

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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“TRUTH IN THE INWARD PARTS”

Psalm 51: 6 (to ...inward parts); Acts 4: 32, 33; Luke 6: 46-48; Romans 6: 17-23; Philippians 1: 27- 2: 11

C.K.R. In suggesting these scriptures I feel that it is imperative that the truth reaches our inward parts. As gathering for an occasion like this what a favour it is to be gathered with a company of believers to look into the truth of God and the truth in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. I trust we all desire to know more of these things. I was arrested by this desire and statement of David's where he says, "Behold, thou wilt have truth in the inward parts". The footnote says, 'desirest', 'takest delight in', the truth in the inward parts. We ought, every one of us as we go in for the things of God, to be deepening and being more formed by them.

I read the verse in Acts 4 because of the reference "the heart and soul of the multitude ... were one". I know that there are a lot of aspects of the truth at the very commencement of the dispensation that cannot be recovered because of failure and breakdown: therefore I would not seek to indicate that that will transpire again.

But on the other hand I do consider that there are certain features, and I would suggest to the brethren that it is quite significant that the heart and soul of the multitude were as one. This was just before the attacks of the enemy in chapter 5. The enemy sets out to spoil and attack the affections of those who have been bound together as a result of the truth of the gospel and the ministry in the power of the Spirit that brought together a multitude of whom it could be said that the heart and soul were as one. The heart and soul, I would suggest, is the inwards.

In Luke 6 we are going to go deep. I want us to enquire together, and in this to go deep together in our enquiry, so that we begin to get below the surface and begin to test ourselves as to our foundation in the truths of God. Is it rock solid? Is my understanding, my conviction, my belief and my enjoyment of the great truths of Christianity such that no matter what attack comes, I know that my foundation is upon the rock? It is absolutely essential

that this is the case because we never know what is round the corner in any aspect of our lives.

The teaching in Romans 6 is obedience from the heart, and in Philippians 2 it is joined in soul. That is why I read these two portions that we might begin to see that in the Roman teaching, as you get towards the second half of Romans 6 and into Romans 7 and 8 the apostle is turning the truth inwards, to the believer's inwards, in order that we might get clear of the sin system to reach the great truths of eternal life. In Philippians I think it is beautiful, "joined in soul". The company was joined in soul in regard to the gospel in chapter 1, and in chapter 2 we see the beautiful spirit that was amongst them, and that seems to find a lever for Paul to bring out in the last portion of Philippians 2 that we read, the beautiful moral glories of the Lord Jesus in the emptying Himself and humbling Himself, but closing with His exaltation looking on to His universal dominion. Would that be profitable?

E.C.B. I am sure it would, and I venture to think necessary, but there is a distinction between "truth" in Psalm 51 and 'the truth' as we use that expression.

C.K.R. I think "truth in the inward parts" is that state of transparency before God whereby the word of God has reached and found a lodging place so that we are ready to move forward.

E.C.B. I think that, but I think "truth in the inward parts" implies that every moral question has been resolved according to God and that provides a basis for the reception of 'the truth' as we speak of it.

C.K.R. And then what follows is the acceptance of the service of the Holy Spirit as the 'the truth', He brings forward what has been revealed by God Himself.

E.C.B. There is a certain parallel between the way truth is spoken of in Psalm 51 and the way righteousness is spoken about in Romans, is there not?

C.K.R. It is these features that show that the soul of David is recovering from his failure but grasping the greatness of what God

has for him, by bringing him on to a platform of righteousness.

E.C.B. David himself had had to face the issue of duplicity, had he not? Is that not something which the Spirit is working at in us all, all the time?

C.K.R. Quite so, because the model we have before us is the Lord Jesus who was "Altogether that which I also say to you", John 8: 25. The perfect Man in every aspect, you might say the opening up of the burnt-offering where everything matched perfectly. There was His obedience and His wonderful demonstration that He brought in Manhood down here, and in Manhood glorified God in the scene where Man had dishonoured God.

R.D.P. Does this have to do with the motives? He proceeded with an outward line of truth; he was king and so on, but underneath there were things working which were in the dark. Is it essential that that is recognised before God first, that that is alien to what God is doing?

C.K.R. I think so, so that when the conscience and the inward part of the believer is reached it is a very great triumph for God. The power and word of God reaches into these parts and exposes us to ourselves according to the first order and we have to get clear of our history. By faith God gives us the Person and work of Jesus in order to give us stability and understanding of the greatness of what He has in mind for us.

M.M. Was the prophetic word used to bring about this deepening in Psalm 51?

C.K.R. I think the word of God, as we put ourselves in relation to it, will reach inward. Hebrews 4 tells us, "For the word of God is living and operative, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (v 12), causing us to see things as they truly are in the divine presence. You feel the need for this more and more, to understand and to see that God wants to fill our affections with Christ. The objective, the divine end, is that Christ may dwell through faith in a heart that is dedicated in every way to Him.

D.J.H. So they gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It seems as though that was the great matter which was before them and holding them at this time.

C.K.R. I wanted to take the first two scriptures alongside each other as carrying particularly the thought of truth in the inward parts as we go forward to embrace what is involved in that. I wondered whether there would be some great stimulation to see that at the beginning of the dispensation there was a tremendous testimony to the fact that God had operated in the hearts and souls of men, women and children and brought them on to the glory of the light of Christianity – their whole beings were affected, it was not just knowledge.

D.J.H. So as giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus it was not just a historical fact, but it was because of what it affected inwardly in them.

C.K.R. The touch that we would like for all our hearts is that we believe in a living Christ.

K.M. I wondered whether the woman in John 4 would help us. She said, “Come, see a man who told me all things I had ever done: is not he the Christ?” (v 29), so that the inward can help the teaching.

C.K.R. I think it will be that way with us. That particular dear soul, her affections had been all array, yet she turns and comes in touch with the One who is the administrator of divine blessing and the gift and blessing of a power within her that was going to spring up into eternal life. God is showing and teaching her through the Lord Jesus that it is the power of the indwelling Spirit.

D.A.B. The first impact of the first preaching of the gospel was on the heart, “they were pricked in heart”, (Acts 2: 37), and then baptism follows, not just as an outward thing, but something very much of the outward expression of an inward conviction. I was thinking of something Mr. Renton said about these chapters that, speaking militarily, the gospel established a very firm bridge-head before the counter-attack could be marshalled against it, and I had thought of

that in terms of the numbers and the beginning of the geographical spread of the gospel. I think it is very important to see that that was a deeply rooted bridgehead in a moral condition among the multitude.

C.K.R. There is always a danger that you take your bearings from breakdown, but let us take our bearings from what God has done, and that bearing is that we come to enjoy that such things are possible for believers, to be characteristically in the victory of Christ and of the resurrection and of what God has secured in the Man out of death. We can glory in what God has secured in the hearts and souls of people such as ourselves.

R.W.F. Is that why the verse in the Psalm starts, “*thou* wilt have truth in the inward parts”? It is not exactly a demand on God’s part, but He helps us to that end. The commencement is with God.

C.K.R. The divine pleasure is in that. David is not saying, ‘help me God’, but he has some light in His soul of what God is saying – “thou wilt have truth in the inward parts”.

D.J.R. Is this part of God securing worshippers? David says this, but a little later he says, “Lord, open my lips” (v 15), like the woman in John 4. She had to face it but then she is brought in to a worshipper.

C.K.R. I think we can all test ourselves, what has reached my affection? What has reached my inwards? Just sitting enquiring together, and gathering our thoughts together, where am I? I thought it would be something to contemplate for a moment – what must Jerusalem have been like with the heart and soul of the multitude of those that had believed being one? What a remarkable matter, not just one in a position, but oneness in affection and inward bearing and feeling. I feel that if we could grasp this more it would be a great bulwark against the attack of the enemy, to see that the bridgehead is established and then the enemy attacks. But God has secured the victory first. Let us never forget that. We are on the winning side.

Christ has won the victory in a raised Christ and God will win that victory in the resurrection of the saints.

D.E.R. If the truth is in our inward parts rather than just the intellect, would it work out then in practice in our walk here?

C.K.R. That is what I want to come to as we move on. It has to be that. How could it be anything else? If Christianity is anything – I know it has been said before – it must be in some testimony. It is not just a theory. We must be able as believers to distinguish in ourselves the life which is in Christ Jesus, and the glory of what God has secured and brought us into. This is the only way that victory is going to be achieved by the believer in the world.

H.A.H. So the great lever in Romans 6 is the fact that the Lord Jesus was raised by the glory of the Father. I was impressed by what you said that if you go through that chapter you get the thought of knowledge, but He goes deep because where we read in that second part it is a matter of yielding, and that is a matter of affection.

C.K.R. If we can carry that remark forward in our considerations, we might come to that.

E.C.B. John 4 has been drawn attention to and linking with what has been said, what a testimony that woman became having truth in the inward parts!

C.K.R. Exactly. We can pause for a moment – we can talk but the question is how am I getting on and how is the truth reaching my affections and my inwards? We are not a debating society. If the truth of God in readings, and I say this carefully, tends to degenerate into just debating over an exchange of information, the enemy will get the advantage. We *have* to pray and desire inward reception of the truth because that is what will ensure that God will secure the triumph in you and me. He will secure the triumph in the saints we know that, but surely every one of us here would like it to be secured in us now.

E.C.B. So, in Acts 4, “the heart and soul of the multitude ... were one” is based on reference to the activity of divine Persons. Is it not significant that it refers to, “thy holy servant Jesus” (v 30) and “the Holy Spirit” (v 31)?

C.K.R. There is so much in these early chapters of the Acts to go over and consider just what God had secured in these souls, many of whom were in the environment where just earlier the Lord Jesus had been crucified. Men had dishonoured God's beloved Son to the extent, as we read in Philippians 2, of "the death of the cross" and yet God is now answering that with great power and victory by bringing the commencement of a glorious dispensation and time of the Spirit and by giving victory to three thousand souls. And more than that, "the heart and soul of the multitude of those that had believed were one". What a statement that is! This is in a short period of time. Is that not quite invigorating? Young believers, think of what this must have meant! What was binding thousands of souls together was their relation to a risen and glorified Christ by the gift and power of the Holy Spirit. The testimony and this way of life was entirely separate from the world and dedicated to Jesus.

D.J.H. Is there a particular danger in our day? It follows on to say, "not one said that anything of what he possessed was his own", that is that material things had lost their value to them. I know they were put together here so they shared them, but the material things were not governing them. In a day of materialism and relative prosperity there is a particular danger, is there, of losing sight of this inward side of things? It was that side which was attacked in the next chapter, the material possessions.

C.K.R. I think that is a necessary warning to us all because we all know the dangers. We have a relentless foe as we will see and the storms are ready to come against the house. I thought that as we carry that with us in our thoughts we could look at the person who built the house in Luke 6. The Lord is saying to this man, "why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say? Every one that comes to me, and hears my words and does them, I will shew you to whom he is like. He is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep, and laid a foundation on the rock". This expression, "dug and went deep" is unique to Luke. It takes time. He built the house, he found the foundation, it is a solid foundation, it was there upon the rock.

D.A.B. Does the way the gospel is presented in the early chapter of the Acts very much bear on the nature of this rock? I was thinking for example in chapter 4 that "*He* is the stone which has been set at nought by you the builders, which is become the corner stone. And salvation is in *none other*". It was not as if this multitude had a lot of little rocks inside themselves, but they had all learnt to rest their faith and thus their unity on something that was outside themselves and was in Christ. Their unity was not just that they happened to have a common human reaction to the presentation of something wonderful and interesting, but there was something divinely wrought by the same Spirit in the relation to the same glorious Man.

C.K.R. I think these are helpful truths to go over and just to let them cause exercise. As you say, "salvation is in none other". The basis for redemption is on no other basis than the precious blood of Jesus. All these matters come in relation to the rock. I think it is Christ's Person, but it is also His work and the glory of everything that relates to Him. It is not just a doctrine, it is not just an outline of faith, but you have dug deep and you have found a solid foundation on the rock. I think this is quite an exercise with us, because we want every soul to be preserved against every attack of the enemy in order that there be character in our Christianity that meets with divine approval and testimony.

R.D.P. This is the company, "the heart and soul of the multitude". I was thinking of the Thessalonians, they were very much like this. The letters to them were not marked by a great deal of doctrine although there was teaching there. I wondered when teaching comes in, or a doctrine comes in, whether we need to be very careful because the way that I hold doctrine might become divisive. If I parade some knowledge of doctrine, individually it might be very interesting, but do you think this matter of the company, of carrying the company and being together as a company, is important?

C.K.R. I think very much so. That is why I referred in prayer to the value of enquiry in the temple collectively in order to bring out clearly what the truth is. This for the gain and enjoyment of every one.

K.M. It says, "If any one desire to practise his will, he shall know concerning the doctrine" – the doctrine is very precious. It is not just given to anybody, but we need to have a desire to practise His will.

C.K.R. I just feel that there would be help as we enquire together in order that our affections and our inwards are reached into the greatness of what God wants to do in us. God has more to do in us than by us. He has given His Son first, and then He has given His Spirit to us, and these are wonderful matters to contemplate, but how am I getting on? How is every one of us getting on in these things?

P.M. Did you have some thought as to the three matters that are referred to in verse 47, "comes to me ... hears my words and does them"? Is there a moral order in that?

C.K.R. I think that links with what I was thinking of in Romans 6. "Every one that comes to me", there is attraction in that. You have found something in the Lord Jesus, the glorious Person who you desire to come to. Then, "hears my words" is you understand that there is a living communication and understanding in what you are desiring to do to shape your life. Then "hears my words, and does them", brings them into practice. There is a sequence there.

P.M. I was wondering if the One who wins my affections and becomes my Lord has authority in His words and it is only as He has that that the authority has any effect in my soul?

C.K.R. I think it is that way and that this is what we desire to develop and to encourage in one another, "I will shew you to whom he is like". The Lord has great pleasure in bringing out the contrast. I want to keep the positive side before us – the storms will come, but I think we want to dig deep, and go deep together.

V E.W. Would this man have been a skilled workman? I wondered if he was a man that worked with God. It says of Jonathan, "for he has wrought with God this day", 1 Sam. 14: 45.

C.K.R. That is helpful. I think this person has started on his Christian life and experience and he is in touch with the Lord Jesus and then the Lord likens him to one who dug and was going deep.

E.O.P.M. This is a man who is building a house. He is not just digging a hole for the sake of digging a hole. He was building a house.

C.K.R. I think he has an objective in view in that sense. The house generally speaks of shelter, but also of atmosphere and enjoyment in the inside. Think of Saul in Damascus and the three days and three nights going deep. We need real spiritual exercise in divine things.

J.W. Having begun in this way we are to continue in it. What has been referred to – the Lord says, “Every one that comes to me”, not *has* come, but “comes”, it is to be a continuous thing.

C.K.R. I did not read it, but I was thinking that if you go on to chapter 8 it is those that hear the words of the Lord and do them that become his brethren in Luke’s gospel. These features are being brought out and I am sure that every one of us would desire to be among such a company that meets with divine approval and of such the Lord can say, “My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God and do it”, Luke 8: 21.

E.C.B. This man almost starts at the point that he hopes to arrive at, “Every one that comes to me”, must be the foundation. It bears on the way the gospel is preached.

C.K.R. I think that; I think it is very important that all of the brothers who seek to serve in the preaching realise the responsibility of preaching and also of the importance of presenting Christ in the preaching.

R.W.F. Christ is the One who Himself went deep, deeper than any other. That is to affect us and move us in the exercise you have in mind for us.

C.K.R. I think this is all so necessary that we aim to present the gospel in power. It is God’s power, Paul says that – “For I am not ashamed of the glad tidings; for it is God’s power to salvation”, Rom 1: 16. This is part of this, “salvation is in none other”, Acts 4: 12. The man dug and went deep. In one sense in every gospel

preaching we ought to be going deep. Mr. Darby said we should aim at the conscience and exalt Christ.

P.W. Can you say what it is we are digging through to reach the rock?

C.K.R. That is an interesting enquiry. I think you are digging through everything that is of the first order, everything of self, everything that characterises you and would prevent you getting to Christ. We do not come to Christ easily. I think we have to be careful and see that we are compelled by divine grace. We are brought and presented but we are required to overcome and to come vitally to a firm link with the Lord Jesus, because the danger is always for a surface link. That is what the second man shows.

P.W. I was thinking earlier of the word in the Proverbs, “Keep thy heart more than anything that is guarded” (4: 23). It is a similar thought, to protect yourselves from things that could find a lodging-place with us. We want to get through to something solid which we can only find in Christ.

C.K.R. Speaking simply, the foundation here is not on the surface. The Lord brings it out and seems to show it very much as a process that the man dug and went deep and he laid a foundation on the rock. That is an absolute statement. Then the test comes, “but could not shake it, for it had been founded on the rock”. I would like to be like that, I would like to be sure in myself that I am like that.

We all know that we never know what test is round the corner, you never know what is in front of you, be it circumstantially, or matters in your life, at work, children at school, younger people growing up – you never know what you are going to be faced with. Is your foundation on the rock, have you proved and come to Christ?

On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

These things are very wonderful. I am glad the preaching has been brought up, because it is good to see a good number of younger brothers taking up the service of the preaching – take it up, take it up before the Lord, but do not take it up lightly. You are presenting the

most wonderful news and glorious truths of God. You can be the means of changing the life of a person, as the gospel reaches into the hearts and souls. It has to reach the inwards.

P.M. Could you help us as to what we mean by digging? How do you dig?

C.K.R. Can we carry that into Romans 6? I think that Paul is doing some digging in the teaching of Romans and particularly through the teaching of Romans 6, 7 and 8. It has been said that is only a Ruth or a Mary of Magdala that can really enter into Romans 6. I found that an interesting quotation (Mr. Coates). I think Ruth is shown as an individual, she becomes wrapped up with Boaz. Boaz becomes a resource to her and her affections and her life, more than ever as her exercises go on, she becomes firmly attached to Boaz and Boaz becomes attached to her. Mary of Magdala in John 20, "they have taken away my Lord" (v 13). Christ was everything to her and from that point of view I think she goes forward.

E.C.B. I think that is very good and in John 20, just to hear Jesus speak to you by your Christian name would show that you have arrived at something.

C.K.R. I think our own links with the Lord Jesus are so necessary, and so precious, and so personal.

D.A.B. Paul is very personal about his own digging in Philippians where he had come to it, having seen the Lord, not before, that he had been building on the ground, "but what things were gain to me these I counted, on account of Christ, loss. But surely I count also all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (3: 7,8). He had learnt then that, fine though these things had appeared to be, they were not rock and he levers them out and disposes of them.

C.K.R. That is helpful, but he arrives at "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord".

D.A.B. That is what Mary had arrived at, "they have taken away my Lord". We often say Mary was not very advanced, but she

seems up with Paul there!

C.K.R. I think we would all like to be a bit more like Mary. It is that sincerity of affection. This is so important but God has pleasure in having truth in the inward parts.

D.A.B. You have only to read the words of Jesus, or indeed to hear them, maybe in the gospel or in your own communion, to know that His voice always has this effect, or is calculated to. I may resist, but there is always this searching element to the voice of Jesus, and where it is yielded to something of the same character is discovered.

C.K.R. So that, “comes to me, and hears my words”. Think what has come out in Romans: you have come to the One indeed “whom God set forth a mercy-seat, through faith in his blood” (Rom. 3: 25), you have come to the One who has been delivered for our offences, and raised for our justification; you have come to the One in Romans 5, “our Lord Jesus Christ” (v 1) – all the blessings which we have come into. This is the One we have come to, this is the One we have been drawn to. This is the One who through the teaching and the word that has been brought out becomes real to you. The questions start in chapter 6, and then Paul turns the truth rightfully inward, following on from baptism which is an outward expression.

As we know it, and it affects our way of life, we come to it that we are obeying from the heart.

D.E.B. What would you say about “having got your freedom from sin”?

C.K.R. I thought of that verse as going deep. That is having got your “freedom from sin”, “bondmen to God”, and the end “eternal life”. You have some sense of the spiritual vigour of the writer here.

“For sin shall not have dominion over *you*, for ye are not under law but under grace” (v 14).

D.E.B. I do not know that it is something that any of us would like to claim, but now you have introduced a new expression which the brethren use, and I do not think is in scripture – what do you say about ‘the sin system’?

C.K.R. I think it is everything that is of the first order. Sin is the virus which bedevilled the race, and it is effective in every aspect and it has become a system in the sense of an organised affecting of people's minds, beings, lives and every other aspect. Sin has infiltrated and so much characterised fallen man. But "having got your freedom" there is something else which has come into your inwards and affections that you desire to walk in newness of life, but also to obey your heart and to bring into demonstration in the world where Christ has been rejected, a different way of life.

E.C.B. Is that not what is involved in digging? There has been a lot said amongst us as if the digging is a process of introspection, but actually it is a process of displacement.

C.K.R. It is a process of going more and more into things which would stand athwart the full liberty of Christianity.

E.C.B. Reference has been made to the 'expulsive power of a new affection'. Is that not the digging?

C.K.R. Absolutely. But what do we know about it?

E.C.B. You referred to Romans 8. Have we arrived at the end of Romans 8, "who shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v 39)?

C.K.R. And despite all the things that come up, your foundation is on a rock. You can go through the whole period from the middle of Romans 6, through chapters 7 and 8 right to the very end, and then there is a real touch of both stability and victory in the believer.

D.A.B. You agreed to carry forward what has been said about this, that yielding is a matter of affection. The sin system will never yield and it has no affection, so we yield ourselves. Thinking again of Mary of Magdala, she was beset and if it did not catch her one way it would catch her another – the seven demons had her hemmed in – but she found her life and her deliverance in yielding herself to that new affection in Christ.

C.K.R. May every one of us yield today, may every one of us yield to this line of truth in order to reach stability. We all sometimes feel

apprehensive as to what is coming round the corner. What test is going to come next? What am I going to be up against? Whatever it may be, the enemy is a relentless foe against the believer. Let us understand that. We have an enemy that is relentless and wants our destruction, but there is a divine system centring in a glorious Man, and in the power of the Holy Spirit here and in truth which comes out in scripture confirm you and stabilise you in order to come every influence is you have a solid foundation.

D.J.H. Is it right to say that the digging continues. There is the arriving at the solid foundation, but in these tests that you speak of something fresh comes up and I find that there is something in me that answers to it and that has to go. In a sense the digging continues does it?

C.K.R. I think it does. I think it is a healthy exercise if we continue to dig, continue to find, because every time, in that sense, you are invigorated and stimulated by finding the foundation. You are maintaining your links with the Lord Jesus in a deep way.

B.H.C. I was thinking of the Lord's appeal in Revelation, "Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking" (3: 20), the result of that is that He would come in and sup with us. Is there something gained by yielding to Christ?

C.K.R. The end of it, "bondmen to God ... fruit unto holiness" and the end "eternal life". There is an end to be reached and Paul is exercising these Roman believers who have embraced the gospel.

He is now in the teaching of the gospel and seeking the living expression of the truth of the gospel in the individual to bring them through to see that God has as an end in view and eternal life is in view from that point. Perhaps eternal life is what is enjoyed in the house.

E.O.P.M. It has always helped me in my exercises to see that sometimes in the exercise of digging (I suppose in a sense that is Romans 7), you may lose sight of the objective.

C.K.R. I think that is very important. You may get so absorbed as to it, becoming introspective, that you may lose sight of the Deliverer.

The Lord Jesus is the Deliverer. He is our Deliverer from the coming wrath, but He is also our Deliverer from all that is within ourselves.

E.O.P.M. Once you have arrived at that you may need to go on digging because of a fresh exercise, but you never lose sight of the stability in the rock.

C.K.R. I think that is very important and very necessary.

A.McS. I wonder whether the two altars at the end of Exodus 20 might help us as to this.

C.K.R. The altar of earth and the altar of stone?

A.McS. I wondered whether if a person was converted on their death bed that perhaps the altar of earth might be enough, but if a person is kept alive and has to go on in the testimony he would really need the altar of stone, which I suppose relates to another Man in another place, which is brought in at the beginning of this chapter.

The answer to that is the spirit of the Hebrew bondman, do you think?

C.K.R. That is all helpful to see that you have this dedication to be here for the divine will. Bondmanship was referred to here, “become bondmen to God”, therefore that becomes a way of living.

A.McS. We begin with Christ and have Christ before us and work out our exercises from that standpoint.

C.K.R. That is the only real way to work out your exercises. If you work them out through your own failure or your own worries you will be grovelling around. The important thing is to get a clear view of Christ. God is building a heavenly world round Jesus. As has often been pointed out, God created the first world and put man in it, but now He has put a second man in heaven and building a world around Him.

E.C. At the end of verse 19 it says, “yield your members instruments of righteousness to God”. What would you say about that?

C.K.R. You are now yielding your members, every aspect of your being, your eyes, arms, legs, feet, your movements, every member of the body you are yielding to righteousness, unto holiness. This would reach through to the priestly side because you also have your fruit unto holiness. Righteousness is not an end in itself it is in view of something.

E.C. As you follow the note through to Romans 1 the word holiness means 'the practical effect produced, the character in activity'. Is that not where we get to digging deep?

C.K.R. It is quite stimulating to reach these things in a world which is becoming more and more unholy, that the believer can go through these digging exercises and reach through to what is very near God's own heart.

E.C.B. Does not that verse correspond to truth in the inward parts?

C.K.R. This whole section is truth in the inward parts. David had to be brought through to that in his own experience, because in one sense his members had failed him, so he had to be recovered to yield his body and life in a fresh way. Part of his experience is in 2 Samuel 7 when he goes into the presence of God, and he touches the holiness of the divine presence.

E.C.B. Does what you have in mind help us as to consistency in behaviour?

C.K.R. I think that is very necessary in a world where there is a moral necessity for behaviour that is consistent with the death of Christ. I think it flows out of your affections being affected by these wonderful matters.

E.C.B. The great controlling power in a believer is his affection for Christ.

C.K.R. And the depth of his personal attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what we want for the younger brethren. It is good to see them here. Start out early in simple matters like praying to the Lord Jesus and reading the scriptures. All these matters are part of beginning to go deep as you are beginning to realise when

you look at the truth and read the scriptures that there is more to this than just light. You are beginning to realise that God is wanting to reach depth in you and to reach the fact that your being is such that you are characteristically demonstrating the moral features of the Lord Jesus.

E.F.W. There is quite a process in verse 22 towards holiness.

Firstly the thrill of experiencing freedom from sin, freedom from everything that would entangle us, but then it adds "bondmen to God". I wondered whether that would link with what has been said that there is to be a consistency. A bondman is one who is dedicated to the one he serves, and then you arrive at holiness.

C.K.R. Every clause of that verse is worthy of sober consideration. There is a sequence and we need to see and follow our way through these things because I see a great danger that we become over occupied with administration. We should accept that matters in a locality get resolved in that locality. Our exercise ought to be to pray with the desire that the saints will be preserved and none lost. Eternal life is to answer a need in man's heart, "and the end eternal life". I wondered in relation to what has been said that he is building a house, but within it there is to be the atmosphere of eternal life.

D.A.B. It is not only Satan and the world that tests our foundations, but God tests our foundations as well. That might encourage the young people because they may feel that they are up against the world, but God is testing His work in them. What you referred to as to administration sadly reveals that our recourse is not as it should be to the Lord Himself. That is an element that should test us every time a matter arises, that the Lord allows it to see whether our recourse is to ourselves and to one another.

C.K.R. I feel the burden that God desires to have truth in the inward parts and unless that happens we will hear of one and another being overcome by a moral matter, or some other circumstance or whatever. These matters are all so necessary so that the believer along this line takes up his life, takes up his duties

rightly. You are taking up marriage, household exercises on that basis in order that the believer by God's help gets the victory over the world in the life of the believer.

E.C.B. It might be for the encouragement of the younger brethren to remark that if you set yourself to digging you will sometimes find that the foundation has come up to meet you.

C.K.R. The rock is there. The rock is Christ, the rock is the truth of Christianity.

A.G.S. Paul says, "I know whom I have believed", 2 Tim 1: 12.

C.K.R. And he was persuaded – had done the digging.

In Philippians it is wonderful that Paul can identify one soul – that feature. This is a collective feature of being inwardly bound together in these glorious matters, and he can refer to it. There is a reference to one soul (v 27) as to the glad tidings, and in the beginning of chapter 2 "ye may think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking one thing", going on to holiness that appears to provide a background where Paul feels free from verses 5 to 11 to bring out some of the touches which I think relate to the holy truth of God in relation to the Lord Jesus.

E.C.B. So that Paul does not need to touch the doctrine of the one body here, he has it.

C.K.R. It is there in demonstration, it is the "me". That was said to him, "why persecutest thou me?", Acts 22: 7. He begins to touch it here in Philippians. What a company this must have been.

Thinking about this I find it very exercising, can I touch the soul in my local company? Is there a feeling amongst our local companies that there is a soul there, that there is some inward binding together? I wondered if the teaching of Romans 6 is like the boards of the tabernacle standing up, and then when you come to Philippians 2 and one soul, it is that there is one bar which goes right through them, the whole matter is there and held together, underpinning the affections of the saints and the binding of the saints together. It is a wonderful matter to touch soul amongst the saints.

R.W.F. So that, if I am digging and you are digging we meet at a common point on the rock. Is that the meaning of “joined in soul”, that we meet at that point?

C.K.R. It is like Christ inwardly, Christ in my affections – we have found a bond together. One of the striking things is the saints’ desire to stay together. The saints are held together, often through discipline. When illness comes, or perhaps some incident transpires which affects one in the place, you get some idea of the soul of the saints. You cannot touch that outside the circle of the saints. We should understand that you will never find such a circle as the circle of the saints where such things can be felt and touched and relied upon. That is the instinct of the work of God being drawn together.

D.E.B. The passage where you began to read says, “conduct yourselves worthily of the glad tidings”. It is worthy of the expression of the heart of God in the glad tidings.

C.K.R. We can all take that away as an exhortation. The way I speak to one another, the way I speak to men, the way I conduct my affairs, what a fine matter to be able to conduct yourself *worthily* of the glad tidings. It is an added quality. In Titus it is “adorn the teaching which is of our Saviour God” (2: 10). It is that feature, a touch of the anointing, a touch of the service of the Spirit being brought out, adding something, by conducting ourselves worthily of the glad tidings. Paul did that right at the start in Acts 16 when he said, “Do thyself no harm, for we are all here” (v 28). Immediately the jailor saw an example of conduct that he had never seen before.

D.J.H. Is that not also protective? I was thinking of the armour, the feet shod with the preparation of the glad tidings (see Eph.6: 15). It is a protective element, is it not?

C.K.R. It is that, “joined in soul”. Think of the saints gathering together in your local meeting for the Lord’s Supper and looking round on one and another, and there is a feeling of being joined in soul. What that must mean to the Lord Jesus; the breakdown is such and schisms and break-ups all around – can you detect that? I feel this all so necessary and so important because the enemy is out

to thwart it completely. Think of being joined in soul and then the loaf there before you reminding you of “For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” the One who emptied Himself, “did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied himself”.

D.J.H. Can you say something as to “thinking one thing”.

C.K.R. I think it is something that we arrive at together, “one thing”. It is a very fine feature to arrive at. We know it is not easy, we know we have to work in certain respects together to come to that, but “thinking one thing”, in divine things in relation to the glory of the Lord Jesus. “This do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22: 19) is thinking one thing.

D.J.H. I was thinking that, it would work out at the Supper.

E.C.B. If we were one mind in the Lord, according to chapter 4, we would think the same thing.

C.K.R. I do not think we should lose sight of it. I do think that if the inwards are affected it must be very instrumental towards this.

E.F.W. “Having the same love” is inserted.

C.K.R. That ye may think the same thing, having the same love” – these are interesting comments: it is the same love, the same affection, you and I are bound together with the same desires, the same expression of divine love coming through.

E.F.W. So we would be held by the love of Christ and response to Him and then to love one another, does that enter into it?

C.K.R. It has to be that way. Perhaps we might be encouraged a little to contemplate these things in order that we might all be more stable than we have been before. The divine intent is “truth in the inward parts”.

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Key to initials

D.A.Burr, London; D.E.Burr, Colchester; E.C.Burr, London;
B.H.Clark, London; E.Croot, Dorking; R.W.Flowerdew, Sunbury;
D.J.Hutson, London; H.A.Hutson, London; A.McSeveney, Cumnock;
P.Martin, Colchester; K.Marshall, Rotherham; M.Matthews,
Birmingham; E.O.P.Mutton, Walton; R.D.Plant, Birmingham;
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E.F.Woodford, Dorking; V E.Wraighte, Gillingham

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE PRESENT TIME

Kenneth Robinson

Ecclesiastes 3: 1, 2; John 7: 37-39; 2 Corinthians 6: 1, 2; Mark 14: 8

I want to say a word on the advantages of the present time. We live in a glorious day and I would like to interest every one of us in that.

Where I read in Ecclesiastes is about a time to be born and a time to die. Between these two dates is the life of a person. Every one of here including the young boys and girls will know when their birthday is. That is the time you were born, the date, the month and the year. What you do not know is the time of your death. What I want you to think about for a moment is that you are now in the time of your life and I want to say, you are living your life in a wonderful day. You are living your life in the time of a glorified Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit of God. Do you realise that? Remember, “now is the well-accepted time; behold, now the day of salvation”, 2 Cor. 6: 2. There are four lines that say:

Time was – is past: then canst not it recall,
Time is – thou hast: employ the portion small,
Time future is not and may never be,
Time present is the only time for thee.

You say, I hear a lot said about a day of breakdown, a day of small things, a day of this and that – that is absolutely true, but never let us forget that we live in a glorious time. For the believer it is a wonderful privilege to live their life in the light of a glorified Christ and the present service of the Holy Spirit of God. We live in the Spirit’s day, a wonderful time to have your life. Mr. Coates said it would be better to live one year in the current time than a hundred years in the time of Methuselah. Maybe you are wondering about your life, which way is it going to go? I would appeal to you, “now is the well-accepted time”, because you live in the light of a glorified Christ in heaven. The sun is shining upon you. You say, but you do not know about my problems, you do not know about my concerns, my

worries. Well – for the moment I want to occupy you with the glory of the Lord Jesus Himself stood and cried in the last, the great day of the feast – that we are in such a day.

We finished the reading with a touch in Philippians 2 of the humiliation of Jesus. He was One who, “subsisting in the form of God ... emptied himself, ... and having been found in figure as man, humbled himself”. Do you understand the incarnation? “Sonship in conscious nature” was seen in Jesus and had never been seen before. The types in scripture all look on to it, but then the moment itself arrived when God in Christ came into manhood in the manger and there was the babe, “wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger”, Luke 2: 12. The incarnation is not the time that I am speaking of exactly: that is a distinctive time in itself and is a holy subject to consider. It is helpful to realise that the whole dispensation of time involving the revelation of God in Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the time in which your life has been set. All God’s thoughts and all God’s purposes secured in Jesus are now being brought into demonstration. He is the anti-type and nothing compares, because Jesus is unique and incomparable as He comes into manhood, and displays in it grace of a lowly manhood, teaching and doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil for God was with Him (see Acts 10: 38). Think of Him going about doing all these good things and His wonderful teaching, and yet He had to go on to the cross. He “humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross”, Phil. 2: 8. Man humiliated Him and in the third hour to the sixth hour on the cross His moral glory shone as He endured at the hands of men the scoffing, the spitting and the denial. Yet there were deeper matters later when from the sixth hour to the ninth hour there was darkness over the whole land, and God forsook His Son, when Jesus made sin (see Matt. 27: 45,46). “From the sixth hour ... until the ninth hour”, the absolute forsaking of Jesus:

Did Thy God e’en then forsake Thee,
Hide His face from Thy deep need! (Hymn 302)

I am going to speak in a moment of a glorified Christ, but initially let us contemplate the One who is glorified now, who was publicly humiliated here. The One who is glorified now is the One who was made sin. The work is now complete. The penalty of sin was death, but on Jesus there was no penalty of sin because He was holy and sinless. Vicariously He went into death and the soldier then took that spear and pierced His side, "there came out blood and water" (John 19: 34). The first order of man is now gone in judgment, and then the whole dawn of a new time begins. The glory of resurrection follows in that after three days and three nights, He is raised from amongst the dead. God raised His Son from amongst the dead in virtue of a work of accomplished righteousness. As the old hymn says:

Up from the grave He arose
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes

We touched on it recently in a meeting locally that there was a time on that resurrection morning when the Father had Christ for Himself in resurrection. The Father displayed His glory when His Son came out of death, knowing and looking on to the fact that every attribute and every thought of His had been righteously accomplished. Following His resurrection, forty days afterwards, He is taken up into glory. Now He is glorified and we live in the time of His glorification.

In John 7 it says, "In the last, the great day of the feast" (v 37). As I would understand it, He is looking on and introducing what is eternal. The seven days and the feast were celebrated according to Leviticus 23, on the tenth day (v 27) and the fourteenth day (v 5). But then there comes a further day, that is referred to here as the great day of the feast. "Jesus stood and cried" and He is heralding forth the glorious matters regarding His own glorification and the coming of the Holy Spirit, "this he said concerning the Spirit, which they that believed on him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified" (v 39). In our time the gospel preachers of Christianity following the descent of the Holy Spirit have borne witness to the fact that God has glorified His

servant Jesus. He is the Saviour who died on Calvary but now do you realise that He is glorified in heaven? That is the time you live in. What a wonderful privilege it is to live in the present time, “now is the well-accepted time; behold, now the day of salvation”. Now is the time of your salvation, now is your time to focus your life through faith on Jesus glorified in heaven.

Received in glory bright up there,
The Father's greetings, honours rare,
Are heaped upon His Son's blest brow
He is the mighty Victor now. (Hymn 350)

I thank God that I know a glorified Christ. The only Christ we know is a glorified Christ. It is a wonderful to have the light of a Man in heaven, shining upon you, radiant upon you, always available for you. The One who is your Saviour is now your High Priest above, your Shepherd, your Friend, the One you can link on with, the One you can and will have a link with eternally. It is a great privilege for the believer to have a link personally with the Father and with the Son in glory and with the Holy Spirit of God. That is the day you live in. Maximise the opportunity that you have, your life is *today*; “To-day if ye will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb. 3: 15). “Now is the well-accepted time; behold, now the day of salvation”. How wonderful these things are!

I want to refer to four people in scripture who are examples of those who proved the present opportunity and took advantage of it. For them “now ... the well accepted time”. The first person I want to speak about is Ruth. I trust we have all read the book of Ruth, four chapters, a very interesting story, much in it, some interesting people and names in it, starting off very sadly, but finishing in great triumph and glory, looking on to David. The history in the book of Ruth is very wonderful. Ruth was a Moabitess who found that her links according to nature had gone. She had lost her husband as had her sister and her mother-in-law. Then they hear that Jehovah is visiting His people to give them bread, and they come back, the recovery begins to happen. But in chapter 2 Ruth has come in touch with Boaz and Boaz's administration. She goes out into the field and she

is gleaning and gathering. She illustrates a young believer going in for the things of God and who takes full advantage of the time that is available to her. It says, “her sitting in the house has been little as yet” (v 7). I trust all the young believers here are diligent in the things of God. I would encourage and exhort you to become *more* diligent in the things of God. We all need to start early and young and Ruth takes advantage of the opportunity. She realised she was never going to have it again. We are in the environment of great blessing, living in the day of a glorified Christ and the Holy Spirit here, and you will find in reading and meditating on the scriptures and through prayer and exercise that substance is gathered in the things of God. You say, My life is busy. I know it is, all our lives are busy, but do not lose the advantage of the current time. The time of your life is *now*. Therefore it is the time available to you to go in for the things of God. She came at the time of the barley harvest and she went through to the time of the wheat harvest. This was an important period in her early contacts with Boaz. Now is our opportunity to gather substance and to gain experience in the things of God. I exhort you to read, to pray, to converse, to talk about the things of God, to endure and to enjoy the blessedness of having a link with a glorified Christ in heaven and the Holy Spirit down here. We live in the Spirit’s day; we live in a wonderful day. That is the impression all should take away – we live in a wonderful day, let us take advantage of it because now is the well-accepted time for us.

Now as life goes on, another verse says:

When as a child I laughed and wept,
Time crept;
When as a youth, I dreamt and talked,
Time walked;
When I became a full grown man,
Time ran;
When older still I daily grew,
Time flew;
Soon shall I find in travelling on,
Time gone;

And face eternity begun,
Time done.

Think of that. We are all saying it, 'time flies'. You get to the end of your life and time has gone, the opportunities are gone, so take advantage of the present opportunity that you have as you live in a wonderful day. The time of the glorified Christ and the Holy Spirit down here.

The second person I want to talk about is Lydia. She is another example of one who took advantage of the time available to her. In this case we are talking about the testimony, and in particular the light of Paul's ministry relating to a glorified Christ, the Head in heaven and the working out of the truth of the assembly. We need to realise that there is something down here that is being wrought out that has never been wrought out before. Great as the history of the children of Israel was – and how full was God's care of them, and blessing for them – the truth of the mystery is that Christ is securing an assembly, a heavenly vessel, formed by the service of the Holy Spirit. This is taking place in the affections, lives and souls of people like you and me. What a great privilege it is to have the light of the mystery. It says of Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul" (Acts 16: 14), I think that was a present experience for her. I would desire that everyone here has their heart opened to Paul's ministry. I would desire that in every one of our hearts that we have some appreciation that we live in a wonderful day and we have the light of a wonderful ministry. These are souls whose heart and soul are together in the things of Christ and are eternally linked with the Man above. Take advantage of this opportunity as Lydia did. Paul's ministry is for today, the light and practice of Paul's ministry is for today, "now is the well-accepted time; behold, now the day of salvation". Every feature of Paul's ministry has been given for our day, and our desire ought to be to be consistent it and enjoy the benefits from it. One of the aspects of Paul's ministry is the placing of the truth of the Lord's Supper in the assembly. What an opportunity that is! I trust everyone here remembers the Lord in the breaking of bread. I trust every young

believer here, if we are left here, will partake of the loaf and of the cup of the Lord's Supper tomorrow. You manifest the desire to remember the Lord who died for you and shed His precious blood. The One of whom another old hymn says:

I gave my life for thee
What hast thou done for me?

He could say, "this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22: 19). Where will you find the opportunity to remember the Lord? It is among the saints in the light of the Paul's ministry. The opportunity is now. I was seventeen when I asked to break bread but I should have done it a lot earlier. I remember being affected in a preaching but I did not respond to it, when the preacher said, As you stand before the Lord in the day to come, and He says to you 'Why have you not remembered me?' The opportunity is now. May every young person think of that, it is a very great responsibility, but a wondrous privilege to remember the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread.

The next person I want to speak about is Paul. Paul in Acts 26 gives a demonstration of a living testimony with the light of a glorified Christ shining on him. The setting in Acts 26 is that the assembled company gathers and the prisoner is brought in bound with a chain, "And Agrippa said to Paul, It is permitted thee to speak" (v 1). What would he say? It does us all good to re-read it again and again.

Paul's testimony was to a glorified Christ that spoke to him on the Damascus way. This chapter is the highest point as we know of his description of it, previously having described it in chapters 9 and 22. The sun was shining upon Paul as he was there bound with a chain giving testimony to Christianity. We are all tested on the brightness and vitality of our Christian testimony, but the opportunity for Christian testimony is now. I can stand here today and say we live in a glorious day, we live in the light of a glorified Christ. Inwardly that is what I want to say when tested, I want to give expression to my love for my Lord and my Saviour, and that He is my life. However we find excuses and express some weak statement. But you think of the joy to the Lord Jesus when a younger or older believer says, I love the Lord Jesus and this is why I do not do this or that. Think of

your name being confessed before the Father and before His angels. How wonderful and touching these things are!

The last person I wanted to refer to is Epaphras. Epaphras brings up the question of how I am now as a local brother. We speak to the brothers and the sisters because it would apply equally. Having taken up a position out of affection for Christ and having followed through certain moral principles in separation, we come together as a local company. Your opportunity to be a good local brother or sister is now. It will not be in heaven. What is the testimony of Epaphras? He prayed for his local brethren that they would stand perfect and complete in all the will of God (see Col 4: 12). The opportunity for that is now. You will say, I will do that when I am older, I will do that when I am such and such an age. I do not know what age Epaphras was, but the testimony came through to Paul that Epaphras was a local brother who combated “earnestly for you in prayers, to the end that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God”. What a fine example for us. We need to pray for one another more, pray for our local meetings, pray for the households of the saints, pray and keep praying. As another has said, if I had to live over again I would study less and pray more. Beloved brethren let us pray more, the opportunity to pray is now.

I leave these thoughts: in every one of these cases, I think the Lord would say, “What *she* could she has done”, Mark 14: 8. What Ruth could she did, what Lydia could she did, what Paul could he did, what Epaphras could he did. May we just heed the appeal. The time of our present committals, our present salvation, is now. May these things just encourage us, For His Name’s sake.

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