

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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WOULD YOU CROSS THE ROAD FOR A MILLION POUNDS?

Jim Gray

2 Corinthians 6: 11-18; 7: 1

I have no intention of making any indictments, but to speak about the attractiveness of Christianity and the attractiveness of having a Father and being sons and daughters to that Father. The Corinthian saints were Greeks, and they had been mainly pagan peoples, heathen peoples. They did not own God in creation; they worshipped other gods, material gods, gods of the air, and made the sun a god and the moon a god and other created spheres gods. The scripture says "gods many, and lords many", 1 Cor 8: 5. When Paul came into Corinth, the Lord Jesus indicated to him that he had much people in that city. He was going to find them by the gospel, just the way He found you and me: He found us in the world, with thoughts and desires after the world, and He found us through the glad tidings. He has delivered us, brought us out, washed us from our sins in His blood and given us the gift of the Holy Spirit. He did that for these Corinthians saints too. In Corinth, as we have often said and been told, there were three meeting places: there was the pagan temple; there was the Jewish synagogue; and there was the meeting place of Christians. The pagan temple in the worldly ways it had was a place of moral corruption and immorality. The Jewish synagogue was not that. They worshipped publicly Jehovah of the Old Testament; they had a relationship with God. Of course, matters had changed when Christ died and was raised but I am not touching on that just at the moment. If you went along to the Jewish synagogue concerned about your sins, they would tell you one thing: sins can be atoned for here through the two scapegoats of Leviticus 16 and your sins can be forgiven you for one year. How would you like that, to be told your sins could be forgiven you for one year? That is the Jewish synagogue. Come into the Christian meeting house, they will tell you your sins can be forgiven you for all eternity; no shortcomings here! The Lord Jesus had died; His blood had

been shed; atonement had been made for sins. Is that not wonderful, that you come along to a meeting like this and you can be blessed and your sins can be forgiven? God says in the scriptures, "Their sins and their lawlessnesses I will never remember any more", Heb 10: 17.

Then the Corinthians had some other things to learn about the world. They were walking in the world. We are still walking in the world; we earn our daily bread; we need to be cared for; we need to have shelter above our heads, a house to live in and a bed to go to. It is all part of life here, but there is a difference now. You are in the world, the same world you were in before you were converted, but before you were converted you *belonged* to that world, your tastes were in that world, your thoughts were in that world, your way of life was the same as that of men and women around you. When you are converted, you are changed. The divine thought is that we should not remain part of that world. There is a *cost* to Christianity. The greatest cost was Christ's cost, the preciousness of His blood, the laying down of His life, but to the believer in the Lord Jesus there is a cost to be for the Lord Jesus here, to be faithful to Him here. He was cast out; He was rejected; He was put on a cross. They cried, "We will not that this man should reign over us", Luke 19: 14. "Away with this man ... Crucify, crucify him", Luke 23: 18,21. Well, He was rejected. Believers are in that world and you will find once you are converted, there is a difference.

But there is also a divine plan for you. That is in this scripture. It is going to cost you something. It says you can no longer be yoked with an unbeliever. In those days there were no motorcars; everything was done by animals; they ploughed in a yoke; they were yoked together; the animals were bound together in a job. Paul says you cannot go along with an unbeliever in business. You cannot be in a partnership with an unbeliever. How could two persons, one a believer and one an unbeliever, get along together with different principles and different thoughts, different tastes? They live in a different world? How could they be in partnership? That is what he is saying to them here. How can righteousness and

lawlessness be together? “What fellowship of light with darkness?” Well, unregenerate man or pagan man, as it was in those days, how could you walk along with him in business or in partnership or association, go on with his way of life? You cannot do that. The Lord Jesus is saying through Paul, I do not want you to do that. I want you to be free from that; be in the world, but apart from the world morally, find your life apart from it. And then, “what agreement of God’s temple with idols? for ye are the living God’s temple”. How could they go along with idols? In those days there were idols. How could a believer go along with an unbeliever in relation to his idols? He could not do that.

But then there is the recompense. The recompense is that “ye are the living God’s temple; according as God has said, I will dwell among them, and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be to me a people”. Is that not a recompense, such a recompense, for being faithful to the Lord Jesus in the scene of His rejection, in His absence, to be “the living God’s temple”, know something about God’s presence in a living way presently as we are gathered together? The speaking is not from man but from God and He is considerate for us. “Wherefore come out from the midst of them and be separated, saith the Lord, and touch not what is unclean”. That is a clarion call to every Christian, to come out of the world they once lived in. You cannot depart from it altogether, but you can come out from it morally, not go on with its lifestyle and its ways, its partnerships, its businesses, all that a man in the world would have before him in ambition without God. You have to be apart from it. “I will receive you” – well, that is a wonderful thing – “and I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty”.

I will tell you something that happened in my local meeting many years ago. An old brother named Percy Lyon was ministering one night and a number of younger men like myself were present. He was exhorting us to be here for the Lord. He said, ‘Would you cross the road for a million pounds? Would you give up your principles for a million pounds?’ I said to myself, Well, there is no

chance of that in this life. Never would I be tempted that way. But, you know, young friend, it comes around. The devil is very skilful. He will make prospects to you in this life here and a million pounds might be within the grasp. Would you cross the road for a million pounds? Would you? What would you give up? You would give up the known care of a Father, give up the joy of communion with this Father. You could no longer have joy as a son or daughter if you crossed the road for a million pounds. See how the devil would give you a temptation in the energies of life, the prospects of life, that you never thought about. One man said in this city an association was only 'microscopic', but it was an association. Would you give up your principles for a million pounds? You may be tempted in that in your life, but be grounded in Christian principles, "be separated, saith the Lord ... and I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters".

The hymn we sang at the outset encouraged me to say these few words to you because this Father cares for you. If you think of your million pounds, go to Luke 12: "What shall I do? ... I will take away my granaries and build greater" (vv 17,18). "But God said to him, Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; and whose shall be what thou hast prepared" (v 20)? you want to be wealthy, wealthy in relation to what is heavenly, not riches here. The Father will see you have enough to get through. Those of us who are older have proved that of this Father whom we have known. He says, "I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters". Then He says, "saith the Lord Almighty". He is a Father, but He is the Lord, the sovereign Ruler and He is the Almighty. He will bring you through. If you cast your cares on Him, you have the comfort of communion with Him.

And he says, "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us purify ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear". Well, that is a little word of exhortation to all of us to see to the purity of our thinking, and the purity of what we feed on, free from the pollution of flesh, self-judged persons, keeping ourselves right by the Holy Spirit so that we are self-judged and we

can live in the blessedness of the Father's care, the Father's communion! You know, at the rapture, dear brethren and dear younger brethren, every believer will go, every person who knows Christ as their Saviour and has the gift of the Holy Spirit will be taken out of this scene, no matter what their state is. God will take them because of the blood of Christ, because they have a passport for heaven. That passport is the righteousness of God, conferred on them through the Saviour's work. However, it is fine in time and life here, in the flesh and blood condition to know something of communion with this blessed Father to whom you can turn and be to Him a son or daughter. You do not get daughters much in scripture. In this setting in the New Testament, we always speak about "ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus", Gal. 3: 26. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *these* are sons of God" (Rom. 8: 14), but here Paul says, as a Father He will take you up as sons and daughters. That shows He is considerate for our present state, our flesh and blood condition, the need of being succoured. Whether you are a son or whether you are a daughter, He will support you and you will know the blessedness of His grace in communion with Himself. There are Christians who may be mixed up in the world, who belong to this blessed One, but they do not know the secret of this joy of having Him as a known, blessed Father; relationships being disjointed or disrupted by worldliness. He is desiring that we are not worldly Christians, but that we are Christians who are seeking to be faithful to the name of the Lord Jesus.

As I say, it will cost you something. Tests will come up in life. You will be tested by these principles, whether you join yourself to the world or the worldling or whether you stay apart and prove the blessing that comes from this blessed One, known as Father, and the joy that He supports you and will see you through and provide what you need. What a triumph, what a joy! These are the blessings of Christianity. It is His desire you should enjoy them. May the Lord bless these few words for His Name's sake!

Word in the ministry meeting

Edinburgh

15 April 2004

WORDS IN A MINISTRY MEETING

(i) PRESERVATION

W.McKillop

Luke 5: 36-39

This passage would impress us with the thought of preservation. The Lord says, “both are preserved”. We would rightly think of God in regard of the great matter of preservation. In writing to Timothy, Paul says, “I enjoin thee before God who preserves all things in life”, 1 Tim 6: 13. I suppose that would take in every feature of life in the universe, whether it be an angel, a blade of grass, or animal life, or vegetable life, God preserves all things in life. Paul also says to Timothy, “who is preserver of all men specially of those that believe” (1 Tim 4: 10), so that being among those that believe we are special objects of divine interest and preservation. It is of great import at the moment that we should be preserved in the testimony, in the fellowship of God’s Son, preserved in the assembly, and preserved in the service of God.

In this passage the Lord speaks in parable as to preservation. It would remind us too that in writing to the saints Jude speaks about, “beloved in God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ”, Jude 1: 1. The preservation is linked up with that order of man “preserved in Jesus Christ”. I suppose it is illustrated in Joseph who said to His brethren, “God sent me before you to preserve life”, Gen 45: 5. I think it is a great matter that whilst so many sorrowful things are happening, not just in the world, but some happening among the brethren, preservation should be more in our minds and exercises and prayers. From one point of view we cannot preserve ourselves, we are shut up to God in that regard and happily so; knowing that He is the preserver especially of those that believe and I am sure that every heart that loves Christ is desirous that every person we know and love in the fellowship should be preserved.

The Lord speaks here as to things that can be preserved, “both are preserved”. Matthew adds another word, “both are

preserved together” (Mat. 9: 17). It is not only that we are preserved individually but we are preserved together. Being preserved together I am assured that the Lord would have to be a leading mark among the saints in these last days, that we are preserved together. I have no doubt that the Lord speaking about two of you agreeing (see Matt. 18: 19) would indicate that they are preserved persons and they are preserved together in the maintenance of assembly interests, and the rights of Christ in the assembly.

Luke says, “He spoke also a parable to them: No one puts a piece of a new garment upon an old garment”. I suppose the Lord has in mind here that these persons He refers to would be spiritually intelligent. While the Lord is actually speaking about garments and new skins, new wine, I am sure He is thinking as to what is deeper in a moral and spiritual sense, and that spiritually intelligent persons would not attempt putting a piece of a new garment upon an old garment. The word “new” here means, as to the garment, wholly new and different. The word as to the new wine is that it is fresh and youthful, and both thoughts would enter into the matter of preservation. It is not that we should be preserved in the oldness of the letter, but in newness of spirit and that there should be the evidence among us of what really is morally out of heaven. What is wholly new and different must be out of heaven, because what is on the earth in a general religious way is aged and near disappearing. So, “No one puts a piece of a new garment upon an old garment, otherwise he will both rend the new, and the piece which is from the new will not suit with the old”. Every priestly person would understand that, that the piece from the new will not suit with the old, they are spiritually incompatible. Then the Lord says, “And no one puts new wine into old skins, otherwise the new wine will burst the skins, and it will be poured out, and the skins will be destroyed”. Intelligent persons understand that, that the first man is not morally capable of containing the new wine. The company that was together in Acts 2 were all new skins, they were not old skins and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. What the Lord had produced was capable of containing the new wine, was capable of containing the

effect and energy in life of the Holy Spirit who would come down. So He says, “new wine is to be put into new skins, and both are preserved”, I would suggest that we want to see preservation in this sense in our localities, that the new garments and the new wine are both in evidence and that we are on this line as persons who have been given an understanding and we understand the need of what is wholly new and different to contain what is fresh and youthful in the presence of the Spirit and His actions in us and the result is “both are preserved”. I am sure every heart feels as I do that the preservation of brethren is a vital matter at the present time, the children, young people, middle aged persons, older persons, we want all to be preserved together and I think it lies in the recognition of what the Lord says here. We are with the Lord in intercession and with the Spirit dependently so that what is new, both in the skins and in the wine is preserved in our localities. The first man is not in evidence, the old wine that appeals to the first man is not in evidence; and no one is saying that the old is better because we have acquired a taste for the new wine and we have developed an appreciation for the new skins. I think these things are intended to draw us closer to Christ and draw us more into communion with the Holy Spirit that there might be preservation of all the saints and preservation in our localities of all the persons, and of the little ones, all having in mind that there should be this state of things when the Lord comes.

I commit the word to the brethren for their exercise and thoughtful because we need to think thoughtfully about these matters, especially considering such matters as happen among us from time to time. We might say it is abnormal that young persons should lose their lives especially violently because the Lord’s mind is that both are preserved together. That is a characteristic feature of Matthew that as assembly persons we should be preserved together.

May the Lord bless the word.

(ii) DESIRE

John Mitchell

Judges 1: 12-15; 1 Samuel 1: 10-18

I have been struck these last two days in thinking about this section. The testimony covers the book of Judges very largely and enters into the opening of the book of Samuel. To say that the state in Israel was low at that time is putting it mildly. As we know it says, "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes", Judg 17: 6. There is a danger of that at the present time. We were speaking over the weekend of the authority. Our brother has spoken about preservation, and I think if there is right authority, authority under God, and it is listened to and acted upon, we will be preserved. Without authority, there is no preservation. We should remember that.

The state in this period was extremely low and yet the Spirit of God is pleased to bring forward certain women, Achsah, Deborah the wife of Manoah, the daughter of Jephthah, Naomi and Ruth, Hannah, and then the wife of Phinehas the priest. It is beautiful to think, though the general state was very low, of what God had in these women. It is a comfort that God will always have subjectively what will hold the testimony. He never lets it go publicly it may seem at a very low ebb, everyone might appear to be doing what is right in his own eyes, but God never lets His testimony go. He will maintain it through persons who are with God Himself. Therefore, the encouragement for us is to be in relation to God about matters – our brother has spoken about severe happenings amongst us. These are very sorrowful and very exercising – and I think would drive us into the presence of God that we might find out what His mind is. Nothing happens by accident, so that the encouragement is to be before God and find out what is on His mind. He loves to disclose what is in His mind to His lovers.

Where I read first it speaks of Achsah. She appears twice, in the book of Joshua (see Josh 15: 16) and then in Judges. It might

seem unnecessary having gone over matters in the book of Joshua, brought out with delightful character, but the Spirit of God in opening this book which very largely deals with a low state, is delighted to bring forward a person who can hold the truth and not let it go. Just the very next chapter says, "And the Angel of Jehovah came up from Gilgal to Bochim" (2: 1). That is a very sad situation. The angel of Jehovah is forced to change his position, but in the midst of it all there is what is going through, an expression we often use, but not only going through, going through in triumph. The chapter, as you read it through, says that this tribe did not dispossess, but then you get this bright spark of light in relation to Caleb and Othniel and his wife Achsah. They were delightful characters, that would not only seize hold of the inheritance, but Achsah is exercised that she might be in the enjoyment of it. Not only does she encourage her husband to ask for "the field" – it is not *a* field, but "*the* field" – but then when her father discerns that she is asking for something else she says, "give me also springs of water". It is wonderful to think about that, there is a person here amidst general decline, who is thoroughly exercised that she might, in the gain typically of the Spirit, as making room for the Spirit of God, be in the gain of God's inheritance. I think that should be an encouragement to us. But there are such persons at the present time and the exercise is that we should be among them, everyone of us – no sectarian idea. In this book it is in the few, but our concern would be that it would be among all. I think any priestly person would carry the concern that what you find in Achsah, in her real earnest desire in type to have the Holy Spirit in such a way that she can enjoy the inheritance and appropriate it rightly, should mark every one of us. What an inheritance we have! I need hardly say that, but do you ever stop to think of the inheritance that we have? Think of what has been handed down to us – this came through Caleb, and you will remember that Caleb was a man who went through the wilderness for forty years with Joshua, but in that forty years, content as he was to go along with the people, the land was in his heart all the time. I often think of the daughters of Zelophohad – there are other women, and they also are anxious to have their inheritance, not to give it up, not to lose it. It may be

fanciful but I often think that they came under the influence of Caleb. There are these persons, the daughters of Zelophohad, and this woman Achsah unquestionably came under the influence of Caleb. What a thing it is to have Calebs in our meetings. It has been said as to the Philippian epistle that there is no type in the Old Testament of a Philippian. I remember that when I was younger the brethren used to tell us that Caleb was a true Philippian. He was in the wilderness and going along with the people but his heart was in the land, that is where he lived. He went through the rigours of the wilderness and all the exercises that were attached to it, and the full acceptance of the governmental situation for forty years wandering there, but he never altered in his affections for the land. Here is a product of that, Achsah his daughter; she says, "Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a southern land; give me also springs of water". Caleb was the kind of man that if he gave anything it would be in relation to the inheritance. That is where his own heart was and that is where his heart would be for the younger persons coming along that they should have the inheritance, and not only have it, but have it with a power to enjoy it. What things are ours! I sometimes stop to take stock of what has come down to us and it is intended that we should be in the thorough enjoyment of it and as we are in the enjoyment of it God will undoubtedly get His portion. One would encourage us all to be like Achsah and to be concerned about the upper and the lower springs. We have been taught that that speaks of Ephesian and Roman truth, that she wanted to be in it vitally, in a real way, and she was concerned about it, "urged" her husband – what a wife to have! I trust all our wives here are urging on their husbands as to what is right.

When you come to Samuel you get Hannah. It is quite remarkable, with things at about the lowest state that they could be – you get a description of what was current in the priesthood and a sad state of things, and very little concern on the part of Israel as to it – the wife of Phinehas is a person who feels things. There was no exercise in Israel; they would appropriate the ark to themselves without a state that is proper to it. Let us not just be positional, let us

be exercised that there is a state which fills out the position rightly. While Achsah had every encouragement to go in for divine things, think of Hannah, she had no encouragement whatsoever. She was a woman for whom there was no sympathy, a husband according to his best, but his best was not very much. The high priest completely misunderstood her and charged her with things of which she was not guilty, rather than seeing, as she herself said that she was: "a woman of a sorrowful spirit". She really felt things. If one person feels a situation, God has the basis there in which He can work recovery. It is from this point on that the recovery takes place, Samuel comes to light in a positive way, and what a change it was! Immediately his influence was felt and that makes room for David so that God reaches His best thoughts.

I have also been thinking very much, especially in the verses in Matthew 11, but elsewhere too, that when things are at their worst, God brings out His best. How wonderful that is! He can bring out His best here, but there is a person who is really agonising before God, and prepared to be misunderstood, prepared to suffer. I believe that there is plenty of room for suffering at the present time; to suffer for the state of things among the saints, suffer for the maintenance of the testimony in its heavenly aspect, suffer as our brother has been saying that the brethren both locally and universally might be preserved and preserved together. There is grave danger, the enemy is trying his hardest to disrupt, and I think the answer to all that is the suffering spirit. Hannah shines in that way. There is one other feature about her: she is really a Nazarite. The reference to a Nazarite in Numbers says, "If a man or a woman have vowed the special vow of a Nazarite" (6: 2) – but then it goes on and deals entirely with the situation of a man: there is no reference to a woman, but we have to wait until the first book of Samuel to see that here is a woman who is really a Nazarite. Not only is she a Nazarite but she is going to make sure that her progeny is a Nazarite. There is great encouragement in matters like that, that there are such persons so that we need not be discouraged. We should be deeply exercised, and carry feelingly and sufferingly in the

way that Hannah does here, the situation and the destiny generally, but do not be discouraged, God will see it through. There are persons like this at the present time, God knows them and He knows all about them. Eli – the Elis – might miss what is there, but God never misses it and it becomes the basis for the recovery. These are well known passages, but I trust that they may encourage us that we might carry things feelingly before God in view of giving Him a moral basis on which He can work in recovery amongst us. May it be so, For His Name's Sake.

Ormond Beach

December 2003

PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD

Paul Johnson

Hebrews 10: 12; 1 Corinthians 15: 3; Hebrews 1: 3; John 1: 29

I was thinking of these few verses as to God's dealing with the fact and issues of sins and in this last verse of sin. I was thinking especially of God's dealings in regard to sins. I know that sometimes people are not very concerned, but man should be concerned about sins, "for all have sinned", Rom 3: 23. We quote these verses but sometimes we fail to take in the fact of what is said, "*all* have sinned". I have to admit that sometimes I have the impression with people quoting that, as if meant, I am just like everybody else, making excuses – "all have sinned". He is not better than I am, I am no better than he is. I do not think that is how that verse should be taken; it should be taken as the fact that *I* have sinned. I cannot exclude myself, it is not just that I am common with everyone else, but it brings it down to the fact that I have sinned, "*all* have sinned". So as to the individual none can put himself outside "*all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God".

This should be a concern to every individual. We know that sins, and sin, are something that God cannot just ignore and I know it is true because of His being holy and righteous, but I think it is also because of His love. Every evil and ailment that man suffers is a result of sin. I do not think that is an exaggeration. If sin had never come in death would not be working in the body, but it is working in the body because sin has come in. Everything is affected. I think it is wonderful to realise that sin is something that God cannot ignore but has already dealt with through the work of Christ. This is what I had especially before me that God has dealt with sin and sins.

In Hebrews 10 it is one sacrifice for sins and I think it is to be noticed that here it does not say, one sacrifice for *our* sins; it is just that there has been a sacrifice made for sins, it is available. It is not necessarily whose sin, the question of sins is involved here, "one sacrifice for sins", and it is the only sacrifice that is acceptable to

God. We know as to the offerings in the Old Testament, one could ask if they take away sins? Never. They were a foreshadowing of the one sacrifice that would take away sins, but those offerings could never have taken away sins but allowed God to pass over them. There is a difference between passing over sins and sins being remitted. I think we can say scripturally that in the Old Testament God passed over their sins because of their sacrifices. He saw in those sacrifices the sacrifice of Christ and He passed over them. But it is only the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ that can remove sins, put them away, not just passed over, put away and put away eternally. That is why it says, “one sacrifice for sins”. It is the only sacrifice that could purge sins, not just hold them in abeyance, or cover them, but totally take them away. That is why He can sit down in perpetuity, which means not only that it goes on forever, but that there is no interruption in that sitting down. The priest of old, after he had made an offering for sin, might have a time of sitting down; but then he had to get up again and repeat the offering. But with the Lord Jesus He sits down in perpetuity, never having to repeat the sacrifice. It is finished completely, “one sacrifice for sins”. It does not say one sacrifice for *our* sins. I do not want to take away from that, but when He speaks about our sins it is the language of faith. I think this verse here is a statement of fact that He has made one offering and that stands by itself apart from whether or not persons enter into it, or have the benefits of it.

In 1 Corinthians 15 it is a little different. What I have before me is God’s dealing with sins and we see here how there is a sacrifice for sins, “For I delivered to you, in the first place, what also I had received, that Christ died for *our* sins” – this is broader than the fact that He suffered for sins. Here it says that He died for our sins. That is the language of faith, it is not only that He has made one sacrifice for sins, that is the objective fact, but here the individual is brought in, “Christ died for our sins”. The apostle is writing to the Corinthians and I think he uses “our” because it included every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not just a statement of fact that there was one sacrifice for sins, but that that sacrifice was for

our sins. I was thinking too that it is put that way “Christ died for our sins”, because the result of persons believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is their being brought into a company. One who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and is sealed with the Holy Spirit is brought into a company, so we have the thought of “our”, and all in the company can say that. It brings in the collective side. No doubt dying for our sins was paying the penalty. Scripture says, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezek 18: 4), that is the pronouncement of God, death is the penalty of sin. So Christ died here for our sins because that was the penalty that our sins had accrued.

Hebrews 1 uses the term, “the purification of sins” which means purging of sins. When we think about purifying you think of making pure, but really it is the removal of sins, taking them away so that they are no longer there. The purification of sins is through one sacrifice and this wonderful work. He could sit down because the work was finished; there was nothing more to do. I am speaking as from God’s side: there is something to do from our side, but from God’s side He could sit down because there was nothing more to do. The question of sins had been settled by the Lord Jesus in His offering of Himself, so that they are carried away. He has made His purification of sins. I thought how this would enhance the greatness of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would like to refer to a verse in Galatians 1, “our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, so that he should deliver us out of the present evil world” (v 4). I do not know that I can give the full import of that, but I see a difference between this and that Christ died for our sins. He gave himself: it is not only that He died for our sins but that He was wholly committed. I believe in a way this is the anti-type to all of the offerings of the Old Testament because it was not possible by the bulls and goats to take away sins, but here was One who was so great in Himself. Think of who He was and what He was, He gave Himself, He did not hold anything back. You wonder at such love and devotion that He would give Himself. He would not retain anything, hold anything back. To my mind this is a little different to Christ dying for our sins. He gave Himself, He was

personally committed, not only that He accomplished a work, not only that He was able to affect atonement and satisfy all the claims of God, but He gave Himself. It seems to be a little more personal that He would give Himself for our sins. He could do this because there was no claim of death on Him. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die", but how blessed it is to know that He was apart from sin, in whom there was no sin and who did no sin so that He could give Himself for others.

I was thinking of this one sacrifice and how it has effected everything for God and for us. As for all of God's dealings with man and man's sin, the whole question of sins and sin has been settled. I say the matter of sin has been settled, but in a way it is not, and I think that is what is involved in John, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" – He is the taker away. Here John does not say when, it is not a question of when. It is a question of who is the taker away; He is the taker away of sin. I believe this goes beyond what the believer enjoys today, we know that He has taken away our sins, He bore them in His own body on the tree, so our sins are taken away, but "the sin of the world". I have no doubt that that is still future; it is based on His sacrifice and He is the taker away of the sin of the world and He is the only One who can do so. We know that while the believer's sins are taken away, (everyone who has received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour), the sin of the world has not been taken away, but He is the taker away, and He is going to take it away. It is going to be taken away forever and He alone is the One who is able. I thought of this too; I am not saying he is doing it in a righteous way, but man generally does struggle with sin. Why do we have laws? Why do we have all of these things? It is man struggling with sin to try in some way make things move right, but man cannot. This sin of the world is still there. The greatest sin was the rejection of the Lord Jesus, turning Him out. We can say that the world stands under that sin of having rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. But, there is going to be a time when it is taken away, and He alone is the taker away. Someone might say, would it not be wonderful if He took it away now? I am thankful that

He did not take it away last century, I am thankful that the day of grace was extended to the time in which we are living now, because it has included me and you and no doubt souls are being saved today. I believe that there is no day passed that some souls are not saved, somewhere in this world, because God is working. We may not always have a touch with it ourselves, but it is going on and we can be thankful for that. But there is a time coming when sin is going to be taken away.

I was thinking as to how God's dealings with sins and ultimately with sin itself, and how God has dealt with all of this in such a way that His righteous claims have been met, and His holiness has been maintained and souls have been delivered, rescued, ransomed. It is wonderful how God could bring that all to pass, because if you were to stop any man on the street and talk to him and ask, how would you deal with taking away sin? How can you change what people are and still bring them into joy and blessing? You would never get an answer. Everybody would have to say, I do not know. Most persons recognise that there is sin all around and that sin has brought all of the sorrow and misery and unhappiness that man experiences universally. Sometimes when I think about it I marvel – we live here in the United States, but you can go to the most uncivilised society on earth and they still sin, they commit the same sins, lie, steal and cheat are fleshly, selfish, self-indulgent – all these things. It does not make any difference whether they have government or no government. But, the wonderful thing is that God has dealt with it and to me this is the great message of Christianity that God has dealt with the question of sins and He is going to deal with the question of sin. He is going to take it away. In dealing with the question of sins now, there are those who are forgiven and delivered, and they are justified so that they no longer have sins attached to them, and accounted to them, but they are free and are at liberty and have peace and joy; they are cleansed, they are purged.

These are very simple things, but one thing I have always appreciated about the glad tidings is that it may be that in a sense

simple things, and it may be things that are repeated over and over, but they never get rusty. There is always a freshness, there is always a reality, something living and vital in regard to it, so that we can reflect on the glad tidings and what the work of Christ has brought and what it has brought us into. It is not just repetition, it is wonderful! Is there anything other than the truth of God that can be gone over and over and never become wearisome or old? It is all the great work of God, how that God has wrought and what He has wrought and how wonderful it is that it is going out now as glad tidings; the message to all.

May the Lord bless His word.

Denton

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