

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

SECOND SERIES

No. 114

September 2016

**A WORD
IN ITS SEASON**

SECOND SERIES

No. 114

September 2016

Table of Contents

THE MAN WHOM GOD HAS APPOINTED

List of Initials:

THE KNOWLEDGE OF DIVINE PERSONS

THE MAN WHOM GOD HAS APPOINTED

Acts 17: 30, 31

Isaiah 32: 1-8, 17; 33: 5, 6, 17

PAG I thought in our enquiry today that we might speak about the Man whom God has appointed. That Man is Jesus. Various features of this Man are spoken of in the sections read in the prophet Isaiah. He is “a king”, “Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness”; but He is referred to explicitly as “a man”: “And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind” and so forth. Now, righteousness has its fruit. If a king reigns in righteousness, we learn that “the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever”. And then we come to see that where God’s Man has His place, we have a heavenly outlook: “Jehovah is exalted; for he dwelleth on high”, but that heavenly position has its effect on us at the present time where we are on earth. It says, “he” - that is God’s Man - “shall be the stability of thy times”. There is a great need of stability at the present time, and it is found in a Man, the Man Christ Jesus. Then there is what is attractive too: “Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty”. No doubt as that feature of beauty is seen, there would be what would call out assembly response to such a One. I hope that we can be encouraged together as we enquire about the Man whom God has appointed.

JL We ought to be. It is a marvellous, irreversible appointment.

PAG It is not an appointment that will be withdrawn. “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”, Phil 2: 9, 10. God’s appointment is irrevocable.

JL Not many of the things spoken by the prophet Isaiah are presented in the future tense, but I suppose we have to consider that we are highly favoured in having the presence of the Holy Spirit, who knows better than any the present appointment of Christ in glory.

PAG I would agree with that. The scripture tells us about “the habitable world which is to come, of which we speak”, Heb 2: 5. This

Man, Jesus, will be the Centre of “the habitable world which is to come, of which we speak”, but there is no feature that He will have then that is not available to us now. That is why I thought we should be encouraged in reading these scriptures together. This is not a matter of some future appointment into which others will enter, but rather we can have the good of this blessed Man now.

AMcK I was thinking that He “loved righteousness and ... hated lawlessness”, Heb 1: 9. That is the character of this Man who has been appointed, whom God has looked for.

PAG That is right; so there was a certain prominence given to Him on account of that: “Thou hast loved righteousness and hast hated lawlessness; therefore God, thy God, has anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy companions”. When the high priest is anointed (Exod 29) his anointing is distinctive beyond that of his sons. The high priest had his own distinctive place, and my exercise is that the Lord might have a distinctive place in our hearts.

AMcK It says of Him in Micah, “And this man shall be Peace”, chap 5: 5. It is not only that He will bring peace or establish peace, but He “shall be Peace”.

PAG So it is inherent in Him. When He says to His own, “Peace be to you” (John 20: 21), He was giving them something that He had Himself because it was inherent in Him.

NJH Is there an answer to the cross? That was where righteousness was established: so there could be no other man who could judge apart from the One that was on it.

PAG God’s righteousness is proclaimed at the cross in the shedding of the blood of Jesus. The cross answered to the requirements of God’s holiness, and the blood answered to the requirements of His righteousness. Everything was settled there and so He has a right to appoint this Man. He appoints Him not only because He is personally suitable for the appointment but morally fitted for it.

GBG You referred to the high priest. He has not glorified Himself but is called by God: “*Thou* art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec”, Heb 5: 6. He was called by God.

PAG That is most important. The Lord spoke of persons who “loved glory from men”, John 12: 43, but His glory came from God. The word is, “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, and shall glorify him immediately”, John 13: 31, 32. All that would show that this is coming directly from God.

JCG The psalmist foretold this: “And I have anointed my king upon Zion” (Ps 2: 6), even though the nations were raging. I am trying to stress what you said about how we know it and understand it now. It would be protective for the saints, would it not?

PAG So John 7 tells us that “the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified”, v 39. That was the situation then. But now Jesus is glorified, and the Spirit is here, and what has been referred to in relation to the Spirit is of importance because “He shall glorify me”, John 16: 14. The Spirit is glorifying Christ in the hearts of the saints now.

JW It is quite remarkable that it is a Man. I was thinking of the scripture in Hebrews where it says, “For he has not subjected to angels the habitable world which is to come, of which we speak” (Heb 2: 5), but then it says, “What is man ...?” (v 6); so it is a Man that is in control.

PAG Is that not wonderful grace on God’s part? He could have chosen to make Himself known in any way. It is His choice to make Himself known in relationships that we can understand, and to speak to us “in the person of the Son”, Heb 1: 2. The reality of the Lord’s manhood should lay hold of us, would you say?

JW That is what I thought.

JL In Acts we are told that the Man has been appointed in view of judging in righteousness, but it is a marvellous thing at the present time that “God has set forth a mercy-seat”, that same blessed Man, “for the shewing forth of his righteousness” (Rom 3: 25); He is connected with mercy rather than judgment.

PAG Romans teaches us that God has chosen to exercise His rights in mercy. We might think He could have exercised His rights

in any way He chose and, being God, He would have had a right to do so, but He chose to exercise them in mercy.

EJM In 2 Timothy, Paul says, “The Lord knows those that are his” (chap 2: 19); then two chapters later he speaks about those “who love his appearing”, chap 4: 8. Is it a challenge to every one of us who claims to be His whether we love this appointment?

PAG I think so. And why do we love His appearing? Why should we do that?

EJM Justice will be done then. He has been rejected, crucified, “despised and left alone of men” (Isa 53: 3), but in that day He will be publicly vindicated.

PAG When we come together to break bread we “announce the death of the Lord, until he come”, 1 Cor 11: 26. We might think of the Lord’s coming as being the rapture but it also involves the appearing. Both are included in the thought of the Lord coming. He comes for us, but then He comes with us; and when He comes with us, He will be “wondered at in all that have believed”, 2 Thess 1: 10. He will be recognised in all that He has secured for God. The great thing about the Lord’s appearing is that the One whom we love will be given the place that is rightly His; but we can give Him it now.

JCG What would you say about “the proof of it”? Paul says “the proof of it” was in His resurrection.

PAG The proof is embraced by faith, I think. The proof of God’s appointment is that He raised Christ from the dead; the Father raised Him from the dead by His own glory; the love of God entered into that; and He showed His approval of Christ and what He had done by reaching into the grave to claim Him for Himself; but we have “the proof of it” by faith, do you think?

JCG That is good. It is very important that the lynchpin of Christianity is that Christ has been raised from the dead. It involves not only God’s power, but His love.

PAG Yes; otherwise we would be trying to put the world right. The world cannot be put right: the world lies under judgment. What God has is another Man in another world, and that is who the Spirit

occupies us with. So that the resurrection means there is a whole system of things on the other side of death that cannot be touched by the features of this world.

RHB When was this appointment made?

PAG What would you say?

RHB I was wondering if it goes back to God's original purpose, "to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth", Eph 1: 10. I would be glad to know what you think about that.

PAG The Lord was not appointed after God had decided if He was suitable; He was always suitable for that appointment, but He is appointed as Man. God was justified in what Christ was morally as Man here, but He was always suitable for the appointment; so there is what is consequent on what the Lord has done, "Wherefore also God highly exalted him" (Phil 2: 9), but, as you rightly say, the purpose was always "to head up all things in the Christ", and as Colossians also says, "that *he* might have the first place in all things", Col 1: 18. That was not a decision that was taken in response to circumstances; that was the purpose of God.

JL In Psalm 2, which has already been quoted, it says, "And I have anointed my king upon Zion, the hill of my holiness", v 6. That was written before the work of the cross was undertaken by the Lord Jesus and those mighty accomplishments fulfilled, but we can see it was clearly established in the mind of God, and could be spoken of prophetically with authority in the psalm.

PAG So "the proof" that our brother has referred to took place after the appointment. He gave "the proof of it to all in having raised him from among the dead". The appointment was made, and then the proof was given. Is that right?

JL It would seem so.

RHB It was a selective resurrection, "from among the dead". We read in the gospels that the disciples were puzzled by that. They had the idea of a general resurrection, but "having raised him from among the dead" was something quite different.

PAG Yes. The Lord's death was distinctive in that "he delivered up his spirit" (John 19: 30), and His resurrection was distinctive in that He was "raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father", Rom 6: 4. His resurrection was distinctive, as were both His death, and His birth: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child" (Matt 1: 23) and "power of the Highest overshadow thee" (Luke 1: 35). His death was distinctive; His resurrection was distinctive; and His ascension too was distinctive: so everything about the Lord is distinctive.

AMcK Can you say something as to the background to this? It was Athens, given up to idolatry; Paul had seen all these shrines to the various gods and there was one "To the unknown God", Acts 17: 23. That is the background to what he says here.

PAG That is why I would seek to emphasise faith as entering into this. There were shrines that could be seen. They were false in their own way, but they could be seen, but there was a God who could not be seen and yet He worked so that there would be some acknowledgement of Him. He wants persons to seek after Him and find Him; so we find God by faith and we appreciate Christ by faith. This is the time of faith.

AMcK That is helpful. I was wondering if it linked on with what was said earlier as to the Man. It is not an unknown God. "He is going to judge the habitable earth in righteousness by the man whom he has appointed", and He is a Man who is known to us.

PAG He is! Think of the words of Mr Darby's hymn:

There no stranger-God shall meet thee –
(Hymn 76).

Why is it not a 'stranger-God'? Because it is a God whom we know in Jesus.

APG The reference to "the habitable earth" refers to men: He "enjoins men that they shall all everywhere repent"; so the glad tidings is for all men. In Athens, too, it is the Gentiles that it is being announced to.

PAG That is helpful; so this Man of whom we speak is appealing to men. God is appealing to men through this blessed Man, and He is

appealing to men everywhere, “all everywhere”. There is no part of this earth that is not covered by the desire of God to have men in blessing.

APG So Luke particularly has that in mind in his gospel. The grace of God is towards all men.

PAG We were reading in Titus locally, “For the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared”, chap 2: 11. It appeared in Christ. We were struck by the fact that it is has not appeared and disappeared; it appeared and it remains.

GAB The repentant malefactor says, “this man has done nothing amiss”, Luke 23: 41. He was really aligning himself with God’s choice, was he not? Another world opens up, and the Lord says, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise”, v 43.

PAG These are very important words, “this man”. There are certain things that we can only say of Christ. We cannot say them of any other man, but we can say, “this man has done nothing amiss”. That Man, as you are reminding us, is in another world: “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise”. If we have the sense of God’s Man where He is, it helps us in relation to everything down here.

RHB Say more about that, because if we believe that He has been raised from among the dead it should promote enquiry as to where He is and the circumstances in which He lives, and if we love Him, we would want to know more about that.

PAG If we find Him where He is, we find what He is to God, but we also find what He can be to us. That is in part why I wanted to draw on Isaiah 32: “And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind”. There are difficult circumstances, but there is a Man who is available in these circumstances. He says in His appeal to Laodicea, “I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with me”, Rev 3: 20. There is a Man who is available to us.

JL I read this verse two days ago and I wondered why God was pleased to use such a number of illustrations. Can you help us about that?

PAG If you look at Paul's epistles, he brings out in each of them a feature of Christ that applies distinctively to the place or area to which he is writing. So he said in 1 Corinthians, "Christ Jesus, who has been made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption" (chap 1: 30); and in the second epistle he says, "in him is the yea, and in him the amen", chap 1: 20. When he is writing to Galatia, he says, "he should deliver us out of the present evil world", chap 1: 4. When he writes to Thessalonica he says, He is "our deliverer from the coming wrath", 1 Thess 1: 10. Younger brethren should look and see how the Lord is presented in each of the epistles. It is the same Man. It may be said that the circumstances in Thessalonica were much different from those in Rome; indeed, they were, but it is the same Man. Would that bear on these different aspects of the way in which He is presented here?

JL That helps. One of the impressions I had was that, such is the infinite delight God has in this blessed Man, He would do everything possible to convince our hearts in relation to the range of His glories.

PAG And there is nothing that He cannot meet, because if you look at the examples given here, He is "a hiding-place from the wind", but a storm is worse than the wind, and He is still available and He is still effective. Then, "a dry place": one might say that if it is a dry place, you could move to another place, but then you come to "a thirsty land". The whole land is thirsty, and yet He is still available.

JCG I have sometimes wondered if there may even be some prophetic reference to what happened in this dispensation. There were ten persecutions of the church, the assembly, and then the dryness of the period in which Rome took charge; but no doubt certain persons continued throughout because they relied on the Man that was the "hiding-place" through all these difficulties in this dispensation.

PAG We often ask where in the Scripture it says, as the Lord remarks on it, "He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water", John 7: 38. Actually, if you look in the Old Testament, the Scripture says it time and time and time again, just in different ways, and it is saying it here. It is

telling us that God's Man is the source of refreshment in every circumstance.

NJH How do you view "princes shall rule in judgment"?

PAG We know that a prince has influence, and I would say that if we have in any way come under the influence of God's Man, we should be like Him. To put it simply - and I feel greatly challenged - is my influence like His? Have I learned from Him? "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment". In the world to come there will be certain arrangements - "be thou in authority over ten cities" (Luke 19: 17) and so forth, and no doubt that enters into this reference to princes - but at the present time our judgment should be consistent with God's righteousness.

NJH Even in David's reign there were persons who were dependable like Benaiah and the Cherethites and Pelethites, where they recovered God's thought about rule and kingship in Israel, 1 Kings 1: 38.

PAG And when David subdued certain territories, he put garrisons; so he had persons who were able to maintain what was suitable to him in these places that he had taken, 2 Sam 8.

RG I was thinking back to the question about these various descriptions of the Lord. They have often been linked with the four gospels. We consider the fulness connected with the four gospels, and then at the end of John it says, if all the things that Jesus did were written "not even the world itself would contain the books written", chap 21: 25. We are reminded that He is the answer to every matter that comes up, but then there is far more in the way of resource available, do you think?

PAG That is important. It is a wonderful thing to take account of the Lord and what He can be to us, but we have to carry in our minds too, a much greater thought, what He is to God.

RG I was thinking of your thought as to the Man. He becomes more and more precious to us as we begin to see what He is to God, His relationships with His Father: "my Father is greater than I" (John 14: 28); "My Father who has given them to me is greater than all" (chap 10: 29); but then He says, "that they may be one, as we are one",

John 17: 22. What is in view in this Man is that we might become like Him.

PAG There are very many touches in relation to what He is to God. As the Alpha and the Omega, He sets things on for God, but He completes them for God too, Rev 22: 13. It says in 1 Corinthians, "Then the end, when he gives up the kingdom to him who is God and Father; when he shall have annulled all rule and all authority and power", chap 15: 24. He set everything on for God; "the last Adam a quickening spirit" (v 45) is Christ in resurrection opening up a whole new race for God, but He is doing it in view of completion, and that again would have a stabilising effect on our souls.

GBG The exercises we face might continue; so do you think it is only as having our affections engaged with the Man that we can go through these tests rightly?

PAG There was a time when He was in the boat and He said, "Silence; be mute", Mark 4: 39. He brought the matter to a halt, but He does not always do that. There are exercises current amongst us, and this is not the place to speak of them in detail, but they have gone on; they have not stopped. We might ask the Lord to take them away, but perhaps He is teaching us something in them about Himself, and perhaps teaching me something about myself too.

GBG It has been rightly said we need to get back to Gilgal. We should never really leave Gilgal, should we?

PAG That is absolutely right. Gilgal refers to self-judgment. Now, we are speaking about the Man who bore the judgment. He had nothing to judge in Himself; He was perfect. But we have things to judge in ourselves, and if we are occupied with Him as God's Man and God's standard, it makes it all the clearer what needs to be judged.

DAB It says earlier in this prophet, "the mean man shall be bowed down, and the great man shall be brought low", chap 2: 9. I notice here it speaks of "the vile man". These are all features of the man after the flesh, but what you are stressing is the One who is of God's appointing, and He really is to become supreme to us. Isaiah says, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils" (chap 2: 22); so

we need to set man aside, 'ordinary man', as it says in the note in chapter 2 (note 'n'), and have our affections and our thoughts and our minds centred on this blessed One who can be all these things to us.

PAG I think that. You have touched on these verses 5, 6 and 7. We live in a world - just to touch on this lightly - where what is vile is allowed and, indeed, it is praised at times: that is not God's way. There is a time coming when that will be set right, and we should have courage that we are not required to go along with these things; they are not according to God. There is a Man who is pure and holy, and that is the Man with whom we are associated. That is the Man with whom we will be eternally, and we are not required to go along with these things.

DAB The prophet says, "Cease ye from man". The power of the Holy Spirit is available so that the purity and preciousness and blessedness of the Lord Jesus Christ is filling our souls, and so we begin to take character from that Man, do you think? Is that what is to be seen in our gatherings, not what is of nature, but what is of Christ?

PAG That bears on what we have in verse 17, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever". What we see as we are together is the work of righteousness. One might say that the work of righteousness was done on the cross. It was, but it is to be carried on; the work of righteousness is to proceed among believers.

JCG Is it important therefore that our eyes should not be "dim" nor our ears failing to hearken? That is stressed as if there was a spiritual alertness. Our brother referred to the Spirit's service to help us. If we see what is unrighteous, we should act in relation to it.

PAG We should. Indeed, we must; we have a responsibility. How we do it, the Lord will help us as to that. It is not that we spend the whole time looking for evil or dealing with it, but when it comes up, it needs to be addressed and the Lord will help us in relation to that. If we simply see that "the work of righteousness shall be peace"; we will understand that "the work of righteousness" will not be more

dissent, more disorder; but rather that “the work of righteousness shall be peace”.

AMcK Can you say something about nobility? It speaks of it in verse 8.

PAG It would seem among other things that nobles were persons who made way for the Spirit,

Well, which princes digged, which the
nobles of the people hollowed out
at the word of the lawgiver, with their staves”,
Num 21: 18.

My impression is that nobility is not exactly an official position. The Bereans were “noble”; they searched the Scriptures, Acts 17: 11. Nobility seems to be a moral feature involving subjection to the Spirit and subjection to the Scriptures. There would be more aspects of it but these might be two. What would you say?

AMcK I thought it was very dignified, and what is seen worked out in the assembly at the present time, which is observed by the angels, should be what is noble.

PAG Nobility would mark persons who were in the good and enjoyment of sonship.

JL It is one of the things listed in Philippians: “whatsoever things are noble”, Phil 4: 8. It is amongst the things to which we are to give consideration.

PAG That is helpful. Say more as to your own impression of nobility.

JL Our brother asked earlier about the princes; you would expect nobility to shine out amongst the princes. It would be seen in persons who would reflect what is truly characteristic of the kingdom under the control of the King himself. You would expect to see noble features arising, would you not? We are to think about these things, the things that are characterised by nobility.

PAG The scripture says that “God made man upright”, Eccl 7: 29. That would be the expression of nobility, do you think? There are

things that contort man's being through wickedness, but "God made man upright", and what He is looking for is that feature in us.

RG It says, "But the noble deviseth noble things". That is not just a cut and dried matter. Do you think devising noble things would involve the activity of the Spirit among the saints? We have exercises and tests to face. Do you think the Lord would help us, as we are subject, to provide an answer? It is not expedient, and does not involve compromise, but an answer that would reflect Himself.

PAG That is right, and what is in my mind in the reference to "God made man upright". He made man like Himself; He is in the image of God; and He expects us to be in accordance with that image. I wonder whether Paul's epistle to Philemon is really an example of "the noble deviseth noble things". There was something to be met there, but Paul met it with nobility. He did not insist on his apostleship but he met it in a noble way that would cause Philemon to accept what Paul was saying.

RG I do not want to take you further than what you have in mind at the moment, but do you think there is any sense in which "the all-various wisdom of God" (Eph 3: 10) might enter into this?

PAG Reference has already been made to the angels looking on. They take account of what proceeds. Certainly there would not be much between wisdom and nobility, you would think. A noble would behave wisely; a wise person would be noble. There would not be disparity.

AMB I was looking at these verses that you read from 1-8. There is a progression in them. We begin by finding need met: if there is a storm and wind and drought and thirst and so forth, we prove Christ as the One that meets our need and we can all relate to that. However simple our impression of Christ, He meets our need. Then there is "the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken"; so there is the beginning of an appreciation of this One. There is movement towards Him and appreciation of Him and things are set right. You get the thought of that in verse 4. And then in verse 8 we come back to the matter of nobility. There is something coming to light in the believer (and

believers can take account of that in one another), that has its origin in Christ Himself. I think it is good to see that God has devised a whole sphere of things in which, in His grace, we come to have our need met in Christ, and we are led on to manifest features that have their origin in Him.

PAG We are not intended just to be spectators, but we are intended to be participators, and we are participators to the extent that we become like Christ; so “the noble deviseth noble things”. In that sense, we can now produce something that will be pleasing to God. Is that what is in mind?

AMB That is fine. We see that we have been given to Christ by God. “The Father loves the Son”, we are told in John’s gospel, “and has given all things to be in his hand”, chap 3: 35. Well, what are these “all things”? We are among them. We have been given to Christ and He brings us home to God. What a wonderful and gracious movement that is to lay hold of in our souls, the reality of it!

PAG And so God has given to Christ what is like Him, and of Him, and for Him, and we are brought in then to that sphere of affection, to which reference has already been made, in John 17, “that they may be one, as we are one”, v 22. These things would all have an ennobling effect on us.

JW I wonder if Paul was looking for what was noble in the Corinthians when he wrote to them. He brings in chapter 13 and he tells us there what love does not do, and what it does do. We have “the vile” and “the churl” and various features referred to in this chapter, but I wondered if what Paul brings out when he says how love acts would be what is noble.

PAG That is a very important injunction for us. We should always be looking for what is noble in the brethren because it will be there; we can be sure it will be there. If the work of God is there, then there will be what is noble. Even to an area such as Galatia Paul says, “Brethren, if even a man be taken in some fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness”, chap 6: 1. Earlier he had said, “O senseless Galatians, who has bewitched you”, chap 3:

1. It might be said that there cannot possibly be anybody spiritual in Galatia, but Paul anticipated that there would be.

CAMcK Do you think Paul was seeking to draw out what was noble in Philemon when he wrote to him through his influence? He said, “/ Paul have written it with mine own hand; / will repay it”, v 19. He was looking for Philemon to be noble towards Onesimus, do you think?

PAG He was, but he did it by demonstrating nobility himself. There is very little point in telling somebody else to be something if I am not prepared to be it. If we are exercised to help one another, it is in showing these features that we will be helpful.

AB “Each one resembled the sons of a king” (Judg 8: 18): that would be very princely. Then it goes on to say, “They were my brethren, the sons of my mother” (v 19), something of the maternal feeling.

PAG That is helpful, and Gideon can recognise and acknowledge what they were. “These were my brethren, the sons of my mother”. Well, that is a wonderful thing to be able to say of one another: “They were my brethren”.

JCG Mr Darby’s hymn says:

And here we walk as sons, through grace
(Hymn 120).

That involves the dignity of the noble. I was thinking too of Numbers 21 where the nobles used their staves to make way for the Spirit. That would involve our experience with God, would it? We see it in divine Persons so that what is real and living might come to light; so there is,

Rise up, well! sing unto it, Num 21: 17.

PAG That is important. The action of the staves was to hollow out. I take that to mean that a noble accepts that the first order of man has to be displaced. Hollowing out is displacement, and if we are going to make room for the Spirit, there has to be something displaced in order for that to happen, and that is the first order of man.

KJW I think it has been said that a prince is someone who is great enough to be little, one who has that going-down mind that was in Christ Jesus. Does that help us in relation to what you are bringing before us? You spoke about the Man appointed. You did not read it but verse 18 speaks about dwelling “in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places”. That is what we get as we make way for Christ and having the going-down mind. We are not concerned about the things of the world; we have that stable area of things where Christ is free and the Spirit is free.

PAG That is helpful. Mephibosheth brings together these features that you are talking about. He was quite happy to give away all his goods; he was not interested in any of that; he would go down. He was misrepresented by Ziba; he did not complain about that; but he says, “Let him even take all, since my lord the king is come again in peace”, 2 Sam 19: 30. That is what mattered to him. One man and one dwelling-place: it preserves us from a great deal. I say that as feeling the test of it myself.

NJH Paul says, “if even in abundantly loving you I should be less loved”, 2 Cor 12: 15. He did not complain: He showed it.

PAG “Now I shall most gladly spend and be utterly spent for your souls”, 2 Cor 12: 15. Why? He knew God loved the Corinthians - so he was going to love them too. Like his Master, he was going to spend everything he had.

GAB Is magnanimity in forgiveness a mark of nobility? I was thinking of the man in Corinth who had been so wrong. The Corinthians were rather lacking in noble features in that they did not accept his repentance properly. The word is, “assure him of your love”, 2 Cor 2: 8. That is noble.

PAG It is, and there is an inexhaustible supply available: “Love never fails”, 1 Cor 13: 8. I do think that. “Her many sins are forgiven; for she loved much; but he to whom little is forgiven loves little”, Luke 7: 47. I have been forgiven much; so we can afford to display these features.

BWL Could you say something about “the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and

assurance for ever”?

PAG The Lord came in to His own in John 20 and said, “Peace be to you”. He said it twice (verses 19 and 21): the work of righteousness had been done and therefore peace was there. We know from the epistles “having made peace by the blood of his cross”, Col 1: 20. “The work of righteousness”, I think, creates conditions in which the presence of God can be enjoyed, and in which God can enjoy relationships with His people. We speak about Matthew 18, and things that may need to be taken up, but the section where we “tell it to the assembly” (v 17) closes with the Lord saying, “For where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them” (v 20); so “the work of righteousness” makes way for peace in the Lord’s presence. They are not disconnected from one another.

BWL There is the peace that has been established through the work of Christ, and that can never be altered, but then there is the side of things that continues. I was thinking about Phinehas, Num 25: 7. He is spoken of in relation to righteousness, and peace was established through it (v 12), was it not?

PAG Yes, and Phinehas took responsibility, and took action when he had to, and he was right to do so.

R-yB You mentioned in your opening remarks about “he shall be the stability of thy times”. Did you have something in mind about that?

PAG It is right to have a general impression of the glory of Christ. There are glories He has which are His because of who He is. However, there is what is available to us that is particularly applicable to the times in which we are, “the stability of thy times”. You can look back over the history of the testimony and say that it was easier when things were fresh and new; or it was more straightforward at the time of the recovery when Mr Darby and others were exercised to come out of the established church. And someone might say that things are much more difficult now. Well, “he shall be the stability of thy times”. It is the same Man all the way through; He does not change: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and to the ages to come”, Heb 13: 8.

RHB In the passage you quoted in John 20, the Lord went on to breathe into them, and then He says, “whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained”, v 23. They received the Spirit of the heavenly Man from Him, and it was in the Spirit they would be able to take up the difficulties that would arise in the testimony.

PAG Yes; there ought to be a direct link between the exercise of judgment and the Spirit of Christ. If the two become separated, there is likely to be trouble. It is the Spirit of the heavenly Man, and He puts remission before retention, so that the bent of our minds would be to remit. Of course, a point may be reached when things become fixed and we would have to acknowledge that, but the bent of our mind would be remission.

TWL I was looking again at this “stability of thy times”. It is not ‘stability of *the* times’; persons were involved. I was thinking earlier in relation to what you said about what Christ is for God, but then what Christ can be for us. “The stability of thy times” is personal for Him; it is personal for us too. If we hang on to Christ, we will be sustained to the end.

PAG Well, the life of the woman in John 4 was disordered: “thou hast had five husbands, and he whom now thou hast is not thy husband”, v 18. She was completely dissatisfied, and she goes from that to “Come, see a man who told me all things I had ever done: is not he the Christ?”, v 29. She had stability that she had never known before, and she had it in this one Man, and not only did she have it in Him, she was willing to speak about Him. There is stability and salvation in speaking about Him.

TWL Yes, and Paul does that in Philippians. He makes a list there of all the things that he counts to be loss and all the things that he has given up and so on, and then he clarifies it all “on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord”, Phil 3: 5-8. That is the appointed Man.

PAG And he shared the source of his stability and the place of it too: “for *our* commonwealth has its existence in the heavens”, chap 3: 20.

RB I was wondering if “the stability of thy times” is finding Christ at the right hand of God. Everything flows out from there; all our blessings flow from there.

PAG That is very good. If you think of how it is described in Hebrews: He “sat down in perpetuity”, chap 10: 12. There is not going to be any change to that, “sat down in perpetuity”, and yet in that place of glory is the One who is “always living to intercede for” us, chap 7: 25. He is thinking of us in that exalted place in order that we might be suited to be in that place.

JL Does that not add great importance to the Spirit’s present service? He occupies us with Christ where He is. If I look around, everything seems to be characterised by instability, but the focus of the Spirit’s service directs my heart to Christ where stability is at the right hand of God.

PAG Do you think that would really bring out these features spoken of here, “the riches of salvation, wisdom and knowledge”? These riches are with Him where He is, and we can have access to Him, and it takes us beyond our need.

JL That is very good. They are not only centred there but they can be drawn upon from there, can they not?

PAG So you come to Ephesians: “being enlightened in the eyes of your heart, so that ye should know what is the hope of his calling” - that is, God’s calling - “and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the surpassing greatness of his power towards us who believe”, chap 1: 18, 19. It is all centred in Christ. There are great riches associated with what God has done and is doing through that blessed One.

JCG Hence the importance of what precedes “the stability of thy times”, “Jehovah is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with justice and righteousness”, so that what you have stressed as to “Jehovah is exalted; for he dwelleth on high” shows that we need to be occupied with the heavenly Man there where He is. There is so much to distract down here but eyes should be heavenward, should they not?

PAG They should, and Zion would remind us of both the purpose of God and the sovereign mercy of God. God has had His purposes in a past eternity, but His sovereign mercy has been effective so that we might come into the good of these things, what He has centred in Christ.

NJH “And gave him to be head over all things to the assembly”: that is in Ephesians 1: 22. We are really united to the Man who has been appointed.

PAG We are. That may link with, “Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty”. “And gave him to be head over all things to the assembly, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all”, v 22, 23. Christ is going to fill “all in all” administratively in a day to come that we have been speaking of, but He will have His fulness with Him. He will have His saints with Him; yes, but He will have His assembly, and she will share with Him. It is worth remembering what God says of the man and the woman in the beginning of Genesis 1: “let them have dominion”, v 26. She will share in that dominion with Him.

JCG Is it the sense in which the saints of the assembly complement for God what is in Christ? Is that how you understand it?

PAG That would be the thought of the counterpart. God says, “It is not good that Man should be alone; I will make him a helpmate, his like”, Gen 2: 18. The assembly is like Him; she complements Him; she demonstrates in a real and living way the features of subjection that are proper to the helpmate. “Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is far off”. Now, perhaps for Israel it was “far off”, but for us “the land that is far off” is separate from the world; it does not have anything to do with the world; it is “far off”. It does not mean we cannot be in it.

JCG Is this what we are able to enjoy after the Lord’s supper? I think increasingly we are beginning to realise the power of the Spirit to help us to see things, do you not think so? He comes in amongst the saints and manifests Himself.

PAG I do; so it says of the Lord that “he led them out as far as Bethany”, Luke 24: 50. We break bread in the wilderness, so

Bethany in that sense was on the earth, but then He did not continue on the earth. In that sense He went to “the land that is far off”, but He takes us with Him; by the Spirit’s power, we are taken with Him.

JL There is a special opportunity at the Supper to “see the King in his beauty” connected with that sphere. We associate many other thoughts with the King - His power, His majesty, His control and so on - but “his beauty” is something very precious to us to be enjoyed at the Supper.

PAG It is, and I think it is a beauty that the assembly appreciates the most. Other families, no doubt, will have their place, and each will have some feature of Christ. There is no doubt about that because God is the Father of every family, but there is an appreciation of His beauty that is distinctive to the assembly, would you say?

JL I think so. There is a suggestion of that in the Song of Songs when “the king is at his table”, chap 1: 12. The assembly values His presence and the spikenard begins to flow forth in response to His beauty, do you think?

PAG You might say it is a spontaneous response: “My spikenard sendeth forth its fragrance”. It is a spontaneous answer in the souls of the saints to the beauty of Christ.

AMcK Although it is described here as “the land that is far off”, it should not be far off to us.

PAG That is my thought. It is “far off” in the sense that it has no connection with the world, but it is not “far off” for us now because the Spirit is here. If we think it is “far off” and we cannot reach it, we need to refer to Ephesians 3, “strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inner man; that the Christ may dwell, through faith, in your hearts, being rooted and founded in love, in order that ye may be fully able to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height” (v 16-18); not ‘what will be’ but “what is”.

JW I was thinking of the palmist in Psalm 45. He says, “I say what I have composed touching the king” (v 1), and then we get the touch, “upon thy right hand doth stand the queen in gold of Ophir”, v 9.

PAG That is good, and so there is appreciation of His beauty; what we have said of the fact that He “loved righteousness, and hated wickedness” (v 7) would all enter into the matter, “Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty”, but then it says, “And the king will desire thy beauty”, v 11. In the same way, as there is beauty in Christ, there is beauty in the assembly; she is His counterpart in that sense too.

NJH We view the Supper peculiarly for Christ. In other meetings, in His grace, He serves us, whether it is in temple enquiry in readings, in the gospel or in the prophetic meeting, but the Lord’s supper is peculiarly for Himself.

PAG That would be emphasised by Paul’s expression of it in 1 Corinthians 11, “For I received from the Lord, that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was delivered up, took bread”, v 23. He committed it into the hands of Paul, because it was a matter of such prime importance to Him that He would give that instruction from heaven: we should pay attention to that.

APG When David was brought in, it was beauty that was spoken of: “a lovely countenance and beautiful appearance”, 1 Sam 16: 12. He was “anointed ... in the midst of his brethren”, v 13. He was given the first place.

PAG And that beauty was not only outward but inward. Samuel had been rather occupied with what was outward, but David’s beauty was not only outward but inward: “but Jehovah looketh upon the heart”, v 7. It is something about Christ. He said He was “Altogether that which I also say to you”, John 8: 25. What He was outwardly and what He was inwardly were entirely consistent in every sphere.

Brechin

16th April 2016

List of Initials:

R Bain, Buckie; A M Brown, Grangemouth; D A Brown, Grangemouth; G A Brown, Grangemouth; R-y Brown, Grangemouth; R H Brown, East Finchley; A Buchan, Kirkcaldy; A P Grant, Dundee; G B Grant, Dundee; J C Gray, Grangemouth; P A Gray, Grangemouth; R Gray, Grangemouth; N J Henry, Glasgow; J Laurie, Brechin; T W Lock, Edinburgh; B W Lovie, Aberdeen; E J Mair, Buckie; A McKay, Brechin; C A McKay, Brechin; K J Walker, Dundee; J Webster, Fraserburgh

THE KNOWLEDGE OF DIVINE PERSONS

Kenny J Walker

2 Timothy 1: 12

John 6: 67-69; 14: 16-17; 17: 3; 12: 1-3

Ezekiel 47: 1-7

Ephesians 3: 14

Philippians 3: 8

2 Timothy 3: 14

We are in a most wonderful dispensation, the Christian dispensation. It has been spoken of as the greatest of all dispensations, the time when the Lord Jesus is in the glory, Centre of glory and love, Centre of another world; and the Holy Spirit is here serving unceasingly in view of magnifying Christ. What a time it is! It is a wonderful time to be a believer. I trust everyone in this room is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to speak about knowledge, not head knowledge because that can be easily obtained, but the knowledge of divine Persons, the knowledge of the Father, the knowledge of the Son, and the knowledge of the Holy Spirit. I think there is a need - and I feel it for myself - a need of enlargement in the knowledge of divine Persons in view of the testimony, and enlargement in the service of God. As we are enlarged, for example, in the appreciation of the Father, and the greatness of who He is, and the greatness of all He has done, the Father that has blessed us, the Father of glory whose 'greatness surpasses our praise' (hymn 49), as we are enlarged in the greatness of that Person, there is a greater response from our hearts.

I trust everyone in this room is a believer; are you a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you got that substantial foundation in your soul that you are saved? Have you put your trust in that finished work at Calvary, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, who came here and moved in such devotion? He was perfect; He was sinless, but He became the precious Sacrifice at Calvary in view of God judging sin and sins, and in view of God coming out in blessing to

man. Oh that many more would come and appreciate Him for themselves and put their trust in that finished work at Calvary! I cannot emphasise enough, and I feel the need of saying at the start of this occasion, but Paul, as we read here in Timothy, says, "I know whom I have believed". He did not just say he believed, but was emphasising that he knew the Person he believed in, and that is what I want to get at, that every one of us should have a greater knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only as Saviour but as to who He is and what He has done, and the many glories that belong to Him. What a Person He is! He has been spoken of it as 'The Incomparable Christ'. What a One He is! Blessed Man, who is the subject of the gospel, He is the blessed Man that we talked about in the reading. He should be the Centre of our lives.

I read, "But surely I count also all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord". That was a deep, conscious knowledge. That was not just the knowledge of what a precious work had been done at Calvary; it was a deep, conscious knowledge of the Person he had come to treasure. He had come to love Him, he had come to treasure Him, and I trust every one in this room has some appreciation of the Lord Jesus. There is none to be compared with Him; that is what I would like to bring before us.

I would like to speak later on about experience, and the way experiences are in view of the enlargement of the knowledge of divine Persons. I think that is essential. Every one in this room will have gone through experiences, perhaps an experience in your work life, or in your school life. Perhaps you have had a problem that has been difficult to solve; you did not know what to do. How did you get through it? Was it through the knowledge of divine Persons? Was it through the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, power to guide you and direct you, or was it through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ being your Friend, the One you could speak to when you could not speak to anybody else? Sometimes things happen and you cannot speak to anybody else, but you can speak to the Lord Jesus. What a Friend He is, and what a Person He is! We spoke in the reading about the law of Jesus Christ, and that is the One we are to be

subject to. We are to come under His authority. May every one in this room be enlarged in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. So there is an emphatic word here, "for I know whom I have believed". I would like every one of us to say, 'I really know the Person whom I have believed in; I really know the Lord Jesus Christ, as One who has talked with me and walked with me, and who moved with me, One whom I know for myself'. For example, if somebody came into this room and I did not know them, I might ask who is that across there? I might be told his name and where he comes from. But how would I know more about that person? I think the key to what I am speaking about is that I would have to spend time with the person. A key point in Christianity is that you need to spend time with divine Persons, to be near to Them, to talk with Them, to make time for Them, and to draw near to Them; They will not turn you away. I have learned that from my little experience, and there are many in this room who can speak about these things far better than I can. They have experience and some have been on the road a long time and they can look back and say, 'The Lord was with me in it, the Father's care was there, the Holy Spirit's power was known'. These things are all part of the experiences of life, and I would rather be a believer going through the experiences of life than an unbeliever. Unbelievers have no hope; who do they turn to? What do they do? They are in despair. What a blessed thing it is to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and have a link with divine Persons. As we go through the experiences of life, the sorrows, the pressures, the difficulties, the illnesses, and then the joys of things, as we are brought into the most wonderful things of Christianity, enjoying the things that are excellent, we can be enlarged in the knowledge of divine Persons. How wonderful Christianity is! How blessed it is! May each one of us come into these things.

So I read in John's gospel. They had come to this difficult juncture in chapter 6, and the question is asked, "Will ye also go away?". Some had turned away because the word was hard, but "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". Simon Peter knew that there was none other to turn to; they had known Him, they had walked with Him. Think of

the teaching they had come under, think of the way they had known His heart; they had known Him talking to them, and had known the unfolding of His heart. Day by day these disciples had moved with Him. They had known something of what was precious to Him, what was of interest to Him, and what I am trying to convey is that the Lord Jesus can be known in so many different ways. We have spoken of Him as Saviour, and we can know Him as Lord, but He can also be known as Head, and He can be known as Priest, He can be known as Friend, He can be known as Shepherd - how many different ways the Lord Jesus can be known. No doubt most in this room have known something of the way He can support. Think of the lordship of Christ, and being under His authority and of the blessing in that. Think also of His headship, drawing from the Head. We talked about His influence, and the wonderful influence of another Man. He is influencing your life, and also directing in your life, but in the gatherings too, think of the way that headship is known. We sang of that at the start of the reading -

Great source of wisdom, power and food
Hymn 199.

Think of that; His headship is known, His feelings are known, and He brings in what is needed. May He become more and more precious to us and may we be enlarged in our knowledge of that Person.

I move on to John 14; I want to talk about our knowledge of the Spirit. He is a wonderful, divine Person. Think of these words, "And I will beg the Father, and he will give you another Comforter". The Holy Spirit, a divine Person, has been given to indwell the believer. I trust you know something of the Spirit's service; He is a Comforter. Do you know something of His comfort? The Lord Jesus is absent from this scene and the question is, how do I get through? The Holy Spirit operates in a way of comfort, and He gives you touches of the glories of Christ. It says in chapter 16, "he will announce to you what is coming. He shall glorify me ...", v 13-14. Think of the service of the Holy Spirit, here indwelling believers, and speaking to them, and serving them in so many different ways. Think of the Spirit as a Friend. Mr James Taylor said, 'the best Friend we have on earth is the Spirit of God', vol 32 p14. Do you know something of the Spirit

as a Friend, One you can speak to, and One you can talk to? He will enlarge your appreciation of divine things, and He will guide you into all the truth. So we can know Him in that way as a Guide. He is typified in 'the caller's spring' (Jud 15: 19, note), as One you can call upon, and you can draw upon at any time. When you do not know where to turn, have you ever turned to the Spirit and said, 'Help me!'? He will bring in refreshment. These are just a few thoughts as to the Holy Spirit and the way He may be known. Think of Him as the great Comforter, the One who is to be appreciated and valued. We spoke in the reading about the woman in 2 Kings 4 who in type did not know the value of the Spirit, v 2. After her debt had been paid the word was, "live thou and thy sons on the rest", v 7. Let us live on the Holy Spirit as the One who will sustain us and give us power, who can help us to overcome. Think of the greatness of the Holy Spirit; I trust everyone has some knowledge of the Holy Spirit and that we may be enlarged to give Him more room in our lives.

I read in John 17 about the Father, "that they should know thee". We know the Lord Jesus, and we know the Holy Spirit, but we can know the Father too. He has been made known to us by the Lord Jesus Christ, "He that has seen me has seen the Father", chap 14: 9. The Lord Jesus come to make known this blessed One. Think of what has opened up. In the old dispensation, the people of old knew God in various ways, but think of the wonder of the present dispensation that we can know God as Father. Think of the tenderness of the love of that Name, the grace of that Name. In almost every reference in John's gospel where "the Father" is mentioned, it is mentioned as a term of grace. Do you know something of the Father and the wonderful things that relate to the Father? He has been made known by the Lord Jesus Christ, and it says later, "And I have made known to them thy name, and will make it known", John 17: 26. The Father has been made known to us and we can appreciate this Person and know Him in our day to day circumstances. He is "the Father of compassions, and God of all encouragement", 2 Cor 1: 3. We can know His care and His help and His grace day by day. He brings in grace, He brings in love, He brings in mercy, He brings in what is needed. May we be enlarged in our appreciation of the Father.

I feel the need of enlargement but, too, the Father opens up a wonderful realm. Not only do we know the Father in our day to day circumstances, but we can know Him in privilege. Think of our relationship as sons with the Father: think of the blessedness of that. Oh may we be enlarged in it! Think of the service of praise, and the way that our hearts respond to the Father, and no doubt in that sphere we are to be enlarged in our appreciation of the Father. We not only know Him as a Father who cares for our daily needs, but we know Him as the Father of glory, the One who has blessed us: "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ", Eph 1: 3. What a Person to know, the Father of glory. May we be enlarged in love for the Father! He is "the Father of lights" (James 1: 17) too, and other titles come to mind as we consider the Father; let us be enlarged in our appreciation of Him.

So I have spoken about the Lord Jesus, I have spoken about the Spirit and I have spoken about the Father. I have spoken about some of the ways that we can know Them, in the various facets of our lives. However, I want to speak about experience in the next three scriptures. It is key that as we go through our lives and through experiences that we can look back on such times, and the knowledge gained of divine Persons. There are many examples, and no doubt the brethren can think of many in the Old Testament and the New Testament, who came to know and appreciate their God through experiences of life, and were enlarged in their appreciation of God. Take account of Jacob, for example, and the many ups and downs of his life, but what could he say when he looked back? "The God that shepherded me all my life long", Gen 48: 15. No doubt there are many in this room who could say the same, who can look back and take account of the God who cared in the experiences of life. Abraham was another; there were various points in his life when he learned God. He went through the experience, perhaps a difficult experience at the time, but he could look back and say, 'God was with me'. He had an enlarged appreciation of God.

So we read about this woman in John 12. Mary in Bethany took the pound of ointment of pure nard and poured it upon the feet of Jesus. Why did she do this? I think it is because she was enlarged in her appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ, in her knowledge of this Person. She had been sitting at His feet in Luke's gospel, and I think that is a key thing to the enlargement of the knowledge of divine Persons. She was sitting at His feet and listening to His word. "Mary has chosen the good part", Jesus says, Luke 10: 42. Think of that! I think it is one of the most blessed things to sit at the Lord's feet and listen to His word. I do not think we can limit it to times like this, as even in the quietness of our circumstances, we read a verse and the Lord would speak to us. Pray to the Holy Spirit, and the Lord comes in and speaks. There is blessing in that, and I think the teaching and blessing would enlarge our times together. Mary was like that; she was sitting at His feet and listening to His word. There was a word for her which was precious. It may be that the Lord Jesus spoke to Mary about the things of the Father and the glories of the Father. Think of that, the things of the Father that the Lord Jesus can say are precious. I think the word coming to us day by day would enlarge us in the knowledge of the Father. The Lord Jesus was listening to the Father's word day by day, morning by morning He got a word (Isa 50: 4), and I think there is a need for that that we get a word day by day, in view of enlargement in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

Mary not only sat at His feet, she had the sorrow and pressure of her brother's death in John 11: think of the sorrow and pressure! It is something that many in this room have gone through, and indeed this locality has been affected recently. Many have gone through sorrow, pressures, illnesses, and various things, which are the experiences of life but, beloved brethren, what we can say is that if you go through them with the Lord Jesus you can be enlarged in your appreciation of Him. To know Him in a blessed way as a Shepherd who cares for you, One who has tender mercy for you, and One who looks after you. Pressure is for a reason, and the Father puts one and another through chastening as stated in Hebrews 12: 5-11. At the time it does not seem good, and you wonder why you are going through things. I believe all these things

are in view of enlargement of the appreciation of the Lord Jesus, that that Man would become more precious to us, that we might grow in the knowledge of that One, and that we may become like a Mary pouring out the pound of ointment of pure nard. One and another are put through things, and sometimes we wonder. Sorrows come in, bereavements come in, illnesses come in, and I believe everyone in this room has gone through something of this sort. The Father feels for you in the circumstances, and why you are going through them, it is in view of your being enlarged in your appreciation of Him. There should be something formed in your soul in view of you pouring out a pound of ointment of pure nard. Oh may we all be like Mary pouring out a pound of ointment of pure nard in appreciation of the Lord Jesus. What we express may have been gathered up from ministry or from the experiences of life, but all this is in view of there being something poured out and the house being filled with the odour of the ointment. I think that is like our local gatherings. Bethany was a local place. Perhaps in your local place, dear young one or dear older one, you may you be a Mary pouring out the ointment, filling the house with the odour of the ointment so that there would be something for the heart of Christ and there may be something for your local brethren. May you be encouraged to do this. Think of the way Mary would speak of the Lord Jesus. She was enlarged in her knowledge of Him and He became more precious to her, not only by what He was going to do, and where those feet were going to go, but she had an appreciation of the Person and His glory.

So I read in Ezekiel, and I want to say something about the Spirit. The great river is flowing, and this man is put through experiences. I suggest that the river speaks of experience with the Spirit. As we go through experience with the Spirit we should be enlarged in our appreciation of who He is. This man is led and is guided, and I think that is one of the great services of the Holy Spirit, guiding and leading. He is leading you on in experiences and spiritual history, in view of having a greater appreciation of the great things of God and the wonderful wealth and supply that is under the Spirit's hand.

The man went forth, "a line was in this hand; and he measured a thousand cubits, and he caused me to pass through the waters: the waters were to the ankles"; it is a gradual step. There is to be progress made in the things of God, and I think it is important for all here; there are experiences to take on and there is greater depth brought out at each stage. When the man went forth, a line was in his hand. He is moving into the waters to the ankles. His walk is being guided; he is now learning to walk in the Spirit. We had that earlier on in Galatians, walking in the Spirit, chap 5: 16. I think that is involved in it, learning how to walk. As away from God without the Spirit, you are walking in your own self will. You are walking in the flesh, are you not? But then as the Spirit comes into your life you find He is there to guide you, and help and direct, and then He would lead you into these wonderful things. So the waters are to the ankles, and then to the knees. There is further depth brought about when the knees are spoken about, and I suggest that you are enlarged in your dependence. The knees would speak of prayer. There is something blessed worked out there and you are learning to pray, you are learning to be dependent; the Spirit would help you in that too. And then He would lead you on further to the loins: your affections are affected. These are only some suggestions but I trust we get some apprehension of the Spirit and His service to enlarge us in our affection for the Father and the Son, and for one another. We are learning to seek out one another, to love one another more and to see the work of God in one another. That is what is involved in the Spirit's service. He would magnify Christ, but He would also delight to bring us into the great things of God. He would delight to lead us into all the truth and to expand us in our apprehension of the great things of God. Think of the wonderful things that are opened up here as he comes to "a river that I could not pass through". There is what is beyond us in divine things, there is what we cannot enter into, but there is wealth in it in the Holy Spirit. There is a never-ending resource in the Spirit, suggested in a river that he could not pass through. There is a wealth; there is an abundance in Christianity and in the Holy Spirit. If you want the Holy Spirit and you want the supply of the Holy Spirit and you want to draw from the Holy Spirit, there is no limitation. You can increase your knowledge

of divine things if you want, and the Spirit will not hesitate to help you. I have said it before, that in Genesis 24, where it says, “now all the treasure of his master was under his hand” (v 10), it is a bit like the river; everything is there in the Spirit's hand. And what is it for? In that scripture in Genesis 24 it is in view of the treasure being brought out into circulation, and in this scripture the river is so that we enjoy the blessedness of the Spirit's service. May we enjoy it more! May we enjoy the Spirit's service more, and the knowledge of the Spirit more and more.

And then this man is brought back, “And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? And he led me, and brought me back to the bank of the river.” And he says, “When I returned, behold, on the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other”. He brings you back and gives you a view of things. Think of the Spirit giving you a view of things. What do you see? I think the trees are suggestive there. I think the trees are there in their excellence and in their maturity and in their stability. They are substantial, and they are there in their various stages of growth, and are all planted in divine soil, and they are drawing from the Spirit, and are living on the banks of the river. Oh, may we appreciate one another more, may we love one another more, and may our loins be affected more in the way of comforting the brethren and appreciating the work of God in one another. Think of the work of God going through. One and another go through things but what is built up and established can never be taken away. As one and another go through experiences, there is what is formed in the saints which is substantial and eternal. May we appreciate it in one another more!

So I turn to where I read in Ephesians. Maybe I have spoken a little bit too much about the day to day circumstances of life, but I think Paul went through these experiences too, and there is a lot we can learn from in him. We had some touches of that in our reading, the way he was in prison and the way he suffered. It says in Acts that he was stoned and was lying nearly dead, but the brethren encircled him at that point, chap 14: 19, 20. Think of the sufferings that Paul went through, through shipwreck, through suffering, and through many varied circumstances. Why did he go through it?

Because he had an appreciation of the Lord Jesus, and an appreciation of the things of God, and had been given wonderful disclosures. Where I have read here, I thought Paul had an appreciation of the Father. He had experiences of life, experiences he was given. Paul is very practical in some of his ministry, but you think of the wonderful blessings and privileges he spoke of too. He speaks of practical things, but in the epistle to the Ephesians you get wonderful, blessed, spiritual heights reached, the purpose of God, the counsel of God, all these wonderful things that we can have a part in, but too even later on in the epistle he could speak of the practical things of life. I think Paul had an appreciation of the Father, so that through these experiences of life, and enjoyment of privileges, he was enlarged. Think of him spending two years in Arabia (Gal 1: 17) - he spent time with God, and he was enlarged in his appreciation of the Father and of the Lord Jesus and, too, of the Holy Spirit.

Where I read I just was impressed by the way that his heart goes out. It is part of the experiences of Paul that he has the knowledge of divine Persons, and thus himself, but he wants the brethren too to be enlarged in their knowledge of divine Persons. He says earlier in chapter 1, that the Father "would give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of him". He was praying for the brethren. He had tremendous affection for the saints that they might be enlarged in divine things, and that they might enter into the fulness of divine things, that they might have their place in what was rightly theirs in the blessings of Christianity. There are the spiritual blessings of chapter 1, and Paul in his love for the brethren desires that they might be fully in these things, fully enjoying the blessings of Christianity. His heart goes out here, "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". Think of his heart going out in worship. His desire was that not only that they come to the Father, and to a knowledge of Him, but that their hearts would go out in worship, and have an appreciation of who He is in His greatness and His glory. He is the Father of glory, the Source of all, the Spring and Source of blessing. That is the One we have come to know, and who cares for us in our day to day circumstances, but also the One who has brought us into the most

wonderful privileges - to know the glory of sonship, to know nearness to Himself, and to know His heart of love. May we be encouraged to have a great knowledge and enlargement (like Paul did) of the Father and of divine Persons.

I read in Timothy. We have spoken about divine Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the way they can be known in various ways, and we can be enlarged in our appreciation in the experiences of life, and the experiences of blessing. If we are left here we will gather to remember the Lord Jesus tomorrow, and we will enter into the time of praise. At such an occasion as that, as our hearts are responsive to the Father, we can be enlarged in the knowledge of divine Persons. One of our local brothers spoke not long ago about the way we have our reading meetings together, and we learn things on these occasions, and we are enlarged in our understanding and our knowledge of the truth through these occasions, but he made a suggestion that in the service of God, as one and another respond to the Father, the Son or the Spirit - especially experienced brothers, we also can be enlarged in our knowledge of divine Persons.

I read about Timothy. Perhaps some here are thinking that I have just spoken about Paul the great apostle. He was the apostle of the Gentiles and had a distinctive place. But I think this younger brother, Timothy, is important too, and that is really why I read about Timothy because things are to continue, and there is one here, who learned things from Paul. I have spoken about the knowledge of divine Persons and learning things from experience, but I think, too, we can learn things from one another. Timothy learned things from Paul and from Paul's ministry. There was something distinctive about that ministry which was great and glorious, and it is a necessity for us to be enlarged in the fruit of Paul's ministry. Somebody has suggested that Timothy was quite a quiet and meek brother, a young brother I think, but one thing: he had affection for the saints. Paul had no one like-minded who would care how the saints were getting on, Phil 2: 20. That was Timothy, and he had a knowledge, "abide in those things which thou hast learned". Timothy had learned things; he had learned them from Paul. Earlier Paul

says, "But *thou* hast been thoroughly acquainted with my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith" (v 10), and so on. Think of the experiences Paul had gone through. Timothy learned things from Paul, and no doubt if we look upon one another we can learn things. I would say I have learned things from older brethren; I know that many in this room could say that they have learned things from the way older brethren have conducted themselves; not always what they have said, but the way they have conducted themselves. Let us look and see the spirit of Christ in one another that we may learn something from one another.

Things have to go on; we need to take up the baton and go on in the things of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this room about three years ago there was a word given as to that at the burial of a brother, for us to take up the baton and go on. The brother who had died had taken up the baton and gone on. Now it is the time for others to take up the baton and continue in the things that Paul speaks of, continue in the testimony, continue in power and in the knowledge of divine Persons. The knowledge of Paul's ministry is essential, but the knowledge of divine Persons is essential. Getting into the divine Presence, knowing the heart of Christ, knowing the mind of Christ, knowing divine things as drawing from divine Persons. The resources are available, as is the power.

Let us be encouraged to go in for these things and be like Mary who is responsive and who has affection in her heart for Christ, or a Timothy who is learning from Paul. Let us go on and be encouraged by these thoughts. For His Name's sake.

Glasgow

27th February 2016

Edited and Published by
David Brown and Andrew Burr
81 Roxburgh Road.
West Norwood. London. SE27 OLE