

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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BLAMELESS

W.Dickson

Ephesians 1: 3-6; Jude 24-25; Daniel 6: 4-5

W.D. This is the first day of the week and the commencement of another assembly cycle, yet I am sure our gracious Lord would think of us on the completion of a three day occasion and grant us the latitude of connecting what we had this morning with these past two days. Such is love's way. The Lord loves to see His people exercising the liberty that is associated with the Christian dispensation. So in connection with our inquiry the last day or two I have been thinking of the power that comes into the testimony from persons who are blameless, who are marked by integrity. It was rather confirmatory that in thanks giving this morning a brother referred to this verse 4 that we "should be holy and blameless before Him in love", and Jude speaks of the delight that God has in presenting us "blame less before his glory"; we might help each other as to what that might mean – not before Himself, but before His glory. In Daniel it was his blameless character that added power to his testimony in Babylon. That is in mind for this afternoon.

H.J.G. Does He not look for "blameless hands and a pure heart"? (Psalm 24: 4).

W.D. Yes, and a pure walk. Blamelessness is attached to the walk of the believer, but finding its spring in the altitude of divine thoughts as they come before us in this passage.

J.A.P. Do we distinguish between the divine side – what God has done – and then is Daniel more our side?

W.D. Yes, we would distinguish, though the question would be whether "holy and blame less" is altogether the divine side. Do you agree?

J.A.P. I am sure that is so; it is the divine intent, but it would not leave out our responsibility?

W.D. Perhaps the thought of blamelessness relates to John 13. The service of feet washing undertaken by the Lord in view of having part with Him was, in effect, to make them blameless. Holiness is not a matter of status: holiness is formation in keeping with the exalted thoughts of God.

H.J.G. One point that comes in is "according to the good pleasure of his will" (v 6). It is God's design to bring us into accord with His will. Does that in a way bring the two things together, that we submit to His will?

W.D. Yes, that helps. Of course we must keep the glory of the divine thought before us – that would be the elevated view of the passage. Yet this word "before him in love" means that the Father delights to survey a scene in which the persons are blameless in His presence, and that there has been some desire by the Spirit to answer to His great thoughts. I think, beloved brethren, when the Lord in John 17, in addressing the Father, said "they are not of the world, as I am not of the world" (v 14), what was in His mind would be what Paul speaks of here.

S.E.H. In Ephesians 5 the assembly is spoken of in that way – "that he might present the assembly to himself glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things; but that it might be holy and blameless" (v 27).

W.D. That is the result of His service in washing her. The assembly will be holy and blameless.

R.A. In John 13 He says, "having loved his own" (v 1). He calls them His own. Does that go along with the blameless?

W.D. Yes. There is what we are according to purpose, but there is what is delightful to the Father as before Him. He surveys the scene in love and He sees persons who are like Christ in their divine beauty, but through the work of the Spirit as well.

N.S.B. In Ephesians 1 we get "chosen us in him" in verse 4, and "adoption through Jesus Christ" in verse 5, and "taken... into favour

in the Beloved" in verse 6. I was wondering whether in John 13 "part with me" (v 8) looks on to these things?

W.D. It does. "Part with me" largely involves these thoughts. Part with Him involves also our part in the testimony as well as our part with Him in the service of God. Have you more to say, because I think the link is a very precious one?

N.S.B. I was just looking at John 13 following your earlier reference to it, and Peter says, in verse 8, "Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, Unless I wash thee, thou hast not part with me". I was thinking of what you were saying about arriving at this holy and blameless position. The Lord has in mind the fulness of all that the Father has designed for us, but it is with Him; it is not just an abstract thing.

W.D. It is good to see that, not that we would for a moment becloud the glory of the divine thought, purpose in sonship, and as to the status that has been granted us, but the *added pleasure* to divine Persons as we function in the service of God. Before the Father are sons, "holy and blameless" and in that way substantially yielding to His heart what speaks of Christ, His own beloved Son. Is what we are saying in accord with the truth?

A.P.D: I am sure it is. I was thinking about what you said about what is in accord with Christ; for instance the thief said, "This man has done nothing amiss" (Luke 23: 41). Pilate had to admit that there was no fault in Him (see John 19: 6). In the testimonial sphere there was blamelessness with Him.

W.D. That is right. So the Lord said in John 17, I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil of the world (see v.15), in effect blameless. "Sanctify them by the truth" (v 17). The truth separates us from the world.

S.W.D. How does this compare with 2 Peter? "According to his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, as ye wait for these things, be

diligent to be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless" (chap 3: 13,14).

W.D. That is another confirmatory scripture. In presenting this it is not to raise exercise with us exactly as to being so – we will touch that – but what the Spirit would help us in, particularly on the first day of the week, is to think of the delight of the Father having before Him a company of sons who are holy and blameless, corresponding to His own purposes and counsels which He wrought out in Christ. Now, we should saturate our spirits in these things. It has been said of Mr Stoney that he read the first chapter of Ephesians every first day of the week. He put it once, "On the first day of the week I read my title deeds to the inheritance, and then as the service proceeds I walk up and down the inheritance and I say, 'It all belongs to me'."

H.J.G. Does it take its bearing from "He that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one" (Heb 2: 11)?

W.D. Yes, "all of one". As was remarked yesterday, one in nature. It elevates our thoughts to think of the sovereignty of God that has entered into these wonderful blessings. We, Gentiles, have escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust and have been brought to the Father through the gospel – the gospel of the glory, the gospel of "the unsearchable riches of the Christ" (Eph 3: 8) – into this place of such favour.

R.G.J. You could not think of there being any other condition before God, could you? So the Lord says, "I sanctify myself for them" (John 17: 19).

W.D. That is good. We were remarking this morning that in Deuteronomy the divine injunction was, "Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before Jehovah. thy God... and they shall not appear before. Jehovah empty" (chap 16: 16), and I think that the sense of what we are speaking of fills the baskets. We are not before God empty.

R.G.J. So that what we get in John 12 is the outflow of what we have in John 11 is it not?

W.D. Quite so.

G.D.P. Paul in Colossians says, "present every man perfect in Christ" (chap 1: 28). Does that go on to this thought of blamelessness?

W.D. In consideration of this matter that thought of "perfect" came to my mind and I am quite encouraged by what you say. Could you explain what that word means because a lot of the young people sitting at the back there may say, 'Well, if I have got to be perfect I am afraid I will never be so'.

G.D.P. In Colossians 1: 28, as I understand it the thought is that we grow up to maturity: using our faculties.

W.D. That is it. Do the young people understand that? When the word "perfect" is used in scripture, it does not mean that in every sense, morally and otherwise, persons are not subject to failure, but it means maturity according to God, and this 'blameless' thought involves that. Do you think so?

T.E.D. Yes. I was wondering whether even in Salaam's times he viewed the people in the light in which God viewed them. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen wrong in Israel" (Numbers 23: 21). Is that a similar line?

W.D. Yes. You remember what Mr Taylor brought out in his readings on "The Tribes of Israel". He indicated that there was something in these tents that corresponded morally with what Balaam saw. They were typically in Christ and in the Spirit.

T.E.D. Yes, I see what you mean. We were there in that glorious place this morning and there is to be the continued expression of that testimonially here.

W.D. Yes, exactly.

A.P.D. So it says, "At this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! " (v 23). That is not an abstract idea, is it?

W.D. How God values every touch of the work of God in our souls, everything that the Spirit has wrought. Thus it appeared before Him

this morning in the service, and it afforded Him pleasure.

S.W.D. In 1 Corinthians 5: 7, "according as ye are unleavened", was real in measure, as well as abstract.

W.D. Yes. In Jude we have this wonderful doxology.

R.A. I was thinking along this line of blamelessness. We could not be part of the assembly unless we are blameless.

W.D. Well, I would not say that.

R.A. You would not say that?

W.D. No, I would not say that. You are part of the assembly because you have the Holy Spirit.

R.A. Yes, but the Holy Spirit brings in blamelessness, does it not?

W.D. That is right, I quite agree. But we want to keep the truth clear. I appreciate what you say, but persons are in the assembly because they have the Holy Spirit. There is of course the assembly functioning. Is that what you have in mind?

R.A. Yes.

W.D. The assembly is composed of persons who have the Holy Spirit. We could enlarge on that quite a bit, but it would divert us.

J.A.P. It says in Ephesians 1, which you read, "should be holy and blameless". That is how it is put. It does not say you are holy and blameless but "should be holy and blameless". What do you see in that?

W.D. Just the thought of compatibility with the divine desires. We should lend ourselves to the Lord's gracious service of feet-washing, and also remembering the word, "They are not of the world, as I am not of the world" (John 17: 16); also Hymn No 284, "Not of this world". We should ponder the import of these words.

J.A.P. And to give credit to the saints, which I think we should do, that they are not of this world. There are features in the brethren that are not of this world and you go in for that, for what is not of this world.

W.D. That is right. And the Lord in that chapter says, "keep them in thy name" (v.11). In verse 24 of Jude, "to him that is able to keep you without stumbling". These things keep us in the area of what is blameless and holy for His pleasure.

A.P.D. If it would not divert you, how could we overcome the sense of blame in connection with the testimony and our families – much that we sorrowfully have to acknowledge?

W.D. Would it be by lending ourselves to the service of Christ?

A.P.D. Do you mean His priestly service?

W.D. Yes. It would be desirable to keep this on the level of John 13 and John 17, because John 17 is a great priestly chapter. It is the High Priest who is uttering this prayer to the Father in John 17. He is the anti-type to Aaron wearing the garments of glory and beauty. I think that "not of this world" relates to the wonderful "keeping" service of the priest. In Jude it is, "to him that is able to keep you without stumbling", keep you *without stumbling*. That is choice, beloved brethren. We sometimes think that if we stumble along we are doing not too badly, but God is able to keep us without stumbling. The Spirit would help us not to stumble. Sometimes an obstacle arises in our pathway. It might be some issue amongst the saints. An evidence of our spiritual maturity is not to stumble over obstacles. "Dan... shall spring forth from Bashan", Deut 33: 22.

N.S.B. Does this go back to God's earliest thoughts in calling His people out? Am I remembering correctly that He said to Abraham, "Walk before my face, and be perfect", Gen 17: 1?

W.D. That is right, and "before me" which links with this, "to set you with exultation blameless before his glory"; Abraham represents this thought. Perhaps we should cultivate this feature of a doxology.

S.W.D. What is your impression of this expression "blameless before his glory"?

W.D. That is what I thought we might have the light of the temple on, but would it not be that there is an answer before Him to all that He is morally as God? His glory is a great moral thought and the

great triumph of God is that He is able to bring His saints through unimpeachable in the presence of His moral effulgence as a righteous God, as a holy God. He is not defeated but by His power He has brought through what He can set before His glory in all its majesty.

S.W.D. In Colossians the Godhead is operating to the same goal, "to present you... unblamable and irreproachable" in His sight, Col 1: 22.

W.D. Quite so.

A.P.D. This is greater than man in innocence, is it not?

W.D. Oh yes. Christ has 'brought again to Him more than by man He lost'. (Hymn 431). Is that it?

A.P.D. I was thinking of the moral outshining of what God is being answered to by those that are before Him.

W.D. The glory of God is a moral thought. It is the effulgence of what He is in His attributes, and the reconciliation of His attributes with His nature. In His majesty and glory He is bringing the whole church through in victory to stand before Him in the presence of all that He is. There will be a witness throughout the ages to what He has done.

J.A.P. In David's first bringing up of the ark, as you will remember, the oxen stumbled (see 2 Sam 6: 6), but in the second time he brought it up it was with exultation before His glory. When Michal accused David she was shown to be an unrighteous person; she really accused the brethren when they were blameless.

W.D. That is very interesting, and it suggests that there is always a point of recovery to the divine thought. David was recovered to the divine thought so that he took up the ark the second time and he danced before the ark "with all his might". One thing that has exercised me a little is that we should never lose the sense of wonderment in the presence of the greatness of what God is doing. The spirit of worship should ever mark us. We should be capable of being affected in our souls, to ponder the incarnation, to ponder the

death of Christ, to ponder the glory of Christ, and let the spirit of wonder stir our emotions in regard to what God has done and is doing.

H.G.H. That brings on the doxologies.

W.D. It does. This one is descriptive rather than ascriptive.

S.E.H. That is you are speaking of God rather than to God.

W.D. Yes, that is right, and do you think there is a place for that in assembly?

S.E.H. Well, I am interested in what you say; normally in the assembly occasion. we are speaking to God, but where would you feel a doxology would fit in in the way you are speaking of it?

W.D. In a hymn of that character. That is my own impression, but I would like the brethren to say.

H.G.H. It comes out any time, it comes out in your private meditation, private conversation.

W.D. Yes, it could.

S.W.D. This is in ministry, here in Jude.

W.D. Yes. You mean it is not just the service of God? Our brother's inquiry is as to the place it would have in the service of God. The service of sonship is towards the Object, the Father. I cannot be dogmatic about this because many brethren here know as much as I do about these things, but I can only suggest that a hymn of this character would fill out in the service of praise.

G.D.P. Hymn 72 by Mr Darby is of that character.

W.D. That hymn 72, "Our God, whom we have known, Well known in Jesus' love", has the character of a doxology, and is descriptive of God as known. You will find in the ministry support of what is being said.

J.A.P. Where it says at the end of Ephesians 3, glory to God "in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages" (v

21), do you look at that as a doxology? The reason I ask is that it is often used in the service in the city from which I come.

W.D. Yes. That verse is used much in our hymns. It literally means that in that vessel throughout all eternity there will be a response to God for His glory. But we use it, rightly so, in the service of God, and there is glory to God in the assembly at the present time. What you say is helpful, because it gives us to see the versatile way in which scriptures can be used in the service of God.

S.E.H. I wonder if a doxology might come in in a word in the service of God.

W.D. That could be so. It would stimulate the spirit of worship which is a great matter in the service of God, stimulate the outflow of worship to God.

G.H. "Oh God, we acknowledge Thy greatness, Thy glory", Hymn 8. That would be like a doxology?

W.D. That is one. In speaking together we do not want to get any rigid thoughts into our minds. We want to be free to expand and make as much room as possible for the extensive character of things that enter into the service of God. For example, the hymn with which we started the meeting (No 232) would give us a touch to rejoice in the millennial glories of Christ.

Daniel refers to what comes out in testimony here. He was blameless. "Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find a pretext against Daniel with respect to the kingdom; but they could not find any pretext or fault; inasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him". What a testimony! A testimony by a man in the palace of Babylon where every corruption abounded. It was recognised that he had a link with God and they said, "We shall not find any pretext against this Daniel, unless we find it against him touching the law of his God".

N.S.B. He was not alone. In chapter 1 they were to look out "youths in whom was no blemish" (v.4) and they found them.

W.D. That links on with what we have had in the readings. What power was in these men's testimony, and the Spirit of God is pleased to record it in the 11th of Hebrews, "stopped lions' mouths" (v 33) – the power of the testimony that shut lions' mouths, based on the blameless character of their lives in that palace of Babylon.

T.E.D. Do you find a link between the word we had in Jude as to "him that is able to keep you" and John's word, "he... keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him", 1 John 5: 18?

W.D. There is a definite link, and Daniel kept himself, but he was also kept by God. Another chapter, chapter 9, speaks of him as a man greatly beloved (see v 23 and chapter 10: 11). God loved Daniel, finding delight in him on account of the blameless character of his life. Of course for us it definitely involves the help of the Spirit. Do you think so?

T.E.D. Yes, and in maintaining that we have the reference to the three times that Daniel prayed (see chapter 6: 10): there would be his relations with his God?

W.D. That is right. So the law of his God is more than the Ten Commandments.

G.H. If I get help to keep myself by the help of the Spirit, God will support me.

W.D. He will keep you: it says that in Jude.

J.A.P. With regard to the inquiry earlier (which is very real with many of us as to the blame that attaches to us corporately, individually and household-wise), I was thinking of Daniel 9 to which you have just referred. Daniel says there, "we have sinned" (v.15), so there is that side that must be with us as well as this other side of right conduct.

W.D. He carried both. He did not say, 'They have sinned', he said "we have sinned". He took the blame on himself, and that is what added to his blamelessness in the sight of God.

S.W.D. I wondered if it extended to eating the sin-offering. You said it is more than the Ten Commandments.

W.D. Is that right?

H.G.H. The law of God is the will of God.

W.D. Just that?

H.G.H. The word 'law' is used with many different meanings.

W.D. I think that the law of his God means that a person is regulated by Scripture.

H.G.H. I think that he would be regulated by God's word, which would be in accordance with Scripture, God using Scripture, of course, to speak to us; but He may not.

W.D. I was thinking of the Scripture in the sense of which you are speaking of it. In the temptations which the Lord underwent, it says Man lived not "by bread alone, but by every word" of God, Matt 4: 4. I think that relates to the law of his God, but it raises the question, of course, whether we recognise the up-to-dateness of Scripture, and whether we are regulated by Scripture. The fashion of the world is to say that much of Paul's instruction is outdated. But in the assembly the Scriptures regulate us.

H.G.H. I think that we need to define it more closely, that it is really God's word to us that we should know what communion is, and it will not be outside of Scripture. If you make Scripture your law you can get the mind of man at work in it, but if you know what communion is it will not be outside of Scripture but it will be God's word to you, God's word to you becomes your law.

W.D. You mean it will be on the principle of what our brother said yesterday as to Mary in Luke 10, listening to His word. That is the way in which I would regard it too, but the authority of Scripture must be recognised.

J.Mcl. We see all those in Scripture who loved what God loved. Think of Moses, how he could intercede for the people, "the people that thou hast redeemed" (Exodus 15: 13). We spoke about Daniel praying towards Jerusalem. I wonder if we should lay hold of this more: to love what God loves would be a great refining process in our own souls.

W.D. I think so very much. The Scriptures would lead us in that direction. The whole bent of Scripture is to yield ourselves for what is for the pleasure of God.

J.Mcl. So Jehovah could speak to the children of Israel. It says He is a "jealous God"; He was jealous of the affections of His people. That is what we need to realise, that God wants our affections.

W.D. That is right. There was an answer to God in Daniel, greatly beloved. These touches of affection in the Old and New Testaments are sweet. Daniel was like John in the New Testament, the "disciple... whom Jesus loved" (John 21: 7). John was blameless in that setting.

H.J.G. Would David help us? We can take account of men like David, how their affections entered into serving God, "Thy law do I love"; Psalm 119: 113. He had his failures – this matter that we have spoken of as to blame – but he always had his recourse to God and his bent of soul and heart was loving God, was it not, "Thy law do I love".

W.D. That is good. Actually the law of God could be Psalm 119, and it commences with, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his path?", v 9. And it brings in the word of God, the commandment of God, all these things come into Psalm 119 and it would appear that that was the regulating force with Daniel.

A.P.D. Is the testimony noticeably weakened by the fact that the authority of Paul's ministry is disregarded?

W.D. Yes, it is regarded as out-of-date. That is the general trend in Christendom. I would commend to the brethren that they read Psalm 119, You come back to this matter of blamelessness, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his path?" Psalm 119 should be the sober reading and consideration of every young person in fellowship. .

N.S.B. Speaking of a young man cleansing his path brings up something that has been running through my mind during the reading. Could I ask about Joseph, because he also sets forth this

feature of blamelessness? There are many parallels with Joseph and Daniel, both young, both governed by the word of God, both suffered, and both, in the ways of God, were raised to high office in the administration of their days. What does all that mean?

W.D. It means that what is morally acceptable to God He elevates. That is the principle, that what is morally pleasing to Him. He elevates in His service and in His house.

TORONTO

13 October 1985

Key to initials

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VALUATION

C.G.Hitchcock

2 Corinthians 4: 16-18; Hebrews 11: 23-26

The thought I have in reading these short passages is the matter of valuation. Valuation is a consideration with which we are all very familiar in life down here when we have to consider either the relative importance of things, or the relative worth of things, or in other words, what one thing may be in value relative to another, one having to be given up for the other. Now, this passage I have read from the second epistle to the Corinthians is in a certain way, as to the first part of what I read particularly, a test. We can understand the statement that is made in verse 16: "Wherefore we faint not; but if indeed our outward man is consumed, yet the inward is renewed day by day". It is a very important matter, and I suppose forces itself upon our attention more as we grow older and experience, as many do, the limitations connected with advancing age; but, as those who have been divinely blessed and are the subjects of the enduring work of God, it is a very great matter for us to realise, and be thankful for – that while we may be conscious of ill health in some cases, or limitation physically with others, we know that our life in Christ, which is a new creation, is being renewed day by day. The work of God is going on and it will be completed according to the measure of likeness to Christ which God has purposed to achieve in each of us through the way of our spiritual development down here before we are taken to be with the Lord. What God has in mind for us will be completed, and it is surely a matter of rejoicing for us all to know that in spite of what may have marked us at times in the course of our present mixed condition of life (and we all have some things to regret, but then we do not occupy ourselves unduly with what is past) we have at the same time had lessons to learn, and then many things in our histories are things for which we can be thankful as being the result of God's grace, and the way which He has led us to maintain our course in the pathway marked out for the saints according to His word for the present time.

Now we have, through that grace and according to the help given us of the Holy Spirit, been brought into this pathway which comparatively few, we must regret to say, have felt they can take, for separation from evil with the most is an obstacle which they have not had the faith, or sought the grace, to overcome, and, if in measure we have done so, it is only through the goodness of the Lord and the faithfulness of God, that we have first stepped into it and then been maintained in this pathway. But the pathway has, in the faith and understanding of our souls, been maintained consciously and, we may say, intelligently, by this valuation that is in the last part of the passage I read, that seen things (and they are all around us and have their attractions) are but for a time – they are temporal, they will not last – and we have through grace committed ourselves to an order of things which is invisible to mortal eye but eternal. It is abiding, and let the younger particularly among us remember that while they may (and we do too, who are older, because we do not discount nature, but we do seek to keep it in its place) enjoy much which is natural, but those among us who are young and have committed themselves to the pathway are those who will more and more discern and value, not so much things that are seen, but things now unseen with which they are connected through grace, which are abiding and can be enjoyed anticipatively here now in the Spirit's power and will last through eternity, when saints will enter upon in actuality divinely established relationships with the Father and the Son, and, being maintained ever by the indwelling Spirit, will enjoy for endless days an eternity of happiness and glory in the sunshine of that love which is the very nature of God.

Now, with regard to what I have read in Hebrews 11, Moses was such an one, coming to evaluate aright things that he had not to merge and so to confuse. Moses could have had everything to go in for and enjoy in a scene wherein he was so placed that no natural joy, or no interest to the mind, would be denied him, but because of his early history, which was over-shadowed divinely and cared for by his parents in faith, there was in him that which could appreciate the moral worth of what was (in type of course, but nevertheless real)

the reproach of the Christ, which he esteemed greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. That was possible because of a divine work in his soul, and we must ever remember that what determines our course here as a course pleasing to the Lord and to the glorifying of God in a scene where Christ is largely (we must not say altogether, because there are many around us who love the Lord and serve Him according to their light) in this world rejected, and the work of God within us is that which stabilises us, and enables us, as we exercise faith and rely upon the gracious and powerful service of the Holy Spirit, to go through this scene in a way which commends the glad tidings, and is a support to what is representative of the assembly in its local aspect where we may, according to the ordering of God, be set. May God bless His word.

LONDON

2 September 1986

"BE YE STEADFAST, UNMOVEABLE"

J.N.Darby

1 Corinthians 15: 58

I have one word to press on you before going away "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable". If our hearts are not close to Christ, we are apt to get weary in the way. All is a vain show around us; but that which is inside abides, is true, is the life of Christ. All else goes! When the heart gets hold of this fact, it becomes (as to things around) like one taken into a house to work *for the day*, performs the duties well, but *passes through*, instead of living in the circumstances.

To Israel, the cloud came down, they stayed; it lifted up, on they went, it was all the same to them, why? because had they stayed when the cloud went on, they would not have had the Lord with them – one may be daily at the desk for fifty years, yet with Christ, – doing God's will is the great thing. Whether I go or you go, I stay or you stay, may that one word be realised in each of us, "Steadfast, unmoveable". In whatever sphere as matter of Providence we are found, let the divine life be manifested – *Christ* manifested – *that abides*, all else changes, but that life remains and abides for ever, *aye for ever*.

There is not a single thing in which we have served Christ which shall be forgotten – lazy, alas! we all are in service, but all shall come out that is *real*, and what is *real* in us is Christ, and Christ only. The *appearance* now may be very little, not much even in a religious view, but what is *real abides* and our hearts clinging closely to Christ, we shall sustain one another in the Body of Christ, the love of Christ shall hold the whole together – Christ being everything, and we content to be nothing, helping one another, praying one for the other. I ask not the prayers of saints, I *reckon* on them.

The Lord keep us going on in simplicity, fulfilling as an hireling our day, till Christ shall come, and then shall every man have praise of God – "Praise of God! " Be that our object; and may God knit all our hearts together thoroughly and eternally.

**At the Tea Meeting, 7 August 1862, at the Priory, before leaving
for America.**

THE CHILDREN GROWING UP

This is something that boys and girls take for granted. The measure of it is best noticed by friends after a lapse of time. As a growing boy I was taken from time to time to visit some very aged sisters in Christ, one of whom was quite blind. I recall how she used each time to feel for the top of my head so as to tell how much I had grown. Her name was Miss Day and although blind she was truly in her spirit of the family who are "sons of light and sons of day". No doubt she prayed that I and other children should be "growing by the true knowledge of God".

In the Scriptures we have been granted beautiful glimpses of the Lord Jesus in infancy and in boyhood. How we wish we had more! Yet the account of His birth is sufficient to show the perfection of His humanity whilst the incident in boyhood shows His perfection in humanity. Learn by heart as much as you can of Isaiah chapter 53 which relates to the Lord Jesus and His work. Growing up "as a tender sapling" was the freshness of life in Himself, and "as a root out of a dry ground" shows that He derived nothing from the world into which He had come.

All believers, as children of God, should be growing up to the Christ in all things. He is the standard and also in Him is everything that our souls need in order to develop rightly. In connection with food Jesus even used the words "he also that eateth me shall live on account of me". As regards thirst He said "... let him come to me and drink". Young minds also need plenty of healthy exercise hence Paul wrote to Timothy to "strive earnestly in the good conflict of faith". No doubt teacher and learner had both at some time seen the long and intense practising of runners and other athletes. In course of business I had occasion to visit an Olympic Games 'village' and had an opportunity there to watch wrestlers at practice. How slow they were, yet every muscle of the body was at the service of the thoughts and quick eyes of the contestants so that they might overcome. Then just as evil thoughts and habits are bad for our

bodies and we must avoid them so, by the word of the Christ, we are helped in our souls to "grow up to salvation". Are you doing this?

J.C.Evershed