

A
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Contents

LIFE BROUGHT TO LIGHT

SHOUTING

LIFE BROUGHT TO LIGHT

2 Timothy 1: 8-11; Genesis 41: 45; 47: 13-27

E.C.B. What is in mind in the verses read is that God has "brought to light life and incorruptibility by the glad tidings", and not so much as to incorruptibility. I just say, as to incorruptibility, that I think we may just touch it from time to time in our spiritual experience, but I do not think we shall actually know it until the resurrection: Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, "... when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility ...", v 54. I just remind all that we have a responsibility to preserve ourselves by the helps which come from God from the corruptible nature of the world in which we are. I do not say that just to the young people: I say it to all. But God has "brought to light life". I think the Spirit would have something to say to us all about life.

Paul writes this epistle as "apostle of Jesus Christ ... according to promise of life, the life which is in Christ Jesus". Unless life is sustained among us, it is trite to say that things will soon perish altogether. Life is not sustained on the basis of formality and merely always saying the right thing. God has brought it to light through the glad tidings, and it would be interesting to enquire how that has been done. I have read the scripture in Genesis 41 as to Joseph's names because he is there presented, as we well know, as the Sustainer of life. Pharaoh called his name, Sustainer of life. That corresponds with John 4, where Jesus is presenting Himself as the Sustainer of life and He gives power for the sustaining of life in the well of water that springs up into eternal life, no doubt corresponding in its application to ourselves to the liberty of the Holy Spirit known in the believer. It would be well for us, I think, to seek to touch something deeper as to the way in which we may come to Christ in order to be sustained in life. I fear some times that so much is known among us and so many familiar words are used that their actual meaning is very little entered into. But life is life and there is no substitute for it. Preciseness and correctness and such things do not of themselves manifest life: in fact they may be a good cover for a dead condition.

Those verses in regard to Joseph in chapter 41 are perhaps somewhat objective. You came to Joseph and you found that he was the Sustainer of life. But I think the verses in chapter 47 touch the question of our own responsibility in relation to the maintenance of life and that that requires our progressive surrender to Christ. I do not think that Christianity is maintained just in objective knowledge; it will be maintained in the progressive surrender to Christ of every believer. Twice in that chapter, in that section, they say to Joseph, "Why should we die...?" But in the end they say, "Thou hast saved us alive" when they had surrendered everything, typically, to Christ. That is, I think, the epistle to the Romans, the progressive surrender to God and to Christ: "yield yourselves to God", Rom 6: 13, and "present your bodies a living sacrifice", Rom 12: 1. The progressive teaching of that epistle is fundamental to the enjoyment of what we speak of as Christian privilege, especially in the succeeding four short epistles, that is Galatians and Ephesians and Philippians and Colossians, but the truth of Romans and life and privilege are not fully entered into unless there is that progressive surrender to God and to Christ which I suggest is typified in the scriptures read in chapter 47. Is that all right?

R.W.F. Yes, I am sure it is and would be a help to us. Life brought to light is not an abstraction. It could not have been brought to light without vessels - we use that word - men, women, children in whom it could be expressed, but pre-eminently, of course, in Christ.

E.C.B. He has come into the world as light. He is the "light of the world", John 8: 12, and His closing words to the world are to "Walk while ye have the light", John 12: 35. In the goodness of God the light is still here. Not for the first time in the history of mankind, we live in a very dark day, but there is light still here and God has brought life to light - I carry in my mind the reference that "the life was the light of men" (John 1: 4) - but the life that has been brought to light by the glad tidings must come into expression. Now, how has that come to light by the glad tidings?

R.W.F. I certainly think that makes the glad tidings exceedingly attractive.

E.C.B. The glad tidings are, of course, intended to be attractive and I at least am thankful in the present day for the evident manifestation of life which is coming into the preachings, especially by the younger men, and I think that should be encouraged. But God has "brought to light life in a world where otherwise there was death. The background, therefore, to 2 Timothy is what is presented in Ephesians, but where there was death, there is now life, and it is by the glad tidings that that has been brought out. It seems to me to be essentially bound up with the actual preaching of the gospel.

M.J.W. I wondered whether the present life of Christ in glory has come to light only through the preaching of the glad tidings because it has not been manifest before. It begins here the life which is in Christ Jesus". I wondered whether there was something special and glorious and wonderful about the life into which He has entered now which is brought into expression by the glad tidings

E.C.B. That is 2 Corinthians 4, is it not, 'the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ', v 4? That is the character of the gospel preaching to which we look forward every Lord's Day, bringing out that God has now a Man in a quality of life, beyond sin and death and failure, beyond corruptibility, and it is preached for other people to enter into. For that they need the Spirit of God but it is presented objectively in the preaching that there is now life in Christ in another world.

M.J.W. Are you saying because it is Corinthians, it does not reach up to your ideal in Ephesians?

E.C.B. No; there are things in Corinthians which are in no other epistle, are there not? There is the Lord's supper, and there is no other description of eternity such as you have in Corinthians. Let us not think of Corinthians as only a corrective epistle to a local assembly! It is clear that Paul was burdened by the conditions in the locality as, in a sense, anyone might be concerned about conditions in any locality, but what is in his mind is that there are things beyond the failure of the present time into which he would draw the saints.

We do a service to the brethren if we maintain things amongst us in the light of the most positive truth that we know.

R.H.B. In the second epistle he says "and he died for all, that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who died for them ...", chap 5: 15. Is that, in part at any rate, the answer to your question as to how life has been brought to light through the gospel, that, contrary to the prevailing trend, there have been secured persons who do not live to themselves but live to Another?

E.C.B. Well, that is very good. It links with the application of the scripture in Genesis 47 because there if you lived to yourself, you would die. You have to come to another source of life and fully to surrender to it. I think Paul in a sense concentrates the truth when he says that life has been brought to light by the glad tidings: persons who are here in sin, and dead and unprofitable to God, not only have it presented objectively in the glad tidings but because people have believed the glad tidings, that life becomes manifested in them. That is the intention. It means that on a Lord's Day evening you consider whether the power of the preaching has actually meant any effective change in you because the word of God has been there.

D.E.B. Does the truth as to new birth enter into what you have in mind, inasmuch as new birth takes place nobody knows when or where, but the fact of new birth, and therefore life, is eventually brought to light by the glad tidings?

E.C.B. That is the way in which the effects of the gospel has worked in us. Paul says to the Philippians, "he who has begun in you a good work", Phil 1: 6. I think that would go right back to new birth.

"He who has begun in you a good work will complete it unto Jesus Christ's day". The fruit of righteousness and the other things that are mentioned there will come to light, but the intention of God in initiating a work in us in new birth is that there should come into expression now life of another character. Is that what you think?

D.E.B. Yes, and going on from that, in the pastoral chapter of John 10, the Lord says He is come "that they might have life, and might

have it abundantly", v 10. That is to come into expression.

E.C.B. In John 10 things are, I think, on the whole presented objectively: "I am come that they might have life ..." and "I give them life eternal; and they shall never perish", v 28. But all truth is first presented to us objectively. The question then is how do things grow in us by our attending to the care which God manifests to us, both in His fatherliness, but also in His giving us the light of the gospel. The maintenance of the light of the gospel amongst believers is a great provision of God, intended to keep the fire burning in them all. As it says in the Proverbs, "Where no wood is, the fire goeth out", Prov 26: 20.

D.A.B. Incorruptibility presupposes a source of life, does it not? That cannot simply be natural life: "for if ye live according to the flesh, ye are about to die", Rom 8: 13. As was said, we are to live to Another who has died for us and has been raised. There needs to be a new source of life, but also a positive direction of mind and heart to make Him the power of the only kind of life that can be incorruptible.

E.C.B. Yes; as you say, the continuance of life implies incorruptibility, and I repeat that we need to be very careful about exposing ourselves to the corruptibility in the world. That God has begun something in us through the glad tidings is not just doctrine. The reality of it is a new power in the life of man, life from another source, another origin. As was said, it begins in new birth which originates with God, but it is intended that it shall come into expression, and be maintained in expression, the power of something new in exhibition here.

J.McK. Is it interesting that in chapter 45 of Genesis when Joseph has disclosed himself to them, he says, "And now it was not you that sent me here, but God", v 8. "So God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance", v 7. Do you think there is a danger that we stop at being preserved a remnant in the earth?

E.C.B. And especially at the present time. We tend to dwell on the sorrows of the path and how few we are but what we need to hear is that something has come in in Christ that not only saves us eternally but introduces us now into the power that is connected with the whole work of God in the world. Small positions keep us humble, but we are connected with the greatest things that God has ever had in this world, that is, the things that are in Christ Jesus. There was a time in the 1890s when Mr Stoney in writing to a brother said that the Lord saw that we needed sifting and He took us in hand and He reduced us; but what I see now, I think he says, is a work of better quality, but on a firmer base. Now that is what is needed, is it not?

J.McK. I wondered whether "save you alive by a great deliverance", has in view not only the earth but another scene.

E.C.B. Yes, and in the scripture to which you refer Joseph was already in that other scene. Christ is already in that other world, but are we drawing our resources and the power of our life from that world? He has given us the Spirit to sustain us in life.

P.M. Was there the witness of that in Act 3? Life was brought to light by the glad tidings. I was thinking of those two men going up to the temple and it speaks of the other man "walking, and leaping, and praising God", v 8. Was it not the witness of the Spirit here in men that brought to light life in that section?

E.C.B. You might say that it was contagious because they took him by the hand. I wonder whether we are sufficiently concerned about communicating life to one another. We need what the Holy Spirit is giving at the present time as the manifestation of the life of Christ seen in people here.

R.W.F. Life came into full expression in that man: complete soundness. It was not that he was just alive or that he was a bit better. He was thoroughly healed and well, a full expression of life.

It is remarkable that that comes at the beginning of the Christian day.

E.C.B. The man remained as a demonstration. Life should be maintained on the level of "walking, and leaping, and praising God".

What I am concerned about is that our meetings, which spring from what we are in ourselves, should be a manifestation of the reality of what Christianity is, not just in perfection in the expression in words, but increasingly in the life of actual people.

J.R.W. How is this life manifested?

E.C.B. It shows itself in the liberty in which people actually are, (that does not mean that they have liberty to do as they like: liberty to do as you like ultimately results in bondage for everybody) in the manifest experience of joy in the things which we profess. It shows itself, for instance, in readiness to talk about Christ and about God and the Father and divine things, and less about one another. What do you think?

J.R.W. That helps. I think it has been said that our life is involved in unseen things. If we look at the things which are seen in the world around us, there is no life there, there is only death; so life is involved in unseen things, but that is why I raised the question as to how it is manifested.

E.C.B. I think it is manifested in that people are manifestly different from what they were at one time. The life which is "hid with the Christ in God" is to be in expression here in the display of the life of Jesus as it is brought out in that epistle .

D.A.B. Is that the testimony of our Lord? It is the life that is in Christ Jesus. It has been said as to that that while it does refer to Him where He is, it also refers to what there is of Him in us by the Spirit and that comes into expression in testimony, so that what is seen is the features of a Man who as to His Person is in glory.

E.C.B. The manifestation of life is the testimony of our Lord, and we can all bear the injunction not to be ashamed of it.

D.A.B. And there is alongside His life His mind which we have in Philippians, which also comes into expression in our disposition, does it not?

E.C.B. It is good to refer to that. That scripture relates to our disposition: "For let this mind be in you ...", chap 2: 5. There will be

no Christian testimony at all unless there is life in individual people.

Other people are not going to be helped in their souls by quotations but by seeing that you or I are a different person from what we were at one time.

L.W.B. It speaks of someone who threw away his garment and came to Jesus (see Mark 10: 50). He was manifestly a different kind of man.

E.C.B. He was left with no cloak for what he was. He was not intending to make Christianity respectable in the world. He was going to be here as somebody in whom it was manifested that "for me to live is Christ", Phil 1: 21. And that is what God has intended to bring to light by the preaching of the gospel.

C.J.G.B. Is that again what the apostle was particularly aiming at in 2 Corinthians 4. He says "we have this treasure in earthen vessels", but as he comes to the end of the chapter "wherefore we faint not" and "our momentary and light affliction ". There are pressures upon brethren and it is remarkable that it is the "treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassingness of the power may be of God", v 7.

E.C.B. Then the question is, how is life to be sustained? Typically in Genesis, you have to come to Christ. Pharaoh in that part of Genesis may be said to represent God and he has ordained that if you want to live, you have to come to Christ. You come to Christ as the Sustainer of life.

E.C. Would you say something about bread because people did not give up themselves and their possessions for anything but bread. Bread is the staff of life. The Lord is the bread of Life.

E.C.B. Life is sustained by food and that will enter into what we may speak of in regard to chapter 47, but John 6 is what you are saying. You will not live unless you are feeding on Christ: "I am the bread of life". There is power and nourishment in Him that will sustain you in life. I venture to think that there is little enough private occupation with Christ among us. We live on meetings but the power of what is to come into expression depends on our personal feeding on Him.

Dr Roberts used to ask what we mean by feeding; but I like an

expression of Mr Raven's, that feeding implies that we assimilate into the life of our being. Now who of us can say that we have fed on Christ to the extent that we have assimilated Him into the life of our being?

M.J.W. What Christ do you appropriate and assimilate? The gospels speak of a Jesus who was here and younger persons are going to say, I do not know much about Jesus where He is; so how would you help me there?

E.C.B. I would start by telling you something about Jesus where He is. Many things are perhaps talked about among us that are not grasped in experience. We live only because Christ lives. If you sought to live here imitating Christ in the gospels, you would continually have a sense of total failure, because you cannot keep up to the Model. The believer has only one Christ and that is a glorified Christ. If I am living on account of a glorified Christ, light will come out in my life and I will be able to say something about the fact that because He is where He is, every problem between me and God has been resolved and thus I can walk in the power of the life of Him glorified.

J.R.W. Other things than food are needed for the sustainment of life. I was thinking of what you were saying as to occupation with Christ, with Joseph. There is everything there necessary, as well as food, is there not? Atmosphere needed, light and rule are needed in order to sustain life, do you think?

E.C.B. Yes. There are two necessities for the life of man, bread and water. John 4, which is peculiarly a Joseph chapter, brings out that the Spirit "shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into eternal life", v 14. The power of life is maintained in the Spirit active and recognised in the believer. But other things are needed for the enjoyment of life. Company does not constitute life: but company is needed for the enjoyment of life. Rule is needed for the enjoyment of life: you cannot enjoy life if everything is in disorder. There are things which are essential to the maintenance of life and things

which are essential to the enjoyment of life. Would you agree with that?

J.R.W. Absolutely. I was thinking about what you were saying as to our preparedness to speak about Christ and His things. A right atmosphere is needed for that, is it not?

E.C.B. Yes: but many of us could have spoken about Christ and we felt the atmosphere was not quite right, so we did not. Speaking about Christ is the result of my occupation with Him.

D.A.B. Does it help that creature life has never been self-sustaining. Paul speaks about living to yourself, but Ecclesiastes says, "the king himself is dependent upon the field", chap 5: 9. We perhaps find some difficulty with the idea of drawing our life from somewhere else, someone else, but we do it all the time naturally, so it is not that we do not have the faculty to do it. God would give us the faculty to draw on that source of life that is in Christ.

E.C.B. The Spirit is here because Jesus is glorified. Now, how do we live on account of Him? "We live of Thee, we've heard Thy quickening voice" (Hymn 137). That is what we have heard and it has made us live in relation to Jesus glorified. I think that Joseph as the Sustainer of life in Genesis 1 is objective truth, and Christ as the Sustainer of life is objective truth. The question is whether It has entered into us as power.

E.F.W. At the very beginning God breathed into man the breath of life. That was really God's objective, was it not? - different from every other creature in which there was a natural life, but the breath of life seems to connect with the Spirit in God's mind to be given later. God had something in mind in breathing into man the breath of life, I think.

E.C.B. It has distinguished man from every other element in the creation. We even talk about flowers as alive or dead: in that sense they have a life. But man has a life which has come directly from God and the Christian has life which has come directly from God in the Holy Spirit, God Himself in you in the power of the Spirit.

P.M. If Christ is really my life, does that mean I do not have a life anywhere else?

E.C.B. Yes. That is important. Another has underlined that we have to live in the real world, and we do live in the real world, but our life is not in that world, and the resources in the believer are not in the world through which he goes. He is intended to be a testimony against that, but in another sense for it because a testimony that is against the world is a testimony for the world's salvation. But there are no resources outside Christ. This is why I think the history in Genesis is interesting.

P.M. I was interested in what you were saying as to the objective view in chapter 41. They are forced to come to appreciate that by necessity. Are we maintained in it not just by necessity, but by affection for Christ?

E.C.B. I think that. In the hymn which we sang (No 235), it is love, love, love. That was the character of Jesus, but are my affections responsive to Him in such a way that I maintain, in the quality for which God has provided the Spirit, a life which reflects the life of Jesus glorified? As soon as you begin to draw from the world, your light begins to be dimmed.

P.M. Does the eating of the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man in John 6 put an end to every other form of life for me? The Lord says, "Unless ye shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of man, and drunk his blood, ye have no life in yourselves", v 53.

E.C.B. I am sure that that is right, but that teaching is one of the most difficult for us, is it not? Who here can put up their hand and say, I have come to the end of the first man? Who could say that I have come to the end of the man of whom God saw the end in the death of Christ. Yet I suppose we know it in degree. Do you not think that?

P.M. We would use an occasion like this to further our desire to know Him more so that we should not be hesitant to speak of Him, do you think? It would encourage us to go in for it, that because of the death of Christ and His present position, for me the whole order

of life here is finished: that is really the point I should come to through a reading like this.

E.C.B. That is what I have in mind. I can remember one day walking down the road and the line of the hymn came to my mind as to the "barren place where Jesus died". That is the view in which we need to be sustained. That is why I have referred to chapter 47. I think in chapter 41, typically, Christ is presented objectively to us as the Sustainer of life. You could not say it was wholly objective in John 4 because the difference in the woman is manifest straight away, but chapter 47 requires that I progressively surrender myself to Him. I start with my money. Money occupies us a very great deal, and perhaps other people's money occupies our minds more than our own, but the first thing which comes to an end in this type is your money, then progressively your goods. Ultimately all are to be surrendered, and each time you say, Why should I die? Then, you come to this, I shall not die if I give this up. And then you go on another stage, another year, and you say, Why should I die? You say, I shall not die if I give this up, and in the end, you are saying to Him, when you have given everything to Him, Take my life and let it be. You give it all up to Him:

"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!" (Hymn 272)

At that point, you say, "Thou hast saved us alive". These things are very easy to talk about, but I do not hear much amongst us about the principle of surrender to Christ. What do you think about that?

J.McK. The question they ask is very interesting, "Why should we die before thee?" It is in the light of the fact that Christ lives that this question has such force.

E.C.B. Yes. Why should you die if Christ is alive? Why should I die? If He is Lord of all, why should I die? Why should I live in some profession of Christianity that has poverty behind the facade? "Why should we die ...?" and Joseph says, here is a step you can take. I think few believers have surrendered themselves wholly to Christ at one go.

J.R.W. It was when the money came to an end that the Egyptians came to Joseph. Previous to that Joseph gathered up all the money. It does not make reference to them coming to Joseph, but when the money had come to an end.

E.C.B. I think first of all that Joseph established his right to everything: he gathered up all the money that was in Egypt. But then we acknowledge the Lord's rights. We preach that you confess Him as Lord, and we maintain that and we take the Supper in the light of that. But then we still have some resources left to which we cling. And He says, You say you are going to die: well, you have this, have you not? Is there some corner of your life in which you can make room for Me? Now, this comes about, to use a current expression, by creating space for Christ, which you do by giving up something else, and space which is left for Him, He will fill. I do not think this all happens overnight. There are believers in the world, and I have met some and I very much honour them, who think you come to this in the moment you are converted, and perhaps it does "flash upon that inward eye" the moment you are converted. But progressively we come to, Lord you must have this, and I shall not get through unless, Lord, you have this. Progressively when everything in you has become His, you can say, We are still alive.

A.J.E.T. It is progressive: it is getting more and more to the core. It starts with what we might be able to do with less of or do without, the money, and we might feel, Well, we have to live so we need our cattle, but they have to be yielded. And what have I left? I have my life and my land and that has to go. Is this reference at the end, "Thou hast saved us alive" now that they are really proving what has been set out in chapter 41, Sustainer of life?

E.C.B. That is what I am seeking to suggest, that you come to Christ objectively as the Sustainer of life, but then you have to come to it experimentally.

A.J.E.T. And in one sense they are now accepting it before the final experiment in the way that it says he has given them seed. They have not actually sown it yet. They are saying, "Thou hast saved us

alive" before they have proved what he said. They have yielded entirely to him in that way.

E.C.B. You can understand why I link this with Romans . It says, "Yield yourselves to God as alive from among the dead", Rom 6: 13 - that is Genesis 47 - and then chapter 12. The structure of Romans is that you take account of the evil world in which you are: you find that you are yourself contributory to it on account of your sins and God deals with that: you then find that there is another power working in you and that God has dealt with that in raising Christ from the dead and you are free from that. Now what are you going to do? You have the Spirit in chapter 8. The next thing you learn is not about yourself, but in chapters 9, 10 and 11, you learn the faithfulness of God that nothing He has promised will He ever let go. And, now you say, in the light of that, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God ...", Rom 12: 1. That, I think, is Genesis 47 when everything is for God. After that you learn that you can work at every practical detail in life, even such things as respect for the temporal government, in the light of the fact that you have surrendered yourself to God and can accept everything from Him. I think that is the teaching of Genesis 47.

E.F.W. It is interesting that the matter of seed rather than bread comes from the people themselves. They asked to be given bread but then they think they want something that will sustain them beyond because they have nothing else to give and so they say, seed, and Joseph provides seed.

E.C.B. That is verse 27: "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen; and they had possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly". You give everything to Christ and then you prosper. You may wonder how you came through, but progressively, and I would rather underline the idea of progressively, because I know that I could not tell you how far along this chapter I have gone, but I believe that the idea of surrender to Christ, you might say overnight, will find you betraying it the next morning. But, "yield", Paul says, yield, and then yield again. And the result of that is that

you say He has kept you alive and now you prosper in the land, and in the best of the land. Is that not so?

M.J.W. Do you think the Father's discipline is behind this experience as well, because He wants to make room for His Son in us and therefore He operates through discipline that we come to it that we are prepared to sacrifice these things. Christ is everything to us because the Father wants it to be so, He wants us to be filled with His Son.

E.C.B. Yes, so the Father's discipline is always tender. It does not feel like it always "but after wards yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness", Heb 12: 11. The Father's discipline is all the time making way for His Son. The next two chapters of this book bring out what you are saying in another man. They bring Jacob to light again. It is as if Moses writing this book says, when you have learned what it is to surrender to Christ, now I will show you a man in whom all this happened. He had a difficult life. He was not always good, he deceived people and the Scripture has not concealed all that. But when you have really given yourself up to Christ what will come out, is that you find that there was a God who shepherded all your life long and preserved you to that day.

J.McK. Is that why in verse 25 it says, "and we will be Pharaoh's bondmen"?

E.C.B. Well, that is Romans: "Yield yourselves to God as alive from among the dead", and "bondmen to God", is it not?

J.McK. So that though submitting to Joseph, they had become bondmen to One who was greater and the great realm of the revelation of God is that in which we shall then live, is it not?

E.C.B. Can I ask you, is being bondmen to God a greater thought than being a bondman of Christ Jesus? "Paul, bondman of Jesus Christ". What do you think?

J.McK. I do not know the answer to that question.

E.C.B. I think that if you yield yourselves as a bondman to God, He will take you up for service as a bondman of Christ Jesus. I think a

bondman of Christ Jesus is for service to the Lord, but I think you have first to become a bondman to God. What do you think about that?

P.M. I was thinking of Moses. Was he not a bondman of God? The fulness of what was in God's heart is before us as bondmen of God, but here in testimony we can be taken up as bondmen of Christ Jesus. Is that your thought?

E.C.B. I think that and that is why Paul begins epistles with the fact that he is a bondman. James too writes as bondman of God, but Paul writes epistles as a bondman of Christ Jesus because he wants to help the brethren. He has learned what it is to be wholly under the power of God having given himself up to God as a bondman.

Having learned Romans right into his system, he is now as a bondman to God prepared to open out to other believers the greatness of what God will give to His bondmen. God may look at you as a bondman for a moment but in the next moment He will be looking at you as a son.

R.W.F. Would it give great pleasure to the heart of Christ to hear us say to Him, "Thou hast saved us alive"?

E.C.B. Say more about that.

R.W.F. Well, He has delivered Himself up for us. The believer individually can say He "has loved me and given himself for me", Gal 2: 20. He has loved us, loved the assembly. How much He has given up! What pleasure there is for Him therefore in the expression in practice of readiness to yield ourselves completely to Him.

E.C.B. I think that. Christianity has in it a combination of bondmanship and liberty which is known nowhere else, but the idea that you are bringing forward of the pleasure of Christ in having believers give themselves up to Him is something which should touch us. We are fairly strong on doctrine and fairly weak on emotion and I think that we could do with a little more of power working in us that comes out in the expression of the enjoyment of what is actually ours and what the enjoyment of Christ is in having a people for a possession.

J.McK. Whilst life is dependent and always will be, it has certain characteristics all of its own, does it not?

E.C.B. Yes. But it goes back to the earlier question as to the character of that life being that of Jesus glorified. It is not really possible for us, because we are in a mixed condition, to live so that nothing we do is anything other than an exhibition of Jesus glorified. But let us have aspirations that way! Christ glorified is the Object of the believer, and a manifestation of Him in life, but it will not come about unless we are prepared for the anti-type of Genesis 47.

J.McK. We should then think of how this comes into collective expression as well as individual expression, should we?

E.C.B. Exactly, but there will not be collective manifestation of life unless there is life in everybody who makes up that collectivity. We cannot expect more of the company than we ourselves can express and enjoy.

B.H.C. I was thinking of the need to rely on the Spirit. It would be a daily matter to keep Christ, and fresh impressions of Himself, before us. The testimony is the consequence. If Christ is our life, we will not have to put anything on or seek to view it naturally but it would come into expression, would it?

E.C.B. I like what you say that we will not have to put anything on. It will come into expression. Mr Darby has a quotation as to 'the blessedness of a man naturally Christian'. That is what you are saying: you do not have to put anything on. What you are manifests itself.

A.C.S. Does the maintenance of life depend on fruitfulness and multiplication? Is that where the seed comes in in relation to God's primary thoughts in Genesis 1?

E.C.B. Yes, that is good. Thus you find in verse 27 that when the people have seed, they "were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly". In that sense they are fulfilling what God had in mind in Genesis 1.

A.C.S. You spoke earlier as to the man who was leaping and dancing that it was contagious: is life contagious in that sense?

E.C.B. Yes; unfortunately, the counterpart is contagious too. A dull brother or sister at the meeting can really put the brakes on. It requires real diligence on the part of everybody else there to overcome that. We ought to come to the meetings pleasant and cheerful because we have something in ourselves that is real.

P.E. Verse 21 speaks about from one end of the land to the other end of the land: everyone was involved. Apart from the priests, everyone had to go into the city which shows how much God can do: everyone can come under the gospel. No-one is left out.

E.C.B. Christ, in type in this chapter, that is in Joseph, would move everybody in the meeting, from one end of the land into Goshen. He refers to it earlier, the best of the land. He would have us all there.

Sometimes some of us are a bit rooted where we are, but He will dig us up, and also enjoin us according to the prophet, "Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns", Jer 4: 3. He is going to have everybody in the best of the land and there, with everything surrendered to Joseph and thus indirectly surrendered to God, in type, you find that you multiply and enjoy. The enjoyment actually in Egypt, but typically in another world in these verses, is greater than Israel ever experienced in Canaan because there they never experienced it to its fullness.

J.R.W. Why were the priests excepted?

E.C.B. Because their portion was in God.

J.R.W. I wondered if you could open it out a little for us.

E.C.B. A believer looked at apart from what he is towards God has this great sphere of enjoyment open to him and he has surrendered everything, but if you are going to serve God, you have given everything up to Him already and it is all His, and in the moment when He took you up to be a bondman to God, everything was His.

Why I refer to this chapter in its progressive surrender is that in our experience we find that it is little by little that we come to what God had in mind for us. Even if you have not given everything up to God yet, He will still use you as a priest, will He not?

D.A.B. In a sense the status of all the people became more equivalent to that of the priests. It seems as if the priests lived on Pharaoh's land already. They had their food from Pharaoh and in the end all the people did the same. I was thinking of what has come into the reading about the way God in the process of this self-surrender would draw us not only closer to Joseph but into greater things.

E.C.B. Yes, and when you come to Exodus, when there is a different Pharaoh, God views the whole people as priests. He says, "Let my son go, that he may serve me", Exod 4: 23. He views the whole people as priests.

D.E.B. The land was sold and they did not have ownership of it, but they still had the use of it and the enjoyment of it and they cultivated it. It was the same land. I was just thinking the ownership may be transferred but the enjoyment becomes fuller.

E.C.B. Yes, you are a lease-holder, are you?

D.E.B. No, I am a free-holder.

E.C.B. In this world? The people here were leaseholders. They held the land from Pharaoh and thus they had obligations towards Pharaoh, but their obligations were in type through Christ.

D.E.B. Paul does speak about Christ's freed man, does he not?

E.C.B. But for the people here nothing now was their own possession. They held everything from God in type and were to use it for God and ultimately for God's glory. The millennium will be like verse 27: everything will be prosperous; there will be no adversary or evil event; the desert will blossom as the rose; and the lion will lie down with the lamb and so on; and things are administered under Christ because everything has already been given up to Him.

D.A.B. It seems that family life is what Joseph is especially keen to preserve. He says, You are all going to be bondmen, and I suppose they thought, Well, we will be away from home now; but Joseph says, This is not going to touch your home life except to put it on a new basis altogether.

E.C.B. That is right: He will put it on a new basis altogether. Well, that is what I had in mind, God has brought life to light. The power to sustain that is known objectively in Christ. The experimental enjoyment of it requires that progressively I surrender everything to Him and I will then find that I am better off than I have ever been.

SUNBURY

9 March 1996

Key to initials

C.J.G.Brodie, Ealing; R.H.Brown, Barnet; D.A.Burr, London;
D.E.Burr, Redbridge ; E.C.Burr, London; L.W.Burton, Kingston;
B.H.Clark, London; E.Croot, Dorking; P.Eagle, London;
R.W.Flowerdew, Sunbury; J.McKay, Woodstock; P.Martin, Colchester;
A.C.Stay, St Albans; A.J.E.Temple, Sunbury; J.Walkinshaw, Bexley;
M.J.Welch, Sunbury; E.F.Woodford, Dorking

SHOUTING

Eric Burr

Joshua 6: 1-5, 15, 16; 2 Samuel 6: 12-16; Numbers 23: 20, 21

I would like to say something about shouting, not shouting for its own sake, of course: we do not need to shout at one another, although there is advantage in speaking in a meeting so that everybody can hear. But I draw attention to the fact that creation began with a shout: "the sons of God shouted for joy", Job 38: 7, and the dispensation will end with a shout, "with an assembling shout, with archangel's voice and with trump of God", 1 Thess 4: 16. And the millennium will begin with a shout according to Zechariah: "and he shall bring forth the headstone with shoutings: Grace, grace unto it! " The thought runs not only through scripture but through history: as long as there is time, there will be a shout. I would like there to be a shout in our day.

One thing about a shout is that it displays confidence and triumph on the part of those who shout. Sometimes of course people shout out when they are in pain but that is not normal. A shout is usually a sound of triumph. Psalm 118 says, "The voice of triumph and salvation is in the tents of the righteous", v 15. Now that will be in the millennium when Christ reigns, but it should be characteristic in the present time that there is "the voice of triumph and salvation", and that is expressed in a shout. As I see things myself, I think there is a need for the strengthening of confidence and of power in those who are at the present time committed to the testimony of our Lord. Things are small: nobody could deny that.

But things have not expired: things are not just dying away. Everything that God once intended to have on the earth is still here in its substance although we would long that there were more people to share it with. Let us keep our minds open to the vastness of what Christ has on the earth in His people at the present time! Few things do you more good than to meet another believer who has something of Christ in him or her. What a stimulus it is! It makes your day

when you meet another believer who has confidence in Christ and will speak about Him. I refer again to what we were saying in the reading that there is a need for us in the confidence that we have in Christ to be here plainly identified with the testimony of our Lord.

Now there are three shouts in the scriptures I have read. There is the shout at Jericho; there is the shout with the ark; and there is the shout of the king. I begin with Jericho. Jericho represents what stands across the possibility of the people of God getting into what God intends to bless them with, the greatness of the blessings which God has prepared for those that love Him. According to Corinthians, "Things which eye has not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man's heart", 1 Cor 2: 9, but by the Spirit they have been seen and heard and have entered, I trust, into the heart of everybody here this morning, the things "which God has prepared for them that love him". Across our getting into this lies this great city, Jericho. It is a well-off place, Babylonish garments in it and pieces of gold in it, and that is the world in which we live. I think, beloved, that there is room amongst us for the shout of triumph over the world. I recall in the course of a reading here or nearby something to the effect that we need to push back the frontiers of the world. That is still true. We need the shout of triumph over the world. I do not illustrate this with particular points or it might appear that I was pointing the finger at individuals, but the world is around us. The poet, Wordsworth, says: "The world is too much with us, late and soon, Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers" and we do. We feel the power of the world, especially in getting and spending, and we need to realise that God provides for the believer what he or she needs. We do not need to go out of our way in extra ingenuity to supplement what God has provided for us. That is a characteristic of the world. God will help us, not in setting standards of living to which we aspire and do all we can to arrive at but in taking account of the resources which He has given us and accepting the standard of living which those things lead to. We need to get things the right way round. The believer tapers his or her circumstances to the resources which God has provided for them. It

does not make life easy. Most of us, certainly those of my generation, grew up in times when our parents had to be very, very careful. One thing they kept before them all the time was, "Owe no one anything ...", Rom 13: 8. They brought some of us up in the light of that, to be content with such things as you have.

The occasion of failure in relation to Jericho was that a man saw that there were possessions on which he might lay his hand, but which God had not provided for him. There was a Babylonish garment and a piece of gold. What did he do with them? He did not take them to the market. He hid them in his tent. We need to be careful and vigilant that the spirit of Jericho is not among us and to be sure that the spirit of the world is not among us. The spirit of the world is concerned with material things: money matters. Money needs to be kept in its right perspective. Be content with such things as you have. The spirit of these things is not to be amongst us. This is not just a matter of doctrine; it is a matter of imitation. And who do you imitate? You imitate Jesus: "I have overcome the world", John 16: 33. That is the shout at Jericho: "I have overcome the world".

And the walls of Jericho fell flat. He triumphed over the world. When He rehearses things to the assemblies, His closing word is this, "As I also have overcome", Rev 3: 21, but among His closing words in John's gospel is "I have overcome the world". And there is in the antitype the shout of Jesus at the fall of Jericho. I say again that the question of overcoming the world is not just a matter of doctrine. If it is a matter of doctrine, it may never be followed through. Overcoming the world is a matter of imitation, imitation of our beloved Lord.

The questions that come up in that connection focus round this, how much do you actually love the Lord? Do you value all that He has given you? Some of us could perhaps be content with less than He has given us. He has been very good to some of us, very, very good indeed, beyond what we might ever have expected, and yet the Lord helps and provides for us all. I have noticed in relation to some of the younger brethren that they have been faced with difficult circumstances, difficult problems, and they pray about them and the

Lord answers them. I do not go into particulars but I could easily illustrate this from some whom I know. The Lord does not neglect people. The Lord will give everybody the opportunity to shout at Jericho. The Lord will help you. It is not just young people that need this: older brethren as well need to understand the spirit of overcoming the world. Parents, too, have responsibility in this.

Those of my generation grew up in a day when things were much more difficult but they adopted a proper parental attitude to their children and they did say to their children, You are not to do that.

The shout at Jericho needs to be in the family because children doing as they like is a characteristic of the world. And the "discipline and admonition of the Lord", Eph 6: 4, demands that there be that "voice of triumph and salvation in the tents of the righteous". Do not be afraid to correct your children! Do not be afraid to say, No. Do not be afraid to say, You must be in at such-and-such a time. They may defy you but that will put them in the wrong: you have to maintain the shout at Jericho in triumph over the world. Sometimes it is painful but what is right will have been insisted on and there will have been a shout at Jericho.

It says, "And it came to pass the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people, Shout; for Jehovah has given you the city". That great Model of our who overcame the world is going to have everything in it. Every knee in it will bow at the Name of the One who has overcome it. Is it not worth following this out on the pattern of imitation and not just on the pattern of doctrine? There needs to be discipline in the Christian home and the power to maintain these things rightly. I am not of course referring to anybody in particular. I am speaking in general principles from the scripture and I think that brethren will understand that these things are what the Lord requires. We all have our disappointments. I can remember when I was in the army in Africa corresponding with my mother and saying that I had been disappointed by something. She wrote back and said, 'Disappointment: His appointment: change one letter and you will

see'. Disappointment: His appointment. We are familiar with the piece, the Disappointments of Life, but it works out in actual life.

I go on because I would be glad if I were able to say something about David. David took account of the general public situation in the day in which he lived. He was there as a responsible man. If the ark was in the hands of the Philistines, he was not directly responsible. As far as I can tell, he was not even born when the ark went into the hands of the Philistines, but he felt the situation. There are young people here who were not even born when certain crises occurred in the history of the testimony but it is because there were persons who were attached to Him in their affections that the Lord came in. He has changed the picture of things amongst us! He has given us a positive outlook. Instead of arbitrary direction, He has revived the knowledge of Himself and of the power of the Spirit. I would say to the younger people, you live in a day when the Lord in His goodness has come in and delivered brethren and introduced liberty. David had to go through a difficult life: he lived through the days of Saul. Saul was always on at him. Saul was anxious to see that nobody who might take his place ever grew up. But in the end Saul died and David survived. The man who had the ark of God in his heart survived. I commend that to you. The person who has Christ in their heart will survive through every assembly crisis. David had the ark in his heart. He would have said, I remember talking about this when I was at home: they used to talk about the ark. You can understand the enquiring mind in David wishing to get more knowledge of the ark and at last saying, we have found where it is: "we found it in the fields of the wood", Ps 132: 6, found it in the house of Abinadab. And he says, It must come into its right place.

Dear brethren, Christ must come into His right place in the heart of everybody here. He must have the first place in everything. That is scripture anyway. David says there must be a proper place for the ark. He, in effect, says, I know the actual condition of the day! We could not build the tabernacle. We have not got the material. We would say of ourselves we have not the capacity to be the complete testimony to Christ. What we will be is what we can be.

David takes account of things. There must be some place into which in type Jesus can come in His glory and in His longings, and he spreads a tent for the ark. And they go and get it. Of course, mistakes are made but the great thing is that at last the ark was brought up in the right way. And they brought it up with shouting. What a day of triumph when Christ comes into His own, in the heart of a single person, let alone into the heart of a company. It says, "And David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet". That almost sounds like the rapture! They "brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting" to put it in its place. They had it there because they loved it. David loved it in its absence and He loved it all the more in its presence. I have often been struck by the fact that the ark was unchangeable. It was constructed at the end of Exodus and it went through Joshua and Judges and through all that history. It was not heard of in the days of Ruth but from the beginning of Samuel there is a man sitting responsible for it and dying almost by it; he could not get up on his feet and the ark goes into captivity. But the ark was the same. When brought back in David's day, Bezaleel and Aholiab would have recognised it. It was the same as it had always been and a special place was to be made for it.

They "brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting". Have you ever had the experience that Christ dwelling in your heart by faith would make you shout and "the voice of triumph and salvation" would be in your heart that Christ now has His place? You cannot bring about that Christ has His place in all the rest of the brethren.

You would like to. I would credit everyone with that. But you can start with yourself. You can make more room. 'Have you any room for Jesus?', the hymn says. Here is David longing for it and at last it is almost as if he says, This is the day I have been living for that Christ is going to come into His place again. Is it the day you are living for, that Christ will have His place as He has never had it before?

I do not dwell on Michal but I say this: if you give way to that spirit of celebration that Christ has His place, there will always be

somebody who despises you. You may find someone saying So-and-so got carried away this morning! Do not let it put you off! Celebrate that Christ has come into His own place! It makes a real difference to you if Christ is in your heart by faith. He is there in a sense by the Spirit: but in some way He comes Himself and He desires to fill every heart to which He has a claim, and if you believe that He died for your sins, He has a claim on you and He desires to fill your heart now. Will you shout about the ark? - not literally, but will you shout that you have found a place for Christ that you never knew before?

You have not yourself brought Him out of the Philistines' hands; out of the place where He was no doubt almost decorative to make that place more approved than it previously was. But you have brought Him up to His own place. If the outward conditions are not really adequate for Him, He will be content with what you will provide for Him in the heart that you yourself have. He is not looking for ecclesiasticism; he is not looking for formality or convention. What He is looking for is hearts in which there is room for Him. I say again, Have you any room for Jesus?

I go on to Balaam. It says "the shout of a king is in his midst". There is a lot that is wrong in Balaam, as a man, but he is right in what he is made to say, prophetically, of the place that Israel is going to have on the earth. It says, "Jehovah his God is with him". That relates to what I have just been saying. "Jehovah his God is with him". Christ is in His place. Now, he says, "the shout of a king is in his midst". Because there is a King for believers, you will shout: "God always leads us in triumph in the Christ", 2 Cor 2: 14. What a place Christ has! What a place is to be acknowledged as His. As we sometimes sing, "A King, despite a crown of thorn!" (Hymn 322) The crown of thorns is still the token of people's rejection of Jesus. The deliberate rejection of Jesus, while purporting to honour Him, is characteristic of the world at the present time. But the shout of a King is to be amongst His people. There is only one King for believers. I will not say there is only one King for the assembly because Christ is not King to the assembly. Christ's relations as

king are with the earth and with Israel: you do not thus refer to the assembly as a queen. But there is only one King for the Christian company. I do not like the expression 'a universal lead'. There is only one universal lead for believers and that is Christ, known as Head and as Lord, and known thus in the company, and ministered and sustained by the power of the Spirit. The concept of a universal lead in a Christian company is ecclesiastical and ultimately papal, but it has a weakening effect in the company because it tends towards people not personally living in relation to Christ but in relation to an individual teacher or brother among them. Unless there is personal attachment to Christ in the Christian company, the idea of universal lead will ultimately lead to fragmentation and break-up. If a particular brother is looked to for direction in the Christian company, it can stultify personal growth in relation to Christ and when difficulties arise or circumstances change, there may not be the capacity in individuals to make judgments for themselves. In no way do I diminish the value of what is distinctive that the Lord has given amongst us. In Ephesians 4 when the gifts are mentioned, it just speaks of gifts which the Lord has given. We need to have great respect for gift which the Lord has given as finding in it a manifestation of Himself rather than in leading us to look to particular individuals to bring things out among us. You may say, how then are we to find our way? The Spirit of God is here and what is needed in order to maintain life and vitality and power in the Christian company is that the place of the Holy Spirit is bowed to, and the place of Christ as Head is bowed to, and is not an alternative to my own mind. It is the only thing that matters. There needs to be the ability, a readiness, to work things through together: Christ holds everything in order and He puts everything in order and He works things out among the brethren: "But whereto we have attained, let us walk in the same steps", Phil 3: 16. I know that that verse has been used to maintain an 'open' position, but the shout of a King is not in an open position. The shout of a King is where things are held by the authority of Christ in His Headship and by the authority of the Holy Spirit of God in the Christian company. I sometimes, be loved, detect this shout amongst us. I go to a meeting and I say, the Lord

was there, the shout of a King was there - even though nobody raised their voice. The sound of triumph was there and you have taken a step forward in your Christian experience because you have been where you could listen to the Lord. How blessed these things are!

There is another generation that needs to be rightly directed and held in relation to Christ and in relation to the truth and in relation to obedience to the Lord and obedience to parents and obedience generally. But what I would long to see is the power of life in the company demonstrating in every brother and sister and every meeting that the shout of a king was there. And it was there because the shout of Jericho had been there and because the shout of David was there too. They "brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting".

I just leave these thoughts with you. There are things that exercise me and I think the Lord will help us as we seek to go on with Him, acknowledging His own place, and in the power of confidence and reality and liberty, to know what it is to live on account of Him. May the Lord help us for His Name's sake!

SUNBURY

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