

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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Contents

THE WILDERNESS

RESULTS OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST'S LOVE

THE CHILDREN'S UPWARD WAY

THE WILDERNESS

Reading at Croydon with J.B.Stoney (No.4)

Exodus 15: 2-27; Numbers 21: 4-9, 16-18

Our subject this evening is the wilderness. The first thing we have to learn is at the end of chapter 14, that the only way out of Egypt was through the Red Sea, figuratively the death of Christ. Israel are out of the ruin and misery of Egypt through death, and now they go three days' journey in the wilderness, and they find nothing but bitter water. It was a great disappointment to them. Hence they called it Marah. I think we talk of the wilderness and of wilderness truth, but for my part I know but little of the wilderness. We have to learn it experimentally. These three chapters, 15 to 17, set forth the grace of God for the wilderness. There is nothing there for you but God. Then after thirty-nine years Israel came to Numbers 21, and now they find that they are unmendably bad. That is the great experience of the wilderness on our side. Then there is entrance on a new order of things. The Son of man, typified by the brazen serpent, must be lifted up, and every believer in Him now finds life in Christ, and the Spirit of God is given to him.

Is there any relation between the law and the wilderness?

The law does not come in till after chapter 17; it comes in to expose our natural state. It is added because of transgression. You now come practically to Romans 7. You find out that you are unimprovable. A man who knew that would be prepared for death here. The apostle can say "death works in us".

You said at the end of thirty-nine years they found they were unmendably bad: is that what the wilderness is for?

My impression is, you are not in your true path in the wilderness until you learn "that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing". The three chapters here set forth how God is for you in the wilderness, but I do not think you are a dependent man till you know yourself as a "wretched man".

Would you say that again, please.

I think until you have learned the nothingness of yourself you do not take your true place in the wilderness; you see that Israel after Numbers 21 had no other support than the manna which they had at the beginning, but until then they were not really dependent on God.

There is this difference, that with them the first part of the wilderness was a test to man in the flesh, but we begin with the flesh judged.

Yes; but though you may have accepted the doctrine, you have practically to learn it. You are thoroughly in the wilderness if you are wholly dependent on God. There is nothing for a Christian from the earth.

He is not dependent on God until he has judged the flesh.

No. Yet we very often accept the truth, but circumstances disclose how much of the truth we have.

Would you say that when Israel had learned that lesson they were at the end?

They come out now in a new light, they are standing for God, and yet they had no other food than the manna, and they encounter a new enemy - Balaam.

There is no spiritual conflict, is there, until a man has learned dependence?

It is when you are dependent on God that you are assailed. I do not see that you are truly dependent except manna is your food. I think, practically speaking, there is nothing one knows so little about as manna.

Will you tell us what manna is?

Well, I will put another question to you. There was no manna in the ark in the temple, it was only in the tabernacle. Why? When Israel are in the land, God's requirements of man will be fully carried out. I understand living by manna to be living in complete dependence upon God.

What does it typify?

Christ in humiliation. Now, will you explain what that is? I cannot. I see what it is. I think one has little idea of what it is to do everything in dependence.

But the manna was given before the law. The law was to test.

I think it shows that God's provision for His people in the wilderness was there before the law was given at all.

Yes; but when they came to Numbers 21 they did not get more than the manna. When a man is tested he does not get any more than manna. I think you do not enter into the wilderness properly until you get to Numbers 21. Still, it is not all in a minute that you come to that.

The expression has been used 'in the land'. What does it mean?

It means in Canaan. There Israel will enjoy earthly blessings - not living simply in dependence on God where there was nothing else for them. Many would like to live now as surrounded with favours from the earth. There is abundance for you on the earth, but not from it.

Then do we still need the manna because we are in the wilderness?

It is your only support. The question is how much you use it.

The manna and the old corn of the land overlap, do they not?

Practically in our experience they do. If you do not know John 6 and feed upon Him as your life you cannot know Him as manna. You could not begin at manna and go up to the other. If you do not know what it is to have fed upon Christ in death you cannot learn what His grace was here as man. You must go that way to learn it; that is, we begin with Him in death.

But I think most have connected John 6 with manna.

That has hindered a great many. You must learn John 6 in order to arrive at the manna. It is the contrast to the manna.

Do you mean we begin with Christ in death?

How do you get out of Egypt? By death - by walking through the Red Sea. You have fed upon Christ's death, you are in Christ now.

Now the point is how you are to go on here. If you are true, you accept death. The highest place a Christian can come to is typified in these chapters. The way before you is death. I have not met many who like that path; have you? But I believe it is a path of great blessing. Instead of getting something more to interest you here you find that things are fading away. We see Paul in prison and John in Patmos at the end of their course. I know I am in the wilderness when I have nothing from man but everything from God. "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content". I think it is a great thing for a Christian to learn that there is nothing for him in the wilderness but God.

The wilderness does not typify a place.

No, it does not; it is moral, it is not a place to stop in, it is to pass through.

And it is not any part of God's counsels. No.

What is the difference between John 6 and manna? John 6 is, You have "passed out of death into life". How can you get out of death but by death? You cannot act on a thing that is dead. Therefore the truth applies. A Christian according to Romans 6 reckons himself dead to sin but alive unto God - not through, but in Christ Jesus our Lord. Now you are going to begin a new history upon earth. What do you expect? Something pleasing to the flesh? No, but bitter water. "Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin". You do not get that till you get to Numbers 21.

Would you say a word more on "always delivered unto death". Is it the same as "reckon yourselves dead"?

No; death is on everything. Everything is gone for Paul, even Jerusalem is gone. Paul could not always say he longed to depart, for he was full of Jerusalem.

There is great gain in accepting death.

The apostle says to the Corinthians, "death works in us, but life in you".

But there is a great difference when we accept that.

If I had accepted it years ago I should have been saved many a trial. You are sure to be disappointed when you expect smooth times in the wilderness. The gourd comes up in a night, and withers in a night. This I call bitter water.

In Peter it is "ceased from sin".

Quite so. He begins at the fact of sinning. "Arm yourselves therefore". The flesh must suffer to do it. You do not gratify the flesh. You suffer; the sin is stopped. If you gratify the flesh you commit a sin.

I suppose the basis for carrying it out is Romans 6 and 7.

Yes; those chapters give you the basis for learning the wilderness, and every day you learn more and more what is to be refused. I think Deuteronomy 8 will help us. He "led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no". The first temptation Satan presents to Christ is to use His own power. The Lord, as a dependent man, says "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God".

It is a pity we do not begin with manna.

I quite agree to that, but we have to learn dependence.

We are learning it, I hope. Nothing gives me such a sense of what the devil is as that he should ask the Lord to use His own power to turn a stone into bread. If I look around I say, Where is there a dependent man? No one as a rule is dependent when he has independent means. Mr Wigram has said he would know a rich man, if he met him, by his self-reliance.

A self-reliant man is not dead to sin.

He certainly is not bearing about in his body the dying of Jesus. Often we think a poor man is the only one who needs faith, but it is the rich man who needs it most.

Is that why it says "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"?

Exactly. If God does not direct you to do a thing, you have gone outside Him - it is your own will. When you can say, I can do it if I like, I say, Take care what you do. I do not think we sufficiently recognise that independence is sin. It is so touching, the Lord saying, I will act only by the word of God. The man who gives way to the first temptation will fall under the second. He will accept a slice of the world, and then he will look for God to show him some proof of His favour.

Casting Himself down from the pinnacle, do you mean?

Yes. I do not seek proofs of His care when I know He is for me.

What does "death worketh in us, but life in you" mean?

It means you must be in life first, because you have been dead, and then you are ready to accept death here. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus". There are three classes of believers. One does not know how to be dead to sin. Another does know, but is not always there. Another, the apostle Paul, was always there. He was truly in the wilderness. Hence God rolls in death. When anything is in the way, and you are trying to turn from it, you will find that death is rolled in upon it.

Power is given for the action.

Quite so. The stone does not go from before the wheel till the wheel comes to it.

Rolling in death is God dealing with things I have to pass through.

Yes; but He comes in to help you. I said to a young man once, Are you in that position for the Lord's service? He said, No, but that he would give it up in three months. Shortly after his horse rolled on him in the park, and he had to give it up there and then. Perhaps if he had never felt his position he would not have been helped to give it up. God thus helps a man in a way he cannot help himself. A Christian who is not progressing has an easier path.

Is always being delivered, not what we do but what God does for us?

Yes. He is not pressing you beyond your measure. Paul was cast into prison. You might think this too severe discipline, but he had better times there than he had before; he had such revelations from the Lord. If you progress you are opposed. Amalek would prevent you from being in the wilderness a dependent man; he would drive Israel back to Egypt. On the other hand Balaam represents the corrupting influence of society; he comes after Numbers 21; from him the Corinthians suffered.

Not necessarily religious?

No. You get infected in worldly society. One sees it in one's children.

But Balaam's aim was to turn them away from God.

Quite so; but, first, it is Amalek - to hinder you being truly in the wilderness. Now that you know John 3 and 4 - life in Christ, and the Spirit of God in you - you begin to stand for the Lord; you are leaving the wilderness for the land. Now Balaam confronts you.

What is the object of Balaam?

Balaam's opposition is a contrast to Amalek's. Amalek comes forth to fight openly to resist you, while Balaam seeks to corrupt you by social intercourse. Those are the two ordinary forms of evil - violence and corruption. What Amalek seeks is to prevent you from taking the place of dependence. But now you have power.

Would the purpose of Balaam be to prevent your entering into life?

You have entered it.

I mean the associations of life.

I quite agree, because in them you would eventually cross over Jordan.

Is Amalek the first power of the enemy?

Yes, the first on entering the wilderness. There were four. 1st, Pharaoh. He has been destroyed, Satan annulled. Next, Amalek, to

prevent you from being a dependent man. When you have learned to have no confidence in the flesh, when you have experimentally accepted Romans 6 and 7, then you are on new ground. Thirdly, you are opposed by Balaam. There is an interval between Balaam and the last, which is the seven nations of Canaan. You confront these where you are, in the power of your heavenly position.

Who are the four then?

Pharaoh; he is gone in death. Then Amalek, then Balaam, and then the seven nations, as in Ephesians 6. If one realised the true nature of the opposition to us on the earth, what a time should we have here!

Will you go back to the manna as to its application to us?

It is your only support here - even after you are over Jordan. You can, as a Christian, get nothing from this scene; hence it is a wilderness to you. But God gives you manna.

The manna adapts itself to our daily circumstances. It is given to the Christian in the wilderness.

Do you limit it then to our wilderness path, not to what we had last night?

Yes, I limit it to the wilderness. "Part with me" is as He is now.

Would that be the old corn of the land?

Yes. The manna is the grace of Christ as He walked here, as we read: "the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God", Gal 2: 20.

It is the responsible life in the wilderness.

Exactly. I think one knows very little about manna. I think the idea of our blessed Lord, the Son of God, being a dependent Man is too wonderful to compass.

One could understand it better during the three years of His ministry, because then, if you understand me, it was His own side of things - declaring the Father. To us His thirty years in private life, when He acted in everything in dependence on God, is incomprehensible.

What a life of beauty in a man! It was not anything He *found* here, for He *brought* all here.

Of course that is not the whole truth of His life.

Oh! He had communion with the Father always. But at the end of the thirty years the voice from heaven declared: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

We are told so little about those thirty years. Would it be the hidden manna?

Oh! I think there is something in His life that we do not understand.

But we shall learn it probably.

Quite so. But the more you think of it the more you marvel. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

How do we get manna?

Christ gives it. "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God". If you have Christ as your life you are living in His grace down here, the grace of a dependent man.

Is it Philippians 2?

There He is our example.

Do we get it through the Scriptures?

The Scriptures tell you what you are to get. People think it is by reading the Scriptures that you obtain grace. Scripture tells you what you are to get.

Do you mean you get it by occupation with Christ?

Yes, certainly, I get grace from the Lord Himself - "by the faith of the Son of God".

Is it the contemplation of Christ in the gospels?

As I understand, it is actually imparted to you from Himself, as the Spirit of God occupies you with Him. I said once to a sister, When you were in the storm at sea, what were you thinking of? She replied, I was thinking of the Lord in the storm. Ah, I returned, if you

had been occupied with Him where He is, you would have been like Him where He was.

Then manna is support. It always is.

Do you mean that if we get occupied with Him where He is, we can act as He did?

Yes, we can act as He did, but you must gather it before the sun is up. It has led to morning prayers, I daresay. I ought to begin everything, assured that His grace is sufficient to carry me through. If you have the manna for the day you may start, you are sure to be brought to the desired haven whatever you undertake.

It is not simply by meditating that you get it.

You feed on Christ's death to enjoy His life. If you abide in Him you will walk here as He walked. He left us an example that we should follow His steps.

I should think that if we were occupied with the Lord we should feed on Him as the manna.

But you must begin above with Him where He is. You cannot begin with Him here - He is not here.

I thought the manna was Christ in humiliation.

Yes, but you must be in the life of Christ outside of everything first. Then He leads you out according to the grace in which He lived here, even in the smallest details.

May we take Stephen as an example? He expressed himself as the Lord did.

Exactly, and no doubt he came out like Him.

What is the old corn of the land?

It is life in heaven. It is where it grew. If you had said, then you must eat the old corn of the land before the manna, I should have agreed with you. Christ ministers His grace to you in your circumstances down here; that is manna. Galatians 2: 20 includes both. Christ

liveth in me, and I am living down here. "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God".

I did not connect the words "faith of the Son of God" with earth before. I connected it with Him where He is; but it says, "who loved me, and gave himself for me".

Quite so, that confirms it.

You say the wilderness is necessary for us.

Yes; I think the trials and sorrows make Christ nearer and dearer to us. He is the manna, the smitten rock, and the intercessor, your true provision in the wilderness. The testing supervenes in order that you may know yourself, and thus be in happy dependence.

To me it is a new thought that we do not feed on the manna morally till after we have passed through Numbers 21.

You are not ready for it till then. Israel was not ready for it. We read, "our soul loatheth this light bread".

I always thought that the food of our souls here was manna, but many Christians have never really fed on it.

That is just what I said to the sister when in a storm. If you are only thinking of the Lord in the storm you are not like Him. You would be like Him where He was if you were living in Him where He is.

What is "our soul loatheth this light bread"?

They could not brook dependence. If you want a picture of a Christian in the wilderness read Romans 12 and 13 - responsibility to Christ, the church and the world. You are in the wilderness, but God is for you.

Do we get manna apart from meditating upon the Scriptures?

Do you get the Holy Ghost from the Scriptures?

No.

Well, the Scriptures give you nothing, they tell you what you are to get. The Scriptures reveal to you the blessings given to you, but you have to enjoy them. There are two classes of readers. One reads to

get the meaning of the words, and the other in order to be in the mind of God. In the Scriptures you get the Lord. They set you longing then.

Do they satisfy the longing then?

Oh! except you are exercised you do not get anything. First you receive the light of the word, then there is exercise, then prayer, and then the Spirit makes it good to you.

In regard to the manna, a great many people think it is a sort of recalling what Christ was here; but I think it is daily grace for daily need.

To be sure it is - the grace in which He walked here.

But does not that come to us very much in the way of reminiscence?

There is no store in you. Yesterday's manna is worse than useless. All grace must come fresh from Christ. Do we all understand that meditation is not feeding?

A cow furnishes a good pattern - it first takes in, then ruminates, then assimilates it.

That is getting the good of what you have taken in.

Now you have it. That is the next step. You get the good first, and you then are in keeping with it.

RESULTS OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST'S LOVE

R.W.Flowerdew

Revelation 22: 8,9,16,17; John 13: 21-31

I desire to speak about certain results of the knowledge of the love of Jesus. I do not presume to say all results. I suppose all of us would say that the extent of the results of the love of Jesus is beyond our reckoning, but perhaps the Spirit would help us to focus our minds and our hearts on the love of Jesus to see certain results which flow from the knowledge of His love. There is no influence apart from the love of Jesus which would enable our hearts to be prepared, as we have sung, to follow Him. There is no influence like that of love. We may exhort each other to be prepared in our hearts, we may pray earnestly as to it, there may be ministry as to it, striking, pointed, edifying, but there is nothing like the love of Jesus Himself, currently felt, which would cause our hearts to be prepared to follow Him.

I had in mind that from these scriptures we might see that the present knowledge of the love of Jesus leads us to have Him as sole object for our hearts; then, as He is sole object, that we might acquire the confidence to enquire of Him as to any matter. Then, as we are built up in that confidence, that we might have a profound and, I trust, deepening impression of His pleasure in us; perhaps one could say, of His pleasure in me. For if we can apply these scriptures to the individual, then we can apply them to the saints together, the assembly. However, the assembly is more than 'the sum of its parts'. "Christ also loved the assembly, and has delivered himself up for it".

Now John, as one in whom the Lord Jesus confided, was well taught: he was aware of the love of Jesus and he responded to that love. The results of that love were very evident in John himself, but even John paid homage to one who was less than Christ. This scripture has point to us, that however developed we may be in affection - and John was markedly developed in affection for Jesus - we may fall into the trap of having another before us who perhaps momentarily assumes greater importance than Jesus Himself.

Recently in this city we heard a pointed reference to the need to hold fast the Head. How necessary it is, when there is so much departure, to hold fast the Head! It struck me that perhaps I had not thought through sufficiently the need to hold fast the Head. If I have myself before me, either in self-admiration or self-abnegation, I am not holding fast the Head. Christ is to be the sole object of my attention and devotion. If I have another before me who assumes for a moment greater importance than Christ Himself, I am not holding fast the Head. If I have before me another whom I admire or support, whom in any way I value or heed more than Christ Himself, I am not holding fast the Head. If I have another before me to whom I am opposed and he assumes a large place in my thinking and my attention, if I am critical of him to the exclusion of the influence of the love of Christ, I am not holding fast the Head. Those things are searching. I wonder whether we have thought them through sufficiently, whether we have applied them, whether we are prepared to see that the need of the day is to hold fast the Head. and that everything else must go. We must let go what is in any way inconsistent in order that we may hold fast to Christ the Head.

Now the warning in this scripture has its answer in scripture. We have often been reminded that the failures of those who are prominent in Scripture are not recorded for criticism but for instruction. It seems to me that the answer that John found to this brief failure, not his first, was in the knowledge of Jesus Himself, the experience in his affections of Christ's personal interest, His current flow of love. That, perhaps, is why the emphasis in the latter part of the chapter is on the personal pronoun: "I Jesus have sent mine angel... I am the root and offspring of David". He would present Himself as the One who is to be before us as sole object. You might say that emphasis was scarcely necessary in John's case. Perhaps the stress was not simply in order that he might avoid failure of this kind again but that he might cultivate more the present enjoyment of the love of that One who presented Himself to him so clearly and so supportively: "I Jesus". The scripture warns as to addition and to subtraction from the words of the book. The knowledge of the love

of Christ always carries or implies the warning that we have to avoid what is inconsistent with that love.

In John's gospel, the last written of the books of Scripture, there was with John the confidence of love. There was such confidence of love that in a most extreme setting, the most upsetting circumstances, he could enquire of the Lord Jesus Himself and find an answer. There is a lesson in that for us. It is a great thing to appreciate and to know the love of Christ, but it is a greater thing to be restful in His presence, not disturbed by the distracting influences around but able, in the confidence that love gives, to put to the Lord Jesus simply the question that burns currently, in order that there might be the knowledge of an answer and, in that answer, the assurance of His love. Jesus gave John an answer by a sign: "He it is to whom I, after I have dipped the morsel, give it". We know what flowed from that. I am impressed that this scripture is a lesson-book in itself. It shows that, come what may in the circumstances that surround us, whatever we may experience individually or collectively, however distracted and distressed we may be - the Lord Himself spoke of one who was about to deliver Him up, His own familiar friend - the love of Jesus gives the confidence which enables enquiry to be made and the answer to be learned in His presence and at His hand.

Now John was distinctly lovable. It is open to us all to be lovable. John had no clear commission and therefore, although an apostle and in that respect distinct, he can be understood to be pattern for all of us. There is a place in the bosom and on the breast of Jesus for all of us. It is possible for all of us, as rejoicing in the love of Jesus and acquiring the confidence which that love brings, to be lovable. It is not a product of nature. In nature we speak of persons who are good natured; morally speaking that is empty. We might even be able to see characteristics that suggest that persons are naturally religious, but that is similarly empty. We are to discern the lovability which comes from the knowledge in the first place of the love of Jesus. John was lovable: we are to aspire to lovability. I wonder if we are lovable; I wonder if at all times we act towards men

and towards all the saints in such a way that, not only do we bring conviction when it needs to be brought, defend the truth when it needs to be defended and assert it when it needs to be asserted, wearing the whole panoply as we are to wear it, but that we are lovable and therefore attractive. Is there that about us which is unmistakably characteristic of Christ Himself, expressive of His love? Occupation with abnormality tends to lead to preoccupation and one can become distorted in outlook and in behaviour as a result of it; that is natural to man. "God made man upright, but they have sought out many devices", Eccles 7: 29. But we are to be patterned after Christ Himself. John was patterned after Him: there were others who were patterned after Him. We do not speak of John to the exclusion of Paul or any others of the apostles, but we are not to forget John.

Now at the end of Revelation I think we have a sense that there was something particular about John which was attractive to the Lord Himself. He had learned the lesson that the Lord was to be sole object. He was ready to enquire of the Lord: the Lord was ready to show him very much, as is described in the book. I do not think it is going too far to say that there was in John what was peculiarly attractive to Jesus. There is constant reference and repeated disclosure to John which indicates the Lord's affection for him. I asked myself recently why John was left in Patmos, isolated. You might say the scripture contains the answer, it was "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus". A great testimony was rendered, surely, the book was written; we constantly draw from it. But why was he left in Patmos by himself? He was put there and left there by the Lord Jesus; he was particularly lovable to Him. We speak about lovability. What is it but lovability to Christ Himself? He was put there because the Lord Jesus had a special place for him in His own affections and, I think it is not too much to say, He had delight in John's company. I think that lovability goes that far. God walked in the garden in the cool of the day: He desired the company of man. God desires our company. Think of the grace of it!

The Lord Jesus desired the company of John as one to whom He could make great disclosures, one with whom He could work to bring about great results, one in whom there could be an expression in embryo of the affection that there was to be - and is to be - widespread in the assembly in answer to Christ: "Lord Jesus, come". This is not a God with uplifted voice, but a call in perfect tune with the Spirit. At this point there is not only the readiness of the assembly to greet Christ, which is to be characteristic of us at all times, but there is the realisation of a result for the heart of Christ, for His pleasure. It is not merely a question of our readiness for dissociation from all that hinders and holds us; it is a question of the delight of Christ: "My delight is in her", Isa 62: 4. As each of us is enraptured by the present knowledge of the love of Christ we will sense His own pleasure even now.

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THE CHILDREN'S UPWARD WAY

The Songs of degrees, Psalms 120 to 134, are thought to express the feelings of godly Israelites going up to the temple. There might well be children amongst them who, like the boy Samuel, had an affection for the house of God. Also, and of special interest to us, these Songs have what is called a moral bearing, showing certain steps in the experience of believers who are committed to setting their minds on things above.

Read Psalm 120. *Conviction* is seen in the expression "Woe is me!" As the upward way begins, the Godfearing one feels how much within him - or her - is unsuitable to the presence of God, and would hide nothing. In grace he was answered when he called on Jehovah because, looking on to the solemn day of the crucifixion, the Lord Jesus was not answered when bearing sins and sin.

Psalm 121. This is *conversion* from our old thoughts and ways of trying to improve ourselves. It comes about by learning God's own thoughts and ways which are so much higher than ours. "My help cometh from Jehovah". To lift up the eyes is necessary in going up and all divine help is at hand to the believer. He can now view the mountains which represent the purpose of God, lofty, outstanding and fixed. He will keep and protect His own work in the soul.

Psalm 122. *Confession*. "For my brethren and companions' sakes I will say, Peace be within thee". The heart of the worshipper seeks to bring others into the gain of its joy. They could then go up together to God's house. The peace of Jerusalem, which is composed of those who cherish God's thoughts and work, is an answer to the evil and unrest of the world around.

Psalm 123. *Consistency*. "Our eyes are directed to Jehovah our God". This Song shows that it was not only in times of trouble that these saints looked up. They were now as servants looking constantly to their Master's hand for whatever service He might have for them. As we know, even a trained work dog will allow nothing to distract him from gazing at his master waiting for his command. These saints served a God of love who was gracious to them, but they were scorned by others who sought only ease and comfort. Many quite young children have told us that they have been made fun of for being Christians. Are you ready to suffer for the Lord's sake?

J.C.Evershed

NB This piece appears in consecutive issues – see No 129 (December 1983) and No 130 (January 1984)