

A
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"LIFT UP THINE EYES"

C.J.H.Davidson

**Acts 16: 6-12, 14, 25, 26, 40; Psalm 48: 1-3; Ezekiel 47: 1, 5;
Philippians 3:19 (from "who") -21**

I want, with the help of the Lord and the Spirit, to take a view in the four directions in which Moses took a view of the heavenly inheritance in the third chapter of Deuteronomy. He was told to look westward and northward and southward and eastward - very interesting directions in which to look. The first passage we read is God moving westward. How thankful we ought to be that He did! What I read was the first entry of the gospel into Europe. None of us would have been here if God had turned the other way. Paul thought that he would like to go farther into Asia. Think of the collapse that came about in Asia! There is nothing left, in the Asia which Paul knew, of assembly enjoyment and testimony at the present day. They all turned away from Paul. But God, with that wonderful singleness of purpose, directed by the vision that for the first time the glad tidings of the glory of the blessed God should be heard in Europe. What a history it has been! I do not say that Moses could see this, but he will see the result of it. He saw a great deal on the mount of glory, but he will yet see the fulness of blessing in which God embraced the nations. As a prophet Moses had some light as to the westward view. He said at the end of Deuteronomy: "Shout for joy, ye nations, with his people", chap 32: 43. It is remarkable for an Israelite, as Moses was, to have the light that God would one day embrace the poor dogs of the Gentiles in His blessing.

So there is the westward look. It is, in a sense, the most important look. That is why Moses was told to look that way first, for God was going on with that glorious singleness of purpose. He never changes, He has gone on a straight course. You can see that in the working out of things. That chapter in Acts is very illustrative of the course of the testimony and, I might say, the ingredients that make it up. So, beloved, let us take it home to our hearts that we are

on a straight course today. Let there be no weakening, no deviation, no compromise; but let it be like Paul in Philippians: "but one thing", chap 3: 13. That is a man on a straight course. There were others with him. Wherever you find the plural pronoun 'we' in the book of the Acts, it means that Luke, who wrote the book, was travelling with Paul at that point. So there is great encouragement in that. "Luke alone is with me", 2 Tim 4: 11. That man was still on a straight course. And two young men were to be on the same course: Paul says to Timothy "Take Mark, and bring him with thyself", 2 Tim 4: 11. When I think of the recovery that God has effected with me and with you, beloved! He has brought us back in grace, you might say like the second giving of the law, Deuteronomy. (I love the name of that book). He has brought us back to go now on a straight course. And what does that straight course involve? The fear of God; that was with Lydia, but an opened heart as with that woman and the things of God were taken into that heart. Paul's influence is as strong today as it was two thousand years ago; it is no different. The Spirit wrought in that man and the Spirit is still working out Paul's teaching, and the fellowship that he knew well, in separation. The Spirit is still working westward. How lovely then to see the prison opened, the great earthquake! Some of us have needed an earthquake to get us out of what is displeasing to God and to recover us to go on the straight course. What have we found, beloved? What I have found is greater liberty and enjoyment than I have ever known before in my life. I have known joy among the brethren before, but when you do not go on the straight course you are going to lose that joy, and it is the grace of God to recover us that we might continue to go westward with the testimony. It is not going to fade out; let us be certain of that. The wickedness of man has said only recently, Christianity is withered and will fade away. *It will not!* The name of Jesus is going to ring from pole to pole, from the river to the ends of the earth. There will be no opposition in that day. There will be no corrupting. There will be the completion of God's work in the westward movements of the testimony, and things are not going to fade out. If the light of the gospel goes out in Europe it will go out all of a sudden at one time. There is never any twilight at the end of the

dispensation. It is a fulness of glory in the glad tidings, and if we will but come the divine way we shall find that all our bonds are loosed.

There was a whole prison full of poor wretches and they listened to men with bleeding backs singing praises to God. And God answered it by blessing. I should like to think, as I see the faces of the beloved brethren, that there would be no one in bondage left here today. I had an interesting time last weekend: no less than seven persons were present who were not breaking bread. I wonder how many here among the young ones are not breaking bread? I can tell you from experience, because I held back for a long while through fear when I was young, that you will never be safe and you will never be happy until you give Christ the full portion from your heart. So let it be that persons find their bonds loosed today.

And what happens? At the end of that chapter the testimony, as it were, was enshrined in the heart of a woman and she would represent the features of the assembly that Christ loves to see. So Paul and Silas go back to Lydia and they see the brethren. Oh, let there be what Christ has died to secure in a westward glory in the testimony, the assembly in Christ Jesus! You read the gospel of John and you take account of Mr Taylor saying that wherever the capital 'W' is used for the word 'woman', the Spirit had the assembly in mind. The Lord says at the end "Mary", but He had said previously to her "Woman". And that, beloved, is to go through with us. Let us make nothing of ourselves, but let us magnify the grace that gives us the light of the assembly to walk in. We do not claim, in the arrogance of the past, that we are the church. There are believers all around us, our brethren in Christ, and one has said that even in the Catholic system there are more believers in Christ than anywhere else, because in numbers the Catholic system exceeds all others. But there are true believers there. One of them was made contact with by a young sister with us. The man was a Catholic but he said, I love the Lord Jesus. How marvellous that is! No one can use that title but one indwelt by the Spirit. So let us take heart, beloved; let us look out upon our brethren in Christ, and if we are on a straight course and preserved in it, let us seek out, as Mr Darby

said in his hymn, 'those who rove' (No.85). There are too many of them roving around loosely in Christendom. Let us go on, therefore, to the end.

We shall find that the next view is testing. It is northward. But what a view Psalm 48 gives us of the sides of the north - "the city of our God... the hill of his holiness". Let us realise that if we have had to come under discipline, as so many of us have, if we have found the bitter winds of discipline blowing in our circumstances, it is that we might have part with God in *His* circumstances. "The hill of his holiness" will brook nothing but what is pleasing to Him. Let us be prepared. All this line of things is so beautiful: "Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King". It is all worth while, beloved. I have brought more discipline on myself through my own transgressions than ever I have had from God. I might say, in normal circumstances, every son that He loves is disciplined. The chastening applies to all of us, but mostly we bring more upon ourselves because we have turned aside from the straight course. Let us go on straightforwardly. Paul says at one time of Peter and others: "I saw that they do not walk straightforwardly, according to the truth of the glad tidings" (Gal 2: 14), and Peter had to have the sides of the north applied to him. You say, That is not very attractive. But the attraction is that, through the means that God uses to bring us back to the straight course in His grace, we get the most wonderful enlarged view of the city of the great King. So let us not be afraid, beloved.

The north is the wind that first awakens the spices: "Awake, north wind, and come, thou south", Song of Sol 4: 16. We like the south; we could do with it, we say, all the time, but to help us to enjoy the south God arranges that we should be disciplined that we might be partakers of His holiness. Mount Zion is a lovely mountain. It is the dwelling-place of God. He retires into the glory of His mercy in Zion. What elevation there is in that! "According to his own mercy he saved us", Tit 3: 5. So we find dwelling conditions among the brethren, because we are all the subjects of divine and sovereign

mercy. Let us therefore see that between the beauty of mount Zion and the expression of His administration in blessing, the city of the great King, God has interposed the sides of the north. Which of us has not felt those sides enclosing us? God loves us too much to let us settle down to mind earthly things.

If we want the south we turn to Ezekiel 47, and we find there that everything that has come to us in the Spirit has come at the cost of the One who was altar, sacrifice, and offering priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. How blessed then to find that those waters come down! They issue; that is, there is a fulness of grace in this dispensation. I love one of Mr Darby's beautiful expressions as to John 4, where the Lord goes outside Israel to the poor Samaritan woman and the men of her city. He says, It was the torrent of God's grace that was irresistible. It is very blessed to think that that torrent is flowing, and it is flowing because a Man went to the cross, "left alone of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief", Isa 53: 3. I would appeal to anyone here who is not doing what He asked - "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22: 19) - to remember that that Man, God's best, was left alone of men. Let no one here leave Him alone. He says in the Psalms prophetically: "I am forgotten in their heart as a dead man", Ps 31: 12. It will not be a dead man that we remember tomorrow. We remember His dying, but we remember a living Jesus. The waters flow. Think of the beginning of the Acts! The southward side was there in that upper room. They were going to have the waters pouring forth from the south side of the altar.

They had witnessed the sacrifice of Christ. Mary was there, her soul riven with a sword as Simeon had said it would be (see Luke 2: 35). She was there, and the violent, impetuous blowing, the inwards of God, were in that scene where the house was filled before the persons were filled (see Acts 2: 2). So the waters issued. The issuing was in keeping with John's record that, when the spear pierced the side of a dead Christ, "immediately there came out blood and water", John 19: 34. And when the river of God, full of water in blessing, issued at Pentecost, it issued immediately at the moment the divine time had come for southward movement and that

wonderful river is flowing today. It makes glad "the city of God, the sanctuary of the habitations of the Most High", Ps 46: 4 - not 'habitation'; the city is one but the habitations are many and wherever there are persons walking in the light of the assembly, there is a habitation of God in the Spirit and He will have His portion tomorrow.

So let us be encouraged that while there is much to test in the west (testimonially we are, as the prophet says, "small, few, of no account", Isa 16: 14), yet in the mind of heaven the light of the testimony is going on to the end. Let us accept the disciplines of the sides of the north. Let us revel in the glorious outpouring of blessing as at this time in this place, southward. What of the end? The end is marvellous. We are looking, beloved, towards the sun-rising, not the sunsetting. Sir Edward Grey, foreign secretary at the time of the first world war, said, The lights are going out all over Europe; they will never be rekindled in our time. That is man's view. But the river of God's grace is going on. It is in Europe yet, and in all the extensions - America, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa even. Think of the way God has acted in the extension of the testimony.

But the last view that Moses had was eastward, toward the sun-rising. So it is that in Philippians, another prison epistle, Paul, going out to martyrdom from a Roman prison, says "our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour". Let us go on enjoying our associations of life together, beloved, and let us realise every moment that He may come tonight. He may come tomorrow morning, but if not, by the Spirit He will say again, "I am coming to you". I love to look eastward. The prophet Elisha when dying said to the king: "Open the window eastward... Shoot", 2 Kings 13: 17.

Let something of that energy that was seen in the dying prophet come into this occasion and let us look toward the sun-rising. We shall see His body of glory, and when we see Him we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. There will be power there. There was power in the resurrection of Christ. The psalm says prophetically that the Father "flew fast upon the wings of the wind...

He reached forth from above, he took me, he drew me out of great waters" (Ps 18: 10, 16), the waters of death. But what will it be like when that assembling shout is heard and the sun will rise for the myriads in the resurrection and for the comparative few, compared with them, who will be among the living who remain? We are that today, but my eyes are on the coming of the Lord. May we be encouraged therefore. I do not say that Moses could have seen all this, but think of the glory of our time when all of this can open up to us! Let our hearts be cheered and warmed and filled and made steadfast by God's Spirit, for His Name's sake.

GRANGEMOUTH

28 March 1981

THE BLESSING OF THE GENERATIONS

E.C.Burr

**Genesis 22: 17,18; 26: 3-6; 27: 27-29; 32: 26-29; 48: 8,9;
Deuteronomy 33: 1, 13, 26-29**

I have read quite a lot of verses of scripture but I would like to say a word about the blessing of the generations. I am sure that would be something as to which we are all concerned. As we grow older we look for further generations for God. Indeed when we are young we should also be thinking of another generation being for God. That is not to say that we are not expecting the Lord to come, but as long as the saints are here there will be a need for a fresh generation that is blessed. All of us who are parents long that the next generation should be blessed. Some indeed are old enough to have grandchildren and they look for them to be blessed.

Genesis is a book of generations. We have lists of generations given to us more than once, but in the history from Abraham down to Joseph the generations are worked out for us, and the scriptures we have read show that God intended to bless every generation. He told Abraham that He would bless him and He told Isaac that He would bless him, and He blessed Jacob, and we can see in the blessing of Moses that He also blessed Joseph. That is the side of blessing on the generations from God. But there is another side of blessing in which, after Abraham, each generation blesses the next.

So that it is not just a question of God blessing one generation after the other; what comes out in these scriptures is that in the succeeding generation each father blesses the next. And while each of us would look to God for His blessing on each generation, there is an exercise for us as to our own capacity to bless our children.

When I speak about our children I do not just speak about our children according to the flesh but I embrace what I might call the children of the assembly, as to which each of us has some responsibility. The side of responsibility comes out in the history of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and also of Joseph, but the important

thing is that, however responsibility was fulfilled, God would not give up or change His intention to bless. I think that we need faith as to this. There are many aspects in Christianity where we need more faith than we have, but we need faith in God's commitment to bless each generation.

We also observe in these scriptures that none of the blessings with which the fathers blessed the next generation were withdrawn.

Indeed Isaac says "blessed he shall be" chap 27: 33. That in itself also implies that we bless the next generation in faith. I speak of these things because of the value to us of the younger brethren, so many of whom we see happily among the saints, but as to whom we would also be concerned that they would be retained in the sphere of blessing. Their own responsibility is not left out, but I think that what will hold them is the positive divine disposition to bless. Most of us who are older would have to say that it was the divine disposition to bless which has retained us, and therefore we need faith that God would bless another generation.

I will not go over the history of these men in detail, but they bear some remark because generally there is a reason why they are blessed. Abraham had been promised blessing before chapter 22.

When he was called to go out of the land of his fathers God said He would bless him, and although he failed in his life various times before chapter 22, God takes account of his obedience in that chapter as a fresh basis for blessing him. It is therefore a word to what I may speak of as the parental generation, whether our obedience to God is providing Him with a basis for blessing our children. I do not speak of the typical bearing of chapter 22 - how precious it is though - but I refer to Abraham's relations with God as a man with God. It is clear in chapter 22 that it was because of his obedience that God committed Himself again to blessing him.

Therefore let us, beloved, fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, examine ourselves as to whether our separation and our obedience is such as will give God a basis to bless the following generation. It is not that God acts only in response to our responsibility, for He is sovereign and will act as He will, but we are

responsible to provide Him with a basis for His acting. What characterises Abraham is separation and obedience.

In connection with Isaac God in chapter 22 promises Abraham that He would bless him richly. So when we come to Isaac in chapter 26, again the blessing is put on the ground of obedience; that is, God does not say to Isaac, Leave the land in which you are.

He had said that to Abraham. But He says here "Sojourn in this land". God had put him in a sphere of blessing and he was to remain there, and as he remained there God would bless him and his seed. I suggest to the brethren that from the side of our responsibility this relates to our committal to what God has given us; that is to say, as we remain committed to the blessings which God has given to us we again provide Him with a basis on which He would bless another generation. I think it is fairly easy to see this, because none of us would say, I will give everything up and God will look after my children or that we in our generation can surrender the blessings which God has given us; He will carry them over to another generation. It is easy for us to see that we provide God with a basis for blessing another generation by our own committal to the blessings of God.

When we come to the blessings of God to Jacob we come to a man who wanted to be blessed. This is not something that is exactly said of Abraham or Isaac, but it is what Jacob said: "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me". I think that what would be in Jacob's view - of course Jacob thought a lot about himself - would be that the next generation was not to be blessed unless he was blessed. He already had a big family but he is concerned that he should know the blessing of God. I think that the way in which Jacob provided God with a basis to bless him was that Jacob had to learn the kind of man that he himself was. That is a lesson which most of us are very slow to learn, and therefore we sometimes will bring up our children, as you might say, in the flesh, because we have never ourselves learned what we are in the flesh. But Jacob at this point was crippled. That was the sign that he had learned what he was, and God blessed him. One thing to be noticed in this connection is that if

a man was crippled everybody can see it, and if any of us has learned what we really are everyone would be able to see what we had so learned. Jacob bore the marks of his wrestling for the rest of his life, and everyone could see that he was different. Indeed people had to learn to call him by a new name. That indicates another basis on which God continues to bless: He blesses on the basis of our commitment to separation, to obedience, to our committal to what He already had given to us; but perhaps, most important, to our having learned what we are ourselves. I think that it requires faith which embraces the fact that God is committed to blessing. It says of those down to Abraham that they all died in faith, not having received the promises, but they went on with one generation after the other knowing that God was disposed to bless them.

Now before I refer to Deuteronomy I refer to the other side of those men, that is to say their readiness to bless their children. In Genesis 27 Isaac was disposed to bless, but he was going to bless the wrong man. It is an indication in one way that there was at least one lesson that Abraham had not taught Isaac because Abraham had made this mistake as well. He said "Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee! " Gen 17: 18. It is like Isaac wanting to bless Esau.

God says of Ishmael "I will bless him" (v 20), but He says "my covenant will I establish with Isaac"; that is to say, what I am committed to is the blessing of Isaac. Now when Isaac comes to bless he tells his wife to send Esau so that he may bless him, but this is overruled and it is Jacob who is blessed. Isaac's blessing of Jacob seems to me to look right on to the blessing of Joseph: indeed that blessing in Genesis 27 is very similar in spirit to Jacob's blessing of Joseph and to Moses' blessing of Joseph. That I think raises the question with us as to our understanding of the purpose of God so that we can bless our children in the light of it. We are not really looking for material blessings for the succeeding generation. What we are looking for is blessing according to God, and therefore according to God's own thoughts. Joseph shows that he has not learned all the lessons, because the same thing that marks his father and his grandfather marks him. Joseph brought his sons to Jacob

and would have had them blessed in a certain way; that is to say, Joseph had not learned all that he might have done from his grandparents. But Jacob had learned something. He crosses his hands and says "I know"; and he blesses another generation in the light of the divine intention towards them. It is an exercise for us as to our ability to bless the next generation. We might ask what that means, and it might not be easy just to say what it does mean, but one thing which should be clear is that we shall not be able to bless the next generation unless we have a sense of being blessed in our own generation.

At the end of this part of the history of Israel, that is in Deuteronomy 33, we have a man in Moses who is going to bless for the enjoyment of the heavenly possession. He says of Reuben "let his men be few". I think that is the most limited of the blessings of this chapter. Every other tribe has a very full blessing. The blessing of Joseph echoes Jacob's blessing of Joseph, and it also echoes the blessing of Isaac on Jacob. The first thing Moses says in blessing Joseph is, "Blessed of Jehovah be his land!" Moses understands that if a tribe is to be richly blessed the first blessing must come from God. Moses had carried the tribes with affection through the wilderness and he will have them blessed by God, even if in his own spirit he blesses them as well.

At the end of this chapter Moses is not occupying Israel so much with their blessings as with the God from whom the blessings have come. He says "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun"; that is, the source of the blessing is greater than all the blessings; and this is perhaps the greatest blessing which we can communicate to another generation, that we impress on them that God is greater than any blessing. But Moses also sees Israel resting in blessing.

He says "Happy art thou, Israel! Who is like unto thee... ?" I think that Moses is looking a long way ahead to generations to come, where in the sense of the blessing of God there will always be a generation that is happy. It will be noticed that in Isaac's blessing of Jacob he says "God give thee plenty of corn and new wine", and Israel dwells in a land of corn and new wine. That is why I say that

Isaac had been able to bless his son in the light of the purpose of God.

I believe that the blessing of the succeeding generation is a concern in the hearts of all of us. God is disposed to bless each generation. There are areas of responsibility on our side which justify God in blessing, although He is sovereign and can bless where He will. That does not give us an escape from our responsibility; but God's disposition is to bless, and our disposition should be to bring blessing on the next generation. We have many of another generation here today. I think we can say that we have a sense that God is blessing them, and the saints in care are blessing them as well; but I draw attention to this, beloved, that the blessing of the succeeding generation is something which must be near our hearts, and also touches our responsibility.

May the Lord help us in understanding these things and working them out from our side, providing God with a basis on which He can give effect to His own disposition, for His Name's sake.

COLOGNE

2 May 1981

REVIVAL

D.J.Hutson

Ezekiel 37: 1-10

One is thinking, beloved, of revival. What we look for, if any matters are unresolved, is really the revival of the work of God, or rather of our being true to it, so that the work of God prevails and normal conditions and relationships are experienced. But then there is also a far wider field in which we look for revival. We have been reminded of the scope of redemption, and we are often reminded in our prayer meetings of the vast number that there are who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, believers throughout the world, thousands, millions of them that are not available to us, unknown to us. Soon a time is coming when all will be gathered in, all will be caught up, and thus we shall ever be with the Lord, and that time for which the Lord is waiting will arrive, when He will have the assembly for Himself. What will transpire in view of that is a great revival. In a sense these dry bones would be like what we have been reminded much of lately in our conversations over the word and in the ministry - the basic character of the work of God.

You might say everything else is gone, the adornment and all that would beautify it is missing, so that there is no apparent life there; for some reason something has come in. These were not originally dry bones, but that is what they had become in the process of time and through what had happened to them. With the work of God, whatever may happen, however it may be stripped and lost to view, there is that which remains. The work of God is indestructible. Soon it is to be clothed with a body that is suited to it, and that something which can be clothed is suggested to us in these dry bones which can be wrought upon and clothed with a view to there eventually being this exceeding great army.

We have been reminded that God uses time and that He patiently waits; the fulness of time comes and then God acts. He sent forth His Son and He sent out His Spirit, but along with that He

would have us to be intelligent in what He is doing, and He would have us further what He is doing. It is His work, and the exercise on our part in relation to it is all to increase our knowledge of Himself and to make us realise that it must be His work, for as Paul could say: "I have planted; Apollos watered; but God has given the increase", 1 Cor 3: 6.

This scripture in Ezekiel shows that the prophetic word had a very great part in this great matter of revival; so it is important that we should continue with these meetings, as we have them, to make way for the prophetic word, and important too that we should be exercised as to these meetings. One feels the challenge of it oneself, as often not having anything to bring in, and being concerned that what is brought in may be prophetic. Paul says "but rather that ye may prophesy", 1 Cor 14: 1. There is an important character to the prophetic word. Ezekiel here is told to "Prophecy over these bones, and say unto them, Ye dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah". There is nothing in the way of reproof or criticism addressed to these bones; what is presented to them is the operations of God, the power of God. He says to them "I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will put sinews upon you, and will bring flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live"; that is, that what is presented is objective, and yet it is to have a great effect upon those to whom it is addressed. It is really the operation of the power of God. Paul was concerned as to Ephesus, in the height of his ministry, that the saints should know the exceeding greatness of the power of God towards those who believe (see Eph 1: 19). This power is called into play here and is presented to these dry bones with a view, as it says, that "ye shall know that I am Jehovah". So that the great end in view is the knowledge of God.

So Ezekiel prophesies and these things begin to happen, not that he does anything. As I have said, it is God who is operating powerfully in relation to the prophetic word, and there is a rustling and the bones come together, bone to its bone, and sinews and flesh and skin, but there was no breath in them. Then that brings in

another matter, that the prophet is to address himself to the wind, as it says: "say to the wind... Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live". It is interesting that he says "Come from the four winds"; that is, that what God is doing in revival in any case is not of an isolated nature but stands related to what He is doing on a very broad front, doing universally, and the power that is operating universally and the power that is to be seen in operation elsewhere is to be brought in in relation to revival so that the whole should be brought together as one great operation. So he calls upon the Spirit, as we were reminded in ministry when we were helped in relation to addressing the Holy Spirit; this scripture was much before us then, how the prophet could say "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live". Think of the urgency that there seems to be in his expression "O breath", or as the note says, 'O Spirit'. There would be an urgency with us in relation to the operations of the Holy Spirit. It is His own operation and it is the breath that came into them. It was not the prophet that put the breath in them, it was again the operation of God, and God's operation sovereignly. Where God operates it is sovereign, and where the Spirit operates it is sovereign, but nevertheless it seems that in some way the prophet and the prophetic word are related to that with a certain urgency, showing that the prophet is intelligent as to it. He is not without feeling in relation to what God is doing and in relation to the operations of the Holy Spirit. So it says, as a result, "I prophesied as he had commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army". So now there was something which was able to stand, stand here. An army would suggest what is here in the testimony. There is that here now that is able to stand militantly in the testimony. Then as we think of the exceeding great army we would look forward to that time of which we have spoken, which we have often been reminded is related to a military operation - the last trump; and those references to the rank; "each in his own rank: the first-fruits, Christ; then those that are the Christ's at his coming", 1 Cor 15: 23. What it will be, beloved! Very soon the Spirit of God will operate in this way, and the

whole assembly, those living at the present time, "we, the living who remain", and the dead in Christ raised first, all stand upon their feet for a moment of time before being caught up to be ever with the Lord. What a great army, we may say, at the last trump, that great call from heaven when all will be secured! There will be no dry bones then; all will be clothed worthily of what is there to be clothed. Paul could also speak of wanting rather to be clothed, and not unclothed (see 2 Cor 5: 4); that is, he did not wish to be one of those who would be buried, whose body would go into dissolution, but he wanted to be amongst "the living who remain" and to be alive at this great triumphal shout from heaven when all will be caught up.

Well beloved, God is waiting, the Lord is waiting, but we are to be with Him in what He is waiting for, and to be intelligently with Him and having our part in the furtherance of this great revival which is soon to take place. It may be taking place here and there, in ones and twos. How we thank God for it as we hear of them, both as being recovered to the truth and as available for the testimony, but we have the assurance that soon all that which is apparently dead and inactive at the present time is to be revived. There is going to be an exceeding great army which is going to answer to that final call to be with Christ for ever.

LONDON

6 October 1981

MEASURES

D.L.Stewart

Ruth 3: 15-17; John 2: 5-10; Ephesians 4: 15, 16

The link between these scriptures is in the thought of measure. I would like to draw attention to the way in which God works, not on the public side but in an inward way, and this book of Ruth, and especially Naomi, would speak of what we often refer to as that which is in the body of the saints - a most important matter. In times of crisis we have often spoken of it; we realise that there is something that God has in a secret way which will stand the test. It is His own work, He knows it is there, He has had to do with it by the Spirit, He has wrought in persons inwardly, yet there may be no public demonstration of it. The book of Ruth comes between Judges and the ministry of Samuel, which is really the bringing in of Christ and the establishing of things in a definite way amongst the saints in a time of recovery in which Christ has His place. But between the condition of things in Judges that we are so well acquainted with and Samuel, we have the book of Ruth and an indication of the means by which God operates in view of Christ, in view of His choicest thoughts being made possible; and the way to it seems to be through these women that appear in this part of Scripture. There are Naomi and Ruth, and the women in the last chapter who name the child as worshipper, and there is also Hannah. This is the secret way in which God operates.

Now as to this section read I am thinking of the way that Christ as typified in Boaz is concerned about the nourishing of this feature amongst the saints, this inward subjective feature that is in the body of the saints. He has great things in mind and there is much to be effected. It says "he went into the city" in view of completing the matter there, but he also has in view the nourishing of what Naomi might represent. He says "Bring the cloak ... and he measured six measures of barley". He had in mind the nourishing of the work of God; the way it is nourished is by the supply of what speaks of

another Man, a risen Man. If there is to be the working of these things among us, if there is to be the maintenance of the recovery - and I believe the Spirit of God would challenge us as to this - it must be nourished by the features of a Man who has been into death and has been raised from the dead. The glorious matter of the resurrection is the foundation upon which everything relating to God's thoughts is to be reached, and it is that kind of Man whom the saints have to feed upon and not any other kind of man. So Boaz is thinking about the mother-in-law and about this feminine, subjective feature, and he is concerned that it should be nourished, for he said to her: "Go not empty to thy mother-in-law".

In John we again have the way the Lord operates and in this gospel He does not work with what is official. He constantly ignores the official. It says that there were six stone water-vessels standing there. Evidently they represent the permanency of the work of God in the saints, yet they were not being used, they were standing there. They represent what He can take on. Then the matter of purification; how essential that is if this work is to go on in the saints in view of bringing in what is new, and what is called the good wine in this section. How important is the application of the water - no doubt the death of Christ in that aspect which has a purifying effect. We are together in occasions like this in view of purifying. Then I wanted to point out specially the fact that the servants knew. I understand these servants were of the menial type; in fact, in the meaning of the word, there is a reference to those that run on errands. It refers to the insignificant feature of service among the saints; but the servants knew, and the feast-master or the official element did not know; he did not know how the deficiency was to be met. How each one of us would love to be among these servants who know! The mother of Jesus was a little out of touch for a moment, especially as to the timing of things; and she, and we too, have to learn from His word; "mine hour has not yet come". How important that we should be getting things directly from Himself! The servants get the word from Him; and that would raise the question with us as to how near we are to Christ, the Son of God, this glorious Person who is bringing in a

new order of things altogether. They had never tasted the like of it in this scene before, the good wine of Christianity, and the Spirit would maintain it for us in the day we are in. It comes in through these vessels that were standing there available, holding two or three measures. The Lord knew the measure of every vessel and He knows the measure of every one of us. I love to think of the servant in Genesis 24. He knew the measure that he had for Rebecca and no doubt the Lord knows the measure that He has for every one of us, and the Spirit is working in view of that measure being available under His hand.

The scripture in Ephesians emphasises again the thought of measure: "according to the working in its measure of each one part". This is the body of course. The working of the body is one of the greatest things in the divine mind, perhaps specially so at the present time when what is distinctive in leadership is not available.

There is nothing of human arrangement connected with it and it has no need of natural ability. To the mind of man it would be mysterious; but it works, and the impulses and supply from One who "has ascended up above all the heavens" are transmitted through the joints of supply so that the body is "working for itself" and there is "its self-building up in love". This is the objective in the chapter, and the purpose for which the Lord has given gifts - and we thank God that He has given gifts - but it is in order that the body might operate by itself. It is not a question of what is yet to come but of what is to operate now. This chapter of course covers the great scope of divine operations, but, nevertheless, these things are meant to work wherever the body is represented. The question would be for each one of us as to whether we are filling out our measure "according to the working in its measure of each one part". May the Lord bless His word.

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THE CHILDREN'S TREASURE

Recently millions of pounds worth of gold treasure was recovered from a ship deep down on the sea-bed. At the same place there are the bodies of men hastened to eternity when their ship was sunk.

Who knows how many of these are treasures of the Saviour's as being the bodies of those who have trusted in Him! In life the body of a believer as an earthen vessel is a storehouse for the riches of divine grace. It is the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus that is the treasure.

The Lord Jesus spoke on more than one occasion of the need for us to have treasure in heaven. This must be in our knowledge of Himself and the enjoyment of His love. It is not intended that we should look on heaven as being a long way off although we perhaps do so unintentionally. It is true that God dwells in a heaven altogether beyond our thinking powers. Nevertheless there are scriptural expressions which bring heaven very near to us. They help us to enter with our child-like minds into what is above mere earthly and material things. Jacob, after his well-known dream about the ladder, discovered that he was really at the gate of heaven. Why not go in? However, such knowledge as he then gained of God became a treasure in heaven and his heart came back to it in time.

Centuries later the same Almighty God promised to open the windows of heaven and pour out a great blessing on His obedient people. This is to be enjoyed at this time also because the Holy Spirit has come and has brought the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Not only did the saints in Malachi's time have heavenly blessing and a heavenly book of remembrance

written for them but their God said that they would them selves be "unto me a peculiar treasure" - for Himself alone! What a privilege!

The apostle John found a door opened in heaven and an invitation to "Come up here". No doubt this was a special call for a special purpose but heaven is surely open to those whose treasure is there and therefore their hearts too. Is your heart there?

J.C.Evershed