

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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HE ... BECAME POOR

**2 Corinthians 8: 9; Philippians 2: 5-11; Psalm 105: 37,38;
Exodus 36: 2-7**

J.A.G. Looking on the emblems this morning, the scripture in Corinthians came before me, “ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sakes he, being rich, became poor”. I thought about the poverty of Christ. As Messiah He was cut off and had nothing (see Dan. 9: 26). Then He says in another place, the birds of the heavens have roosting-places, the beasts of the field have places where they can lie down, “but the Son of man has no where he may lay his head”, Matt. 8: 20. Through His poverty He had in mind that we should be enriched. I thought the scripture in Philippians 2 would help us to see the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the wealth that was His and how He came into a position where He knew poverty in order that we might be enriched. I thought of the verse in the Psalm, “he brought them forth with silver and gold; and there was not one feeble among their tribes”. How wealthy we are as we come out of Egypt. God had said to Abraham many, many years before that they would be brought forth with great property (see Gen. 15: 14). In the book of Exodus the scripture we read shows that they had more than enough to put together the dwelling of God. There is a footnote in Hebrews which says that the tabernacle in type was the expression of God’s universe of glory (note ‘d’ ch. 9: 1).

I wonder if we can feel our way into these great matters, and be affected in our spirits as we think of the condition that the Lord Jesus took up in order that we might be delivered, and delivered with wealth, to be contributors to the great divine system. I think quickening has that in mind – we are not just living, we are living wealthily. In the scripture in Exodus it was the time when Israel was holiness to Jehovah. We need to think of these things. They had to be restrained; there was more than enough. Perhaps the brethren can help us in this. It is quite a consideration, how He became poor and how He knew poverty. We come to this section here and really

it is His obedience that is in mind, but you can see the line of poverty that runs through it. Certainly not moral poverty: it is moral greatness. But He is not related to the earth or earthliness or material things – not that there is anything wrong with material things because we can have them from God and regulate them under God's hand: they are needed. We learned that today by the way the brethren contributed to clear the expenses of the meetings. But think of how Jesus felt when He was here.

N.J.H. Do you link “became poor” with His humiliation?

J.A.G. Yes. I thought so. “Being rich”, “did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God”. What wealth that was! What grace was coming out in Christ here! “Ye know the grace”, he says, “of our Lord Jesus Christ”. He brings in that verse in relation to the collection in Corinthians – “for your sakes he ... became poor”. He came into these circumstances that were very straitened, and He could not be in more straitened circumstances than on the cross.

N.J.H. We have been enriched with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies” (Eph 1: 3) and been glorified as having the Spirit. We have every enrichment, but with Christ it was humiliation.

J.A.G. Yes, that is exactly the scripture that I was thinking of. The wealth that belongs to us as having been blessed “with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ ... taken us into favour in the Beloved” (Eph 1: 6), “holy and blameless before him in love” (v.4).

R.N.H. Does the full name involve the enrichment, do you think?

J.A.G. You mean “the Lord Jesus Christ”. That is very beautiful, very affecting.

J.A.P. Even as to money it does not appear the Lord ever had any with Him; so when they had to pay the small tax it came up in the mouth of the fish.

J.A.G. Yes, and He says to the Pharisees, show me a penny, “Whose image and superscription has it?”, Luke 20: 24. I suppose

that is all part of the dependent way that the Lord went.

R.G. Is it like the merchant – he sold all whatever he had to secure the pearl (see Matt. 13: 46)?

J.A.G. Yes, that was in mind, the treasure, and then the pearl. I thought that, and the Messiah was cut off and had nothing, and everything belonged to Him. You marvel at the wonder of it, the grace of Christ that He was prepared to move in this way. I think the footnote says it is in contrast to the first Adam (note 'n', Phil 2: 7).

G.D.R. Would both the stoop into manhood and the stoop into death be included in that? The note seems to speak of His coming into manhood. We need to contemplate these things more, do you think? The emptying.

J.A.G. Yes. Think of His coming into manhood. Cast your mind back to the manger, no room in the inn. He was accustomed to these conditions from the very start.

W.M.G. It should cause us to be worshipful in spirit when we think about what the Lord has done for us, who was rich and became poor, that by His poverty we may be enriched.

J.A.G. I thought of that as I looked at the loaf and the cup. Think of the poverty of Christ!

R.B.H. The hymn says:

E'en the tomb's reproach sustained (Hymn No 13)

J.A.G. Every single thing that was necessary in order that we might be enriched. The stoop in 2 Corinthians 8 has in mind the believer, the Christian. Christ did this. He went this way in order that we might be enriched. Not only that we might be saved but that we may be wealthy persons, and the whole of heaven is at our disposal. Reference has been made to Ephesians, "who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies". He has "raised us up together, and made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus", Eph 2: 6. We go through the tabernacle system, we go through the court and the holy place and the holy of holies, and you get some idea of what the heavenlies are.

J.A.P. The Lord Jesus came into relationships as man that we might come into them. Mr. Darby says even as to sonship, if the Lord had not been Son here we could not be sons. It is the Spirit of His Son in our hearts whereby we cry, Abba, Father, (See Rom. 8: 15).

J.A.G. He has given a lead in everything, and consequently He is pre-eminent in everything. He is the only One who has been born Son.

J.N.M. Could you say something about the italics, “being rich, became poor, in order that *ye* by *his* poverty might be enriched”. Mr. Darby’s note says, ‘This “his” is emphatic: the poverty of such a One as he’. That is affecting, I thought.

J.A.G. I think it is, and it is to endear Him to our hearts and strengthen us in our links with Himself, appreciatively.

R.G. Is there something to learn from the fact that it say, “became poor”? He was not made poor, it was not any outside power that did this to impoverish Him, but it was of His own volition – “became poor”.

J.A.G. Yes, His own deliberation, this is the way that He went. A bondman’s form, He took upon Himself – “a bondman’s form”. It has often been said that there was nothing about Jesus here that would have made Him outstanding to look at. You would never have said, Oh, that is Jesus, He is distinctive. You would be able to say, that is king David, and that is someone else, but the fine flour of the oblation made Him even and there was nothing outstanding naturally about Jesus. How blessed that is! That is all part of this wonderful stoop into a bondman’s form.

N.J.P. The “became poor” is even more tremendous when you consider that He could have been rich at any point. So not only did He become impoverished but He continued in it, did He not?

J.A.G. Yes. Completely in contrast to Adam or to anything that we have naturally: “Nor yet in triumph passing” – He could have done it – “but human infancy”.

H.J.G. Never a bondman like Him. He took a bondman's form to serve men, to serve us.

J.A.G. And His language was the language of love. "I love" (see Exod 21: 5), He says, that is the Hebrew bondman, and the whole of the truth hangs upon the Hebrew bondman, hangs upon Exodus 21, the whole unfolding of the law and of the system. "I love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go free". It is a deliberate action.

How much help we need, beloved – well I can say it for myself anyway – to be more conscious of the warmth and vitality of the love of Christ.

W.M.G. Would it help us in our spirits to be affected by the greatness of the stoop that the Lord has taken? What I am thinking is, that we should have a good spirit as we think about these things.

J.A.G. Well, this is to help us in our thinking, "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus". We are to think the same way as He thought. There is a lot in Philippians about how you think, "thinking one thing" (ch. 2: 2) for instance, "ye may think the same thing ...joined in soul". All that precedes this appeal, you might say, to "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus". How much help we need to imbibe this humble spirit!

H.J.G. I know this is a bit negative, but I think we have to face, each of us, that we are affected by independent thinking and it makes a lot of trouble among the brethren, and this is the only way out of it, is it not?

J.A.G. This is the only way out of it. The two sisters, let them be of the same mind in the Lord, (see Phil 4: 2). If we move on this line we will be thinking the same thing, thinking one thing, joined in soul.

What a wonderful situation it is in a local meeting when it is so. How much liberty the Holy Spirit has to glorify Christ. We need to be regulated by the truth of God as it has been revealed.

G.D.R. We have been considering this blessed Person for nearly three days, but I think this is the top-stone, *that* Man and the way that He came, would you say?

J.A.G. I think so. I think it is wonderful to be able to sit here and drink into this spirit, “emptied himself, taking a bondman’s form, taking his place”, *his place*, “in the likeness of men; and having been found in figure as a man, humbled himself”. See how totally different that is to Adam or to any of Adam’s race – “humbled himself”.

G.D.R. The spiritual result in the soul is not only, as we have been referring to, our being enriched, but then we become resourceful. If there is a need at the present time it is to become resourceful, would you say?

J.A.G. Yes, exactly, and that is part of the wealth. You have plenty of resource, “brought them forth with silver and gold”.

G.D.R. Paul could say, “put this to my account” (Phil 1: 18). He has a cheque book and there is money in the account.

J.A.G. Exactly, and there is no lack of grace. “Of his fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace”, John 1: 16. But what a blessed contemplation this is; what can we say about the bondman’s form and then taking his place in the likeness of men? This is a divine Person come into manhood, and He is going to become obedient *even* to the death of the cross.

W.M.G. Maybe you can help us in regard to the stoop down, the way the Lord has gone, “did not esteem it was an object of rapine to be on an equality with God ... taking a bondman’s form”.

J.A.G. Well, a bondman, as you would know and all the brethren would know, is wholly and solely at the disposal of his master. He has no will of his own, he is completely at his master’s disposal any hour of the day or night, a bondman’s form. Then it says, “taking his place in the likeness of men”. Then “found in figure as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death”. This is Paul’s impression of the incarnation. That is not my thought but Mr Darby’s thought.

R.G. That is part of the becoming, is it not? I think we need, just for a minute or two, to contemplate the becoming, because it was not something that happened once. It was a series of descending steps

in love that was the becoming poor, was it not? Starting from glory's height.

J.A.G. And He learned obedience – He learned obedience through the things which He suffered. He had not known obedience – His position was to call for obedience. But here He has come into a place where He has to obey. And so at the end when He says, “not my will, but thine be done” (Luke 22: 42), how fully and perfectly that obedience shone out. Oh, what marvellous grace!

N.J.H. There are two forms referred to, “The form of God” and “a bondman’s form”. Could you help us on that?

J.A.G. Look at the difference. What can we say about the form of God? God is a Spirit. But, I suppose, a bondman’s form is the most abject form you could get.

N.J.H. There is nothing in between the two. As we have been taught, it is in taking a bondman’s form that He emptied Himself; there is nothing between the two.

J.A.G. No, exactly. That is the form that He took.

J.A.P. Could you say a word about heaven overruling men? It says that the Lord “was with the rich in His death”, Isa. 53: 9. What was your thought about that?

J.A.G. That is God, God’s regard for Him. They wanted to put Him in a pauper’s grave with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death because He had done no wrong. This, beloved, is holy ground and I think we need to have our shoes from off our feet in principle as we go over this chapter. You marvel at the poverty, “by *his poverty* we might be enriched”. He was not considering for Himself, from that point of view He was thinking of us, He was thinking of the assembly as our brother says, the pearl of great price. The pearl does not need any working on, any alterations. The pearl is an entity in its own completeness. The death of the cross, the worst death I suppose that you could get.

N.J.H. The place where He lived, Capernaum, was probably the worst place to live.

J.A.G. Yes. All related to His becoming poor.

R.G. That is interesting because He went from Nazareth to Capernaum. That is an indication of the becoming poor process, to use that word. Nazareth was an elevated town, Capernaum was right down at the seashore. He went down to Capernaum.

J.A.G. Nathanael said, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" John 1: 46.

J.R.B. The apostle says "*let* this mind be in you". He then proceeds to open this up to us. Is it that this becomes so attractive to us that it has that effect in the way we move here?

J.A.G. I think so. Look at Paul, and you can see how he exemplifies his appeal here in the way that he moves, "become as the offscouring of the world, the refuse of all", 1 Cor. 4: 13. That was because of his fidelity to Christ, his love for Christ, his devotion to Christ. How did he come to be able to write this? He is writing this from the prison, is he not? He is thinking about the incoming of Christ and this is his impression of it. And he said, No, I am not there; you have always obeyed in my presence but not I am not there with you, obey in my absence. Look at the example, look at the model. "So that, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence, but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (v.12).

C.F.D. Do you think obedience is something that needs to be developed and built up in us? With the Lord it was all there, you might say, all the time. But what you find in your own heart is it is not native to you at all, and maybe as we look around we find the same thing. This is not native to us and it really needs to be developed, which would make way for the Spirit of God, I suppose?

J.A.G. I am sure that is the case, because some things we might like to do so that we would be obedient, but when it comes across our will we are disobedient and then we need discipline. Persons here that have been in the army know that they spend a few weeks getting knocked into shape. Then you have to do what you are told or else you are in trouble. The Lord knows how to bring that about.

He has had hundreds of years of experience in this area of discipline. Mr. Stoney has a book, Discipline in the School of God.

So what you say is very important, that we learn it. The Lord said to Peter, when you were young you went wherever you wanted to go, but when you are old you are going to stretch out your hands and somebody else is going to gird you (see John 21: 18). That sort of thing becomes very testing to us.

C.F.D. So it is something to be worked out. It does not seem as if it just falls into our hands, but in that verse it says, “but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”. These features are to mark us because they become constitutionally part of us, do you think?

J.A.G. That is right. This here, as you know, is heavenly men on earth – the Philippians – and normal Christian experience as Mr.

Darby says, although we would have to humbly say it is not always the normal experience of a Christian. But the Lord *learned* obedience, He learned obedience through the things that He suffered. He was never disobedient.

R.N.H. Would wealth come in as we make room for the Spirit?

This word “let” as our brother mentioned it, seems to indicate yieldingness, yield your members instruments of righteousness, for example, (see Rom 6: 13).

J. A.G. Yes, I think so. The glad tidings brings that about, it brings about a situation where you are moved by the compassions of God and you present your body, all your members are under control. You present your body “a living sacrifice ... acceptable to God” and then you prove “what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God”, Rom 12: 1,2. The gospel affects us throughout the whole being, you might say, your whole being, all your members are under control.

H.J.G. The blind man in John 9 obeyed, and he came to know the Son of God. What greater thing could he get?

J.A.G. Yes, exactly. And the Lord almost invites him to know the Son of God. “Thou, dost thou believe on the Son of God? He

answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? And Jesus said to him, Thou hast both seen him, and he that speaks with thee is he", John 9: 35-37.

G.D.R. The complete sacrifice in Romans 12 – there is not much left of the old man, is there? The new man is there in life.

J.A.G. Yes. It is certainly a worthy consideration how the glad tidings are worked out in us. It has often been said we are taken out of Egypt but then Egypt has to get out of us.

C.F.D. It took forty years, did it not? I think sometimes we maybe expect too much too quickly, but the point is that it is a process that in principle might take forty years but a necessity in order to arrive at the finality of God's thoughts.

J.A.G. Yes, it must happen, because as you know it can be done in eleven days, never mind forty years, but how many have done that! But the Spirit would engage our hearts with Christ, engage our hearts with the Model. The older brethren used to say, Keep the Lord before you. It is nice to say, Keep the ministry before you, keep M. Taylor before you. All true, you know, but the Lord is the Man that you keep before you. Everything else is augmentary.

A.L.F. Would you mind saying something as to "might be enriched"? What do you gather from that?

J.A.G. I think it has already been said we have been enriched with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies and we have the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, to help us and to guide us into all the truth and to promote the features of sonship in our hearts so that we cry Abba, Father. We are growing in intimacy with the Father, the knowledge of God, and we have this link with the brethren. The spirit is the bond between the brethren, that is our links together are in the Spirit. What do you think?

A.L.F. So that would be being enriched in the knowledge of God, the way He has come out in this lowly Man?

J.A.G. Yes; look at the wealth that is coming out in this room this afternoon, what the brethren can say about Christ, what they can say

about this scripture.

J.R.B. The hymn to the Spirit says:

Dispenser Thou of heaven's store (Hymn 158)

How greater could we be enriched?

J.A.G. Exactly, and always in freshness and vitality. Is this right?

D.N.M. You mention freshness and vitality. I was thinking earlier, with reference to the Hebrew bondman, that it is '*distinctly*'. These things are distinct, are they not? The poverty was distinct; the richness is distinct. They are clear, there is a fulness connected with both, an emptiness and a fulness.

J.A.G. Yes, and it is manifest publicly, he goes to the door-post. He has his ear bored through with an awl and he serves him as a bondman forever.

G.D.R. As to response, what is your impression as to "the heavenly and earthly and infernal beings"?

J.A.G. I think every creature has to acknowledge "that Jesus Christ is Lord to God the Father's glory". A believer gladly does it. Think of the devil: Satan, has to acknowledge this, and all these infernal beings, they have all to acknowledge that Jesus Christ (the Man who was here and set out the truth of God, who made God known) is Lord. They have tried to be lords and so forth, but this is the Man who is Lord. When Peter is preaching to Cornelius he says, "*he* is Lord of all things", Acts 10: 36. What a fine Lord to be under!

N.J.H. He is already exalted, highly exalted, but He awaits the time when every knee will bow and tongue confess. Is that right?

J.A.G. Yes, "granted him a name, that which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus" – that is very beautiful, the name of Jesus – "every knee should bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal beings, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to God the Father's glory". He was known here as Jesus.

W.G. The subject of the three day meetings has been the title 'Jesus'. I wonder whether you could say something as to this in this

connection.

J.A.G. I think it is all part 'of the blessedness of His becoming poor.

C.F.D. You say part of the blessedness of His becoming poor'.
Take the brethren as we sit around here this afternoon, who amongst us is minded to become poor? This is something that is contrary to the flesh, is it not?

J.A.G. It is, and I suppose we can say, and it is right, and the Lord says it as He set out the legislation of the kingdom, "Blessed are the poor in spirit", Matt 5: 3.

C.F.D. "... in spirit", I was thinking of that. You have referred to it well, but it is what we become inwardly, is it not? It is like the texture of our spiritual being, becoming poor, and naturally speaking we do everything to resist that, do we not?

J.A.G. Yes, because naturally we all want to be somebody. But you cannot be better than what God has given you. Think of the blessedness of being in sonship, and all these blessings, the gift of the Spirit. What is greater?

A.R.H. We sang at the end of the meeting:

The concept and the consummation thine! (Hymn 370)

To think that God had all this in mind and the way that it was going to proceed, and at the end Christ would be exalted.

J.A.G. Yes. Is that not very wonderful? What grace began, grace shall crown. And every single thought of God has been accomplished by Jesus, and accomplished in the suffering way, the *death* of the cross. Who can enter into that, even in your spirit? You think of the awfulness, the wicked hands of men, He submits Himself to this because it is the will of God, and He has in view our enrichment. He must accomplish redemption, He has to bear the judgment of God. Think of these three hours of darkness, what endurance, what happened in those three hours? Who can say? Who will ever be able to say? All of that would help us to eat the sin-offering in a holy place.

J.A.P. Referring back to what came into your mind, as you said, at the Supper, would it be right to think, too, that the emblems themselves speak to us of lowliness? The Lord did not take something ornate but it was a simple matter. The simplicity has stayed with us for two thousand years and it is as fresh today as when He instituted it.

J.A.G. Yes. Rome and the ecclesiastical system have to dress up and have something or other to make up for their poverty, moral and spiritual poverty. There will be true believers there. But all this paraphernalia that the churches have is just an expression of their moral poverty. And Jesus was not like that, He did not need it, and the brethren do not need it. If we are going on with God we do not need these things.

J.A.P. That is part of what the Lord says about the public position in Revelation when He deals with it, “the might of her luxury” (Rev 18: 3), it says, the “*might*” of it.

J.A.G. He has to say it to Laodicea, that they say they are rich and they are grown rich and they have need of nothing (see Rev. 3: 17), but He says, you are the poor. You have no wealth Godward. And there is Jesus, and all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily, and “ye are complete in Him” – we do not need anything else – “who is the head of all principality and authority”, Col 2: 10. That is His exaltation.

H.J.G. Is it still the day of grace, “I counsel thee to buy of me”, Rev 3: 18?

J.A.G. Yes, very beautiful, “gold purified by fire”, it is the real stuff.

R.N.H. “Granted him a name”, does that bring out the beauty of His qualification? He is qualified for that Name.

J.A.G. Yes, that is very fine, because the Man is greater than the position He fills. And that is not always the case. Think of the apostle. Paul was greater morally in himself than his gift, though the gift and the man are all the same thing, but you do not let the gift regulate you. Is that the case?

C.F.D. I think you should say something about that because the gift might have more influence on us than we think, or realise, or maybe even what we want. But you say do not let the gift regulate you.

J.A.G. What I am concerned about is that the Lord may have given the person a gift, but the gift is the person and he is greater in himself than whatever gift or ability he may have. We have let gift regulate us and it has led us into no end of trouble. The family side among the brethren is the greatest side.

R.G. I was going to say that gift is for time, but what is secured through His becoming poor that we might be enriched, is for all eternity.

J.A.G. For eternity. It is for the dwelling of God.

G.D.R. The section begins with the mind, and I think you were going to say a bit more about the mind, because Paul rationalises it, does he not, and says, "*I myself* with the mind serve God's law; but with the flesh sin's law", Rom 7: 25.

J.A.G. Yes, the mind is under control. I suppose we could refer to the sons of Aaron with their high caps bound on (see Exod. 29: 9), so that you gird up the loins of your mind and think clearly and rationally, because it is innate in us that we go up instead of going down. We love to justify ourselves.

T.V. Is that why then, with the mind under control, we can have intelligence, "Which is your intelligent service", Rom. 12: 1.

J.A.G. Exactly. "Which is your intelligent service", and you can fit in to the community in that chapter. Whatever your job might be you go and you can do it.

J.A.P. What you are saying is in the history of the revival that when the brethren first met they were carrying meetings on in Lady Powerscourt's mansion, and so forth, and I think Mr. Darby and others felt the poor brethren were feeling not very free to go to such a place, and he said there ought to be a lowly place in Dublin. So

they took a small, lowly meeting room which is still there, in a district which was approachable. These men were lowly-minded men.

J.A.G. Exactly. In divine wisdom they were able to accommodate all the brethren, to make people feel they were wanted, whether they were rich or poor. That is not the thing, it is the person, it is the person that has been saved, and whether you are rich or poor you pay the same ransom money, half a shekel. It cost the Lord the same for every single person, and we need to think of that. It says in the Psalm, “he brought them forth with silver and gold; and there was not one feeble among their tribes”. Egypt was exposed and the people got the gain of the manifestations and the plagues. They had come out in haste, loins girded, staffs in their hands, sandals on their feet. Egypt was spoiled.

H.J.G. The people of Israel had to learn in the plagues, too, did they not? Do you fit that in with our learning the Man that went the way of lowliness and poverty?

J.A.G. Yes, I think so, and it fits in with the exposure of Egypt. Every day Egypt is being more exposed. Not one feeble one, not a single feeble one among the tribes. He brought them forth wealthily, so they all became contributors to the refined dwelling in the wilderness, which is the abode of His holiness, “The Sanctuary ... that thy hands have prepared”, Exod. 15: 17.

G.D.R. Is it vital – Egypt is ruined? That came from a most unlikely source. They went to Pharaoh and said, “dost thou not yet know that Egypt is ruined?” Exod. 10: 7. Well, it is a question if it has been ruined in all of us.

J.A.G. Yes. Mr Darby’s hymn says:

Rise, my soul, thy God directs thee,
Stranger hands no more impede;
Pass thou on, His hand protects thee –
Strength that has the captive freed. (Hymn 76)

G.D.R. As the brethren know, that was one of the final touches of Mr. Taylor senior. He was journeying across the country by rail; he

gave a powerful word, 'Egypt is ruined'.

T.V. Say something about the silver and the gold.

J.A.G. They spoiled the Egyptians. They borrowed from their neighbours utensils and other things because God had said four hundred odd years before to Abraham, I am going to bring them forth with great property (see Gen 15: 14). That is the knowledge of God coming to us through the glad tidings. Romans 5 opens up the whole scope of things for us so that we reign in life by the one Man, Jesus Christ (v 17).

H.J.G. "Let my son go, that he may serve me", (Exod 4: 23), and they needed all that to serve Him.

J.A.G. Exactly. To serve him wealthily, and they do.

K.N.P. Did the eating of the Passover strengthen them so that there was not a feeble one among them?

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. The contemplation of the lamb in the house, the contemplation of Philippians 2, four days in the house, then it is slaughtered. It has to die. Think of how attractive Jesus was, even naturally, but then He had to die. As our brother was saying, He was very acceptable to man. He grew up "in favour with God and men" (Luke 2: 52), but when He comes into public service He is clashing with religious people, and the opposition mostly came from the Pharisees because they were on the up line and He was on the down line. The state was such in Exodus, there were wise-hearted people, willing-hearted people, and the contribution is a heave-offering, which I suppose points to the strength of their affections. And they are making the Sanctuary. Moses has the pattern, but you make it.

W.M.G. Willingness is very much brought out in that passage, is it not?

J.A.G. Yes, that is what it is, wise-hearted, the heave-offering. You are willingly, gladly, presenting the substance for God, because you have in mind to accommodate Him according to the pattern.

W.M.G. I suppose it is from the heart really, the willingness. If you are willing you do it from the heart so the hearts are involved in it.

J.A.G. It is affection, really. So much so that he says, No, you have given me far too much; restrain the people.

N.J.H. It is after the breakdown that this is said.

J.A.G. Yes. In principle it is the result of the new covenant. He had other tables, and you have to put them in the ark where there never would be breakdown.

J.A.P. It says where the Macedonians were giving, that they first gave themselves (see 2 Cor. 8: 5). That is what you are at here, this giving in the tabernacle system. It is yourself, as saved and having the Spirit and glorifying God.

J.A.G. Yes, he says, "And not according as we had hoped, but they gave themselves first to the Lord, and to us by God's will", and that is the proper situation I would say for Christianity.

T.V. So there is no minimum size that they brought then?

J.A.G. No, the substance is put into the hands of persons who can work is according to the pattern. It never needs renewing. What they do here goes right through into Solomon's house. It does not need repair, patching up or anything like that.

R.G. Why do you think the sanctuary is emphasised so much in this section – the work of the sanctuary, the service of the sanctuary and the heave-offering of the sanctuary? This is the material that came out of Egypt, but now it is to be usable in the sanctuary. Maybe we need some help about that.

J.A.G. Well, I am sure you can say something about it. It is where God lives, it is God's abode, "The Sanctuary, Lord, that thy hands have prepared". What do you say?

R.G. Well, He became poor that we by His poverty might be enriched. The enrichment of the soul by the Spirit of God is what is involved here, is it not?

J.A.G. Yes, and what is in mind is the service of God.

R.G. That is what I wondered. You cannot bring anything in here. Certain things would have to be kept out.

J.A.G. God says to Moses, See that you make it according to the pattern which I have shown thee in the mountain (see Exod. 25: 40), and that is Christ. That is the Man of Philippians 2. That is the Man that the Spirit of God came on as a dove and abode upon Him (see John 1: 21), and God is finding His rest now amongst His people.

J.R.B. How do we become wise-hearted?

J.A.G. I think it may be some allusion to coming under the service of Christ in headship. What do you think?

J.R.B. I was thinking of the wisdom that comes down from above (see James 3: 15). That is what we have been thinking of this afternoon, is it not? It has been demonstrated in that blessed Man.

J.A.G. Yes, I think the wise-hearted would regulate our willing-heartedness. Would that be right to say?

R.G. You do not become wise without a process. There is a lot of information, you marvel at the amount of information that we have, but that is not for the sanctuary. Mr. Taylor senior, said information, then knowledge, which means that you require the understanding of the Spirit. But then there is also wisdom. "I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find the knowledge which cometh of reflection", Pro. 8: 12. That is what is suitable to the sanctuary, is it?

J.A.G. Yes, and I think that means that you are under the touch of the headship of Christ, because the wisdom is resident in Him. But what a fine situation it is here when you have to be restrained from bringing, "for the work they had was sufficient for all the work to do it, and it was too much".

N.J.H. Regulation enters into the service of God.

J.A.G. Well, that is wise-heartedness, it is headship, it is under the Lord's touch. He leads, He is the chief Musician. "In the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises", Heb 2: 12. It is an immediate

answer to the declaration of the Father's name. I think it is very wonderful the way the Lord has helped us in the service of God. So we have the Supper, we celebrate the Supper immediately, we do not wait until the end of the meeting or anything like that, because we are ready to go to heaven.

N.J.H. There is far more in the hearts of the saints than what is expressed.

J.A.G. Oh yes. And it is always being increased. You do not leave a meeting with nothing, you come in with something and the Lord gives you something else.

R.G. Do you think that we have reached the point yet when He says it is enough?

J.A.G. No, I think there will be increase right up to the rapture.

R.G. That is what I was trying to get at. If you take the history of the testimony, the Lord has blessed step by step what has been brought, the Spirit has been able to use it, to fit it into the service of the sanctuary. Maybe the Spirit is still waiting for something more to be brought, do you think, for the service of the sanctuary before the rapture.

J.A.G. Well, it could be, some further enlargement, because the tabernacle system is an entity in itself, but when you come to David there is a whole lot of other material brought in. And then Solomon incorporates the whole of it; everything is incorporated in Solomon's house, which is like the city in Revelation 21 and then the tabernacle of God is with men.

H.J.G. Moses comes into what has been done quite a lot. That is what you are saying about headship, he had the pattern. Is that what you are meaning?

J.A.G. Yes. I think the wise-hearted are persons who are under the touch of Christ. The willing-hearted are as well, but then willing-heartedness needs regulation. How willing-hearted Mary was in John 20, for instance, but she needed regulation, she needed wise-heartedness and the Lord was quick to give it to her.

J.A.P. John's gospel says that more could have been written, so the limitation is with us I take it, that we could not take it all in?

J.A.G. No, exactly, as was said in the word last night, the little power is not the Spirit's fault. Of course there is what is governmental because of the breakdown, but the more room we make for the Spirit the more power there would be.

C.F.D. You say 'the more we make way for the Spirit'. Do you think we really need to examine that a little bit and find out how we can work something increasingly into the service of God as to the Spirit because – I do not know what you find, – in the main it would appear as if there is not very much in the way of responsive word for the Spirit in the service of God. We might touch it, might have a hymn, but it seems to me it is an area that needs to be expanded.

J.A.G. Yes, well, we can speak fairly extensively about what the Spirit has done in glorifying Christ and so forth, but how much do we really know the Spirit Himself? Is that what you are thinking?

C.F.D. Yes, because the knowledge of the Person would result in a greater answer in the service of God. That was really what I was trying to get at.

J.A.G. I think John probably helps us in that. On the Lord's Day he became in the Spirit, and a door opened in heaven. Immediately he became in the Spirit. His links with the Spirit were pure and full you might say. So he is ready to receive the revelation.

G.D.R. The Spirit in type says, Give me a sip. But then the answer to that is drink. There is an abundance in that. I think we have thought of this a little. I think it is a wholesome thing if we can have two hymns, and we have proved that at home but I do not know if that is what is our brother's mind. Something of that order?

J.A.G. The service of God is under the headship of Christ. You cannot prescribe, saying we must have two hymns, or it is twenty minutes to ten we must go to the Spirit, we are a bit late. The impulse of Christ's headship is something we perhaps do not know sufficiently about.

R.G. You referred to the door being opened in chapter 4 of Revelation. That comes after what the Spirit says to the assemblies, and you come to twenty-four elders. It is not the twelve, but it is David's side you might say, the extension of what is in the service of God as you come to completion as a result of the Spirit speaking, do you think?

J.A.G. I think so, because immediately the voice says, "Come up here", and that is the rapture. And then we are looking into heaven.

As you say we have got the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures, and then the great blessed truth about what is creatorial and God's creatorial claims in chapter 4, "and for thy will they were, and they have been created" (v 11), the whole scope of things under God's hand. In chapter 5 the great concern as he was going to open the book was that nobody seemed to be able to touch it. "The lion which is of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, has overcome so as to open the book, and its seven seals" (v 5). That is the Man of Philippians 2. John saw, "... in the midst of the throne ... a Lamb standing", Rev. 5: 6. He is speaking about the lion of the tribe of Juda but what he sees is a Lamb, and that is Jesus, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow".

TORONTO

29 September 2002

Key to initials

J.R.Bellamy, Vancouver; C.F.Dadd, Plainfield; A.L.Fennell, Toronto; H.J.Glass, Toronto; J.A.Gardiner, Aberdeen; R.Gardiner, Kirkcaldy; W.M.Grosse, Edinburgh; A.R.Henry, Glasgow; N.J.Henry, Glasgow; R.B.Hill, Toronto; R.N.Hesterman, Woodstock; T.v.H. T.van der Hoek, Denton; D.N.Morrow, Toronto; J.N.Mooney, Toronto; J.A.Petersen, Plainfield; K.N.Pye, New York; N.J.Plant, Toronto; G.D.Rosenberry, San Francisco

FRIENDS OF GOD AND OF CHRIST

Robert Gardiner

James 2: 21–23; Exodus 33: 1–3 (to “...honey”), 7–11 (to “...friend”); 2 Samuel 15: 30–37; John 15: 11–15

You will have noticed, dear brethren, as we have read these scriptures together, that they speak of being friends of God and friends of Christ. This is a verse that rings true in, and rejoices the heart of, every person in this room that knows the Lord Jesus as their Saviour.

I've found a Friend, O such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him (Hymn 187)

I would just say at the outset, if one of you does not know your sins forgiven, does not know the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour, does not know what it is to fall down in repentance before Him and give Him the place of supremacy in your heart, may I say to you that the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son that cleanses us from all sin, (see 1 John 1: 7) is still as available to you now as it has been for nearly two thousand years. All that God is waiting for is that you might put your trust in Jesus and His finished work and the shedding of His precious blood:

Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
Shed on Calvary!
Shed for rebels, shed for sinners,
Shed for me. (Hymn 167)

Now, I would like to ask, can every person in this room say, 'Shed for me'? An opportunity is given at the beginning of this address for every person to – commit themselves afresh to the Lord Jesus who died for them on the cross at Calvary. As we know, the whole of Buckie and the whole of Scotland and the whole of the world stands tonight in propitiation because He “gave himself a ransom for all”. What God requires from man is that we might

accept Him as our Saviour and then be able to say “He bore the sins of many” (Heb 9: 28), and know that we are included in the ‘many’; that we have accepted Him as the One who has been the Bearer of our guilt, of our sin and sins, and that He is now the One to whom we own allegiance. Might I ask you at this time, to whom do you own allegiance? Is it to somebody outside the Lord’s domain? Is it to some person in the world? Is it to some person that only has a span of life of “threescore years and ten; and if, by reason of strength” (Psalm 90: 10), a few years more? Is that to whom your allegiance is? Your allegiance tonight is demanded that it might be to the Lord Jesus Christ! God commands “men that they shall all everywhere repent” (Acts 17: 30) and He would, I believe at this moment, command every person in this room to bow their knee to Jesus and own their full allegiance to Him, the One who is the Friend of sinners.

Well, I now speak to those that have found the Lord Jesus as their Friend. We referred in our prayer to “a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Prov. 18: 24), and those that know the Lord Jesus and have the Spirit are following closely Him whom they have known as, “a friend that sticketh closer than a brother”. Closer than a natural brother. That would be somebody that you probably have been brought up with, somebody who has the same natural father and mother, but here is a Man who “sticketh closer than a brother”; sticks so close that He will never leave you or forsake you, but no He is looking to us to display features that would justify Him calling us “His friends”. The two scriptures that we read first referred to being friends of God, and the last two to friends of Christ, and I just want for the few minutes that we are together to impress you with the features that come out in persons who are true friends of God and friends of Christ.

And so I read in James. James is a very practical man and he is drawing attention in this section to Abraham. Abraham, you will recall, was a man of whom God say, “I called him when he was alone” (Isa 51: 2) out of Ur of the Chaldeans. There he was, a solitary persons and God called him when he was alone, one man being called out. Abraham honoured God. He answered the call.

He came out of Mesopotamia, a cultured place, a place at that time that had all the wisdom of the world, you might say, resident in it. He came out of that and was given a promise, and although he never got possession of the promise, he still walked in faith with God. He came to see that to walk in faith with God meant that there had to be a lesson learned, and that lesson was that everything that is for God has to be beyond the scene of nature. The scripture that we have read speaks about him believing God at a time when you might have said, well, how can you believe God? God had said to him that He would give him an heir, and He gave him that heir in his old age. He gave him an heir, and now at this point, God says to him, "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, Isaac ... and ... offer him up for a burnt-offering on one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" Gen 22: 2. Now, is he going to continue to believe God? One of the features of a friend of God is that he believes Him. He took his son Isaac, as you will all remember, and the wood and the fire for the burnt-offering, and he bound him and he put him on the altar and he lifted his hand, with the knife in his hand: and as he lifted it, there was that voice from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!", God recognising that here was a man of faith, a man that believed God and was prepared to turn his back on everything that was of nature, even to the giving up of his son, his only son, whom he loved. Beloved brethren, what a man Abraham was, what an example he is for us, a man of faith! When James recalls this, he says, "He was called Friend of God". And it was on that basis, that he was prepared to give up for God even what was most precious to him. It says, as you will recall, "And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, and he was called Friend of God". Friends of God are going in with Christ to eternity, and all that is of nature will be left behind, and Abraham was in the light of that. He never got a possession in the land of Canaan – we know that – but "he waited for the city which has foundations of which God is the artificer and constructor", Heb 11: 10. Beloved brethren, just to believe God. It has often been said that John writes so that he might make believers out of believers and that is what this is all about tonight. To become a friend of God, you have to display

in your actions and in your walk and in your outlook that you are prepared to give up that which is even the closest to you in nature, give it up in the knowledge that God will see you through. Oh how God saw him through!

I read in Exodus 33 because there we have Moses who is spoken of as a friend of God. This was a dark time when Moses was called a friend of God. He had been up the mountain and had come down with the two tables of stone. The people had given themselves up to idolatry. It is like Christendom in our time, given up to idolatry. He had to break the tables of stone and then it says that God said to him, "Depart, go up hence, thou and the people that thou has brought up out of the land of Egypt, into the land that I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob". God is demanding now that he should move in the midst of all that had occurred, all the degradation, all the shame of a golden calf to which they had bowed down. After such a dismal display, you might say, by the children of Israel in rejecting their God, God looks upon Moses and He says, "Depart, go up hence". And what does it then say? It says that he "took the tent, and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp".

Now this is not the tabernacle, of course. He took the tent. No doubt it was Moses' own tent – we do not know – but he took the tent, it says. It was obviously a tent that would be recognised as the Tent of meeting, "took the tent ... and called it the Tent of meeting.

And it came to pass that every one who sought Jehovah went out to the Tent of meeting which was outside the camp". Now I just want to draw attention to one thing here. There were those that went with Moses outside the camp *with him* and there were those that stood in their tent door and *watched him*. When the camp has been rejected and the Tent of meeting has been taken outside the camp and set up, there are those that answer to the call of love by the Lord and they follow Him into that tent and they hear the most wonderful things. They hear of the great things of God; they hear of the truth as it is opened up; they hear what God's *current* mind is, not His mind that was – but they hear His *current* mind and that is most important – that we hear the *current* mind of God. Those that stood

in their tent doors and watched never heard that current mind, they were too far away; but there were those that followed Moses, and it says Jehovah “spoke with Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend”. I truly believe that those that went *with* Moses outside the camp to the Tent of meeting also heard the voice of Jehovah and were considered friends of God. By extension, I believe the Spirit of God would say that those who follow Moses, not only see Moses as one that is spoken to face to face as the friend of God, but also hear what is being said to Moses, as if it is being said to them and who consequently can be called the friend of God.

Beloved brethren, it behoves us always to be where Jehovah is speaking. Do not let us opt out of that! Do not let us leave it! We hear of people who think there is a greater sphere for them in the preaching of the gospel and they leave the tent. They go out to evangelise, as they say, or to be missionaries. I only caution any person that might have aspirations on these lines; keep to the Tent of meeting! It is a very remarkable expression, the Tent of meeting. It does not only mean meeting one another; it is meeting Jehovah who speaks face to face in the Tent of meeting. In Revelation the Spirit speaks to each of the assemblies. He continues to say something to each of the assemblies. If, as has been said ‘all the truth is out’, then we would be as well just settling down, but the Spirit continues to speak. Mr Taylor said in Bristol in 1946 (and I just say this because I know there are some who wonder about this) that ‘all the truth is out’. While that, of course is true – the Spirit is the truth – is there nothing fresh to come? You will remember that a year or two later we had truth as to the service of the Spirit and the response in worship to the Spirit of God. I only say that to demonstrate that “the Spirit speaks expressly” (1 Tim 4: 1) and continues to speak, but we will only hear if we are in the Tent of meeting and hear Jehovah as He speaks to His friends face to face.

I move on to the section in 2 Samuel. This is a dark day also. It is a dark day for David. Absalom his son is attracting persons after himself. It is so easy to try and be somebody, to try and attract persons after yourself. Many of us have known something of that

practically and, thank God, we saw the light and we rejected it and, may I say now, we should reject it forever. There is only one Man that is to be followed and that is Christ, David in type. Anyone that leads you to himself and not to Christ is not to be followed. Anyone that leads you to Christ, hang on to him. Well now, here is David in the time of his rejection on the one hand, and Absalom, on the other, a man whose hair was shorn once a year and weighed. What pride he had! Absalom sat down and said to the children of Judah, if you will come to me, I will solve your problems for you. He lured them away after himself. David goes up the mountain weeping as he went up. But then there is this man Hushai. There are also two priests – two men that are faithful to David and they are going to remain in Jerusalem. But then there is Hushai and he wants to be with David. David knew him. He was “David’s friend”, David says to him, “if thou passest on with me, thou wilt be a burden to me” but you will be of great value to me if you just go now and be with those that maintaining what is true in the time of my rejection where Absalom is reigning in Jerusalem.

I want to apply this tonight this way. You might say why did he send Hushai into the very area where there was opposition to David? I would like to refer to the fact that some of our brethren have had a period of time when they have had no work and we pray that they might find suitable employment. Now Hushai was given suitable employment because he was sent by David. *He was sent by David.* He did not go there because he wanted to go there. He wanted to be with David. He did not go into his secular occupation, as it were, under his own volition, satisfying his own desires. He did not do that. Beloved brother, beloved sister, if you find yourself in an occupation and you can honestly say before the Lord, I know that He sent me there, then you will find what can be carried back to David (in the type) who is in rejection at the present time. That is what Hushai did. He gave information in the right place at the right time and that is what the prayer meeting is convened for. At the prayer meeting you can convey information to God Himself from an area where God’s name is not revered nor recognised, and maybe even ridiculed and

rejected, as you work in a sphere into which the Lord has sent you.

You can then bring that which can be presented to God prayerfully with a view to there being some alleviation for the people of God until the Lord comes. David was not in rejection forever. He came back again. Our Lord is not in rejection forever. He will come back again and He is coming very, very soon. In the meantime, let us be guided by the Lord in all that we do and then, wherever we are, we will find that which we can carry to the Lord so that the testimony might be able to go through until He comes.

The last section of scripture refers to the friends of the Lord Jesus when He was here – wonderful thing to think of the Lord having these persons surrounding Him. He says, “No one has greater love than this, that one should lay down his life for his friends”. May I point out to you that this is not His laying down His life for sinners. That is not what it is. The Lord has demonstrated His love, as we said at the beginning of this meeting, admirably and more than adequately in the giving of His life at Calvary’s cross.

That is for sinners. But here He is demonstrating His love for His friends. These are persons that knew they were sinners but were no longer sinners on the basis that “their sins and their lawlessness’s I will never remember any more”, Heb 10: 17. On that basis the Lord calls them His friends. He says, “I have spoken these things to you that my joy may be in you, and your joy be full. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you ... Ye are my friends if ye practise whoever I command you”. Beloved brethren, to love one another is commanded of us. He has shown His love to His friends. If we are His friends, we will do what He says. A friend loves and that is what the disciples did. He had shown His love for them but they were showing their love for Him if they answered to His commandment that they love one another. I believe the Lord will, before He comes, have a testimony in the world that there are companies of people, no matter how small they are, who demonstrate their love for Him by loving one another. Well, He continues, “but I have called you friends, for all things which I have heard of my Father I have made known to you”. Think of the Lord

Jesus speaking to persons here that He can look upon as His friends and to whom He can say, “for all things which I have heard of my Father I have made known to you”. Beloved brethren, what an opportunity just to be in the circle of divine love as the friends of Jesus and to hear everything that exists in conversational terms, if I can use that expression carefully, between the Father and the Son. That is what the Lord delights to bring to us.

It is attractive to me. I trust it is attractive to you. To be called a friend of God and a friend of the Lord is something wonderful. It is something that demands, however, that there are evidences of our friendship. He has given every evidence of His friendship to us.

Now, it is for us to show that we are His friends by believing on Him, by going to Him outside the camp, by being in the place that He would have us testimonially until He comes in all His glory, and by practising whatever He commands us – that is that we love one another. Our privilege would then be to know something of all that the Father has (in conversation and in communion with the Son), conveyed to us by the Son and taken, therefore, into the realm of love itself that only exists in its fulness and in its perfectness between Christ and His Father. That is where love is perfect, between the Father and the Son. That is where love is at its greatest because that is where love is at home. Beloved brethren, that is what we can enter into and share because the Lord delights to share with us the great things that are existing in the heavenly realm.

May we be attracted into these things, beloved brethren, and go on from here with fresh resolve that we will demonstrate those features that constitute us friends of God and friends of the Lord Jesus. For His Name’s sake!

BUCKIE

7 September 2002

YE WHO PASS BY

Jim MacFarlane

Lamentations 1: 12; Mark 15: 22-32; Luke 10: 30-35; 7: 11-17

The prophet Jeremiah, in the passage which we have read, addresses himself to those who “pass by”. The world is full of people who pass by and it has probably always been thus. Move through any concourse and you will be among people who are passing by. They all have their preoccupations; if you were to enquire, you might discover where they were going and what was concerning them. All sorts of things may be going on around them, but these are not of importance to them; they are passers by.

Shopkeepers lay out their windows in a way that seeks to catch the attention of those who pass, in the hope that, although people may have other things on their minds, they may digress for a moment to consider the shopkeeper’s wares. Alternatively, there may be an incident in the street, which brings the ambulance or the police, and attention will be diverted in this direction. The incident will require the full attention for the ambulance man or the policeman to its detail, because this is their duty, but, for the rest of the people in the throng, it will be a matter of momentary distraction and quick return to the activities which were preoccupying them; they will continue to be passers by. Distractions such as we have imagined seem no more than momentary diversions from the real issues of the time, but even they are temporary. Life moves on, as people say, and tomorrow’s all-absorbing issue will be different from today’s and last year’s completely forgotten. For the most part, people are passers by with short-term preoccupations which have not lasting significance.

If you address those who pass by in the words used by the prophet, I think that you are unlikely to gain much attention. He says, “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?” The answer is probably, ‘Yes, it is nothing to us’, particularly in view of what follows this question from the prophet. “Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, whom Jehovah

hath afflicted in the day of his fierce anger". There is no record of any reaction on the part of Jeremiah's hearers but his question and the appeal which follows it are arresting. They have been preserved to us in these memorable lines of Holy Scripture and they have an enduring force and significance. They refer in a prophetic way to the sorrow which belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ and this accounts for their continuing significance. I would like to be able to convince everyone on whose ears these words of the prophet fall that they can no longer proceed as passers by but that they must turn aside and give attention to the words spoken by the prophet. This is not some minor human diversion but an account of the sufferings of One who was dealing with God. "See if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, whom Jehovah hath afflicted in the day of his fierce anger". A call to consider such extremity of sorrow, because of the way in which the wrath of God was being endured, compels attention.

The passage which we read in Mark's gospel gives the fulfilment of the verse in Lamentations. I chose to read in Mark because he tells us in verse 29, "they who passed by reviled him".

Jesus here was the sufferer who is represented in Lamentations and in the midst of what He was enduring there are passers by "who reviled him, shaking their heads, and saying, Aha, thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in these days, save thyself and descend from the cross". No doubt some would be regular passers by at this spot and would know it as a place of execution of criminals. Two robbers were crucified with Jesus and seemed to attract no comment. Notice was taken of Jesus, however; His presence there was not a matter of transient indifference to passers by. Like all passers by, they doubtless had objectives which had nothing to do with what was happening at this crucifixion scene but when it was presented to them they found that it compelled a response. Whether they understood it or not, nothing compared in significance with what was proceeding here at the cross. This was the event that is described in the epistle to the Hebrews as what happened "once in the consummation of the ages". The response was to revile Him,

shaking the head. The word goes on to say that “in like manner, the chief priests also, with the scribes, mocking with one another, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save”. However indifferently they may have approached the scene, the passers by found themselves aligned with those whose furious hatred had demanded the crucifixion of Jesus. My desire is that as the word comes in the preaching of the glad tidings, none would attempt to take the position which only recognises the historical and cultural impact of Christianity. The immensity of what took place at the cross is such that no one can take a position of detached, objective indifference.

The section which we have read in Mark’s gospel refers to Jesus’ first three hours on the cross, when the full extent of the wickedness of man was exposed. Even in their mockery, the chief priests and scribes bore testimony to His having saved others and the work which He would accomplish between the sixth hour and the ninth hour would secure the moral basis for salvation. In verse 33, Mark tells us “when the sixth hour was come, there came darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour”. During that period, even passers by would be arrested. They would be prevented from pursuit of their objectives by the darkness: compelled, in complete ignorance, to acknowledge the immensity of what Jesus was undertaking on the cross. Jesus alone knew what passed during these three hours, as he endured the judgment of God in respect of sin. Another gospel writer refers to the piercing of His side, after He had died, and His response to this final act of human brutality in the shedding of His blood, which laid the basis for remission of sins.

Consequently, the word in the preaching of the glad tidings seeks not only to arrest passers by as to the incomparable greatness of what proceeded on the cross but also to engage them with the significance which it has for them. God is favourably disposed towards you because of the greatness and completeness of what was accomplished by Jesus and the remission of sins can be embraced by you simply by the exercise of faith in Him.

My desire is that you would have the sense of being at the focus of the interest of heaven and it is for that reason that I read in

Luke's gospel. Chronologically, it comes before the crucifixion and it is a parable, but what it does make very clear is the attitude of God.

It refers to two passers by, one a priest and the other a Levite, who encountered a man who had been set upon by robbers. I suppose that, in those days, the best prospect of having the restoring kindness of God communicated to this man lay in an encounter with a priest. He had a prominent part in a system which had been set up by God to give man the opportunity to establish his righteousness before God by his own works. The completely ineffectual response of the priest, as one of the highest representatives of this system, bears testimony to the entire failure of man under these arrangements, "and in like manner also a Levite, being at the spot, came and looked at him and passed on on the opposite side". The Levite was provided to give support to the priest but is found no more effective. Theirs was only the superficial historical momentum of a system whose value was in what it represented of all that would be established in Christ. Neither had the capacity to meet the needs of a man in a half-dead state; neither was capable of anything more than passing on. Someone then arrived who was different, "But a certain Samaritan journeying came to him". This was not one who could only pass on but rather one who was journeying, moving with purpose, whose destination involved all that is implied in "the consummation of the ages". The Samaritan was representative of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. You might imagine that, with a destination which was to involve so much, he would have had less time than the two who preceded him to deal with someone who had fallen among thieves but he had both the capacity and desire to turn aside and provide all that this man needed. If you feel that you have needs which cannot be met by the best human prospects, I would desire to point you to Jesus, the One who is symbolised by this distinguished Samaritan; He will not simply observe your condition and pass on. He is moved with compassion towards you and His resources are rich. The Samaritan did not produce a first aid box which might supply minimum necessities. He "came up to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine". These are rich things and they are poured in; there is no indication of limitation here, "and

having put him on his own beast, took him to the inn and took care of him". There is a sense of wealth with this man to meet immediate circumstances and a wealth which can be conveyed to the innkeeper in order to secure the future. He took him to the inn and he had the kind of currency which was acceptable to the innkeeper. Would oil and wine be the most suitable things to offer to the innkeeper?

These were the resources which met the needs of the man in the extremity of his half-dead state. The means by which he would be sustained in the inn were different and such was the wealth of the Samaritan, that he was able to provide these too. The two denarii which he gave to the innkeeper and his promise to him were to ensure that the man was fully set up until his return. Those who accept that their sins have been removed by the work of Christ on the cross cannot allow their lives to be motivated by principles whose moral character is sinful and the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey order to provide the energy for life. He will be here until the Samaritan returns.

My mind turned to the incident in chapter 7 because of the way in which the Lord Jesus encountered a situation of extremity and refused to be a passer by. This is not a parable; it is the historical account of the direct intervention of the Lord Jesus. The widow and the crowd which went with her were understandably preoccupied with the severe pressure under which they found themselves and, in the circumstances, it might seem difficult to reproach them for passing by without any recognition of Jesus, but He would not allow them to be passers by and He would not Himself be a passer by. He did not wait to be consulted and intervened directly. "And the Lord, seeing her, was moved with compassion for her, and said to her, Weep not". You might wonder at such an exhortation to someone who had just lost her son, she herself a widow, but He did it as moved with compassion, just as the Samaritan was, and the capacity of the Lord Jesus to move effectively in support of His exhortation became so powerfully evident, "and coming up he touched the bier, and the bearers stopped". How close He came; He did not give an instruction from a distance but moved so close as to be able to touch

the bier and in a manner that made the bearers stop. What authority His manner must have conveyed and its final expression is in His word to the youth and its immediate life-giving effect. In chapter 10 of Luke's gospel the man was in a half-dead state and the skill of the Samaritan was sufficient to restore him. You may feel that your case is so extreme that it is beyond healing. It can be no more extreme than what is represented in the widow's son and my desire is that you would have the sense of Jesus' willingness to come near to you, because He is moved with compassion towards you, and to restore life to you by His power. Accept it by faith; blessing came in Luke 7 because the service of the One who would not be a passer by was accepted.

The man in Luke 10 was brought into the full, practically sustaining wealth of the system of which Christ is head and which is ministered by the Holy Spirit here. A result further to the raising of the widow's son in chapter 7 is that "fear seized on all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet has been raised up amongst us; and God has visited his people". Life was restored to an individual and a worshipping company emerged. Faith in Christ not only guarantees your eternal security and your present blessing but God's desire is that, as in the path of faith, you should be brought into an arrangement where there is response to Him. At the beginning of the chapter it says, "many of his disciples and a great crowd went with him". A little further on there is reference to the very considerable crowd of the city with the woman. May you find yourself transferred from the crowd which accompanied the woman, with the sense of hopelessness which belonged to it, to the company which moved with Christ. That is a very great blessing and may it be the portion of every one of us.

BO'NESS

OUR ANCHOR

Acts 37: 39-44; Hebrews 6: 17-20

Their anchors they cast in the depths of the ocean,
They hoisted the foresail and made for the strand,
And all, notwithstanding the water's commotion,
Both Paul and those with him came safely to land.

How often, our props and expedients removing,
God gives us to trust Him and carries us through!
So let us rely on His faithfulness, proving
What He in His infinite wisdom can do.

For human resources how often we hanker!
But let us henceforward on Jesus depend:
The hope set before us in Him is our anchor –
In Him our Forerunner, Redeemer and Friend.

For even eternity's numberless ages
Could never completely His glories unfold:
No matter how fiercely the hurricane rages,
Secure in our Saviour our anchor will hold!

G.H.Brown

MELBOURNE