

A
WORD
IN ITS
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THE LORD AS MASTER

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J.A.G. We have been drawn this week to the scripture in 2 Timothy, to the fact that the Lord is Master. He is a very blessed Master. I thought the second portion we read in Matthew 26, as we look at it together, would endear Him to our hearts - to see Him in His committal to the will of God, facing up to the power of death and all that that involved for Him. There is much instruction for us in Scripture. So that as we come to 2 Timothy, we move in this way that brings us into serviceability to the Master. The woman in Simon the leper's house shows us how to be serviceable to Him, probably, you might say, the result to be reached in the preaching of the glad tidings. The scripture in 1 Chronicles gives us some impression of the personalities that we associate with, who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. We come to the transfer of the kingdom from Saul to David, so it is obvious who our Master is. I wondered if we could speak about these scriptures; the brethren will, no doubt, fill in the many gaps.

C.J.H.D. I think it is timely that we should go back to our roots, our first touch with Christ, to see if these scriptures can really apply to us.

J.A.G. Well, it is a time of encouraging one another. I think that the scripture as to the Lord in Gethsemane is most affecting. He has already, in this gospel from chapter 21 to chapter 25, given His judgment of the whole position: His ministry in that sense - His public testimony - is finished, and now He is committing Himself to be the Victim. How that should draw out our hearts to the Lord Jesus, that He is going through in His spirit the anticipation of what He came to fulfil what He came to do. He said to Pilate I have been born for this, and for this I have come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth, John 18: 37. It was said of Him prophetically, "Behold, I come ... To do thy good pleasure, my God, is my delight, and thy law

is within my heart", Ps 40: 7,8. He did this, beloved brethren, for us; He did not have to do it for Himself.

E.F.W. Were you thinking that the setting of the first scripture is in a scene rather similar to that of ourselves? It was in Bethany, and in Bethany there was that which is genuine for Christ. In this particular house there was indifference and a materially minded assessment. Is it in that scene which is all around us, that we get the shining of this person who is committed to Christ?

J.A.G. Yes, I thought so. In one sense it is like a 2 Timothy 2 position: there is mixture there. But the 'in Christ Jesus' position is there in its intactness. I thought that perhaps we should look at the Lord's committals in Gethsemane before we go on to that. I read it in the order I did because that is just how it comes in the chapter. He takes with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply depressed. He was the only One who was able to go into this; yet we would seek to follow Him in some measure in our affections and think about what He has undertaken for us. You might say He was doing this for God: so He was but He was doing it for us as well. I think the scripture in Hebrews is very interesting: "Thou tookest no pleasure in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin. Then I said, Lo, I come ... to do, O God, thy will. Above saying, Sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou willedst not" (chap 10: 5,6). It seems to me to cover the scope of divine purpose. All that is before the Lord here; He is facing death and the awful reality of it, the power of Satan.

E.C.B. Is this, I love my Master (see Exod 21: 5)?

J.A.G. Yes, that is what it is. It is the true Hebrew bondman, and the whole of the truth is going to hinge on this committal; the whole of eternity is hinging on what proceeds in this section. What a matter it was that the Lord Jesus goes into this, gives expression to the deepest feelings of soul. Say more about Exodus 21.

E.C.B. I wondered, in regard to what you said at the beginning, if He does not become attractive to us as our Master because of the way

in which the type shows that He devoted Himself to His Master.

J.A.G. That is what I thought in this section: you see the Lord Jesus committed to His Father's will. He is not going to take this cup from Satan: He is going to take it from the Father, and we can follow the teaching in it as to ourselves. While this is uniquely Christ and only He could go this way, yet I think the background to this position would greatly strengthen us when pressure of any kind comes upon us. There is the moral side of the passover, the bringing us out of Egypt, the Lord's supper celebrated in the wilderness, (but the gateway to the inheritance) and great scope in the mount of Olives, so that we can come from heaven, you might say, into this scene of pressure where the will of God is to be maintained and carried through.

C.J.H.D. How we are to be affected by what these three men represent! The first of the twelve to be martyred was James, but Peter at the beginning, with the scope of the will of God in the gospel in his heart affects three thousand persons at one preaching, and John abides until the Lord comes.

J.A.G. I think you might say that they are a great extension of this woman, who was the standard. Christ is supreme in their hearts: wherever they are, the Lord is their object. What a blessed matter that is! It is far more than teaching; it is a link with Christ by the Spirit and everything else is regulated in order that His supremacy may be maintained. Then they are happy and joyful in whatever circumstances they are.

E.F.W. Why does the Lord say, "My soul is very sorrowful"?

J.A.G. I think it would perhaps convey to us the deep inward feelings of Christ as to death; how He felt it in His heart, in His soul - "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin", Isa 53: 10.

E.C.B. You said the whole of the truth hangs on this; the whole of truth hangs on it as well, does it not?

J.A.G. Exactly.

E.C.B. Does our being in the gain of both truth and the truth hang on our relationship with Christ as Master?

J.A.G. I think it does; it provides a guileless, artless condition of holy transparency which is really in its fulness the holy city, is it not? It comes down clear as crystal. It is a very wonderful deliverance the Lord has wrought for us and this is Him working it out in His spirit so that we should be wholly clear and free. How wonderful that is! He has removed every obstacle. He did that before He ascended up far above all the heavens; He descended into the lower parts of the earth to deliver us from the power of death and Satan.

E.C.B. Do you think that the one hour is a test to us?

J.A.G. Yes, because we so easily wilt under pressure. I know my own heart very much in that regard. The answer to it is prayer, to be cast upon God in prayer, and to pray and to pray again - because the devil comes into it and his intention is to come between us and our links with God, to bring in depression, to cast us upon something else away from God, to cause us to fall back on something natural. "And being in conflict", it says in Luke, "he prayed more intently" (chap 22: 44). That is a wonderful feature of manhood, as pressure comes upon us, to commit ourselves to prayer all the way through it, to find the answer, and then we are overcomers. I think that is very wonderful, would you say?

E.C.B. Yes, I would certainly say that. You were speaking somewhere else about the examination of Jesus, for instance in the burnt-offering, not being necessary to prove any discrepancy, but because it only brought out perfection. Is that not what we get here, the perfection brought out in submission to the Father's will?

J.A.G. Exactly. I remember Mr Gardiner giving a word somewhere and saying that the three times that the Lord prayed here brought out the depth of degree of perfection. There is a standard, then there is more than a standard - there is what is way above the standard - and you can go as far as you like in Jesus and you will find only more perfection. I think that is very wonderful.

S.D.K.R. The Lord said, "Sit here until I go away and pray yonder". I thought as it was being read how wonderful that is when you think of who the Lord was; He felt the need of prayer at that time. Would that enlarge a little on what you are saying?

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. That is all very helpful, and the fact that He says, "watch with me" - "watch". You might say that the Lord did not need to be vigilant, there was nothing in Him that would answer to any presentation by Satan. As a true Man He felt the need of vigilance and prayer, and when He. says, "yonder". How far is that? Is He thinking about sin's distance? Mr Biggs must have read this chapter very often. Who could measure sin's distance? 'Thou didst measure then sin's distance', (Hymn 298); "yonder" - How far is it? The bottom of the mountains, the depths of the sea!

S.D.K.R. The facing of it all was in the garden, and the Lord goes there as committed to the will of God and all that it involved.

J.A.G. I think so. That is the important teaching for us, that we get through the thing with God; then when it comes we are superior to it. It is not that we do not feel it, that we are not going to be affected by it, but there is divine support from God to carry us through, so that God is represented in it. I think that is very wonderful, that you never need to fail in representing God. What royalty there is in Christ in this section.

D.A.B. He never asked the disciples to pray for Him, did He? He would never ask them to share a load that they could not bear; He knew how heavy the load was and He knew how heavy it was going to become, did He not? He told them to pray for themselves, but He only asks them to watch with Him.

J.A.G. Yes, and what a Man He is, that He can come from His prayer and speak to Peter in the holy calm of a normal relationship with all this pressure on His spirit. He says, Could you not watch one hour, Peter; you are supposed to be wholly committed to this?

D.A.B. And the next time He comes He finds them asleep and He goes away, and apparently He does not say anything to them, and

yet He would long to have their company in that moment of sorrow, yet He bears it really without them.

J.A.G. It is a challenge as to how much you can be with the Lord in the appreciation of His feelings about the whole position of the church at the moment. John is the weeping one - he wept much. Now the elders can tell him what is going on. How much can we really be feelingly with Christ and in the display of that spirit, the spirit of Christ amongst the brethren, that would promote and bring out God's work in assembly features and character as we are near to Him and know how He feels. Largely, as far as I am concerned, that is objective, but it is a very blessed objective to be arrived at, that I might be an increasing diffusion of the spirit of Christ among us. We would then be far closer to one another, because He is the Object of every one.

C.J.G.B. Does the type in Genesis 22, in relation to the burnt-offering where it says, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship" (v 5), have a bearing?

J.A.G. Yes; you might say in this section that the Father is binding the wood; the Lord is going and speaking to the Father, and in the three times He is getting an answer. The Father must be telling Him (He is in communion), that the cup cannot pass from Him. Abraham bound the wood, and then he took up his knife to slaughter his son. There is the element of violence; the death of Christ was a very violent one, was it not? You see the Lord moving into this matter so feelingly with the Father as committed to the Father's will. He shrinks from the awfulness of what was before Him, but He is going to receive it from the Father as His will, because He delights to do His Father's will even if it involves being made the very article of sin itself. What a Man Jesus is! I do not know that we really know Him or appreciate Him enough; He is no mythical Person.

C.J.H.D. I was thinking of Genesis 22. Twice over it says, "and they went both of them together", and here the Lord leaves the three and three times it speaks of Him "going forward", "going away" and "he

went away again". There is a solitary glory about the Lord here as Leader and Completer of faith, is there not?

J.A.G. Yes, that is so. I think it is very beautiful, that He is seeing this matter through. I do not suppose He really expected that the disciples could be with Him in, it - He knew their weakness - but He is committed in going through with it - as you say, the Leader and Completer of faith. Hebrews 5 helps us in this chapter as well, "though he were Son, he learned obedience from the things which he suffered" (v 8); and "having been heard because of his piety" (v 7). All these true and real features of manhood according to God come out in Christ in this section. I think it is an appeal to the heart that we should submit to Him as the Master.

E.C.B. Do you find that Gethsemane has in a certain sense more power over your soul than even the cross? I know Mr Darby says there is nothing like the cross, and there He is forsaken, but here we get the emotions of Jesus extended in a way that we do not exactly get them at the cross, and therefore it has a special power.

J.A.G. I think so. I think that the inward depth of this section calls forth your heart perhaps in a fuller way than the actual cross does, because on the cross He is totally superior to everything. John is the ark going into the Jordan, as you know; the woman anoints His feet, He despises the shame, He dismisses Pilate, He moves in royal dignity, everything is held up until He says the time has come. In Luke it is the perfection of His manhood; and here in Matthew it is royalty. But here in this section I think we are privileged to see the deep inward feelings of Jesus and the reality of His manhood as He faced up to this great matter of death involving the judgment of sin.

So we come perhaps to 2 Timothy. It is the way out of the confusion to the glory of the Ephesian heavenly side of the truth. The 'in Christ Jesus' position in its power and attractiveness is before us, and as we follow the line of instruction, we will come into the true blessedness of the way of things that Paul had - be serviceable to the Master; that not only separates but sanctifies. I think that is an inward thing. If there is not sanctification with separation the Lord is

not in it; it is only an external thing. Sanctification I think is the evidence of inward holiness in the link with Christ, that we refuse things.

S.D.K.R. Some of us may not be very clear about sanctification.

J.A.G. I think perhaps we would be conscious, as we have been speaking together of the section in Matthew, of sanctification proceeding amongst us; your heart is drawn nearer to Christ, sanctification is increased. As the Lord comes into your heart you will find that you have no room for other things; there is a greater evidence in you of sanctification. In times of assembly conflict when persons are really concerned about the truth you will find that the level of sanctification greatly increases.

S.D.K.R. You mean that you are set apart for holy purposes.

J.A.G. Yes, you are set apart for holy purposes, and the thing attractively proceeds in yourself because it is flowing out from a link with Christ.

E.C.B. Is this the way in John in which He leads the sheep out of the world?

J.A.G. Yes, exactly, because of His own attractiveness.

R.W.F. In connection with the name 'Master', is it helpful to understand that it is the One who has the mastery? He has the mastery over all opposition including the power of death; and He is to have it over our wills and affections, to have it in practice in our lives. Is that the way to understand it?

J.A.G. I think that is the way we understand it, because of what He has wrought for us. If we do not hold it in affection we are going to go awry somewhere. The word is used only twice in the Scriptures. How attractive He is in Acts 4 when they speak to Him, and, when they go on to the prayer, it is "in that thou stretchest out thy hand to heal" (v 30). Is that not very blessed?

C.J.H.D. Sanctification would link with inward holiness; righteousness outwardly without the inward holiness is of no profit really and can lead to the cleansing in a Pharisaical way of the

outside, but the Lord stresses the inside, and I feel for myself, and for the brethren, how much we all need the inward side to characterise us in sanctification that the outside may be right.

J.A.G. Well, that is what I think. There is tone and quality about a person who is sanctified on this line; they impart something to you spiritually - an impartation of the spirit of Christ. There was separation and sanctification in Mary in Simon the leper's house. So that He is the only Object of our hearts.

G.A.P. The Lord says in John 17, "I sanctify myself for them, that they also may be sanctified", (v 19). Would that relate to your earlier scripture?

J.A.G. I think so; that is the supreme idea of sanctification. He takes up His position in sonship - "for them". His whole concern is that they may come really into the gain of the words which the Father had given Him, so that they would have capacity within themselves to enjoy that love wherewith He was loved before the world was. What a position that is!

D.A.B. The scripture just quoted is the second time the Lord speaks of Himself as sanctified, is it not? He was going apart then by going out of the world, but He says He was sanctified and sent into the world. He was not further from the Father because He was in the world, was He? The two are opposed to one another in John's epistle. He says, these things are not of the Father but of the world. We find, do we; that as we are nearer to one we are further from the other?

J.A.G. There is a complete, clear, difference between the two. In 2 Timothy 2 there has been intrusion by these people, Hymenaeus and Philetus, and all sorts of things that the devil is in to overthrow the faith of some - getting into houses, (and that goes on all the time, people coming to the door and they have this doctrine and the next doctrine and the evil is in the whole thing). Paul is saying to Timothy, "be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus". You are going to need it because you are going to meet all these things, but you will be serviceable to the Master.

W.J.R.B. Is Matthew governed by this woman with the anointing? There must have been great appreciation of the Lord.

J.A.G. Surely, tremendous appreciation. This woman sets out the true result of the gospel; we should all be this woman, every Christian should be this woman in Simon the leper's house. We have been Simon the leper; we have been cleansed; we have been set up in the dignity and glory and power of the anointing of Christ; all these precious features that come into the cleansing of the leper in the system of administration have been taken on by us, have they not? Cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop; all these precious features that give expression to the humanity of Christ endear Him to our hearts. So that at every opportunity we seek to glorify Him.

D.A.B. Did she sanctify the Lord the Christ in her heart? Is that the way to purification that we have here?

J.A.G. That is the whole secret of sanctification, that Christ is in your heart, and the Spirit is glorifying Christ; you are more and more apart, not because the brethren say you should not go to this place or you should not do that and get the young people all hassled up about what they should do and what they should not do. It comes from Christ in your heart, does it not, if it is worth anything?

Ques. Verse 21, "separating himself from them". Are we to separate from all the vessels and just be for the Lord, or are we just to separate from the vessels to dishonour?

J.A.G. Separate from the vessels to dishonour, it says, because you cannot ever get out of the great house. Simon the leper's house in Matthew is part of the great house; it is in Jerusalem.

E.C.B. The latter part of 2 Timothy 2 is really John 17 in a broken day, is it?

J.A.G. Yes, that is very beautiful. How the Master is to be represented. Think of him saying, the "bondman of the Lord ought not to contend, but be gentle towards all; apt to teach; forbearing; in meekness setting right those who oppose".

E.C.B. It was said by Mr Darby I think, certainly by Mr Stoney, that in John 17 He sets His own as He is before the Father and then He sets them before the world as He was. If we have the gain of John 17, the practical side of 2 Timothy 2 would be straightforward, would it not?

J.A.G. Yes, but then we may not have read what Mr Darby set out or Mr Stoney, and we may not understand John 17 very much, but we can all understand that if we are going to be a bondman of the Lord we are not to contend; we are not to be argumentative; not to have that kind of spirit. If we have drunk into the depths of the spirit of Jesus in Gethsemane, we will not contend, we will be gentle towards all. That is the kind of manhood that is accredited in heaven; we are not contentious. Peter was wrong; he drew a sword, he was not gentle towards all, he was contending; he damaged a man, maybe he was damaged for the rest of his life. We must be careful in our representation of God.

C.J.H.D. That man according to the gospel record is given a name and has his ear healed, the last act of healing that the Lord did on earth. Well, what a man to have his hearing given back to him by the One whose words are inexpressibly wonderful to us. So in this section the background of separation is that the firm foundation of God stands. That is why I have difficulty in understanding people - brethren - standing aside from taking the Supper for years, as if the firm foundation of God has broken down.

J.A.G. Exactly, because this is the clear pathway into the whole of the heavenly position, and the way in to it collectively is through the Lord's supper. So it takes us to Corinthians on that line, but it takes us to heaven in the wonder of what is in Christ Jesus. You can be in this condition and still sit in the heavenlies in Christ, that is consciously.

Well, maybe we should look at this woman for a minute. She has great liberty: she is not really in her own house, she is not in Martha's house; she is in Simon the leper's house. The surrounding circumstances and the talk of Judas, the feelings of the disciples, in

no way deter her from her committal to the Master. What a bondman she was! What a beautiful spirit this sister has; she commits everything that she has to Christ; if He is going into the grave I might as well go in with Him too. She is thinking of His headship; thinking of all the great thoughts of God that He is carrying through and she is committed to that in her person. You do not need gift, you do not need to be able to talk; we all have something according to the measure of the gift of the Christ. That is the basis in everybody for the appreciation of the truth.

E.F.W. So is the word "came to him" vital; she did not exactly come to the leper's house but "came to him". That affected the whole of her service, did it not?

J.A.G. What singleness of eye she has; the whole body is full of light. She came to Him and poured it out upon His head as He lay at table. She did not say, I wonder what the others will think, what will they say? Of course they are quite out of gear because they become indignant and they think materially. We get so materialistic in our thinking; we need great help to think spiritually, to see the moral flow and order of the truth.

S.D.K.R. Would you say something about pouring it out upon His head? In another gospel it is His feet.

J.A.G. I think in both Matthew and Mark she pours it out on His head and in John she pours it out on His feet. What feet they were! His head - it is looking on to headship, I suppose, in the fulness of it.

W.J.R.B. Does it link with Colossians?

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. I think she is committed to the whole of the working out of the purpose of God. He is the Head, is He not? She is committed to His death, that is Colossians. She has found the secret way in. You might look at her and say she is one of the holy and faithful brethren who are at Colosse; she is manifesting love in the Spirit. What a bond of union there was between Mary and Christ because that is who it is, is it not? She is serviceable to the Master. He takes this woman and He says, every time you preach the gospel

you can show this woman as a result of the gospel; this is the end result of the glad tidings.

E.C. Is this a lovely example of the feminine regard of the Lord as Master; in the other scripture it is Despot? I was thinking of the scripture in Genesis 24. You mentioned her relationship with Christ in the power of the Spirit, but the servant as a type of the Spirit says, "That is my master!", and there is an exclamation mark after that as much as to say Who else could it possibly be.

J.A.G. Yes. What a master he was. I think "That is my master!" covers the whole of the south country, does it not, the whole of the sphere and setting of things where Isaac dwells. The spirit is ruled and regulated by the glory of Christ in its fulness, so that is what is governing all my activities towards you.

C.J.H.D. This must have given the Father great pleasure because the headship of Christ is wonderfully leading, according to Paul, up to God Himself - Christ's Head, God. So the napkin that was about His head is folded in a distinct place. I remember one saying, Some hand had done that out of respect for the headship of Christ.

J.A.G. Well, you can see how the Lord immediately takes us on; she would have had some impulse from Him, she enters in depth into how He felt. He was in this house and He was free, longing, you might say, for this kind of expression of hospitality amongst the brethren. That is not giving people their tea and that sort of thing. She has entered into how He felt in His spirit, and He immediately takes it on and clothes it with the divine thought: He says, "she has done it for my burying". So He says, "Why do ye trouble the woman?". If this thing is proceeding in localities, beloved, it must be made way for.

G.A.P. How do we acquire it?

J.A.G. I think we acquire it as we feel the effect of leprosy in ourselves, and we need Christ, we need the gospel; as we have to do with Him we acquire this precious ointment. I think it is the accumulation of the spirit of Christ formatively in the woman that she is able to enter with Him in depth of feeling, subjectively, femininely,

as has been said, in what He was about to go through. I think it is very wonderful and the Lord certainly appreciated it. Do you think so?

G.A.P. I am sure; occupation with Him and all that He had done, and all that was before Him, and all that has resulted from what He has accomplished.

J.A.G. Yes, so that younger brethren should think about these things, about acquiring some kind of substance; have to do with Christ and get some substance; get some knowledge of God in your soul like this. We may say something about it later on if the Lord will but it is a great encouragement that when the opportunity presents itself we are ready and available for the service of the Master. The service of the Master is not only preaching and teaching, or giving words in the ministry meeting, but to be able to comfort people, able to minister to His own heart. What a service it is; He will tell you what it is.

E.C.B. Would you fill out a little your earlier remark that this represents the situation at the present day.

J.A.G. I think it does. They are good men you know, but they are not in the current of the Lord's mind, and that is very sorrowful because they were the leading men. Usually it is the leading men that get out of gear. (I think the leading men should feel very humble about that. In the history of the testimony that is how it has been; it has not really been the body of the brethren). The disciples are good men but indignant; they are saying, "To what end was this waste?". They are not in the current of what the Lord is thinking, but this woman is. Immediately you find the Lord - I suppose He might come in through ministry, He might come in through a word - the ministry would be supportive of this kind of thing, would you think?

E.C.B. Is it something like Philadelphia coming to light in the midst of Sardis; so He makes them know that He has loved her?

J.A.G. It exactly is; without being too hard on the disciples, you might say at this moment that they had a name to live: they were not really alive to what was going on.

E.C.B. Their works were not complete.

J.A.G. Exactly, their works were not complete and He knew it. This woman's works were complete. You might say she has kept His word and she has not denied His name; there is opposition, she has a little power, and she knows the holy, the true. What a thing that is. He is going to support her right in to the glory of the opening up of the eternal side of things in Revelation 3: 16. A marvellous thing that the Lord has somebody to whom He can open up exactly what is next to His own heart about His God and about the city of His God.

S.D.K.R. In verse 12, the Lord says, "For in pouring out this ointment on my body, she has done it for my burying"; would you make that clear for us?

J.A.G. I think she knew instinctively – she had not been taught about it - that the Lord was going to die and be buried, and she did this to comfort His heart because she entered in some measure into how He felt about what was coming before Him, and she thought, Lord, I am giving you this measure of comfort; I sympathise with you and what is before you. She was not in the garden with Him; she was not in Gethsemane, but she is here entering in spirit into what is about to come upon Him, and she is manifesting a sympathetic understanding and feeling, and seeking to minister comfort to the heart of the Lord Jesus. What do you say yourself?

S.D.K.R. That is very helpful.

C.J.H.D. She is like the fourth unnamed woman standing at the cross. That opens up something, does it not, for our time, that we have to be prepared to be small, few, and of no account as the prophet says, and yet the grandeur of standing by the cross in separation from everything around; you can be unnamed.

J.A.G. Exactly.

W.J.R.B. It would be in contrast to Judas who betrayed Him. We were struck on Thursday night in reading a passage in John; it says, "being one of the twelve" (chap 6: 71). It need not have put that in at all; the Spirit emphasises that fact, does He not?

J.A.G. Yes, I think John liked to pour contempt on Judas; he always tells you who Judas was; he completely dissociates himself. A great lover John, and every time he dissociates himself from Judas; he says he was a thief and carried the bag, and that is the kind of person he was and I am having nothing to do with him. That is John, is it not?

E.C.B. "Wheresoever these glad tidings". What is that? It is more than the forgiveness of sins, is it not?

J.A.G. I think so.

E.C.B. Is it all that Christ has entered into for us as having been buried and raised again and now in another world?

J.A.G. I think it is the whole scope of the gospel: you are set up as a board of the tabernacle, you are ready to fit into the assembly; that is what it is. Do you think so?

E.C.B. Yes, I think sometimes we have too narrow a view of it; so you get questions asked like, Are we to mention this every Lord's day in the preaching? But it is the whole scope of what the Lord is unfolding to persons who are willing to identify themselves with Him in love.

J.A.G. That is what it is. So He brings that forward; He says, This is going to be the result. It is not that every Lord's day evening you read this chapter and you say, Well, that is it again. There is a memorial - you know what a memorial is, you go and look at it, it tells you something. Well, this woman points to the result of the glad tidings, the full result, she is really an assembly person, she comes into the assembly gospel.

E.C.B. It has been said that in Matthew and Mark the memorial is in the woman, in Luke it is in the Supper.

J.A.G. Well, it is very helpful indeed. Luke does not bring her forward at all but he brings forward the remembrance connected with the loaf, that is the body here, is it not?

C.J.H.D. The woman in the Song of Songs can say of the man, "His head is as the finest gold" (chap 5: 11). While she covers the beauty

of the man from his head to the sole of his feet, there is something outstanding to begin with, the finest gold.

J.A.G. I think that is very helpful. All that is in this section, is it not - His locks flowing, black as the raven - think of the vitality of life in Jesus as He goes forward in His committal to the will of God.

E.F.W. It does not say when these glad tidings are preached, but where "Wheresoever". Does that not give us some impression of the great extent of God's glad tidings? What a heart He has!

J.A.G. I think so, and the fact that this is to be the standard that is before the preachers: this is in their mind, this is what they are to arrive at. I suppose wherever Paul went this was the standard before him. We preach not ourselves, that was Paul, "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus Lord and ourselves your bondmen for Jesus' sake" 2 Cor 4: 5. What a beautiful spirit that is!

As to 1 Chronicles, it just appealed to me the kind of people we meet as we call on the Lord out of a pure heart 'with those'. A reconciled position, Judah and Benjamin; David is the master. A great chapter of personalities - wonderful personalities amongst the brethren. We may be inclined to look at odd pieces of which we all personally have many, but look at the work of God in them the Spirit immediately taking on their exercises, clothing them, and that is we are really saying to David's antitype, we know that grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. We have had enough of Saul and his legal bondage; you are the anointed and we are committing ourselves to that because we want to be like that woman. It is a prophetic utterance; they had had an awful time under Saul; civil war and all the troubles.

E.F.W. In verse 8 it says, they "separated themselves to David in the stronghold", not exactly separated themselves from Saul although they surely would have a judgment of him, but David was the great object of their hearts.

J.A.G. That is right, as Christ is. They come to David to Ziklag. The kingdom is morally transferred before it is officially transferred. We need to see in ourselves that we are transferring to that kingdom if

we have not already done it; grace is to reign through righteousness unto eternal life in our hearts, that is David; that is Christ reigning supreme. It is a wonderful chapter, Romans 5, as over against what came in in the other man. Saul is an extension of the other man.

E.C. Would you say something about the stronghold - "came ... to the stronghold to David"?

J.A.G. Well, there was a stronghold, I suppose, in Simon the leper's house. She is quite unperturbed, is she not; she is in the stronghold? It is like Corinthians, I suppose. In her grace was reigning through righteousness unto eternal life; she commits herself thus to Christ.

E.C. It would be a place of protection.

J.A.G. It is; she is consciously protected, she is free in it. You could not be free if you are not protected; you would be looking over your shoulder to see what this one thought and the next one thought. Ziklag relates to deliverance I think.

C.J.H.D. It is very interesting that the Spirit puts Benjamin before Judah. It reminds one of that lovely Psalm "the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary ... There is little Benjamin, their ruler", Ps 68: 24,27.

J.A.G. "Princes of Judah, their company".

C.J.H.D. But Benjamin first, because there is that link between Joseph and Benjamin; he wept on his brother and his brother wept on him. There is room for more soul with all of us.

J.A.G. Yes, I am quite sure there is, - his bowels burned for Benjamin his brother; how he longed for him. Then he sets them amongst the brethren. Ziklag is a place where the people strengthen themselves in the Lord their God.

E.C.B. Later in this chapter, it became like the camp of God, and then there was joy in Israel. Is that the kingdom with righteousness, peace and joy in the holy Spirit?

J.A.G. I think so. I think it is beautiful at the close of the chapter; there they were with David three days eating and drinking. What a time! Eternal life surely. The wonder of the kingdom, the resource of the kingdom; how beautiful it is. Fine conditions their brethren had prepared for them, those too that come near as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali; everybody is contributing to the good and well-being of the brethren.

E.C.B. Some one must have had an impression of what the camp of God was like as it "became like the camp of God". That is the kingdom in our favour?

J.A.G. Perhaps we may have slightly warped ideas about the kingdom. The kingdom is the rule of grace, as our brother says, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. There it is, and it is all David, it is Christ supreme in every heart. It is a very fine thing when you can really get clear of yourself.

S.D.K.R. Linked a little too with that 2 Timothy 2 scripture, naming the name of the Lord. Is that our way into the kingdom or not?

J.A.G. Yes: I think so. To call on the Lord out of a pure heart is a priestly action; naming the name of the Lord and departing from iniquity is a royal action. I think in 2 Timothy 2 there is the evidence of priesthood and royalty working in persons, so that they are together with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Now I think in principle that is this chapter. Look at them all, great persons too; the prince of the Aaronites, and Zadok, a valiant young man, everybody is somebody, and that is the case in the meeting. It does not matter how small your meeting is - you would know about that - but there are personalities who are formed of God and they are able to hold the truth for God, and He greatly values that.

G.A.P. Living stones coming to Him the living Stone.

J.A.G. Exactly.

E.F.W. They come to him and then they belong to him.

J.A.G. Yes, "Thine we are David" , and they are identified with him. They say, aforetime when Saul was king, we knew that thou wast the

one who led out and brought in Israel; and they identify morally on the flesh and bone line, do they not?

E.C.B. Good soldiers of Jesus Christ?

J.A.G. Exactly. Not entangled with the affairs of this life.

DORKING

14 June 1986

Key to initials

C.J.G.Brodie, Ealing; W.J.R.Brodie, Ealing; D.A.Burr, London;
E.C.Burr, London; E.Croot, Dorking; C.J.H.Davidson, Dorking;
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London; S.D.K.Roberts, Croydon; E.F.Woodford, Dorking.

THE SCOPE OF THE TRUTH AS THE INHERITANCE

J.A.Gardiner

Jeremiah 32: 6-17, 26, 27; 33: 10-14; Hebrews 10: 19-24

I do not think there is much, if any, connection between these two scriptures, Jeremiah and the epistle to the Hebrews. I believe the Lord might have me say a word about them both because personally I am very much in need of it; perhaps other brethren would reciprocate these sentiments. I am thinking of the scripture that speaks about buying the truth and not selling it, (see Prov 23: 23). Part of our inheritance, beloved, is the whole scope of the truth. The Lord would encourage us to think about the inheritance; to think about what has been secured for us, what the land is, what brethren mean when they speak about 'the land' and speak about 'the inheritance'. I suppose they mean the sphere of eternal life known here in the wilderness; God's provision for the wilderness, eternal life. I suppose they mean sonship, the entering into the enjoyment of these wonderful relations that we have with God. They have been established on the other side of death and do not relate to what is natural at all; all that I would think would be in the minds of the brethren when they speak about the inheritance. Scripture speaks about God's inheritance, what He has in the saints the riches of the glory of it; the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. You look around at the brethren and you marvel at the work of God - God's inheritance. We look upon one another, beloved - we are looking up on God's inheritance. We would all like to be serviceable to the Master I am sure - available to Him for whatever He might have in mind for us, we would like to be available for His service, perhaps not public service but maybe on the line of memorial there is something that can be called attention to, that can stimulate the work of God amongst the brethren; can lift the brethren up in their spirits, give them fresh desire and impetus to move into the realm of eternal life into the realm where Christ becomes the supreme Object of their heart.

Well, Jeremiah is in prison here; he is shut up it says, "in the court of the guard" - not very nice place. Like many, I suppose, Jeremiah could have spoken about better days; he could have sat in the prison and thought about the wonderful times they had under Josiah, a marvellous time then when things were probably as normal in Israel as they were under David and Solomon. He could have spoken about the fine time that they had as they celebrated the passover in Jerusalem, a passover the like of which had not been celebrated since the days of Samuel the prophet - links with the beginning, links with what may be applied to apostolic times, that sort of thing. He could have thought about that, and no doubt he did think about it, no doubt it was in his mind. He could think about that beautiful appellation that comes out as to the ark in the days of Josiah, when they spoke of it as the holy ark; when the new covenant was in evidence, when the book was recovered and he put it beside the ark, how beautiful that is. What a man Josiah was! He could see that if the brethren were to be helped forward, if there was to be encouragement, if they were to enter into the liberty of the joy of their links with Jehovah, it had to be on the basis of the new covenant. He was not putting the covenant into the hands of man; he was putting it into the ark, putting it in type into the hands of a Man who would carry it all through for God. Jeremiah could have thought about that; he could have thought about the glory that was set out in that wonderful book; what the inheritance would be normally; the kind of land that it was, a land full of productivity, full of variety.

Beloved, is that your heart and mine? Do I produce Christ like that? That is God's inheritance. Am I productive? Is there a power working in me that produces Christ as set out in these various agricultural features of the inheritance - a land of corn and new wine, a land of grapes, all these beautiful features, a land teeming with production. Jeremiah might have thought about that; he is sitting there in the prison, and he is in the prison because the people that he was really concerned to help were not prepared to listen. He is in prison because of enmity. They have put him in there and they are

keeping him in there because he is not saying the kind of words that they wanted him to say; he is speaking the word of God.

What a test it must have been to Jeremiah. He gets this word, your uncle's son is coming to you and he wants you to buy the field. He wants you to expend some resource on the inheritance - God says that to him - because you have the right of redemption. If you were Jeremiah, would you say, Well, it is hardly worth it, really, is it? No hope; look at the position, the city has been broken into, the land is overthrown; where are the evidences of what is levitical amongst the brethren; where are the Solomonic features? We cannot see anything around but the pride of man, the wall is broken down, they are entrenching themselves in the city; this field, I suppose, in Anathoth is already over-run, maybe the camp of the Babylonish armies. Beloved, that was God's inheritance, that was God's land, it belonged to Jeremiah. God is speaking to His people through this prophet. Are you going to buy it, Jeremiah, have you faith in what God will bring about? Beloved young brethren, have you faith in what God can do? Looking on the externals the thing is hopeless. Have you hope in God? He would encourage our hearts, beloved. This is the word of God that came to the prophet. You can understand Jeremiah going back to God, and saying, Are you sure this is what is meant by it? Are you sure I must do this? The land is in ruin, they are going into captivity; there is no heart for Christ around, there is the parading of the glory of man in the place where there should be the manifestation of the features of the Son of God. How solemn that is publicly, beloved. Do we feel it? Are we humbled by it? God says to Jeremiah you go and buy that land; exercise your right of inheritance. It is yours, beloved; you have a right of redemption. It has been given to you as a Christian through the precious work of Christ; the inheritance has been given to you, go in and possess it, expend your energies upon it. That is what God is saying to Jeremiah. He says, through you, Jeremiah, this is what I am saying to the people.

So he says, "And Hanameel mine uncle's son, came to me in the court of the guard". How would Jeremiah be in the court of the

guard? He would be very sober, sorrowful, I suppose, but he would not be exuding defeat or anything like that; he is sitting there and reigning in life by the one Man, Jesus Christ. How wonderful that is! There is with him the justification of life, supported in his ministry, irrespective of the external conditions, and he is proceeding in faith; he is tested to the core by this matter. The work of God in Jeremiah is going through quite a severe test at this very moment in this chapter, but he is going ahead with it in faith and he buys the field. He goes through the purchase legally; there is the evidence with the man that he is moving in the power of the kingdom of God, publicly that is what he is doing; he pays the money, the whole thing is acquired righteously and legally. O, beloved, are we prepared for that kind of committal? Come into the inheritance by the way of the kingdom; being regulated by what is true and right and proper to God's kingdom? What a kingdom it is! What a rule it is! Jeremiah evidences these features, and he says "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these writings, this writing of the purchase" - O, how particular he is, how careful he is, that the whole transaction is seen to be carried through rightly. I believe we should be like that, beloved, on the line of piety and sanctification; concerned that we are moving into the inheritance rightly, and so that we will be supported and maintained in it, and the inheritance, as far as we are concerned, will be fruitful and multiplied; there will be an extension and expression of the features of Christ here. Naomi missed it, her husband missed it, her sons missed it: Boaz did not miss it. Why should that be? Why should Boaz' allotment prosper in the times when the judges ruled and there was famine in the land? When they come back there is a mighty man of wealth? Because the man, I would say, was going on with God. O, how blessed that is to find that there is fruitfulness; going on vitally in the experience of the power of resurrection in the soul. There is the wheat harvest in that book - there is a barley harvest and there is a wheat harvest. There is the power of an indissoluble life operating in persons at this very moment. Beloved, is it operating in me? Am I being sustained in the power of that life in the enjoyment of it? Jeremiah is here, and he is testifying amidst the ruin and the break down and the awfulness of

the position. He says, "For thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be purchased in this land". Would you have believed that if you had been there? Have you faith for that? Jeremiah is shaken to the very depths of his being, and there are persons who have been like that in fellowship now; and there are persons who have been shaken to the very depths of their being, and they are still shaking. There is no need for it; the word of God is sure and true. Beloved, let us maintain before us the whole scope of divine purpose because that is infallible; it is a great anchor for our souls, the great line of divine truth that relates to purpose. We fail, and others may fail, but that goes through, that is a line that is infallible; it is a word of God in relation to His own purpose. Jeremiah is relating himself to that. After he has done that, he goes in to God, and he is not at all sure what is going to happen, he says, "Alas, Lord Jehovah!" - he has done it, he has committed himself to it, and he knows the truth, and he knows what God has done, and he knows God's power, and he can speak over the ways of God but in God's presence he is finding in himself this little bit of infidelity in which he is not too sure. He says, "Alas, Lord Jehovah! Behold, thou hast made the heavens and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm; there is nothing too hard for thee" - he knows that, he has that knowledge in his soul, but through this experience it is really going to become part of himself. God raises that question with him in the next verse I read, "And the word of Jehovah came unto Jeremiah, saying, Behold, I am Jehovah, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me?". What encouragement that is for us, beloved brethren; "Is there anything too hard for me?" - Would you believe that? You may be in adverse circumstances, things may be against you; the desire for the inheritance, for the truth, may be waning in your soul. Beloved, be encouraged, be stimulated, be stirred up, be committed to God's word. Go to God and say to Him, Is there anything too hard for you? O, what confirmation to our soul, beloved. God takes up Jeremiah's language. He had said, "there is nothing too hard for thee", and now God says to Jeremiah by way of question "is there anything too hard for me?". How beautiful it is to see the working out of God's word,

the working out of God's ways; everything was in ruin, a terrible position. I wonder what Jeremiah would have thought had he been in Bethlehem that night; Mr Darby speaks of that 'wondrous night', that marvellous night 'when shepherds hid their faces in brightest angel light'. Everything is in ruin, Jeremiah; Jeremiah's faith would be greatly confirmed. How wonderful that is beloved!

God would stimulate us and encourage us; He speaks to Jeremiah the second time in chapter 33, in the prison house, in the court of the prison. God delights to confirm faith, He delights to come in and support and enlarge, and He opens up His heart to Jeremiah. His ways go on in government, His grace goes on along with it. Think of this wonderful out-pouring of the heart of God to the prophet. How He would encourage all our hearts at this time beloved. He says, You say it is this - and it is true. And you look out there and you see nothing but ruin and breakdown. God is able to change these conditions. He says, "There shall again be heard the voice of mirth and the voice of joy". Is that so in our meetings, beloved? "The voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride the voice of them that say, Give ye thanks unto Jehovah": these are hearts that are buoyant and happy in the blessedness of their relations with Christ. Think of all these wonderful things that are proceeding - "for Jehovah is good, for his loving-kindness endureth for ever, - of them that bring thanksgiving unto the house of Jehovah". What a scene of holy activity and response God is speaking of to Jeremiah, quite contrary to the circumstances in which he is found. God says He is going to bring that about. These circumstances beloved, can be brought about in our souls; it may be that your soul and my soul is waste and barren and there is no movement no response, there is no answer to His love. We may have the light of it, we may have in some measure the knowledge of it, but as far as being affected in our inward beings it may not be so. God would bring that about; He would make us responsive, He is bent on making His people happy, making us joyful. If it is not the case, what is our Christianity? It must be a very burdensome thing if there is not the joy, if your strength is not the joy of the Lord. Look

what He goes on to say. Where there was no joy, there was no care, no concern, but all was desolation, he goes on to say, "There shall again be a habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down", and in all these beautiful spiritual circumstances, the hill-country, the cities of the lowland, the cities of the south, the land of Benjamin - beautiful that, wonderful; care and concern, the environs of Jerusalem, the Bethphages and the Bethanys. Have you ever read what Mr Taylor says about the environs of Jerusalem? What a sphere it is, the cities of the south, the joy, the favour of God. Judah in the south - the cities of the lowland where persons move in the humility and meekness and gentleness of the Christ. There would be concern and care that all these features are maintained and expanded. Is that not wonderful? It is all part of the inheritance and it is to proceed in every meeting no matter how small. These are the activities then that God encourages - "the flocks pass again under the hands of him that counteth". Is it so in your locality? Can you see evidences of concern and care; somebody counts the brethren, sees how they are getting on, how the flock is getting on; not counting them to see how many times they do not come out to the meeting or anything like that. There is the evidence of true shepherding, true concern, they have had to do with the Good Shepherd, they have had to do with the Great Shepherd. They know the rich pastures of Israel, they know where the food is. These are wonderful things. Persons are concerned for the flock of God. God is encouraging Jeremiah as He is encouraging us to go on and take up the inheritance, to buy the truth and do not sell it, and make it our prime concern, and find that all these things will be developed and added to us. Beloved, how wonderful that is.

Now I wanted to speak about this scripture in Hebrews, and I would like to encourage all the brethren and especially the younger brethren, to take up this word "approach". I am not too good at making appeals and that sort of thing, but I would say to every young brother and sister, Approach God – approach - go into God, the access is always there. The way has been opened up for us; make it a custom that you approach God. We are encouraged here to

approach with boldness "boldness for entering into the holy of holies". What privilege belongs to the Christian beloved! This is in contrast with what was set out in Jewry; the work of Christ is perfect once and for all. You may sin again and again: - there is not another offering, the blood is there. There is no such thing as being saved today and lost tomorrow; persons who think that are trying to be made perfect in flesh. The work of Christ is complete, the blood is there: if you sin there it is there it will meet your conscience, you are forgiven. The water has to do with your state. The way has been opened up right into the presence of God. Now, beloved, practice - make a point of going into God's presence. Make a point of approaching. You do that and see what happens; God is going to be very active. Do you want to know God? Do you want to increase in your knowledge of God? You sit in the meetings and you hear these brethren speaking, and they can connect up the scripture with the next scripture, and some of it makes sense to you and perhaps most of it does not make too much sense, and yet as you go on there is an up-building in your soul; there is line upon line, things are increasing, it may be slowly, but let them increase substantially. Well, go into God, approach God, tell God about it, and you will come out of God's presence with a greater knowledge of Himself. What will God do when you go into His presence? I think He will do what He says He is going to do in verses 16, 17 and 18, He will give His laws into your heart. What is God's law? You might say what is the motivating principle? The rule of God; the rule of God, beloved, is love, that is the law, that is God's law. You will grow in the knowledge of God, you will grow in the knowledge of divine love; you will find that it is casting out fear, and fear is torment and there is no fear in love. If any one fears, John says, "he that fears has not been made perfect in love" 1 John 4: 18. O, beloved, it is certainly worthwhile approaching God. In the old economy you might have been scared to approach God. You would have had to go and get a sacrifice, get an animal, and go to a priest and he would have had to intercede for you with God. Not now, beloved. There is the way opened up to the holy of holies, into the very presence of God. The blood of Jesus has opened up the way; He has dedicated it for us

through the veil that is His flesh, and He is there to support you as you go in. What an experience this could be for you, as it has been an experience for the holy myriads throughout the centuries; persons who have approached God and found strength that they never thought was there before. They found that the Great Priest over the house of God has been supporting them in God's presence and God has been writing upon them, giving His law, as it says into their hearts. He has not been demanding from them; He has not been saying to you, Well, here you are, what do you want in here! That is not God; He is giving, He is not demanding; it is an experience of impartation. Would you not like to have it? "I will write them also in their understandings..." He is not thinking about your sins and your lawlessnesses, He says, "I will never remember any more". O, beloved, is not that wonderful encouragement. He is not thinking about that, He wants to fill your heart with Himself and with the knowledge of Himself, and if Jeremiah were here he would say, if you want to glory, glory in this, that you know and understand Me, God says. Now you are going to come out from God and you are going to come amongst the brethren, and what is going to happen now? Well, you are going to think about the brethren. Just sit where you are and look around this room and consider the brethren; there they are, have a look at them, what do you think of them, consider them. What could you do to help that old sister or that young brother; you are going to provoke them to love and good works. This is going to help the state amongst us greatly; the more we are in the presence of God and are conscious of being the subjects of divine activity, conscious that there is some impartation taking place in God's presence - there has been giving and receiving you might say - we are going to come out and be affected and we are going to affect one another. We are not going to provoke people so that they manifest the flesh or anything like that; we are going to provoke one another to love and good works. That is Christianity, that is normal Christianity. O, may the Lord encourage our hearts because the day is drawing near; the day of apostasy is drawing near; the wall has been broken down publicly, the Chaldeans are swarming all over the place, they are at the very heart of religion, the pride of man is

everywhere from Rome to Canterbury to York to Edinburgh, to every place. Let us cleave to the great mandatory side of things in 2 Timothy 2, find that we are representing God as manifesting the power of what is in Christ Jesus. The way is open for us. We are in the wilderness in this book: we are not in heaven. The ultimate, as we proceed through the teaching, is that Timothy is set at liberty; "Know that our brother Timotheus is set at liberty" Heb 13: 23. O, would to God that every one here were like that, that we have heart, and we have taste, we have desire for God's presence. We can go in, and at any time; you are not going in exactly with your needs, although God is very pleased to hear about your needs - whatever your need go and tell God about it, He has an abundance of resource - but in going in to God think about Himself, think about Christ. There is the mercy-seat, there is the altar of incense that is your communion, the candlestick giving light over against itself; there is the table with these twelve loaves; fragrant incense, consciously supported by the great Priest in the border of gold. What a setting it is! It is not exactly the order of Melchisedec, but the conscious experience of the function of that kind of priesthood. He is not dealing with weakness, he is dealing with power. John 20 is the side of power. I suppose the great Priest on this side, in the language of Paul's epistles, would relate to headship, where the headship of Christ is known and experienced, and there is a wonderful line of communication. Then you will be at the meetings - there will be no problems about that, you will not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, you will not be able to get there fast enough. Then you will be able to regulate your life by the meetings. The assembly becomes a dominant feature in your life; you might even become a man in Jerusalem, marvellous prospect, wonderful possibilities. Then there will be increase in local meetings, then there will be substance, then there will be the evidence that the inheritance is prospering. Beloved brethren, it is all there for us in the Spirit. May the Lord encourage all our hearts. He is not exuding condemnation; there is nothing like that. He is doing all He can to attract us into the greatness of the truth, and the greatness of the recovered truth is that we should live in the love of God. We should

be able to manifest the more excellent way - "yet show I unto you a way of more surpassing excellence" 1 Cor 12: 21. Follow after love, that is the way, that is the leader. These are wonderful leaders in 2 Timothy 2, and that is another leader in Corinthians. It is going to bring us into an area of spiritual manifestation. They will be wealthy people in spirit: they may be poor financially and things materially, but these persons, persons who are on this line, will really be wealthy spiritually. May it be the portion of every one of us for His Name's sake.

DORKING

14 June 1986

THE CHILDREN'S OPPORTUNITIES

One of the many 'whosoever' of Scripture is "everyone whosoever, who shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved". The blessing here is salvation. I remember reading of a young University student who, confessing to be saved through a preaching, asked if he might call upon the preacher if he should have any difficulties. The preacher agreed. Next day the student called and said that he could not find any token that he was saved and he had decided too hastily. The preacher pointed out that the young man had not asked him for, say, a watch or some such token that he would keep his promise to see him. Why then should God be expected to give a token that He would keep His word? The young man understood and believed the promise of salvation.

John's Gospel chapter 3 verse 16 should be learned and enjoyed by all children. As a little matter of interest it is preserved in 215 different languages in the foundation of Cleopatra's Needle in London. As to this wonderful verse the "whosoever" refers to believing, not just the words of scripture, but believing on a Person. The blessing in this case is life eternal, because the Son of God is Jesus who did indeed die, but who now lives again. Because He lives we live also. As to the body even children may die, but the wonder is that having received the "Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" the believer has a life which is beyond death, and he enjoys it now.

Another opportunity open to all is that "Whosoever shall confess me before men, the Son of man will confess him also before the angels of God" . Often children are more ready than older persons to confess the Lord Jesus. We all meet perhaps with scorn and laughter which are hard to bear. People of false 'religions' are generally not at all ashamed, but the name of Jesus is in reproach. The blessing in this instance is that "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God". Could anything be more wonderful?

J.C.Evershed