we have on historical record in the ends of the gospels and the beginning of the Acts, the service of God in principle is established immediately and persons secured to have a full and fitting part in that service without any question of the glory of God being set aside by that service.

A.N.T. Would you say that God has in that way secured for Himself rest? What was undone, what was ruined in the fall, He has secured for Himself. It is an accomplished fact now in Christ in glory.

A.J.E.W. What wonderful lengths the love of Christ has gone to that we might be, in every sense, furnished to have part in that service! The point I mentioned, the point of peace, is all important. The spirits of the saints are not disturbed by that which in its character around us is calculated to disturb us to the very depths. The Lord is able by His presence and His living touch of love upon us to give us the sense of peace. He says "I give my peace to you" (John 14: 27); that is that the present conscious entrance upon relationship, especially our place as sons, is to bring us to the stable sense of peace. We are not uncertain. Anything which leaves us uncertain, any order of things which leaves us in any sense of insecurity, the Lord would meet by His own personal assurance of peace so that we enter upon the service of God undistracted and undisturbed by what would hinder peace.

W.A.M. What is your understanding of sanctification here?

A.J.E.W. "He that sanctifies and those sanctified" has the force of the suitable setting apart of the company for God; that is, it is set apart, we could almost use the word 'dedicated', to the divine pleasure. But this is done in a way that is entirely suitable; that is, the Lord through death has removed every question which arose against the saints and has brought into view a new order of things in

which He gives His saints part; and this involves the setting apart of the saints to have their part with Him in this service. It was anticipated I suppose in the many promises the Lord made among His disciples when He was here; that is, He really took possession of that company of persons as being His, and His to use as it pleased Him, and that applies at the present time.

G.H.B. In John it says they "rejoiced therefore, having seen the Lord", chap 20: 20. That is open for us today; the impressions we receive are to be like that.

A.J.E.W. Indicating the question of what governs us as we move on together. One thing governed them there, that is that they had seen the Lord. The suggestion is that whatever else might have been engaging their minds and hearts prior to that, the coming in of Jesus had turned them in one direction only. They had seen the Lord and that is what governs them.

G.H.B. That is what we want, do we not? We want an impression each time, a fresh one to carry us through the week. I think it is wonderful to get into these things because they really are life to us, are they not?

A.J.E.W. And is it your experience that we get it?

G.H.B. Yes, we do.

A.J.E.W. I think we would all endorse that, that it is important, as you say, to get a vital impression because this means that the service of praise is not a question of form or dead activity, it is something which is in living freshness and life and affection.

G.H.B. It is ready response.

A.N.T. When those going to Emmaus recognised the Lord (He made Himself known to them in the breaking of bread) they immediately returned to Jerusalem. So this has its uniting power, does it not? The power of the Spirit and the unity of the Spirit set us together in relation to the greatness of what we are speaking of.

A.J.E.W. That is a fine instance because they changed their course completely. It is very touching and comforting to read that chapter

because they went away to Emmaus. Why did they go? The chapter does not tell us. It was a diversion, two of them being diverted, and the Lord is not content that even two of His own should be diverted.

He not only follows them in grace but He does not immediately direct them back by the word of authority which He could rightly use; He introduces Himself to them. He works through to the point where they discern that it is indeed Jesus, no one else; that is, the ground is cleared and those persons secured with Christ dominant in their hearts.

W.A.M. It is interesting that they speak about the women that saw the vision of angels that say He is risen, but they said, "him they saw not". So that was the vital thing, they had the doctrine and truth of it - it was assured by angels - but they had not seen the Person.

A.J.E.W. A very vital point because in general the dear brethren are not ignorant of what the Supper has in mind, and we might assume something about it. This is the normal course of things but involves fresh experience, a fresh touch.

W.A.M. Even having our hearts burning is not enough. That was before He was made known to them.

A.J.E.W. They go back to it and realise that something was going on in experience which was leading in this direction; but now they have come to the point to which the experience leads; that is, they have come to Jesus. They have reached a certain terminus, if you like, to the course of activity they had been on.

W.A.M. That is the key to everything in our day when everything is in ruin publicly.

A.N.T. And eternally everything will centre in that blessed Man, God's glory shining in His face.

A.J.E.W. It is important to see that and along with that is the point that, as we are engaged in what we speak of as the service of God, Christ must always be in the very close sense before us. Not that He is all the time the object of the praise; the Father would be that; the Spirit, at a certain point, would be that; but we have to keep near

to Christ in relation to it because we learn from Him what belongs to the heavenly realm of response and, as we are with the Father, we would be in His presence as apprehending the unique place that Christ fills - something that we touched a little this morning, that He is there in His own uniqueness as the One who has given effect to things. He loves to bring in others alongside Himself in the course of what He has effected but He has given effect to it; and that glory, as John 17 implies, remains and is unique to Christ. Though brought near as the saints are, they have no part in that glory, that is unique to Christ.

J.S. Sometimes persons ask you what are you occupied with, what do the brethren do? There are many things we do not do but this is something that we do participate in that is very important and may not be immediately obvious or appreciated, that at the present time we enter into something that is eternal.

A.J.E.W. Of course we shall eternally engage in it, in a totally renewed order of things; our bodies will be changed but the relationships in which the service goes on remain. Our place with Christ in the assembly remains; our place in sonship with the Father remains and the service which fitly belongs to those relationships goes through in some sense to what is eternal; and it is the wonderful touch of the Spirit that what belongs in eternity is set on by the Lord even in this present time in the presence of what has occasioned Him suffering.

W.A.M. Mary's service was not really appreciated by some. Ministering to the poor seemed to be valued above it but the Lord says "me ye have not always" (John 12: 8) and that would be the secret of it.

A.J.E.W. It would indeed. So it is not on the line of human understanding, or of the human sense of values. We need to value things as they are valued in God's presence and God sets a great valuation on this element of response of praise.

A.N.T. So we experience our portion now: "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph 1: 3); but one day

we shall be with Christ, in His presence.

A.J.E.W. The service we are speaking of belongs there: it belongs in its character to heaven. It is a heavenly response that we engage in, that everything might be fit for God who is served. Nothing is out of sympathy or accord with the glory and blessedness of the God who is served. The ground is laid for that in this chapter by the work of Christ: "it became him" (that is, God was acting in a manner that is entirely in sympathy with what He is) "for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make perfect the leader of their salvation through sufferings". That was the way He took to make perfect the Leader of their salvation. His perfecting would involve that Christ is gone into a new position on high in view of men being brought in in relation to Him to serve God.

A.N.T. Is there a touch of what you are saying now in the discussion on the holy mount in relation to what the Lord was facing? So much is involved in His setting Himself to accomplish that work; the reconciliation of all things centres in the work that is spoken of there on the mount.

A.J.E.W. Your use of the term 'reconciliation' is important because it has God himself and His portion in mind, and the removal of the distance that had come in which God effected by removing the man in judgment which could only be at distance. God has done that in the work of Christ. He has effected reconciliation; so that, as often has been said, Where distance once was, nearness has been established. And that is in reconciliation, for the pleasure of God. It is that He might have His pleasure, because God will never find His pleasure in that which introduces some element of distance before Him. It is foreign to all that He is in the blessedness of His nature.

J.R.B. "Bringing many sons to glory" involves our being recovered to a right, happy relationship with God rather than the idea of a place, does it not? In Romans it speaks of our having "come short of the glory of God" (chap 3: 23) but this is man recovered to it, is it not?

A.J.E.W. It is indeed; and the expression 'glory' here - "bringing many sons to glory" - is, as you say, not a location but the whole

realm of relationships into which God brings us. Truly, this is glory! So we have the expression in 2 Corinthians 3, "from glory to glory" (v 18). The whole matter that is opening up to us is glorious; there are characters of glory that differ but the whole bent of the service, as we engage in it, is from glory to glory.

A.N.T. It says, "but we all, looking on the glory of the Lord".

A.J.E.W. That confirms what was remarked that Christ is to be kept before us. We do not, as we touch the wonderful levels of the service of God, lose touch with Christ. It is essential that we have this close link: "I will declare thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises". How attractive this is, the Lord singing the Father's praises in the midst of the assembly! It is the service of song in the buoyant liberty which is characteristic of it but established in relation to Christ and those whom He has with Him, He being in His place in the midst. This proceeds in direct relation to Christ and that is the great point for us as we engage in it.

A.N.T. Is it not wonderful that the matter of song is brought in? It embodies the sisters and the brothers, with Christ leading the praise. So that all - every heart, all affections - are centred in this holy matter.

A.J.E.W. It becomes a positive concern on our side that our relation to Christ be fully maintained as the service goes on so that He can, in the way that His love delights, prompt us and direct us in the flow of the service. He loves to touch a chord in the affections of His saints as if (to use a word which I trust will be seemly) to fit it into the whole flow of praise Godward. The Lord is able to do that, and the assembly's relation with Christ is so intimate and sensitive that in His place as Head He can do this. So the Lord's place as Head enters into the service, that He prompts things and gives impulse to much that finds expression in the utterances of those who take part.

J.R.B. Is it not beautiful how quickly the Lord engages the woman in John 4 with this side of things, as though what He immediately has in His affections is what this woman would be as an instrument available to Him in leading out praise to the Father.

A.J.E.W. There is an immense volume in that because the Lord does not raise questions with such a person as that woman was without having definite intent in relation to the things that He raises, so that He has her in mind for a part in the service of praise that she should become what He later speaks of as a true worshipper; that is, not just a formal worshipper (an idea which it would appear she understood to a certain extent) belonging to an established system of service. She understood that side - "in this mountain" - but the Lord is at another quite distinct side. This is not a formal course of service. This is something involving the reality of what persons are inwardly, that they are secured as worshippers and their function as worshippers is in mind.

G.H.B. Would there be a power of attraction in that woman?

A.J.E.W. The power of attraction to Christ and His wondrous readiness to have to say to her, to carry her through to the full end.

The Lord is so ready to take us on. We have made our many mistakes; that woman had made many, her history was such that she diverted a lot of times from the straight course but the Lord is having to say to her with a single glorious matter in His mind and, you might say, He is leading her up to it. He is not just leaving the proposal with her.

G.H.B. So she becomes a clean vessel fit for the Master's use.

A.J.E.W. Exactly. She goes back into the city and says, "Come, see a man". That has changed everything for her - she has seen Jesus, she has seen a Man who is everything to her heart and that becomes effective in her to bring her to what the Lord has in view.

W.A.M. What do you think is the difference between what you have been speaking of in this chapter where you have His headship and what you get in chapter 8 where He is the Minister of the sanctuary?

A.J.E.W. I thought this passage in chapter 8 would have a very strong link with what we have been saying because it is, in a certain sense, an official position that the Lord has taken.

W.A.M. That is what I thought; it is a little more official than personal, is it not?

A.J.E.W. And it has perhaps a wider bearing; that is, He stands related to the whole glorious matter "of the true tabernacle, which the Lord has pitched, and not man". "The true tabernacle" would, I suppose, be a little in line with what we were speaking of as to the woman in John 4 where it is a question of true worshippers; not the type, not the thing in figure, but in reality. What is in mind in this passage is the service in its true full character and reality, not just in a figure.

W.A.M. So that the literal thing was just the shadow of what has really come in.

A.N.T. She might have been occupied with position but she became occupied with the Person.

A.J.E.W. That is what is worked out in that woman's case. She understood the significance of certain places which she can name and the significance of certain parts of the history as to Jacob and so forth; but the Lord is not leading her along that line at all, He is engaging her with Himself.

W.A.M. So that, in the moment you get the instance of the woman that cast in the mite, the temple has to go. The Lord says that there is not going to be a stone left upon a stone - what has come in is the true thing.

A.J.E.W. That is a beautiful instance because it shows what the heart of that woman was. As has often been said, she might have kept one for herself and she would not have been doing badly by so doing but she cast in both; it is "all her living", as the Lord says. That would have its bearing upon us as to our attitude to what ministers to the pleasure of God.

W.A.M. So that could only go on to the true tabernacle; the old was not great enough for that.

A.J.E.W. That is right. This springs in the chapter from the thought of the high priest which, as you said, has a certain official bearing. It

involves the way the Lord will sustain the whole service and the personal part that He takes up in view of the service proceeding and being sustained. He sets things in the due order in the presence of God, does He not?

W.A.M. So that the Lord glorifies even what is official. The office does not add anything to Him: He adds something to the office. No high priest ever filled out the office as He will.

A.J.E.W. No, it far exceeds the official thought and yet it is in line with what the official thought had in view. Moreover it is of deep interest to me to see the suggestion of power here: "who has sat down on the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens". That is the place of power; that is, the Lord is perfectly able to sustain this service. We need power for it. We cannot carry it forward in our own vitality or strength; it is a question of the power, what is spoken of in another scripture as "the power which works in us", Eph 3: 20. There is power to sustain the saints in the service immediately, spiritually known but nevertheless real power to engage us with divine thoughts and with divine Persons in the service.

G.H.B. So we are to be at home in that realm.

A.J.E.W. Quite so. There is a remarkable combination of thoughts in these two verses in Hebrews 8. It is "the throne of the greatness in the heavens", the glory of God conveyed in that throne and all that is related to it; and then the "minister of the holy places and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord has pitched, and not man", as if the Spirit of God turns us immediately to consider the order of service which fitly is before God in view of His satisfaction and His rest.

D.J.S. How did the woman casting in her two mites change the system?

W.A.M. What I was saying was that when that incident comes in, the Lord immediately says that there is not going to be a stone left upon a stone - the old system has to go because what has now come in belongs to the new system.

A.J.E.W. So it is not exactly a question of changing the old system but of bringing in the new and engaging us with the new. The old system remains, in fact it remains to the present time in its formal character, but the Lord has introduced something distinct and fresh with which He loves to occupy us.

A.N.T. So we often sing 'Life is found alone in Jesus'. That is what the woman proved; her living is found in Him.

A.J.E.W. Quite so: and the springing up of the Spirit which is touched in the woman's case - the living water - is crucial to what we are saying. It is the Spirit who brings us into the conscious experience of these things and who becomes in the service, at least as I apprehend, the sustaining power in which the service goes on under Christ.

W.A.M. That is how things go in Hebrews, they are displaced by something greater, are they not? There is that which is decaying and ready to vanish but it is because of what is greater having come in.

A.J.E.W. God has intimated that one order of things is superseded and He has brought in the new and it is not a stage toward something else. What He has brought in relates to His final glorious thoughts for men. This is not to be superseded in turn by something else save that the whole condition of things will be changed but the new is something which abides.

W.A.M. What marks man's world is something continually superseding something else but nothing final is ever arrived at.

A.J.E.W. This is where something final is arrived at - the glory of it - and it reflects glory upon Christ as the One who in His mediatorial place establishes and sustains the new and the final thing. What we are to gain out of considering this together is the unique glory that attaches to Christ and that we may be more established in our proper relationship to Him so that the service may proceed in its worth and its true liberty.

VANCOUVER

4 April, 1976

Key to initials

G.H.B. - G.H.Ballard; J.R.B. - J.R.Bellamy; W.A.M. - W.A.Moseley;
D.J.S. - D.J.Soukoreff; J.S. - J.Soukoreff; A.N.T. - A.N.Thomson (all
local);

A.J.E.W. - A.J.E.Welch, London.

"RICH TOWARD GOD"

H.W.Knauss

Luke 12: 13-21; 1 Chronicles 29: 1-5

In presenting the glad tidings at this time one would like to speak of two rich men. There is a certain similarity between these two men, and yet at the same time a vast difference between them. They were both rich, but one of them used his riches in ministering to himself, and the other one used his riches to minister Godward. I suppose that God in creation has equipped each one of us so that we can become rich. Think of the perfectness and completion of God's work in creation in man, that man has everything that he needs in the way of faculties, the intelligence to acquire and amass riches in his lifetime. Have you ever thought of that? - the perfection of God's work in creation in regard to man. The animals are not equipped by God in this way but man is. Think of man's hands and what they are able for; think of man's mind and what it is capable of; think of the five senses that God has given to man; all miracles of creation. They help man to be able to acquire substance in his lifetime; and how much time people spend amassing riches! To our shame there is much time spent acquiring substance relating to things found here in the world that are not needed by us in our links with God. Certain things are needed. We need to be sustained in our bodies, we need shelter; God knows that. God is merciful, God is gracious to us to provide us with what we need to maintain our

bodies here in this scene. But I think we need to be regulated by God, we need to give place to God in our thoughts. Is God in your thoughts? God was not in the thoughts of this first man that I read of in Luke 12; the only person in this man's thoughts was himself, his soul; therefore he ministered to his own soul continually and God has to say to him. Have we left God out of our lives in that way? I believe that that is the way we begin the glad tidings, the true evangelical spirit is that: "Behold your God!" Isa 40: 9. Have you considered for God in your lifetime? Is God in your thoughts as you move here in the body that God has given you? Do you glorify God in your body? What a test that is! We surround the emblems in our bodies, you know; I have often thought of it at the Supper. What have we done with our bodies through the week? Have we ministered to God in our bodies? God has given us the body for that purpose. We have been created in His image and His likeness. We are to minister to God in our bodies, to glorify God in our bodies.

Have we done that? Or are we like this man who had no thought of God in his activities here in the world? How active he was! This is parabolic; the Lord is speaking here, He is setting out what depicts man with no thought of God, that it is possible to spend a lifetime without having God in your thoughts and without the desire, as Abraham had, to minister pleasure to the heart of God. You use everything that you acquire or amass to minister to yourself. That is what I see in this first man. Therefore the Lord sums it up: this man was "not rich toward God". He was rich in the world's substance, so rich that he was concerned as to where he would keep his riches and his wealth. It is possible to have that. Just recently the world's two richest men have died – Mr Getty and Mr Hughes. What did they amass and acquire in their lifetimes? Each one of them was a billionaire. It is hard for some of us even to think of such substance as a billion dollars, a thousand million dollars; and these men had more than that, both of them. But when the time comes and they are to leave this scene what good is that billion dollars when they have not ministered to God in their lifetime? I have said it before, but I believe that God would have it said at this time, that a Queen of England - Elizabeth I - said on her deathbed, All my possessions for

a moment of time! With all the wealth that she had she was like this rich man, she had not ministered to God in her lifetime, she had not been rich toward God, therefore she was in fear and she said, All my possessions for a moment of time! She could not buy time with all the wealth in her possession.

God would search us at this moment as to what we are doing with our life, beloved brethren. We are living in a day of prosperity when money is floating freely in the systems of men; it is available if persons are willing to put their energy on that line to acquire it. Are you doing that? Oh, I would say that there is something better than that. David had the secret of it. He acquired wealth in his lifetime but used it for the interests of God. I suppose there was not a richer man on the earth; I suppose he had greater wealth than these other two men, Getty and Hughes. What did they have? What good was their wealth? You bring nothing into the world and you take nothing out of it save your knowledge of God. What you acquire in the way of wealth is not going to help you in the eternal state; it is the knowledge of God that will stand you in good stead - your appreciation of Christ. I think God would speak to us now. What do you think of God? What do you think of Jesus? Do you ever think of the cost to God linked with the gift of Christ? Peter says "Silver and gold I have not; but what I have, this give I to thee", Acts 3: 6. The preciousness of the blood of Christ! What it was to God! It is that which makes atonement for sins. If you amassed all the wealth of the world and offered it to God to pay the penalty of sin that was upon you it would not meet it; but the blood of Christ is enough. God is a holy God and what is required to make atonement is precious blood, and the blood of Christ is that. Therefore God has acted to provide what is needed by us to be able to minister to Himself. I would say that the way to acquire a bank account is on this line; "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ", Acts 20: 21. That is the way to have a beginning; begin to know what is required by a righteous and a holy God. As being part of a fallen race and being in sin you do not have that requirement in yourself, you only have the power to minister to what is against God.

Every man in sin goes on in lawlessness; lawlessness is sin because it is against God, ever that; but God has moved from His own side in grace and mercy to provide what man needs so that man might become pleasurable to Himself, be rich towards Him. God provides the best, He provides the Lord Jesus: "God so loved the world, that he gave", He gave the best, "his only-begotten Son that whosoever believe s on him may not perish, but have life eternal", John 3: 16.

That is God's desire for us, He wants us to be rich towards Himself; there is no reason why we should not be. If we accept Christ we can say that we are rich towards God. Think of the Lord Jesus, the One who was rich, who "became poor", as it says, that we "by his poverty might be enriched", 2 Cor 8: 9.

What a contrast between these two men! I thought first of just reading of the man in Luke 12, and then I thought that that is not enough, that God has the contrast in David. What a man David was, ever considering for the rights of God. You see God-given instincts coming to light in him; when he heard of the ark he began to consider for it, that there should be a suitable place provided for it (see Ps 132). And David began to work on that line. He was not the greatest man in the Old Testament, as we have been taught - Moses was that - but he was a man that, thought for God, his affections were right. It says that he gave in his affection for the house of God. It was not that he gave to acquire a place of renown but out of purity of affection. What a man he was! No wonder God used him, allowed him to set on the great thought of the service of God. Here he is at the close of his days; he represents manhood according to God, a type of Christ. Having amassed what could be used in service Godward he was rich towards God. God had said that he should not build the house because of having shed blood in his lifetime, that Solomon his son would build it instead. David was, you might say, being displaced, but not in the thought of God. The holiness of God required Him to act in this way. God knew what David would do.

David made available to Solomon for the house of Jehovah all that he had. Here he is at the close of his life, one who is said to be "full of days" (v 28). What every day would have been to David in his

links with God. I love the way that that expression, "David was old and full of days " (1 Chron 23: 1) comes into the Scriptures. One desires as one gets older that it would be true of oneself, of each one of us, that it could be said in our lifetime that our lives are full of days, that we had to do with God each day of our life. Give time to God during the day; think of God, think of the Lord Jesus, depend upon the Spirit of God. One would appeal to the young people; one knows what youth is and the activity and desires of a young person, but one would just say this, Give some time to God. Begin that way and then you will find you will increase your links with God, your appetite will increase for the things of God.

So this man in Luke never thought of God; he speaks to his own soul. Think of that, a man ministering to himself, speaking to his own soul. David does that in Psalm 103 but what a contrast! "Bless Jehovah, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (vv 1,2).

How precious that is! Think of the benefits God has given to us in creation. Are we using them for His glory? What about our minds? What about our affections? Are they right Godward? They are not right if we are in sin, because if we are in sin we are not serving God. We are born in sin and shapen in iniquity (see Ps 51: 5); therefore we need to have to do with God in our lifetime, each one of us. God in the glad tidings is making available to us all that we require. "The wages of sin is death", it says, "but the act of favour of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord", Rom 6: 23. Think of the benefits of eternal life through Christ Jesus! Have you taken advantage of it? Are you going to live eternally in the divine presence? God desires that; that is the glad tidings; God has made provision for it. The whole world stands in reconciliation; salvation is available to all through repentance towards God and faith in Christ. Make way for the Lord Jesus in your life now. As you do that you will begin to acquire substance that will help you to be rich towards God. Let us not be like the man in Luke 12 who never thought of God, who ministered to his own soul, but may we be affected by the gift of God, the Lord Jesus, coming into our lives not only as Saviour but

the One who would fill our lives as Head. Do you have a link with Christ where He is? Christ would minister to you from that place. Do you have a link with the blessed Holy Spirit? Is the Spirit indwelling you? It is not automatic (we have been taught that) but it is always the gift of God; God reserves to Himself to give the Spirit. I believe that where God sees room made for Christ in the soul He would give the Spirit in order that that person might be held in the line of His will, like David; what he acquired in his lifetime would be in line with the thought of God, so that he could minister what would please the heart of God. Oh, I would say, let us be on this line, like David, acquiring substance that will help us in our lives to be rich towards God so that the Lord Jesus will not have to say to us in a future day, as He said of this man, "Fool". A fool is one, as we see in scripture, who says "There is no God", Ps 14: 1. The Lord says of this man that he was a fool, that he was not rich towards God. May the Lord never have to say that to us, but may we minister to God in our lifetime so that the Lord will say to us that you have been rich towards God.

May the Lord help us to know how to distinguish between these two passages of scripture that what passes through our hands may be held for the divine pleasure and the divine will, that God would trust us to handle things here, His property. Abraham was in the possession of God's property and held it in such a way that when the time afforded itself he could minister it back to God. I think that Christ is becoming our property in that way; it is to be held by us so that we can minister Him to God. That is what is acceptable to Him; what is of Christ pleases the heart of God. May we be rich towards God, beloved brethren. We are living in a time when we need to be exercised as to this, not to spend all our time acquiring substance relating to an order of things that is found in the world but to spend time linked with the things of God so that we may become rich rightly, not like Getty, not like Hughes, not like Queen Elizabeth that we spoke of, but like David who acquired great substance and gave it out of his affection. He gave a lead in it so that the people offered willingly that day. He says "And who is willing to offer to Jehovah

this day?" One would raise that question now; are we willing to offer to Jehovah all the substance that we possess? Substance is given to him who has substance, according to Matthew (see chap 13: 12); that is, if you are on the line of acquiring substance that is available to God, God will help you on the line of increase that you might arrive at what David arrived at, amass a fortune that can be used in service Godward. May we have it, beloved friends, as we put our trust in the Lord Jesus and give place to the Spirit of God - two great gifts of God. God has provided for us so that we can be rich towards Himself.

TORONTO

27 June 1976

RESPONSIBILITY

E.M.Walkinshaw

Romans 8: 3,4; 2 Timothy 2: 3; Revelation 3: 14, 21, 22

The impression I have, dear brethren, is of the need to take up responsibility. In the world there is an evasion of it; men generally, through fear of taking the blame, pass the responsibility on to others.

Men in high places will fail to make a decision, this is fairly well known; they pass it up the line; they say, so to speak, Let someone else make the decision and then the responsibility will be his and I can evade any blame. The clerical system arose because persons failed to take up what they should have taken up as responsible to God, and other persons assumed the responsibility and subsequently a complete dominance of Christians. In our day the same thing happened in what is called 'the system': many of us failed to take up rightly with God our responsibility, and what was called a 'levitical system' took control. It is not for us to blame the persons that were in that but to be exercised ourselves as to how far, with God, we are prepared to take up the responsibility of His interests.

So I read this first passage because it is quite impossible to take it up in the flesh; that has been condemned: "God, having sent his own Son, in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law" (which is love) "should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh but according to Spirit". Here we have fulfilled responsibility, but it is fulfilled responsibility in the Spirit. This means then that we must make more room for Him so that there is no effort to assert what is right in the power of the flesh, because man's wrath never works God's righteousness. It is essential that we should act in the power of the Holy Spirit. So the exercises of chapter 7 resolve that, in the individual and in the company, and that is why the Lord so often brings us back, I think, to Romans 7, so that we might be able to answer the question, Is it flesh or is it Spirit? It is to be Spirit: "the righteous requirement of the law should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh but according to Spirit". So I test myself: How am I walking - according to flesh or according to Spirit? It is no good saying it is impossible to walk according to Spirit, although sometimes, I must confess, I have said, Lord, it seems almost impossible. The standard, even that set out in such words as those of Mr Darby when he speaks of what simple *things* such as levity can put the soul out of communion, have often made me feel that it

seems impossible; but the Lord never puts impossibilities before us.

So I believe, as we face matters with the Lord and with the Spirit, They help us to name things so that we can say, *That* is flesh or, *That* is Spirit. Here I think is the great answer in the saints to the exercises of Romans 7, that all is to be according to Spirit. Thus I fulfil my responsibility as an individual and thus we fulfil our responsibility as a local company, each person in it. Is each of us fulfilling his responsibility? One thing I have feared for a long time is being a drifter: drift in and drift out. You get yourself into a religious rut. Now you do not get yourself into a religious rut by coming to meetings; getting yourself into a religious rut is an attitude of mind and soul, so that while you may come to a meeting, and may frequently come to meetings, you could come as in a religious rut, which is legality, or you could come in the Spirit, with freshness and joy and liberty. So while you may be doing the same things day by day you are kept in freshness because all is according to Spirit. Now that is basic, I think, dear brethren, to taking up our responsibility, whether it be in meetings like this, or reading meetings, or care meetings. I think it is a sad thing when responsible persons fail to state what their judgment is if a matter comes up. If we are in the Spirit we can state our judgment; we may have to be corrected in the light that comes into the assembly, we should always be ready for that. The order of the day is adjustment. Never get fixed; never think that your outlook is perfect or absolutely right. Any man in any crisis or difficulty that thinks he never made a mistake in it is on very false and shaky ground. I would not care to be like that. Surely I need *some* adjustment somewhere according to the truth, and that would apply to every one of us. Our weakness, however, should never be an excuse for not taking up our responsibility, and each of us has a responsibility in the local company, but always to be according to Spirit.

Now Timothy was a young man and Paul says to him "take thy share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ". In Lamentations the word is "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" chap 3: 27. You see it *forms* a person, it gives him

moral fibre when, in his youth, he is prepared to take the yoke: "take my yoke upon you", Jesus said, "and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls", Matt 11: 29.

It is good to bear a yoke like that, is it not? Would you not like to be yoked with Jesus? I would. I do not say I am worthy to be; I would like to be worthy and yoked with Him: "my yoke is easy, and my burden is light". *That* is because He bears the heavy part of the load but gives you the privilege of sharing in it, even when you are but yet a youth. It says of another man who was a youth in Gideon's day: "he feared, because he was yet a youth", Judg 8: 20. Do not fear.

"Let no one despise thy youth", 1 Tim 4: 12. Timothy and Titus would both be respectful to older brethren; I have no doubt about that. In standing for the truth they would respect both the truth and the brethren; nevertheless, Let no one despise thee is said to both of them and they were both young men. The Lord is looking for young men who are prepared to take the yoke, prepared to take up responsibility, prepared to take up His matters here in this evil world and be a testimony. So Paul says "Take thy share"; he is not expecting you to take it all; take just your share "in suffering, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ". A soldier is prepared to suffer. He sometimes endures hardship of hunger and thirst; he must learn to bivouac in the open field, know what the rigours of warfare are; and the soldier of Jesus Christ must know the same *morally*; he must learn what it is to suffer as a soldier in the ranks, not a lieutenant, captain, major or field marshal, but just a soldier, a good soldier of Jesus Christ. You take your share, Paul says: the Lord will see to it that you are not overwhelmed. Some here might have felt, like I have felt sometimes, that it seems very difficult always to be fighting. I think many of our brethren have lost their way because they have become war weary; they feel they have been in the trenches too long, so to speak, and they have gone off; many have become prisoners of war. In many cases it is much easier to be a prisoner of war than to be in the front line, but I think those who love Christ would desire to be in the front line, taking their *share* in suffering, taking up responsibility in the conflict, so that what is precious to Christ might be protected and carried through; shoulder it. Paul

appeals to this young man; he is about to die, as he says in this epistle, but he still loves the testimony and he is appealing to a younger man to *shoulder* the burdens. I think those of us who are getting on a little would desire to see younger ones shouldering the burden and taking their share in suffering; labouring so that there might be fruits for the pleasure of God and for the pleasure of Christ.

Now in Laodicea the Lord speaks to the angel; that could be the messenger; the angel of the assembly in Laodicea: "These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God". But He says it to the angel; that is, He says it to what we call the responsible element, but in a previous footnote the translator says that all are responsible (see chap 2: 20). Now the Lord is looking and searching us in love and He is, so to speak, appealing to us. Who is prepared to take up the responsibility? Who is prepared to take it up in conditions such as Laodicea suggests - carelessness, ease, indifference, much ambition, bigger and better houses, bigger and better cars, bigger and better businesses, and so on and in the presence of a tottering economy. That is man's outlook. Is it mine? Or am I prepared to answer to the Lord's word to the angel? Well, I say, I would like to have my share in that; and I think the person who takes it up is the person who becomes the overcomer. Would you not like to be an overcomer? What a promise the Lord makes: "He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne; as I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in his throne". I think the one that answers to the Lord's word is the one that becomes the overcomer, the overcomer in such conditions. What you get in Christendom is a terrible blanket of apathy in the presence of what exists in the world. Men are very careless but would you not like to be an overcomer in those conditions - one who *breaks through* so as to give some answer to the heart - of Christ? He is sitting on His Father's throne; He holds everything in His hand; *all* the stars, seven stars, are in His right hand. There is no possibility that they will slip out or fall at all, they are in His hand; and as sitting upon His Father's throne everything is in His hand. The service of God, that is in His hand; the

governments, administration, everything is in His hand: "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand", John 3: 35.

And He says of the overcomer that he will sit with Me in My throne. He has not taken that up yet; shortly He will, and I doubt not in the minds of men there would be a great clamour as to who should share with Him in His glory; many persons only too ready to clamour around and acquire honour from the King of Kings, but not many willing to follow the rejected Nazarene, very few prepared for that; but the one that sits down with Him in His throne is the overcomer. No person in the world to come will have any official position to which he is not morally equal; we might as well face up to that. In the world, as we have often said, official greatness and moral contemptibility and corruption run hand in hand, but it is not so in God's world; in God's world every person will hold the position to which he is morally equal. What an administration that will be when Jesus takes over! There will be nothing hidden, no part of any city into which the police could not enter; every part of every city will be accessible to the messengers of the Lord Jesus in that day.

Nowadays there are parts of cities marked off into which the police do not care to enter; they are left like that even in this country. That will not be so in the day to come, all will be under the hand of Jesus - no violence, no corruption, everything transparent. I would like to have some little part, as morally worthy to have that part, in that day with Him. Would not you? It is open to brothers and sisters alike, each filling out his or her respective place in taking up responsibility. Beloved brethren, let us take it up; do not let us be like the world and evade it; do not let us do what men do, pass it on to someone else: Let him make the decision, let him state what the facts are, let him give the judgment and let me sit back and watch him take the blame. That is what is happening in the world; that is why the communists are getting a hold, because men in these big organisations, unions and the like, sit back and leave somebody else to take the responsibility. That is not to be so in the assembly, dear brethren, and let us set ourselves and say we will not let it be like that in the

assembly, but with His grace and help, and that of the Spirit, each of us will take up our responsibility so that all is maintained for His pleasure.

GILLINGHAM

5 October, 1976

IDENTIFICATION WITH LOCAL ASSEMBLY CONDITIONS

C.A.COATES

Local difficulties do not prove that there is nothing in a place of the Lord and for Him. It would be serious, and contrary to the principles of 2 Timothy, to bind saints to identification with evil. But if, on the other hand, there is anything in a place which the Lord can recognise as being of Him and for Him, even amidst weakness and sorrow and for the time without the privilege of His supper, I am convinced that it is the path of faith and love to seek it out and be identified with it.

Our association with saints is not a voluntary one that may be taken up or not according to our pleasure. To entertain such an idea would be to give up the truth of the church. It is the liberty and responsibility of the saint to stand apart from iniquity, but we do not walk together as a voluntary association of believers. It is because we have learned something of the fellowship to which God has called us, and recognise that there is such a thing as the assembly of God, that we are together. We are under obligation to own the place in which God has set us, and the relations and responsibilities which are inseparable from that place. We are not at liberty to disown our divine associations merely because at some time they may involve sorrow and the bearing of burdens. *Love* would have no desire to do so.

I feel more and more the importance of owning practically our divine bond with saints, and that it is vital to the present testimony - not a formal ecclesiastical bond, but a knitting together of saints in truth and love according to our divine relations. This takes practical shape with saints who by God's ordering are within reach of each other locally. This was evidently what came into view at the beginning, and it is what we should have before us now, for it is what the assembly is vitally. It is due to the Lord that we should maintain the truth of the assembly as in local responsibility but it will not satisfy Him unless it is maintained in the activity of love which binds together in a distinct way the hearts of Christians who are locally

near each other. The Lord does not want us to be lawyers carrying out divine principles in a formal way but to be living in the love of God and thus bound together in affection. I am sure that if we breathe the *atmosphere* of God's house we shall find that the *order* of His house is not an arbitrary rule but that it is the wisdom of love in exercise for the development and safe-guarding of holy affections.

I believe that one removed to a new place should take up his local obligations in every case save where the principles of 2 Timothy raise a moral barrier against his doing so. And in the latter case there would have to be some distinct evidence that what was due to the Lord was not maintained, or some principle not of God allowed. It should be in every case a matter of exercise and faithfulness and love, not personal choice or convenience. My impression is that the above simple principle, which I believe to be of God, would make the course of a newcomer clear in all cases of local difficulty.

TEIGNMOUTH

3 December 1913

(Reprinted from WORDS OF GRACE & COMFORT, Vol.33, No.4, April 1957)

THE CHILDREN'S MONEY

In early times the noble metals, gold and silver, were weighed out and kept in some form such as rings to be carried easily and serve as money. Later on coins became used and their names showed their weight or were words such as 'handful', 'quarter' or 'very small'. As now, one side of the coin told what it was worth to the owner, the other showed him that he owed loyalty and duty to a monarch. The glad tidings is therefore like a coin. One side tells its value to us needy persons, the other reminds us that we owe our blessings and our own selves to a Saviour God. When Jesus, who it seems had no money, was shown a 'penny' he drew attention to the 'head' side. From it we are taught to render to God what is His due.

It has been said that money is able to buy everything except happiness and is a passport everywhere but to heaven. This definition won a newspaper prize and through it many people had the scripture warning "take great heed to your souls". Without the knowledge of God the happiness of this world is like tinsel without reality, and husk without the kernel. In the parable of the wealthy father, the repentant son learned this lesson. But returning home he could now enjoy without money all that his father was in his love, all that he had in his house, and could have the help of at least three different kinds of servants at his bidding. We do not know the son's age but even his elder brother was called by the affectionate name "child"!

Our Lord was with the rich in His death, His precious body being lovingly buried by a wealthy man. Money itself is not an evil but Scripture tells us that a secret cause of every kind of wickedness is the love of it. This *root* of evil might be hidden for a long time and if allowed to grow it has an ugly *shoot* which should be cut off at once; if still let live it will have a *fruit* bitter as death. There was only one Judas but he is a terrible warning to us. The price of betrayal put upon the Saviour by those who should have had the very highest value for their Messiah was thirty pieces of silver. This was just the fine to be paid if a Hebrew bondman happened to be killed by an ox. It was also the cost of a potter's field out of which the clay had been dug. "A goodly price that I was prized at by them"! How precious is He to you?

J.C.Evershed