

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

SECOND SERIES

No. 56

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Table of Contents

THE ACCOMPLISHER

Key to Initials:

COMING INTO GOD'S HOUSE

IMAGE AND LIKENESS

TABERNACLING

THE ACCOMPLISHER

Genesis 22: 8

1 Samuel 16: 1, 2

Isaiah 42: 1

Psalms 2: 7

John 13: 31, 32

RFW We will have received various impressions during our occasion this morning, and we would trust that something of the richness of them might flow into this occasion. I had a thought in relation to these verses in John 13, as to the glory of Christ as the Accomplisher of all that was in the divine mind, and the joy that God the Father has in glorifying Him in that connection. It says, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God also shall glorify him in himself". I have an impression that God has infinite satisfaction in Christ as the Accomplisher of His will, and delights to honour Him in that connection. And then it says He "shall glorify him immediately". As we know Christ will be glorified publicly and universally, but that awaits Him. But there is an area of things in which His glory is known here now and that area of things is in the assembly. And so I was wondering if, as those of the assembly, we should have some enhanced appreciation of what the Lord Jesus Christ is to God. That led me to think of these scriptures which seem to suggest what the Lord Jesus is for God. First of all, it is "a sheep" - "God will provide himself with a sheep for a burnt-offering". And then He provides Himself a king in 1 Samuel 16. The thought of David as king originated with God - "I have provided me a king amongst his sons". Then He says in Isaiah 42: 1, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth". Then in Psalm 2: 7, "Thou art my Son". So we have the sheep for a burnt offering; God's king, God's servant, and then God's Son. I wonder if we might enquire about these references.

DMW These features speak of Christ, what He is to God - My King, My Servant, My Son. We could understand that this personal

outflow from God is to exalt this blessed Man, this Person, before our affections and before the universe that He has secured for God.

RFW In every aspect of His service He has glorified God, and God has glorified Him. In every situation that He took up there was perfection. We see that in respect of the Lord Jesus as the sheep for a burnt offering, as God's King, His Servant, or supremely as His Son.

DMW These are wonderful thoughts to get into our souls. We speak often - and rightly so - of the devotedness, the committal, of the Lord Jesus, for the Father's pleasure and for God's will; but the Father is with Him in everything, and He is committed to the Lord Himself, would you say?

RFW Just so. The anointing of Christ implies the full committal of God to Him. The anointing brings out the blessedness of divine committal to that One, God having full assurance that He would carry through everything in perfection.

JRB What chords of affection must have been struck as God looked down on the Lord Jesus as suggested by what it says here, "they went both of them together", Gen 22: 6. It is a beautiful suggestion.

RFW We can take this up in the light of the New Testament, can we not? The type is somewhat imperfect in that Isaac did not know exactly what was going to happen. But, in the antitype, there was perfect consonance, perfect knowledge between the Father and the Son as to all that was going to be carried through. It has often been said that the expression "they went both of them together" could be written over John's gospel.

APD We are often engaged with what God is towards us in Christ, but this is a wonderful thought, to see what Christ is to God, do you think?

RFW Yes, I had that in mind. We often approach things from our own standpoint, to grasp something of what He is for us, and what has been secured for us in Him; but it gives us enlargement in our thoughts and our affections, to see what He is for God, and what He accomplished for God.

KAK Would you help as to God as the Provider? God took up that line of things even in relation to Adam, providing the coats of skin.

RFW Yes, He did. He has provided all things as a faithful Creator, but it is blessed to think of God providing for Himself in view of the accomplishment of all that was in His purpose. The burnt-offering character of the death of Christ brings out all that He was for the pleasure of God, expressed fully in His death.

TRV Would it be His pleasure in having man before Him, as He saw in purpose as He set on in a type in Adam? But Adam could not be the satisfaction that His beloved Son could be.

RFW It is a blessed thought that it was in the purpose of God to dwell with men, that order of being, men such as ourselves, who have been brought into a relationship to Him. And how was He to bring it about? I think sometimes - if it is right to do so - of the obstacles, the difficulties; what had to be overcome in order that God's rest and His pleasure in men might be secured. But He has secured it all perfectly in Christ.

DMW It is affecting that He did take up man as an order of being to have for Himself. The Lord Jesus as a Man is the Accomplisher of the pleasure of God in having this before Him. The kind of manhood that God desires is perfectly filled out in the Accomplisher of all that God had in His mind.

RFW Yes, indeed. In His pathway here below God saw in Him all that He ever desired in man; but then, manward, the Lord expressed all that God could be for men.

WSC Do you think this thought of "both of them together" comes out in the Lord's prayer in John 17 where He speaks to the Father? We see it from His side, of course, but there is an opening up of the oneness between them - "They were thine, and thou gavest them me", John 17: 6. And He says "Father", and "Holy Father", and "Righteous Father".

RFW It is interesting that, as the Lord proceeds in that prayer, He utters those expressions - "Holy Father" and "Righteous Father" - as if these sentiments rise up in His soul as He goes over the way that divine purpose had ordered things. There He was, as the

Accomplisher of it all, speaking to His Father in the light of all that was in the Father's mind and heart as to the men that had been given to Him.

DMW You say it refers to "men" - plurality - that is your thought?

RFW "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world. They were thine, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word". As I understand it, they have been given to Him in divine purpose. Redemption comes in, and purchase comes in, but they are given in divine purpose to Christ, "the men whom thou gavest me". And then the great work of Christ comes in that the reality of it might be secured. I think that we are to touch something of the blessedness of belonging to Christ in purpose as together collectively.

TRV Would that link to the passage, "to the redemption of the acquired possession to the praise of his glory", Eph 1: 14?

RFW Yes, the possession has been acquired now; the great work of redemption has been accomplished and things can proceed from that standpoint. I wondered if that was in view in the Father glorifying Him as the Lord speaks of it in John 13. He anticipates the completion of His work, and His place in the Father's presence. He is glorified there as the Completer of all that He had given Him to do.

APD What do you understand by the reference, "God also shall glorify him in himself"?

RFW It involves, as I understand it, the present glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of God. It is "in himself". He is glorified in that heavenly position in God. He is the supreme Object of His affections - glorified "in himself". He has been given such a place of glory and honour in the Father's affections, the affections of God, as the Accomplisher of all His will. I am not sure that I can convey the thought fully but it seems to me it touches something very sublime, the infinite joy and satisfaction of God in this Person.

APD Is it the special place He has in God's affections?

RFW In John 17, He says, "I desire ... that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the

foundation of the world", v 24. That would be a distinctive glory of the Lord Jesus Christ that we will behold. But the Lord is in that glory now, is He not? He is in that place of distinctive, blessed honour that has been bestowed upon Him. We will have the privilege, according to His desire, of seeing it. But "thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" relates, as I understand it, to the affections that were there in relation to the Lord Jesus as One who would be the Accomplisher of what was in the divine purpose.

DMW Is this in any way touchable now in the service of God - this vision in John 17: 24?

RFW As to the actuality of it, the Lord says there, "I desire that where I am they also may be with me". We - very thankfully and by the Spirit - get some impression of the glory of Christ, but I thought that it related more to the reference in chapter 13, "glorify him immediately". There is an area in which the Lord's glory is known now, but there is something that awaits us, it seems to me, in the reference in John 17, "that they also may be with me". Think of the blessedness of being with Him to see His glory, that distinctive glory that has been given to Him!

DMW I am just enquiring. We are not there actually in the service of God, but we are spiritually there, touching glorious things.

RFW I think the Father delights to give us, in the service of God, a sense of the way in which He has honoured Christ. I think He delights to give us some fresh touch of that in every occasion. I trust we have had some fresh sense today of the glory that He has bestowed upon His beloved Son.

AL Is the glory in John 17 all encompassed in the burnt-offering? I am thinking of verse 24, and the relations between the Father and the Son that come out in that chapter, and I am just struck with the thought of the burnt-offering mentioned three times in the early part of Genesis 22.

RFW Well, no doubt what is presented in type in the burnt-offering underlies all that the Lord is speaking of in John 17. The burnt-offering refers to the pleasure that God had in the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who was here in perfect accord with His will, and went

into death in full obedience to that will. That brought out a wondrous fragrance for the delight of God the Father's heart. The burnt-offering really speaks of the perfect acceptability of that One. It underlies all the other offerings. There was One there who was perfectly acceptable to Him, and that underlies all that has been accomplished. So, all that the Lord Jesus has accomplished in His death will ever be reflected in the glory that is His - that is, the glory that is His as Man. There are glories that belong to the Lord Jesus because of the greatness of His Person, who He is, glories that were ever His and ever will be. Coming into manhood, He has fulfilled the will of God and acquired glories - we might say reverently - that were not there before.

KNP The prophet says, "he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and was as a sheep dumb before her shearers, and he opened not his mouth", Isa 53: 7. Is that another glory that we see coming out in the way that He was subject and led in the direction that the Father would have Him go?

RFW Quite so, what a Man He was! And He even lays down His life as under commandment, does He not, in John's gospel: "I have received this commandment of my Father", chap 10: 18. The fulfilment of what was in the divine mind was before the Lord Jesus in that moment, and He had received commandment to lay down His life to bring it about. That would relate to Genesis 22, would it not?

DMW "I, if I be lifted up" (John 12: 32) - there would be something in that in regard of drawing all to Him as the Accomplisher. There must be something in that?

RFW "I, if I be lifted up ... will draw all to me". It has been helpfully said that it may not be all without *exception*, but it is all without *distinction*. That is, it is all without distinction of race, or distinction of nationality - "all". There is a central gathering point for all men in the One who has been lifted up.

MN Do we get an appreciation of these things in Peter? He says as to the Lord accomplishing these things, "For he received from God the Father honour and glory, such a voice being uttered to him by the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my

delight ... being with him on the holy mountain", 2 Pet 1: 17, 18. Do we grow in appreciation as being with Him?

RFW Yes, that helps because I thought that part of the wonder of that statement is what you draw attention to, "this voice we heard uttered from heaven, being with him on the holy mountain". That is, the Father delighted to bring others into His appreciation of Christ - "this voice we heard". I think that is the line on which we come in. We would look for something of that in the service of God, something of that voice being heard. It was a wonderful moment when the Father could cause others to hear the expression of His delight in Christ

DMW Is there something of His appreciation of Christ to be shared by the Father with us when the Lord says - "that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them", John 17: 26?

RFW That is a wonderful expression, is it not? Do you understand it to mean that something of the character of the Father's love for the Son is to be in us? I remember a brother saying that, when the Lord Jesus left this scene, He left behind something in the hearts of His own that had never been there before; something of the love with which the Father had loved Him.

DMW Would that go with glorifying Him immediately?

RFW Yes, I think it would. And it would relate in our experience to the operations of the Father's Spirit, as mentioned in Ephesians 3: 16.

WSC I have thought for some time that the wave-offering (Exod 29: 24) is connected with this, our appreciation of how the Father thinks of Christ.

RFW Just explain for us all what the wave-offering is.

WSC It included the shoulder of the ram of consecration, and the priest would wave it heaven-ward in an action towards God.

RFW He would wave it; it would represent an appreciation of the One who had taken upon Himself the whole burden of carrying through the divine will. He would express to God an appreciation of

the ability of that blessed Person to carry out all that God's will involved.

DFH What had you in mind in the thought of the king?

RFW Well, God has provided Himself with a King as well. David as king accomplished great things for the people of Israel, but he also set on something that was for God. When you come to the Lord's address to Philadelphia, He speaks of the key of David, Rev 3: 7. That is, David was used by God to open up something that was not there before in the service of God. I wondered if that is related to the fact that God says, "I have provided me a king". He was looking beyond the need of Israel, and He was looking to that which would be established for His praise eternally.

DFH I wondered about it, because Jehovah Himself would be their King, and He was grieved that the people of Israel should want a man as king, but what you say is instructive that God had in mind something for Himself.

RFW When the people asked for a king to be appointed, God said through Samuel that this king is going to take things from you. It is interesting to read this section (1 Sam 8: 10-17) - Samuel says he will take, and take, and take. God's King comes in as the great provider, the great securer of the people of God, and the One who sets on that which would be for the service of God.

APD Do you think underlying that is "a man after his own heart", 1 Sam 13: 14. It is a beautiful expression - after *God's* own heart.

RFW "But now thy kingdom shall not continue: Jehovah has sought him a man after his own heart, and Jehovah has appointed him ruler over his people". It is a very fine thought. We have had three-day meetings in Glasgow based around that reference, the man after God's own heart. Paul brings it in, in his address in Acts 13: 22 - "I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will". So the suggestion is that God was looking for such a person and God has found Him.

APD You can understand God honouring Him, and delighting in our honouring Him too.

AL God always had David in mind.

RFW Well, I am sure it must have been so. He always had Christ in mind and He brings in these types to help us to understand His thoughts. The thought of a king *seems* to originate with the people but God had something in His mind even before that. He had in mind to bring in One who would set on and establish that which would be for His pleasure. So the Lord Jesus Christ has been made “both Lord and Christ”, Acts 2: 36. We come into the benefit of this now through the acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord.

DMW Why is it, then, that He is not exactly a king over us, but He is a King - God’s King? You have reminded us of the verse that he has been made “both Lord and Christ”. Could you say something as to the teaching?

RFW He does not exactly stand in relation to the assembly as her King, does He? But He stands in relation to us individually as Lord, which is a somewhat similar thought. The administration of the world to come will be under the Lord Jesus Christ. His kingship will be acknowledged; but, as to His Person, He will not be any more in the world to come than He is to us now as believers, as Lord.

APD So in Psalm 2: 6 it is “my king”. That is a beautiful suggestion. He says, “/ have anointed my king”. We are really brought into the appreciation of God’s King, are we not?

RFW It is lovely thought that God has a King, a Man after His own heart; a Man “who shall do all my will”, who can carry everything through. So what a man David was. It is interesting that, when you come to the Book of Revelation, the Spirit of God reverts to David - the “root of David” (Rev 5: 5), “the root and offspring of David” (Rev 22: 16), and “the key of David” as already referred to. There are a number of references to David, bringing out his importance as a type of Christ.

TRV So you mentioned the other day the introduction in Matthew - “Jesus Christ, Son of David” (Matt 1: 1), so that the book of relationship with God’s people is introduced in that way.

RFW Yes, exactly; and Matthew tells us that their King came to them, “meek, and mounted upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of

an ass”, Matt 21: 5. It is a beautiful scene. I do not suppose that the Lord will come to Israel again in that lowly way. He came that way once; He came “lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass” (Zech 9: 9), that He might fulfil the prophetic scripture, but I do not suppose He will come that way again.

HJG Do we prove as the Lord is in our midst that He is Head, and not exactly King, to the assembly?

RFW Just so. There is there in Him everything that is proper to kingship, but we do not exactly know Him in that relationship in the assembly. Everything of the dignity and authority that belongs to Him is there, but that blessed One has come into relationship to the assembly as Head.

APD We speak of what is dominical in connection with the Lord’s supper, Rev 1: 10 *note a*. Would you help us about what we mean by that? It is the *Lord’s* supper, it is the *Lord’s* day.

RFW It is good to remember that. We gather in the acknowledgement that it is *His* Supper. We recognise His Lordship individually, do we not? We come together as those who recognise the Lordship of Christ, and we are individually subject to Him; and we take up the Supper from that standpoint.

APD I suppose it looks forward to the day when He will have dominion universally. But something of it is known in our souls, do you think?

RFW Exactly. We recognise the worth of that blessed Person to have universal dominion. We have that secret knowledge in our souls as we gather to remember Him. And we celebrate the Supper in that way “until He come” (1 Cor 11: 26), and He is going to come to take up universal dominion.

TRV So the footnote in Revelation 1: 10 says ‘belonging to the Lord’. Would it attract our hearts to this One, that anything belonging to Him should have attraction and therefore also authority?

RFW The key of David involves authority, and I have often wondered if it relates to the way that the Lord has opened up the truth to us. It relates to what has been established. David was able

to establish things; he was able to lay the basis for the temple to be built, and the service of God to be maintained in it. The key of David suggests something opened up through David's service. The Lord has opened up certain things to us, in the recovery of the truth especially. He has opened them up in an authoritative way; and I think one of the most blessed things that has been opened up to us has been the service of God. When the Lord says to Philadelphia, "that no one take thy crown" (Rev 3: 11), I believe it refers to that. Others can say what they think about that, but there is something distinctive to Philadelphia as laying hold of the fact that the Lord using the key of David has opened up certain things. They take hold of them, and they are rejoicing in them, and that is their crown. It is right to rejoice in the experience of the service of God, I believe.

PBK Are we to understand that coming to the Lord's supper is a personal matter?

RFW We assemble as those who are individually subject to the Lord. As we assemble we look around and take account of the brethren; and we relate to one another as those who are individually lovers of the Lord Jesus, and subject to His authority in our own lives. And in that way there is a company assembled of persons able to move together into partaking of the Supper and what flows from it.

PBK What has been said is helpful, that we come personally; but then we come into a collective matter.

RFW Yes - "we being assembled to break bread", Acts 20: 7. There is something very precious about the thought of assembling. I think the moments in which we sit together before the occasion begins are precious, because the spirit of what belongs to the assembly properly is in motion as the saints assemble.

JRB I was wondering if the passage in the beginning of Philippians 2 would help us in the understanding of this, that pathway of down-stooping love. It says, "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and granted him a name, that which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly and earthly and

infernals beings, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to God the Father's glory", v 9-11.

RFW That is very wonderful. It is one of the fullest descriptions of His Lordship. But it is very precious that, even in that statement of His universal dominion, it is "to God the Father's glory". There is no divergence. The glory is reflected back on God the Father, and the Lord would have it so.

Then, He is also the Servant. That is a very precious thought - "Behold my servant". This scripture is referred to in Matthew's gospel, and it is interesting that when the gospel writer quotes it, he adds something - "my beloved, in whom my soul has found its delight" Matt 12: 18. How precious to think of the beloved Servant, the Lord Jesus, here for the carrying through of every thought of God - "my servant".

KAK Does the upholding here link with God's provision?

RFW Yes, it would. It would relate to the anointing. God is fully committed to this blessed Person - "whom I uphold". He was rejected, His service to Israel was rejected, but God is upholding Him. Mr Darby says in relation to this section that God has a controversy with Israel over their treatment of Christ (see *A Brief Outline of the Books of the Bible*, on Isaiah - Collected Writings vol 19 p9). He says, "I am Jehovah, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images", Isa 42: 8. God has a controversy with Israel in respect of their treatment of Christ as His Servant. He came in that lowly way to them, and God upheld Him and they rejected Him. And God is still upholding Him, and they will come to respect Him, they will have to bow to Him and acknowledge Him.

WSC Would you link Hebrews 1 with this - "the expression of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power", Heb 1: 3?

RFW That refers to the Lord Jesus, does it not? It is the Son "whom he has established heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power".

WSC I was just thinking of what a Servant He was for God, and it goes on, "having made by himself the purification of sins". Was all His work, and how He was down here, reflective of the perfection of His Person?

RFW It is blessed to think of the greatness of His Person in those verses and then the greatness of what He has accomplished. He, "having made by himself the purification of sins, set himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high". So that work was accomplished perfectly. You might say, from one standpoint, that, whether anybody benefited from it or not, the work was accomplished perfectly. It was done by Himself - or for Himself - and for the accomplishment of God's purpose.

DFH Does the Lord's character as Servant extend to setting justice in the earth? "The isles shall wait for His law." I am just thinking of all that the Lord will accomplish for God. Finally, He delivers up the kingdom, 1 Cor 15: 24.

RFW He will go on to that. "He shall not faint nor be in haste, till he have set justice in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law", Isa 42: 4. It is very fine thing, that justice will be set in the earth. We come under the administration of this blessed One now, do we not?

APD Is there something in this reference, "Behold"? John the baptist says, "Behold the Lamb of God", John 1: 36. Do you think we need to be contemplators: John says, "we have contemplated his glory", John 1: 14? Beholding it would not be a casual view, it would be something like "looking stedfastly on Jesus" in Hebrews 12: 2.

RFW We have the peculiar privilege at the present time of seeing Jesus "crowned with glory and honour" before the time of His public manifestation. It is open to us now - "we see not yet all things subjected to *him*, but we see Jesus, who was made some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour", Heb 2: 8, 9. When He was here He received from God the Father honour and glory but now we can see him "crowned with glory and honour". It is a blessed privilege that is open to us at the present time.

TRV And the experience of Stephen, to see the heavens opened: is that open to us?

RFW Well, what an experience was given to Stephen distinctively! He saw Him standing there, as if He was ready to return had they received his message. Now, we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour. Now He is sitting - the scripture we had yesterday says, "The Lord ... sat at the right hand of God", Mark 16: 19. We love to think of the Lord Jesus, sitting restfully there, we might say. The gospel of Mark speaks extensively of the Lord's activity in service, all that He did; and at the end of the gospel it says that He "was taken into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God", Mark 16: 19. Hebrews gives us that too, in chapter 10, "*he*, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God, waiting from henceforth until his enemies be set for the footstool of his feet", v 12, 13. It conveys to me a scene of restfulness. The great work of redemption has been accomplished; the Lord Jesus has gone up. He has offered one sacrifice for sins that never needs to be repeated, and He has set Himself down, waiting. There is no anxiety about how the whole matter will be carried through to completion. He is not concerned at the present time about how His enemies are to be dealt with, He is concerned about His assembly. The day will come when He will ask for the nations as Psalm 2 gives us: "Ask of me, and I will give thee nations for an inheritance", v 8. That day will come. It has often been pointed out in relation to John 17 that He does not ask for the nations there - "I do not demand concerning the world, but concerning those whom thou hast given me", v 9. At the present time, the Lord's affections are going out to the saints of the assembly, and He is waiting in perfect restfulness for the working out of all that is in the divine mind concerning the earth, and concerning His earthly people.

DMW The controversy that you mentioned is really two-fold: the mercy of God towards Israel is very great as to receiving the ministry of the Spirit. They rejected Christ, and they rejected the Spirit, and "wrath has come upon them to the uttermost", 1 Thess 2: 16.

RFW What a thing that is; they have closed their eyes, as we have in the end of the Acts. There is something judicial about it - "lest

they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them”, chap 28: 27. There is that which is governmental that has come upon the nation, but God will take them up again: “the gifts and the calling of God are not subject to repentance”, Rom 11: 29. He will bring them in on the ground of mercy, as Romans tells us. There are two great controversies in this section in Isaiah. God is speaking to men about Christ as His Servant, but He is also speaking to man about His greatness as Creator, as we get in chapter 40. These are current issues. God is speaking to man about His glory as Creator, and what belongs to Him. It is set aside largely in the world, what God is as Creator; and then He is speaking to men about Christ, His Servant.

KRO Is there something notable about the Spirit being put upon Him? We have been reminded over the past few days of the Lord being marked by the Spirit descending as a dove, and, after he is anointed, the Spirit comes upon David too.

RFW The Spirit is identifying Himself completely with the Lord Jesus here as Man. In the type of the ark, the gold is put on the acacia wood. There was that in the acacia wood that could perfectly support the gold; there was that in the manhood of Jesus that could sustain perfectly all that was in the Spirit of God. “I will put my Spirit upon him”: it is a lovely touch. It is gentle, it is careful, it is deliberate - “I will put my Spirit upon him”.

DMW This is the Holy Spirit, but is there a character here that may be for further enquiry - “my servant”, “my soul”, “my Spirit”?

RFW Is it that, at the baptism of Jesus, the Trinity was really in expression, we might say, for the first time?

DMW It is helpful to think about these things. They are very deep, and yet we can never think of the Godhead, as we speak of it, being in any way other than unified. Yet each divine Person is distinguished, is distinct.

RFW That is right. I am exercised personally as to the worship of God, to understand what is involved in it; because each divine

Person is distinct as you say. There must be something very great about the worship of God Himself.

MN Do we get a touch of affection about Benjamin as a type: "The beloved of Jehovah, - he shall dwell in safety by him; He will cover him all the day long, And dwell between his shoulders", Deut 33: 12? I was thinking of the Lord carrying everything for God on His shoulders and God's affection resting upon Him.

RFW Christ was God's beloved Son, was He not - "Thou art my Son". Solomon is the great type of the one that was loved by God. It was God that sent Nathan to name him Jedidiah, 'beloved of Jehovah' (2 Sam 12: 25), before he did anything. David is a type of one who is loved because of what he was, and what he had done. Both combine in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So we have been taken "into favour in the Beloved" (Eph 1: 6), and both the David and Solomon types come together in that reference.

So, he says, "Thou art my Son". There is something infinitely precious in the expression, "Thou art my Son; / this day have begotten thee". Think of what was in purpose, and we get the veil drawn aside and we hear the Lord saying, "Lo, I come ... to do, O God, thy will", Heb 10: 7. But there was a moment in time when this blessed Person came here in Manhood - "Thou art my Son; / this day have begotten thee".

MN How do we develop more in these things? I think of John the baptist; he says, "He must increase, but I must decrease", John 3: 30. Would that help us?

RFW It would indeed, and the importance of contemplation already referred to; "we have contemplated his glory", John says, John 1: 14. We have to set time aside for these things and engage our minds and affections with this blessed Person so that He becomes more precious to us. May we have a greater sense of being drawn into the blessedness of the Father's affections for Him!

APD In the quotation of this in Hebrews 1, he says, "to which of the angels said I ever, *Thou* art my Son: this day have *I* begotten thee?" (v 5); as if He is deliberately distinguishing Christ above every other.

RFW Think of the moment in time when the Father said this to Christ: “*Thou* art my Son”! Think of what it was for that blessed Man to be here in this wonderful relationship to His Father. What sonship really means was seen for the first time in expression in Him.

DMW You could not think of any separation between the Father and the Son: “we have contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only begotten with a father”; and the two of them were together.

RFW Quite so. They went both together. It says in John’s gospel, “Jesus therefore, knowing all things that were coming upon him”, chap 18: 4. There was a perfect knowledge of all that was before Him. It says, “He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed”, Isa 50: 4. The Lord knew perfectly what was before Him in His pathway. The Father and the Son went together.

AL Would the term “my Son” imply divine relationships and affections?

RFW There is a kind of infinite blessedness about it, “*Thou* art my Son”. It is the perfection of feeling between the Father and the Son.

TRV I am just thinking, as you are referring to “they went both of them together”, that the distinctiveness of the Persons is seen in the garden when He says, “nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done”, Luke 22: 42 AV.

RFW Well, He had the right of having a will of His own, but there was no divergence; just a reassertion of His blessed, perfect obedience and submission. It was an assertion of the unity of these wills; there was no question of the Lord’s will being different from the Father’s.

WSC Even from His birth, it is amazing that they were given the privilege of naming Him. I was thinking of what we had in the first reading about His Father’s business even at twelve years old; but the perfection of His Sonship came in immediately as He was born.

RFW I believe so; “this day” relates to that. In Matthew, his father is given to name Him, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus” chap 1: 21. In

Luke it is His mother, Luke 1: 31. They are both brought into the privilege of giving Him a name.

DMW The reference made, “nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” did not really require an answer from the Father, did it?

RFW What delight it must have given the Father to hear it!

APD Going back to Genesis 22, it is “thine only son, whom thou lovest”, v 2; and then in the reference you made in John 10, He really gave the Father fresh occasion to love Him.

RFW It is a precious thought. “On this account the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again..... I have received this commandment of my Father”. John 10: 17, 18. Think of the reality of that: the Lord Jesus here as Man having received commandment to lay down His life. Think of what that meant to Him and yet He accepted it in perfect obedience and drew out the Father’s love on that account.

APD Then in Romans 6, He was "raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father" (v 4), as if that was the outshining of the Father’s love.

RFW You might say that all the glory that related to the name of the Father entered into the resurrection of Christ.

DMW That was the answer to “nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done”. He was raised by the glory of the Father.

RFW The answer was in resurrection, was it not?

APD It has been said that the Father was there first at the grave. Mr James Taylor spoke about his pent up feelings (vol 56 p 51); what it meant to the Father to be without Christ for three days and three nights.

RFW Divine feelings were very real, and very intense. We often think of the death of Christ, what it meant to His Father. Any father would feel deeply the sufferings of his child, but think of what it was for the Father to take account of the sufferings and death of His Son; and of His burial. You can understand the glory of the Father entering into His resurrection.

In John 13, I just thought that there is something infinitely wonderful about the expression "God also shall glorify him in himself". It seems to suggest the delight of God in glorifying that Person, the Son of man. It says, as to the Lord Jesus, He "has been received up in glory", 1 Tim 3: 16. But there is something intensely beautiful about God glorifying Him - delighting to glorify Him as the One who has fulfilled all His will. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him". God is glorified in Him in everything He did. He sustained and carried through every thought of God; and God glorifies Him in Himself.

DMW Would you say just a word as to the wonderful privilege to be let in on these things; having the light of these things and the desire to be in the gain of them - "glorify him immediately". There is no place else where we can get these touches, is there?

RFW No, I do not think so; it is a wonderful privilege indeed. It is something we should appreciate deeply that we are in an area of things where the glory of Christ is known now.

KAK Is that an inside thing? I am thinking of how Judas has gone out at this point. The Lord was not seen publicly in immediate glorification. It was for His own.

RFW Exactly. His public glory has not been seen. He has been glorified in God: "and God will glorify him immediately" relates to the affections of the saints now.

KAK Is that seen immediately when He assembles with them after His resurrection?

RFW Yes, quite so. He comes in among them bringing His peace - "Peace be to you", John 20: 19.

Denton

24th April 2011

Key to Initials:

J R Bellamy, Vancouver; W S Chellberg, Wheaton; A P Devenish, Edmonton; H J Glass, Toronto; D F Hugill, Vancouver; P B Klassen, Aberdeen ID; K A Knauss, Indianapolis; A Lidbeck, Göteborg; M Noel, Ormond Beach; K R Oliver, New York; K N Pye, New York; T R VanderHoek, Denton; D M Welch, Denton; R F White, Londonderry

COMING INTO GOD'S HOUSE

Alan J McSeveney

1 Corinthians 11: 3

Acts 16: 22-34

Ephesians 6: 1-3

1 Peter 2: 1-5

What I have to say in this preaching tonight, dear hearers, is from a slightly different angle than that which I would normally take in the preaching. I am conscious of all who are here waiting on a word from the Lord, and I just trust that the Holy Spirit might take what I have to say and apply it in His own way to every heart.

This is the second preaching that some of us have attended today. In the earlier preaching, our brother reminded us of the temple that King Solomon built in Jerusalem. Our brother also emphasised how tall the porch of the temple was. In thinking and praying about this preaching, I thought about the temple and its porch. Then I thought about every person that I anticipated being at this preaching, having been baptised to the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and having a place within the porch of the house of God. What I simply mean by that is this; that if you have been baptised as a member of a believing household but are not a believer yourself you are not part of the world that is outside, but neither are you part of the house of God that is inside. What we can say about you is that you have been brought into an area of protection, blessing and responsibility.

My desire in this preaching, with the Spirit's help, is to show you how you can become not only someone who is within the porch of the house, but someone who is actually part of the house of God; someone who is not just a member of a believing household, but someone who is actually a believer. You may say to me, well, I am not sure whether my parents are Christians. That does not matter, dear friend. Peter stood up at the beginning of the book of the Acts and as he preached the gospel he said, "For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord

our God may call", Acts 2: 39. The gospel goes out to everybody. It is for the "whosoever"; it is not only for the Jew, it is for the Gentile. It is not only for those who have believing parents; it is for everybody, irrespective of their background. I might just say in passing that God is no respecter of persons. The only thing that can be said of those who have believing parents is that their responsibility increases because of the privileges they have been given. I would say right at the beginning of this preaching, that someone who goes out of time into eternity without Christ from such a privileged background will bear the judgment of God more severely than someone who did not have those privileges. The scripture says of the servant who knew the lord's will and failed to do it, that that servant will be scourged with more stripes than the servant who did not know the lord's will and failed to do it, Luke 12: 47. So you see that it is a serious and sobering matter to have parents who are Christians and for you to be in this area of privilege.

Perhaps you wonder why I have read in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. It is only to remind you that Christ is the Head of every man. In this section, of course, the male is in mind. Christ is Head of the male, and the male is the head of the female, but it is right to say without any doubt that Christ is the Head of all mankind. He is the Head. It does not matter whether you are a believer or not. He is still the Head according to this section and because He is the Head, each one of us has a responsibility to regulate our lives by Christ. That is our responsibility whether we believe it or whether we do not. He arrived at this exalted position in a way that demands our respect, our affection and our faith.

We sang in our opening hymn of the way that the Lord Jesus came into this world. You remember that Adam was created. You also remember that Eve his wife, was formed from a rib taken from Adam's side. You know that each one of us after that came into this world by way of natural generation. We have to tell you that with the Lord Jesus Christ it was different; He came in by way of incarnation. He is "over all God, blessed for ever" (Rom 9: 5), He came in to this world by way of the virgin. His conception in the womb was entirely miraculous. A virgin conceived and gave birth and the One who was

born was the Son of God, King of Israel, and Son of man. That blessed One had the right to rule over the whole universe. He had legions of angels He could have called upon to assert His right, but He did not do so because when He came the first time He came to suffer and to die.

Think of the Lord of glory leaving that scene where angels surrounded Him and praised Him. He came down and down and down. He came not to the palace. When He was born, His mother brought Him forth, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger. Do you know what a manger is? It is an animal's feed box. That was where He was laid. When He came the first time, He came to suffer, right from the moment of His birth. Not only was He not born in a palace, He was not brought up in a palace either. He was brought up in an area that I suppose not many of us would like to live in; an area that was referred to as "Galilee of the nations", Matt. 4: 15. One dear man said, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth" (John 1: 46); that is where the Lord Jesus was brought up. He was different from us. He was not influenced wrongly by the men of Nazareth. He grew up before God "as a tender sapling", Isaiah 53: 2. There was a delicacy and a sensitivity in His humanity. He knew no sin, He did no sin and in Him is no sin; even though He was brought up in Nazareth in Galilee. When He was thirty years of age God brought Him forward and the heavens parted asunder as God expressed His delight in His beloved Son. There were great men present at the Jordan that day, but there was only one Man, unique beyond compare, for whom God would open the heavens and say, "This is my beloved Son", Matt 3: 17.

That same One was anointed by God "with the Holy Spirit and with power", Acts 10: 38. He went about "doing good, and healing all that were under the power of the devil". You can read the gospels yourself, dear friend, and find the way the Lord Jesus brought in blessing after blessing to poor men and women. Yet we find that though, "He came to his own ... his own received him not", John 1: 11. Not only did they not receive Him, but they delivered Him up to the Roman ruler and ultimately they cried out that He might be crucified.

Before the Lord Jesus reached Calvary He suffered more than any one of us could ever suffer. Think of what He went through at the hands of the Roman soldiers. Think of the way that Pilate caused Him to be scourged. Think of the way they embedded that crown of thorns upon His holy brow. I tell you; "they made long their furrows" upon His back, Ps 129: 3. The prophet tells us that His visage was marred more than that of any other man, Isa 52: 14. He was the Messiah of Israel, the Son of God and yet "they cried out saying, "Crucify, crucify him", John 19: 6. "He went out", according to John's gospel, "bearing his cross" (v: 17), and "when they came to the place which is called Skull, there they crucified him", Luke 23: 33. There was a robber on one side, and a robber on the other, and God's beloved Son in the centre. For three hours, men poured out their mockery upon the Lord Jesus. At the end of those three hours, the scene was shrouded in darkness. No one can fully fathom what the Lord Jesus went through from the sixth to the ninth hour but at the end of the three hours the Lord cried out from the depths of His soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me", Matt 27: 46.

We often say that His own disciples left Him, Judas betrayed Him, Peter denied Him, and God forsook Him. I need hardly tell you that it was not because of anything God found in Christ. When God forsook His beloved Son, He was suffering on account of sins not His own. The Lord Jesus was satisfying God in respect of the sin question. I would say that if you really want to know how God feels about sin; see Him forsaking His beloved Son for three hours of darkness when the Lord Jesus hung upon the cross. When the three hours ended, the Lord Jesus cried with a loud voice, delivered up His spirit, and His life was ended. That life was taken from the earth. It came to an end. He could say Himself "the things concerning me have an end", Luke 22: 37. His life was ended on others' behalf. He did not need to bear the penalty of death for anything He had done, but I tell you, dear friend, He bore it for things that I have done. Then the soldier in an act of barbarity thrust his spear into the side of Christ and from thence, "there came out blood and water", John 19: 34. Thank God for the precious blood of Jesus. It is able to cleanse from every sin. The Lord Jesus was buried. We are often reminded that He was with the rich in His

death, but the fact that He was buried could only mean that He was buried on others' behalf. He deserved to live! He did not deserve to die, but if a person dies, that person must be buried, and if He died for others, He was buried for others.

It is a wonderful privilege to be able to tell you that the Lord Jesus is no longer in the grave. He was there for three days and three nights but, not only did He go into the grave, He also came out of the grave. He is alive to die no more. After forty days, He was "received up in glory", 1 Tim 3: 16. He is in heaven, a Prince and a Saviour, and He is the Head of every man. Has He not a right to be so? Has He not a right to be your Head? Has He not a right to have control of your life? Has He not a right to have control of my life? Who is like unto Him? Who can compare with Him? He is the incomparable Christ, and He is the Head of every man.

Dear friend, if you are here tonight without Christ, you are serving other lords and other gods. You are in bondage, but I want to tell you about a different kind of Man. The Lord Jesus is your Head, and that for blessing; and if you would only surrender yourself to the claims of this Saviour, you would get the blessing of His headship. If you are the head of a household, your family would too. Oh yes, they need to come to Christ for themselves. That is what I am going to preach about, but when the head of a house is converted, the whole family gets the benefit of it. So that Christ is the Head of every male here. The male is the head of the female. That is a regulated, divinely-provided household condition. It is so lacking in this world. There is many a poor child that suffers because of that but I tell you, that when God comes into the head of a household's life He has the whole household in mind for blessing. He is also able to set the solitary in families, Psalms 68: 6. Someone may say, 'I do not have a Christian background'. Never mind, dear friend, God is able to set the solitary in families. He finds you on your own and comes into your life. He saves you and He adds you to the Christian circle. He is such a God. The order here is God, Christ, man and woman. It is not that Christ is not God Himself but, as Man, God has made Christ Head of every male.

That is His position. How does it work out practically? Let us turn to Acts 16.

There are two households mentioned in Acts 16. One of them had a certain woman called Lydia as the head and she worshipped God. When the Lord opened her heart to attend to the things spoken by Paul, her whole household was baptised. It does not say in the scripture that the Lord opened their hearts, but they were under her authority and were baptised along with her. They would appreciate Lydia as a Christian householder. However, there was a far greater contrast in the jailor's household, and that is why I read of him.

It is likely that the only person that controlled the jailor was the person who was in authority in Philippi. If this jailor was the kind of person that is in control of jails in some parts of the world now, you can be sure that this was not a man who would be gentle to his household. This man was prepared to lay many stripes upon Paul and Silas and cast them into the inner prison. The inner prison is the part of the prison that is reserved for the worst kind of prisoner. That is where the jailor thrust Paul and Silas. "Suddenly there was a great earthquake"; a natural phenomenon took place. We have seen in the past week how men's lives can be turned upside down in a moment of time, through a natural phenomenon taking place. The earthquake shook the jailor. He was awakened out of his sleep. He saw the doors were open and drew a sword. He was going to kill himself thinking the prisoners had fled but Paul called out with a loud voice. Listen to this Christian speaking here. A man who, only a few hours before received many stripes on his back, called; "Do thyself no harm". The jailor "rushed in, and, trembling, fell down before Paul and Silas. And leading them out said, Sirs, what must I do that I may be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house".

Christ is the Head of every man, but when I as an individual come to know Christ myself, I bow to Him as Lord. Indeed the scripture says elsewhere that I must confess that Jesus is Lord, Rom 10: 9. That is what the Lord Jesus is to me as an individual. Have you bowed the knee to Him? I have to tell you, dear friend, you will

do so sooner or later. Now you have an opportunity to bow the knee to Him for blessing. If you miss God's opportunity of mercy, you will bow the knee to Him before you are condemned to everlasting punishment. The jailor bowed the knee to Christ. Paul and Silas spoke the word to the jailor, and all that were in his house. The jailor believed in the Lord Jesus. He was saved, and there was a different atmosphere in his household. That is the point I wanted to stress. The jailor was a man who was prepared to scourge people but now he took Paul and Silas "the same hour of the night and washed them from their stripes." What a tender service that was. He did more than that; he laid the table for them. What a change in this man's life. The scripture then says that the jailor "rejoiced with all his house", that is he 'rejoiced householdly'. Whether the household believed or not is not mentioned. The fact is that the jailor believed and there was rejoicing in the household. That has been the case in many a household.

I was thinking of a man that I heard of once from the part of the country that I come from. He was in prison many times. He was a terrible man, given over to drink and violence; but one day a believer gave him a gospel leaflet. That man went to the preaching that night, knelt down, confessed his sins, and was converted. He then went back home and there was an instant change in the atmosphere of that household. There was rejoicing in that household, when the head of the household was converted.

Most of you present at the preaching have Christian parents. Your father is not violent. He prays for you. He opens the Bible, and reads to you. Do you not think you are privileged? Do you ever thank God for it? You say, 'I do not know God myself as a Saviour', but did you ever thank God for the privileged upbringing that you have had? If you have never done so yet, dear friend, let me say tenderly it is about time you did so. You are in a very favourable position. You do not need to worry about drunkenness or violence in your household. That is not your life. You are privileged. You are blessed. Your parents do their best for you. Let me ask you dear friend, what do you do in return? That is why I read in Ephesians 6.

Some may be saying, 'What is he doing in the gospel preaching reading from Ephesians 6?' Only to say this; remember you are part of a believing household and as such, you can be said to be, 'in Lord'. You are under the Lord's authority whether you are a believer or not and, because you are part of a believing household, Paul has something to say to you. Here it is in Ephesians 6 verse 1, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just". That is what you have to do as a child. You obey your parents as far as it is consistent with the will of the Lord; but you do obey. You not only obey, you also honour your parents. The scripture says, "Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with a promise". It does not say 'which was the first commandment', but "which is the first commandment". It has a current bearing for us. What does it mean to "honour thy father and thy mother"? It is more than to obey. It is esteeming and revering. Have you always esteemed your parents? You ought to, because it is a commandment that is binding upon you, and if you break the commandment you sin against God. If I sin against God, I must die the death of a sinner, and if I die the death of a sinner, I must face the punishment of God. You are in this privileged area and you have parents that care for you and look after you. You can sing hymns and read the Bible. You lack for nothing that is needful in a material sense, but do you obey, and do you honour? You say, 'Sometimes it is irksome'. You feel your liberty is confined. You do not feel that you are able to do everything that you would like to do. Do you know why that is? It is because you have not come to Christ yourself. That is why. You have not come to Christ yourself. You are within the porch of the house - that blessed area, that safe area, that privileged area. That is where you are but you are not part of the house itself because you have not come to Christ yourself.

My burden in the preaching tonight as I close in 1 Peter 2 is that you might move from simply being a member of a believing household to becoming a believer for yourself. It is the only way to happiness. It is the only way to blessing. I want to tell you that what is offered in the gospel is not second best. It is the best that God could offer to satisfy the heart of men. You say, 'How would I know? I have not tried everything'. Maybe you have not, but others have;

and this is the best! It certainly is. There is nothing to be compared with Christ. There is nothing to be compared with Christian blessings. This is the best! Lay aside the malice and forget the guile, the hypocrisies, the envying and evil speaking. These things mark us all but they are sinful and need to be judged. Repent of your sins, and "as newborn babes desire earnestly the pure mental milk of the word, that by it ye may grow up to salvation, if indeed ye have tasted that the Lord is good". He is good, dear friend; He is good. Have you tasted that the Lord is good, have you come to Him for yourself? Are you a happy Christian? Are you a Christian at all?

I need to close soon, but I do want to stress this, that you need to come to the Lord Jesus for yourself. Yes, perhaps your parents have faith for time and eternity, but that does not mean to say that you are saved. If you see your parents enjoying Christianity, and you are not enjoying Christianity, the question has to be raised; are you a Christian yourself? You may be baptised, but that cannot save you eternally. Yes, you are privileged, but that only increases your responsibility. It is not a question of getting to the age of twelve and then coming forward and breaking bread. It is a question of your heart being worked upon by the Holy Spirit in new birth and God giving you the gift of faith. It is a question of repenting of your sins, and in doing so confessing your sins to God. It is a question of believing in the Lord Jesus and in the value of His precious blood and receiving forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Let me ask you in all sincerity, have you come to Christ for yourself? I am not saying you will have an experience like Saul of Tarsus. I do not mean that, but there needs to be a change in your life. There needs to be an inward conversion in your life. You need to say, 'I have made my choice; it is Christ for me'. Have you made your choice?

When I read this scripture, I think of Moses. Moses was taken by his mother, put in an ark of reeds, and laid in the sedge at the side of the river, Ex 2: 3. His mother exercised faith as a parent but there came a point in the experience of Moses when he had to make a decision for himself. He had the world before him, but the world did not satisfy him. Have you found that? Moses chose. He made

the right choice; he made the only choice: he chose Christ. We are warranted in saying that from Hebrews 11: 25, 26. He chose Christ. Will you come to Christ; the “living stone”? If you come to Him, you will become a living stone also. You will become one of the holy priesthood and be able to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. You will become a Christian yourself. You will no longer only be in the porch of the house; you will actually be part of the house. You will find your joy in speaking about the Lord Jesus, you will find your happiness in being amongst other Christians; and you will be real. There is no point in putting on a façade. It is a great thing to put everything to one side and venture your all on Christ! May you be able to say, 'I have made my choice: it is Christ for me'. Will you choose Christ? You need Him.

For His Name's sake.

Sunbury

13th March 2011

IMAGE AND LIKENESS

Jim D Gray

Genesis 1: 26-27; 3: 8-9; 4: 26-5: 2

Romans 3: 22 from “for there”-23; 6: 19 from “For even”-22; 8: 29

I have a thought as to image and likeness which I would like to consider in the presence of the brethren. God brought in man. Much had gone before this in Genesis 1 verses 1 and 2, and thereafter the preparation of the earth for the present creation, for man. The animal creation came out of the earth by the power of the word of God, remarkable matter! The earth had been brought through to its vegetative state on day three, then it brought forth living souls on day five and day six. God does not bring man out of the ground as He had done with the animals. He considers this personage, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”, divine Persons taking counsel to bring in a being, a remarkable being, man. He came from God as having intelligence - he is able to name the animals, every one of them. He had a mind capable of receiving divine communications and God sets him over the creation. He gives him instructions and there he was in the image of God. He represented God, but he also had likeness which is a moral thought. God gave man that likeness when He created him, when He breathed into man the breath of life, so that man has a distinction from every other creature, man is “of God”, Luke 3: 38.

I read in Genesis 3; God came down in the cool of the day into the garden. He was walking there and He expected Adam and Eve to walk with Him. I believe God had in mind to commune with man.

Coming to chapter 5 we have, “In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him”. Thus, after the fall, the scripture stresses the fact that man was made in the likeness of God; image is not mentioned. What man was morally in the likeness of God had been destroyed by the fall, and man now had a fallen, an evil nature, derived from the fall, and the poison of Satan was in his bloodstream. God does not give man up. He has in mind to secure

man in His likeness. How did man come to it, that he no longer represented God's likeness? I think there is an indication in Seth naming his son Enosh, 'Man as weak, mortal', (see chap 4: 26 and note). What was in the likeness of God had gone, and He recognises what fallen man is, and that therefore God has to work again. There were many thousands of human beings in the world who only caused God grief as shown in chapter 6. God, however, secures the faith line as described in chapter 5 where eventually there is a man, Enoch, who walks with God, and that man is a heavenly man. He finds his place in heaven; so that God has secured in this short space of time an answer in moral likeness in working in these persons, this line of weak, mortal man. That is the line it was - "he died", "he died", "he died", weak, mortal man, but there was something for God in faithfulness there. And then you get another man, Noah. He walked longer with God than Enoch. Enoch walked with God after his son was born. He walked for three hundred years. How pleasing it was to God, and God communed with him. That is what God desired even in the garden; God came down to commune with man and to have man walk with Him, and lead him into the secrets of His mind. Noah walked with God all his lifetime so that God had something to treasure.

Now, how do we come into it? That is what brings me to Romans 3. I thought there was an indication here in line with Seth naming his son Enosh, weak mortal man, with the fact that we are convicted, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God". I am a sinner, and come short of the glory of God. There is nothing in me that corresponds to the likeness of God and if there is to be true image there has to be likeness. This is presented to men in responsibility, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God". That is the bottom line, you might say, but it is the beginning of hope and recovery because it leads to man being justified; God able to justify. Thus, coming to the matter that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" is an answer in a man or a woman to the fact that the fall has taken place and there is no longer what God desired in man in likeness. But God has in mind to secure that likeness and this is the beginning of it. So it says, "for the shewing forth of his righteousness in the present time, so that he should be

just, and justify him that is of the faith of Jesus", v 26. That is the beginning. God justifies. It is what proceeds in the soul. I cannot go into the details in these chapters in Romans - "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5: 5), but then how do we take account of the features of likeness? That is why I read in chapter 6 because, before we come to Christ, before we acknowledge that all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God, "ye have yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness and to lawlessness unto lawlessness". After coming to Christ "so now yield your members in bondage to righteousness unto holiness". That is likeness, yielding your members in bondage to righteousness unto holiness. That is likeness coming to light in us as believers, the work of God in the soul by the presence of the Holy Spirit. And then, "having got your freedom from sin, and having become bondmen to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end eternal life". That is the prospect: "your fruit unto holiness" is fruit that God can delight in that is to His taste, and is secured in man through the gospel. Chapter 8 says that He "has condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh but according to Spirit. For they that are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh; and they that are according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit", v 3-5. There is a differentiation. There is power to differentiate in your soul, so we are now fulfilling righteousness, fulfilled responsibility. That is a completed matter in the power of the Holy Spirit. What a triumph for God, considering that man had so soon fallen, likeness was destroyed, and then God continues with man in flesh and blood condition and makes of him what is greater than what was in innocence, man that He can glorify. That is why I touched on chapter 8, "Because whom he has foreknown, he has also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son". The work of God in the believer is suited to a body of glory. "Conformed to the image of his Son" in its fullest thought involves being like Christ actually, Christ as a Man. There is a blessed Man in a body of glory, and "conformed to the image of his Son" involves that you and I anticipate that in finality we will be like Him.

There Christ, the centre of the throng,

Shall in His glory shine
(Hymn 178).

“So that he should be the firstborn among many brethren”. He is the Firstborn. He has His own distinctiveness, but He has many brethren that are like Him. What a triumph for God from a disaster, where likeness was destroyed, and image did not continue fully to represent God! Here image is secured again, representation of God in men. God has Man in righteousness in Christ, and man in righteousness in the saints; persons who know good and evil, and able to judge good and evil by the power of the Holy Spirit.

May the Lord just help us in these things. I trust we have the Holy Spirit. What a triumph for God! I trust we have had a little help as to God's great triumph in regard to likeness and image. For His Name's sake.

Edinburgh
10th May 2011

TABERNACLING

John Mitchell

Revelation 21: 1-4

I am always impressed with the fact that, as our brother has said, God came down into the garden that He might walk with man. Think of that: God was looking for company. You think of the greatness of God, but He created man that man should be for His pleasure, and that He should find His company there. That is a wonderful thing. The sad thing is, of course, that sin came in and that was lost and lost completely; and yet God Himself has worked to secure that which was in His mind. He never gives up things that are in His mind, but He works in His own way, and our brother has touched that in what he has said this evening. One of the things that strikes me is that God came down to *walk* with Adam, but here it does not say that: it says, "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God". I think that is something much more intimate. If I might use the expression, it is much closer. If you walk with somebody there is a degree of separation there, but here it says that He would tabernacle with them. I think that is something very wonderful just to think of what lies before us, beloved brethren, as we think of eternity and think of what God is securing for His own pleasure. It does not say anything about tabernacling in Genesis, or indeed in the Scriptures generally. You have to wait until you come to the end of the Scriptures to find out that it was in the mind of God that He should tabernacle with men. Think of that, that He should dwell with men. He not only comes into man's circumstances, though He certainly does, but as a result of the operations of Christ and the Spirit there is that in the assembly that is able to answer fully to the pleasure of God Himself. There is no disparity about it. There is nothing to hinder God tabernacling or dwelling with men. How near that is; how near God would come to men. He comes to us, we might say, and the wonderful point of it is that He finds His pleasure in it. How wonderful that is! Our brother has read very helpfully about the history of man and all that came in, and what has been

secured through the present dispensation. When we come to the end of the book it tells us that God is to tabernacle with men.

Well that is all I had in my mind, but just to show the glory of what is in the mind of God and the intimacy that there will be there with nothing to hinder. Not a stroke will be there to hinder God getting all that He had in His mind from the very beginning. He will have it there as He tabernacles with men.

May the Lord help us in this for His Name's sake.

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