

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 247

October 1993

Contents

THE GROUND THAT CHRIST HAS WON

PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD

SIGNS OF YOUTHFUL LIFE

THE GROUND THAT CHRIST HAS WON

1 Samuel 22: 1,2; 2 Samuel 2: 1-4; 5: 1-3, 6-9; 1 Chronicles 25: 1 (to "cymbals"), 5-7

J.D.G. It is in mind to follow through an impression we had this morning as to the ground that Christ has won. I am looking at David, principally as a type of Christ in these scriptures. It would, therefore be apparent to the brethren that in 1 Samuel 22 He in type has secured a place where we can be gathered to His name in His rejection and gather round the Person. It is not so much doctrine or principles, but they gather round David.

In 2 Samuel 2 they gather together to the place that he has secured in Hebron and anoint him king, firstly over the house of Judah, and then all Israel come round to the place that David has acquired. In 2 Samuel 5 he brings them, typically, into the truth of the full light of the assembly as seen in Jerusalem. Having secured that, 1 Chronicles 25 brings out that he now has vessels usable under his hand for the service of song. I read the verse as to Heman's sons and daughters to bring out the touch of the feminine side as well as the masculine side. I know that in the service of God we take masculine relationships with God, but we would encourage the younger people that they are all contributory in relation to what Christ has under His hand in view of God's heart being satisfied.

D.J.H. It is something to follow through; the basis for all is our gathering to the Lord in rejection and providing a place for Him there.

J.D.G. Yes. There is quite a description of those who gather round David. I suppose it is persons who had been under the burden of the law, and they are attracted to David as establishing new ground for man.

D.J.H. There was a reference yesterday to Revelation and it was referred to at the Supper this morning, that He has redeemed out of every tribe and tongue and nation. It was said that all these distinctions are gone as we gather to Him. All these differences as

here - the distress and debt and embittered spirit - are all ended as we gather round Him.

J.D.G. Instead of the burdens and the pressures that could not be met, we come to a person who has met all. Before this David had dealt with Goliath in the valley of the terebinths and secured the victory over death. Christ has been rejected but we are encouraged to go to Him. I was thinking of Hebrews 13: "go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (v 13); it may be on similar lines to this chapter.

E.C.B. Apart from his taking Jerusalem where there was conflict with the Jebusites, most of this ground is won, in the scriptures that you have read, on the basis of his personality and their affection for him.

J.D.G. Yes. I thought that it is most attractive that, as gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus here in the scene of His rejection, the celebration of the Supper takes place in that environment. It is helpful for us to see that it is to a Person for whom we have affection that we gather together. That is a good prerequisite before we proceed to the Supper.

E.C.B. That in itself helps to preserve us from doctrinal or any such basis of the Supper or even of our being together at all: "gathered together unto my name", Matt 18: 20.

J.D.G. He established the ground of gathering; we never do.

B.H.C. The Lord is the great gatherer; it is an occasion that is not announced but we are there because we love Him, are we not?

J.D.G. Yes. He does not scatter, He gathers. One of the poetic parts of Scripture brings out that Joseph had the horns of the buffalo with which to push the peoples together (see Deut 33: 17); that is integration. Then too in John's gospel: "if I be lifted up ... will draw all to me", chap 12: 32. It is the Person who is before us as we come together. We are taking a position outside the camp, outside the ecclesiastical systems, we are still in the great house but we have taken a position outside, not exactly on doctrinal ground - that would

enter into it - but because we have affection for Christ. This section of scripture brings it out; these persons had been oppressed by king Saul and his regime which was making nothing else but demands upon them, but as soon as David establishes the cave of Adullam they are liberated to go to him.

B.W.W. It says also in John: "gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad", chap 11: 52.

J.D.G. That is what I was thinking - "gather together into one". It has always been the divine thought, the Lord's intent. The ground He has established is for all believers. As we remarked yesterday, the loaf includes all believers.

J.S.G. It began to happen with Mary in John 20. We speak about her intelligence and what was or was not there, but she missed the Lord and felt His absence, and the gathering together began on the ground of loving Him and feeling His absence.

J.D.G. Certainly Mary had affection for Christ. Possibly, at that time, no other had greater affection for Christ, staying alone in the garden but eventually being found by Him and finding Him - "Rabboni, which means Teacher", John 20: 16. Then she gets the secret of what is not related to the position of rejection but more perhaps to Hebron or Jerusalem: "go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God" (v.17).

J.S.G. I was wondering if the disciples' love for Jesus when He was here prompted Him, several times, to speak about things that He had in mind. On one occasion it says "ye cannot bear them now", John 16: 12. He speaks to lovers of things that are ahead, so that in feeling His absence and gathering to Him we would desire to be more able to apprehend the things that He has that are for us.

J.D.G. Those who gather here have a sense of kindredship. It says, "And his brethren and all his father's house heard it, and they went down thither to him. And every one in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one of embittered spirit"; there was some sense of kindredship in the position of rejection.

J.C.E. There does not seem to be any inhibition with David as to what his past had been. He had a moral history but that was closed and he was able to come out as the Lord Jesus did in grace.

J.D.G. I was thinking of him as a type of Christ in the section we have read and, as you say, he comes out as a type of the Lord Jesus in grace; he is not making demands upon those who come down to him, but he becomes a captain over them. He is one who is a provider of guidance for them. The Lord Jesus becomes that for us.

M.A.J.T. Could it speak of conversion, that they all went to the cave of Adullam, they all followed David? There should not be any debt, stress or sorrow after we are converted, should there?

J.D.G. No, that is true. He is the great liberator; he showed his power to liberate in 1 Samuel 16 and 17, power to liberate them from the power of death and the fear of death. How the women sang his praises! That all precedes this position, but it was not to be the kingdom immediately then, there was not a position of glory immediately; it was a position of reproach and shame. They had been set free from a system of bondage. We heard this morning as to the Son setting free, the truth setting free. There is a touch of more than the truth setting them free here, the person of Christ setting them free.

E.C.B. It could be enlarging for us that in verse 2 it twice says "every one". "Let your heart also expand itself" (2 Cor 6: 13); there is no roll call and there is nobody excluded, but "every one". Is that not the basis on which we gather, that as we gather to the name of Christ there is room for every one?

J.D.G. It has been remarked that the meeting was not announced; it is established on the basis of persons who move towards Christ, moving here towards David, as you point out, "every one". The Lord takes account of every desire in every heart; that brings in all in this room, the young and old and all who gathered to celebrate the Lord's supper this morning. The Lord takes account of all as moving towards Himself. It is Himself:

'O Lord, it is Thyself; none, none but Thee

Could so call forth response from every heart'

(Hymn 209)

The response is there before we come; He liberates it as we come.

F.E. At the end of the section it says: "they abode with him all the while that David was in the stronghold." (v 4). It was a very safe place to be.

J.D.G. It is good to abide with David while he is in the stronghold.

The ground of gathering is a stronghold because we gather to the name of the Lord Jesus; He has established it and it is a safe place to be. It preserves us from ecclesiastical error because we are gathered to His name and to the Person who has a place in our hearts. We come under His touch and His instruction. In these chapters from 22 through to 30, in a general sense, we come under the instruction and see the manner of His movements.

M.J.E.W. The word "collected" is interesting. I wondered if that was a forerunner to assembling, that is that there is a certain dignity.

There were characters, all those that Samuel had wondered at, Jesse and others, but they collected. Do you think there is a forerunner of assembling, related to one another, dignity in relation to Christ?

J.D.G. It links with what the Lord brings out in the gospels, looking around on those who were gathered round him (see Mark 3: 34); it is on moral grounds. He was the centre of their occupation. There were those who could not understand it; His natural relatives at that time could not understand, they thought He was out of his mind. But the Lord takes account of those who were gathered around Him. I think that is in line with your thought as to "collected".

B.W.W. It is interesting, in relation to what you said as to His relatives, that in Acts 1 His brethren are there.

J.D.G. They come into the blessedness of His position as in Hebron, that is the house of Judah, those who are related to Him.

They were in the upper room among the hundred and twenty. Scripture specifically says that - "Mary the mother of Jesus, and with

his brethren", Acts 1: 14. That is His brethren on natural lines, but they come over from the side of what is nature in relation to Christ, to a moral link with Him, they come into the line of His brethren on moral lines.

The next position that David establishes is Hebron; he makes enquiry and then he goes up. He carries with him all that has been secured in the cave of Adullam - "his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jizreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite". I suppose he carries forward with him the thought of the assembly as secured by Him in the wilderness setting; then the men and their households are all subservient to the move up to Hebron, which would be suggestive.

D.J.H. Are David's own movements interesting? It says in the first scripture that "he became a captain", not that they made him a captain. Then it is as captain that he has this command to go up and he brings them up. They answer to that and anoint him king.

J.D.G. "He became a captain": the Lord proves to us His capabilities in the wilderness setting in the way of leadership. He is fully qualified.

D.J.H. I wondered whether that was carried forward now into Hebron in the way that David takes them up, and then it is recognised by them.

J.D.G. I thought that his leadership goes right through these scriptures. We had a word this morning on the parcel of ground in John 4, the ground of gathering, what Christ has secured and the wealth that came out of it. I thought that these scriptures suggest how He reaches it; David controls the movement and having secured himself a position in the hearts of the saints as captain over them in the cave of Adullam, the place of rejection, they are equal and able and attracted by him as he moves to Hebron.

J.S.G. In the recovery of Ziklag in 1 Samuel 30 there were four hundred men with David. The number is not mentioned as Hebron appears, although it seems from the reference to the two wives as if the recovery at Ziklag was in mind as carried forward. I wondered if

the numbering is more a personal committal to the Lord Jesus in affection, and the collective side taken over as we are occupied with Him.

J.D.G. I am glad you mentioned 1 Samuel 30 because it was in my mind in regard to David's spoil. There is what is distinctive secured out of the conflict at Ziklag which is referred to as "David's spoil" (v 20). I think all that was cumulative of what he brings up to Hebron where he has a place of pre-eminence in kingship.

E.C.B. David in chapter 2 is not detained by lamentation.

J.D.G. You are referring back to the lamentation in chapter 1. He is free, it is movement up in view of securing what is established as out of death. Hebron was established before Zoan in Egypt; it is a greater place. Hebron is the city where the giants were slain; so there is established what is greater than what man could do.

T.D.E. Would you say more about "every man with his household" accompanying David. In chapter 22 it is very much a personal matter, but here it is more than that.

J.D.G. It seems to be movement up together. In 1 Samuel 22 they go down and gather round David as individuals, his brethren have kindred links with him, it is every one with embittered spirit as individuals. But here it is more personalities that have established links with David, they are equal and able for moving with him into another area where he is to be honoured. It is not now David in reproach in the cave of Adullam, "as when they hunt a partridge on the mountains", 1 Sam 26: 20. How affecting that is in regard to our Lord in relation to the testimonial sphere! David is now coming into an environment of affection and kindredship which is beyond death.

A.M. In the same connection it speaks of his men that were with him; it is almost a repetition of the closeness of the link. They were with him but they were his men as carrying his mark. We often refer in the morning meeting to His being "not ashamed to call them brethren", Heb 2: 11.

J.D.G. You are touching an area of what we call association with Christ which is beyond death. David's men that were with him become his confidants, he can disclose the secrets of his heart to them: I believe they are following him intelligently up to Hebron.

"The men" would convey the thought of intelligence. They were intelligent as to his movement upward and able and willing to anoint him king over the house of Judah.

E.C.B. They would say, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?", Luke 24: 26.

J.D.G. That is good. They were in the gain of that. Christ entering into His glory, the glory of kingship in this setting. In chapter 5 Hebron is where all the tribes come up. There is a wider influence growing when all the tribes recognise his position as the one who is exalted and has a place in their affections. I suppose Hebron involves Christ having the first place in our hearts, the first place in all things, and then too we have association with Him.

E.C.B. Hebron has also been related to the purpose of God as having its place before the world. It is very remarkable how much, while not explicitly so, these references enter into the Psalms - "Who is this King of glory" (24: 8), "Whither the tribes go up" (122: 4).

These thoughts are all drawn from history, are they not?

J.D.G. Yes. You can see how the experiences in the history are expressed in the Psalms. The songs that we sing in the service of God have been written from the standpoint of persons who have had experience with the Lord and appreciated His movements upward. It is good to be with Him in the movements upward. It is an enriched position.

B.H.C. Would "anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy companions" (Heb 1: 9) link at all?

J.D.G. That is true of Christ. He always has the place of pre-eminence. Hebron involves His preeminence among His brethren - "oil of gladness above thy companions". He must have a joy that He can enter into that is greater than our joy. We can enter into His

joy and He shares it with us, but He must have an appreciation that is greater than our appreciation.

H.J.T. Would it be right to think of David's enquiry of Jehovah as suggesting to us the relation of the Son with the Father, in its application? I had that impression very much this morning, the mutuality between the Father and the Son.

J.D.G. I think that is helpful. He is establishing a kingdom, and that kingdom, in the finality of it, He is going to deliver up to the Father.

What you have said is very suggestive as to the relationship, how the Father would have Him move in relation to being crowned in the midst of His brethren and in the hearts of the saints. It was all in His thought for Him in purpose.

D.J.H. It is like the Lord Jesus in John 17 speaking to the Father: "the men whom thou gavest me out of the world" (v 6).

J.D.G. That is good. How Christ valued the men that were given to Him! He valued them because every one that came to Him had been drawn by the Father (see John 6: 44). The secret side of things is that the Father is drawing us to Christ.

E.C.B. Is there not ministry entitled 'Christ Crowned by the Father and by the Saints'? (see J.T. Vol 1, p.19). I was thinking of what you were saying, the acclamation; 'Received in glory bright up there' (hymn 350), and there He is crowned by the Father; but He is also crowned by the saints. The spirit of this, in type, is not so much the honouring of Christ by the Father but His being honoured by the saints.

J.D.G. That is right. It is in accordance with the Father's thoughts.

H.A.H. Does it not link with Colossians? We give Him that place as the Spirit magnifies His glory to us, and yet the Spirit in His grace retires in that epistle.

J.D.G. Christ has His full place of honour. So in chapter 5 all the tribes of Israel come to David at Hebron. The influence of His place affects others so that there is a complete thought here. All are brought in and he is anointed king over Israel.

H.A.H. Another feature of Hebron was that it was a city of the priests and a city of refuge. There would be no charge against any, they would be completely free from past history.

J.D.G. It is very beautiful how they come in: "Behold we are thy bone and thy flesh". That is the first thing, establishing kindredship with him; then they acknowledge in a very comely way, "Even aforetime, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel; and Jehovah said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel". There is a full acknowledgement of any deficiency on their side and yet acknowledging the place that he has been given of God.

A.M. It says "David made a covenant with them": does that involve settled relations?

J.D.G. No charge has been brought against them. The Lord does not bring a charge against us as we come to acknowledge Him. Everything has been settled on the basis of His work.

A.M. It goes on to going up to Jerusalem, which I have always linked in my mind with Ephesians where everything is final. We have the light of the finality of things, everything is settled by Christ and in Him.

J.D.G. It seems that the movement up to Jerusalem comes from David: "And the king and his men went up to Jerusalem"; he is going to lead them into the heavenly side of the truth. There are elements here in this chapter that would hinder; so there has been conflict for the truth. We are brought into the understanding and enjoyment of it, conditions have been established amongst us for the enjoyment of the heavenly side.

H.A.H. Building "from the Millo and inward" would involve the Christ dwelling in the heart by faith (see Eph 3: 17).

J.D.G. That is good. "He built round about from the Millo and inward". He has met the enemies. He does it all himself. The Jebusites had been long entrenched in Jerusalem. There was a long period in the history of the church where there was

entrenchment hindering the development and enjoyment of the heavenly side of the truth, but finally it was established for us. We have to appreciate the ground that has been established and it is Christ who has done it.

D.J.H. The secret was getting up to the watercourse, the Spirit being given His place.

J.D.G. Do you not think that the Spirit's place figures prominently in the recovery? Later on in the recovery we were brought to acknowledge Him objectively, but nevertheless I think the men who went before us appreciated the Spirit's help in direction, as well as the Lord's help, in relation to the establishment of what was for His pleasure here. It is a comfort to Christ's heart that He has men to whom He can disclose things. In John 17 they could listen to His prayer, they could understand what was in His affections for His God and the testimonial side, how He was sanctifying Himself for them, and He would have them sanctified by the truth. It is all in view of the continuation of the testimony and its heavenly character here below.

J.C.E. There came a time when David was concerned about a house for Jehovah.

J.D.G. Once the light of the heavenly side is established and there is building from the Millo and inward - Christ in the heart by faith, Christ in the affections - we have an understanding of what is in His mind in securing heavenly territory in Jerusalem, the enlightenment in relation to the assembly position. He can then move forward to develop the service of God as in 1 Chronicles 25. He must establish this before that.

E.C.B. I was wondering whether Solomon has anything to do with any place other than Jerusalem. David establishes this point, and then later the house is built, but it is all in view of the divine centre of things.

J.D.G. Once he is established in Jerusalem the basis is laid. There are certain things to be subjugated in the kingdom but the ground is

laid; so Solomon is associated with the house and the building of the house and the territory secured in this chapter.

E.C.B. In regard to the Jebusites, would you think that they are like spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, which we have to be able to overcome in order to enjoy fully what it is to be made to sit down in heavenly places in Christ?

J.D.G. I was wondering about that; it is an intense position. It has been entrenched for a long time in the history. It is the Christian's struggle.

E.C.B. It is not in order that we may gain our heavenly position but in order that we may enjoy it.

J.D.G. That is right, because it has already been secured by Christ.

M.J.E.W. We do not often refer to Solomon and his songs, a thousand and five. We often refer to the service of song established under David, but it seems that brethren forget that Solomon was a great songster, he wrote a thousand and five and we have the Song of Songs; so something was established under David that was continued in Solomon.

J.D.G. David is the sweet Psalmist of Israel; he sets on the service of God.

I read in 1 Chronicles 25 to show how all that he has secured is leading up to his thoughts with his God. Christ has in mind the service of song. I thought that perhaps the reference to the military side in verse 1 would include His exploits. David and the captains are merging as one thing, merging as the type of Christ as including Christ's exploits and establishing what we have been speaking about. So he can now separate for the service of song the sons of Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman "for song in the house of Jehovah, with cymbals, lutes and harps, for the service of the house of God".

It is a very wealthy suggestion. What is secured in the men is to be liberated under his hand with a view to the service of his God. The house would be in mind here, although it is not built at this point.

E.C.B. The house had been in David's mind for a long time and it is remarkable that he is allowed by God, or stimulated by God, to prepare all that we have in these chapters, with the house already in his mind.

J.D.G. I thought that his personality is developed here. That is what the Lord is developing in us - personality. There is variety in personality; so it would encourage us all to express something in the service of song. Heman had fourteen sons and three daughters; it is not so much the masculine and feminine side but the personalities I was thinking about, showing the contribution expressed by those that are masculine in that sense in the service, but the sisters, and the young sisters, contribute in their spirits to that. We are all being developed in personality.

J.A.B. 'Each with some trait of Him' (hymn 90): it is everything of Christ.

J.D.G. The Father's delight is in the traits of Christ in each of us. It says in Hebrews 2: "in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises" (v 12). It is a vessel in which He can strike the chord and they all respond to God.

H.A.H. I was wondering whether the separation is not so much the basic separation, however necessary that is, but as in Hebrews 2: "he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one" (v 11). They are separated from a natural order of things and even from the conflict. They are distinguished from the captains in that sense. The conflict is over.

J.D.G. I think it is separation to - towards; it is not related to the sphere of testimony exactly. It is separated in view of functioning Godward.

J.S.G. The men are mentioned earlier and later but are not mentioned in the same order each time. It is exercising to be available as a vessel, is it not? The whole of the service of God is to be carried through and it is all under the hand of David. The Lord Jesus is able to bring forward all that is needed, but should we be available as vessels at any time?

J.D.G. Yes. The spirit of fatherhood that is brought out in this section has, I think, an influence in the service of song, yet it is under the direction of the king, under Christ's hand as Minister of the sanctuary. But the spirit of fatherhood is among us. Paul says that in Ephesians 3: "to be strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inner man" (v 16); that comes out in expression in the saints.

H.J.T. Is it of interest that, according to the first three verses, prophecy comes in by this means?

J.D.G. In the service of song you get the idea of prophecy, the mind of the Lord coming out in the expressions of response to Himself. The mind of God is being made known.

D.J.H. Do you get that touch in Mr Darby's poem entitled 'The Endless Song' - 'All the mind in heav'n is one' (Hymn 14)? That is prophecy, is it not?

J.D.G. Yes. It is not just related to the Tuesday night meeting.

E.C.B. I think we have our Christian practice too much compartmentalised. We might bear in mind Mr Raven's remark that there was only one assembly meeting and it ran right through the week.

J.D.G. That is helpful.

E.C.B. Just as an illustration of the prophesying in the morning meeting, or the service of God as we speak of it, it is worth noting how often the Old Testament is drawn on. It is brought in as if it were prophetic.

J.D.G. The prophesying here was to be "with harps and lutes and cymbals". I think it is a response in song ;there is prophecy in the songs too.

H.J.T. We often find that something in a song leads to some expression in praise.

J.D.G. How it flows! What is evident in the service of God is the flowing character; that is music. Music flows, it has a movement that is all of its own.

E.C.B. In regard to your earlier remarks about the younger brethren and young sisters, do you think we may need help in catching some of the younger notes in the meeting.

J.D.G. I was thinking that; as they are expressed you want to catch on to them because there is a freshness there that may not be with older ones, because as we become more intelligent we fall back on our intelligence, whereas what is expressed in youthfulness is coming from the heart.

E.C.B. While, of course, the sisters and young sisters do not take part audibly, to see a young sister attending to what is going on in the meeting is a touch in itself.

J.D.G. We do not want to underrate them; it surprises us in one sense how some of the little ones listen to what is taking place in the meeting. I think we have to encourage the young people to maintain their interest in what is proceeding because there is something for Christ in that interest.

E.C.B. It is sobering for us who are older that Scripture actually says "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy sons", Ps 45: 16.

J.C.E. We used to hear of the conductor who stopped the proceedings because he could not hear his little piccolo.

J.D.G. That is a helpful remark because it shows that in the choir in heaven under the hand of Christ He will know when everyone is functioning. He will draw on each one.

E.C.B. Where you stopped reading in 2 Samuel 5, the next verse says "David became continually greater"; that colours the whole of the rest of the history. I wonder if in Chronicles there is not still the sense that "he became a captain over them". He has the captains with him, he leads them by the skilfulness of his hands even into the service of God.

LONDON

22 November 1992

Key to initials

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PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD

B.M.Deck

Mark 16: 2-6; Luke 24: 5,6; John 6: 66-69

These three scriptures, I trust, will engage us with the glorious Person and work of our Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, presenting Him to us, as the crucified One, then as the living One, and in John 6 we read of Him as the holy One. One is assured that the attention of every interested person would be involved in the presentation of such a Saviour. Who can measure the depths to which divine grace has gone in the crucified One, because it was for us - poor sinners, undeserving, unmerited - that the mighty sovereign work has been effected to save us, save us from the guilt of our sins. And the penalty and the judgment of our sins has been borne on the cross by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Mark's gospel brings that out peculiarly. We often speak of Matthew and Mark as the pressure gospels. I will tell you why: they give us the detail of the forsaking. They give us the very words Jesus uttered when hanging there, alive on the cross, bearing the sins of believers. He uttered those words, quoting from the Psalm: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Mark 15: 34. One hesitates to speak of such things. If the whole earth was engulfed in darkness during those three awful hours, what human mind would venture to penetrate beyond what has been recorded: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" They were the words of the crucified One. That is the death He accepted, "and that the death of the cross" (Phil 2: 8), as if, perhaps we could say, it went beyond what was envisaged. He came to die. He came "to seek and to save that which is lost", Luke 19: 10. He came from heaven to do this in the glory of His Person, in humanity in flesh and blood conditions, to become the sin-bearer for everyone who believes. I trust you are numbered among them. If not, get numbered among them - quick! Before the meeting is through, be sure you are numbered among the believers in Jesus! We understand that death

by crucifixion is the cruellest death depraved man could devise, and it was meted out to the spotless Saviour and He accepted it. He did not even receive what might have relieved the agony, He refused it.

Our blessed Saviour went through the dreadfulness of what He suffered at the hands of wicked men, by whom He was crucified and slain. Think of it! Still more, He bore the awful judgment against sin and sinners. We come into the gain of that wonderful finished work by faith in His Person and in His blood. It says, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin", 1 John 1: 7. That is a Christian speaking. It is John who says that, the disciple whom Jesus loved. You might say, if you only knew my history you would hesitate to say "all sin". No! I would not. The word of God establishes it; there is not one too great a sinner to be saved.

Why not put in your claim? What does it mean to be saved? You confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord - these are the terms - and "believe in thine heart that God has raised him from among the dead" - that is what I have read: "He is risen, he is not here" "thou shalt be saved" (Rom.10: 9) - an unconditional promise if only you will believe. God has made it so easy - we might say too easy for the intellectual or the foolish or depraved. We have known persons thought too senile to be saved. O the grace of God! Tonight, my friend, it is within your reach; more! it is within easy reach, in the simplicity of putting out your hand in faith and embracing the terms of God's glad tidings. You will never regret it. There will be many alas! unbelievers who will regret it. Terrible thing to die in your sins! The Lord speaks to the Jews that way: you will die in your sins (see John 8: 24). I cannot think of anything more terrible or more unnecessary. It is to a sinner's advantage to be saved, to get the burden rolled off. You come to the cross for that. You are going to do that, I trust. It is a wonderful thing to be a Christian. In some sense you have to experience it to know the wonder of it, to know that not a charge can be raised: "cleanses us from all sin". Prove it, my friend! The crucified One! Each one needs to come to the cross with that awful burden; it was borne away, sufferingly. You say, how could He do that? We generalise too much. He bore our sins, one by one. Think

of it: believers' sins! Paul says, He "died for our sins" (1 Cor 15: 3), that is Christians. We could not say He died for the sins of unbelievers. Now, do not get me wrong! He died for all. It is "towards all, and upon all those who believe", Rom 3: 22. There will come a moment when those who have died in their sins will be raised in their sins to be judged in their sins and to be banished in their sins. Do you know what heads the list of such? The fearful and the unbelieving. That is not persons who have not heard the gospel, it is persons who have heard the gospel and alas! to their eternal folly, have said, No. Do not be among them! You need not be. The grace of God gives us an opportunity, and be assured that you are sheltered by the blood of the crucified One, the Lamb of God, the taker-away of the sin of the world. Has He taken yours away? You know: God knows: I do not know. We would not presume to know anyone's heart. God knows your heart. He is the heart-knowing God and He knows even the blackest history. What is He doing? What is He saying? He is commending His love to you. Even while we were yet sinners, even then, He commends His love to you: the best commendation that we could ever pass on to you is that God loves the sinner. He does not love your sins. He dealt with the whole matter of sin. The cross met the whole question of good and evil. Has it been met in your history? It is a wonderful thing to come by faith to that finished work, to know everything, absolutely, from God's side. He is satisfied - "when I see the blood, I will pass over you", Exod 12: 13. That was said in Egypt where that passover lamb was cherished, then slain, its blood put up on the doorposts and on the lintel; that house was sheltered. It is a wonderful favour to be brought up in a Christian home, in a baptised home. What protection it is! The whole world is under judgment. Do not be deceived. Many are allowing themselves to become engulfed in a world about to be judged. You say, I do not believe it. Well, you think again! It is God's strange work, but it will inevitably come. He will judge the world in righteousness; more than that, the day is appointed when that will be. There is no mistake. The prince of this world is clothing it with all sorts of attractions to lead you into its morass. Beware of it! It has been rightly said that the higher you get in this world, the nearer to

its god. I would appeal to every fellow-Christian: do not steer your course as near to the world as possible; flee it! "The world is passing, and its lust", 1 John 2: 17. Flee it! Keep as far away from it as possible!

There is another sphere in which you can live, the world of the Son of God, the living One; that is what I want to come to. The living One: how wonderful that is! John says in the Revelation, quoting the Lord: "and I became dead", chap 1: 18. No one took His life from Him. Why? He is the originator of life! Peter said, when he preached, "the originator of life ye slew", Acts 3: 15. What folly, even from a human point of view, to slay the originator of life! Men are doing their utmost to prolong life. Why? They fear death. The Christian does not. Death to a Christian is blessing. You might not think it, but it is. Death for a Christian is to be with Christ where He is, where the living One is. O let this hope burn in us, beloved brethren and friends! What a propitious atmosphere we find ourselves in this afternoon. God is propitious towards us. He is commending His love to us. Do not turn away from it! For your own sake do not turn a deaf ear! Do not be bothered about appearances! Be real and genuine, honest with yourself and honest with God. It is so worthwhile. The whole world's system is built up on a veneer.

Look behind the curtains, what do you find? Corruption and wickedness. I am not wanting to dwell on that. I would like to tell you about another world, the world of the Son of God. It is worthwhile, a thousand times, to face the reality of where you stand with God.

So I come to this reference in Luke, to the living One. Those who came to the tomb, these beloved women, were lovers of the Lord. "They found not the body of the Lord Jesus" (v 3) - how touching that is! They were looking for the body of the Lord Jesus.

He had lain there for three days and three nights. Scripture says, "in the heart of the earth", Matt 12: 40. That was His vicarious work too. He not only met my sins vicariously but He removed the whole man that sinned. Think of Him going through the whole penalty of death! Not on His own account. He had no sin. He was sinless, the

spotless One. The thief on the cross said, "but this man has done nothing amiss", Luke 23: 41. "Nothing amiss" - uniqueness is in that. Could you point to anyone else of whom that could be said? No! We have all done plenty amiss. The holy, spotless Lamb of God has taken on the whole liability of everyone that believes. O, be a believer! Put your trust in Him! You cannot be too simple or too real.

Just get down to the very facts of your present conscious need and put your trust in the Saviour! Do not wait until after the meeting! We were singing just now about snatching away the seed (see hymn 109). The seed is in the word of God; it is not in what man has thought up. Value it! If you do not have a Bible, get one! If you are not reading it, read it! If you do not believe it, begin to believe it, because the word of God is true and every word will be fulfilled. There is no mistake about it.

So Jesus is the living One: "Why seek ye the living one among the dead?" What precious words these would be to them, to find the One to whom they owed everything was risen: "Why seek ye the living one among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spoke to you, being yet in Galilee". I would like to introduce you to the living One. He has the keys of death and of hades: "I became dead, and behold, I am living to the ages of ages, and have the keys", Rev 1: 18. What door do they open? To life out of death. The shadow of death can never come is what He will introduce you into by faith, your link with Himself on the other side of death. I know no greater glad tidings; they bring me into conscious relationship with the Man on the other side of death. On this side of death it is the fear of death: "through fear of death through the whole of their life were subject to bondage", Heb 2: 15. But He has "annulled death, and brought to light life and incorruptibility by the glad tidings", 2 Tim 1: 10. Think of death being annulled! It is not annulled in the world yet. No! People die. In some parts of the earth, we hear, people are getting their bodies frozen, hoping that at some time there will be some means to prolong their lives. There is no faith in that. What a wretched business that would be! Why? Faith introduces you into a scene of things where death can never come. I

know nothing more wonderful than to be attached to the living One on the other side of death.

The crucified One and the living One, the cross and the blood of His cross - He has "made peace by the blood of his cross" (Col 1: 20) - meet and settle the whole question of my eternal salvation and destiny. Is that a settled matter, my friend? Could we pause just one moment longer to persuade you and appeal to you and assure you that that can become an absolute settled matter because that work on the cross established divine righteousness in the very place of sin, and you can be free in the absolute assurance that you are saved for eternity, sheltered from the judgment to come.

Now I go on to a further thought - the holy One in John 6. How are you going to spend the rest of your time here, either until we are taken - as I said, for a Christian that is blessing, better to be with Christ, "far better", Paul says - or until the Lord comes? Christians all over the world are speaking about the coming of the Lord. We do not disregard that. You say, how do you know? There are plenty of mockers who say as Peter records it: "Where is the promise of his coming?" 2 Pet 3: 4. They say, people of every generation have been talking about the coming of the Lord. I tell you it is nearer.

Personally, I believe it is at the door. I do not force that on you: I would seek to stimulate your like faith. How, therefore, are we going to comport ourselves in the few moments that may remain until every believer in Jesus hears that assembling shout, the voice of the Son of God; that will be the first thing, and they will be raised incorruptible. It would appear that even their graves will be opened according to Matthew (see chap 27: 52). These things are realities and they are imminent. I ask again, in the few moments that remain, how am I going to comport myself?

John 6 is a long chapter and a very full one. We often describe it as somewhat difficult; it is a chapter of reduction. But it is a chapter of food, and we need the food it portrays. The Lord could feed five thousand from those few loaves and those few little fishes that a boy had. Ah! He can do everything. I suppose the millennial time will show what He is able to do in this world. There will be no

starving millions then. The earth will produce prolifically under the administration of a righteous King: "a king shall reign in righteousness", Isa 32: 1. This chapter portrays reduction in numbers. How we have seen it: reduction! Are you prepared for "the day of small things" Zech 4: 10? Can you not see the moral glory that attaches to a few lovers of Jesus, attached to Him and attached to one another, finding their way through a perishing world? Why? Because of their attachment to the holy One of God. Many were going back; it says "From that time many of his disciples went away back and walked no more with him". How far back? It does not say. Beloved, the dreadful clouds of apostasy are sweeping this world. It is not full yet; it will be, and then the judgment. Do not get caught in the tide of those who went away back! Where could it lead such? How solemn! Maybe many would not intend it to be so, but they get caught in that receding tide. Where could it lead you? Back and into the dreadful vortex of apostasy. I am not saying that any true believer would ever be lost, but you could be lost for the present testimony of our Lord. Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, outwardly in such frailty, weakness and sorrow. We will not find perfection here; we find it in Jesus up there. Paul laboured to "present every man perfect in Christ", Col 1: 28. I wonder sometimes whether there is something in the testimony now that corresponds with the closing phase of the Saviour's life in the ignominy and the shame and the smallness of what that life was, leading to the cross and to the grave. Let us value the moment of suffering with Him and for Him!

So the Lord raises the question, "Will ye also go away?" Let that "also" burn into us. It is as if the Lord is saying, I am feeling it when anyone goes away back. Remember how He raised the question as to those ten lepers when only one out of the ten returned to give thanks: "the nine, where are they?", Luke 17: 17. Where are you, my friend? Are you the one that has returned to give thanks or are you one of the nine that never returned to give thanks? I want to leave this appeal: "Will ye also go away?" Peter rises to it; he says, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast words of life eternal; and we

have believed and known that thou art the holy one of God". That is a lovely allusion to Jesus: "the holy one of God". I firmly believe that what will hold us in faithfulness to the end is attachment to the holy One of God. Without holiness no one shall see the Lord (see Heb 12: 14). Cleave to the holy One of God! Cleave to the company of those who love Him! Cleave to the word of God! Cleave to the truth! "Lord, to whom shall we go?" were the words of one who was attached to Jesus. Remember how in John 21, Jesus probed Peter three times as to his love for Him. Earlier he had boastfully said he would not do certain things, but he did them. How wonderful is the power of divine grace that meets us in all our waywardness and our selfassertiveness and our pride. God hates pride: "God sets himself against the proud, but gives grace to the lowly", Jas 4: 6. Peter went through it. I do not think Peter's sins are recorded to expose Peter.

They expose me. I am no different but for the power of divine grace. So the Lord probed him and says, "Lovest thou me more than these?", and the third time Peter says, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I am attached to thee", John 21: 17. Let us prove it! Beloved hearer, demonstrate it in a way of life, maybe a fresh way of life, demonstrate that you are not going back, that you are attached to the holy One of God. May the Lord help us and seal home these things to us and may faith be active to believe in the glad tidings. For His Name's sake.

GRIMSBY

10 April 1988

SIGNS OF YOUTHFUL LIFE

In the course of Paul's ministry at Troas it happened that a youth, sitting in a window-seat, fell from the third story right down to the ground, and was thought to be dead. I like to think that he may have exchanged a good seat for a more dangerous one! However, be this as it may, Eutychus, for so was his name, was taken for dead until Paul descended and embraced him back to life. What a mercy and relief for all concerned.

In a somewhat similar circumstance and centuries before Eutychus, a lad thought to be dead, was brought back to life by Elisha. The prophet identified himself with the lad by bowing over him, member to member, until the boy became warm, sneezed seven times and came back to life again. The Lord Jesus has identified Himself fully with the believer 's needs in view of a new life.

The youth to whom Jesus said "Wake up" outside the city of Nain, sat up and began to speak. What he said at that time we do not know, but it must have been some answer to the life-giving Saviour, and God was "glorified". Have you with the mouth confessed Him as Lord?

J.C.Evershed