

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 352

July 2002

CONTENTS

[‘A HEAD IN HEAVEN ...’](#)

[“REKINDLE ...”](#)

Edited and Published by:

E.C.Burr

50 Red Post Hill London SE24 9JQ

‘A HEAD IN HEAVEN ...’

E.C.Burr

Colossians 1: 18; 2: 19; Ephesians 1: 22, 23; 1 Corinthians 11: 2, 3

E.C.B. It will be obvious to the brethren that I wish to set on an enquiry about the headship of Christ. I have been thinking especially about the younger brethren and wondering how far they are acquainted with the history of what is commonly referred to amongst us as ‘the recovery’, and with how things began, and whether what was in the minds of those who began has continued down to the present time. I venture to say that it is a matter of real exercise as to how far that is true. The recovery began with a few brethren gathering together in Dublin, then the Lord introduced our beloved brother Mr. Darby into it. The nature of the Christian profession and its demonstration in companies at that time, especially in what is known as the established church, and the actions of government in relation to that church in Ireland, promoted in the mind, especially of, and then formulated by, Mr. Darby, that the reality of things is that there is a body on earth and a Head in heaven.

What I would like to enquire about is how far that worked out in practice, because history with which some of us here are familiar, and history with which we may acquaint ourselves, raises the question very directly as to how far the headship of Christ has been known in the 175 year’s history. Would it be true that brethren had become almost notorious for division if the headship of Christ had been known and maintained? Would there be any lack of sustaining support, effective and organic amongst the brethren, if they had been maintained, above all things, in the knowledge of the headship of Christ? We may think of ourselves down to our own day – and there are good many here who can remember history amongst for a little while at least – and ask whether, if the headship of Christ were known, local difficulties would give rise almost immediately to questions raised here and there, this opinion and that opinion, and this group of opinions and that group of opinions? Is that the

headship of Christ? I bring this forward because I think it is a matter of serious exercise how the headship of Christ is actually known in a Christian company.

I have referred to well-known scriptures that bear on this. Brethren will know that the headship of Christ is spoken of in various ways in scripture. "He is head of all principality and authority": that is an aspect of His headship which will be manifested in the world to come. Our beloved brother in the meetings at Easter in London, brought before us the scripture in which God is going to head up all things in the Christ: how blessed that is! He has that Man and He is going to head up everything in Him. If you think about Christ and God's disposition, it must be true anyway, but you think of the marvel of that, that everything that is here for God is going to be headed up for God in one Man.

But what I am concerned about is how far is the headship of Christ actually known in practice? I find that God is going to head up everything in Christ easier to understand than I do the actual working of His present headship. The scriptures that I have read are familiar in this context, there is much teaching, but it is obvious to anyone who reads the Bible. I just remind brethren of a remark of Mr Stoney's that he often heard Mr Darby quoted to prove something which, if the quoter was familiar with the Bible, could be proved from scripture.

In Colossians, "*he* is head of the body"; He has not been made it, He *is* it. There is something to be understood about the greatness of His Person. It is not, I think, divorced from His Manhood, because He is firstborn from the dead – that must relate to His Manhood – but "*he* is head of the body". I read in the second chapter because it goes on to say, "from whom all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God". That suggests to me that the whole structure bound together by the Head works together, and that means you and me, we work together for the expression of the headship of Christ. Paul in the verses in Colossians comes as close

as he does elsewhere to the way He speaks of the body in Corinthians.

The verse at the end of Ephesians 1 is that He has been given to be “head over all things to the assembly”. That seems to me to imply that if there is the assembly it needs the Head. If there is a body, it needs a head, “gave him to be head over all things to the assembly”. The context there brings in what He is as the Son of Man, but He has been given to be head over all things to the assembly, as if the assembly is not to function without the headship of Christ.

I read in Corinthians because I would like to touch the individual aspect of His headship as well. It says, “woman’s head is the man”. I am not concerned here about subjection of women, but man’s head is Christ, and the implication of that is that the headship of Christ may be known individually. I bring these thoughts before the brethren because I am exercised about them and I would be glad of help for the brethren and myself as to, How does the headship of Christ become effective in the present day? A lot of ready answers will spring to the mind. Someone will say, By the Spirit? But let us get deeper than that and find out how does the headship of Christ actually work in the present time.

D.J.H. I am sure your exercise is shared by many and we cannot really separate these scriptures that you have read. In a sense, the last one is fundamental in the working out of the others, but the important thing for us to find out together is how it works as we are together, and how it works as to Christ being the head of the assembly.

E.C.B. I think what you say is right, the word in Corinthians is fundamental to the experience of the Lord’s headship. You wonder as you go through your own daily life, how do I prove that Christ is my Head? It is no good just quoting the scripture. If He is Head to me and I come together with a lot of other believers of whom Christ is the Head, then His headship in the company must follow.

D.J.H. I would be searched by a word of Mr Stoney's; he said, If I do anything other than as the Lord Jesus Christ would do it I must judge myself. Would it not be that if the headship of Christ was known by me actively, then I would do things as He would do them? But that extends as to our local companies. If the headship of Christ were operating, what would be done in those local companies, what would work out together as a whole, would be as He would have it done.

E.C.B. He would be represented in it. In fact He would be manifested in it, because if He has His way in a company He will be expressed in the company. I feel tested by the very thinking back to the 1820s, that there was set on amongst the people of God – and it had immediate effect, believers gathered together all over this country, and it spread and it was all over the then known world – that the organised system of Christianity was not what the Lord had in mind, but there was a body on earth and its Head was in heaven.

Let us ask ourselves, do we in practice manifest that today? Why are there many opinions about things? If something happens and there are more opinions than there are people, is it not largely because His headship is not known by the individuals, and they each give way a bit to the view of somebody? Brethren, do we not long for that unity of the Spirit which is the binding power of the present dispensation?

D.A.B. I wondered as you set this on whether in fact a lot of the general exercises that are expressed amongst the brethren do not really depend on the one you are now raising. There are not only administrative exercises, there are exercises about the place that the Spirit has, there is exercise about vitality, about continuance, about responsibility, about the sustaining of ministry and no doubt others that could be expressed, but they all seem to hang from the one you are now bringing forward. You have quoted Mr Darby as saying, If anything so precious and so thin as a piece of gold leaf came between the head and the body, the body would die. That is something that the young ones can perhaps think about, but the connection of the saints here, whether collectively or individually,

with Christ where He is essential to the maintenance of any expression of life through the testimony.

E.C.B. That is right, and it raises the question as to how far does everybody here this morning live in the light of their personal link with Jesus glorified? I think that touches the question of how is the gospel preached among us? Does it lead you into a connection with Christ in heaven that makes you come to the conclusion, as the hymn says:

We live of thee, We've heard Thy quickening voice
and you are dependent on Him.

D.A.B. Just to follow your last point, which is another exercise among us, as to the maintenance of the gospel, I was thinking of the preaching to the eunuch by Philip, "Of whom does the prophet say this?" His life was taken from the earth. The glad tidings of Jesus related to the headship of Christ as far as that man was concerned; he was offered the life, the joy that would come having a new head.

E.C.B. He was, but of course he did not understand the teaching; in fact I would say that that teaching was hardly current. Teaching as to the headship of Christ comes in almost entirely through the apostle Paul and springs from, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" Having "seen Jesus our Lord" he knows that everything subsequently must be directed from that source and the power of it must give character to his life. After that the way is with "Christ who is our life". If that is true of you, you will have no difficulty about the headship of Christ in present activity.

R.M.B. I think this title of Christ, "the head of the body" is found only in this epistle. What do you think about that?

E.C.B. Many things are found in only one place in the Bible, but in this context you will see from chapter 2 that they were in an environment of philosophy and vain deceit. But the character of philosophy is arriving at things by the interchange of opinions amongst men and women, and Paul says to the Colossians, you will be led away by that. There is another source of inspiration and the

power of that is in Christ who is head of the body, “he is the head of the body, the assembly”. It is well to bear in mind in speaking about the scriptures that in virtually everything that Paul writes something else is taken for granted. Paul does not rehearse – when he gets as it were to a higher level of mathematics he is not reciting the two times table every time – he assumes that there is certain knowledge. The fact that Christ is exalted and where He now is in heaven, and that there are believers on earth constituted as one body by the Spirit, he takes for granted, but what he is bringing out is that headship is to be learnt, not in philosophical systems or that kind of thing, but in the direct link with Christ Himself.

D.J.H. The reference that He is head of the body stresses more than anything else that the two are inseparable. “Every principality and power”, that is another matter, but with the head of the body, the head and the body are inseparable, so the body cannot function without the head, which is the root of your exercise at the present time.

E.C.B. Chapter 2 virtually says that, “from whom the whole body”.

Mr. Darby said, as has been quoted, that if something as valuable as a gold leaf comes between the head and the body, the body is dead – for that matter, the head is dead as well because in the corporal system from which Paul is drawing analogies, the head /and the body are totally interdependent. The head cannot exist without the body and the body cannot exist without the head. Christ cannot die again, but what is needed is apprehension of the reality of the bond. I would, if I may, refer to another quotation because I am interested in this; Mr. Raven said, you arrive at Christ as Lord through His headship, I find it easier to understand that I arrive at Christ’s headship through His lordship. That in its turn connects with the preaching of the gospel in which the company is encouraged to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. If you confess that Jesus Christ is Lord you are, without venturing to contradict Mr. Raven, in the full sense of dependence on Him available for the enjoyment of His headship.

J.W. Would there be a distinction between Christ as the new head for man and Christ as head of the body?

E.C.B. Yes there would. Christ is not actually spoken of as a 'new head'. There *is* a new head for man in Christ. No doubt 'in the Adam' (see 1 Cor. 15:22) implies Adam as a head of the race, but the headship of every man is the way it works individually. A new head for man is your personal link with Christ, but the head of the body requires that in the Spirit the bond between you and all the brothers and sisters sitting around you is known too. I think the new head for man speaks of something that is individual and bears on the way in which He is head of all principality and authority, because He is head of every man. But Christ as head of the body is a much more delicate matter, and needs to be understood in its working amongst ourselves. We are a company who believe in the headship of Christ; then we need it to be working amongst ourselves, and it requires a good deal of surrender.

D.J.H. It must depend upon the liberty of the Spirit; otherwise we are all thinking different things. It is striking that that is the first exhortation of Paul after opening up the truth in the first three chapters of Ephesians, to use diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. That really underlies, or is at the root of, your exercise.

E.C.B. How is the headship of Christ known in the company? Why is it that the smallest matter in another locality stirs up telephone calls, correspondence, conversations, why? Because somewhere the headship of Christ is not known. One characteristic of the headship of Christ is patience, "the patience of the Christ", and the idea of patience is that the controlling force holds everything in its own place, but waiting on God's time. Think of the fact that Christ is waiting God's time to have everything headed up. Could it not wait in a local problem?

P.M. Why is it in these passages that He is presented as head, not that He should be, or that He will be, but that He *is*?

E.C.B. What alternative did God have? He *is* head of the body. There is a word in the scripture in Ephesians that Christ has been *given* to be head over all things to the church. There was controversy amongst us a good many years ago now when some spoke as if Christ was given to the church. That would diminish His own place; He is given to be head. That is there is a position given to Him in relation to the church which is His body, but He is head. It bears on a previous question, that in the place that Christ has as the leader of the whole generation of mankind for God, He must be head because for one thing, He is the only impeccable Person that there has ever been and God has put Him in that position as Man in order that He might be the controlling element in the whole range of things for God.

P.M. Would that not stimulate us to come to know Him in that capacity, that God has set Him there? It will never break down, His headship of the body will never break down, but it would stimulate me to draw upon it.

E.C.B. Yes, but the question I would like to be touched in this reading is how do I do it?

P.M. I do not know that I can help, but I wondered if it was essential first to see the view of Christ as head from God's side, that in Him is fulness of perfection and affection which is flowing from God from the divine side manward, and in that blessed Person I have everything.

E.C.B. I think that and it bears on why I made a connection with the preaching of the gospel. The gospel is preached in very many ways, but one aspect of it that must come into the preaching every time (perhaps not in specific words) is that you to whom I am preaching cannot do without Christ. If you cannot do without Him everything else must fall away. Of course there is the area of our responsibility, that is a different matter. Everything else must fall away and I am left with Christ as my only resource for salvation, but if He was my only resource for salvation, is He not my only resource for life? Do I

not live because in the moment of my greatest need I was shut up to Him?

D.E.R. Christ having been established head, His direction and guidance are available. That raises the question whether we want His direction and guidance and whether we are prepared to be subject to Him.

E.C.B. Tell us your own experience.

D.E.R. I think the epistle to the Corinthians helps us: there was division there in Corinth, “I of Christ, I of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, I of Christ”, that was because they were of man.

E.C.B. What I want to get at is how do I come at this in my own experience knowing that I cannot do without Christ in that place of headship.

D.E.R. But that involves the setting aside of my will and of my natural tendencies and tastes in order to be governed by the direction of the head.

E.C.B. Yes. We are not perfect, and we have not all arrived at what you have just spoken about, but we know it in principle. If we could start with this, that when I believed the gospel it was because in an essential aspect I could not do without Christ and, to use an expression that is conventional amongst us, I was shut up to Him.

Why did I try to get out of it and import other things as if there was another resource than Christ who could control my whole life?

J.R.W. Does verse 17 help in your enquiry, “*he* is before all, and all things subsist together by him”.

E.C.B. That verse no doubt alludes to His deity, “before all, and all things subsist together by him”; His headship in relation to the assembly is in His manhood. You cannot separate deity and manhood in Christ. The emphasis in His headship in relation to the assembly is on His manhood, but the One who is head of the assembly in that status as Man, is the One who in His own person is God Himself – who is before all and through whom all things consist? They can only be in One who is Himself God. But then He

has come into manhood and He has died, and been raised, and He is glorified as Man, and it is as Man that He has the assembly, and the assembly is His body, as Man. You start with His deity, but then you come on to the marvel of what God has done in His manhood. It is as if in the perfection of that Man that God had here, God says there is nobody else who could be head of that great entity in which I am going to be glorified.

J.R.W. What is your impression as to how we get help to enter into the good of it? There are several exhortations in a negative way in the next scripture, speaking of persons doing their own will, being vainly puffed up and so on, but give us your impression as to how we practically can enter the current enjoyment of it.

E.C.B. I go back to what I have said about the gospel, that here I am as a sinner; when I was a sinner and exposed to judgment I could not do without Christ. Therefore, having believed in Him, the thought is that He should take me over and I learn to live on the account of the Man who died for me and is exalted and who lives for me, I learn to “live on account of” Him. It is in the intimacy of communion with Him and conversation with Him that you find that it works. For instance, there is a great deal learned about the headship of Christ when you are lying in bed awake and you find that you have nothing but Him, just a few moments. That reinforces what He is to you by way of the head. What you are asking about is my basic exercise in this time. How can we know the headship of Christ better?

E.C. I am very thankful for what you are raising because you often hear the expression, ‘the head in heaven, the body on earth, that is a mystery’, and that is where it stays, it does not go any further. As I understand it the body referred to there is a composite body of believers and the head in heaven is the Lord Jesus Himself. The apostle Paul in Corinthians uses the physical head and the body to describe how that works spiritually. There are a lot of young people here and they often hear this expression, ‘the head in heaven and the body on earth, and it is a mystery’, but it is not to us, because we have been initiated into the truth of the mystery. Can you say something about the head – we talk about the head, and we talk

about headship. The way I think of this is that there is a school and a headmaster and everything goes on his authority. If it is a concern of some kind of which somebody is the head, everybody does what the head wants done and they respect it and there is authority there; now, as I understand the headship of Christ, it is in that respect, it is His authority and I should be obedient, but unless I understand that how am I going to, myself, work this out, what you are now bringing before us.

E.C.B. Paul's references to the body in Corinthians are different from those in Colossians and Ephesians because the very reference to the head in 1 Corinthians says that the head cannot say to the feet, I have not need of your (see ch. 12:21) showing that they are two different functioning parts. If Paul was looking at the body in Corinthians in the Ephesians and Colossian sense, he would not be able to say, the head cannot say to the feet, because the head of the body in Ephesians and Colossians is Christ, but the analogy in Corinthians is that as the human body works and needs every part, so does the functioning down here of the local Christian company. That is why I said it corresponds a bit with the reference in chapter 2 of Colossians.

As to what you said about school, the headship of the headmaster corresponds to the lordship of Christ, but what you find in practice, and is very clear, is that if a head of a school is head in any degree in the sense in which Christ is head of the church, the school takes on a totally different character from that which is governed by authority. He infuses the whole entity with what he is himself and his own conception of what schooling is. That is what Christ is doing to us. If I could arrive at it myself I would long to be in the gain of Christ's headship more than His lordship. I wish I was more subject to his headship.

P.J.M. I was wondering if the disciples really learned the Lord's headship while He was among them. You referred to the gospel, the implicit need that I cannot do without Him. That was their practical experience; when He was taken from them, they were scattered.

Would you say something as to how particularly their experiences might help us?

E.C.B. John 6 partly answers your question, “Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast words of life eternal”, that is, we are dependent on what comes directly from You to maintain us in life of another character. That is the longing of everyone, to be maintained in life of another character. But, to whom shall we go? If I use the expression again, Peter says, Lord we are shut up to you. The headship of Christ was not, as you know, directly revealed at that time, but it is “Lord to whom shall we go?” The submission to Him as Lord connects in headship with “Thou hast words of life eternal”.

P.J.M. I was just enjoying once again what John says about the Lord that “we have contemplated his glory”. It was something that they had never seen before and will see again, “we have contemplated his glory as” – as though he is struggling for words to describe it – “as an only begotten for the Father”. I wondered whether in some sense the Lord Himself showed the way that this is arrived at, that He was totally dependent upon the Father for every day and every act.

E.C.B. He virtually says that in John’s gospel, “As I live on account of the Father”. Now, how do we ourselves get into this attitude that we live on account of Him? The scripture in John 6 implies that we are feeding on Him, we have Jesus before us and we are feeding on Him.

D.J.H. It could be said that Peter would say that if we need life of another order we can go to no other. Is that not, in a sense, the root of our problems, – do we want life of another order? Just to speak practically in the present state of things – what we speak of as affluence, and so on – there is so much that we can enjoy in this life, do we really want life of another order which stems alone from Christ?

E.C.B. That is a very practical question, as to whether we want life of another order, but I think if you begin at the point where you could not do without Christ, you will take up every circumstance of the

present time by including Him in your thinking in relation to it. The scriptures bring out that the head is indispensable to the body and to the individual. How are we going to arrive at that? What I need to do is to get back to the point where I had nothing but Christ. One aspect of things amongst us (which I am not saying is, but could be weakening) is that so many of us are in the position where we are because our grandparents, perhaps our great-grandparents, were there; we were brought up in this atmosphere and we accept the teaching and the language of it – probably nearly every brother here could give an address on headship – but what about the reality of it? Did I find at sometime that Christ was everything to me? I have often gone back to an occasion when a brother from Edinburgh was serving in London, and in his address he referred to the scripture which said “when Christ who is our life”, and he stopped and said, Is He? – I have never forgotten that brother. Suppose he said that to you, “when Christ who is our life”, Is He?

R.H.B. Do we need to understand what the body of Christ is and our place in it to experience the headship of Christ? We do not become part of the body of Christ because we were born among the brethren and regularly attend the meetings. Scripture speaks of water baptism which was done in faith for us, and then by one Spirit we have been baptised into the one body, and we have all been given to drink of one Spirit. Do not the schools of opinion and the differences that arise indicate deficiency in that, in the understanding of baptism, what is implied in water baptism and what it means to be baptised into one body by one Spirit?

E.C.B. I am sure that is true. The teaching we have is that in baptism you come on to new ground, the old ground is left: ‘baptised in the power of one Spirit into one body’ is that you have no other resource, because everything else has gone in the water and you are now established in Christ and living on account of Him. But position means nothing. Then I do not think you will apprehend the headship of Christ unless you apprehend the whole body; it does not just mean the brethren, the whole body. There is a great tendency among us to speak of ‘the saints’ as if they are the company present;

that is too limited. They are saints but there are many others too, and you will not apprehend the headship of Christ unless you apprehend the whole body, everyone who, believing in Him, has the Spirit. Once you get that conception in your mind, you will say, Such a vast thing as this, there is a head and it must be Jesus.

D.A.B. I was going to refer to the passage that has just been mentioned because I thought it was perhaps the key to your enquiry as to how we see these things. We have teaching as to baptism and what it involves, but I think it is right that we do not carry it over into the way we take our place in a Christian company. For example, you are not excused baptism, because your parents were baptised, but then you are not excused what has been referred to because your parents were already part of the company. There is that way that leaves all these things that a claim can be staked on, then I take my place in the company solely because of the relationship I have through Christ with it.

E.C.B. That is right and I am thankful to find company. Baptism is an individual experience. The scripture refers to “all” – but that is all the individuals – “been baptised by one Spirit into one body”, but to borrow expressions that have been used, coming out from the water we have an apprehension of what baptism is and you are thankful to find that there are many others with whom you can have fellowship in the light of the fact that I have been baptised. But then the power of that is in the one Spirit.

D.A.B. I was thinking in relation to the history that has been quoted, what a revelation this truth was about the nature of the Christian company. It lost all its institutional aspect and all that had accrued to it through the history and the way that the world and the establishment thinks about the idea of church; all that fell away.

That was a process of baptism and what emerged was something entirely new, entirely fresh, to which what was old immediately tried to attach itself as we see with the Plymouth trouble. The old would have destroyed it if had not been confronted. We need to be vigilant to maintain that new and different spiritual encounter that marks the body.

E.C.B. Yes. It is of value to think about this – the work began with apprehension that there was a body on earth and a head in heaven – what was the first major challenge to that question? The challenge was clericalism. Mr. Darby quotes Mr. Newton as saying he expected to have the whole of western England under his power.

Clericalism rose straight away. It found easy ground because so many of those who first came out of systematised religion had themselves been pastors of a church and a clerical system was natural to them and a challenge to the headship of Christ right down to today is clericalism. Those who were alive and active in their minds in the 1960s will readily recognise that the danger to the practical working of the headship of Christ was clericalism and ideas about ‘one man’ and about ‘*the* man of God’. I am not in any way questioning the distinctiveness of gifts that the Lord Himself has raised up which themselves reduce personal occupation with one’s own status. If you have any gift it is given by God, and by Christ. It makes nothing to you, but the challenge is in clericalism, and we are never free from it because it is natural in individuals to want power. The headship of the church rests in Christ alone.

D.A.B. Another reason for a reversion to what was clerical was a certain uneasiness that without some structure and prior arrangement it would be difficult to keep order, but that was overcome and it was recognised that none of that was needed for order or for the profit of the gathering, especially at the Supper. The headship of Christ was something that could be proved and confidence grew in it as it was proved.

E.C.B. As the headship of Christ is fully apprehended in a company, no man or woman will seek status; they will be content to be what Jesus was.

J.W. What do we have to learn as to the way the apostle presents the truth in this epistle? He first of all presents the greatness of Christ before he goes on to speak of the function of things.

E.C.B. It is because it is the dominating personality of Jesus glorified. Has that not ever come into your soul? The dominating

reality of the person of Christ comes into your soul and then everything else takes its due proportion because of the place that He has.

J.W. The increasing appreciation of Christ Himself would help us in the functioning and recognition of His headship.

E.C.B. Exactly, if I apprehend that Christ is head of the assembly, the powerful influence of that must come into everything I say and do. I cannot then seek to mould things according to my personal point of view or the people that I like. I must speak for Him. These things are difficultly learned.

D.H. Does 2 Corinthians 5, help us on that, "For the love of the Christ constrains us, having judged this: that one died for all, then all have died; and he died for all, that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who died for them and has been raised" (vv. 14,15)? You spoke earlier about different opinions and how we get into things. One of the scriptures which may help is "the love of the Christ constrains us", and it says, "that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who died for them". If that was real and true of us it would solve a lot of problems.

E.C.B. That would certainly help. That is what He is to all who believe. He has that place and my love for Him will lead me to concede to Him His place as head. These things work influentially and powerfully and often slowly. One thing that is often manifestly missing amongst us is patience when what is needed is to wait until we hear what Christ Himself says. The scripture says, "wait I say on the Lord". If it were possible even by this occasion to encourage the brethren to seek out more for themselves the reality of what Christ is as head to them, I think we would find the quality of things amongst us, in every matter that arises from the service of God down to the smallest matter of administration, took on a different colour.

H.A.H. The headship of Christ does not come into Philippians, but you do get 'one mind' and 'the same mind'. It begins with the comfort in Christ and consolation of the Spirit. I wondered if those two things are essential.

E.C.B. What is brought in in Philippians 2 are persuasive things, “If then there be any comfort in Christ, in any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit” (v.1). These are persuasive things to lead you to find everything in the fact that there is a Man that God has highly exalted, given a Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in whom God is head up all things – in the Christ. Christ is presented to become attractive in those chapters in Philippians. There was a small spot of difficulty in Philippi and these two well-known sisters Paul exhorts to be of one mind. That connects in mind with 1 Corinthians 11, that the woman’s head is the man, man’s head is Christ, Christ’s head is God. I use the expression respectively, but Paul starts at the bottom of that line in Philippians by pointing to two women; if they are subject to a man, but the man has to be subject to Christ and Christ is subject to God, you get the remedy for things there in the teaching of 1 Corinthians 11 which you find working out in Philippi.

D.A.B. What has been drawn attention to is that Paul is detained at the beginning of the Colossian letter by the personal glory of Christ.

It was, as it were, to draw the eye to Christ and to exalt Him in the heart of the reader. I was struck with Corinthians where Paul says, “the woman is man’s glory”, so that alongside the personal glories of Christ, what we are speaking of, if it were expressed, would be a glory of Christ. I was thinking of the woman of worth, it says, “her husband is known in the gates”. It is very powerful, someone would see this man walking in to the gates of the city and they would say, Who is that? And someone else would say, that is her husband.

That is how it should be, as this is worked out among us – a glory of Christ manifested in a company.

E.C.B. It is the occupation with Christ glorified that makes all the difference. We love administration because it gives us an opportunity to exercise power, but administration in the assembly comes directly from a glorified Man:

Every eye shall then behold Thee,
Gaze upon Thee as thou art,
Every heart in love rejoicing

Shall fulfil its glorious part.

That is the headship of Christ working because every soul has an impression of Himself.

P.M. Does the headship of the Christ as the head of every man come out in the very detail of our lives? Not just what is spiritual, but what clothes I buy, where I go, how I behave. Is the headship of Christ reflected in that and I am dependent on Him for the details?

E.C.B. That is right, and that is a good way to start learning it.

Some old-fashioned expressions used were, Would you like the Lord to see you doing that? It is a very good test. Would you like the Lord to see you putting that on? Is that suitable? Remember you are the testimony of Christ when go down the street in skirts like that. The headship of Christ reflects the smallest detail of my life.

The scripture in 1 Corinthians 11 is not intended to bring out the subjection of women, I think it is to bring out what to God is a natural order that is explained in other epistles by the fact that the man was first created and then woman. That is why that order is there.

Subjection of women came in after the fall, "thy husband shall rule over thee", but the headship of man over the woman is the result of the order in which they were created according to God and it is to be learned in the blessedness of the fact that you could say to your wife, we both came from the hand of God.

D.E.R. So in the normal Christian household there should be an illustration of the working out of the truth as to headship, because the wife and her husband are in communion together and she knows his mind and her love for him. The Lord will see that that is carried out.

E.C.B. It belongs in the first chapter of Genesis, that even in the Christian household God might say, "let them have dominion". Not, you are the boss and she is not, but "let them have dominion", and in the mutuality and oneness of their relationship the whole household becomes itself a light in the world.

B.H.C. What is meant in Ephesians where it says, "submitting to each other in fear of Christ" – the fear of Christ?

E.C.B. The fear of Christ springs directly from the fact that in His Person He is God and we are never to forget that; even in the tender familiarity in which we might come to know Him as Jesus, we are never to forget that He is Himself God, and we are to be regulated by that because we live in the fear of God. There is the fear of the Christ, as you quote. We are not exactly afraid of Him, but we reverence Him because of what He is. You lead me to refer back to Ephesians. I find it very interesting that the fact that God has given Christ to be head over all things to the assembly, follows the reference to His being the Son of Man – “has put all things under his feet”, that is the Son of Man – “and gave him to be head over all things” – that is all the things that God has put under His feet – “to the assembly, which is his body”. I found it interesting that in Matthew 16 Jesus says, “who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am”, He then goes on to speak to Peter about the assembly, and it strikes me that there is a direct connection between the glory of Christ as the Son of Man, with the distinctive place that He has as Man in that position, no doubt reflecting His lordship.

G.N. So He is the One who is considered supreme here for God as Man. I was thinking of David saying, “for all things are of thee, through thee and for thee”, and we will not really be content until we are able to say that. Is your thought that we should be able to say that even at the present time? It should be possible in our local settings, that all things are “of thee, through thee and for thee”?

E.C.B. We certainly should. It is part of the basis on which we come together. What else do we expect? ‘All things are of thee, through thee and for thee, except the bit that is of me’. Is that what you are going to say? No. What do you think of the connection between the Son of Man and the place He has in Ephesians 1?

P.M. I was still thinking. Must it not be so that because of what He is gathering up for God as Son of Man He will give character to it all through the glory of His own Person?

E.C.B. There is a certain reference back to the place of Adam. Adam had all things under his feet in chapter 1, but to Eve he was

head over it all. She is the type of the church. I see a remarkable connection between the place that He has as the Son of Man and the place that He has as head because He must be head of the race, but He is head of the assembly because of what God gives Him to be.

P.M. So Adam was a figure of Him to come because God had Christ in view in that office.

E.C.B. I am sure that is true. We have to be careful when we say God always had Christ in view because it raises the question in the mind as to why did God then create the earth if He always had Christ in mind? I think the distinctive glory of the Son of Man is one that shows us that we are shut up to Him in everything and deriving from Him, find that His headship is the natural thing for us to enter into.

D.A.B. What is true of Him universally should be seen par excellence in His assembly. If you were to preach to somebody about the universality of the headship of the Son of Man, he might say, Is it always His way in your company? It just would not be an expression of the assembly if it was otherwise.

E.C.B. What if you go to the preaching as an unbeliever and you say you are converted as a result of the preaching and you rejoice in that, and then you come to the care meeting and you find that there are more opinions than there are brothers? That manifests that the headship of Christ is not universally working among us. My exercise today is not to be critical, maybe to put up a warning plaque, but to suggest to us that there is another character of life to be known among us that is not dependent on the raising of administrative questions.

I would commend to the brethren the sober exercise as to how the headship of Christ might be better known amongst us.

LONDON

18 May 2002

Key to initials

R.H. Brown, East Finchley, R.M. Brown, East Finchley, D.A. Burr, London; E.C. Burr, London; B.H. Clark, London; E.Croot, Dorking; D. Hawgood, Bexley; D.J. Hutson, London; P. Martin, Colchester; P.J. Mutton, Walton; G. Naphine, Colchester; D.E. Remmington, St. Albans; J.R. Walkinshaw, Bexley; J. Wright, Havering.

“REKINDLE ...”

Eric Burr

1 Timothy 1: 6

I read just this verse to count on the Lord that He will give grace to us so that there is something rekindled in every one of us. I have been around for quite a long time. I have, as the brethren well know grown up in the company, my father honoured, my grandfather was there, and I have seen generation after generation. Where I gathered in my childhood the place is used for other purposes which are themselves a sign of the turning away of people from the Christian testimony. You will find that in other places too, that meeting rooms with which we were familiar are now devoted to other purposes altogether. We notice that with sorrow and we notice the public decline of Christian profession. We should pray about it, we should not just let it go, we should not just say, things go that way, don't they. One thing I pray about is that there might be revival in the present day. It is conventional among us to slightly to decry revival and rather say things like, Well you get these big campaigns and a lot of people make confessions but where is the result? But, beloved, there is some result and it would be worth a great deal in our testimony one or two, ten, twenty people were converted and came to the Lord through the testimony that there is among us. I would be prayerful ,and it is worth praying for, that there might be something increasingly established for Christ amongst us. Virtually every week in the prayer meeting there is prayer for addition, there is prayer for those from whom we are now separated that they may be able to judge what they have joined and come and find a place where they really belong. There is prayer that other believers might come along too and share with us, and not only share with us, but we might share with them what they have in relation to Christ. These expanding views should be amongst us.

There is prayer about the young people among us that they might find their way in faith in Christ to find their place in

identification in the breaking of bread with those who all ready break bread in the place. May I say to the young people that to break bread is not just the means of joining a Christian community; to break bread is a public confession that Christ is now your life, that it is worth giving up many other things for the sake of Jesus Christ, it is worth committing yourself to a new way of life, worth finding you way not just to attachment to a company of Christians, but it is worthwhile to identify yourself publicly with the Name of the Lord Jesus. May I just remind you that if you ask to break bread, and we trust that young people among us might be moved to break bread, if you ask you are not just asking to join a particular Christian community, you are publicly identifying yourself with a Man who was crucified here. The emblems on the table are a symbol of His death, and, beloved, if you break bread you are identifying yourself with the death of Christ publicly.

I say these things because I would encourage the younger brethren to find their place publicly in what the loaf speaks of as the one body, but I say these things with a cautionary touch, because what history gives me apprehension about is lest we become a kind of hereditary fellowship, where grandfathers and fathers and parents and children and grandchildren all have followed each into the same line of things. Unless there is personal and deliberate exercise the things with which we have been identified and which we have greatly valued will disappear, because the light will go out of them.

Therefore I refer to this scripture, Paul says to Timothy, "I put thee in mind to rekindle the gift that is in thee". We are all familiar with Mr. Darby's footnote that the whole subject of the epistle is energy in the darkening state of the assembly. I am surprised that Mr. Darby wrote that because the assembly in itself has never been in a darkening state. The assembly itself is Christ's treasure and He sees it here in all the glow and shining which one day will come out publicly. I often think of that hymn, The church's one foundation -

Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore opprest,
By schisms rent asunder,

By heresies distress,
Yet saints their watch are keeping,
The cry goes up, "How long"?
And soon the night of weeping,
Shall be the morn of song.

And the next verse says:

And the great church victorious,
Shall be the church at rest.

Beloved, Mr Darby may have put the darkening state of the assembly in a footnote, it may relate to what there is publicly, but it does not relate to the powerful and inward side that what there is in the establishment of God is indestructible. The assembly is here in its power and in its life and in its reality and if we are to be rekindled then let it be not as if we are trying to rescue some perishing element that is here, but because we are anxious to bring in the light, power and glory of what one day, to this world, is going to be displayed in that city that comes down out of God. It is conventional amongst us to say, it will be displayed to a wondering universe. I can remember a brother saying to me, what do we mean by a wondering universe, because all those who belong to it will be with Christ and it will come down to take up with Christ the place which He will have in relation to the world to come, and the glory of the assembly will always be eclipsed by the glory of the Lord. How wonderful these things are and they lighten your soul even as you speak about them. Mr. Darby says that the whole subject of the epistle is energy in the darkening state of the assembly.

One thing that is interesting about 2 Timothy is how much Paul says about himself. He says, I have been this and that, and in the last chapter he says I am already being poured out. He had come to the end of things, he had come to the end of what the Lord had committed to him. He has committed it in letters that we have to one local assembly and another, and we have had great gain even from reading the Bible to find out what the Lord's mind is in relation to local churches, but Paul is now closing his own book knowing that

he has his part now with the Lord. He is waiting to be poured out, indeed he says, "I am already being poured out". What a triumph, what a way to die to say, I am already being poured out! I just warn the brethren that the footnotes in the Bible are not actually scripture. There are some that give you alternative translations of an original word, but other footnotes are comments, valuable as they may be, but they are still comments. Leaving aside any question as to the darkening state of the assembly, what Mr. Darby comments on here as to energy in the darkening state of the assembly, and the darkening state of things publicly, and that is all around, is needed in our own day.

Paul says to Timothy here, "For which cause I put thee in mind to rekindle the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands". Paul uses an interesting expression in the first epistle to the gift that Timothy had through prophecy. It is rather a difficult thing to understand; nevertheless Timothy had this gift which was bestowed upon him through the laying on of Paul's hands. We find the history of Timothy in the Acts, father and mother of different origins, you might even say of different faiths but he was the product of that line.

It has sometimes seemed to me that Timothy had every advantage of understanding the new man, because one of his parents was a Jew and other was a Gentile, and you might say that Timothy had the advantage through that of finding what the new man actually meant, that it owed nothing to Jewish origins and nothing to Gentile origins but he owed it to the reality of the work of God in him.

I go on to raise this question, I have raised it with myself, what was the gift that Timothy had – "the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands"? I think we can fairly say he was not an apostle. There are allusions to him which give him an apostolic character, he is an apostolic messenger especially on the part of Paul and he went to one or two localities of which we have an account and he was to bring out in those localities the characteristics of Paul himself, but I do not think that he was actual an apostle as others were. He may have had apostolic character but he was there as a believer and as representative. Whether he was a prophet is a

question too. We have nothing in the scriptures that is a direct prophecy on the part of Timothy. Always remember that these two epistles were not written by Timothy himself and what they foreshadow are the feelings of Paul addressed to his own true child in the faith that he should understand what the present state of Christianity was and what the future was as well. I doubt whether we could say he was a prophet. He was shepherd in degree because he was sent by Paul to these other places in order that he might show them what kind of person Paul was, but in order also to help them to be kept within the parameters of the Christian testimony so that they were here for him. He was a timid man, "if Timothy comes see that he be among without fear"; he was a young man too, and you might say he had shepherding characteristics but whether he had gift as a shepherd is a question. There is a difference between having a gift and being the delegate of someone else who has a gift. I doubt therefore whether Timothy was a shepherd, as a gift. I just remind the brethren of what our brother said in the address in our three day meetings and the question that he raised in that address, as to who amongst us is prepared to take on the service of shepherding. Has anyone come to a decision about that since those meetings? Has anyone decided that under the Lord's hand they will take on the shepherding of the saints? You have had quite a time, something like fifty days since then. The disciples were left alone for fifty days and they had to come to some conclusion in that period, and something like fifty days have gone by, has anyone come to the conclusion that under the Lord's hand they will devote themselves to shepherding the brethren? You say, I am not up to that. Timothy was not up to it. You say, there are others here more able than I. Beloved it will not do, the question is you. All ministry is personal. The Lord is looking for people to respond to what He says. Let me remind the sisters that the Old Testament has in it several shepherdesses. Are any sisters who listened to that address willing to take on the service of shepherding? There are things that sisters can do amongst the young people, some of which are better done by sisters than by brothers. Even a word of comfort and encouragement, the shepherding that sisters can do comes out in

very small things; it does for brothers too. Brothers are not all that big, but there are things sisters can do. You see a child crying at the back of the meeting room and someone puts their hand on its knee and just reassures them; that enters into shepherding, shepherding. There is a care that sisters can display and take in relation to the younger brethren that is invaluable amongst the people of God. It is often said because of exercises that were raised at the time that we do not have Sunday schools, but there is room for shepherding which has in itself a teaching character. A few simple words about the Lord Jesus to a child is calculated to nurture what we speak of as the work of God in him and help them. I do not think that Timothy was a shepherd by gift, but he took on shepherdly activities, and the Lord would have you take them on. I just raise the question again, who has answered to the word. Could I ask who listened to it? We do not all listen, we come to meetings and we do not all listen, our minds go here, there and everywhere. I have often thought when you are giving an address, if you see the company beginning to move a little and start to look around, you are losing them because they are not attending, but, beloved, the word was given about shepherding and who is going to take it on? You have had time to think about it.

Then there is teaching, shepherds and teachers. Was Timothy a teacher? He is encouraged later in this epistle to have an outline of sound words by which is able to instruct others. If I may say so, not being a great teacher myself, one of the greatest needs amongst us at the present time is of teaching. By teaching I do not mean the recitation of what you have read somewhere else.

Quotations from ministry are as, if you are teaching English you might quote Shakespeare, if you are teaching Greek you might quote something from Virgil, if you are teaching mathematics you would be quoting Euclid. Instructing one another in the teaching is not just by quotation; it is what you have understood by the teaching. While I was at school we were reading one of Shakespeare's plays. We had read it and come to the end of it and the master said, write an account of that play. If you had been taught in that play you would

be able to say, the substance of this play was this and the object was that but I myself had not a clue what the play was about. By some surreptitious looking at the text book I managed to fill up the appropriate amount of paper with reference to this play, and the master wrote on the end, 'reads like somebody who continued to look at the book'. I had not learned. Beloved, some ministry comes like someone who has been looking at the book. The purpose of reading is to go on reading so that the instruction there begins to form your outlook and your apprehension of what was being ministered at that time. The Lord is not giving us ministry so that we may learn it by heart, but He is giving us ministry so that we may be formed by it in ourselves, and then have something of ourselves to say. We may illustrate by quoting, but these things come in by way of illustration; to grasp the substance is another thing altogether. I encourage the brethren to pray for teachers amongst us. I say it without disregard for what there is amongst us, but we have not at the moment enough teachers. The Lord would raise exercise amongst us.

Another gift you might consider in relation to Timothy was, was he an evangelist? He is told to do the work of an evangelist which implies that he did not have the gift for it, unless Paul means 'Timothy you are an evangelist, go in for it, get the gospel over to people'. The impression generally held among us from that scripture is that Timothy was not by gift an evangelist but he was to do the work. Beloved, we are too apologetic about the preaching. You ask someone if they are preaching tonight – Well, one would seek help to give a word. Are you preaching tonight, They have asked me at such and such a place and I will do what I can. Beloved that is all wrong: if you have something to say in relation to the gospel you should be pleased and ready to say it and to say it with such power as the Lord gives you at the time. The preaching of the gospel is not the lowliest service amongst us, if anything it is the highest service amongst us because it has to do with the work of God and its initiation and maintenance in the souls of those who are present to hear. Do not underrate the value of the preaching the gospel. We

need evangelists too. If I were to ask you to name an evangelist amongst us, how long would you have to think? You could tell me some preachers, but suppose I asked you to name an evangelist, would you be a long time in answering, I wonder? Beloved, we need evangelists. The gospel is the foundation of everything in us that is for God. It is the end of one order of things in us that is not for God, but it is the foundation of everything else in us that is for God. It is the clearing of the ground in order that this great divine structure which is the work of God in you, and then the work of God in others and their binding together in a company, as the great foundation on which that is laid. Timothy was just told to do the work. Perhaps that is what you do, perhaps that is what I do. None of us is particularly proud of our service, I trust, but let us pray that the Lord will raise up the gift of evangelists among us so that there might be that convicting power in the preaching every Lord's day evening, and through the week as well, that results in the foundations being laid and secured in the souls of the brethren.

Having said these things as to the gifts in Ephesians as to which Timothy may not have had, what then was the gift that he is to revive? What I think about that is also in Ephesians 4 "But to each one of us has been given grace according to the measure of the gift of the Christ" (v.7) and everyone has that. In a certain sense it hardly needed Paul's laying on of his hands to give that to Timothy, but the laying on of hands in the Acts is the confirmation that those already in the pathway are committing themselves to someone else in the pathway, either in the gospel or in the power of maintaining the work of God in others. Therefore I look at this epistle and try to discover the characteristics of the grace that had been given to Timothy. The first thing I came to was faith, "calling to mind the unfeigned faith which has been in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice" (v.5). Beloved young people, be thankful for your mother and your grandmother. What they have came into you at a time when you were hardly conscious that they were doing it and it is something that is of permanent value to you. What they helped into Timothy was faith. How much faith do

you have? There will be no fresh rekindling in the darkening state of the assembly unless there is faith. Faith – we might begin with faith in what? Your faith in God. You will get nowhere at all without faith in God. The foundation of Christianity is faith in God, but before that it is belief in the God who lives. Then there is faith in what God is towards you and it is clear from the history and the way Paul is able to write to Timothy that he had faith even in regard to the gospel. He had believed the gospel, and that is very largely the first movement in yourself of faith that you will recognise. It was presented to you, and a brother said something in the preaching that stimulated your soul and spirit, and the result is that you have faith in God and faith in Christ as your Saviour, and that began your Christian life.

Christian life does not end with the gospel, and you need to be maintained in faith for the whole of your Christian life. Your daily doings need faith. James says, “if the Lord will”, we will do this or that; that is faith. Everything you do you look to the Lord about. You say, if the Lord will, and you have faith. One thing that we notice at the moment is how many marriages there are among us. Last year there were less, the year before there were a lot, this year there are a lot too. Are these undertaken in faith? When young men and young women start a relationship together, is that in faith, is there faith in both, faith in regard to God, believing in God, resting in Him, discovering His mind – is that all there? Beloved, it ought to be. You are in for a rocky time if that does not exist, unless the premise of your being together is that you both have faith in God and faith in Christ. Be sure you have it. Stimulate one another. How many brothers here regularly talk to their wives about the Lord? How many wives regularly talk to their husbands about the Lord? We take a lot for granted. If you bump into another believer, they are talking about the Lord almost straight away. Do you talk about the Lord in your own kitchen? All these things have their place, but the foundation of a Christian marriage is that you both have faith in God and faith in Christ and you both have the power of the Spirit. If there is one place where the reality of the Spirit as the bond is to be known it is in Christian marriage. I invite the young people to consider their way in that respect. It is very easy to be taken up by someone else’s

charms, but we used to be told when we were younger that beauty was only skin deep, and charm may only be skin deep. Beloved what is of God in one another is what will matter and if you are going to have a relationship with a young brother or young sister – may God preserve you from a relationship with anyone who is not – let it be established in faith and your common faith in God – “the unfeigned faith which has been in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother ... and in thy mother”. Let these things be established in you. That is one thing that Timothy was to be rekindled in.

The next thing to which I draw attention which might be rekindled in Timothy is grace, “be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus” 2 Tim 2:1. The relationships that I have mentioned already will call on grace day by day on both sides. We test our wives a lot, but grace – “be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus”. That is the manifestation of what the work of God in you is that you are able to live here in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

What has been given to us of God, the gift, “But to each one of us has been given grace according to the measure of the gift of the Christ”. If there is grace given to you be strong in it. You say, I tried to give a soft answer but it would not come. Beloved, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Learn the power of it, learn what grace can do, learn what power of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. “You know it”, Paul tells the Corinthians – “who being rich became poor in order that we through his poverty might be enriched”. What are we enriched in? The first thing we are enriched in is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Cultivate it, learn it, you will not get it out of a book. You will not learn grace from a book. Where you learn grace is in the presence of the Lord Jesus, in the presence of God, and you learn what He is there and you learn it from Him – “learn of me, I am meek and lowly of heart”. He would have us learn grace from Him. Beloved, “to everyone who has been given grace” – rekindle that, sharpen it up, brighten it up, put on it some of that spirit which readily goes into flame and causes warmth to everyone who come in touch with it, that is the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God may

have to quench things, but He is the most stimulating power that there is to be known amongst men.

Then I just also touch this, that at the end of chapter 2 Paul speaks about meekness, “in meekness setting right those who oppose”. Have you tried that? How quickly we get on our high horse, how quickly we get our armour on and quote scripture. There have been those who oppose; it would have to be said that there have been difficult brethren among us, and perhaps there are still.

Not everybody finds me congenial, but beloved, “in meekness setting right those who oppose”. Let something else come in that is able to adjust, something about Christ that is able to adjust, to put matters right without spreading conflict here there and everywhere.

If you stimulate someone into a hostile reaction it will not be long before the knowledge of that reaction to what you have said has been spread – ‘I only did so and so and do you know what he said to me?’ People do not boast in meekness, they do not boast in having been the objects of it either, but beloved it is one of the most healing things that there is and it is free. You do not have to be sixty five or sixty to get that gift free. How contrary it is to the dispositions of persons, and yet “in meekness setting right those who oppose”.

Just one other thing to which I draw attention is in chapter 3 where Paul says, “Every scripture is divinely inspired, and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete”. It is in order that the man of God may be complete, it is in order that what is lacking in you might be made up, the man of God may be complete, full growth. Reading the scriptures is the way to full growth. The way to full growth in Ephesians is by other means, by gifts, but here “that the man of God may be complete”. Do you have an ambition to be a man of God who is complete? We might say, I think I could have given a word then. No beloved, that the man of God may be complete is not by serving in ministry, it is by reading the scriptures.

The scriptures are there, ministry applies the scriptures to the state of the person, but beloved you have to start with the raw material,

the scriptures which are divinely inspired and they have been ordered that the man of God may be complete.

I have spoken about these things and no doubt others could be discovered, but in concluding what I have to say, what I want to say is this – if you look for faith where is the great exemplar of faith? The great exemplar of faith is in the life of Jesus, “I was cast upon thee from my mother’s womb”. The great exemplar of *faith* is in Jesus. When he was on the cross they said, “he trusted in God, let him deliver him”. There He had been and no doubt known by many people for thirty years and known in public testimony for three and half years and what they say about Him when He is crucified is, “he trusted in God”. The great exemplar of *grace* is in Jesus “you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ”, and the great exemplar of *meekness* is in Jesus, “I am meek and lowly of heart”, and you will find rest to your soul, and the One who had the great grasp of the scriptures and was the Man of God who was complete and was never anything else, is Jesus. And what is to be rekindled in you and me is the life of Jesus manifested in our mortal flesh. That is what Paul is looking for in a young man like Timothy, “rekindle the gift of God which is in thee”, and while I may or may not fully have credited Timothy – or for that matter the Lord – in whatever Timothy had, one thing he had was faith, and one thing he was responsive to was grace and another thing he was responsive to was meekness and another thing that he was responsive to was the scriptures, so that the man of God might be complete. All those things are the life of Jesus on the earth and the rekindling of ‘the gift that is in thee’ is intended for the manifestation of the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh.

May the Lord work with these impressions amongst us, For His Name’s sake.

London

18 May 2002