

# **A WORD IN ITS SEASON**

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# THE PERSONAL POWER OF THE LORD JESUS

John McKay

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I would like to say something as to the personal power of the Lord Jesus. It is something that should stir every heart that loves Him. We thank God for an atmosphere such as this where we are in the presence of those who love Jesus, persons who have learned to trust Him, not only as to their future, but as to the present circumstances of life. It is a wonderful thing to have your confidence in One so great as Jesus. The young ones here will soon prove that there is nothing to compare with a known and experienced link with Him who is the Saviour. It relates not only to the present time but it will cover the future for you. It is a wonderful thing to pass through a world of confusion, with clarity of confidence in the Man of God's choice.

It says in this epistle which Paul is writing, “for *our* commonwealth has its existence in the heavens”. Are you not glad that your portion is not earthly; are you not glad that your portion is not in this world of change; are you not glad that your portion relates to another scene entirely? How much time do you spend in relation to your heavenly inheritance? I know that life is busy; I know that demands are real, that righteousness must be met if we are to be rightly in God's testimony, but our hope is not here. We need to be more interested in what is in that place where the Christ is, “from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour”. We are awaiting Him; He is awaiting the Father's time. We are in a crucial time. The history of God's testimony on earth stretches back behind us and we know something of it. The future is absolutely certain, and we know that the great climax of this day of testimony will be that assembling shout, and none who belongs to Christ will fail to answer to it. In a moment, “in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor 15: 52), there will be a great change and it will be a permanent change; it will be a transfer from earth to heaven, and Christ will have what belongs to Him. Another has said that the rapture is not a rescue operation; the rapture is when Christ receives what is precious to His own heart from the scene of testimony. I trust you are part of that great

answer that will yet come fully into view.

Then it says, “according to the working of the power which he has even to subdue all things to himself”: note that it is not the power that He will have, it is the power that He has. He has it already. Think of divine supremacy remaining in Christ in spite of the scene of evil that we see around us. He has the power already to subdue all things to Himself. In God's ways, He waits, His grace active, securing men, taking them from bondage and freeing them for Himself and for His service. These great things are going on in the day in which we live, but remember the power that He already has is sufficient to “subdue all things to himself”. That power has already called the universe into being; how great Christ is! “By whom also he made the worlds”, Heb 1: 2. He not only made them, but He sustains them. The poet says:

And brings forth the host of heaven by their numbers to display  
The uncontested brilliance of His might!

That is the glory of Jesus, demonstrated creatorially in bringing things into being that had no existence previously. We have read in John's gospel, “All things received being through him” (John 1: 3); not simply that they were made, but they “received being”. There is something in the created universe that finds its character and distinction from Christ. That same poet goes on to say:

But although His arm is power in the infinite expanse,  
That same unerring arm is in control  
To determine and to govern my every circumstance,  
To claim supreme submission in my soul!

Robert G Fear (1944)

Where do you stand in relation to the power of Christ “to subdue all things to himself”? What a question that is. Would you not like to submit to Him fully and prove the blessing that that involves?

In Exodus 27 we have the brazen altar - in the teaching of it we have been helped to see that this conveys the power that Christ has towards men. It is “the altar of acacia-wood”, the humanity of Christ is referred to in that, the durable wood, the wood that could go through wilderness circumstances and sustain everything that was pleasing to God. It was overlaid with copper; there was a quality of manhood in Jesus that could sustain the fire of God's judgement against evil and

could also support everything that God required in this scene. It has often been said that according to the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, the altar was greater than the gift that was put upon it. He is able, as Man, to sustain all that was required for God in the scene of testimony. The altar was in the court, a public area where it could be seen, the cross of Christ was a not a secret matter, it was a public matter. Mr. Raven spoke of the shame of it, the public shame of the cross of Calvary, vol 6 p298. The Lord Jesus was equal to sustain it.

I read this reference and I will leave you to ponder on it. It says, "its horns shall be of itself"; that is there was sufficient strength in Christ to bear everything that was put upon Him. What a Saviour, what a Man we have to speak to one another about, to stir our affections, to prompt our confidence. He was here devoted to God's will. The ram in Genesis 22 was "caught in the thicket by its horns" (v 13); He was held in relation to God's will by what was in Himself. He not only did God's will but He loved it. It was not only His rule, but it was His motive: that is why He came. He loved God's will and, although it involved suffering, He had the strength to go through with what was necessary as to it.

In Luke 22 it says, "an angel appeared to him from heaven strengthening him" (v 43); that is the angel strengthened what was inherently there in the manhood of Jesus in view of the enormity of what was before Him - Calvary's cross, death itself, He was equal to everything that was required. The personal power of Jesus, you might say it is God's great resource in the whole universe.

In Exodus 28 we read about the garments of the priest - this involves His power, not with men, not in the scene of adversity, but His power with God. What comes out beautifully in this passage, in these two onyx stones, is that the names of the saints were there according to their birth. This is very precious; the names of the saints are written on the stones and then placed upon the shoulder pieces of the great High Priest. That means that all the strength of His manhood is now being used in the support of those who are in God's testimony. Do you have part in the testimony of God? What a privilege it is. Do value it, do not hold it lightly. You could not acquire it for yourself; God has given it to you and, if rightly in the place that He has given, you are sustained by Christ in all His perfect manhood as He serves as our great High Priest, interceding towards God. It views the saints according to the affinity

they have with one another, according to their birth, not according to their personal distinction. When we come to the breastplate the thought is different, the stones are different and the names are different, but on the shoulder pieces they are “according to their birth”; that is, we are of divine origin and Christ sustains us in the presence of God. I commend these two aspects. He is equal to what was required in the scene of testimony in suffering, and He is equal to sustain what is for God's pleasure, even in these days as the saints' names are borne in the presence of Jehovah. It has often been said that in Isaiah the government is upon one shoulder, chap 9: 6. Here two shoulders are employed; the full support of the manhood of Jesus is able to sustain the saints at the level of God's thoughts about them.

Matthew 14 is a picture of the present circumstances of the testimony. It speaks of the Lord Jesus as Man in the days of His flesh. It says, “having dismissed the crowds”. I suppose that suggests that Israel's time has not yet come. “He went up into the mountain apart to pray”. He is on the mountain top. Then it says, “And when even was come, he was alone there, but the ship” (and He had compelled the disciples into it) “was already in the middle of the sea tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary”. Is there anybody here feeling that as they have part in God's testimony the wind is contrary? You will find that. You begin at school, early in your life, to bear testimony to your faith in Christ, and the wind is contrary. You go to work and you find it is just the same, the whole atmosphere, the whole course of things in this world is against God's testimony. It is not a sudden squall here; it is a continued pressure, the devil being against what is pleasing to God, “the wind was contrary”. “But in the fourth watch of the night he went off to them, walking on the sea”. The Lord takes up a distinctive position here and what it brings out is the faith of Peter. I want to call attention to what Peter says: “Lord, if it be *thou*, command me to come to thee upon the waters” - firstly, “if it be *thou*”, the strength of his link with Christ personally is prominent; then he says, “command me to come to thee upon the waters”. The Lord's answer is, “Come”. Peter comes into a position which, as far as man is concerned, is untenable. Have you ever tried to support God's testimony in your own strength? Have you ever tried, even with the best intentions, to keep things in order in your little area of testimony, your local meeting? Have you ever tried to do that in your own strength? You will soon discover that human strength

is of no avail. Peter finds himself upon the water, a position that is untenable apart from present faith and present contact with Christ. There is a lesson here; we cannot sustain the position in testimony ourselves, we cannot without the strength of His hand be maintained in the path of God's will. The experience that Peter had is, "seeing the wind strong"; he had some impression at that moment of the force of the opposition that was against them. The Lord had met that opposition. We know that Jesus has been into death and He has bound the strong man, but the opposition may still show itself, and we may see the wind strong; "he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught hold of him" - a powerful expression. There was a degree of urgency about it, that Peter should know freshly, as he had known before, the touch of that powerful hand. Dear brother, dear sister, the only way to be in the testimony of God is in the strength of that hand. Not according to your knowledge. It is not according to your knowledge of scripture or of ministry or what has happened in days gone by, not according to your awareness of church history and the way that crises have been met. No; the way and the *only* way to be sustained in the testimony of God is by direct touch with Christ Himself. He "stretched out his hand and caught hold of him". He says to him, "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" - Peter had a degree of courage which I suppose most of us lack. He was prepared to take that position of walking on the water, he was prepared to leave the boat, leave the area of human security. There was no boat, nothing to sustain him, and he soon discovered that it was very testing, but the present power of the hand of Christ was fully sufficient for his sustainment. We referred to it in the reading, our previous experience in itself cannot help us, but as held in relation to the Person and touch of Christ it forms a valuable connection and we can be sustained in the testimony in the power of His hand.

The word in Colossians, "As therefore ye have received the Christ", brings us back to the beginning of our meeting this morning, "but as many as received him", John 1: 12. I trust that everybody here has received Him, not only received teaching about Him. We are not simply to be well informed but to receive Him. To receive Him is to perceive the glory that belongs to Him and Him only. It is not to receive simply from Him the answer to your needs, although the Lord is the only One who is equal to that; He can lift the burdens. He is willing to do it,

He is able to do it, allow Him, if He has not done it already to do it for you; He can set you free. But greater than that is receive Him, "As therefore ye have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in him". I suppose Colossians helps us as to coming under His personal influence. The teaching of Romans is that He is Lord, the teaching of Corinthians extends that, the area of His authority must always be known. There is something, however, beyond the area of simple authority and this scripture suggests to me the need, and I feel it, of coming under the personal influence of One so great as He is. Not simply to do what I am told, but submission because He means so much to me, and because He has so much resource for my blessing and benefit. To come under His influence, even in these days in which we live, is great blessing. "As therefore ye have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and assured in the faith" - thank God for the faith that is current, "this is the victory which has gotten the victory over the world, our faith", 1 John 5: 4. That is the great system of teaching that we have embraced; what a privilege we have, what has been entrusted to us, given to us in the way of inheritance "which has gotten the victory over the world, our faith". But the assurance of it comes as we hold all in relation to the Person of Christ.

May we be assured of His personal power: not only what it has done, not only what it will yet do, because what is alien, what is opposed will soon be annulled by "the appearing of his coming", 2 Thess 2: 8. He is equal to meet every element of opposition, but in the meantime He is equal to nourish and sustain all that is for His pleasure in His people. I would like to know more of what it means to come, not only under the lordship of Christ, but under His headship, to know His influence, to know the touch of His love. We shall look for it in the morning as He comes amongst us. We come together and we break bread, the area of His authority is immediately recognised, but then *He* comes. Shall we be amenable to the touch of headship, shall we be ready in the great realm of privilege into which He alone can lead us?

May God bless the word.

**Buckie**

**5<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

## **“THEN FACE TO FACE”**

**Charlie Brien**

### **1 Corinthians 13: 12, 13**

I would like to say a simple word this evening, and to rely on the Spirit for help in speaking of this scripture.

A couple of weeks ago our brother preaching talked about the 'now', how the urgency of the gospel is so important. I have been thinking a lot lately as to how the world that we live in is a 'right now' world, it is a 'real-time' world, a world where everything is available to us and expected to happen right away. We do not have to wait around for much; if we need something, if we want something, we can generally have it to an extent. That is the world that we live in. Just as it was two weeks ago, it is now. The urgency of the gospel would appeal to you and to me, that we consider where we are before God at this very moment, and at this very moment only. God is Himself interested in where we are before Him. He is interested in where we are in our relationship with the Lord Jesus, and where we are in our life if we have already put our faith in our Lord Jesus, in our faith, and in our hope for His return. The message goes forth again and appeals to each one of us as to where we are *right now* before God. At this very moment, where are you in your relationship with the Lord Jesus? There will be a time very soon when there will not be an opportunity to consider this any more. I would stress once again the urgency of this as we think for ourselves how all that is around us impacts us. We have to go through a difficult world, where many things attract us and many things are pressuring us: our responsibilities, obligations and demands with our jobs, school, or life in general. Many of us are under much pressure in our physical bodies. We see, therefore, how great an effort the enemy is putting into all of his devices and all of his ways to distract us and to keep us occupied with all the things that are happening right now - everything that is besides what would be for the glory and honour of God.

So, we are here once again this evening to come under the sound of the gospel, and I desire that each one of us, including myself, would have a sense of the Lord Jesus in such a fresh and real way that we would be able to go from here with renewed hope and strength in our



hearts and souls, into a scene with all of its demands and all of its pressures, knowing that we have a way to overcome it all, a way to get through it all. We should have a desire to live in a new and fresh way for the glory of God, no matter where we are, what we are doing, how old we are, how young we are. We each must make a decision this evening, a very important decision, even if it is a renewed decision, to commit ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ and to all that He has in store for us as we are left here.

The scripture I have read may be a different scripture for the glad tidings, because it is really more of an appeal to those who are already believers. I could probably say that most in this room are believers, and so it might be appropriate to read such a scripture. Nevertheless these three things which I read about, and the dim window, have to do with the gospel because they apply to the fundamental message of the gospel, and I would like to touch a little on these things.

It is always interesting to think about how, in all of the scripture, God despises sin. While we know that He has dealt with sin, we can see how He has moved in such a way through the history of time to show how His ways and His thoughts are of righteousness and perfectness. One thing He has made clear through the scriptures, as you read through them, is that He hates idolatry, He despises it. I was struck afresh in considering this scripture, and thinking of faith, hope and love, how man's tendency is so easily tended towards that which he can see, touch, feel - all the things that are real to him in his circumstances here in this sphere. I know that I have said this before, but I was struck afresh as to how God has given His creature the ability to lay hold of, believe and have faith in something that he cannot touch and feel necessarily, yet man tends to choose the easier route, We know for ourselves how easily we tend towards this, that is, to put our confidence, our faith and our trust in things that we can physically see around us, things that we can apprehend without having to think at all, or consider at all what they might be because they are right there in front of us. So, men have turned, in every aspect of their lives to some form of idolatry, to some form of committal in their lives to what would satisfy themselves and their desires, or that gives them some sense there is another power, turning them to worship something that is physical. It is really affecting to think how God has expressed His

distaste for idolatry, and how He has no time for man putting trust in idols or figures, because He is a God who can be known through faith. He is a God who can be known through believing, and seeing what is not seen physically. We see that where the Lord Jesus in John 20, said with regard to Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed they who have not seen and have believed", v 29. That is the time that we are in. That is what faith is, believing in what is not seen, believing in what will bring you to the greatest things that there are to know simply by believing and trusting. You cannot put your hands on it, you cannot touch it, but it is there and it is real and it is as real as ever.

So the preaching this evening has to do with a God who is as real as can be and He is interested in you and me, He is interested in where we are in relation to Him. You might say, 'If I saw the Lord Jesus and He was here, there would be no question that I would believe'. You might say, 'If the Lord came into my school, everyone there would surely know that He was the Lord because He would be able to do signs and wonders, and perform miracles'. But the scriptures show that seeing the Lord and being with Him and observing all things that He did, did *not* affect every person, and that shows the hardness and the coldness of men and how they will not have what is for God. They will not have even what they can see, they will not have it if it does not fit with what they want, and does not fit with what they want to believe. Again it comes down to what you believe in your heart and whether or not you will believe and put your trust in the Lord Jesus. Will you believe on what is not seen and what you cannot touch? Will you believe in the Lord Jesus and will you put your faith in Him?

In Hebrews 11, which is the "by faith" chapter, it says, "faith is the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen", v 1. Faith is something that is required for you really to come into all the blessing that is available for you. It is simply believing in who the Lord Jesus is, believing why He had to come here, believing that He is One that has, as we sang:

In a servant's form come near,  
Sitting, walking, talking with thee!

(Hymn 112)

That is what He wants to do, to come near, and that is what you can

experience while you are left here. Maybe you think that is really difficult to lay hold of, that it is a figment of my imagination, but yet even Paul says that these things are not a figment of the imagination. They were not a figment of the apostles' imagination when they were teaching here on earth; they were real. These things are real for you to lay hold of and it is essential that you do lay hold of them because there will be a time when it is not going to be a choice any more. I would encourage you to think about what you believe in. Do you *really* believe in the Lord Jesus? Do you know something about who He is? Have you acknowledged to Him in your heart that you are like one of those who would not have believed in Him even if He was here? Are you like one of those who might not believe if you did not want to, even if the Lord Jesus was physically here now, or you were there in that time? You have that in your heart. Is there something in your heart that *wants* to believe? The way that you come to that is to accept that you are a sinner, and that *you* are the reason why Jesus came here to die on the cross and to be raised. All that is for you, He has come to do that for each one here. Do you have a burning in your heart from the knowledge of that, and will you confess it with your lips? Will you confess with your heart that you are a sinner and believe that Jesus is real, He is risen, He is in heaven? He is there and wants to be with you, sitting and walking and talking with you as you go through this scene where there are so many pressures and distractions, so that you no longer fear the judgment that is laid upon you? That is faith. It is not something that I can present to you in such a way that you will believe; it is something that I can only present to you so that you can make that choice to believe.

We then come to hope. Hope is what we look forward to, something that we expect to happen. These three things would maintain us while we are here in this scene. They are not things that have anything to do with the world that we live in; they have to do with things that are going to continue forever. We will not need faith in heaven when we are with the Lord, but that is the hope that we would hold on to in our hearts as we are left here. Do you have this hope in your heart that the Lord is going to come, and that He is going to meet His own in the air? His desire is that you will be one of them. Is that a hope that is on your heart this evening? As you consider what it is to have faith and what your faith is, as you read through Hebrews 11 and

you think about those different persons that it mentions and what faith was to them, do you apply it to yourself, and where you are in these things? I was thinking of the hope that we have as we wait for the Lord Jesus to come. What a time it will be when He comes to take His own, to take you and me to be with Him forever! That is His desire, but will you be one of those? That is the simple and solemn question: can you be sure you will be one of those with Him if He comes this very moment?

Then we come to love, “and the greater of these is love”. It struck me that the reason why “the greater of these is love” is because that is what God is, He is love, 1 John 4: 8. He has shown all of His love to us in the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are to be here living and waiting for Christ, we must have this hope that lies before us to go through this scene in faith. We must have that which is of God Himself, and to know that which is of God Himself, that is that He is love, and that He has manifested Himself because of His love. He is there in heaven, desiring that His love would be known by us and that it would be a real and a present thing with us in each day and each moment that we go through this scene as we wait for the Lord Jesus. He would desire that we know love and that we display love and prove love - divine love - while we are here. These things are very real, and I wondered whether that is why it says, “the greater of these is love”. That is what must be the underlying feature that is in us as we go through this scene. It is there for us to know, it is a powerful love, proved in the raising of our Lord Jesus Christ. Love was shown to us not only in God giving up His beloved Son, and having Him suffer on that pathway that He walked here, and then to suffer at the hands of God, but especially in His raising Jesus from among the dead! That is the wonderful thing about love - it is living and it is meant to be living for you and for me, and it is meant to be known in that same way. That love would have a living Saviour there at God's right hand, and available that we might know it in all of its wonder and reality, knowing the power of it as we go through this scene, displaying that power as we go through this world with all of its temptations and pleasures, able to resist all that we are susceptible to. We are to display this love toward one another, and to display and proclaim it to others. This is a hard thing for us at times as we go through these struggles but love will proclaim itself. You might say that love cannot help but to proclaim itself when it is in full activity. Love is an active feature. Faith is active and needs continual renewing. We need

to be constantly renewed in our faith and reminded of these things, because we so easily tend towards the things that we can see, rather than the things that we cannot see. So we need to be renewed. That is why the Spirit comes in, He would help us as an unseen power but a known power in us that is available to each one of us. Love always has been active, God's love is an active thing, and is known and in us by knowing the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Finally, what started me thinking of this scripture was “but then face to face”. This is Paul speaking about how “we see now through a dim window obscurely”. There is a hindrance from seeing things clearly. You might say that that is the flesh, because that is what keeps us from being completely free. We can be free, there is the power to be completely free. We still have the flesh, but we need the Spirit's power to help us to see more clearly. To see completely clearly, that will be the time that has to do with hope, that is the time when we will see the Lord Jesus face to face.

One thing I would like to leave for your consideration is this expression, “face to face”. We see in Thessalonians how we have hope, “then we, the living who remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we shall be always with the Lord. So encourage one another with these words”, 1 Thess 4: 17, 18. That is the hope that we shall meet with the Lord. In Corinthians it says, “face to face”, and I was struck by that expression particularly. The main thought that struck me was, do you know what the Lord's face will look like? Do I know what the Lord's face will look like? As we said in the reading, we ought to be transported from one place to another; there should be no surprises for us, and I just wondered whether the Lord's face would be familiar to us. There are a lot of pictures and a lot of renderings as to what the Lord looks like and I do not know if there is any element of reality to them. But really what should affect us is what we know of the Lord's face by faith and by our experience with Him, by knowing this One who is sitting, walking and talking with us. That is the One whom we have to do with - He is real, living, and He wants to have to do with you and me. Do we know Him? Will we know His face?

Then there is the other aspect which we maybe do not always consider, it says “face to face”, implying that the Lord is going to see

*your* face! He knows you, He knows what your life is like, He knows what your heart is like, He knows all of your thoughts, He knows all of your ways, the things you go through, the things that you struggle with, and He desires to see your face. So, will you consider this evening this thought that He wants to see your face? Will you want to see His face? He wants to see your face and my face, and He wants to see it in all its fulness as having had the most experience possible with Him while we are left here.

This is the thought I would like to leave with each one of us this evening. We look forward to the Lord Jesus coming and it will be very soon, but what will I be - a lost soul, or a saved, redeemed one for God through Christ? Where will I be in my experience with Him at that point in time when He comes Himself? What will He see in my face that is, and has been, for Him? What will He see in me that has been committed to Him while I was here? What have I come into of all the things that are available to me by the Spirit while I have been walking here? This is just something to consider, but may we especially have these things in our hearts as we go from here. It is not faith in things that are here in this world, and it is not hope in things that we have to do with in our experiences here and our lives here. We might have faith in things such as the government, and we might have faith in things that go on in our circumstances and hope that they will happen, but the things that we are speaking about are spiritual things. Paul says, "And now abide faith, hope, love; these three things; and the greater of these is love". May we just have our faith renewed and strengthened! May you put your faith in the Lord Jesus! And if you have already, even if I have, may we put our faith in Him in a renewed and fresh way and may we have a greater sense, appreciation, longing and desire for the hope of His return - the hope of the life that we can experience now but that will go through all time and all eternity. And that we might know the love of God and how He has manifested Himself, and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the way that He displayed that love while He was here, while He desires for us to know Him now where He is, as seated at the right hand of God. He is ascended! That is where He is, and He wants us to know Him in this way, so that we might too manifest His love as a result of letting Him into our lives, letting Him fill our hearts, letting the Spirit come in to guide us and give us the power to overcome all the things that are against us. And that the love of God might make itself

known through us to one another and to all those who are around that they might see something that is real, that is different and will go on forever. These are the things that the glad tidings have to do with. They have to do with the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. May you put your faith and your hope and your love in Him. May it be so for His Name's sake!

**Denton**

**13<sup>th</sup> January 2008**

## **THE MAN OF GOD'S CHOICE**

**Rodney Brown**

**Matthew 12: 13-21; 3: 13-17**

**1 Samuel 8: 5-7, 10-12, 19, 20; 16: 1, 6-8, 11-13**

**Luke 23: 13-18**

**1 Peter 2: 4, 5**

I have an impression as to the Man of God's choice. We have had it before us today already, the beauty of the Lord Jesus, the One of whom Jehovah could say typically, "I have provided me a king". This stands in contrast to the man whom men would choose. The choice of the people was Saul; God's choice was David. When the Lord was crucified, men would rather have Barabbas than Christ. Then we come in 1 Peter to what has been "cast away indeed as worthless by men, but with God chosen, precious". God's choice is the line that we need to be on. As away from God we have no ability to make a right choice. I am not presenting the Lord Jesus as a choice to you in the gospel; I am presenting Him to you for your acceptance. God is not holding out Christ in the gospel in order that you can make up your mind whether or not to choose Him as your Saviour; He is holding Him out for your acceptance. Scripture says, "by which we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12); that is the message in the glad tidings today. God has made His choice, He has provided Himself with a king, He has provided the Lord Jesus for His own affections and it is for us to come into line with that. There is no other Man before God, nor will there ever be. It is for us to align ourselves with the Man of God's choice and there is opportunity to do that now. If you have not done it before you can do it now in faith, just where you are in your seat, and I would commend this One to you. God commends Him to you. God is not commending any other than the Lord Jesus, the only Saviour, the One of whom it could be said prophetically, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth!", Isa 42: 1. That thought coalesces with the Lord Jesus coming out of the waters of baptism in Matthew 3, "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness". No one could say that except the Man of God's choice, the Man whom God has appointed.

It was not an arbitrary choice, but it was as coming up out of the waters of baptism that this prophecy was fulfilled, "the Spirit descending as a dove from heaven, and it abode upon him", John 1: 32.



He was sent from the waters of baptism, but sent as One who was morally qualified to be sent. Think of these thirty years, of the Lord Jesus as a boy of twelve in the temple, hearing and asking questions, advancing in favour with God and men, Luke 2: 46, 52. What an object of satisfaction and delight for heaven! These thirty years underlie the time of public service, the time when the Lord Jesus would be sent. What is recorded of the Lord Jesus in these thirty years is sufficient to engage our hearts, to think of what these thirty years were for the heart of God as that blessed Man was here wholly for God's pleasure. How blessed to have your heart engaged with that precious One, the One who Himself was God. We were reminded of that in the reading, "emptied himself ... taking his place in the likeness of men; and having been found in figure as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross", Phil 2: 7, 8. That is what lay at the end of that perfect pathway, "the death of the cross". There was no outward glory from men; that is yet to come. There is a day coming when the Lord Jesus will be publicly vindicated. His was a pathway here of outward weakness, but I trust you know the secret of the One who was here, the One who was God, the One who had to do with men, the One who can still have to do with you if you will give Him your heart, if you will extend the hand of faith towards Him now. How ready He is to bless!

I was affected with the perfection of the pathway of the Lord Jesus. Think of Him coming to John in this way, "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness". No one else could have said that, "all righteousness". That could only be said by the Lord Jesus or of the Lord Jesus. Then we have the descent of the Holy Spirit from heaven and a voice out of heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight" - testimony to the delight that the Father had in Christ in these thirty years. This is the identification of heaven with this man, the man of God's choice; the Father committing Himself fully. It is not to say that there was anything previously that He could not commit Himself to, but this was not an arbitrary choice, this was a choice which was proved to be the right choice as the Lord Jesus moved out in service. What an object He is for our hearts! How different He is to the kind of man that you or I may seek after the flesh. Saul was an imposing man, he was the one that the people wanted. They wanted to be as the other nations. That is always a problem: if we seek to be as the world,

there is no blessing in that. God's choice is not bound up with what the world is doing, God's choice is in one Man and in one Man only.

In 1 Samuel 8 it says, "appoint us a king to judge us, like all the nations". There is something transpiring on earth among the people of God which is not approved by man; it has its approval from God. There is a danger in seeking to be like the nations, and so the gospel would change our tastes and change our desires away from what would please us naturally and bring us into accord with heaven's view of things. This history is well known, but there is a stark contrast between what the people wanted and what God wanted. I wonder whether that struggle is going on in your heart? If there is a struggle there, if you are seeking to do what is right and you find that you do not have the power in you to do it, the power is available; it is available in the Holy Spirit. It is not typically spoken of in this chapter, but the divine resource is such that God would give you the means to walk here pleasurable to Him, and to be apart from all the nations and what men are going on with.

Samuel was obviously disturbed by what the people wanted, but Samuel himself had secret leanings towards Saul, because in chapter 16, it says, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?" There is what man would choose, what we would choose ourselves as away from God, and then there is what God has rejected. These two things coalesce, what man chooses and what God rejects eventuate in the same line. We need to be on the line that God has approved, that God has chosen, and that is the line of David, a type of the Lord Jesus. We have read of the anointing of this blessed One. I believe we do this every Lord's day morning, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he". There is no other. There is what is impressive to man, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him; for it is not as man seeth; for man looketh upon the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh upon the heart". As away from God we are incapable of making correct choices; we need the Spirit's help and we need the Lord Jesus set before us as an object in order that we can get direction and be guided aright. Samuel would have chosen any of these men, but Jehovah said, 'it is not this one or that one'; "Jehovah has not chosen these", v 10. Then he says, "Are these all the young men? And he said, There is yet the youngest remaining, and behold, he is feeding the sheep"; what a qualification for the man of God's choice, a lowly service

feeding the sheep, not seeking recognition of men. I have been affected by the thought of shepherding this week, how it really underlies all service among God's people. The feelings of care and protection are involved in shepherding. It is interesting how many men in the Old Testament who became prominent in God's things had shepherd instincts and had an education in shepherding, and so it is with David. It says, "Jehovah has sought him a man after his own heart", 1 Sam 13: 14. He is a man of God's choice. I think more than anyone in the Old Testament he speaks to us of Christ in that way. "Arise, anoint him; for this is he"; there was no other person before God. "And Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren. And the Spirit of Jehovah came upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah."

It is interesting how the Spirit is linked with these things. I say again how essential the Spirit is if we are to be found here in any measure pleasing to God. The Spirit is given to those who obey and also to those who ask, so there is no reason for anyone here not to have the Spirit. It is a question of being submissive to what the Lord would have you to do; and also you can ask the Father; how readily He bestows the Spirit.

Regarding our scripture in Luke's gospel, I used to wonder why these men chose Barabbas, but it is in our hearts as away from God without the light as to who Christ is and what He has done. We have to come to it that naturally we would not have Christ. As it says, "We will not that this man should reign over us", Luke 19: 14. Crucifixion was a terrible death, but that was the death that was appointed to Jesus, the Man of God's choice. Death lay at the end of that pathway of perfection, but it was all in the foreknowledge of God that it should be so. It speaks in Peter of "the blood of Christ, foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world", 1 Peter 1: 19, 20. So, while men did this in hatred and cruelty, it served God's purpose and it is a blessed fact that that is so. Man chose Barabbas who was a murderer, after the line of Cain; they chose him rather than Christ, the Man who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners", Heb 7: 26. There was nothing in this Man, the Man of God's choice, to arouse hatred or enmity. Always pleasing to the Father, every step of His pathway in entire accordance with the Father's will, never a motive, never a thought emanated from the Lord Jesus that was not wholly in

keeping with the will of God. What an object for our appreciation and our contemplation! We read typically of Him, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he", there is no other man. There is no other man being presented in the glad tidings today, and God has no other man in mind, but God has you in mind for blessing, if you will accept this Man for yourself and the work that He has done. The divine choice was publicly stated at the Jordan, anticipative of the Lord Jesus going through what we read of here, suffering at the hands of men, ultimately suffering at the hands of God, when "Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us", 2 Cor 5: 21. It was not on account of anything He had done, for He was ever perfect before a holy and righteous God, but if we were to come into blessing, and if God's purpose and thoughts were to be answered to, then it required that this perfect life had to be given up in death. That is what this book goes on to bring out. The Lord Jesus was crucified, men did that to Him, but far more awful than the suffering at the hands of man at the cross were the sufferings at the hands of God when He was made sin. There was darkness over the land for three hours. Think of the awfulness when He was made sin. He bore my sins in His body upon the tree; thanks be to God that He did that. He has removed them. As we had in the gospel last week, He has put them behind His back forever (Is 38: 17), they are never to be raised again, they are gone. The blood of Jesus, and the Father's satisfaction in the work that has been done, has ensured that. The Lord Jesus is no longer in death. He was in death, He went into death, He died on the cross, and then His blood was shed. The soldier came and pierced His side with the spear, "and immediately there came out blood and water", John 19: 34. What an answer to the hatred of man:

Though man in hatred pierced Thy side,  
Thy blood, love's answer gave.

(Hymn 230)

Have you proved that? Have you some appreciation that the blood of Jesus was shed for you?

Shed for rebels, shed for sinners,  
Shed for me.

(Hymn 167)

I trust everyone in the room can put their name there, and say that the blood of the Lord Jesus was shed on the tree 'for me'. What a work has

been done! A basis has been laid that man should be before God eternally. It did not end there; He was taken from the cross and put in the grave, "in the heart of the earth three days and three nights", Matt 12: 40. These women went to the tomb very early in the morning, they found the stone rolled away and the angel sitting on it, testimony to the fact that the tomb was empty. The Lord Jesus was no longer in death, He had been raised, Matt 28: 2. What a proof of the Father's full satisfaction in the work that had been completed; that there was nothing left to be done:

O the peace for ever flowing  
From God's thoughts of His own Son

(Hymn 390)

That relates to His thoughts when He was here as a Man, it relates to what transpired on the cross, and it relates to the place that He now has. God's thoughts as to His Son are not changed, but your thoughts need to change from the way that man views Him, to the way that God views Him.

I read in 1 Peter 2, "To whom coming, a living stone, cast away indeed as worthless by men" - I trust there is nothing in the Lord Jesus that you consider to be worthless, dear friend. How precious He is, precious to God, precious to those whom God has worked with, "but with God chosen, precious". That relates to Christ, but, "yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood", it goes on to cover the fact that that "the stone which the builders cast away as worthless, this is become head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and rock of offence", v 7, 8. Man after the flesh has not changed his thoughts as to Christ, but the opportunity is available for your thoughts to change, for your thoughts to come into accord with God's thoughts as to Christ. There is blessing to be proved in doing so. Once that is so you can look back and see that, in the sovereignty of God's ways, you have been marked out for blessing, but it requires that you come in faith and on the basis that the glad tidings are freely available to whosoever will. This is not outside the scope of any man. Indeed the Lord Jesus, the Man of God's choice, is being presented in the gospel today for your acceptance, and for the acceptance of all mankind. I trust you will avail yourself of Him. God is not presenting any other man; there is one Man before God and that Man will be before

God eternally. All our blessings are bound up with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We read last weekend as to the “the bundle of the living” (1 Sam 25: 29), and we read today as to the “Sustainer of life”, Gen 41: 45, note. He is the One who will sustain us in life and ensure that there is a living response for the heart of God, “living stones, are being built up a spiritual house”. May we be fully in these things! For His Name's sake.

**Denton**

**3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008**

## **THE UPPER CHAMBER**

**G Allan Brown**

**2 Kings 4: 8-11**

**Luke 22: 7-20**

**Acts 1: 10-14; 20: 7-12**

These scriptures refer to the upper chamber or upper room. You could hardly call this first one a luxury apartment; indeed it was rather basic. It was provided by a wealthy woman and her husband, and no doubt they could have provided some more comforts but as well as being wealthy the woman was spiritual and she knew what was suitable for the man of God.

I want to give this an application to the homes of the brethren, but would hasten to say, before I am misunderstood, that I am not advocating that our homes should be austere. I am not suggesting ascetic living which is practised by some monastic orders who say that by austere living and harsh treatment of the body that you can nullify the flesh - that only gives the flesh something to glory in. I do not want the brethren to think that I am finding any fault with having your homes comfortably furnished. In fact, more than that, I would say it is due to the testimony that it should be so. The homes of the saints should indeed be homely.

What I do want to suggest is that the thought of the upper chamber alludes to a spiritual dimension in the believer's home. It is said to be upper which suggests to me that it is something that is elevated above the ordinary domestic run of things. We all know what that is - to cook, clean, and so on, perhaps bring up a family. All these things carried out in the fear of God are pleasing to God, but are not in themselves spiritual. There are doubtless many worldly homes where they are well ordered and well disciplined, but there is nothing spiritual in them. This is what makes the believer's home different, the spiritual dimension.

As well as being "upper", it is also said to be small, which I think comports well with the current time of the testimony in which we are. Not only has there been breakdown in Christendom but there has been breakdown among those who had part in the recovery too and we have had our part in that, some of us more than others. We do not have

anything to be proud of. Proverbs speaks about certain things which are "little upon the earth" (30: 24) but they are "exceeding wise" and now it surely is wise to be very humble. You could hardly imagine the man of God going to preach in a cathedral or anywhere like that; they would not let him anyway. Mr Darby remarked that Paul would not be allowed to preach in such a place because he was not an ordained minister, Collected Writings vol 14 p293.

This is a small upper chamber. It is said to have walls, or be upon the wall. That means separation.

I want to say a simple word to the children. You know what a wall is; you probably have one round your garden. A wall does two things, it keeps out things you do not want in, and it protects the things which are inside. You might have some nice flowerbeds and finely mown lawns, and you do not want rubbish floating in and spoiling it. The wall keeps the nasty things out and protects the good things inside. To be practical, when you are at school or perhaps at work, your companions speak to one another about what films they were watching last night, what place of entertainment they had been to - do you feel a little bit left out? I will tell you why you do not have these things; it is because your parents have built a wall, and it is not a wall made of bricks. It is a moral wall. The things that we are talking about that other children have in their homes, or places they go to, they would not do you any good; they would do you harm. That is why your parents want to keep them out, and by the same token the wall is there to protect you. We have a sister and when she was at school the teacher said of her, 'She is the most deprived little girl I know, and yet she is the happiest'. What a testimony! I can assure you, dear young ones, that all these things which you might feel deprived about are not going to do you any good at all. Joy, happiness and satisfaction is in the home of the believer, where the Lord Jesus is known and honoured. That is what I mean by a wall.

As to the actual furniture, there is a bed. A bed is for rest and that is a very important thing in a believer's home, that there is a restful condition. We live busy lives these days and, just being practical about this, I believe that Satan, the enemy of our souls, is seeking to trespass on our time. I feel for the young brothers and sisters going to work early in the morning, coming home late, perhaps bringing work home with



them. The devil will keep you going, keep you occupied with secular things so that there is not time for rest. Rest is very important. Even in the Lord's work we can become so much governed by activity that you do not have time to recharge. The Lord said one time when the disciples were so busy healing people that they did not have leisure even to eat, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest a little", Mark 6: 31. He also said, "Come to me, all ye who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls", Matt 11: 28, 29. It is a very important thing that there is an atmosphere at home where you can relax in a spiritual sense and enjoy the sanctified atmosphere of a believer's home.

Then there is the table. This suggests two things, one is fellowship, and the other is food. It is a very important thing to have the brethren in your home in the enjoyment of Christian fellowship. This is a feature which is happily present amongst us, and may it continue because it is for the preservation of the family in these days. Then there is the food as well. The head of the house has a certain responsibility in reading the scriptures, teaching his family, and seeing to it that there is food on the table.

Then there is the seat. I suggest the seat has something to do with contemplation. There was a time in the history of king David when he had a huge disappointment, the biggest disappointment of his life. For all his life he had had desires to find a resting place for the ark and build a house that would be suitable. God had given him rest from all his enemies round about him and he said, 'Now I will get to building this house'. He said to the prophet Nathan that he would like to do this, and he told David to go ahead. Then in the night God spoke to Nathan, and said, 'You will have to say "No" to David'. What a blow it must have been. But was he resentful? No, he went in and sat before Jehovah. To go in and sit like that means that you are going to be there for quite some time. Then He spoke to Jehovah, meekly accepting of His will. He spoke of the way he had been preserved, how his house would be preserved for a long time to come, and some of his suggestions look on to Christ, 2 Sam 7: 5, 18, 19.

Reading helps too. It is a good thing to read, to concentrate your mind on what is good. There is plenty to read of what is good. You do not need to go outside of the ministry of the recovery, something that

the Lord has honoured for nearly two hundred years now. It is good to go over the scriptures in the presence of the Lord. This kind of satisfaction can be found in a believer's home.

The next thing is the lampstand. We were speaking earlier about the times in Egypt when there was darkness, thick darkness, but there is light in the dwellings of the people of God. I would like to make sure that the lamp in my home is shining. We find from the reading of the scriptures and prayers, and fellowship that you have with the saints, that there is light flooding into the believer's home. It is the spiritual dimension in the believer's home.

Whenever the man of God came along the place was ready for him, no special preparation needed; when he comes he will have this place. He may come any time. I would like to think that your home and mine would be open to the brethren at all times. No special cleaning up to be done, nothing to be put out of sight - always have an open door.

This was a small upper room; but in Luke 22 there is a large one. In the passage where we read the Lord Jesus is about to face death with all the sufferings that that involved. The abandonment lay before Him, the awfulness of the cross. How it must have borne in upon His spirit and yet in His tender consideration for His own, He institutes the Supper. You might say that it was the passover I read about, and that is true, but this is the passover being brought to an end as an ordinance. We know it has a moral bearing, but as an ordinance it is finished. People speak about the last Supper, but it is not the last Supper, it is the first Supper really; it is the last passover. The Lord partook of the passover here; He did not partake of the Supper. He said to them "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, that I will not eat any more at all of it until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God". A day is coming when God's relations with Israel will be restored, but for the present dispensation, the passover is finished. Paul speaks of it in 1 Corinthians 5, "so that let us celebrate the feast ... with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth", v 8. That is to say that the passover has a moral bearing now, but no longer is an ordinance. So, when Paul gives you the Supper in 1 Corinthians 11, from verse 20, it is separated from chapter 5 because the passover is viewed now in a moral sense. What I am suggesting here is that the

Lord is seeking to release His own from the narrow constraints of Judaism, and to open them up into the expansive and glorious realm of Christianity. The Spirit was going to come, and what a wonderful thing it would be. Here the Lord says, 'I have finished with this passover and I am leaving you with the Supper. He did not partake of it Himself; it says He "gave it to them". That was because it was something that belonged to the time of His absence. We break bread in the time of the Lord's absence; so He did not partake of it, He gave it to them. That required a large upper room - wider and wider. In Ezekiel's vision of the temple, is says, "there was an enlarging ... increasing upward" Ezek 41: 7. This we see also in 1 Kings 6: 6. As I understand it, there were three levels. At the ground level there were cells for the priests where they washed and ate of the offerings. The actual floor space was somewhat limited where the service of God was carried on. On the second level there were fewer cells, but there was more space, and on the top level there were no cells at all, it was all open. That is enlarging upward. As the saints become more spiritual there will become less need for the side of what is priestly and more scope for sonship where the service of God carries on in all its glory. Think of that, "increasing upward", how vast it is, the glory of Christianity, superseding all that had been before. So the Lord said, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer", then He says, 'I am giving you the Supper in an upper room where there is scope for what is heavenly, what belongs to the assembly'.

When you come to Acts 1 the Lord had suffered, He had been into death, accomplished the great work of redemption, all is now complete and now He is taken up into heaven, "And as they were gazing into heaven, as he was going, behold, also two men stood by them in white clothing, who also said, Men of Galilee, why do ye stand looking into heaven?". They said, 'Why are you doing that, because things are going to happen down here now?' Gazing up into heaven, as emphasised in that context, was not going to do any good; the Lord had gone away, left them. This was the time of His absence, it was the time for the assembly. This upper room I suppose is the same room that we have in the next chapter when the Holy Spirit came. What a wonderful opening up of things in glory in the assembly!

What I wanted to draw attention to was, "they went up to the upper chamber, where were staying both Peter, and John, and James,

and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew ...", they were staying there. I do not know how that would have worked out practically, but if you take scripture as it is set out, the Holy Spirit of God gave us the wording, these persons were staying. Are we all staying? There was a time when many of the disciples turned back, Jesus said to His own, "Will ye also go away?", John 6: 67. I believe the Lord would raise that question today. "Simon Peter answered him, 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", v 68, 69. May every one of us have that firm resolve in our hearts to stay in this large upper room where the very best and greatest things can be enjoyed and entered into. Who would want to go away from all of that wealth and glory, all that belongs to the assembly? This was just about to be clothed with power from high. I think it is the same room in chapter 2; it is the same room because it says they were staying there. It was to this environment that the Holy Spirit came, to this place, the large upper room. I would like to leave that challenge to everyone of us - are you going to stay?

In chapter 20 we have the final touch. Paul's ministry has come out at its height. Perhaps there was need in this gathering to have a long discourse, but the reason they came together was to break bread. There is no word of the passover here, "the first day of the week, we being assembled to break bread". "There were many lights in the upper room", what a wonderful sphere it was to be in. But there was this young man who was sitting by the window, which is always rather a hazardous place to be because there are things you can see out of the window which would distract. Perhaps he was not listening to what Paul was saying, and then he fell asleep and fell down. In 2 Kings 1 we read about someone who fell down, the king "Ahaziah fell down through the lattice in his upper chamber which was in Samaria, and was sick; and he sent messengers and said to them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this disease", v 2. He did not get better, the word that he got from Jehovah's prophet was "thou ... shalt certainly die", v 4. I think this is a solemn example of one who, having had the greatest light in the upper chamber, fell down. In principle it is apostasy but at the very least it is a sin unto death because there was no resolving of it before he died. It is a solemn consideration that those who have the greatest light also have the greatest

responsibility.

The young man in the Acts fell down from the third story as well but there was recovery for him. I suppose he was not so responsible, he was just a young lad. Ahaziah was a king, king of Israel, thoroughly responsible; so it was a very solemn thing which happened to him. This young man was taken up dead. It does not say they thought he was dead, it says, “was taken up dead”. That is to say that he was a write off. The brethren had said, 'He is dead'; Paul says, “Be not troubled, for his life is in him”, there is recovery for him. So “Paul descending fell upon him, and enfolding him in his arms, said, Be not troubled for his life is in him. And having gone up, and having broken the bread, and eaten, and having long spoken until daybreak ...”. This boy was taken back up to the very place from which he had fallen. They did not put him in the basement or anything like that; he was taken back up into the full joy of happy fellowship amongst the people of God. There was great joy “they brought away the boy alive, and were no little comforted”. What a comfort it is to see recovery taking place, and remember that recovery is not to anything secondary, it is to the very highest level of Christianity, because that is what you have in Acts 20, Paul's ministry as it came out at Ephesus. But there is one sobering thing about that too because Ephesus did not maintain that level and the Lord does say to that assembly in Revelation, “Remember therefore whence thou art fallen” (Rev 2: 5), but in saying that He has in mind full restoration.

I just trust that what has been said may have some bearing practically because we live in difficult days, there is no denying that, and I believe the Lord would have us to be sustained, to continue to commit ourselves. Even if we have failed, recovery is possible, and it is recovery to the best place.

May He bless the word.

**Buckhurst Hill**

**12<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

## **NOTHING SHALL SEPARATE US**

**David Bailey**

**Romans 8: 37-39; 14: 7-8**

I do not really feel able to say a great deal about these scriptures, and one could say very simply that they speak for themselves. Paul here is writing to the Romans. He had faced adversity, he was to face it, but he is able to say, "But in all these things we more than conquer through him that has loved us". It is a present love. It is a love that is well known. "The love of Jesus ...", we sometimes sing, "None but His loved ones know", hymn 279. I am sure our brother who has been taken to be with the Lord could say those words, "None but His loved ones know". I was reminded recently of one of our hymns which we sing, hymn 116. Our brother used to give it out often,

"How may we rise to Thy vast thoughts,  
Or apprehend Thy sovereign will -"

I have just a simple impression as to those words,

"How may we rise to Thy vast thoughts"?

Our brother who has been taken to be with the Lord is in the gain of those vast thoughts. He is in the enjoyment of them. He has been released from the frail condition of man. He has been released from that condition and he is now enjoying things which are far, far better, "with Christ, for it is very much better", Phil 1: 23. What a prospect we all have, those who have put their faith and their trust in the finished work of Jesus and in His shed blood. It can be your prospect. I trust that it is. I trust that it is everyone's prospect here to be forever with the Lord.

This passage here goes on to say that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God". Our brother has been in the enjoyment of that here, and he will be in the enjoyment of it eternally. Nothing can separate him, not even the final article of death itself can separate us from the love of God, and then it goes on, "which is in Christ Jesus our Lord". Everything that our brother has now is founded upon the work of Jesus. Everything that he is enjoying now is founded upon that blessed work of the Lord Jesus, the One who died for him, the One who shed His precious blood, the One who "became poor in order that

ye by *his* poverty might be enriched”, 2 Cor 8: 9. What our brother will be enjoying will go on throughout eternity, will never end. These things listed here, naturally speaking, could separate us, but in the enjoyment of eternal things nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is a love that has known us. Simply, if it is a love that has known us before the foundation of the world, if it is a love that knew us before we were born, how can it not be so that even death cannot separate us from the love of God? It knew us before the foundation of the world; it will know us throughout an eternal day.

I have just a simple impression as to Romans 14. I thought of this to bring in comfort to those bereaved, particularly at the end of verse 8 where we read, “both if we should live then, and if we should die, we are the Lord's”. What a triumph it is! Naturally death brings in its sorrow. It separates links here that have been enjoyed and treasured, but even if we should die it says, “we are the Lord's”. What a triumph it is to know that nothing can separate us. That love that has known us before the foundation of the world will know us throughout an eternal day.

Well, may we all be encouraged that there is nothing that can separate us from that love, and “if we should live ... and if we should die, we are the Lord's”.

May He bless the word.

**Edinburgh**

**23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008**

(At the meeting for the burial of Mr Jimmy Cumming)

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