

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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Contents

[THE EVANGELIST](#)

[BONDMEN](#)

[THE CHILDREN JUSTIFIED](#)

THE EVANGELIST

Mark 16: 15-20; Acts 8: 4-8, 29-40; 2 Timothy 1: 6-8

C.F.D. We would seek to carry forward the thoughts that came before us yesterday in which we were considering the fact that an ascended Christ has "given some apostles, and some prophets" and now "some evangelists", all in view of edification, as he says in Ephesians 4 "for the perfecting of the saints; with a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ" (v 12).

Now we should think about the evangelist, and as we do, I would like to direct our thoughts to Christ. Christ is always the pattern for us in any service. It is interesting in Mark's gospel, which points to the perfect Servant seen in Christ, that as soon as He is seen coming into public testimony at the commencement of His service, it says, "Jesus came into Galilee preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God" (Mark 1: 4). So in Mark we have the Lord beginning His public service, "preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom ...", and the last thing He says to those that are to remain testimonially is, "Go into all the world, and preach the glad tidings to all the creation". I trust we will be strengthened and stimulated as we look at these sections together.

J.R. Do evangelists secure fresh material? We have the apostles who establish and the prophets maintain, but there is fresh material required, if the body of Christ is to be built up.

C.F.D. The evangelist is labouring to bring to light the elect, those in whom God is working, new birth and the gift of faith having proceeded. The evangelist labours that these persons might come to light and become material for the testimony and for the assembly. This raises the challenge with us as to the effectiveness of our preaching.

J.McK. Would you say a word on what you feel the appeal of the evangelist might be to secure that fresh material spoken of?

C.F.D. Would you say something about that for us, please?

J.McK. I think what you have said is good as to the Lord setting the full and perfect example, and one has thought that perhaps the evangelist might appeal to the affections of persons in whom God has already worked by new birth, and bring to light what is to be available for the assembly and the testimony.

C.F.D. To appeal to their affections, I think is very good. That should be a prime objective in the preaching, and as we see such a large number of young people here, there might be something in this reading of a prophetic character which will appeal to their affections for Christ.

J.R. Do you think the work of God in a soul creates a vacancy that only Christ can fill, and the evangelist brings the testimony as to Christ? Is that how it works?

C.F.D. So the evangelist would point to Christ, and would seek to do that effectively. Reference was made in Aberdeen in 1984 to the preaching, that it is not just a question of putting a good word together, but that if there is anything we need right now in the preaching, it is power. Maybe you would say a word about that for us, please.

W.D. That comes from the Spirit, does it not?

C.F.D. You are referring to what Peter said - the gospel preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. (See 1 Pet 1: 12). Say more for us, please.

W.D. Philip, in the passage you have read, was undoubtedly marked by power, and the Spirit enters into that passage in a remarkable way.

C.F.D. I thought that. That is why I thought it would be profitable if we read that section just to try to get the feel of the pattern as to what is in the mind of the Spirit of God.

J.McK. The appeal of the glad tidings has always been to my own affections. The evangelical line preached by Isaiah - "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter" (Isa 53: 7) - brings in what the sufferings of

Christ were in order that we might be secured to be serviceable to Him.

C.F.D. That is very good, bringing home the appeal of the sufferings of Christ. As we get older, I think we appreciate the sufferings of Christ more and in preaching seek to make those sufferings attractive. We have a lot of young people amongst us, and prayer is going up in relation to them, and we desire to see them come in and take up what belongs to them.

R.T. Is not the gift of the evangelist more than just preaching, more than just the preacher? I think we have been taught that the evangelist is seen in John 4, the Lord dealing with one soul, weary with the way He had come. Others go off, possibly rightly, to do other things, but the Evangelist sits weary, but ready to deal with one soul.

C.F.D. Yes, and to secure that soul, not just for eternal salvation, which might be the trend of the popular preaching; but that soul was secured and she became an evangelist herself. She would have become fine assembly material. I think that is what we get with Philip in Acts 8. He secures one soul, and I am sure that as the eunuch went back to Ethiopia, he would have been fine assembly material.

R.S.R. Might I state an exercise I have that our activity should not be restricted to preaching in the hall? I think we should be at this every day.

C.F.D. Yes. Do you mean privately? Do you mean in our contacts with men?

R.S.R. Definitely. 'Grappling with souls'.

C.F.D. We can say a word for Christ: I think that is very important. I do not think we have enough of an evangelical outlook. I think we want to get more imbued with the feelings of God. That is where we lack, I think - we have not caught the feelings of God about men.

D.R. The Lord says in John 4 which was referred to, "If thou knewest the gift of God" (v 10). Would evangelism involve an

understanding of God's heart desiring that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth?

C.F.D. I would say that fully, and John 4 involves the great gift of the Spirit. I believe that should come substantially into our preachings. If material is to be secured, it means that persons need to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

E.W.J. Do we understand the divine side of the glad tidings? I was thinking about Matthew 13, and the treasure in the field and the pearl. Do we understand these things from the divine side in regard to the preaching of the gospel?

C.F.D. I think that is it. You preach that the treasure might come to light, and you think of what God has done in the death of Christ: He has really secured the field. The whole world is the field, and you might say the Lord labours to bring to light the treasure that is in the field, and then He takes us on to Paul's ministry in the idea of the pearl.

J.L. Scripture speaks about persons who are winning souls - 'he that winneth souls' (Prov 11: 30, note 'a') - to win them for Christ, but to win them too for the assembly as assembly material. It shows the personal contact that is involved in approaching souls with the gospel.

C.F.D. I suppose that brings us to Acts 8. I think we have an outstanding example of what you say in Philip. The Spirit said, "Approach and join this chariot". You have more in your mind about this, but how amenable, how available, Philip was, and it is the Spirit now who is coming into the matter.

J.L. Does it not show that God is working beforehand? This man was reading the Scriptures. How comparatively easy it is to get contact with a person who is interested in the Scriptures and reading them.

C.F.D. Yes, interested in the Scriptures and reading them. We had an appeal last night. Our brother said, 'If I can make any appeal, I would ask you to read the Scriptures'. That is fine.

D.R. I was wondering about what you said as to the Spirit and how Philip moves here. In the past dispensation angels were active but do you think that the fact that the Spirit is involved in the testimony of the glad tidings shows the greatness of the matter? It must involve the testimony of Scripture, but it must involve, as you say, the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

C.F.D. Yes, it would show how things lie in the Spirit at the present time testimonially. Everything lies in the Spirit, and I believe that we have not given due attention to the importance of the Spirit of God in all these things. But I would like to draw our attention to the way Philip moved before the Spirit spoke to him and to use this to stimulate the brethren. There was a scattering. At the beginning of the chapter the brethren will note that "there arose a great persecution against the assembly" (v 1), after the stoning of Stephen, and persons moved out and God used this as an opportunity for the spread of the glad tidings. What seemed like a victory of the devil was used of God in His wisdom to take the gospel to men, and, beloved, I believe we have to be energised to take the gospel to men where they are. We cannot wait for them to come to us. These persons did not wait: those men that had been scattered "went through the countries announcing the glad tidings of the word". Think of what God was doing! I think He began something, and He is still doing it.

A.C.C. It would seem that two calls go on together in Revelation. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come", and then, "And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come ..." (Rev 22: 17). Do the two calls go on together?

C.F.D. I think that is interesting because it shows how the heart of God continues in the call right to the very end. I think that is a fine thing to carry in our minds, and we want to be stimulated about this ourselves. We are talking about the continuity of the testimony, we are talking about recoveries, we are talking about additions. How is it going to come about?

A.C.C. The street preaching has lapsed with us in many places. You would stimulate the younger men, younger married men to take it up definitely in exercise and continue with it.

C.F.D. I think that is a very vital matter to raise. I was impressed by what was said in Australia in 1947. Grief was expressed over the fact that the open air preaching had been given up in the main, and the exercise was stimulated and revived amongst the brethren. I think this is what we need now.

W.D. Is that the force of the expression in Mark 16 as to preaching the gospel to all the creation? That verse calls attention to the all-embracing scope of the preaching towards men. You meet in the street a different class of person from those you meet in the rooms, and a different class in the office, but all creation is in view in the preaching.

C.F.D. Yes, God has men in view. The "whole creation" has all men in view, and the setting of the gospel requires that we need versatility so that we know how to speak to persons, - a word in season - and then you know what to say on the street corner. I would like to stimulate the younger brethren here. The preaching on the street corner is a younger man's service.

H.B. The Ethiopian practically puts a word in Philip's mouth when he says, "concerning whom does the prophet say this? of himself or of some other?", and that is what we find in our contacts with individuals that very often they put a word in our mouth.

C.F.D. And do you think too, that the Ethiopian was interested? I was helped by a reference to this at Indianapolis last November when there was emphasis on the need to be interested. I think we need to be stirred up about being interested, and this involves the preaching of the glad tidings.

W.W. I was going to enquire as to the extensiveness of evangelising. We are speaking about gifts, and preaching involves gift: it involves being sent. Timothy is exhorted to do the work of an evangelist. I wondered if we might be exercised to speak to souls, as not being conscious of having gift but as having love for Christ,

and if that would include sisters, who we know do not preach. It says of the woman in John 4, already referred to, that she went "and says to the men"; she did not preach to them - she said to the men - so that we all can say something concerning Christ.

C.F.D. That is very good. All of us can say something concerning Christ. So let us look at ourselves: when was the last time we spoke to someone about Christ? When was the last time that we took part in evangelising?

R.S.R. There are over four hundred brethren here. If every one of us testified for Christ, who could say what the result would be?

C.F.D. That is right; and who is to say that he has no gift in the preaching? Go out and do it. You might find the Lord will give you a gift. You can go to the Lord and ask Him for the gift of preaching.

R.S.R. If Christ is supreme in the heart, you want others to share with you what you enjoy of that glorious Man.

C.F.D. And when Philip went and preached in this section that we read, there is no indication that he was gifted other than the fact that he took the initiative and he went out and did it. He had no direction in the earlier section that we read. He really did not get his direction till the latter part of the chapter when the Spirit directed him. But at this point he goes out and takes the initiative, and does it.

J.McK. Is not love for souls like Christ's love to bring sinners to repentance? We should be in the spirit of the evangelist - love for Christ - to bring them into the gain and joy of what He has, as we get in Luke 15. He went after the one sheep that was lost and brought it back rejoicing.

C.F.D. Yes, putting it on His shoulders, both His shoulders.

J.McK. I was thinking about love; do we love to secure souls for Christ?

C.F.D. It gets back, I believe, to whether we have caught God's feelings about men. I think we need that at the present time. We have been, and rightly so, pre-eminently taken up with the thoughts of Christ and the assembly, which is the greatest subject we can be

occupied with. Along with that we do not want to forget the glad tidings.

R.D.P. Is it not so that this kind of service begins with care, it begins with love for souls, it is selfless? It is so easy to become full of one's own service and full of one's own thoughts. This service is a selfless thing, it is concerned with what is for God, it is concerned with the salvation of the soul. It is different wrestling with a soul from preaching from behind a desk.

C.F.D. God is thinking of all men. He is thinking of His creatures, and we want to catch the feelings of God about men. Paul had it. The apostle had the feelings of God; he prayed for all men, and he exhorts us to pray for all men.

R.D.P. We spoke about Christ and the assembly, but would the evangelist not be carrying all that in his heart?

C.F.D. It has been said that you cannot separate the gospel from the assembly. The two are bound together, and we should always be preaching with the assembly in view.

W.G. The scripture in Peter, speaking of the Spirit's part in regard to the gospel, says, they ministered those things, which have now been announced to you by those who have declared to you the glad tidings by the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven, which angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1: 12). Do you think in a sense it might link with Philip?

C.F.D. There is a footnote to "by the Holy Spirit". It is in the power of (note 'g'). So the gospel is preached 'in the power of' the Spirit of God, sent from heaven.

J.R. I notice that the idea of being sent is not emphasised in this section from verse 4 of chapter 8 of Acts. "Those then that had been scattered went through the countries announcing the glad tidings of the word", Philip goes down to Samaria and "preached the Christ to them". It is not exactly the idea of being sent, it is a question of the heart being full and desiring that others share with them what they have enjoyed.

C.F.D. Yes, that is why I had this scripture read. What I would like to get help on is these men who took the initiative. It does not say they were sent, it does not say they were gifted; but they went and preached the word of God.

J.R. In chapter 11 there is the same situation. The assembly at Antioch was established by persons who entered into Antioch and "spoke to the Greeks also, announcing the glad tidings of the Lord Jesus", (Acts 11: 20). There was a locality established in Antioch, not by persons who were said to be sent, not by apostles, but persons who were able to testify where they were.

A.McB. In John 7 it says, "Jesus stood and cried ..." (v 37). Would that bear on what has just been said? He just did it, and He is the great example for us. He "stood and cried ..." Would that in a sense be the principle of open air preaching?

C.F.D. I think it would be. The great thing it seems to me at the present time is what are our results? What results are we getting from the preaching? I think this should be a concern to us.

D.M. It is encouraging to know that the glad tidings are being preached, and wherever the Spirit of God is working, there will be a result.

C.F.D. Well, that is true and we can say, Well, the Spirit of God is working, which is very fine and which is very true, and we can leave it at that. My concern is, how can we be aroused about this? In our country - it is a very interesting thing to note - there is a tremendous work going on in the glad tidings. It is being preached - we might not agree with or be happy about the way it is done or the vehicles used, but the fact of the matter is, there is tremendous wave of blessing. It might be a limited gospel, it might be persons just fleeing the coming wrath, but something is happening and I think we want to get the mind of God about this.

J.M-r. Could I comment on your exercise about results coming to light? I, too, have been exercised about how many times I personally have preached and there is so little to show for it, and someone has said to me 'Of course, the results will come to light in

that day'. But in prayer I have been encouraged by the word where the Spirit says, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants and thy majesty unto their sons", Ps 90: 16. Is there not justification then for praying that there will be tangible evidence in this day of the success of the gospel?

C.F.D. I think that is the whole point because we are thankful that persons do accept the gospel; we thank God for the preaching of the gospel which saves souls for eternity, but the objective of our preaching at the present moment should be the assembly. I am greatly affected by the fact that you cannot separate the preaching of the gospel from the assembly.

A.B. In the scripture in Luke 14 the Lord says "compel to come in" (v 23). I wondered if the feelings of God are seen in that; and then it is in view of the house being filled; that would suggest the assembly.

C.F.D. Now, how do you compel them to come in?

A.B. I do not know, but I think it would involve having God's feelings in relation to men, His desires that men should come into blessing.

J.McK. If the gospel is preached in the power of the Spirit, it is irrepressible and results will come to light.

C.F.D. That is good. It is good to remind us of that. How do we compel persons to come in?

D.B. I do not know if I could answer the question, but I was thinking about Paul in Athens. While he was waiting, he must have taken account of what was happening around, and it says that his spirit was painfully excited, so he must have been in line with how God felt about what was going on.

C.F.D. Yes, he saw the inscription to the unknown God, and what did he do? He gets up and he preaches the God whom he knew. It was a very interesting preaching on Mars Hill. He hardly brings the Lord in until the very end when he speaks about the resurrection, and as soon as he mentioned that the opposition arose.

A.B. I was interested this week in a remark that in the preaching we should tell persons that God wants them. The question of their sins

is another matter, but the impression we should give people is that God wants them.

C.F.D. Yes, He wants them. That is fine. I wonder if every young person here today realises that God wants them. He wants you. It is not just a question of accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and even confessing the Son of God, which is a marvellous thing. It is very important that you confess that Jesus is the Son of God. But He wants you, all of you.

D.McG. An evangelist has no position in this world; he is following his normal calling and working but that would not in any way divert from the spirit of the evangelist.

C.F.D. Do you think that comes out in Philip? Later on he is called an evangelist (see chap 21: 8), but at this point he is not called an evangelist.

A-t.W. Is the only compelling power the power of love, love to God and love to men?

C.F.D. I suppose it is the most compelling, but you can put fear into the hearts of persons. You do not preach fear, but you warn persons about the coming wrath, and God can use that. He can use the fear of the coming wrath to bring about a person's turnround.

A-t.W. So it would be love that would be behind warning people?

C.F.D. Exactly.

J.McK. Let us not forget John 3, the greatest evangelical chapter in the Scriptures ... "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him may not perish, but have life eternal" (v 16). It is God's attitude towards men. Are we marked by that attitude in the preaching?

C.F.D. Exactly. It has really been God's thought for men ever since sin came in.

A.K.T. I was wondering whether heaven and the right hand of God comes into this? According to Mark 16 it is after the Lord has been taken up into heaven "and sat at the right hand of God" that "they,

going forth, preached everywhere ..." Is there power and dignity and authority in that position, which would be reflected in the preaching?

C.F.D. I would think so. I think it is extended really from Christ.

Christ has set the whole thing on, and now we preach from the viewpoint of an ascended Christ and the Spirit that has come down from that ascended Christ. We have a wonderful gospel to present.

P.B. There is a field too. Referring again to John 4, "the fields ... are already white to harvest" (v 35).

C.F.D. My feeling is that the fields are already white to harvest, but are we going out into the fields and trying to bring in the harvest? You have to be very practical about this, I think.

J.R. I was just thinking that. We must all get opportunities in conversation with persons, whether it be in shops, whether it be at work, we get opportunities which we do not always make use of. We need to be stimulated to make use of every opportunity to testify, do you think? And, if you get a response, it is very happy; you can see there is evidence of God working there. But to redeem opportunities, make use of every opportunity, ought to be an exercise with us.

C.F.D. That is right and, in this chapter 8, they seized the initiative and they made their own opportunity.

A.C.C. Mr Samuel Carter said about the text "He goeth forth and weepeth, bearing seed for scattering; he cometh again with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves" (Ps 126: 6); that we should 'Steep our gospel seeds in tears'.

C.F.D. That is good.

J.R. The woman in John 4 testified and there was a very happy result. The man in John 9 testified and all he got was opposition, so we have to face that too.

C.F.D. Oh yes, we will have opposition, but I think God is going ahead of us at this present time just before the close of the dispensation, and He is creating amongst men a receptive spirit to the glad tidings that was not so evident forty years ago. There is a

more receptive attitude amongst men today, I think because they see the terrible things all around.

J.R. I was going to say that - there is a good cause for fear in the hearts of men with all the build-up of these dreadful weapons.

C.F.D. If one thing goes wrong it could cause large numbers to lose their lives, and men are fearful, they do not know where to turn.

Therefore there is a better attitude to the glad tidings. I think God is providing that for us, and we should take advantage of it, beloved brethren.

R.S.R. Do you not think that the ability which Philip manifested was that he took up the eunuch on his own ground? He did not say to him, 'Now you are reading that scripture; I will bring another one to bear'. He just fastened on where the man was reading. He had the gift of the evangelist.

C.F.D. Is that like Luke 10; the Samaritan came to where the man was? You go to where people are, you preach the gospel to them to reach where they are.

J.A.G. Do we perhaps need to be settled in our committals to the reproach of Christ publicly? This is a great deliverance and we might perhaps have more success on this line.

C.F.D. That is a very interesting enquiry, because the fact of the matter is that there are all kinds of extreme groups of persons going around and they show great energy. We have all kinds of people come to our door - it must be so here too, I am sure - they have great energy and they go out and spread what they believe. We have the greatest message in time, we have the greatest thing there is, and I think we need to be more convicted in our own hearts about that, and it will bring about a greater answer, do you not think? What else do you say for us?

J.A.G. If we are honest we will say we miss opportunities because we are afraid of reproach; we would have to own that humbly. But I think perhaps as we are committed to the reproach of Christ, we find

deliverance and the Spirit sustains and helps us. We would be conscious that we are getting liberty to speak to someone.

C.F.D. What you say is very important. We often talk about taking up the Lord's reproach and going out to Him where He is, taking up the cross and so forth but it is something beloved brethren, we heed to learn to be prepared to suffer.

J.M-I. "The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost" (Luke 19: 10) · I am thinking of the feeling side, the seeking side and the lost.

C.F.D. So Philip here is seeking out he is going to find something: he is showing energy, he is seeking what is lost.

N.H. The scripture refers to the goodness of God leading men to repentance? (see Rom 2: 4). Philip would be in keeping with that and he goes down with the man.

C.F.D. It is interesting that the man brought up the question of baptism. He got help in his soul and he says, "Behold water; what hinders my being baptised?" Baptism, I think, links with the going down in the acceptance of death ourselves.

A.H. The Lord said of one, 'What she could she has done', Mark 14: 8. Is that needed? You were speaking earlier about what the Lord is doing all around us, and we might often think He is not doing much amongst us, and yet there is a need for us to do things.

C.F.D. Yes there is, and I feel the Lord is doing things amongst us. You see young persons coming forward, you see that they are getting help, but she having done what she could I think would raise the challenge with us this morning as to whether we are doing what we can. Am I doing all I can in order to show the feelings of God to men?

R.C. Is there a responsibility on us to do that? In Mark the Lord says, "Go", and in Luke 14 that has been referred to He says, "Go": in that setting it is, "Go out into the ways and fences and compel to come in, that my house may be filled" (v 23). It is almost suggesting that if we do not go, God's house will not be filled.

C.F.D. If we do not go, somebody else will. Now we have to get a hold of that. I am only repeating what has been said, that if we fail in working out what is in His mind, the Lord will have somebody else do it, because God is not going to be frustrated in any of His thoughts.

J.N. We had a word on Tuesday night about the importance of taking care of him. I thought how important it was. The Samaritan did what he did, and then left it with another to take care of the man.

C.F.D. That is right; he knew where to put him, and I think that is the link in that section with the assembly that there is a place where persons can be brought where they are in safe-keeping, where they can be provided for, and this should be on our minds as we preach the word of God.

J.A.G. From one point of view, the state of things at Philippi resulted from this kind of activity amongst the brethren. The glad tidings has a great place in the epistle and there seemed to be abundance of joy among them in their activities together. It speaks of certain women who "have contended along with me in the glad tidings", Phil 4: 3.

C.F.D. That is fine. I am very glad you raise that. John is the only one that gives us the fact that there were three women standing at the cross of Christ. Now, where are our sisters? Do they support the open air preaching? Do they go down and stand with the preachers? I ask all you sisters this. It is an exercise in our locality. Standing by the cross were three women and one brother. What fine examples they were of those that were prepared to suffer.

J.R. You remind me of the four leprous men in 2 Kings 7. They went and helped themselves to all they could, complacent with their own blessings, but then they said, "We are not doing right; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace" (2 Kings 7: 9), and they went with the good news. We tend to be complacent with all the blessings that we have, all the things we enjoy, and forget that what we enjoy is really for all men.

C.F.D. All men, that is very important; it is not just for all believers, but God "desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2: 4).

R.B. I was interested in the thought you are bringing before us as to the objective. The footnote to "the Preacher" in Ecclesiastes is 'a former of assemblies' (Eccles 1: 1, note 'e'). Do you not feel that there is a need amongst us, even for our own young, to have the gospel presented to them clearly?

C.F.D. Yes, clearly. I appreciate that scripture. The Preacher was a former of assemblies, so I think even then it would show that God had nothing else than this line in His mind, and we cannot separate the gospel from the assembly. Paul says to Timothy, "Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony ..." (see 2 Tim 1: 8).

R.S.R. Prior to that it refers to "a spirit of cowardice". I wondered if cowardice might mark us more than we care to acknowledge. "For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power, and of love, and of wise discretion" (v 7).

C.F.D. Right, He "has not given us a spirit of cowardice". It is the enemy that would make cowards of us.

R.S. Do you think it raises the question as to where our life is? The little maid in the Book of Kings was of the land of Israel. You feel that there was an expression of something in her very ways as she waited on Naaman's wife, and the end result was that Naaman's flesh became as the flesh of a little child. Even though captive she was expressive herself of the liberty and joy of the gospel.

C.F.D. She had the word for the moment. I do not say that I always get that in the preaching, but I can see that she knew she had the word for the moment that related to Naaman's blessing.

E.C. The compelling power is the Lord's love and you cannot resist it whatever you do; I have proved that.

C.F.D. I agree with you, and yet we are all such diverse personalities and characters. The Lord uses a certain way to save one and might use something else to save another. I was a difficult kind of personality so I needed different treatment.

J.McK. Do we not have that in regard to those who went to David, those who were in debt and of an embittered spirit, but David's word

to Abiathar was, "for with me thou art in safe keeping", 1 Sam 22: 23?

C.F.D. That is fine, and did Joseph not say something like that about his family too? What is the Lord saying to us about this, do you think?

A.W. I think it is very testing. Many of us have given up the open air preaching.

C.F.D. Well, if we have given it up, beloved, let us reverse that. Let us go back to our localities and revive this great matter. Timothy needed to be revived, rekindled. Let us rekindle this.

B.I. It has been said that if we do not go out the testimony will die out.

C.F.D. Yes, I can understand that being said, but I do not think God's testimony is going to die. I think it is going to go right through. What I see is that the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. It is going to go through, but it is our responsibility to be with it. We can be with it or we can fall along the wayside, and what I am encouraging the brethren to do in this room today is to get back to their localities and revive something that has slipped away from us.

R.D.P. To go back to your original reference, it is one of the gifts that has in view the edifying of the body of Christ that we might come to full growth. Is there not a way in which the spirit of the evangelist is needed also amongst us, not only for adding to the assembly in that sense, but in which the spirit of it - the way that the evangelist is able to work at things - is needed in these final days that we might be helped together in the assembly?

C.F.D. It is good to bring that in, so what you are suggesting is that this idea is working all the time in the locality. It is being set on by persons who have the spirit of this in their own hearts.

R.D.P. If we are aware of someone who has a need in relation to their soul, we would not want to leave them until it was settled, but sometimes we are content to leave things in the assembly and hope they will go away. That is not the spirit of the evangelist.

C.F.D. No, I think that is right.

E.J.J. Is that footnote 'g' in 2 Tim 1: 8 important, 'This personification of the gospel is very common with Paul'.

C.F.D. Oh yes. Now what do you say about that?

E.J.J. I am only reminded of what has been said that 'I would rather see a sermon than hear one any day'; in other words, that you would see the gospel in Paul himself as being the expression of it.

C.F.D. Yes. He was the outshining of what he was enjoying. There is a great need of joy amongst us. Let there be more joy amongst us. I believe that the spirit of the glad tidings is something that brings joy into the soul, which becomes expressive. You can look at a person's face sometimes and you will know he is a believer.

E.J.J. That is interesting. When there was a tent meeting near here some time ago, I was coming to the prayer meeting and a person came over to me and spoke. I asked him whether he knew the Lord Jesus as his Saviour; his face brightened up straightaway and I had a link with him. He said, 'Are you coming over?' I said, 'No, I am going to the prayer meeting and we will pray for you'.

C.F.D. Very good. Timothy was a young man and he was inclined to be like many of us, I suppose. Feeling perhaps 'all in Asia have turned away from Paul and things are very difficult, it is a time of small things'. So we back away and tend to go into our shell. But Paul wanted Timothy to rekindle the gift of God that was in him.

J.L. I wondered if we should also think of the way God is pleased with the telling out of Christ in the gospel. There is a scripture which reads, "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters", Prov 25: 13. Heaven is exultant when Christ is made much of.

C.F.D. That is right. One of the first things that Paul did was to preach Jesus that he is the Son of God (Acts 9: 20). Then right at the end of the Acts of the Apostles, the last thing he is doing with the

Jews is pleading with them and preaching the kingdom "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching ..." (Acts 28: 31).

R.S.R. Do you think that the passage in 2 Timothy 4 epitomises what we have had before us? "be urgent in season and out of season" (v 2). In season would be in the preaching; out of season would be every minute of the day.

C.F.D. Yes. He brings in the thought of the word of God in that setting. In fact, that scripture was used to change our noticeboards to 'The Word of God'. That gives us great scope. It is not only preaching the gospel, but "in season and out of season" you are proclaiming the word, which gives great scope.

J.McK. In your remark as to the gospel linked with the assembly, is there not the necessity to bring in the water as well as the blood? The blood judicially cleanses the sinner, but the water keeps us cleansed in view of what is for God.

C.F.D. Yes, and all the brethren need that. We all need the water as we come up. I would like to raise that challenge too, whether we all get into the presence of the Lord Jesus before we come out and see that we are cleansed from any defilement. I think we are very short when it comes to the application of the water.

R.S. I wonder if Paul when he speaks of himself as "a delineation of those about to believe on him to life eternal" is a pattern, a delineation? (see 1 Tim 1: 16).

C.F.D. It has been said that the preacher should be a pattern of what he is preaching.

J.M-r. The Lord Jesus was reckoned with the lawless, the word says, (see Luke 22: 37). Young people might, as they go out into the reproach of Christ, feel a little ashamed and might feel it wrong, but my own father helped me many years ago. A worldly person would not feel ashamed for their cause, but he said, 'You will feel ashamed for your cause because your Leader died as a common criminal'.

The point is, not that you do not feel the reproach, but that you go on in spite of it. You do not give up.

C.F.D. Very good. That is a good word to finish with.

EDINBURGH

31 May 1986

Key to initials (*Edinburgh if locality not stated*)

A.Bain, Buckie; D.Beveridge, Kirkcaldy; H.Brown, Kilmarnock;
A.Buchan, Peterhead; P.Buchan, Peterhead; R.Campbell, Glasgow;
A.C.Craig, Airdrie; E.Croot, Dorking; C.F.Dadd, Plainfield;
W.Dickson; J.A.Gardiner, Aberdeen; W.Grosse; A.Henry, Glasgow;
N.Henry, Glasgow; B.Ikin, Manchester; E.W.Johnston; E.J.Judd;
J.Lovie, Macduff; A.McBride, Grangemouth; D.McGregor, Lochgelly;
J.McKillop, Chicago; J.Marshall; J.Mather, Dundee; D.Matthews,
Kirkcaldy; J.Newberry, Hamilton; R.D.Plant, Birmingham; J.Renton;
R.S.Renton; D.Robertson, Cumnock; R.Swan; R.Taylor, Barnet;
A.K.Turner, Rotherham; W.Wallace, Hamilton; A-t.Wilson,
Manchester; A.Wilson, Kirkcaldy

BONDMEN

C.F.Dadd

Exodus 21: 1-6; Philippians 2: 3-11; Luke 19: 13-20

It is my desire at this time, beloved brethren, to say a word about bondmanship. Over these days we have considered the thought of "some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers" (Eph 4: 11), and now I thought we would consider the thought of bondmanship. It should be attractive to all of us because we are all open to this wonderful lowly service of being a bondman or a bondwoman. Scripture speaks of both, therefore we are in a position, beloved, where none of us has to think of ourselves as outside the possibility of being here in faithfulness to Christ as a bondman or a bondwoman. I think Christ makes this service very attractive. As we read this section in Exodus, the glory of that blessed Man who stooped into manhood, that One who was none less than God, stooping into manhood to fill out the place of a bondman, becomes very attractive to us. We see the attractiveness of it in Christ, and one of the things that makes it so attractive is that it does not require gift; it is just a question of love, love for God. Love is the beautiful feature that comes out in the Hebrew bondman. There is no name given, there is nothing to suggest that he was prominent in any distinctive way, but it comes down to the question of his own affection, his affection for God, and that came out in Christ in all its beauty, His affection and His feelings for God. As Christ moved through this scene, how attractive God was to Him, how beautiful was God to Him, so that in John He could say to those about Him, "That the world may know that I love the Father" (John 14: 31). I think those words are beautiful, beloved, "That the world may know that I love the Father". It is beautiful also to think of the love of God for Christ, how it came out so early, God's affection for Christ. How attractive Jesus was to God. At the beginning of His public pathway, He could open the heavens upon Christ, and He could say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight", Matthew 3: 17. How attractive that is - "This is my

beloved Son ...". How the Father loves the Son! It says "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand", (John 3: 35). How wonderful that the Father has so loved the Son and has such confidence in Christ that He has committed everything to be in His hand. Beloved, it could not be in a better hand than the hand of Jesus, the hand of Christ. Then how the Son loves the Father and how this came out in His manhood. I love to think of Jesus at the age of twelve, in the temple amongst the doctors of the law and the dignitaries of the day, and how they marvelled at His answers and His questions. Would you not like to have known some of the questions that the Lord asked when He was twelve years of age? I would. And as just a lad of twelve, would you not like to have heard some of His answers? I would. At twelve years of age, what answers they must have been. But all this was under the eye of a loving God, and what was coming out in Christ I think was the beauty of bondmanship at a very early age, the beauty and attractiveness of bondmanship. He was here to serve. He was going to serve God, His prime responsibility was Godward and, our prime responsibility is Godward. Our prime point of righteousness is righteousness towards God, and that is what came out in Christ in all its beauty as He moved through as a servant under the eye of a righteous, holy God. He came to the Jordan to be baptised of John, and John said, 'I should be baptised by you'. But no, the Lord said, "it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt 3: 15). I think what was coming out in the Lord at that time was His devotion to the will of God, His devotion to what was pleasurable to God, His committal in righteousness Godward, so that He said, "it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness". I wonder if that is our language, beloved. Is that your exercise and is it mine, that every feature of righteousness should be filled up? It was filled up in the life of Christ, and now I think the Lord has left us a pattern that the feature of righteousness might be marking every one of us. So are you right with God? Are you right with heaven? We have been together these two days and various things have come before us, but I would like to ask you now, are you right with God? Are you fulfilling your righteous relationships with God? Are you here moving according to the will of God? It

could be said prophetically of Christ as to the body that was prepared for Him, "Behold, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me - To do thy good pleasure, my God ..." (Psalm 40: 7,8). Think of that, the filling out of the will of God was seen in that blessed One, and every way He moved He was filling out the will of God. I think that links with bondmanship, His committal to serve. I think it links with His love, "I love my master", but then he loved his wife. How wonderful! You think of the way Christ loved the assembly. If we are spared till tomorrow morning - if the Lord will and we should live - we will be reminded of this as we proceed in the service of God, how Christ loves the assembly. He loves His wife.

That has come out in the way He set Himself to secure the assembly. It was bondmanship, it was committal, it was a whole-hearted life of devotion in which He had as an objective this glorious vessel which He was to secure on the basis of His own love, "Christ also loved the assembly, and has delivered himself up for it ... that he might present the assembly to himself glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things (Eph 5: 25-27). Think of that beloved all moving, you might say, on the basis of His own committal and His bondmanship as He served His own when He was here. In John 13 it says, He "rises from supper and lays aside his garments" (v 4).

Think of the dignity of Christ, think of the glory that belonged to that blessed One, and yet it says He rose up and He laid aside His garments and He girded Himself with a linen towel. I wonder if we can see Jesus in that position as serving His own. that He laid aside momentarily His dignity and what belonged to Him as He moved here in relation to His own, and as a bondman He would gird Himself with a linen towel, having in mind that His own should be served. I wonder if we are able for this beloved. Are we able for this in our own localities, that there should be committal on our part and we are ready to help the saints? If correction or adjustment is needed we are ready for that, or for refreshment and that is the way I would like to think of John 13 for the moment, how the Lord just laid aside His garments and took up the linen towel and girded Himself - the glory of the Bondman committed to serve His own - and He washed their feet, He refreshed them. He refreshed them for all He had in view

that He was about to unfold to them, because those chapters 13 through to 17 of John's Gospel are full of glory and of uniqueness, because it is the only Gospel which gives them to us. If John had not given them to us we would not have the glory of what the Lord outlined in those chapters, which all pertain to a line of things involving the purpose of God. So He served His own in this way as a bondman.

I thought that Philippians would help us to see the mind that was in Christ Jesus, the going-down mind, but the appeal of the apostle is that this mind might be in you, and this is the test for us. He said, "For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied himself, ..." "For let this mind be in you" ... He "emptied himself". Think of the Lord coming in, taking humble ground, taking humble ground to serve God, taking humble ground to serve His own that He might fill out the idea and the glory of bondmanship which is so precious under the eye of God. Such bondmen are persons that the Lord can confide in. Would you not like to be one of the Lord's confidants? Would you like to be so near to Christ that He could have confidence in you, He could make things clear and open up things to you? I like to think of the apostle John. He presents himself in Revelation as a bondman. You might think of John as an apostle, you might think of him as a prophet - both would be true - but it is very attractive that he presents himself as a bondman, and it is to the bondman that the Lord made His mind known regarding the prophecy of the Revelation "to shew to his bondmen what must shortly take place; and he signified it, sending by his angel, to his bondman John, who testified the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, all things that he saw" (Revelation 1: 1-2), I suppose John would have taken peculiar pleasure in being able to think of himself in that regard as one who was committed to the will of God, one who was so devoted, one of whom the Lord could say, "If I will that he abide until I come, what is that to thee?" He could say that to the apostle Peter (John 21: 22), and John just fills in this beautiful service of a bondman, and one

who could be the confidant of Christ. Beloved, I believe this is open to you and me that we can be near enough to Christ to have His confidence. Do you ever go into the presence of the Lord and ask Him about things, about things which are proceeding at the present time? Do you ever go in to the Lord and ask Him about assembly matters that are proceeding at the present time that might be perplexing to the beloved saints? Would you not like to be able to go into the presence of the Lord and spread these things out and have the sense of the Lord communicating something to you? That is a test to us, is it not? Has the Lord ever spoken to you, has He ever spoken to me? And yet it is open to us, beloved, it is open to us to get into His presence and know His mind, and I believe He is letting His bondmen know. He let His bondman John know what was going to proceed, what would come in after this dispensation closes down. Think of it, the things that were, the things that are and the things that are to come, and He discloses all this to a bondman. How choice!

I would like to say a short word as to Luke 19 where the Lord presents this parable of a man who was going away to receive a kingdom, and of course the Lord is speaking about Himself. He is speaking about the fact that He is about to leave the scene of testimony, and He did leave this scene by way of death, "and that the death of the cross". So before He goes He is speaking about this and about a high-born man going into a distant country "to receive for himself a kingdom and return. And having called his own ten bondmen, he gave to them ten minas, and said to them, Trade while I am coming." - "Trade while I am coming." It is very interesting the way the Lord puts that. He does not say, 'Trade while I am away', He does not say, 'Trade during my absence', He says, "Trade while I am coming". It is very suggestive, is it not? The Lord is in the act of coming and that is the way it has been for the whole dispensation. He is in the act of coming, and now we are just at the threshold of the Lord being about to return and take His assembly to be with Himself. He indeed will take all those that have died in faith - wonderful thing! Think of all that belonged to the previous

dispensations, think of all that belong to our own dispensation, and He will take them all. He knows every one, He knows where they all are, but in the meantime He has committed certain things to us. He has given a mina. You say, 'What is a mina, it does not appear to be very much'? But what is a mina? Well, when the Lord came into manhood He brought within our range the knowledge of God. He brought within our range the love of God. He brought things to us that pertain to heaven and, beloved, He has left these things with us, He has given these things to us and He is saying to us, 'While I am coming you trade with that and we will see upon My return how the matter works out'. Now, we are looking for Him to come. All those that love Him are saying with the Spirit, "Come, Lord Jesus". That is the characteristic cry, we might say, of the Spirit and the bride. How united the Spirit and the bride are in saying, "Come" to the Lord Jesus, and while He is coming He is saying, 'I want you to trade with this mina'. That is a very interesting enquiry because when He comes back He is going to hold you and me responsible for what we have done with it, and I believe as we have had these two days there has been the idea of the trading. We are putting into motion, we are putting into circulation what the Lord has left with us, what He has given us, and that is the way it becomes expanded, it becomes enlarged. He has given us the capital to work with, brothers and sisters alike. He has given us capital to trade with. You cannot function in a business very well without capital. Well, the Lord has put us into business, and it is the King's business; the King's business requires the first place in our lives. His business is very attractive to many of us. Many of us have spent much time of our lives in business circles, but, beloved, this should be our prime business, the things of Christ, the things that He has left with us that we might put them into circulation and they might be expanded in our hands and there might be an increased answer to God. Tomorrow morning as we sit down together and we participate in the Supper, for the brothers it is our responsibility to participate verbally, give out a hymn, get on to our feet. We are tested as to what we can say to the Father. We are tested as to what we can say to the Father about Himself. We can speak to the Father about Christ, and of course

that is always so acceptable to Him. We can speak to Him about His Son but, when you get into the presence of the Father, what can you say to the Father about Himself? And what can you say about the Lord where He is in glory? Ofttimes in the service of God we are speaking to a historical Christ, we are speaking about the Lord when He was here in manhood in flesh and blood. We are speaking about what was historical, but the test to us, beloved, is what can we say to Christ about Himself where He is in His present condition? He is not in flesh and blood now, He is the glorified Man, seated at the right hand of God. What can we say to Him about Himself now in His current condition and in His present place? This all relates to our trading with the mina. It relates to how we are handling the capital that the Lord has left with us. So we find we are together in meetings like we have had and you find that your mina is growing, your capital account is growing, and then you get home into your own locality and you do not stay home from the meetings because you find you want to put into circulation what you have got. Well, a sister might say, how do I do this? How does a sister do this? I believe when a sister comes up exercised and has matters in her mind, the Lord has His own way to work them into the temple and bring light to shine on them. Many a sister, I am sure, has said, 'I was just thinking of that when you spoke about it', or, 'When you gave out that hymn, I was thinking of that hymn myself', showing how the exercises of the sisters can be worked out in the local expression of things. So therefore this is attractive to the sisters too, because, beloved sisters, you are to have part in administration in the coming day, That is why I am sure it is such a fine thing, amongst other matters, that the sisters are in the care meetings. I hope the sisters are all exercised to go to the care meetings because it is a tremendous help to the brothers if you are there. But the thing is, you set into motion what you have, and what you find is that things are expanded, and then when the Lord comes back He says, 'Now I want to speak to you. I gave you a mina, I asked you to trade with it while I was coming. Now what have you?' And the one bondman says, 'Well, I have ten minas'. 'Oh', He says, 'that is fine. You have been a profitable bondman. You have set into circulation what I

gave you and it has built up and now you have ten minas', showing, beloved, how we can be built up in the things of God and how it can be that the Lord would say to this bondman, 'Be over ten cities'. We are going to have part in the administration. That should be attractive to us. If we suffer with Him we will reign with Him. We are in a suffering time now, and there is a lot of suffering amongst the saints, but the time is coming, beloved, when we will reign with Him. What a marvellous thing it will be when the assembly comes out with Christ to have part in administration for He will set on an administration in this world - this very world in which we are - such as the world has never seen in history. I suppose there has never been more confusion amongst men than there is at the present time, confusion amongst the nations one nation trying to dominate another, confusion in the military world, confusion in the political world, terrorism, anarchy - the world is just in one great mess, but think of the Lord coming in and setting up the kingdom in which there will be righteousness. Oh, what a shortage there is of righteousness at the present time, but the Lord is going to establish a kingdom in righteousness and beloved He is going to reign, and when He does we' are going to reign with Him. Oh, I think that is so attractive that the Lord is not going to reign alone. 'No', He says, 'you are going to reign with me'. Is that not attractive to us beloved, and now we are in the trading time, now we are learning what it is to work with the things of God, with the things of Christ and in a coming day we will be that much more trustworthy. The Lord will be able to say, "Well done, thou good bondman" or "Well done, good and faithful bondman" Matt 25: 21. Oh, would you not love to have that said when the Lord comes! Would you not love to think that you would really be the recipient of an expression like that from the lips of Christ? "Well done ..." So it says here, "And the second came, saying, My Lord, thy mina has made five minas. And he said also to this one, And thou, be over five cities". We do not want to be like the bondman that buried the mina in a towel. The Lord has left certain things with us, and He has given us capital and when we finish our time we might not have anything further than what we began with. Would that not be sad, would that not be really sad that we have

been left here, we have spent all these years, it might be going in and out amongst the brethren, and possibly we have gathered up very very little and we have very little to show for what the Lord has given to us? The Lord is intent, I believe, upon our putting into circulation this capital so that as He comes He is going to be able to say to us, 'You have done well, faithful bondman'. What an attractive thought it is, so that our part with Christ in the kingdom will depend upon our faithfulness in testimony. Now, we want to think about that. Your part in the rapture and mine, when we are called up, will not be related to responsibility, it is really related to the purpose of God, it is what the Lord will bring about. Oh, how wonderful, what a moment that will be in the history of time. The place that you have in the kingdom will depend on your faithfulness in the sphere of testimony and you want to think about that because those that suffer with Him will reign with Him. Well, beloved, He is about to come. May we be ready for His coming!

EDINBURGH

31 May 1986

THE CHILDREN JUSTIFIED

In the presence of his king, the prophet Elijah spoke of the God "before whom I stand" - a remarkable statement. Not only did it mean that he waited in service, but that he was able in his spirit to abide in the presence of the allholy One. Later, on the Mount, he did actually stand in the glory with Jesus, the holy One of God. Of the early life of Elijah we know nothing except that he was given a name meaning 'Whose God is Jehovah'. It could be that, while quite young he realised that through the grace of his God he was reckoned righteous enough to stand in the divine Presence. As he grew up he may have understood that the sacrifices offered by the priests in some way secured this for him. We know that those offerings of beasts without blemish looked forward to the great sacrifice of Jesus and the shedding of His blood of atonement. The believer on the Lord Jesus is justified "in the power of his blood".

As to our enjoyment of these things, the believer is "justified freely" by "the grace of God". This is through redemption's blood having met the judgment-guilt of our sins. All our sins were future when Jesus died so that, although the believer should never sin against his God, yet even so "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin". The water that also flowed from the riven side of the Saviour shows the fulness of God's provision when our consciences become uneasy.

God's justifying grace is unmerited favour and is without conditions, although a believer would seek in every way to please Him. A little incident recorded of Queen Elizabeth I shows the principle. In speaking to a woman known to her but who had attempted to endanger her life, the Queen sought to attach precautions to a free pardon which she was graciously giving. She was startled however to hear the reply, 'Madam, grace that is fettered by conditions is no grace at all'. Nevertheless a full pardon was given and a devoted subject secured. It cost her Majesty but a few words to pardon: God spared not His only-begotten Son that we might have a full and righteous justification! Do you enjoy it?

J.C.Evershed