

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 243

June 1993

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DISCIPLESHIP (3)

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J.A.G. Yesterday we were looking at features of discipleship in Matthew's gospel chapter 5, the disciples coming to the Lord, the Lord Jesus going up the mountain and the disciples coming to Him, choosing the better part, the Lord taking advantage of the moment and opening up the whole of the legislation of the kingdom; then going on to Peter in chapter 14, the Lord proving His own work in him, I would think, showing that he had dug deep and reached the rock.

Now in chapter 28 the feature of discipleship, despite the broken conditions, continues right through the dispensation and in relation to the fulness of the revelation of God. It says "the eleven disciples went into Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had appointed them". That was very commendable. They are not overcome by the events, the broken condition; they are moving in subjection and committal to the Lord, and they have this wonderful commission, which has not yet been fulfilled but will be fulfilled. I think the spirit of it and the greatness of it remains. Paul took it up, as we know, and made disciples. It comes right through to the end of the dispensation. I wondered if Exodus 15 was an answer to it; it goes right through, wonderful triumph of Christ, the Lord Jesus in death overcoming the power of the enemy, drawing it out and overcoming it, and so making way for the opening up of the whole purpose of God. It is a very buoyant chapter; we should touch the buoyancy of the spirit of it: Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song - very beautiful! I thought Romans 6 would bring us into it. Exodus 14 closes with they "believed in Jehovah, and in Moses his bondman". Romans 6 brings out, I think, features of both discipleship and bondmanship: ye "have obeyed from the heart the form of teaching into which ye were instructed". It seems to me to relate to the discipleship side of things, not that there is that much difference; but then verse 22: ye have "become bondmen to God, ye

have your fruit unto holiness, and the end eternal life". Perhaps if we dependently inquire into these things the Lord might help us.

B.J. It is very precious that in this chapter 28 of Matthew we can go from verse 10 right over to verse 16 in relation to what you are pointing out. The verses between relate to the enemy's work. Is that right?

J.A.G. I think there is something in that, because in Exodus 15 there is no reference to the wilderness: you go from the Red Sea directly to the borders of the inheritance. That is something to consider. It is very encouraging that, as they keep the appointment, the Lord Jesus never disappoints; if He makes an appointment with us we need to keep that appointment. Despite the fact that there is some doubting, the Lord is going on with what He has in mind. He is going forward with His intentions despite weakness, and that is prevalent at the current time, the Lord is going on with His thoughts in relation to a full answer to the revelation of God.

H.J.G. Has it not been said, and rightly so, that we have to retire into the purpose of God to grow in our souls? I was wondering about Moses. God chose him to lead His people, but where we read it shows that he understood the final thoughts, the whole objective. Is there something in that?

J.A.G. Yes; the measure in which we are able to help and to get help is the measure in which we apprehend the greatness of God come out in revelation, which involves the fulness of His purpose.

C.F.D. The disciples have to make that journey from Jerusalem to Galilee, which was no small thing in itself. But then there is the mountain which requires spiritual energy and the preparedness for what might involve reproach, and yet out of that setting the greatest thoughts are coming, the commission that you spoke of involving the opening up of the name of God.

J.A.G. Yes, I think that is helpful. They are free, the Lord would have them free from the influences of Jerusalem, free from every sort of religious influence. He would have us free, too, from the influences of brethrenism. He would have them free from all that, as

related to Himself in reproach and to the mountain. That probably relates to Second Timothy days and also involves the Lord's supper. I do not know what the brethren think of that but that is how it seems to me, a very stable position in Galilee, it is the final mountain in this gospel.

C.F.D. The Supper itself involves the pinnacle of what we would touch, the high point of Christianity, and yet the atmosphere of Galilee surrounds it, do you think?

J.A.G. I think so: that is the great appointment, you might say.

J.A.P. Would the mountain of appointment be a good name for this mountain, involving the Lord's supper and the service of God, ultimately in the knowledge of God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

J.A.G. We can see from the gospel that the enemy had sought, and done his utmost, to destroy, to eliminate, Christ, and then to corrupt the whole report as to His resurrection. In the face of that the Lord Jesus is going on in power, carrying out His own thoughts, and He begins by saying to them, "All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth", and because of this you go on and make disciples, baptise "them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". That is a very full baptism which I think is answered to in Exodus 15. You come to Romans 6, 7 and 8; we have the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

L.McF. So that despite the broken conditions here - the eleven disciples - unity is preserved.

J.A.G. Yes, they are going on in subjection. I think it is the proof that they have arrived at the full idea of discipleship; they are qualified then to make disciples.

J.A.P. I am not clear about the link between this passage and Exodus 15. Could you say a little more about that?

J.A.G. I think when Moses says, "My strength and song is Jah", he is thinking about the greatness of God in revelation, and he goes right through in type to the epistle to the Ephesians: "bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance ... The

Sanctuary, Lord, that thy hands have prepared". I think in type that is the assembly at the level of Ephesians.

E.C.B. Is "This is my God, and I will glorify him" the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?

J.A.G. That is what I thought, and I think discipleship in that sense is leading on to bondmanship - they "believed in Jehovah, and in Moses his bondman". It is a very fine touch in Romans 6, that ye "have obeyed from the heart the form of teaching into which ye were instructed". The affections of the brethren were bound up with it.

R.N.H. It says they were baptised in the cloud and in the sea, (see 1 Cor 10: 2). Would there be a connection with the verse in Matthew?

J.A.G. It seemed to me that in Exodus 15 the cloud and the sea come together, if you understand what I mean. The sea was a negative thought, it was deliverance; the cloud was very positive, and I think both of them are bound up in Exodus 15, because Moses has the whole scope of divine thoughts before him. You can understand how he would have in his heart, as having gone through all the exercises that related to deliverance, how God had exposed Egypt in the plagues, how he had understood the immensity of what was conveyed in the passover, and the wonder of the promise that He was going to bring them out of this land, bring them up into another land, spacious, that flows with milk and honey. So he is Jehovah's bondman.

H.J.G. Making disciples and baptising them and teaching them to observe things relates to what you have just said about the exposure of Egypt and every other feature of the world, does it not?

J.A.G. Yes, and the triumph of God in the death of Christ, that there is no nation left out. God has given Himself a free hand, and you can go to all the nations and make disciples, preach the gospel to them, bring in the teaching of the glad tidings, bring them through to the end of Romans, so that they stand up on their own feet like the boards of the tabernacle - righteousness and holiness. God has wrought marvellous things in the death of Christ. So we should be buoyant in it. "Then sang Moses"; after all the pressure that he had

been through and the exercises that related to deliverance, and seeing the enemies dead on the sea-shore, you can understand how he would let himself go to God in song.

E.C.B. It is of interest therefore that the epistle to the Romans is written to the nations. Israel is not left out - they are gathered up together - but when you have arrived at what is for the nations and for Israel, you have "For of him, and through him, and for him are all things: to him be glory for ever", Rom 11: 36.

J.A.G. That is fine because, as you suggest, in that epistle, in case there is concern, he works out how Israel has been set aside and how it is going to be brought in, how it is a time of the nations, the wealth of the nations is going to come in, there is that casting away as being the world's wealth: what their reconciliation, but life from among the dead! What wealth there is in the epistle to the Romans. God, through His servant, goes right to the capital of the Gentile world and brings the whole thing down.

E.C.B. Do you think Peter would have understood by the end of this gospel that when Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of men" (Matt 4: 19), what He intended Peter to do was to make disciples of them to this end?

J.A.G. Yes, it is not only that persons are to be saved - and that is wonderful, and the whole evangelical line of things is very fine - but the evangelical line of things in Christendom stands related to the relief of man, whereas the true idea of what is evangelical has in mind that persons are brought into the assembly. "They shall invite the peoples to the mountain ... For they will suck the abundance of the seas", Deut 33: 19. In Deuteronomy 33 there is the reference (and this is very interesting because it is bound up with the fact that the gospel is related to the house) to "the hidden treasures of the sand". "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; And thou, Issachar, in thy tents!" The going out is in the glad tidings, and then the bringing of them into the tents. "They shall invite the peoples to the mountain; There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness; For they will suck the abundance of the seas, And the hidden treasures of the sand".

That comes out, I think, in the epistle to the Romans. Hence at the close of that epistle you have the allusion to the assembly.

G.R. This result in Romans - the form of teaching which you have obeyed (see Romans 6: 17) - is a moral result. The Lord comes up, as you were pointing out, He is speaking to them, there would be the teaching. We need to get the gain of that in our souls.

J.A.G. Yes, He commits this to them because He knows that they are capable of it, they have absorbed and are formed in the teaching. They are actually disciples, and virtually He says, You go and make people like yourselves.

G.R. Do you not think it significant that a final touch in Mr Taylor's ministry related to the name of God? Here it is in Matthew 28. It is a fine thing. We need to get that form of teaching into our souls.

J.A.G. What a remarkable thing it is that in this broken condition the Lord Jesus brings this out: "baptising them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". There can never be breakdown with that, and then by way of confirmation He says, "I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age".

C.F.D. Would the power that He refers to - "All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth" - stand behind them as they go out? The dispensation will be inaugurated, the Lord will go back into heaven, the Spirit will come, but the power will lie in the Spirit, do you think? So they go out as fully equipped to carry out this great mission.

J.A.G. I think we see here that the ark is leading the testimony through the wilderness. It comes out in the Acts, city after city comes down. The Lord has gone before, He comes into Ephesus and Paul says, coming, He has announced the glad tidings. You say, it was Paul that preached; that is not what Paul says: "coming, he has preached the glad tidings of peace to you who were afar off, and the glad tidings of peace to those who were nigh", Eph 2: 17.

W.S.C. I wondered if Ephesus would be a helpful example of what you were speaking of. When Paul came there they were deficient

about baptism; and then Paul taught there in the school, apparently with the object of making disciples.

J.A.G. Yes. They had heard only the baptism of John; they had not heard that the Holy Spirit had arrived. But it seems that they learn very quickly, so effective was the gospel at Ephesus that they took their books of charms and burned them, and reckoned up the cost of them (see Acts 19: 19). So that by the thoroughness of their committal there as the basis for the unfolding of the greatest thoughts of God.

J.A.P. Would baptism shut out man's mind in this great revelation of God? It would be through death that we have to understand this great matter.

J.A.G. Yes; baptism shuts out man altogether, his mind and all the rest of him. Hence you have to learn how to yield your members instruments of righteousness unto holiness, until finally by the compassions of God your heart is really affected by the wonderful way in which God has come in in grace in the glad tidings. "By the compassions of God" (Rom 12: 1) you present your whole body, "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God"; then you are in relation to His will and coming into this wonderful community where everybody has something and they are working together, shutting out the whole line of independency.

E.C.B. You referred to the ark leading them through the wilderness. There is a difference in the teaching of that and the ark leading them through the Jordan, is there not?

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. "All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth". It just appealed to me that that power is manifest in the leadership of Christ as He goes before them. But say more as to what is in your mind.

E.C.B. It was your referring to that that made me think that there is that distinction, and that perhaps, in so far as we know anything about it, we know more about the ark making the way through Jordan for us than we do the ark leading us through the wilderness for God.

J.A.G. Exactly. I think it is something to look into, how Paul, for instance, was directed in the execution of his commission under the leadership of Christ by the Spirit. The great point that would always be in his heart was that there should be assemblies, there should be an assembly formed in a place, and the glad tidings should make way for assembly features, assembly growth; it is not to leave us half-way, there is no half-way house in that sense in Christianity. We are to come to the fulness of divine thoughts in answer to the revelation of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

G.D.P. You told us yesterday that Peter had a touch in Matthew 14 about saving "me", but is this a further touch about all power?

J.A.G. Yes, this would give us complete confidence in the Lord Jesus. Man is shut out in baptism. Man's mind was referred to, but the whole man is shut out, and the full idea in baptism is that not only are we baptised but we come up again as "quickened together with him" (Col 2: 13); that is, you are living in a different life now.

W.A.M. The disciples are teachable persons, are they not? We are challenged as to that, as to whether we can be taught: "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined you".

J.A.G. Yes. He says, You would know what I have enjoined you, you carry that whole thing forward, I have left out nothing, I have unfolded the whole matter to you. That is the kind of teaching that you proceed with. You will find, as that is taken on and substantiated in the souls of the disciples, there is a complete answer to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. That is a wonderful thing in the midst of breakdown.

W.A.M. The disciples at Ephesus were mentioned; they had not received full light, but Paul brings it in and they were teachable.

J.A.G. Yes, and how beautifully Aquila and Priscilla helped Apollos, they "unfolded to him the way of God more exactly", Acts 18: 26. They exude the spirit of the new covenant in opening up the teaching, and that is what should be amongst us. We need to learn to choose the good part, sit down at His feet and listen to His word -

probably we like to say too much - to listen to what the Lord has to say as He would open up and unfold to us the greatness of the truth.

B.J. Yesterday we emphasised the importance of meekness and lowliness, which comes home to us in every relation of life. We have that at the end of chapter 11: "Come to me, all ye who labour" (v 19), and so forth. Is that the way in which it individualises each of us, to get our bearings at that source?

J.A.G. I think so: that is the King Himself, is it not? The Lord Jesus does not want anybody to be anything different from what He Himself manifests. We do not have to say it, but it is so obvious that He is everything. He says: "Altogether that which I also say to you" (John 8: 25), and that is how He would like us to be.

R.N.H. Does that bring up the importance of this observation in verse 20? The Lord uses that word in Matthew 7, too (v 28). We learn by observing, just as the children learn by observing how their parents move. Do we learn skilfulness if we are observant in the assembly and observe what the Lord does through one and another?

J.A.G. That raises the whole question with all of us as to how keen we are to learn. If you are keen you will observe, you will look, you will listen, you will get something in the meeting, and you go home and search it out and if you do not understand it you will go and ask somebody. We may go back in our souls: we have all known that kind of thing. But this is the vitality, the energy, that belonged to the nation when they came out of Egypt, they were "holiness to Jehovah", Jer 2: 3. We need to maintain that line of sanctity all our lives, and that is bondmanship, I would think. What do you say?

M.P. I was thinking about Paul who writes to Timothy, "the things thou has heard of me ... these entrust to faithful men, such as shall be competent to instruct others also", 2 Tim 2: 2. He was careful about the continuance of the testimony. Then in Ephesians we have "as the truth is in Jesus" (chap 4: 21), in that kind of Man, to learn of Him not just as to the light, as to the knowledge of the truth, but being like that kind of Man, Jesus.

J.A.G. That is fine; "ye have not thus learnt the Christ, if ye have heard him and been instructed in him according as the truth is in Jesus; namely your having put off according to the former conversation the old man", which means that the new man is being taken on - the truth as in Jesus. I believe the disciples - these eleven men - would impart the truth, as you suggest, not only as knowledge but as expressed in themselves. Would you say that?

M.P. Yes, and Peter could say, "Look on us", Acts 3: 4.

R.G.J. Should we not take into account the importance of the Spirit? It says in the end of Luke, "do ye remain in the city till ye be clothed with power from on high" (v 49). I was noticing how quickly, after the Spirit comes upon the saints in the beginning of Acts, Peter and those with him move out in relation to making disciples.

J.A.G. I am sure it does, although here in Matthew the Lord is insisting, you might say, on His own authority, the power that He has, and the fact that He is with you all the days. The power of resurrection, the power of a risen Christ, is leading the disciples. Certainly the Spirit is there, but the Lord is over the services, He is the great Prince of the princes of the levites, and He is so interested and concerned that there might be formation after Himself and a full answer to this wonderful revelation of God.

D.T.H. Would you say some more about the spirit of the new covenant seen in those who minister?

J.A.G. I think it is fine in Acts 18, how "they unfolded to him the way of God more exactly". They did not say, You are not right here and that is not what you should do. They helped the man forward. Unfolded is a Deuteronomy word - Moses unfolded to us a law (see chap 1: 5). It is something further and something further; it is that kind of spirit that helps people. What do you think?

D.T.H. I thoroughly agree with what you are saying. I see it beautifully exemplified in the Lord in John 20 and 21, the way in which He manifested Himself. The spirit of the new covenant was seen in how He adjusted the disciples.

J.A.G. I think the in-breathing carries with it the spirit of the new covenant; that is the character that is imparted. So He wants to remit, that is the first thing: "whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained", John 20: 23. But the Lord sends them forth with His own Spirit, the same way as He moved. He is the great mediator of the new covenant. It is the love of God. As we said yesterday, as we appreciate the new covenant, and if we drink into the spirit of it, we become Godlike.

E.C.B. That is 2 Corinthians 3 and 4 - "competent, as ministers of the new covenant", chap 3: 6. It leads to the local company "looking on the glory of the Lord" (v 28), and then finding that "the glory of God" is "in the face of Jesus Christ", chap 4: 6.

J.A.G. Exactly, that is how Christ's epistle comes out. That is how there is the evidence of the formation of the teaching in the brethren, they have seen the glory of the Lord.

E.C.B. "Known and read of all men", chap 3: 2. That corresponds with all nations.

J.A.G. It does indeed. That is a fine suggestion. Because that is so you reject the hidden things of shame, not working with deceit or falsifying the word of God. You do not do it because the brethren do not want it, you do it because you have seen something far better.

J.A.P. Perhaps from the light of what we are having this morning we should think much more greatly of the end of Matthew's gospel, that something is reached in the Lord's instruction that in a way we do not get in any other gospel - the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Is not this the only place where the Lord Jesus puts it in just that way?

J.A.G. That is right. I think we need to appreciate, you might say, the regimentation that belongs to this gospel. So there is an appointment and you keep that appointment: you keep that appointment and the Lord unfolds this wonderful commission. First of all He tells them that "All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth". That is a marvellous statement, is it not? Then He

says, now you go to all the nations and make disciples, "baptising them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit", and there is to be nothing different from what I taught you, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined you", and I will be with you in that.

G.R. Could we inquire as to how each of us here would proceed to make disciples of all the nations? We have spoken of the glad tidings and we know a little of that, but then there is more to it than that. We spoke of example, too. Does all that enter into making disciples?

J.A.G. I think it involves the teaching of the truth, it involves the gospel, our contacts with persons, and what they see in us that is attractive. It is marvellous the way that Naomi made a disciple out of Ruth. She said, Do not come, no, you go away back. She did not pressurise her or say, You are one of my converts, I have your name, and that sort of thing. It was what she was that was attractive, and Ruth went with her. Imagine somebody saying to you, Enjoin me not to leave thee, I want to go with you, and wherever you go I want to go and where you are buried I want to be buried with you (see Ruth 1: 16,17). There is something very real about that.

G.R. Only Paul could say, I suppose, "Be my imitators ... as I also am of Christ", 1 Cor 11: 1. There is a great deal in that, is there not? But then there is to be something of that by extension.

J.A.G. I think so, as was just referred to, Paul says, What you have seen and heard of me, commit to faithful men, who will be able to instruct others also. Other people will want to go in the same way, and they will be able to show them where to go and how it is done. These are very practical matters.

B.J. We have the blessing in chapter 5, and now at the close of Matthew it is to all the age. It includes us, and that is really a wonderful thing with which we are blessed. Is that the way to look at it?

J.A.G. I think so, it is the completion of the age. In this broken condition the age is going to be completed, despite the fact that we

are less than the twelve. Hence I suppose the completion of the age for us is the Spirit and the bride saying Come, which is a remarkable statement.

R.B.H. I was thinking about that, and then John adds his own word, "come, Lord Jesus", Rev 22: 20. I have been impressed with the thought of John and his witness, what he would set on, and that is what he does at the close of the book, he adds his own expression. We are all individuals. We have been talking about following, and what would be attractive, and we need help in setting that on, do we not?

J.A.G. I think so, and John throughout the whole of his life - you might say, throughout the whole of the dispensation - maintains himself in the love of Christ. So he says, "To him who loves us" (Rev 1: 5), loves us, that is a current, present love, and in that sense he represents what is bridal. He carries it right through to the end, as you say. He said, "come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22: 20), I am ready. That is fine.

E.C.B. This reference to "teaching them" might perhaps underline for us that there is a need of teaching currently. My own impression is that we should be praying that the Lord would raise up teachers among us, but not the Corinthian kind.

J.A.G. I am sure that teaching comes from persons who have gone through the course, they understand the scope of the truth. I think one of the finest things that brethren can do, young people, but everybody, is to go through Mr Darby's Synopsis and get the interpretation of the truth.

E.C.B. It is interesting in this scripture that Jesus says, "teaching them ... whatsoever I have enjoined you", without reference to the Spirit. In John 14 the Spirit will bring things to their remembrance (see v 26). But there is evidently something formed in people here that He can rely on.

J.A.G. That is what I thought; and hence He says, I, "I am with you", so that if you have any difficulty you can refer to Him, He is right with you, He is the great teacher and He knows the whole thing. "I am

with you all the days", whatever the days; there are different days, some days are good, some days are bad, but He is with you every day, right through to the completion of the age; you do not have to go far to speak to Him. The word of faith is near you (see Rom 10: 8). "I am with you": we should think about that. The Lord is asserting Himself at the close of this gospel in relation to the unfolding of the name of God, because He is the great revealer of the Father, the declarer of God, He is in the bosom of the Father. This section is a tremendous close to this gospel of Matthew.

D.T.H. Paul makes a great point at the end of Timothy about the Lord standing with him. He said, "no man stood with me", "But the Lord stood with me", 2 Tim 4: 16, 17. That is the "I" here.

J.A.G. That is the "I", "I am with you all the days", and that day He was with Paul. Jacob is a man of experience, and he speaks about the God who shepherded him all his life long, every day, even "to this day", he says (Gen 48: 15). And he pours out the spirit of the new covenant. He says God "bless the lads" and cause them to "grow into a multitude in the midst of the land! " A very spiritual person was Israel! I think there is something for us here that the Lord asserts Himself: "I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age". There is maturity here in the formed disciples. They have made their degree, you might say; that is a scriptural idea, you gain a good degree and much boldness in Christ (see 1 Tim 3: 13).

E.C.B. Would you say that these references, that "All power has been given me" and "I am with you all the days", enfold "baptising ... to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"? Would that suggest to us not to be afraid to go in for the highest truth?

J.A.G. Exactly. You go in for the highest truth and then you may find people saying, Of course it is all head knowledge. That is because they have not bothered to be engaged with it. You go in for the highest truth and the Lord will make it good in your soul. I remember an old brother saying to me when I was fairly recently converted, Get to know the sayings of the men of God who have led in the revival;

you will not understand them, but as you go through life, circumstances will arrive and they will become clear to you. The Lord will do that for you. Do not be afraid to go in for the greatest things.

R.N.H. In relation to what was said about what was formed in the disciples, I wonder if the fact that when they saw Him they did Him homage - a spontaneous outgoing to the Lord in that way - would be proof of what was formed in the disciples.

J.A.G. I think so; that they did Him homage must have been so much to His own heart. They say, We are loyal to You; Judas has betrayed You but we are not going to do that, we do You homage, we own allegiance to You. The Lord appreciated that and He commits this wonderful commission to them and He tells them that all power has been given Him. So you do not have to worry. Paul says that to the Philippians: "not frightened in anything by the opposers", chap 1: 28. There was enough at that time to scare the wits out of anybody. Think of Paul in Rome and the whole force of the Roman Empire against him. You go into the Colosseum in Rome and you see that place where the Christians were martyred and where the emperor sat and where perhaps Paul stood and gave his defence. Fearsome! Think of the power there, yet the Lord standing by him, giving him power, that through him the proclamation might be fully made. That was the proof of this scripture here.

J.A.P. Where do we fit in as brethren in this day of great evangelical activity and what we call in this country fundamental churches, and so forth? What should we hold to in the face of that?

J.A.G. Well, we maintain this position, this mountain. We name the name of the Lord and depart from iniquity (see 2 Tim 2: 19). Then we "pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart" (v 22). Then we are like the bondman of the Lord - if we are - we do not contend. In meekness we seek to set right persons who oppose (see v 25). We have the light of the truth of Christ in glory and the light of the assembly, and we seek to maintain that rightly and affectionately in our places.

E.C.B. Are we not fundamentalists?

J.A.G. I think we are. If we are in the good of Romans we are very much fundamentalists.

E.C.B. He dug and went deep and built his house on the rock; that is a fundamentalist.

J.A.G. Exactly. What do you say about that?

J.A.P. The foundation of God stands. Still, in my conversations with many of our brethren, I think we are wondering what God is doing in others, which we thank God for, and pray for. What you outlined is our objective at the present time - to maintain this mountain of appointment. But the work of God is one; in Ephesians it says "one God and Father of all, who is over all", and "one Lord, one faith, one baptism", chap 4: 6, 5. I think there are some seeking to do what we are saying. How does that all work together in this day of brokenness?

J.A.G. There are many things you leave with the Lord. I also think that the word to Peter is very salutary to us. You say, well, what of this man, what of that man? "Follow thou me", He says, John 21: 22. Christ alone is your object. Then you will be influential.

D.T.H. To make disciples is the work of a shepherd, is it not? I think, following what has just been said, there is a need for us in relation to the glad tidings. I mean we have neighbours: knock on their doors, tell them about Christ.

J.A.G. Well, to go out and preach and be the thing yourself is very influential. How beautiful are the feet of those who announce glad tidings! (see Rom 10: 15). "Look on us" was referred to.

C.F.D. Should not teaching that has been referred to be brought into the glad tidings? I was noticing that Mr Taylor says that if we do not bring teaching into the glad tidings, persons that are brought in will be shallow as to the basic truth. The assembly is always before us. It has been said that you cannot separate the assembly from the glad tidings. Is that right?

J.A.G. That is why I quoted that scripture in Deuteronomy 33: "They shall invite the peoples to the mountain" (v 19). The whole wealth of heaven is available to them there. We have on our boards that we preach the word of God, which should be a very substantial thing. It is the expression of God's mind for men at this particular time. The glad tidings are very copious and the scope of them is great and the word of God is something very distinctive. It comes in to meet an immediate need, and I think it leads us on to the full truth of the assembly. Take the case of Saul of Tarsus. He was with the disciples certain days; there is the pattern for conversion in the 9th of Acts, how to come into the assembly, how to come in through the gates, and so forth.

W.A.M. Mention was made of faithful men, "such as shall be competent to teach others also". It is not that the disciples are teachable, but that they were able to teach, and I suppose as taking on the truth ourselves we become faithful and are able to teach. Would you think that?

J.A.G. I think so. It brings up the whole question of our meetings and what proceeds in them, what kind of meetings we have, what sort of teaching proceeds. Fathers, young men and little children: there is experience there, the fathers teach and they express things that they have proven themselves.

W.A.M. So there should be something prophetic in our meetings, should there not?

J.A.G. We should look for the Lord in every meeting.

E.C.B. In regard to the question raised, one thing that perhaps needs underlining among us is that we should never speak ill of the work of God wherever it is.

S.E.H. Also in regard to that, would the example of Aquila and Priscilla in relation to Apollos help us? You might say that Paul was the main line of what the Spirit was doing, and yet Apollos was, it says, "an eloquent man, who was mighty in the scriptures" (Acts 18: 24); but then he needed to be instructed in the way of God more exactly. There may be people who are ministering along the lines of

Apollos in principle; can we get close to such and bring to them the light of Paul's ministry?

J.A.G. If we are going on with the Lord and the truth, immediately we come in contact with a Christian all our affinities are related to the work of God. Apollos is a brother and he is really keen; a fine thing to be mighty in the Scriptures! How many of the brethren here in this room could go through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, right through to Revelation? To repeat them is just nothing; we did that at school. But to be able to know the Scriptures, to read them and to understand what they mean, that is the importance of the Synopsis of the Bible. The Lord has given us great help in the revival through these expositions that put the matter in the whole of the books in their proper place interpretatively.

K.A.O. Would you say something more as to teaching coming into the glad tidings.

J.A.G. I think there would be teaching in the preaching. You preach about the Saviour, there is teaching in the way that He has met the claims of God's throne, there is teaching in what was due to God, there is teaching for instance in why you are convicted as a sinner - how did that come about? You need to be taught about the fall, about how man acquired a conscience, about how God took Adam and his wife and clothed them with coats of skin, about how Adam had faith in the word of God, how he was recovered, how his wife was recovered, how Abel received help. All that involves teaching, and we can only teach in the measure, I suppose, in which we ourselves apprehend what we have been taught.

K.A.O. Is this teaching something that would help us as believers so that we do not stumble? "Him that is able to keep you without stumbling" (Jude 24), we had yesterday. If there is teaching, and observing of things that the Lord has taught, it would help us not to stumble, do you think?

J.A.G. I think so. We have a hundred and one books of the finest ministry over the whole of this century that will probably meet every

need in every soul. Yet there are people who say we read Mr Darby only. They miss out on the current voice of the Spirit.

G.D.P. In John 6: 60 it says, "This word is hard". That was in relation to making disciples, was it not? You spoke about Naomi: she told Ruth to go back. It is a testing matter, is it not?

J.A.G. Yes; but Peter did not say it was hard. He said, It may be hard but I do not know where else to go.

G.D.P. Because he was with the Lord.

J.A.G. Yes. I think John 6 equates to Matthew 14, Peter walked on the waters. He says, You have words of life eternal, we have never heard teaching like this, we have never been affected in our affections like this. I think Mr Stoney said he marvelled, having been to a reading in Dublin with Mr Darby he had never had a time in his life like it in reading John's epistle. He had been going to the Establishment, he had never heard anything like this at all. His heart was completely won over to the truth through the teaching.

W.S.C. What do you say about the way Elijah, you might say, disciplined Elisha, when he meets him and Elisha says he wants to go back to his parents? He says, "Go back again; for what have I done unto thee?", 1 Kings 19: 20.

J.A.G. He cast his mantle upon him, did he not? Elisha wanted to go back and say goodbye to his parents. Well, he says, that is all right, you go back and do it; but his heart was won, was it not?

He passed, on me his mantle threw
And in a trice my heart was won.

That is the secret of the whole matter, is Jesus the hidden Man of your heart? Have you room for more than yourself in your heart? The full idea in Ephesians is that He dwells there through faith (see chap 3: 17).

E.C.B. That is what preaching is about, that Christ might have His full place in someone's heart. And then such persons are taught.

J.A.G. Teachable. When He has His place everything else happens.

R.G.J. Is that why Paul preaches immediately that Jesus is the Son of God (see Acts 9: 20)?

J.A.G. Yes. There was a big question at the crucifixion; they said He made Himself Son of God. Paul preached that He was Son of God because He knew that God had revealed His Son in him. The wonder and glory and blessedness of the relationship of sonship was known in Paul personally; it was different from the revelation to Peter. That is why he has the force, you might say, to withstand Peter to the face. That was personality.

B.J. The acts of the Apostles often are spoken of as the Acts of the Spirit, but I am thinking of what we are saying now as to teaching. Luke's opening verse is "all things which Jesus began both to do and to teach", and then, in verse 3, it is the kingdom of God. Is it for us just to continue right on to the present time?

J.A.G. Yes, so that Paul in his own hired house taught the things concerning the kingdom of God (see Acts 28: 31). That is the rule of God in your soul if Christ has the first place in your heart. There is no reason why He should not have, but we are so selfish.

R.N.H. Lydia's heart was "opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul", Acts 16: 14. Is that because she had a place in her heart for the Lord that He could open it?

J.A.G. Yes, she "worshipped God ... whose heart the Lord opened". You might say that was a sovereign action - "whose heart the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul". But then we are taught in relation to man's responsibility that God is justified in acting sovereignly. So there was something about Lydia that justified the action of the Lord opening her heart.

C.F.D. In resurrection, in the forty days, the Lord was with them coming in and going out, and He opened up matters pertaining to the kingdom. Do we need to be instructed as to this because really the kingdom is the way into the assembly, is it not?

J.A.G. Yes, and the kingdom is the safeguard, it is the bulwark of the assembly. As we come into the teaching of the kingdom we are subdued, we are related to the will of God. It is God's kingdom and He rules in it. His administration is the finest economy that you could possibly be under, and that is the kingdom; now that protects the assembly. As we are in the gain of that and we come up to the Lord's supper we have no problem in locating the Lord Jesus immediately as He comes in at the breaking of bread, because we are subject persons.

G.R. Do we need to value more the truth of the assembly? What was said earlier as to prayer for the raising up of teachers needs to lay hold of us. Teaching as to the assembly was the burden of Mr Taylor's ministry, was it not? And, as you read from Jude yesterday, "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints". We are to be custodians of the truth. It is an immense responsibility, do you not think?

J.A.G. I think so. We are to sacrifice to get it: "Buy the truth, and sell it not", Prov 23: 23. The teaching is opening up and laying down; there is authority in it. It goes back to the whole matter of doorkeeping, which is a big question. You lay down the law, you say this is how it is, you come in through the gates, these are the standards that we regard in the fellowship. It is not the brethren's standards, it is the standards of the fellowship. We begin with the Lord's commandment. Now you say, Well, all the sisters here wear tokens, and we go on on that line, and that is the truth, that is in the Scriptures. Nobody should take offence about that, it is written in black and white; you do not have to be spiritual to see it. All these matters have come up in the revival. So man and woman are in their place under Christ, under God, in view of the celebration of the Lord's supper. Man does not have long hair; woman has long hair, that is her glory. She does not pray with her head uncovered, she covers it; he does not pray with his covered, he uncovers it. That is divine ordering; it is all part of the teaching.

J.A.P. Miriam is affected thus by Moses' song. It is very remarkable, it seems almost to be spontaneous: "Miriam the prophetess, the

sister of Aaron, took the tambour in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambours and with dances" (v 20) showing how one affects another. Is that not the idea?

J.A.G. Yes, she is affected, but you cannot say of her here that the disciple is as his teacher (see Matt 10: 25); she is not up to Moses' standard. But she is going to get there, going to come up to that. In Deuteronomy 33, for instance, the full idea of discipleship is set out in Levi, the cross has had its way with him: "Who said to his father and to his mother, I see him not" (v 9).

K.A.O. In the earlier chapters of 1 Corinthians much instruction was brought forward, but in chapter 14, as a result of the teaching, the man falls down and says, "God is indeed amongst you" (v 25). Do you think that to observe the teaching and what precedes in an orderly way would tend to bring in recovery with us?

J.A.G. I think so. There is power in that meeting, what is prophetic is coming into it, and the man falls down and says, God is among you of a truth. This is a wonderful place. I just was impressed with the tremendous buoyancy and greatness of chapter 15, what God has wrought in the death of Christ. the great clearance that He has given Himself in the death of Christ, to make way for the establishment of the greatness of His own thoughts. The whole of the enemy's power is annulled - 'the power of Satan broken in Jesus' death of scorn'. The Red Sea is the great scope of death, it reigned "from Adam unto Moses" (see Rom 5: 14). Christ has made a way through for His people, the whole nation, it says. The children of Israel went on dry ground through the midst of the sea (see Exod 14: 22).

E.C.B. Does the last verse of what Moses says, "Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever!", go as far as 1 Cor 15: 24, "Then the end"?

J.A.G. I think it would, it goes right on to the eternal day, "when he gives up the kingdom to him who is God and Father". Of course Moses did not know that teaching.

E.C.B. It is a very interesting reflection how Moses knew all that is in his song, because he had not been taught. Three days' journey in

the wilderness is different from this.

J.A.G. Yes, and he had never been in the land, but he can describe it better than anybody. Mr Taylor relates that to his knowledge of the mystery, in type.

E.C.B. Yes, heaven with the saints in it. You made a remark earlier that discipleship leads to bondmanship. One might have thought that bondmanship led to discipleship. What about that?

J.A.G. I can maybe compromise and say they go hand in hand. I think discipleship is teaching, it involves your mind. Bondmanship is your affections, "I love", so your heart is gained through the teaching. It gains your affections, it becomes increasingly precious to you. Then you know how to say, "I love". So you become "bondman to God": what a statement that is in Romans 6!

E.C.B. You then sit down at His feet.

J.A.G. Yes. Let us settle for, they go hand in hand.

E.C.B. I do not mind at all, but one thing I am concerned about, if I may be so bold, is that there is insufficient teaching among us to secure bondmen.

J.A.G. Well, you better blame the teachers.

E.C.B. There is a tendency amongst us, if we serve in meetings, to think that the reason why the brethren do not come up to what is said lies in them, but it may lie with the servants.

J.A.G. I am sure it does. Better to blame yourself for everything. Do not blame anybody else, then you are safe.

M.P. I just want to refer to Philippians 2: 5: "For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus". That is willing bondmanship.

J.A.G. Yes, that is beautiful. Who "emptied himself", "being in the form of God" thought it not "an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied himself, taking a bondman's form" (vv 6, 7). How little we know of Jesus! How proud we are! I think the company is probably further ahead in the truth than the platform, in fact I am sure of it.

C.F.D. In the addresses to the seven assemblies, in each case the angel is addressed, which represents the responsible element, does it not? It is that element in each assembly that is held responsible by the Lord for the condition that is there. Would it be right to say that?

J.A.G. I think so. Hence Paul insists on the necessity for fatherhood at Corinth, does he not?

C.F.D. Yes, fatherhood: in other words you are suggesting that this thing is to be substantially set out in persons and they are to be a true representation of what there should be in the locality as representing the Father.

J.A.G. I think they care, they have a heart. Anybody that is a father knows how it is with their children, they care for them, they are concerned for their well-being. They watch that things do not come upon them, you see them coming and you can see a trend and you have to stop that before it becomes too great. That is fatherhood in the local meeting. That is what Paul was to the Thessalonians, he admonished them as a father. You do not hold them off at arm's length, give them a lecture that is away beyond them. You may have to give them a dig in the ribs now and then but that all helps, too.

C.F.D. Does the idea suggest the homeliness of the household setting, that the locality is under the eye of a father in the place? Each one would be known to him as his children, and in a household, generally speaking, the father is fully aware of what is going on in the children. Is that to be represented in the local position?

J.A.G. I think so. The children do not think he is fully aware, but he knows what is going on. If you want to know about fatherhood read Luke 15: that is how to be a father.

S.E.H. The angel of the assembly is addressed in each of those assemblies, but then there is "he that has an ear" and "he that overcomes". Does each of us need to recognise that we fit into at least one of those categories, just as John writes to the fathers, young men and little children? Would you say that we each can take

on what the Lord is saying to those assemblies in Revelation even if we are not an older, perhaps responsible, element?

J.A.G. We are all responsible. We have come into fellowship on our own responsibility and we put our hands to the loaf and the cup, and it is our responsibility. We have to know how to possess our vessels, and consequently we are interested and concerned for the Lord's interests in the place. Everybody is responsible. Every anointed ear would be anxious to hear what the Spirit has to say. Nobody has a right to elect themselves out of responsibility.

G.D.P. Does the ear relate peculiarly to bondmanship?

J.A.G. It does indeed, his ear bored through with an awl, he is a bondman for ever (see Exod 21: 6). How many persons could be like Paul and say, the less I be loved, the more abundantly will I love, I am prepared to spend and be spent for your sakes? The saints were the whole object of his life, because he realised how precious they were to Christ.

TORONTO

12 October 1991

PHILIPPI

Willie Dickson

Philippians 1: 9-11; 2: 1-5; 3: 20,21; 4: 4-9

I thought, beloved brethren, it would refresh our hearts at this time to have a look at a model assembly. I sometimes wonder if there is such today, and yet I think that the characteristic moral features could be found. It may not be where there is a wealth of gift or outstanding administrative ability, but there would be some tangible expression of what morally represents a model assembly. It could be in just a little company, two or three, yet having the features spoken of in these passages. I suppose it would be right to say that the Philippian epistle gives us the substance of what "the life of God" (Eph 4: 18) would mean. What is unfolded in these chapters is affection for the truth and regard for the Lord's servant and for one another; they give us some impression of the area where the life of God is known.

So I thought we might look at these chapters for help. It is well known that Philippians is the outcome morally of Ephesian teaching - "as the truth is in Jesus", chap 4: 21. The Philippian had indeed learned the Christ, and the epistle in substance reflects the teaching of the Ephesian epistle. The first feature I would call attention to as marking a model local assembly is discernment. It says, "that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and all intelligence, that ye may judge of and approve the things that are more excellent". The practice of discernment in regard to things that are more excellent is a very choice feature in assembly life. In speaking of Philippians we have always to recall the inception of that local meeting. It was by the river; that is an indication that all that ultimately worked out in Philippi stood related to the Spirit of God, and this feature of discernment must of necessity have come from the liberty that the Spirit of God had, and so he says, "in full knowledge and all intelligence, that ye may judge of and approve the things that are more excellent". Now, that is a test. We can usually

discern the things that we might feel are not quite what they should be, but the underlying state and the discernment that marked the Philippian assembly were that they were able to discern and approve the things that are more excellent. That would involve the truth as in Jesus; that is, that everything which is for the furnishing and development of life in the assembly relates to Christ. He is the great source of life, of power, and of blessing. The divine standard of excellence is in Christ, and if the Philippian believers had to consider any matter that called for discernment, the truth as in Jesus would be their divine plumb-line by which matters were measured. What a standard comes before us! It says, "in order that ye may be pure and without offence for Christ's day, being complete as regards the fruit of righteousness". The reference to Christ's day is interesting in connection with the fruit of righteousness because the outstanding moral feature in the world to come will be righteousness, and the outstanding moral feature of the present dispensation is righteousness. We should ponder that. The truth as in Jesus. involves what it cost God in the death of Christ to establish the standard of righteousness that would be in keeping with His own throne and His dwelling amongst His people. So the apostle is exhorting this assembly that when Christ's day came it would be seen that they had discerned the excellent thing in the pursuit of righteousness. Righteousness is not to be construed as a principle of inflexible demand. Righteousness is a feature of refinement in the things of God, because it is measured in relation to Christ, and in our desires to bring things about for the divine pleasure in our localities we should think of what it cost God, in the death of Christ, to establish conditions in which He can dwell with His people in complacency and love.

In chapter 2 it says, "If then there be any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit". While it is too full to go over in detail (not that one is able for it) I should like to dwell on that expression, "fellowship of the Spirit". That is what characterised Philippi as a local assembly, the fellowship of the Spirit, not a fellowship dictated by human affiliations or governed by

race, by nationality, by environment or any of these things that distinguish the fellowships of this world. The fellowship of the Spirit involves an area in which everything is in accord with the truth as in Jesus, this feature of love and unity marking the saints.

We should perhaps pay more regard to the organic working of things among us. In our exercises to secure things for the divine pleasure do not forget that the Lord is Head of the body, and, in virtue of that, there is organic operation amongst the people of God. Any spiritual person, whether a brother or a sister, would never, in their exercises for the maintenance of the truth, overlook the principle of the organic working which lies in localities and amongst the saints generally. That is the fellowship of the Spirit, the same thing in principle as in 1 Corinthians 10, the fellowship of the Lord's death, not quite that (though it is that too) but a refinement as to this area where the life of God is known. So, dear young people, if the world entices you to its fellowships, and associations, remember that it may be that the enemy of your soul is opening a door for you. The fellowship of the Spirit is one of the most treasured possessions that the people of God have and we should know the affection that marks it. The apostle then proceeds on to the mind which was in Christ Jesus. This is another instance in Scripture in which there is a reference to the manhood of Christ accompanied by a touch as to His deity. It speaks of that manhood and the depths to which it went in suffering love, but like the cherubim covering the ark, it says, "subsisting in the form of God". You will see that all through Scripture, even in the references to the Messiah in the Old Testament prophets: whenever the Messiah is brought on to view in His manhood, the Spirit of God inserts a touch as to the glory of the Person who became Man. What treasured thoughts these are to dwell upon with spiritual minds, that the greatness of them might be known in our conversations together. Beloved brethren, how rich our conversations together would be if we dwelt upon these wondrous matters.

Then in chapter 3 another feature of the model assembly is that it is a company with a heavenly outlook. This expression, "our

commonwealth", can be used as to our relations in the area where the life of God is known. The word "our" is emphatic. It says it has "its existence in the heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour". Beloved brethren, a feature of a model assembly is that it is waiting for the rapture. We are pilgrims here, our outlook is towards the Man in heaven, waiting for Him to come soon. There are no shackles that tie such to the earth, none at all. "Our commonwealth" that we enjoy here in the life of God has its existence up there where that blessed Man is. Our expectation is to be there and enjoy fully all its wealth and the glory of divine thoughts. Are we like that? We come back to what Mr Darby was told when he complained about the state - Put it right by one man. These are heavenly things we are speaking about, they are moral things. The Philippians had to deal with moral things. It is obvious from this chapter that there were enemies of the cross of Christ; Paul warned them: he says, "I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ". You say, Such a thing in Philippi? They were not in Philippi, but they were encroaching on the divine territory, and Paul, in his desire to preserve that choice garden for the Lord, brings up in chapter 1 this matter of discernment as to the things that are more excellent. You can never really separate what is spiritual from what is moral. That is basic to the Christian faith. The two matters are intertwined to the extent that the workability of what is spiritual amongst us must have its bearing upon what is moral and a judgment of the things that are more excellent. He says, "the heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall transform our body of humiliation". It does not say here 'our body of death' but "our body of humiliation". Have you ever felt that? Often on a Lord's Day morning at the service of God, when it goes higher and higher and you feel the whole meeting is being transported, despite the body of humiliation you feel you want to remain where the Lord is, to be with Him. But we find that the body of humiliation hinders us - not the body of death but the body of humiliation - but if we fix our eye on that blessed Man up there, we know He is coming soon, and our

commonwealth which we enjoy now down here amongst the people of God will be our eternal portion.

In chapter 4 Paul says, "For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true". Is it of any significance, beloved brethren, that the list is headed by the word "true"? It is a wonderful list, and what heads it is the word "true". That takes us back to Ephesians 4, what is true. In an assembly such as the Philippian, what is true must remain at the top of the list - true in our relations with God, with the Lord and the Spirit, and with one another. The street of the heavenly city was of transparent glass, and we should be able at all times to look one another in the face and shake hands with one another, and be true. We should be true to the fellowship and to one another, and to the truth. Then he says, "whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are amiable, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if any praise, think on these things": think on them. Then he says, "What ye have both learned". Paul did not say to the Philippians, 'What I have taught you', no, he says, "What ye have ... learned". A Philippian assembly should in substance have some person who can say "What ye have ... learned ... in me". It is not my knowledge of the truth, or the ability to give a good address or anything like that, but to be able to say ye have learned that of me. Oh, brethren, what have we learned? Let us learn something about the area of the life of God. The responsibility for keeping it lies in our hands, for the Lord's pleasure, an area in which the Supper can be celebrated and where the truth under the Spirit can flow. May I appeal to the brethren? I trust we have learned something, not only the sorrows, but the Lord's faithfulness and love. There has been much blessing. Young people have confessed the Lord and have asked to break bread; it is not all sorrow. Let us learn to pray more and learn something from the history of the testimony for the Lord's glory. Amen.

BUCKHURST HILL

8 August 1992

TIMELY CHILDREN

As you probably realise, it is really the sun in the heavens that governs our time-keeping although we have clocks and watches worked by electricity and by clockwork. Even the younger children will have at some time seen a sundial showing the time getting later as the shadow of the gnomon moves down.

King Hezekiah of Judah once wanted a sign that God would bless him. He was told by the prophet Isaiah to choose between the shadow going down or backwards on the dial of King Ahaz. Wisely he chose the latter so that he could gain ten degrees of valuable time equivalent to forty minutes, the time of a Gospel address!

Even if we have wasted precious time, God's grace is still towards us. In the glad tidings of our Lord Jesus Christ we are told to redeem, or buy back the time, because it is so precious.

Do you value time?

J.C.Evershed