

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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Contents

"THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS"

MAIDS

THE CHILDREN'S OBEISANCE

"THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS"

Zechariah 4: 6-14; Haggai 2: 1-9; Revelation 3: 7-13

W.L. I think it is evident that we are in a day of small things; we ought not to be deterred by that but see that God's thoughts remain in their majesty, in all their scope, and that divine resources remain the same, undiminished, none less than as at the beginning. The power that was present at Pentecost in the Holy Spirit is the power that is available today even though publicly we are in a day of small things. To be able to cope with the day of small things and see what the Lord has in mind for us in such a day is something to learn in our thoughts and exercises. The scriptures we have read show quite clearly that while we are in these days, even of numerical reduction, God still has great things in mind for us. The things which God has prepared for them that love Him (see 1 Cor 2: 9) are undiminished, they are as available now as ever they were, and it is for us to go in for them and enjoy them. These prophets that we have read from lived in very difficult days. They passed through very searching exercises of many kinds, many different pressures. One thing that is apparent is that they went through them with God. I think they learned as the psalmist did, "In pressure thou hast enlarged me", Ps 4: 1. Someone has said that pressure in itself without God would embitter, but as we go through it with God enlargement comes in.

So we accept it from the hand of God but at the same time see that He still has all His thoughts and all their greatness available to us. Would it help to pursue that line of things?

L.McF. Very much so. So the most essential feature coupled with what you are saying is faith. That is the day in which we are.

W.L. The Lord asked a question: "But when the Son of man comes, shall he indeed find faith on the earth? " (Luke 18: 8), as if it was a great concern, speaking reverently, to Him whether the line of faith would continue - "shall he indeed find faith on the earth?" The Lord may have indicated then that faith in its reality may become fairly scarce in the light of what is happening in the world today, but it will

be there. When He comes He will find faith on the earth, persons who have gone right through on the line of faith. The enemy cannot destroy it, it is of God; the enemy cannot destroy what is of God. He will attempt it but he will never destroy it; his activities simply serve to bring out the substantiality and beauty of God's work.

L.McF. Without faith it is impossible to please God (see Heb 11: 6). God is looking for an extension in the saints of that which He found in Jesus here; the delight He found in Him is to be extended here in these last days. It is in a way a day of privilege, do you think?

W.L. I think that is helpful. These scriptures would help us to see also that God is not using what are merely human means: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit". Men are looking for what is mighty, what in their eyes is powerful. God is saying, and saying to us, I am not operating on those lines. God is working by His Spirit and He is more powerful than anything that men could devise.

C.F.D. You referred to Pentecost; we think of the way things began, the Spirit of God so active, taking such a prominent place in what was proceeding, yet there were only one hundred and twenty names. The dispensation began very small - to use your word - but do you think the secret of the fact that God's thoughts will go through undiminished, though the personnel may be numerically reduced, lies in the power of the Spirit of God?

W.L. Undoubtedly, and the only power. I believe there is something very precious being secured today as the result of God's ways with us that could not have been secured otherwise. All the pressure, all the suffering, all the sorrow that the saints are passing through in many ways, is producing something that is extremely precious to God.

J.A.P. It says "For who hath despised the day of small things? Yea, they shall rejoice" - that is encouraging, is it not? I wanted to read on: "these are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro in the whole earth"; so that while we are in the day of small things God has great matters in the earth and it is not in mind that we should be small. The prayer meeting would show that.

W.L. Exactly, that is helpful. What comes to one in reading that verse is Hannah. There is the line of Peninnah and then Elkanah, "Am not I better to thee than ten sons?", 1 Sam 1: 8. He was really despising the day of small things. Hannah felt it before God; she went before God about the matter, and look at the line of fruitfulness that was produced in Samuel, a man of whom it is said that God "let none of his words fall to the ground", 1 Sam 3: 19. Hannah felt the sorrow, but as she proceeded in her prayer she learned, "Yea, they shall rejoice". Through serious and sorrowful exercise she learned what it was to rejoice before God.

T.E.D. You get in this book 'the angel that talked with me'. Is that a part of this great resource that is available to us?

W.L. Do you think you discern a certain intimacy in that? I believe we are in a day when we need to learn intimacy, be with God in what He is saying and what He is doing, what He is saying at any particular time, discerning the Lord's movements and what the Spirit of God is saying, as we will see in Revelation: "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies". That did not stop at Pentecost, it did not stop with the breakdown publicly in the church; that goes on till today, the Spirit of God speaking to the assemblies. So we need to learn, as you say, to acquire this intimacy with divine Persons.

T.E.D. More liberty and allowing the Spirit to commune with us.

W.L. Yes, the secrets are there, they are for us to discover, to enjoy them and to understand them, and that can only be by the Spirit of God.

G.H. You mentioned at the outset the things that God has prepared for those that love Him. 'Prepared' is something special. That word comes in very often in the book of Jonah, how God loved Jonah and prepared things for his salvation.

W.L. Very good. God says, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts then your thoughts", Isa 55: 9 - the greatness of what God has prepared for them that love Him, not just persons whom He loves but who love

Him. So there is a moral road to these things; we have to understand that, the moral road into the truth, to the understanding of it, to the enjoyment of it. But it is all available for us.

L.McF. Zechariah was a young man, Haggai was the older man, but they prophesied together. They were in keeping with the mind of God. Now help us as to an application of that at the present time.

W.L. In Ezra 5 they are both linked together. "Now the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem; in the name of the God of Israel did they prophesy to them" (v 1). So they are not acting independently. I think these two sons of oil literally might be Haggai and Zechariah. We can bring it down to our day, but in the application of it at this moment these two men were vessels and channels through whom the word of God could come to His people at that appropriate moment.

J.A.P. We are told not to despise prophecy (see 1 Thess 5: 20).

W.L. That is an important word. As we began here: "This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel". That is another thing, as you say, we should bear well in mind, that the word of God today has no less authority than at Pentecost or any other time in the history of the testimony. Do you agree with that?

J.A.P. Would you open that up for us a little?

W.L. Well, if God speaks He speaks in His own authority and His authority never diminishes. I think we need to see that.

C.F.D. I think that what has just been said is a challenge. Why is there not the moral state and spiritual state amongst the saints to accept that? There is a tendency at the present time, as you know, to independence; the word of God comes to us in faithfulness through the Spirit of God but we tend to be indifferent as to whether we take it on or not.

W.L. Yes. "Who art thou, O great mountain?" Things perhaps arise that seem insurmountable, "before Zerubbabel thou dost become a plain; and he shall bring forth the headstone with shoutings: Grace,

grace unto it!". I think what you say is most appropriate. Was it not Mr Raven who said that Christian blessings are unconditional but the enjoyment of them is conditional? They are unconditional, God has freely given, He has made everything available for us, but from our side the enjoyment of them depends, as you say rightly, on my state and on your state; and that depends on the measure in which the Spirit of God is free amongst us.

S.E.H. In Ezra to which you referred you have Haggai and Zechariah prophesying together, and then is there an answer in Zerubbabel and Joshua, two persons who are prepared to build together in answer to the prophetic word?

W.L. That is helpful. What is brought forward in chapter 1 of this book of Zechariah to meet the terrible condition that was coming in were the four craftsmen. It was not four warriors· warriors are needed but what God brought forth at the beginning of the book were four craftsmen, or smiths as the note says, carpenters, men who can build. It is easy enough to pull down in the sense of being over-critical and destructive, but the skill of craftsmen is needed to meet a situation and build upon it.

L.D.P. I wonder if Mordecai would fit in here because of his recognition of the need for someone to come in and preserve the people, and also Esther's readiness. It came to the point where she said, "If I perish, I perish", Esth 4: 16. So the position was saved.

W.L. That is a helpful reference. I think if we follow through the Scriptures we will see that no matter how dark the day, there was always someone who had God's mind and who was able to communicate it; and sometimes unnamed persons. You have named one, Mordecai, and many others are named, but in some instances persons who are unnamed come forward. I think that these persons, if God was glorified in an exercise, would be content to remain unnamed; that is a great test for us too, in line with the day of small things. None of us ought to be out to make a name for ourselves. You get the record of persons who are seeking to make a name for themselves, for example Haman. Men like Mordecai and

these men we read of here were not on that line at all; what they were out for was to glorify God and for the blessing and upbuilding of God's people. That ought to be our motive.

A.R.S. What you are saying is very stabilising because we are in a time when standards are being changed. It is good to see that God's thoughts are going through and He is not reducing the standard.

W.L. That helps. So you have the plummet brought in; someone has it, someone is holding it. There is a man holding it. The perfect standard that God has in mind is set forth in one blessed Man, set forth in Christ and God is not going to depart from that. He is not looking for any other man, He does not need to look for any other man, He has the perfect Man in His presence, a Man who was perfect down here and is perfect up there. So God is not going to lower His standard to accommodate anyone. In this modern day some say, Well, of course we live in a modern age, you have to adapt to that age. God's standard remains the same from the beginning to the end. That is what we get here: "bring forth the headstone with shoutings: Grace, grace unto it!" Paul says to the Philippians, "he who has begun in you a good work will complete it unto Jesus Christ's day" (chap 1: 6) and that Man is God's standard. The plummet seems to be linked with rejoicing. Would you say something about that?

W.L. I think it is a thing we need to learn: "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice", Phil 4: 4. The tendency today, I think, as we view the whole public breakdown - much failure and so on - is to become depressed. The Spirit of God will not help us on that line. The history of the testimony is strewn with persons who have fixed their eyes on what the enemy has done instead of learning by the Spirit to see what God is doing, and that is the secret. Fix your eye on what the Lord is doing and you will come out all right.

C.S.E. Would a day of small things help to focus our attention on God? Do we prove God's power in a day of small things? I am thinking of Gideon and the reduction which came in; it was through

three hundred men that God was going to deliver His people from the Midianites. While it is good to have large numbers (God is able for that), He reduces us so that we might be shut up to Himself more and prove His power, do you think?

W.L. I am sure of that. What you say is right. It is significant - and there is a great lesson for us in it - that the Lord took a little child and set it in their midst (see Matt 18: 2). There they were, wondering who should be the greatest, and the Lord took that little child and set it in their midst, as if He said, There is My example for you - a little child. It is not that we should be childish but the features of a child ought to mark us – no malice, no guile. In other words, our motives should be pure. I think that the Lord is searching us by His Spirit as to what our motives are.

K.N.P. Is it as we are close to God that we understand what these resources which He has available are? Zerubbabel had some sense of that, did he not - "by my Spirit" - and he had the plummet. He had a great sense of the resources that God had, His capabilities, what He was able to bring in. I was thinking about the seven thousand He had that had not bowed the knee to Baal; there was a great resource there that Elijah did not realise. Do you think we need to keep close to God to realise what resources He has?

W.L. I think that is helpful. And these are all held firmly in the control of one Man. Zerubbabel would rise here to a type of Christ. "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; and his hands shall finish it: and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts ... " (It is remarkable that this comes in in a chapter relating to the day of small things, that He is Jehovah of hosts; and He remains that.) "Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto you". So there is one Man who has begun it and one Man who will finish it and He has all these resources, as you say. Does He not say, "On this rock I will build my assembly, and hades' gates shall not prevail against it", Matt 16: 18? He does not say they would not attack it - they certainly will attack it more and more towards the end - but He says they will not prevail against it.

J.A.P. It seems in these references that the governor and the priests and the prophets work together. What would you say about that?

W.L. It is interesting that 'helps' are recorded as a gift by Paul in 1 Corinthians (see chap 12: 28). A brother might modestly say, Well, I am not a gifted person and that may be true, but 'helps' is among the gifts in 1 Corinthians. So can you help? We can all help. We can all hinder too if we let the flesh assert itself. But let us be helps.

L.McF. Our presence at the week-night meetings is a great help.

W.L. It is simple things like that that help things along. As you say, that is a very practical matter. We are not laying down rules and regulations but every little helps. We were speaking about building: where would the bricklayer be without his labourers? That is not to despise the bricklayer's labourer, everyone is needed, we are all needed.

J.A.P. The note to the word 'helper' in Romans 16 might be useful to refer to. It says, 'Assist' is 'to stand by her and help her'. 'Helper,' in this verse is stronger and has a higher sense, and means 'helping as a patron. It was used for a Roman patron, and is applied in special honour to Phoebe as one whose help many had been dependent on and had profited by. It was a complimentary touch of heart in which the apostle never fails: they were to 'stand by her for assistance,' but she had been 'a patron' in the matter'.

W.L. Very fine - that is a good reference; which shows that all we are saying extends to the sisters. The work of God is proceeding in the sisters just as much as in the brothers; in fact if we look through the Scriptures we get many instances where the work of God in a sister or in a wife often excels that of the man or the husband.

A.S.H. In our local reading (we are reading in Judges) we noticed how often the sisters come in and very effectively help in situations. We have a sister who is not named who dropped a millstone on Abimelech's head and she saved the day (see chap 9: 53).

W.L. Yes, she knew what was needed and did it. Sometimes we can see what is needed, and I might say, Well, that needs to be

done, and that person needs help, and I might sit back and say, Mr So-and-so or Mrs So-and-so will do it. If you see a thing needs to be done you do it.

A.S.H. Jael saw something that was really needed at that time, she used a workmen's hammer and a tent-pin - close contact.

W.L. Yes, exactly.

G.D.P. As builders we have to use good material, do we not? You referred to the foundation "on this rock": no other foundation can be laid, can it? We are responsible in that sense to bring the right material in.

W.L. Exactly. Bring in what is helpful and bring in what is needed. We are living in days when brethren are trying to help. In Haggai God has in mind what is glorious. "Is it not as nothing in your eyes?" He asks. We are living in days of public ruin but God's work and its substantiality is still there to see. We can see it in one another and we can see it in local assemblies no matter how small they may be. And God is working towards a glorious end. That is what this prophet brings out: "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of hosts". These men living in the day of small things held that thought - "Jehovah of hosts". So we would always have every believer in our affections. We are not sectarian. I trust that is clear and ought to be clear to all of us - we are not gathering on sectarian ground.

L.McF. We are holding to the whole thought - a little cake (see 1 Kings 17: 13).

W.L. That is helpful.

S.E.H. Would you say something about the glory of this house and the latter glory being greater than the former. Is the latter glory referring to the day when the heavenly Jerusalem will come down out of heaven or do you apply that to the present time?

W.L. We know that the public order of the church will never be resumed. There will never here be seen an expression of unity

publicly as was seen at Pentecost, but God is working towards a glorious end and He will bring it all to light.

S.E.H. Bringing it to light in the day at the end of Revelation?

W.L. Yes. We will see that briefly if the Lord helps us in Revelation, but these things are available now. We ought to be gathering in the light now of the latter glory of this house being greater than the former.

C.F.D. Do you think too that divine Persons will show how great They are and what They are able to do? The revival, the re-establishment of Israel based on the recognition of Christ, will be far greater than what Israel was historically, will it not?

W.L. That is helpful. Also, to view it historically, there has been a glory about the history of the recovery of the truth, for instance as compared to the dark ages. There always was something for God right through the dark ages; the theme of the very precious hymns that we have from that period invariably is the Person of Christ.

C.F.D. I think that is good, the theme is the Person of Christ. And do you think the revived, the new, Israel will be established on what Christ is and what He has done and all His greatness which far exceeds anything that was related to Israel in the past dispensation?

W.L. I am sure that is right. Do you think the end of verse 7 would help: "and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah of hosts"? God is going to do that. He is not going to have His work end in confusion. As someone has said - I think it was Mr Darby - the church will go from its public ruin to its glory and the world will go from its glory to its ruin. That is how we look at things. So we are living in these latter days when God is doing glorious things; maybe in smallness - it is in smallness - but He is working as powerfully and as gloriously as ever He did.

T.E.D. There is a threefold appeal to be strong: "be strong, Zerubbabel ... and be strong, Joshua, but then "be strong, all ye people of the land". We cannot in any way elect ourselves out of it, any one of us, can we?

W.L. That is a very helpful verse, I am glad you referred to it. It goes on: "for I am with you, saith Jehovah of hosts". It is the Lord's word at the end of Matthew: "And behold, I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age". That One who is with us is the very same One who says, "All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth", Matt 28: 18. So we can strengthen ourselves, as you say, in the light of that; the One whom we love and the One who is supporting us now is the One who has all power in heaven and upon earth.

C.S.E. Certain things that are happening currently ought to affect us. The word here says, "I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations". I just wonder if things that are happening now are fulfilment of this word and this ought to affect us. God's power is behind it, do you think?

W.L. Undoubtedly. The saints do not become politically involved, but we can observe political happenings and see the hand and ways of God in them. No man could have devised what has occurred in eastern Europe: it happened in spite of all the armies, powerful politicians and so on, God's ways obviously in it. It is really a preview, we might say, of "I will shake all nations". "And the desire of all nations shall come". We know the prophetic clock has stopped and will recommence with the rapture, but I believe today that God may be fore-shadowing what will come in.

G.H. Would it be significant that the Lord says at the end of Matthew's gospel, "Behold, I am with you all the days" and "All power has been given me"? That is in the assembly gospel.

W.L. That is right. I am glad you refer to that to complete what we are going to say about the day of small things: "where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them", Matt 18: 20. Now 'of them' is important, I believe it links with "behold, I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age". The Lord will support believers right to the end of the age, but He is not supporting Christendom as such.

J.A.P. Mr Darby maintained that where breakdown came into the testimony God does not recover outwardly that breakdown. I think what you said earlier about Pentecost was right. These are distinctive times in the testimony and if we accept the breakdown and our part in it God will help us.

W.L. I am sure of that. Now a word on Revelation. The brethren know these scriptures well; they are often referred to and we always get a fresh touch as to the Lord's own speaking to these local assemblies. That is another thing I think we have had to learn particularly, that the Lord has His own direct relationship with local assemblies, and who dare interfere with that? Priestly advice, help and counsel are right but matters administratively belong to a local assembly. That is the way the Lord has constituted it and He is not going to allow anyone to abrogate that. Would that be right?

C.F.D. Yes it would. The Lord is jealous of what He has in a locality. Maybe in our own activity this has been stepped on a bit. But I think what you are saying is right. You can look at these seven assemblies addressed in Revelation and, to support your word, the Lord holds each one responsible on their own. They have to answer to Christ locally.

W.L. It is a sobering consideration that whatever any of us may do in our local meetings we are directly responsible to Christ. Of course what we do in our local meetings affects the assembly universally. We have to bear all these things in mind. But it comes down, as you say, to local responsibility; the Lord holds each local meeting responsible for what happens in that place. He is not holding me responsible for New York or Plainfield but He certainly is holding me responsible for Cumnock. Is that the truth?

C.F.D. Absolutely.

W.L. So here I think He is speaking definitely to this local assembly in Philadelphia. It is sobering to reflect on the fact that none of these local assemblies now exist. What divine expenditure there was in the establishment of local assemblies in these places that the Lord refers to by name in the beginning of Revelation. We know the

testimony has moved westward and we bear in mind that it is in God's ways, but it is still sad that there is nothing of assembly character remaining in these places.

J.A.P. "I have set before thee an opened door" is a very great encouragement. We were saying this morning in our house that many things are closed to the brethren, many relationships that we once had are closed, but there is an open door and we ought to go in for it; the week-night meetings are open doors for help.

W.L. That is one's thought in this reading, that the acceptance of the day of small things leads to spiritual expansion; the scriptures we have read indicate that and this one particularly. But this one suggests - addressed to this assembly - that these wonderful things are available to the overcomer. So it encourages us, as you say, to be among those who are overcomers. How the Lord loves an overcomer! He says to Laodicea, "He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne; as I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in his throne", Rev 3: 21. We should get a sense I think, beloved brethren, that the Lord loves His own, He loves every believer, but He has special love for an overcomer, a person who is prepared to sacrifice for Him. What is popular in what is evangelical is the meeting of human need. In speaking to many believers they will rejoice with you in the knowledge of the Saviour and their sins forgiven, but when you bring them to the point that the Christian path (for His sake) must cost something many draw back. So the overcomer is a person who must learn what it cost Christ and be prepared in his measure to follow in a pathway of suffering, a pathway of sacrifice. Christianity was based on sacrifice and it rightly continues on the principle of sacrifice.

A.S.H. So this comes down even to the individual according to the last verse here: "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies". That means you have to take it on for yourself.

W.L. That is helpful; it comes down to each one of us and each one of us is responsible. someone asked who the angel would be, "the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia", and the answer was, That is

the responsible element. The next question is, Who is responsible? And the answer to that is we are all responsible. It is a significant thing that in that very practical epistle, the epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul never once mentions elders. I think it was to lay upon them that they were all responsible. We may say, The elders will look after things, I am not responsible. In a local meeting we are all responsible. That is the Lord's word to these people here and it is a word to us.

G.H. In the Lord speaking to all these assemblies He says, "I know thy works": have you something to say about that?

W.L. He says to them "I know"; He knows all our hearts, He knows all our motives, He knows intimately all our local assemblies. Some of us might think we know about other assemblies' matters but the Lord shows John here as to these seven local assemblies what He thought about them. Others may have had their judgment about them - they may have been right or wrong - but the Lord tells John exactly how things were in each of these local assemblies. To get His mind, to be close enough to the Lord to discern His mind about any situation is a wonderful thing. It is available to us. In Acts 13 those men at Antioch and their activities: what a meeting that was where the Holy Spirit could come in so directly! But today these things are just as available to us; God's thoughts, God's mind, the Lord's feelings - that is another thing, we should learn to discern the Lord's feelings in a matter, not only His mind but learn His feelings.

T.E.D. "The word of my patience": would that link with what you are speaking about as to discerning His mind? It must have something to do, as the note says, with endurance and our preparedness to continue in this day of small things in communion and in closeness to the One whose mind we need to know.

W.L. That is helpful. Verse 9 in chapter 1 would confirm what you say: "I John, your brother and fellow-partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and patience, in Jesus", I think that 'in Jesus' is the key to it. Everything, beloved brethren, depends on our links with that blessed Man.

G.H. Would you say something as to discerning the Lord's feelings.

W.L. I think that is what comes out here in these early chapters of Revelation. He is presented girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle, His feelings somewhat restrained, circumstances where He is not too free to express Himself fully. It brings to mind how the Lord must have loved Bethany where He could go and be free, be relaxed and express His feelings as He did to that family there - a local meeting we might say. We should catch on to how the Lord feels about things because His mind is not arbitrary, His mind conveys the depths of His feelings and His manhood.

B.I. "The house was filled with the odour of the ointment", John 12: 3. It is as if the Lord really valued that appreciation of Himself.

W.L. That is helpful. In chapter 11 He had done so much for them; in chapter 12 they therefore made Him a supper. Now all these exercises are to that end that we should be helped to do something for Him. He has done so much for us and we owe our all to Him.

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MAIDS

David C.Brown

2 Kings 5: 2,3; 2 Samuel 17: 15-17; Acts 12: 1 2-1 5; Psalm 46: 1-11

The first three scriptures that we have read make reference to maids. I wondered if we could think about that. If anyone thinks 'This cannot apply to me' I would say that what we have before us would have application to every one. We may be speaking about maids and it may be that there is something that has particular reference to the young sisters, but it would apply to each one of us. We see that in that the apostle Paul's desire for a locality, Corinth, was to present them a chaste virgin to Christ. That was to be the characteristic of the whole locality and it was to be the characteristic therefore of everyone in it so that they could be presented with virgin affections to Christ, Christ being the one object for them. So it would apply to each one of us.

The first scripture especially would have reference to everyone. We see this little maid. We spoke earlier about what was little and now we have a little maid. I would like to commend her to you as an example for you. The first thing is that she had knowledge of a man in another place who was the answer to the problem in the place where she was. Now perhaps you know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, but I would like to be assured that everyone here knows that they have a link with Christ as a Man in another world who has the answer to all the problems that are in this world. This girl could point to the prophet; he was not there; he was, in type, in another world. Do you know Christ as a person in another world, who is interested, and who has the solution? It may be a problem in your own life, whatever it may be at the moment, or it may be a problem in someone else's life, but you can point to Him. He, in His place of exaltation, is the One who has the answer. The answer here was to the problem of leprosy, sin and all its evidences. And we look forward to the time when this scene will be changed because Christ has exercised His right to take control and to put things right. Everything will be in order. That does not prevent you, or anyone you come into contact with, being put in order now, through a link with a Man in another world.

Another important thing about the little maid is that not only did she have a link with a man in another world but she knew that she belonged to that world. Do you realise that you are a heavenly person? Have you ever thought of that? You may say, 'These things that affect us in this world seem to affect me: if it is too hot, I am too hot, if it is too cold, I am too cold'. But do you know yourself as a heavenly person? Do you know that that is where you belong? You may say, 'I am always doing things that I do not really want to do, that are sin; I do not feel very heavenly'. But do you know that you are a heavenly person? If you belong to Christ, if you have a link with that Man, you are a heavenly person. That is what should be in your heart. Have you the assurance that you belong there? You do not belong to this scene, you do not belong to this world, to this earth, you belong to heaven. From that basis you will find the power

to behave more like a heavenly person. If you try to struggle to be heavenly you will struggle all your life and get nowhere. You must begin knowing that you are heavenly. Do you know that you are a heavenly person? Do you know in your soul that you are heavenly, that heaven is where your home is? We sing that: 'Yon heaven is our home' (hymn no 7). But do you only sing it or do you know it? Does it characterise you, that you know that you are a heavenly person?

A third feature of this little maid is that she has depths of feelings. Reference was made in the reading to the little children crying (see Matt 21: 15). She gives a cry, a more intelligent cry than would come from little children: "Oh, would that my lord were before the prophet that is in Samaria!". She knew the answer for herself and she knew that she could point it out to another. It is very clear that if a little maid could do this for a great man in the world like Naaman, you can do it. Whoever you are, brother or sister, young or old, you can do what this little maid did. You can present the glad tidings. You can tell people that there is a Man in heaven who has the power to be the solution to all the problems in this scene and to the problems in their lives. This little maid is an evangelist, she does the work of an evangelist, and you are not excluded from the word, "do the work of an evangelist", 2 Tim 4: 5.

In the second scripture we have some very imposing persons. We have Hushai, the king's friend, who was very close to the king, who could give good advice, and who enjoyed the favour and the presence of the king. There were Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and there were these two young men Jonathan and Ahimaaz who were the sons of the priests - all very important persons. There was a problem, a message had to be sent. And there was one other very important link in the chain - without it they could not have done anything - and that was a maid. Are you available to do just what is needed? It would be a dangerous thing to do: the city was in Absalom's control, the usurping king was in charge there. If she had been captured what would have happened? She would have been imprisoned, she might have been killed; but she was willing and she

was reliable. Are you a reliable person? Young sister, young maid here, are you reliable? Could the brethren depend on you? We know that there is only one person that we can depend on absolutely and that is Christ. But are you sufficiently formed after Christ that the Lord and the brethren could depend on your being reliable? She must have some of the characteristics of the little child in the fact that her name is never mentioned. Among all these imposing people there is no suggestion that she wanted to be famous. She did not want to be known she was just available for service. One of the footnotes in the New Testament is about a sister who did the needed service (see Rom 16: 1). Can you think of anything better? She did the needed service. Of one other woman it is said by the Lord: "What she could she has done", Mark 14: 8. She was one that was reliable. Ask yourself whether you would be able to put your name in here. There is no name here; could you put your name in as the reliable person on whom all would depend so that the message would get through?

Rhoda we have another maid, in very difficult circumstances. Peter who had the leading place in the testimony at the time was imprisoned, so the brethren gathered together to pray. This young sister is with the brethren coming together to pray, which is a very commendable thing: when the brethren pray this young sister was there with them. That is good. It may be that we sometimes think that it is more important for the brothers to be there when it is time for prayer, but although they express prayer it does not reduce the importance of the sisters being there on our occasions for prayer. It is very important that they should be there. That would be one important feature of this maid, she was there when the saints were gathered. Peter knocks at the door, and Rhoda goes to answer it. It is very interesting that she should do that, because it was the middle of the night. The brethren were all gathered together. From experience, if somebody was knocking at the door of the meeting room when we were in prayer, it would be one of the brothers who would go out, especially if it was dark. Yet at night, despite all the dangers, she was willing to do whatever was needed. She was

willing to get up and listen. She was a good listener. That is another good thing - to be a good listener. You may not be able to do things but you can listen. Are you a good listener? She recognised the voice of Peter. If I could make application of that too, it is important to be able to recognise the Lord's word that is coming at any given time. It is not only important that the older brothers and those who take responsibility in speaking should know what the Lord's word is but you should as a younger person, a young sister. You should be able to recognise the Lord's word for the moment. At this time it was coming through Peter, and she listened; she was a good listener.

We come to the very serious matter that the brethren, when she reported that Peter was standing before the entry, said to her "Thou art mad". They had been praying for his release and when they received the answer it did not come in the way they thought it would and they did not accept it. Are you prepared to be ridiculed in your locality when you are right? You might say, 'There are all these older brothers and we can depend on them, they are sure to know what is right; there are older sisters who have spent a long time in prayer, we would expect them to be right'. But it is not for you to put the responsibility on someone else. It is not for you to say, 'These older brethren should know what is right'. You should know yourself, however young you may be, whether you are a brother or a sister. I would put it straight-forwardly to the younger sisters that you should bear in mind this possibility that you could be the only person who is right. The brethren might say that you were mad - a very severe matter. But did she say, 'These brethren must be right; I cannot be right'? No; she maintained that it was so. She maintained it because she knew by experience, she knew Peter, she knew his voice and she could maintain it. She maintained that it was so. Would you be willing, would you have the strength to be the one to maintain the truth? We all trust that it will never come to that and you will never be put to this test but it is a possibility. It happened here in these early days when things were in a sense publicly bright. Young sister, are you ready to fill in that breach, to know the truth and to maintain the truth? Do not leave it to others. Do not say we

can depend on such and such a brother to lead us through, he is well taught, he knows the truth. Can you maintain it yourself?

The Psalm that we read is interesting too. You may wonder what the connection is. The connection is in the heading; it says it is "On Alamo" and if you look through the footnotes you will find that it is the voices of young women. This Psalm was composed by persons with great experience with God but the response was in voices of young women. That should characterise every one of us; that our response to God should be as a chaste virgin to Christ. It should be in the freshness and depth of affection that one would expect to characterise young women. We cannot exclude anyone from this. It has its particular reference to you, whoever you are, whatever your age. It also would be right to apply it individually, particularly to a young sister. You come to the meetings and we appreciate that there is a little bit of a problem since you do not have any active part in speaking, and you do not have active part in giving out hymns, but that does not exclude you from the praise. It does not mean that it is only the brothers who praise because they are the ones who express it. When a brother is speaking on his feet it does not exclude you from the praise. God is expecting praise from you. He is expecting praise from your heart. Praise is not what is said exactly, it is what is from your heart. Your heart should be active in response. You can have part in singing, you are not just following someone else's lead. We sometimes, every one of us I expect, find that we are singing the words and our hearts are not in what we are singing. We need help about that, we can all easily sing the words and our spirits not be involved. It is for each one of us to have our spirits involved, to have our hearts involved in what we are singing. There should be something of this virgin affection of response for Christ.

I do not intend to go into much detail about this Psalm. It speaks of God as a refuge "a help in distresses, very readily found". What do you do if you are in distress? You cry. That was the word that came in earlier. Do you cry to the Lord when there is need? It goes on to an appreciation of the river "the streams whereof make

glad the city of God". Do you have an appreciation of the Holy Spirit for His help to you in your part in the testimony? "Make glad the city of God"; He makes glad. Does He make your heart glad? Are you gladdened by the Spirit when He speaks to you of Christ? Think of Rebecca as she went across the wilderness, how glad she would be to have her affections awakened to the man Isaac. The servant would bring out the glories and perfection of Isaac, in type the heavenly man, the man that she would be connected with. She already was connected with him, kindred to him. It goes on to an appreciation in this Psalm of what will not be seen literally until the world to come. Are you interested in the world to come? This Psalm speaks in the past tense of some of these things; "behold the works of Jehovah, what desolations he hath made in the earth: He hath made wars to cease". We look around and we see that there are plenty of wars, though we are thankful for what there is of peace that has been maintained in this continent for so long. That is in the ways of God and we are thankful for it. But we look forward to Christ's day. Are you interested in the world to come, in what we refer to as the millennium? That would be something for you to consider. What will the answer be, what will be their response to God? "Jehovah of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our high fortress. Selah". Consider these things, give a response.

I trust we will all think about this, give consideration, which is what 'Selah' would suggest. We have spoken of several things this morning, spoken of Christ, spoken of the way that you can be faithful to Him, whether young or old, whether brother or sister. Remember that this is what the Lord has in mind - that you should have your part in the testimony and have your part in response to Him. What is the end when we speak of little children? It is response. What is the end if we speak about the maid? It is response - response in affection for Christ. Let us all be marked by response to Christ, every one of us, for His Name's sake. Amen.

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THE CHILDREN'S OBEISANCE

In the book of Genesis the history of Joseph makes us think of the Lord Jesus, especially in that both endured evil treatment and afterwards came out in personal glory. In the case of Joseph, he was only in his teens when he had dreams about his brothers which did not come true until he was over thirty years old. In the meantime he had been dishonoured by his brethren and had suffered even the likeness of death itself. But his brethren had in the end to bow before him although they did so without knowing that it was to their own brother that they made obeisance. Afterwards throughout the land of Egypt was the cry made before him "Bow the knee".

A poet, well known but a critic of Christianity, was on one occasion telling some friends what he would do if history's greatest personages were to enter the room in which they were. Several names were mentioned and a suggested attitude proposed in each case. Then someone said, 'And Jesus Christ?'. With a hushed voice the poet could only mutter, 'You see, we should all kneel'. He had to admit to what Scripture says of the Lord, 'at the name of Jesus every knee should bow'. It was surely a warning to all concerned and to us all today! Have you bowed to Jesus as Lord of all?

J.C.Evershed