

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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GROWING

J.McKillop

Colossians 1: 9, 10; Daniel 6: 10; Numbers 7: 89; 8: 1-3; 2 Samuel 7: 18-23

These thoughts, beloved brethren, follow the reading together in our brother's home this morning. We read this scripture in Colossians. It appealed to me; it impressed me as to its greatness and the profitability that is available for us as we take on this truth. In a previous reference Paul said, as to the manifestation of their love in the Spirit, "who has also manifested to us your love in the Spirit", Col 1: 8. I think that there was a definite, full expression of the love of the Spirit amongst the saints at Colosse. That is a wonderful thing to think of. As we think of these things we desire them, and we are assured that God will bring them about. We can say that there is the positive manifestation, in the saints in many localities, of the love of the Spirit. But what came to mind is to "walk worthily of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work", and the consummation: "and growing by the true knowledge of God". I thought it might be helpful to look at how we arrive at it. Perhaps there is more detail in the Old Testament scriptures as to approach to God because it was not in the power of the indwelling Spirit, but as saints were liberated in their affection Godward they were free to move into the divine presence.

I read in Daniel so that we might see how we begin to grow. Daniel grew in adversity, he grew in pressure, he grew in the spirit of one who was dedicated to what was of God. He purposed in his heart not to eat of the meat of the king's table, and the brethren know the result. We do not want to go into too much detail, but they were fed pulse, and at the end of the trial the man in charge of the feeding found them fairer and fatter than those who were feeding on the king's food. They were feeding on what was spiritual, what related to Christ in His place here as a Man in rejection, not on the elements of the world. Even in its finest religious character it is but

the king's table, and Daniel and his three friends decided that they would not eat of that food, and he knew that God would be with them and in them. The result is growing by the true knowledge of God. I think these three men set out the principle in pressure and persecution. It says "And when Daniel knew that the writing was signed"; the writing was that if any one asked a petition of any god or man, other than of the king, he was to be put to death. So these wicked men who were adverse to Daniel and his place of favour could only find something against him "touching the law of his God". It says: "the prefects, and the satraps, the counsellors, and the governors have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, except of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions", chap 6: 7. The writing was signed by the king, unaware of the diabolical intention underneath, that Daniel might be cast into the den of lions. Daniel knew when the writing was signed and he went into his house. It is a most encouraging thing; he was not marked by excitement, he was not marked by fear or terror, but he knew where his resource was - God, Judge of all. He prayed three times a day: "he kneeled on his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime".

Now I might ask: Do you know your God? Or, do you just listen to what the brethren say in the meeting? Do you pray to Him? We had in the reading as to entering into your closet and praying to the Father in secret, and He will reward you. Daniel prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime; he is not overcome by the pressure, the thought of death being brought in upon him. He knew what the signing of the writing meant; it meant that his life and his testimony in relation to the king was finished. But he went in in the confidence that the God whom he knew was for him in such a position; he prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Think of the way in which his spirit was restful as to matters! Perhaps many of us, at the slightest disappointment, the slightest challenge of the enemy, maybe as to our life or business, would be overcome. But Daniel prayed and gave thanks to his God,

as he did aforetime, in all the serenity of his communion with God.

In the world today, beloved brethren, the saints have to meet much, but we remain separate from it and have recourse to the God whom we have known -

'Our God whom we have known,
Well known in Jesus' love,
Rests in the blessing of His own
Before Himself above'. (Hymn 72)

So Daniel is prepared to suffer for the testimony and maintain his links with God. There is a wicked power to the east of us, communism, which seeks to sweep into this land where the recovery of the truth was brought in a hundred and fifty years ago. Do we value our inheritance? Do we value the heritage that we have in the truth at the cost of the sufferings of God's beloved Son? He has made known His thoughts to us; He has also told us how He delights in us; God's inheritance is in the saints. So Daniel commits himself to it, and he committed the matter to God, Judge of all. God came in and closed the lions' mouths; the king sought to deliver him, but he was powerless; he could not close the mouths of the lions but he was concerned for the safety of Daniel, and Daniel was delivered and brought out to be a further testimony in his knowledge of God, Daniel says, my God. Paul says, my God. The Lord Jesus says "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God", John 20: 17. Can we say, my God? We should be able to in the Spirit's power because we are brought into the same liberty before God as Christ Himself is. "The Father himself has affection for you, because ye have had affection for me", John 16: 27. In the glory and the liberty of sonship we are brought into the joy of coming to know God as Judge of all. Despite the testing and the trials, we come to know the God who raises the dead, who has, delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

So Daniel says "My God", and he comes through in triumph. It says: "The king spoke and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will save thee" (v 16). Then it says: "Then the

king arose with the light at break of day, and went in haste unto the den of lions ... he cried with a mournful voice unto Daniel; the king spoke and said unto Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, hath thy God whom thou servest continually been able to save thee from the lions? Then Daniel spoke" (vv 19-21). Ah, what a voice that was to that king - a living voice coming out in testimony that Daniel's God was able to save him from the mouth of the lions.

Now I go on to speak of Moses because I think there is a link as we look at Numbers 7. As the brethren will know, the book of Numbers relates to the assembly's position in the wilderness. What comes into view is service to God. The tabernacle was finished in Exodus and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. As we proceed with what was required for its function, we find the twelve princes, representing the whole twelve tribes, bringing their gifts that the service of God might proceed in its fulness. And it says finally when all had been added: "Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him". Well, how pleased God is when we go in to speak to Him, when we tell Him about the things that have been brought in. No doubt this was on Moses' heart - the gifts by the twelve princes of Israel - to say to God that all these things had been brought and were now available for His service. But Jehovah saw him coming; "when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him, then he heard the voice speaking to him from off the mercy-seat which was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim; and he spoke to Him". Think of how God is speaking to us in Christ! The ark of the testimony is what we are connected with today; and the service of Moses as the law-giver and the mediator points on to the service of Christ coming in as the Ark in the tent of meeting. And He spoke to him from off the mercy-seat. Christ appears for us in the presence of God to bring to God the knowledge of what His people need and what His people desire for His glory.

So He speaks from off the mercy-seat. There was a question some days back as to the ark, and I simply said the ark is in one place, it is in one place in the city; it is in one place in the assembly - Christ in the midst. The One who is the first-begotten from among

the dead, the firstborn of many brethren, has His place in exaltation and glory. The ark was made of acacia wood and covered all over with gold, which indicates the greatness of what God is as expressed in Christ in His righteousness and His holiness, and the filling out of divine thoughts and purposes that find their expression in Christ, our Lord Jesus. And then it says: "from between the two cherubim; and he spoke to Him". The rights of Christ and of God are being maintained by the cherubim. They are symbols, of course, of that which is here in relation to the saints. We have with us the principle of the cherubim, symbolic of the power that God has made available to us through Christ and by the Holy Spirit. Let us call on Him for the symbol to become a living reality in the Spirit's power in view of maintaining the rights of God amongst His people.

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses saying, Speak to Aaron". Now we come to the priesthood, through the mediator, typically Christ in His place in glory. He is both the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, everything is in Christ, the One in whom there is no failure, no breakdown. The type, I think, opens up to us the confidence that Moses had in his place with God in regard of the tabernacle in the wilderness, with the tribes surrounding it, and everything set up according to God's order. So God says: "When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick". Think of what the candlestick is in this type; it is Christ. He is the true light that has come into the world to lighten every man. The light shone in the darkness according to John's gospel, and the darkness apprehended it not; in Him was life and the life was the light of men (see John 1: 4,5). It brings out what Christ is as the candlestick. Paul brings us back to the moral side as he speaks in Philippians: "among whom ye appear as lights in the world", chap 2: 15. Well, what kind of light am I in the world? What is radiating out from me that men may see the light, may be brought to the truth and surrender to God's claims, His claims of righteousness and holiness? It has been secured for us through the death of His beloved Son; our Lord Jesus Christ. These things open up a great vista of glory, as these men, growing in the true knowledge of God,

were able to move in the light and power of God. We may be like Asaph in Psalm 73, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked his foot well nigh slipped (v 1). We may have been affected, in our younger days particularly, with the prosperity of the wicked. I was affected by it until I entered the sanctuaries of Jehovah, there saw I their end. You go into the sanctuaries and you see all the full thoughts of God in relation to the universe as unfolded and brought out in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Asaph said: "then understood I their end" (v 17). He was content then to go on, seeing that the end of the wicked was that they would be no more, but that the man whose trust was in Jehovah was preserved; he was like a tree by the rivers of water whose leaf shall not fade and is always green.

Now just a word as to David. David is very encouraging because there was much in his heart that he had looked forward to in view of having his desire filled out to build the house for Jehovah. He can speak of his exercises, the moral way in which he came, the sufferings he endured, the enmity of Saul, the enmity of others who sought to circumvent him, even Absalom; and of his place in relation to God. But he comes to something in a distinct way as he entered in and sat before Jehovah. This chapter shows how we are to judge rightly, judge as to what is true. Nathan tells David to do all that is in his heart. A prophetic word? You say, It must be right, we received it in a prophetic meeting. But you have to go in before Jehovah and find out what the value of the word is, whether it bears out God's thoughts in His blessing. You are there in relation to God's communion with yourself to substantiate even what the prophetic word may bring. Nathan, in his affection for David, was quite in accord with it. It says "And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thy heart; for Jehovah is with thee". But he was not to build the house; that remained for the son. The glory of everything that God has stands in relation to the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. So David comes to it; he went in and sat before Jehovah and said, "Who am I, Lord Jehovah, and what is my house ... ?" God has prospered us and given us a view of His eternal thoughts: are we relating them to

what we are, as David did to himself? He could say that in his affliction and in his affection he had prepared for the house of God; but it was committed to his son. How we delight to think of God loving the Son and giving all things into His hand! He is bringing in the kingdom in which everything will be in perfect accord for the glory of God, and the delight of all those that are in that kingdom. As we have quoted already; He has "translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love", Col 1: 13. Are we enjoying it? Are we in that kingdom? Do we see the circulation of love amongst the saints? Do we appreciate the blessedness of Christ in His supremacy as the Son whom God loves and has given all things to be in His hands? I just leave these thoughts with us, brethren, that we might have liberty in our souls to go in. In the sanctuaries of God there is nothing that belongs to the first man; everything there is revealed in Christ for the glory of God and our eternal blessing. I would say, too, that David comes to the knowledge of God, Judge of all. It is wonderful to get into our hearts that we have come to what is beyond even the greatest thoughts of men in regard to what God is doing, but it is made known to us by the Spirit. I just leave these thoughts with the brethren. I trust they will be profitable that we might grow in the true knowledge of God. May it be so for His Name's sake.

GRIMSBY

11 May 1985

ONE GREATLY BELOVED

A.K.Turner

Daniel 12: 2-4,9,10; 9: 22,23

Our brother has referred to our dear departed brother as one greatly beloved. Daniel was one such, greatly beloved by God. Both our brother and Daniel were beloved by God because of their faith, because of God's precious work in them. Our brother had faith in the Lord Jesus, and although we are going to the grave, if the Lord tarry, there is no question as to our beloved brother but that he will

awake to everlasting life. What a hope! Have we all here that hope that we will awake to everlasting life? What a hope for the believer, based on the finished work of the Lord Jesus, when He died on the cross, suffered for sin, the Just for the unjust to bring us to God. Is every one here a believer on the Lord Jesus? It is a wonderful thing to be a believer, to know the Lord Jesus as your own personal Saviour and Lord, and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, sent by Christ after He had ascended to the Father.

The word to Daniel is: "Go thy way, Daniel". Our brother has had that word, Go thy way; he has had the word to go and he will stand in his lot: "But do thou go thy way until the end; and thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days", Dan 12: 13. Do we all here believe in resurrection? This was a word to a saint of God, a saint of God greatly beloved, a man who had faith - Daniel. Have you heard the hymn?

'Dare to be a Daniel!
Dare to stand alone!
Dare to have a purpose firm!
Dare to make it known! '

Our brother was like that, he dared to stand alone. We remember how he stood alone. He could stand alone and yet he could be a father of many; he was able for both. He stood alone at Barrow on Humber, the only brother with a few sisters, but here he has had a family, those he guarded and cared for and prayed for as a shepherd watching over their souls. Well, he is gone and he is resting: "thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days".

Daniel will have his lot, he will have his reward for the acts of faith, how he purposed in his heart not to be defiled by the king's delicate food, how he was prepared to be thrown into a den of lions rather than give up his daily - three times daily - prayer to God. Daniel was a man of faith and stood alone. God will honour him in a day yet to come; he will stand in his lot at the end of the days. And our dear brother will stand in his lot at the end of the days; maybe to the world largely unknown, yet with God well known, well known for his prayers, well known for the care of the flock.

We read in verse 10: "Many shall be purified, and made white, and be refined". This raises the question: have we washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb? That is what our brother had done; his robes are white in the blood of the Lamb. It says "Many shall be purified, and be made white, and be refined". Through the work of God in our brother this refinement has been in evidence. We also read in verse 3 of the wise: "they that turn the many to righteousness as the stars, for ever and ever". O, that we could turn someone here to renewed diligence and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and committal to the pathway of God's will, to be here for our beloved Lord and Master until the day that He returns for us. May we be encouraged by the words and exercised to be in faith like Daniel until the end, for His name's sake.

GRIMSBY

26 September 1983

At the burial of Mr J. Franklin

(1) STEADFASTNESS

D.A.Burr

Luke 6: 47,48; Nehemiah 4: 12-14; 2 Samuel 11: 16

These three scriptures speak of steadfastness and reliability. The first speaks of what is individual and necessary if any of us is to stand at all. We must listen to the words of Jesus and be obedient to what He says. We cannot be light about it but must be prepared to work to get down to this foundation on which this man built. It says he built a foundation upon the rock. As we know, the rock speaks of Christ Himself; it is like the one in Matthew's gospel, where the Lord speaks of "this rock": "on this rock", He says, "I will build", chap 16: 18. He is the rock upon which we are to build, and I believe our brother has done that: he has built a house upon it, a house that remains among us and represents something lasting among the saints.

But then our brother has known what it was for storms to arise, storms that none of us would have sought or welcomed; storms, perhaps, that he would not have chosen to pass through. The Lord was over that, however, and, applying this verse, the Lord never had the slightest doubt that our brother's foundation was good. Pressure came, and sorrow came, through what the Lord allowed; and it came from many quarters - Matthew speaks of the winds (see chap 7: 25). Here it speaks of the rain and the stream. They may come from any quarter. Will it be, as our brother has shown, that our foundation is good, that it is "built upon a rock"? The Lord never had any doubt that he would stand. What a wonderful thing that is, beloved! He has, therefore, placed our brother among us, I believe, in order that we might learn that it is possible to have a foundation that will certainly stand. Our brother has shown that and the Lord has used him to show it to us; I believe we do well to take heed to it.

In Nehemiah there is another kind of building. As I said, the Lord's building is in a way like the man's in Luke 6, but there is another point of view of the Lord's building. He is working in the

present day when there is ruin and failure. He is working in recovery; and it is recovery, beloved, that Satan would resist and seek to overwhelm. So while that work is continuing, the Lord has those upon whom He can call to stand in the exposed places. Now, it is, of course, of no value to put a novice in an exposed place. You could not rely on somebody who had never been tested, because, in a sense, on that stretch, they would be the wall; and it would be essential, therefore, that they should be as redoubtable as the wall itself. So the Lord will set in exposed places those whom He has proved and whom He knows. It may be that we are exposed to having to take a part in the testimony publicly; we might have to render a testimony before rulers, before those who are opposed, perhaps, or those who had to have the position explained to them; and so on. These are exposed places and our beloved brother has stood in them. He has stood with his wife in them and the Lord has come in for him. I believe we could say that. The fact that our brother has passed that way is itself a testimony to what the Lord saw in him. He would not have thrust into that kind of conflict anybody upon whom He could not rely. Beloved, the Lord may require others of us for that kind of service, and it is a question, therefore, of whether we are those upon whom the Lord can rely.

Are we steadfast persons that He can trust? I believe there would be a lesson for us in that. There is a certain nobility about the matter, too, that we might take account of.

The verse in Samuel might be rather a difficult verse to apply, because Urijah was put in a position as a result of David's unfaithfulness. None of us under the Lord will find ourselves in that position because the Lord would never be unfaithful. David remained at home when the people went out to the conflict; the Lord would never do that. And, if I may say so, our brother would never have done it either. Like Urijah, he felt out of place if the saints were gathered together and he was not there. Urijah evidently felt that that was unnatural; he wanted to be where the people were. So he is sent back to Joab, and he assigned him to a place where he knew that the valiant men were. Urijah was not out of place there; he was

worthy of the position in which he was. Later in this book David lists his mighty men and Urijah is among them. Urijah is at the end (see chap 23: 39) and it might appear to be a relatively modest position.

But then look in Chronicles; as we have been taught this is the history as God delights to record it; and Urijah is promoted further up the list as God has delighted to give it. What a thing that is, beloved, to see someone who might appear to have a relatively modest place advanced when God comes to make the record Himself. You will find him about halfway up the list in 1 Chronicles: "Urijah the Hittite", chap 11: 41. What a thing that is! I draw two thoughts from that, beloved. One is that God honours steadfastness and it is at a premium in His sight. Another thing I would draw from it is, let us each esteem one another better, because that is how God would esteem us.

(2) FAITHFULNESS

E.Palmer

2 Timothy 2: 1,2; Deuteronomy 31: 14,23

Our brother has referred to the moral feature of steadfastness. I desire to call attention to that of faithfulness, because I think they are very near to one another and both have marked our beloved brother now with Christ - steadfast and faithful, and among "such as shall be competent to instruct others also". Now, beloved, instruction does not necessarily come through speaking, it does not necessarily come through the ability to set out great principles of the truth of God. I believe that the most powerful instruction comes on account of what is demonstrated, what is seen in people. Indeed, it is said amongst men 'actions speak louder than words' and there is some truth in that. Our brother was faithful, his experiences bear testimony to it, his preparedness to stand, stand for the Lord, stand for the Lord's rights and what was due to Him. And stand he did. These things are to be a feature of the testimony that is entrusted to those of us who remain: "the living who remain". Our brother yet speaks in this way. I believe we should, all of us, those of us who are older and the younger, take heed to this; do not let it pass. How could we let it pass here in the actual presence of death? There is a word in the Revelation: "Be thou faithful unto death", chap 2: 10. I know it may be a different setting, but in the presence of death there is this word: "these entrust to faithful men". We have recently been reminded that the first thing referred to in this well-known passage of scripture is the fact that we are to be "strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus". You might say, what does that mean? It means that we are in touch with that Man, with Jesus, who went into death and came out of it as the overthrower of death. He has overthrown it, in death itself He overthrew it, and came out victorious and is ascended triumphant there in the glory - Christ Jesus. And what is flowing from Him? Grace, beloved. It was there in Him when He was here upon the earth where we are, grace upon grace; it is there in Him in the glory and we are to be strong in it. There is to be a testimony to the

link that we have with that Man. I believe our brother had that link; I believe he was one who was strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Now the word, both in Timothy and in Deuteronomy, is addressed with the younger persons, men and women, in mind.

This letter to Timothy is addressed to a younger man by one mature in the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. How we feel it in this city that in a comparatively short space of time, three beloved and faithful brethren have departed to be with Christ. There is a complete testimony in this to the fact that God is speaking. I believe the positive side of that speaking would be that there should be an appeal, a stirring up in all of us, especially those who are younger. So there is this word that these things are to be entrusted to faithful men. I believe that the Lord would help us that we might not only desire to be faithful but be faithful in the practical working out of our part, individually, in our homes, and in the assembly, in the testimony of our Lord.

I refer to Deuteronomy because Moses was about to die, and in that situation God speaks to him and says "Call Joshua, and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, that I may give him a charge".

God would say, as it were, you both come into My presence because I am going to speak to you. What a thing that is! As we become conscious of the presence of the Lord, soberly and with a due sense of what is due to God, here together, God would say, I have brought you here because I want to speak to you. Our brother, with his soul resting upon that rock, was one who had put his confidence in Christ, had known Him long and proved that Jesus never fails. I would like to say to each and all who are here today, If you do what our brother did and put your confidence in Jesus, have regard for that precious blood, the blood of Jesus that cleanses from every sin, if you put your confidence in Him, you will prove what our brother did, that He never fails. We may fail, He never does. That precious blood of His will never lose its value before God, and that in relation to the persons who have faith in it, faith in His blood. Jesus will never fail us as we put our trust, our confidence, in Him. There

are young people here today, and it is very significant that very young people are here. Thank God for every young heart that has trusted Jesus. You know the children sing, Jesus loves me, this I know. It is a wonderful thing that Jesus should love us. It is more wonderful than that we should love Him. I like that little children's hymn because of that very thing: Jesus loves me. It was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us. And why did He die? Because He loves us. You say, these are very simple things. They are the fundamentals and belong to that rock, dear friends. Jesus loves me, this I know. And dear young child, when you think of that, you can put your confidence in Jesus. You do it, do not fail to do it, because God is speaking, He would call us together into His presence and speak to us today.

So Joshua comes with Moses; they "went and presented themselves at the tent of meeting. And Jehovah appeared at the tent in the pillar of cloud; and the pillar of cloud stood over the entrance to the tent". What is that? It is the divine presence, the presence of God, and there they were, and the word that Joshua received (for I believe that he was specially in mind) is "And Jehovah commanded Joshua the son of Nun, and said, Be strong and courageous; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I have sworn unto them; and I will be with thee". O, I say, what assurance, what encouragement! We have seen the way that our brother has been supported in the most testing circumstances, just before the Lord took him. Our brother was an overcomer; if ever I have seen an overcomer, I saw it in him, finding his place as assembled with the people of God when he might reasonably have stayed at home. What an overcomer! And we thank God for such an example, strong and courageous. And God says to such: "I will be with thee". Would any one of us want anything else? God has given us His Spirit. Does anyone want anything else other than assurance of the presence of God? It is the guarantee, dear friends, that God will see each one who has this assurance right through every kind of exigency until they find their part and place in that land, that good and pleasant land which, I believe, spiritually speaks of the purpose

of God that He has designed for His people and His good pleasure. Well, I say, let us not miss the charge, but let us take comfort here today for God speaks to us together as in His presence.

(3) RESOURCES FOR GOD

E.C.Burr

1 Chronicles 22: 14-16; 29: 1-5

What has been said here as to the characteristics that marked our beloved brother now with Christ would certainly be affirmed by all those of us who have had the privilege of actually being local in the same meeting with him. If we speak of steadfastness, of faithfulness, these are things that we have seen. We are not here on an occasion like this merely to speak well of one another, although it is good in any circumstances to speak well of one another. The occasion of a brother's death brings back much to us as to his life, but the question is, if there was steadfastness and faithfulness and overcoming, as there was, what was there for God?

I refer to these scriptures because they bring out three different sets of resources for God, three different things by which what is for God is furthered: affliction and power and affection. The closing words that I have read in each case provoke with us a challenge as to whether we are prepared to provide for God on this basis. A believer is here in the testimony of our Lord, he is to be here for God; the testimony of God is in local places, the testimony of the Christ is here; let us be in it and let us be sure we are in it and let us be sure that we are in it without in any way detracting from it. It is a tragedy if a Christian does, or even says, anything which detracts from the testimony of the Christ. Let us watch that.

But David had prepared in *affliction*. It says earlier in this chapter: "David prepared abundantly before his death" (v 5). Our brother has departed to be with Christ, his closing illness relatively

short; we have had in a certain sense the opportunity to watch his dying until the Lord has taken him. We ourselves saw him on the evening before the Lord took him and were impressed with his restfulness and peace. But he prepared abundantly before his death. What we have spoken of in these moral characteristics is preparation, but it is not preparation just to be a good Christian; it is preparation that there might be something for God. That should be the prime thing in the minds of all of us all the time, that there should be something for God, and the first thing that comes into this chapter is that David says "And behold, in my affliction I have prepared for the house of Jehovah". "In my affliction". We have spoken of the sorrows which our beloved brother has had, sorrows at different stages in his life, sorrows going on even to his death. We might wonder sometimes how much affliction the Lord imposes on particular ones of His own, and we think of ourselves and feel how little He has imposed upon us. Perhaps He imposes it where He knows that there is a capacity to bear it. But in his affliction David prepared. And you wonder at the wealth that came out of his affliction. To translate this gold and silver and so on into present day monetary terms would be more in value than we can comprehend with our minds. Out of his affliction came wealth for God. Those of us who have been local in this room with our beloved brother will be familiar with hymns which our brother often gave out. In a sense, we all, I suppose, have favourite hymns, and I am not saying they were our brother's favourite hymns, but some he gave out more than others. It has often struck me in the prayer meeting that he would pray at the end of the meeting briefly, but with point; he did not waste words, he did not multiply words, but he would pray at the end and sit down and straightaway give out hymn 86: Through the love of God our Saviour, All will be well. We who gather here have experienced that often and it just reminds me that our brother was conscious that in personal affliction, in assembly affliction, there was going to be something for the God who had ordered all these things and in whose hands nothing could be ill. What it is to have a knowledge of God like that! And in our affliction to be preparing.

It is interesting that in chapter 29 David, evidently referring back to what is spoken of in chapter 22, does not say in verse 2 "according to my affliction I have prepared"; he looks back to what he had spoken of in chapter 22 and says "according to all my power".

One thing is undoubted, beloved, that we may not be very prominent, we may have a more or less hidden place amongst the brethren, but it takes *power* to be what our beloved brother has been. Out of that power more has been prepared for God. I think that there are things mentioned in this list which are not mentioned in chapter 22. It seems as if David had invested for God what he had provided in his affliction, and interest on it had been acquired, because he had held things for God first of all. "I have prepared according to all my power for the house of my God". We know from the Psalms how early in his life David had the things of God before him; may we, as our beloved brother has just said, from our youth have what is for God before us for out of it comes wealth. And David does it with power: "according to all my power". If he had energy he was providing things for God. If he had energy it was not wasted, it was not wasted on things of this world, it was not wasted in the pursuit of money, or pleasure, or that kind of thing. "I have prepared according to all my power for the house of my God". He had God first, the life of piety and therefore the life of power. On account of piety, things are provided out of this resource, not only out of affliction, but out of power.

And then out of *affection*, something added, something extra for God because he loved God. How great that is! David says "Moreover, in my affection for the house of my God I have given of my own property of gold and silver, for the house of my God", just as we read he adds one thing to another because he loved the God whose house it was. Reference has been made to the way in which our beloved brother overcame to be amongst the saints when he might well have been excused for not being here. I recall some years ago that a sister was taken from us here of whom the same could be said, that when there would have been good reason for not being here, she was here. There was good reason for our brother

not being here, but he was here because he loved the house of God. Beloved, may we be stimulated in this. The first scripture says "Arise and be doing". Let us be drawing something out of our affliction.

Everybody here has affliction; let us be drawing something out of it for God. "Arise and be doing". Let us be devoted to be getting out of our afflictions something for God. A lot of us go through affliction and what we are really looking for in the end is something for ourselves, even if it is only sympathy; but let us in our affliction have in view what is for God and arise and be doing, and out of our affliction bring something for God. And out of power and affection, "who is willing to offer to Jehovah this day?". Think of what our brother brought out of affection. If I refer to hymns that our beloved brother gave out, how often he has given out: We'll praise Thee, glorious Lord (No.235). Things formed in the soul find expression in a resource that is available to us all; We'll praise Thee, glorious Lord, Who died to set us free. And: We bless Thee, God and Father (No.67) and: O God of love, how measureless (No.35). Brethren who meet in this room will be familiar with these hymns as our beloved brother gave them out to us many times, but it is out of affection for the house of my God. And the question is: "who is willing to offer ... this day?", today, this Friday afternoon, who is willing to offer? It is not the divine intention that God should, as it were, go short because one offerer has been taken to be with Christ. Who is willing to offer today? I think, speaking here on the occasion of another burial fairly recently, I was challenged myself that the departure of a brother leaves a gap and we can fill that gap to a certain extent and in certain ways, but a brother may leave something that we feel that none of us can fill. I am impressed with what Peter says about David, and he must have been referring back to this kind of thing: he says "his monument is amongst us unto this day", Acts 2: 29. Beloved, our brother's monument is amongst us till today. If the Lord leaves us here his monument in that sense will remain. Let us not forget the monument of these faithful men; it is not in stone, it is not some artistic design or clever device, but the monument is what a man has been for God amongst the people of God. Well, beloved, let us arise and be doing, and ask ourselves,

who is willing to offer today? May there be something acquired for God out of our brother's history amongst us and this occasion, for the Lord's sake.

LONDON

26 October 1984

At the burial of Mr J.W.Pittman

THE CHILDREN STEADFAST

Things around us in the old creation have lessons for us in connection with that which God by His Spirit is working in the souls of believers on the Lord Jesus. There is certainly mystery in the way in which young creatures, and especially children, gradually grow up. We do of course know that things like food, exercise and rest are necessary for them. Likewise these are vital to the spirits of Christians growing up to Christ in all things. It was a very fine word of advice by Barnabas, an apostle though not of the twelve, when he told recently converted believers whom he was visiting that "with purpose of heart they should cleave to the Lord". Desiring to do this ourselves we can think of the little marine creatures to which the Creator has given great powers of clinging to a rock - the more one tries to move them the more tightly they hold on!

Paul writing to Titus in the section that includes "little children" used a similar expression to that of Barnabas, namely, "clinging to the faithful word according to the doctrine taught". This referred no doubt to the ministry of Paul himself although the Lord's ministry by His apostles and disciples must have had a profound effect wherever it penetrated. There were evidently already believers in the various cities of Crete although the people of that island had a bad reputation.

This short letter to Titus mentions "teaching" about seven times which suggests that believers are always learning as at school. It can be said that in the epistle "the grace of God" is our teacher, bringing - not a rod - but "salvation". The schoolroom is "the present course of things" so we are always in it and our lessons include learning to "live soberly, justly and piously". These words refer respectively to our conduct towards ourselves, other people and towards God Himself. Thankfully we are encouraged to look out of the schoolroom window, watching for "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ". Are you doing so?

J.C.Evershed