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CONTENTS

"LIFE AND INCORRUPTIBILITY"

THE LIVING BIRD LET LOOSE

COMPLETION

THE CHILDREN'S SURNAMES

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"LIFE AND INCORRUPTIBILITY"

2Timothy 1: 8-18; 2 Kings 4: 32-37; John 12: 1-3

B.M.D. The allusion in verse 10, where we began to read, to "life and incorruptibility" might well enter into our conversation and inquiry. It says that "our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has annulled death, and has brought to light life and incorruptibility by the glad tidings"; – a very profound matter which would alert our interest in what is beyond death. It occurs to me, dear brethren, that in this chapter Paul is facing the turning away from him of all in Asia, the beginning of the breakup of the public testimony that he had been labouring in, and he reverts to the stability of what had been established through Christ's death in bringing out an order of things that death does not touch and to which breakdown does not attach.

Now we have come to the very close of the same dispensation and it should be apparent to every one of us that the rapture is near and that the testimony – the same testimony as has been maintained by the Spirit throughout – can be maintained in the power of life and incorruptibility alone. Then I thought that the ministry of Elisha would bear on this time of the Spirit. That history, so well known to us, is somewhat like a review of the dispensation, the prophet's service bringing life out of death and maintaining things householdly, which would link, I think, with the house of Onesiphorus who sought out Paul diligently and found him. So, though we are in broken days, God will bring through in someone His thoughts according to His promise and it would seem in households too. Then perhaps we can get a touch as to a condition of things out of death in John 12, if we can, so to speak, get over the page from John 11 where we have to go through the thing in deep moral exercise. The Lord, remember, stayed away two days; there is no escape from going through this depth of exercise to reach the sphere of things which is not touched by death. That is really where the assembly is, where she belongs; it is a deathless company, a deathless system and, dear brethren, we belong to that. I just thought this might helpfully engage us as we inquire simply and dependently.

L.MacF. So do you think we would be concerned as to the continuance of the testimony in life?

B.M.D. Unless it is in life what is it? Publicly in Christendom it is a name to live but dead; that was Sardis (see Rev 3: 1), but life is there somewhere. I think this allusion to life and incorruptibility is like a touch of John coming in in support of Paul's ministry. I know it is Paul saying it but, as he saw the beginning of the breakup, he committed the deposit: "keep for that day the deposit I have entrusted to him", and then: "keep, by the Holy Spirit... the good deposit". It seems that he is assured that what was given to him and brought out by him as regards the truth of the assembly would go through. But we are in John's time and need to support in life and incorruptibility what was brought out through Paul. Would it be safe to suggest that?

L.MacF. Yes, that is choice. Timothy would be one into whose hands things could be committed as faithful to the Lord and to the testimony of our Lord. So we are concerned that these precious things might continue in our younger people.

B.M.D. The fact that we are exhorted not to be ashamed would show it is in a day of outward smallness and insignificance and reproach; so the exhortation is not to be ashamed of it. Why should we be?

B.T. So in John 6 "It is the Spirit which quickens, the flesh profits nothing" (v.63).

B.M.D. That is a lesson to be learned, a very deep lesson to learn that the flesh profits nothing. To be in accord with the total removal of the man in the flesh at the cross is a very deep moral lesson. Do we not need to learn experimentally that we enter into the grace of a life and incorruptibility that is not shadowed by death?

J.A.P. "Brought to light life": is that a link with John's ministry that has been referred to, that Paul would be with John, working together with John's thoughts?

B.M.D. I think we can see something interweaving itself here that bears very much on the close of the dispensation. The deposit has come through, the recovery is to Paul's ministry. It seems to me that the test now is the maintenance of the truth. And that is why it is John's supporting line in life and incorruptibility that will maintain, might we say despite the public breakdown, what is in accord with the heart of Christ.

C.F.D. These things have been brought to light by the glad tidings. Do you think that what Paul is saying here lays great import on the preaching of the glad tidings, that if there is to be the maintenance in the power of the Spirit of God of what has been introduced, you can think of it as related to the power of the glad tidings?

B.M.D. That is very helpful. We used to say, and I expect it stands, that everything is encased in the glad tidings, including the mystery; everything, the whole scope of the truth. Therefore there is no greater service that any one of us could engage in, would you agree, than the preaching of the gospel?

C.F.D. I fully agree with that, and I think we want to be more concerned about it. I think the import of the preaching is something that possibly we have allowed to slip in our minds a little bit and we need to be revived to it.

B.M.D. So he is writing to an individual here who let the fire get a bit low, and he wanted him to rekindle the coals. Maybe we could stimulate one another a little today to evangelical zeal; and yet what is in mind always is the vessel that Christ loves. It had been there in this beloved servant; 'rekindle' implies that he had once been a bit brighter. I suppose we could all admit that we could be a bit brighter; and yet why should we not close – indeed we must see to it in our committal that we close – at the brightest point? Should we have any less a standard?

C.G. In 1 Corinthians 15 corruption and incorruptibility are mentioned: "Thus also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruptibility (v.42). What would you say is suggested in being sown in corruption? We know corruption cannot

inherit incorruptibility, and further on it says; "But this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom, nor does corruption inherit incorruptibility" (v.50).

B.M.D. It brings us back to the value of the fellowship of the Lord's death, so that we learn experimentally to have no confidence in the flesh or anything to which corruption attaches. We are about to experience the change, that same chapter alludes to it, and what we need to be accustomed to now is ,spiritual change. Even while we are yet in these conditions of frailty and humiliation we need in the Spirit's power to become accustomed to spiritual change; presently it will be in the twinkling of an eye, indeed at any moment the actual thing will take place. So in a meeting like this what we are looking for above anything else is an experience of a spiritual manifestation. Are we ready for it?

C.G. We should always have our minds on the things that are above where the Christ is sitting at the right hand of God (see Col 3: 1,2). The important thing is where our mind is.

B.M.D. We seek the power by the Spirit to abstract ourselves from what may hinder us. The Corinthians apparently were deficient in the experience of spiritual manifestations, I suppose because of their state. But that is not normal and Paul says, I would not have you ignorant of spiritual manifestations (see 1 Cor 12: 1). So we would seek to be in the power of the Spirit and in a sense of the mutuality of love working in the organism of the body; the Spirit, I am assured, is ready to give us a spiritual manifestation of Christ.

B.T. Do you think that Paul saying, I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified (see 1 Cor 2: 2) would make way for that? He might have been tempted to go into discussions of higher truth with them not having come short in any gift, but he was determined to know only that because of their state.

B.M.D. I think that is very fine. So as the Corinthian brethren read that letter it would have been an inward search for everyone would it not? saying, Well, Paul is determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Would not each one say, Where do I stand

in regard to that search? It could never be that we are in the presence of spiritual things and there is not some search coming into our souls because of the condition we are still in.

G.H. Maybe you could say some more as to being ready at this time for spiritual manifestations.

B.M.D. Would it not be that our interest and affections should be quickened as to what can take place in this meeting? The Spirit of God is here, we are actually in the presence of God. The habitation of God in the Spirit is now. Here we are in the variety of our circumstances and histories but the Spirit of God is among us and in us. What possibilities there are as we are thus convened!

R.N.H. It says in Romans 11: 29: "For the gifts and the calling of God are not subject to repentance". Would that strengthen us with regard to Paul's exhortation to Timothy when he refers to the calling of God and also the gift of God according to the laying on of his hands?

B.M.D. Yes. We were looking the other night at the corner-stone; God has not altered the material or the pattern of the building one bit; what has been built in is Christ, but it is Christ in the saints. What is it we love in one another? It is the measure in which we are formed according to His image, the image of God's Son. That is what gives us a bond with one another, it is our love and our formation in some measure according to that image.

T.E.D. I was wondering about the way Paul was in the shipwreck and how even that experience, which would have been behind him here in writing to Timothy, shows how a man with God can go through into life in spite of the very circumstances of death around. Would that help us as to what you are seeking to get at?

B.M.D. It bears very much of course on the prophetic side of the breakdown – "Ye ought... to have hearkened to me", Acts 27: 21. That is where we went astray, did we not? We failed to listen to Paul. But then in a way he immediately takes over, he really took over the captaincy. Ye should have listened to me, and then he said, Take food: it has to do with your safety. There is never greater need

than to keep Christ before the affections of the brethren. We need it with the enemy assailing to try and spoil the finish. How is it going to be withstood? As we keep Christ before the affections of the brethren.

T.E.D. Even as safe at land the enemy is there with the viper. These things are abounding around us, these elements of Satan's power, but the question is will they have an influence on me?

B.M.D. We do not want to minimise their power, it is an awful power and in our own strength we are not able for it. Satan said, I have destroyed the thing in the shipwreck, it has all gone to pieces. And what is Paul doing? He is gathering those sticks into a bundle. Satan saw the same thing he destroyed being rebuilt. That was the recovery, was it not? Immediately the viper takes hold of his hand; it is the hand that was again bringing about assembly conditions in warmth and mutuality in this rekindled fire. And has Christendom ever been more cold? Do we not need the warmth of one another and the affections amongst the brethren? That is what Satan hates. But what did Paul do? He shook it off, not into the heat but into the fire; that is that he dealt with it judicially. The heat, I think, was the warmth amongst the brethren. Is that right?

T.E.D. Yes. I was just impressed by it as you mentioned the breakup; we are in the presence of that, but we find that there is life and incorruptibility coming to light in spite of all the enemy has done in the recent decade or two.

B.M.D. We are in John's time, but the recovery is to Paul's ministry, there is no question as to that. There is no salvage of the ship; it is smashed and any assumption to be it is not the truth; there is no such pretentious position. Our links with one another are on moral grounds not ecclesiastical.

L.MacF. "The Spirit life on account of righteousness" (Rom 8: 10): I am thinking of the need of the Spirit and making room for Him in critical times, and also the need of food coming in for the dear brethren that the young might be sustained in life.

B.M.D. Well, we have to admit that we are in critical times. Yet could we not say wonderful times? Have they ever been better?

What is available is the full glory of the divine system, the arrangement of love operating even if it comes down to two or three gathered to Christ's name (see Matt 18: 20). I read the other day that His being in the midst is not just a sequence. I thought perhaps it was – that where two or three are gathered to my name, there am I in the midst of them. But it is a fact. Do you think is that all right?

C.F.D. You say it is a fact and not a sequence.

B.M.D. Not exactly a sequence. Where two or three are gathered together unto Christ's name "there am I in the midst of them". It is a fact and we prove it.

G.H. Reference was made to the shipwreck and that Paul exhorted them to partake of food. In the New Jersey area we had some very difficult times, deep exercises were gone through, and then we had a reading on 'Food which Abides' (see J.T. vol.16) which was very helpful amongst the saints. The Lord's servant felt that what the saints needed was food.

B.M.D. So Paul took a loaf. What would be in his heart as he took that loaf! Everything precious to Christ was in that beloved servant's heart as he took that loaf. It was not exactly the Lord's supper but it would point to it, to the truth of the one body, the mystery that he was privileged to unfold. That is really what is involved in the good deposit to be kept by the Holy Spirit. He has kept it somewhere in someone; even through what we speak of as the dark ages it was here. It is a little like the Lord's body-coat which was not rent; but it is in mystery, they drew lots, someone had it somewhere.

G.D.P. You mentioned about being able to keep Christ before the brethren. Paul says: "I know whom I have believed" that would be stability, would it not? Then later he says to Timothy: "knowing of whom thou hast learned them", chap 3: 14. So it would carry forward, would it not?

B.M.D. So what have we that we have not received from others? To be practical, it has come down through faithful men who were

competent to instruct others also. Thank God we remember the stability of those days in men who were competent to instruct others also. Let us cleave to that.

B.T. Jacob asked his sons: "Why do ye look one upon another?", Gen 42: 1. We have to challenge ourselves as to that because there is no food in looking into each other's face rather than going to Joseph.

B.M.D. Exactly. That would never do, nor do we want to feed on the history. We want to learn the lessons, look back over the surface of the waste, learn its lessons, but let us look towards the land. The Spirit will engage us with the heavenly Man and He will lead us over. It is not authority that gets us into the land; we need it in the wilderness but it is attraction that gets us into the land.

C.S.E. "But has been made manifest now by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has annulled death", and then the glad tidings come in there: what is the sense of the appearing of the Lord there?

B.M.D. That little word 'now' makes it clear. We await His appearing; that is future. We love His appearing; that will be His manifestation and His vindication publicly. But what has appeared in testimony now? Christ has: "so also is the Christ", 1 Cor 12: 12. Do you remember those lectures by Mr Raven: 'The Testimony of the Christ'? It would do us all good to re-read them. The testimony is Christ; "For the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus", Rev 19:10. You could put it either way I suppose. So it is now; there has been a manifestation in testimony of Christ. Where is it? It is in the saints.

J.A.P. Earlier in the reading you spoke about the household; did you have more to say to us about that?

B.M.D. What comfort it would be to the apostle at this point that someone searched him out diligently until he found him! And he twice says, The Lord grant mercy to that house. And we are in an area of things now where mercy is needed particularly in regard of the households. Things are getting more difficult. They were difficult

enough when we were young but you feel particularly for parents bringing up their children in the present world, the school and all the exercises of getting employment; it is mercy alone that will get us through. It seems as if the testimony involves households, and the fact that the devil has attacked divinely-appointed institutions of the household, involving husbands and wives, and parents and children, shows that he sees its importance in the divine mind, because the family of God is going through into eternity and he would seek to destroy the practical way in which the household can be brought up in the fear of God and in the truth.

K.P. That links with what you were saying earlier about feeding, because the lamb was for the whole house, was it not?

B.M.D. Certainly. You mean that every one would be brought into that sympathetically and tenderly feeding upon the sufferings of Christ so that we are set free from judgment. It just seems to me as if these things need constantly to be re-stated among us. Baptism is another; it needs to be re-stated, and the truth of it.

K.P. We need to understand these things more. We go on with things and sometimes wonder if we know why we are doing things.

But do you think as we feed on Christ and these things are re-stated it puts everything in a fresh light because it shows everything as having gone through the death of Christ?

B.M.D. So we need to cling to this, that the idea of a whole household can go through. Many of us just have to hang our heads. There is enough left to keep us humble for ever but that does not in any way affect the divine pattern; and the truth will be maintained.

Timothy is being revived, his gift is being rekindled, and the truth now maintained in the godly committal to the truth of a man and his house searching out Paul.

K.P. So Paul goes right back to his commission: "to which I have been appointed a herald and apostle and teacher of the nations" – to present Christ.

B.M.D. Exactly; he never deviated from that. Even when conditions came in that were difficult he never deviated from the divine pattern.

A.S.H. He said he was not ashamed of these things; and speaking of the other brother he said he is not ashamed of me and of my chain. Would he find consolation in a brother not being ashamed of being in the work?

B.M.D. Certainly, I fully agree with what you are saying. Many are not prepared for a day of small things where there is nothing of any outward pretension whatever, but what they fail to see is the moral glory that attaches to a day of small things. I do not like the word 'position' – you understand what I mean: language limits us somewhat – because if it is a position at all it is only what belongs to every Christian on earth who has the Spirit, but we just seek humbly to walk in that light, and as I find you doing it as well, we just go on and walk together. It is as simple as that is it not?

A.S.H. That is what I had in mind.

B.M.D ; So if we can find more, we can join hands and thank God for it. But I believe in that we have had to go through in recent times we have had to come to it that if necessary I will walk alone rather than compromise what is precious to Christ; I would rather say alone.

But we will not have to. John's line comes in supportingly bringing in the family of God as an environment in which the truth can be worked out in the mutuality of love among ourselves.

C.G. The thought of the household brings to my mind the passage in Colossians 3 which deals with household behaviour: "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord. Fathers, do not vex your children, to the end that they be not disheartened" (vv 18-21). That is good advice.

B.M.D. It is very good to say that and to go over the truth of what is becoming to a Christian household; there is a blessing attached to it. Alas, in most countries even the laws are destroying the sanctity of the household. If men only knew it they are destroying a nation. But what is the devil at? He is seeking to destroy the coming generation; in fact in some sense he has not been without success. These

things are very, very humbling but we are not to be overwhelmed by them; God is still proceeding and I am sure He will maintain His testimony, and also what is proper in households.

C.G. Satan is rightly called the destroyer, is he not?

B.M.D. He is, of everything precious to God.

When we come to Elisha's ministry it fits in with our times because it was in the recognition of that pot of oil, the recognition of the Spirit, which really commenced the recovery, that the Spirit was here involving Christ's body and the Head in heaven. So the legal demands of the clerical system were overcome as dispensationally the sin against the Spirit, overcome in the recognition of the Spirit.

The debts were paid and we live on the rest. I do not want to put too much into this but I just think there is some kind of little review prophetically of the recovery resulting in a wealthy woman. I mean that we have come into exceeding great light, the precious wealth of things we were recovered to in the power of the Spirit. Now the test is how is that going to be maintained if it be not in the energy of life and incorruptibility?

C.F.D. So we have really been recovered to sonship, have we not?

B.M.D. Yes, that is the point that we will get to here. She took up her son and went out. But what happened first was a decline in the responsible element. It would seem as if the father was almost callous, and then the danger that came in was "my head, my head!" We need to guard our hearts more than anything that is guarded, for out of it are the issues of life (see Prov 4: 23). If we are not right in our affections we will not be right in our thinking.

T.E.D. The turning away might not be a physical thing but it might be in my mind and thought. Is not this man here of that feature, having turned away in casting off his own responsibility?

B.M.D. Yes. I think this beloved woman really represents the feminine element we might say the assembly or the testimony going through feelingly. You think of it how the child sat on her knees and died. What that beloved woman would have gone through! Just

pause and think of it! The father seemed almost indifferent. We have to hang our heads

? bout how we failed in responsibility. He was immersed in the harvest or his business or the world or something, but this beloved woman was not. Think of her taking her child on her knees till noon and it died; think of what she went through.

J.A.P. She is a wonderful woman. Adding to what you are saying, the prophet himself had to come under her influence. At the end of verse 30 it says, after Gehazi's service failed. "And he rose up and followed her". Mr Taylor said that you never can help a locality unless you go into the place, and that is what Elisha had to learn here, go to the place. Long distance will never solve anything.

B.M.D. The staff is sent with Gehazi but that did not effect anything; it was not authority that effected it. As you say, he had to go to the place. So he would enter feelingly into what this beloved mother was going through is the motherly side of the assembly: Jerusalem above... which is our mother" Gal 4: 26. Was that not reflected in Paul in Galatia? When he travailed again was he not the mother reflecting the mother above, reflecting it down here, prepared to go through travail again till Christ should be formed in them? I think that is the setting here.

B.T. So where there is a breakdown on the responsible or administrative side as seen in the father, these exercises are carried in the subjective side, and that is what you are calling attention to, that we should get hold of the subjective side amongst us, should get hold of what is current at the present time in relation to this.

B.M.D. I am very thankful that you say that; that is exactly how I feel. It is not exactly a question of ministry. Think of what we have had, what food there is. I know we might say it is on our bookshelves, but it needs to be in us. The whole question now is the subjective answer to the truth as presented. What is needed is something more than ministry, it is effective ministry that is needed.

L.MacF. Then the small upper chamber; we need conditions locally in which the truth can be worked out.

B.M.D. Yes. She had regard for the prophet and she provided for him. Her husband was amenable to it; outwardly things looked all right, but when it came to the test he failed but she did not fail. So she did not even confide in him what she was going to do, she had direct links with a spiritual ministry seen in Elisha.

A.S.H. Would you please say something on the prophet going in and closing the door and then praying to Jehovah.

B.M.D. Well, what would you say?

A.S.H. I think he would shut out all encumbrances, all that was not in keeping, and then he would get to Jehovah where the source is. Would that be right?

B.M.D. It would. And then he walked up and down in the house. He would be looking round, Why has this happened? What has happened to this boy, his head? He is an area of sympathy. He is not pulling down the house but the opposite, he is going to bring life in by personal contact and warmth. Like Paul who embraced that young man, and said: "his life is in him", Acts 20: 10. The brethren apparently thought he was dead. Maybe we give up persons too quickly.

J.A.P. What you have said is helpful because this woman said to Elisha: "I will not leave thee!". That is really Paul's ministry, it is a current thing; I would not go against that, she says. I am applying it, but she was helped on those lines. She did not follow Gehazi.

B.M.D. Gehazi did not help. The staff did not help. There was no sign of attention, nothing happened. But what we do need is effectiveness in ministry. How can we acquire the power to be effective in ministry? We are not talking just a pleasant song. We are in critical but wonderful times; there have never been times like it. I venture to say there has never been a generation in the generations of faith more responsible than our own. The ends of the ages have come to us with all the accumulated wealth of history involving the wars of the Lord, and we stand directly responsible for the maintenance of all that is that right?

J.A.P. When you say there are none more responsible, do you mean that we have had the ministry of the revival, as we often say, and therefore we are very responsible?

B.M.D. Yes. The test now is the maintenance of the truth till the Lord comes. And surely we are convinced it is near: "the coming of the Lord is drawn nigh", Jas 5: 8. The finish will test us whether it is in life and incorruptibility.

C.G. In this section with the child we have the eyes, the hands and the mouth. This suggests contact. You will recall that in Acts 9 Peter put them out and kneeled and said, Arise, and she opened her eyes (see v 40). What do you think is suggested in the contact here rather than the word?

B.M.D. I think it is how personally the prophet could involve himself in these circumstances in detail so that there is something imparted by way of spiritual warmth. I think the seven sneezes is the energy of the power of the Spirit showing itself resulting from the prophet's service, but it is bound up with the exercises of this beloved woman.

S.E.H. Would you link the revival of this lad in any way with the rekindling of the gift in Timothy?

B.M.D. Yes I would. I suppose it would first involve Timothy personally; he would say, Why have I let the embers grow cold?

How easily we do that. How easily we droop and are not as we should be in the Lord's service. We might as well be practical, who of us has not fallen into that? It is a time to get re-quickened, to see that those embers can be revived in ardent committal and devotedness to Christ for the few moments that may remain before the Lord comes. I do not see anything in a halfway position; I cannot understand a worldly-minded Christian; morally they do not exist.

Dear brethren, you might think that is a bit strong but I believe that the close calls for full committal and consecration to the interests of Christ.

T.E.D. That is the real test that is of concern in this country, the elements of the world creeping in and the tendency of heart to go towards that side of things rather than faithfulness for Christ.

B.M.D. Well, the world is about to come under judgment. What is the value of getting my roots in that? It is only a way through it? maintain a testimony in righteousness, that is all. Our life is not here, it is where Christ is; He is our life. If that is not so am I in these things at all?

T.E.D. What is in mind in "she took up her son"?

B.M.D. I think it is the position in recovery, it is the full level in liberty of sonship. She takes him up another way, it is life out of death, it is life and incorruptibility coming to light through the glad tidings.

We read in John 12 and I just used the homely expression, Can we get over the page? Do the brethren understand that?

J.A.P. You want us to get into the joy of eternal life?

B.M.D. Yes, but we cannot miss out chapter 11. The fact is that the Lord remained away two days; why did He do that? He could have gone there immediately and met the whole position. He loved each one of them, the personnel in Bethany. There is no question about His ineffable love for us but we have to go through these things experimentally and in depth.

C.F.D. If Christ is to have His place amongst us, whether here or in Bethany, it means that a certain moral process has to be entered into and gone through and then you can emerge in chapter 12 and find that Christ is the centre.

B.M.D. In a way we have had to learn Him in a fresh way. Someone has said that "my new name" (Rev 3: 12) may be some allusion as to how the Lord presented Himself in the days of recovery. Now in chapter 11 it was just that; "I am the resurrection and the life". There was something displayed of what was in Him personally. He not only met the need in that family where death had invaded but filled it with a fresh view of Himself: "I am the resurrection and the life". Do you see anything in that?

C.F.D. Yes I do. While it was a wonderful family and a locality of affection, there was still something to be worked out so that He was truly in His rightful place. So before they went the Lord said: "This

sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son I of God may be glorified by it". That was the end result, was it not?

B.M.D. So it is worthwhile working through this exercise in depth of feeling and tears, and in which He shed tears too. He sympathetically in His priesthood enters with us into all that we are going through. Some things continue among us and we wonder why. The Lord is able to work out more than one thing at the same time; what we need is patience to be with Him in what He is doing.

But if in it we learn Him in a fresh way what fruitfulness will result.

C.S.E. The Lord says, "I am the resurrection and the life": the gain of that can only be learnt clearly if we know what it is to have the experience of death. It would have meant very little to them otherwise but the actual experience of death and the Lord Himself presented in this way as the resurrection and the life helps us to see the greatness of the Person after we have been through the experience, do you think?

B.M.D. Yes. It really is the Person. The 'I am' of course would involve that. It is, I suppose, anticipating His own precious death and resurrection but it is fixing the affections on the Person. So can we get over the page?

C.S.E. If we are really to reign in life and to enjoy this life and incorruptibility we have to get over the page.

B.M.D. What you say is right; that is Romans, learning to reign in life, each of us individually going through this deep moral process, learning Christ as the resurrection and the life. What must it be then? I must be with Him where He is. Could you stop short of being in the presence of the object of your affections?

C.S.E, I was affected earlier in thinking about the stability that was in the apostle's own soul when he said; "I know whom I have believed". As we spoke about days of brokenness it just entered into one's soul that if we can say like the apostle "I know whom I have believed" and that He is able to keep the entrusted deposit, that is really what the ministry is to help us into, to get to a place of stability in our own souls and in our links with Jesus.

B.M.D. Very important. He was fully persuaded, you could not have shaken him. He knew where he was and we need to know where we are and why we are there.

B.T. Our currently getting hold of Him as the "I am" would link, do you think, with the new name?

B.M.D. I wondered that. It is transferring our interest now to another world; it is another scene altogether. Presently we will be with Him there and we will see Him as He is. But is not the affection of the saints of the assembly already arising to the imminence of what it will be when He comes? I mean we quicken one another at a time like this. We reach after it and it weakens our hold on earthly things and worldly things. We do not belong here at all, we belong where Christ is. He has entered in already as the Forerunner for us.

J.A.P. I would like to know more about the new name. Martha said to the Lord Jesus after He had adjusted her: "Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God". While the expressions were not new it was new to her. She grasped something in what He said. Is that what you are at? The Lord reached into the family. I missed your thought when you spoke about turning the page; you meant, Can we turn the page?

B.M.D. That is what I am asking. I am just raising that question, Can we turn the page?

G.H. What do you actually mean by that?

B.M.D. Well, we are inquiring about this. I do not think it is just an automatic thing to turn the page. The Lord wants to get us into an out-of-the-world circumstance of relationship of life and being, where the hold down here is almost so small that we can leave it at any moment. I am convinced that the dispensation will close in the enjoyment of eternal life among the twos and threes gathered to Christ's name in the bond of affection of brethren dwelling together in unity. There is testimony in that: "By this shall all know that ye are disciples of mine, if ye have love among yourselves", John 13: 35.

Would it not quicken our hearts to furnish something for Him, to get over the page where they made Him a supper, where things are

normal and right? And we get in this beloved woman the quality of devotedness necessary for the close of the dispensation.

T.E.D. That starts in the local setting, does it not?

B.M.D. Yes. It was from Bethany the Lord was taken up according to Luke and to which He will come back. Do you think we can furnish a Bethany? Will He find faith on the earth? Let our committals be deepened that it may be so.

C.S.E. Would turning the page also mean that I am ready to go on, that I have absorbed the gain of the lesson that the past was intended to teach me and I am ready to go on with the Lord?

B.M.D. And in our learning the lesson He has endeared Himself to us in a way we would not have known Him otherwise, forming a preciousness of a bond. But then it will presently be to know Him in His own relationships, in His own sphere of things entirely, an out-of-the-world condition of relationship and being.

C.S.E. So we could not get the fragrance that comes in chapter 12 without getting the gain of chapter 11.

B.M.D. Exactly that. Maybe we could just leave it as a simple question: What does it mean to turn the page?

G.H. You said you have noticed that in John's gospel the thought of the word is mentioned quite often, but then also the thought of life, really living, is also much emphasised in John's gospel. John would say that to be in life is the way to overcome the world. Is that the idea?

B.M.D. Surely.

NEW YORK

10 November 1984

Key to initials

C.F.Dadd, Plainfield; B.M.Deck, Motueka; T.E.Druckenmiller, Plainfield; C.S.Elliott, New York; C.Greenidge, Plainfield; A.S.Hinkson, New York G.Hesterman, Plainfield; R.N.Hesterman, Plainfield; S.E.Hesterman, Plainfield; L.MacFarlane, New York; G.D.Pfingst, Plainfield; J.A.Petersen, Plainfield; K.Pye, New York; B.Taylor, New York

THE LIVING BIRD LET LOOSE

A.Hutchinson

Leviticus 14: 1-9; Psalm 84: 1-4

These two clean living birds speak of Jesus. How clean Jesus was! How unclean I am and you are! How different Jesus was, the only Man who has ever been here who was absolutely perfect and spotless, not in the sight of men but in the sight of God. We may appear spotless in the sight of men, but men's judgment is of no avail. Two sparrows in men's world are sold for a farthing (see Matt 10: 29) but this clean living bird was of tremendous value to God, and one such shall not fall to the ground without the Father's knowledge. Oh, how God looked upon Jesus! How God took account of that clean living bird! Jesus here amongst men was entirely different; Himself perfect, spotless, pure, in all His ways every day, very minute of every day – 'No thought of His e'er moved apart from Thine' (Hymn 119). Oh, the cleanness of the life of Jesus! Does it not throw into relief the lives of every other man and woman who has ever been here? In His life, how pleasing He was to God a clean living bird. People think they are alive but they are dead, there is nothing for God in their lives; even if they think they are clean and they are living, they are impure and there is nothing for God in their lives, they are dead while they are living; and here is a clean living bird that has to be killed. You would have thought that this is the very thing that had a chance to remain alive, that had no need to die; and, of course, it had not, that is the point about it, it had no need to die. There was intrinsically no need for Jesus to die either; when here death had no claim on Him because He was clean, because He was living. Death has a claim on every one of us because we have all sinned: "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3: 23); and let us make no mistake about it "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6: 23) and death has "passed upon all men, for that all have sinned", Rom 5: 12. These scriptures are very clear and very applicable because they apply to you and me, but not to Jesus; "all have sinned", never Jesus; "come short of the

glory of God", us, but never He. He was the clean living bird, we are the leper, but the clean living bird had to be slain in order that the leper might be pronounced clean. One of them, it says, shall not fall to the ground without your Father's knowledge. How much do men take account of the fall of sparrows? How much did God take account of this clean, living bird falling to the ground? It says: "one bird be killed in an earthen vessel over running water". Oh, how much knowledge the Father had about the dying of Jesus!

We have been speaking earlier about Abraham and Isaac going on together, Abraham knowing that he had to sacrifice Isaac and here there is this clean living bird not falling to the ground without the Father's knowledge. Oh, how much the Father knew about the movements of Jesus! How much He knew about the end of the life of Jesus! How much He knew that there was no way out for Jesus! There was a way out for Isaac, there was a way out for Abraham, but there was no way out for Jesus; the clean living bird (if I can use that figure) had to be killed and its blood had to be shed.

Does it not speak to you of the value and importance and necessity of the blood of Jesus? The blood of that clean living bird had to be shed. The blood of Jesus had to be shed: "without blood-shedding there is no remission, Heb 9: 22. The leper could not be cleansed without the shedding of blood. The priest had to look upon him, and he might even appear to be clean, but in order for him to be rehabilitated into the system it needed this cleansing, and the cleansing process needed the shedding of blood, the blood of a clean living bird. Oh, the blood of Jesus! I wish I could speak of it in a way that would attract and move all our hearts. The One who was perfect and spotless was prepared for His blood to be shed. He was the answer to all the offerings, He was the answer to all the sacrifices; "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin", 1 John 1: 7. Think of all those thousands of animals that had been slain in those preceding centuries effecting nothing; they could not cleanse a person of sin except that they looked ahead in God's mind to the incoming of the sacrifice of Jesus. Here is this clean living bird, its blood was shed; it speaks of the blood of Jesus; it is

the only way that that leper could be cleansed and could find his part and place back again in the circle of God's people; a clean living bird must be slain and its blood must be shed. It says: "killed in an earthen vessel over running water; as to the living bird – he shall take it, and the cedar-wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water". Two sparrows sold for a farthing and one does not fall to the ground without the Father's knowledge. What about the other one? What about the second of them? Here he is, the living bird; that too speaks of Jesus of course.

All the Scriptures speak of Jesus. If only we could read the Scriptures in the light of the fact that they all speak of Jesus! As to the living bird it says "the cedar-wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop"; they all speak of Jesus. Jesus said of the Scriptures: "they it is which bear witness concerning me", John 5: 39. The cedar-wood – think of Jesus in His excellency, what He was amongst men; the One who was the Son of God was absolutely perfect and outstanding amongst men. The scarlet – His excellence, His regal rights, His kingliness, His glory. The hyssop – that smallest of herbs; in man's mind that hyssop was the feature they saw; in God's mind the feature that He saw in Jesus was the cedarwood and the scarlet. What a Man He was amongst men! "My beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight" (Matt 3: 17) – the cedar-wood and the scarlet shining out in the eye of God; but, "When will he die, and his name perish?" (Ps 41: 5) – that is the hyssop; they did not want Him. But these features and the living bird which also speaks of Jesus, go in the blood of the dead bird. The one whose blood was shed for the leper to be cleansed; the One whose blood was shed for your sin to be remitted. I hope you have believed it, I trust you accept it, that that blood was shed for you. It is not just a page out of the Old Testament; of course it is that but it is not just that, it has its application to me and to you tonight, dear friends, because we are all lepers, we all need to be rehabilitated we all need to find our place.

So the blood of that one bird covers them all. It covers the living bird and the cedar-wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, all those

features are covered by the blood. And the living bird – one does not fall to the ground without the Father's knowledge; the second one – "and shall let the living bird loose into the open field". Jesus, the One who went into death, is the One who has come out glorious; He can ascend up where He was before, like the living bird let loose into the open field, every question settled, nothing remaining. The blood was upon Him of course, but He is there; every matter is dealt with now satisfactorily for God's pleasure; that second bird, the second sparrow, can go into the open field just where he will. When Jesus was here upon earth, of course, He was subject to human limitations in some ways; now He is entirely free from them; He is a Man, of course, but He is entirely free from those limitations that marked Him and that mark us; He is there in the open field, He can soar right up into the very presence of God. He is the One who died, He is the One who has been raised, and the One who has ascended far above all principalities and powers and names named, He is there able to soar in the open field. Oh, how wonderful Jesus is!

Have you thought of Him as One who is not dead but alive? Many people around us think of Jesus as the One who has died, but He is not dead now, He is a glorious living Man, He is the second of these living birds in that sense; it needs both to cover the work of Jesus, and a lot more besides, but these two cover the work of Jesus in His being taken, and His being crucified and His blood being shed, and that blood being put with all these other features in order that the leper might be cleansed and find his place among the people, that the living bird might be set free, loose, into the open heavens. I suppose, in a certain sense, that is what was in mind for the leper himself, that he should be set free into the open fields. Think of the restrictions upon the leper – no access to the camp, no communication with persons, no living with anybody, a life of seclusion, a life of difficulty, a life of impoverishment; but now he can go because of the work of Jesus, he himself can go into the open field as well as into the camp. I wonder if we have experienced what this means. Have you ever tried to soar? The living bird would soar, that is what it means – "let the living bird loose into the open field" there is no restriction whatever; it is entirely free, it is entirely clear, it

can go exactly where it will. Have you tried to do that? The blood of Jesus Christ cleansing from all sin, that blood put upon you as it was upon the living bird, have you tried to soar? How far can you get? I suppose in a certain sense it means that we need the Holy Spirit too. These are wonderful scriptures, the blood of Jesus cleansing from sin, the Holy Spirit giving power to ascend. "Come up here" was said to one (Rev 4: 1) and he went in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Have you tried to soar, may I ask again? And how far can you get in your soaring? Once a man was taken up to the third heaven and he heard unspeakable things (see 2 Cor 12: 2,4); I suppose he was soaring into the open field; he was in the experience of everything having been cleared, himself being entirely clear and able to go up, to soar into realms of glory, because that is where Jesus has gone, and He is worthy of it. But I wonder if you have really appreciated the lowliness of Jesus. Have you really understood that Jesus in His greatness – the One who is the I am, the One who is King of kings and Lord of lords – is prepared, because of your state, because of your lowly condition to come and present Himself to you according to the type of the sparrow so that you can grasp it, so that you can have some sense of what it is? How near He has come to you, how lowly He has come, that you might be cleansed and that you might be set free from all your sin.

There was a man further on in the Old Testament who was a leper – Naaman; he could not grasp the idea of the sparrow at all. The Lord Jesus said: "there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed but Naaman", Luke 4: 27. I suppose the Israelites did not grasp the idea of the sparrow either; they would not understand the depths to which God Himself in His mercy would come to present such a Man in the Person of Jesus; none of them was cleansed, it says. The lowliness of Jesus is something which man's mind just cannot grasp; man is after something bigger, higher, more majestic, more glorious; if he would only just come down and accept the fact that he is a sinner, a leper, and be prepared to accept the way that God presents Himself to men, he would come into blessing. So Naaman was a leper; and

Jesus says: "and none of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian". What a remarkable statement about Israel, God's people, many lepers, none cleansed but Naaman a Syrian. What a mighty man was Naaman! It took him some time to arrive at the fact that God would speak to him by way of a sparrow. It took that little maid: "Oh, would that my lord were before the prophet in Samaria!" 2 Kings 5: 3. She had a part in it, a little maid with no great thoughts of self, but she just testified. How she knew I do not know, because there were no lepers cleansed, but she says: "would that my lord were before the prophet in Samaria! then he would cure him of his leprosy". That is faith of course, laying hold of faith in God. She perhaps had read this passage about the law, the cleansing of the leper (I do not know), but even then this is to Israel and not to Naaman the Syrian. But still, the little maid would suggest something of the lowliness of the way that God brings His testimony to bear upon us. Then when the prophet says "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times" Naaman says, No, I cannot, that is not my way, and he implies that it cannot be God's way either because it is not his way. But God has somebody who can just draw alongside of him and speak to him: "if the prophet had bidden thee do some great thing" – that is the bullock, that is the heifer idea of things – "how much rather then, when he says to thee, Wash and be clean?" How simple, how sparrow-like it is! There was nothing for Naaman to do actually except just get in that water seven times, and when he went he was cleansed, "And his flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (v.14). He had accepted in measure the principle that God had come in, God was speaking to him in this way of a sparrow and there was cleansing. Have you? Are you prepared to accept this lowly way of God's cleansing? We might think we have to do our share in the bargain; we have: just accept it and be obedient. Naaman had won many battles, he had been a great warrior but, but, he was a leper; the battles meant nothing in the sight of God, what mattered in the sight of God was the 'but' he was a leper. Whatever you have done does not matter if you are a leper. Naaman was a leper and he accepted it; at last he was prevailed on to go and just get down in that water and be cleansed, and he was

cleansed. Can you accept the way that God has appealed to you in Jesus, the lowly, harmless One, despised by men, the stone which the builders rejected? The world has no place for Jesus today as it had not nineteen hundred and eighty years ago, no place for Jesus.

But there is another sparrow; one does not fall to the ground without your Father's knowledge, but the living bird goes off into the open field, it can soar and soar, but where is it going to find a home? Psalm 84 shows that it has found a resting place, it is not just moving on all the time. I notice that this Psalm is of the sons of Korah – a remarkable thing; the judgment had fallen upon their father but the sons of Korah through divine mercy had been saved. I suppose they had themselves appreciated the value of those two sparrows, the one that went into death and whose blood was shed, and the one that went into the open field. So in Psalm 84 these sons of Korah say: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Jehovah of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of Jehovah; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God". I suppose that is really the exercises of this other living sparrow, the crying out in this search for something higher and better in the open field, the living power of the Holy Spirit; they are really searching for something: "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of Jehovah; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God". It is the living bird crying out for the living God. And then: "Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she layeth her young, thine altars, O Jehovah of hosts, my King and my God". The sparrow has found a resting place. Thine altars: I suppose the living bird in that sense becomes a living sacrifice, like Romans 12, it would be put upon the altar never to be taken off, it is just there as a living sacrifice, and there finding a home. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be constantly praising thee. Selah". This is the living bird.

We speak sometimes about a dawn chorus. I do not know whether we are up early enough to hear it these days; there is not very much dawn chorus in Sheffield because there are too many magpies, but the dawn chorus would be the living birds celebrating.

Do you wake up with the dawn chorus? Do you wake up with a

song in your heart to God? Or are you drowsy, too tired to open your eyes, too tired to open your mouth? Well, here we are: "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be constantly praising thee"; this is the living bird, the second of these sparrows. If one does not fall to the ground without the Father's knowledge, think of that second one finding its place in the Father's house, the Father's altar, the Father's knowledge, the Father's satisfaction, the Father's pleasure, the living bird that is representative to Him of Jesus. Oh what a work Jesus has done! Is He not worthy of your acceptance?

He may appear in lowly guise here; He may have been amongst men, you might say the poorest of the poor. He could, of course, have laid claim to everything, everything was His, but He was here as a lowly Man amongst men, the sparrow amongst the bird kingdom you might say, and He appears to you as that, and He wants you to accept the work He has done. He wants you to come to some appreciation of the place to which He has gone as that living bird, able to ascend up where He was before in the glory of His own Person, and the majesty of His own Person, and yet He wants you also to take some of that character. Are you a living bird, having that blood put upon you, the blood of that dead bird, the first one taken?

Can you, in any sense represent Jesus in the sight of the Father? It is a wonderful thing that we may be like sparrows. Thank God for the sparrows; thank God for Jesus· thank God for every one who has any character of Jesus.

I think Saul of Tarsus came to it at some time in his history that he was really only a sparrow; he thought at one time that he was something great, Pharisee of the Pharisees and all that kind of thing in the majesty and glory of his own person, but he came to recognise that he was a sparrow, that Jesus Himself had met him, that the blood had been upon him, and in the virtue of that he was able to move forward; there was something all the time of that living character about him. Sometimes we appear living and sometimes we appear dead; what is wanted is the living bird, the living character of something that is always going on for the pleasure and glory of God. So just let us think of God looking down; He has seen that one

sparrow fall to the ground, the Father knew all about it, what it meant to the Father that Jesus died, to hear Jesus go into that garden and speak to Him: "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me", Matt 26: 39. Think of the Father's beloved there, a sparrow falling to the ground, saying three times: Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done. But the Father knew also that second bird; that bird is alive. Jesus said "ye are better than many sparrows", Matt 10: 31.

Think of what God would put upon you because of the work of Jesus, because the blood has been put upon you! Think of God just turning round and saying to you, Now, you are of more value than many sparrows! Think of the work of Jesus! God can credit you with having the same character as Jesus and being of value to Him. How wonderful the thoughts of God are! What do you put upon them?

How much God thinks about Jesus! How much God thinks about those who believe on Jesus! May you have some sense of living to Him and being known of Him. He looks upon you; He is looking down upon us now; He wants every one of us here, young and old; male and female, He wants us all to have some sense of the greatness of God's thoughts for us because He has given Jesus to die for us. Oh, beloved, what it means to Him to have persons who can go into the open field and soar away from man's world, away from the degradation and the shame and the ignominy of things here, and just rise up into the realm where Jesus is. May we try it.

May this word help us to do it; may the Spirit help us to be here more for God's pleasure, for His Name's sake.

GRIMSBY

19 May 1985

(Revised but not by Mr.Hutchinson – with Christ June 1985).

COMPLETION

J.Braddy

Philippians 1: 6 (from "that he"); Revelation 14: 13

I have read of two completed matters. The work of Christ in our brother is a completed thing, and as to every one who has begun in that way with faith in the Person and the work of Jesus, that work will be completed, not for your satisfaction, although that enters into it, but to the satisfaction of the One who began it, to the glory and the satisfaction of God Himself. It is what has happened as to our brother through a lifetime of the Lord's dealings with him and his own service Godward; that has been going on and it is a completed thing. But a thing is not completed if it is not started. That is a very simple statement but, beloved hearer, has the work of Christ started with you? We would long that there should not be one person leave this room who could not say with absolute certainty that the work of Christ is begun with them, because what is going to be said at the end, at the end of my history, the end of your history, stands good for all eternity; it is not a passing matter. Our own lives are short, how restricted they are, like a vapour appearing for a moment and disappearing, but if the work of Christ has begun in us, God leaves nothing unfinished, nothing imperfect. The work of Christ in our brother is completed to God's glory and praise. It has been seen as it has proceeded; we who have had the privilege of walking with him, of listening to him, who have been treated by him as a father – what a thing it is! Our sorrow is not the less because he is the second father taken from us in seven days; it is greater, but nevertheless the work of God is completed.

But there is something else: "I heard a voice out of heaven saying, Write, Blessed the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth". As to every person who has faith, as we have been hearing, and as our brother's last words were, it can be said as they come to the end of their history here: "fallen asleep through Jesus", 1 Thess 4: 14. That applies to our brother; but there is something

further still; the comment of the Spirit of God here is "Blessed the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for their works follow with them".

God is fully acquainted with every detail that has gone on in our brother's history in which he has served Him, served his fellow men and served his brethren. What a circle it is! The work is completed, and the wisdom of the Lord is in that He knows when the time is come that the work inwardly and the work outwardly, both of them, are at the point of perfection; and then He gathers, gathers for His own pleasure, and for the blessing, the eternal blessing, of the one He gathers to Himself, and we shall all, those who have faith, be with Him.

But then I wanted to emphasise this: What is going to be said of each one of us at the end when all things come into reckoning?

We have to be careful what we say because, in fact, it is the Lord who has the last word. He will have the last word with me, He will have the last word with you, saved or unsaved. Then what a word this is: "that they may rest from their labours; for their works follow with them". The effects are going on of the works of our brother, and not only that but they followed after him, the work that has been wrought in faith and in the Spirit's power in our brother's history.

May it be thus in your history as well as in mine. The final and complete reckoning is the Lord's and we have to be careful, it is not for us to say every detail – that is the Lord's matter – but it has allowed us to say so much, and we can say that his works follow with him, and they will be seen because they have an eternal character.

May it be said of each of us as we come to the close of our history.

The time is very near when the Lord is going to gather to Himself the whole result of His work on the cross and His work in each one of us in the Spirit's power, His work completed in each of us and our works completed. May it be so for His Name's sake.

GRIMSBY

26 September 1983

Word at the burial Mr.J.Franklin

THE CHILDREN'S SURNAMES

By a surname we usually mean a name by which a whole family and indeed a number of families are known. In Scripture however it has the sense more of a 'pet name' expressing fondness for the person concerned or referring to some feature of the person's character.

God gave to Solomon when he was a new-born babe an affectionate name meaning 'Beloved of Jehovah', although it appears that he was not generally known by this name. Remarkably enough also a Gentile king, Cyrus, who helped God's people to return to Jerusalem was surnamed though the name of affection does not appear to be given. In New Testament times there is the well-known instance of Simon being surnamed Peter. The circumstances were that he had confessed that Jesus was "the Christ the Son of the living God". The Lord Jesus discerned in him the firm rock-like work of God and surnamed him 'Stone', suitable material for a place in the spiritual house being built.

To James and John, the sons of Zebedee, the Lord Jesus gave the surname of "Boanerges, that is Sons of thunder". This may have been due to some natural zeal such as showed itself when they would call down fire from heaven upon certain persons who had disregarded their beloved Master. They had to learn, as we do, that the true spirit of a disciple is one of grace. Thunder however is something heard by everyone and demanding their attention. Each of these great men, though now dead, speaks loudly of God's ways with believers in His testimony. James was slain a martyr soon after the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers: John however, lived to be quite old and would no doubt always remember a mysterious word about himself from his Master: "If I will that he abide till I come what is that to thee? Follow thou me".

It is interesting that in connection with God's promise regarding the blessing in this earth of Israel His people, Isaiah shows that there will be an eagerness to be counted on with those blessed. For instance "one shall say, I am Jehovah's"; another, to make even more certain, will write those words down with his own hand and will

"surname himself by the name of Israel" so as to ensure acceptance. It is good if every believer, young and old, on the Lord Jesus Christ is as eager to share in the spiritual blessings available "in Christ" by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Are you?

J.C.Evershed