

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

SECOND SERIES

No. 183

June 2022

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PIETY

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KNP I wonder if we could consider the matter of piety. The word is elsewhere translated 'godliness' and it involves us considering for God in everything, and bringing God into our circumstances. How necessary that is, particularly in the present day. I wonder, if in this reading, we could look at the perfection of piety seen in Christ. Piety was demonstrated in Him in absolute perfection. I read first in Psalm 4 because this is what God was looking for: "Jehovah hath set apart the pious man for himself". God is looking for this type of man. He is looking for the man that would be godly. That involves for us, of course, having to do away with man after the flesh. I read in Timothy because you have there the declaration of what God is; the mystery of piety involves the incoming of Christ. It involves the justification of the Spirit - we will perhaps talk a little more about that as we come to that section. In Hebrews we see the purpose of the Lord Jesus when He said, "(in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will". The purpose of the Lord Jesus when He was here was to do the will of God. How more pious can you be, than doing the will of the Lord? That is involving God in everything. You see how that worked out in the prophet where He had ears to hear, and as He heard, He became instructed, and that leads in to what we finished with in the gospel according to John, because He always did the things that pleased the Father, showing how things work out - a Man now pleasing the Father; everything He did was in accord with the Father's will. He is the One that I thought could be the subject of our conversation this morning.

KAK I am wondering if sanctification ties in with this, what is set apart to God?

KNP In order to be pleasing to God, we have to be sanctified, set apart for Him. We often are concerned about ourselves. My exercise really is we should see what is for God. It is, "Jehovah

has set apart the pious man for himself". He did not set apart the pious man so that a man could pat himself on the back and see what he has done. He set apart the pious man for Himself. And that does involve sanctification because the pious man cannot be before God without being sanctified.

KAK I was thinking about what the principle sets out, holy, set apart to God, which is what piety is really, and then the Lord Jesus takes that up and sanctifies Himself for us as having in mind what is for God, totally.

KNP Yes, that is exactly right and very helpful, because everything the Lord Jesus did when He was here as Man had in mind what was for God, to be accomplished and reached in its entirety.

MJK Would piety involve a way of life? I was thinking that godliness is the character of a man.

KNP Yes, the character of the man; so it involves everything he does, the way a man operates.

MJK The Lord Jesus sets out piety perfectly; His whole life shows forth that kind of character.

KNP Yes, the life of the Lord Jesus certainly shows forth that everything that He did had that in view. He was constantly in communication with God; that comes into piety too, does it not? When we speak in regard to Isaiah, we will speak about that. How can you hear if you are not attuned to what God is saying? It involves everything we do.

DMW So such a man has access to God's ear. I was just thinking of the latter part of the third verse, "Jehovah will hear when I call unto him".

KNP Yes, that was known by the Lord Jesus. He says that in John 11, "I knew that thou always hearest me", v 42. He knew, He listened, He was instructed, and He had access to the Father. He was God, of course, in His own Person and character. I would like to keep that in mind, the greatness of who He is. As Man, He showed piety, He showed His consideration for God in everything that He did.

DMW So He sets out in every way how we have access to the same God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

KNP We have been, and are, privileged to come into that because of His work, because of what He has done. I think what He is showing us is how He considered for God in everything that He did. It was not merely consideration for man. The Lord Jesus's consideration for man was there, because that was what God wanted. His piety was not considering just for what man wanted; it was what God wanted. I think that links with what we are saying. In the psalm it says, "Jehovah hath set apart the pious man for himself", set apart for God.

TRC "I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will" (Acts 13: 22) - there was a different character of man that God could have infinite pleasure in. Think of the life of Christ in perfection. Well might the heavens have been opened at the waters of baptism. It was as if the pent-up feelings of the Father could not be held back, you might say, any longer. And at the mount of transfiguration He declared His delight, "*This* is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight", Matt 17: 5. The One that is the "man after my heart, who shall do all my will".

KNP That is good. This is the first time God had a Man that was found in perfection, "a man after my heart". David, in type, shows that - "who shall do all my will". What a delight that was to the heart of God. What joy He had in that. At the baptism, and the mount of transfiguration, we see God the Father's view of it. How it brought in all heaven rejoicing. The angels, the heavenly host, rejoiced. There was joy in heaven because here was a Man that would do all the will of God. How joyful that is for us to contemplate.

GMC I was wondering about the name Jehovah being used here; it is God who did that. I am wondering really if piety is a way into the fulness of relationship that God had in mind.

KNP Well, it is what God has in mind to be displayed in man, and that is why it was displayed in perfection in the Lord Jesus. And that is how we can enter into the purpose of God. We cannot enter in on our own merit, and that is because of all the things that

hold us back. The Lord Jesus Himself was always in absolute perfection answering to the will of the Father.

WSC Is piety a two-sided thing? It first starts within, then it is seen without? I am thinking of the first chapter of John; the Lord came “full of grace and truth”, it says (v 14), but then John the baptist says, “Behold the Lamb of God”, John 1: 36. Did he see something in Him, that was shining out?

KNP Yes, he saw something shining that he did not see anywhere else. John had baptised many persons but now he says, “Behold the Lamb of God”; that was looking on Jesus as He walked. I suppose piety would come out in our walk; in the way we walk, we would demonstrate what we are. How we walk demonstrates what we are. The piety of the Lord Jesus coming out was seen in the way that He walked.

WSC The scripture says, “having been heard because of his piety”, Heb 5: 7.

KNP Yes, there was something that was recognised of Him. There was something there inwardly that was not known in others. But then piety comes out - it is seen. I would like us to understand that that is what God is looking for. God is looking for the pious man; He has found it in Christ.

DJK Does it involve God being expressed? I was thinking of John 1: “In the beginning was the Word”, v 1. I was thinking of what God found in Christ, speaking reverently, coming from Himself, and ultimately, that it is really what is found in the saints too.

KNP It is an expression of God, and perhaps that lead us on to 1 Timothy. It is good for us to look at that. It speaks there of the mystery of piety. It is really a demonstration of God, what God is. What God is has been “manifested in flesh, has been justified in the Spirit, has appeared to angels, has been preached among the nations, has been believed on in the world, has been received up in glory”. That is really a description of what God is, and that is how we know Him.

DJK This is very good. We may try to be pious, and I am not saying we should not be, but it is really what is seen in Christ; the

whole of His life was for the pleasure of God, the pleasure of the Father. It was not seeking to be something by natural means - it was what He was.

KNP Exactly. And that is seen; it has been manifested in flesh. That began at the incarnation. That is where the definition, or the description, you might say, of piety begins. How much do we know God? In the old dispensation, they knew Him as the Almighty. They did not know Him as a Man: "God has been manifested in flesh". That is how God has been made known now in this dispensation and how we know Him.

JKK Creation brought in image and likeness in relation to man; so that the formation of God's own handiwork was there. That is really piety, is it not? It is there inwardly to begin with. Obviously, degradation had come in, but the work was there in the first place, and I was thinking of what was said, that it comes out when that is allowed to reveal itself.

KNP I think it is seen there and comes in as we recognise that God has been manifested in flesh. As we appreciate the manifestation of God in flesh, which is the incoming of Christ, that is the beginning of the work of God in us.

JKK The Lord was not turned aside by things of this world. He gave perfect expression to everything that was that "image" and "likeness" in that sense. What a view is given to us here, One that could be in perfect accord with the will of God. That is seen in expression here in these verses in Timothy, is it not?

KNP Yes, and that is key for us. These elements are not in time order or chronological here because, as an example, "received up in glory" occurred before He was "preached among the nations". That He "appeared to angels" was something that transpired here as a result of the manifestation in flesh. I think these things build up to the appreciation and accumulation of where He is now. It is an ascending line. He was manifest in flesh: He came into manhood's form. He has been justified in the Spirit - the Spirit descended on Him as a dove; that Vessel was made to stand out as no other could experience. Then it says, "has appeared to angels". You may say that angels are heavenly beings - this is the manifestation of God to angels - He appeared to angels. God

came into manhood's form. The importance of the manhood of Christ needs to be appreciated by us because that is how we can recognise that God appeared to angels, He appeared in that form. How many times and in how many ways, He appeared to angels throughout His life here as a Man. He was preached among the nations: we get that in the Acts of the Apostles; we can see how He was preached among the nations.

DMW Were the heavenly host active as He came into the world?

KNP Yes, I am sure. The heavenly host was necessary; that was the first glimpse that the angels had of the greatness of God as Man. It caused the whole heavenly host to be caught up in singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men", Luke 2: 14. That is the result of the incoming of Christ, and the One that has been manifested in flesh.

DMW I was wondering how far back the justification of the Spirit goes? It certainly is observed and declared at His baptism, and on the mount of transfiguration and sonship. But I was wondering about that reference to "the holy thing", Luke 1: 35.

KNP Yes, that is helpful. I think "justified in the Spirit" helps us to see how divine Persons have made themselves known to us - God is made known in Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He has been justified in the Spirit; so the manhood of Christ is that which we have to come to first. But then, it is the work of the Spirit that brings us into that, do you think?

DMW It is a wonderful contemplation, is it not? It is referred to here as a mystery. Say something about that.

KNP The "mystery of piety". It is a mystery to the world; it is not known. It is not a mystery to the believer, because the believer knows the One who has been manifested in flesh. That takes away the mystery, does it not?

DMW It is manifested in flesh. It does take it back to John 1: 14, which is God truly. That passage does not refer exactly to flesh and blood, but the suggestion in "became flesh" is of something that continues after that order.

KNP Yes, that is an order that will go right through. Flesh and bones refers to what goes right through. So it begins there and

will continue right through. Of course, blood was necessary for death had to come in. Without that, we would not be able to come in. So that side was necessary, but here we have this wonderful mystery opened up to us where we can recognize the One that is manifest in flesh.

WSC Our brother has raised the reference to justification in the Spirit. Do you think the fact that the Spirit preserved the Lord's prayer in John 17 is really justification in the Spirit, for us? We can see Him speaking to the Father, and how He spoke to the Father freely.

KNP I think that section is there for us to understand that, and give us a glimpse too of His relationship with the Father. That is important for us to recognise, and to know something of His relationship with the Father. These verses will help us to see that He and the Father are really one.

WSC It seems to me that a relationship with divine Persons would involve godliness.

KNP I think that is good. We cannot be in a relationship with divine Persons without being godly, because it cannot be done in a fleshly manner. If it is done in a fleshly manner, it will end in destruction. It can only be done in a godly manner.

TRC As to God manifested in flesh, one of the titles of the Lord Jesus is Emmanuel, "God with us", Matt 1: 23. Everything that God is revealed to be was expressed in Christ.

KNP That is true. Of course, He is God; so how could God not be expressed? Then He manifested Himself as a Man. For myself, I wonder if I really appreciate that. I would like to encourage us, the young ones too particularly, to have an appreciation of what it meant for God to be manifested as a Man. There was no sin in Him; He was sin apart, because He was perfect. That is how piety is seen in perfection in the Lord Jesus. We have to grasp that God was manifested in a Man, manifested in flesh. He came into manhood's form. Now, how else could God come near to us? The way He could come near to us is as a Man, because we could not appreciate anything else. If you want

to get to know something, you have to engage in that character. That is what God did.

LPC It says, “the Word became flesh” - is there a suggestion of a heavenly desire to come in the form of Man to be with us and to secure what is His own to Himself?

KNP Yes, that is right. He became flesh; He took that on Himself. He was One that accepted that, we might say, to come in to manhood’s form. He took that upon Himself so that God could be declared and be known to man. There was not any other way, because Jehovah has set the pious man apart for Himself. How else could that pious man be appreciated and known except as we come to appreciate the Lord Jesus?

DJK I was also interested in what has been raised about this mystery of piety. I wonder if it is seen in John 16: 28? It says, “I came out from the Father, and have come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father”. Is that the mystery of piety?

KNP Well, I think that is the declaration of Himself, the One that is manifested in flesh. It involved Him coming into the world. He had to come that way. It is the only way that man could be found in the presence of God, because godliness cannot be known by us except as we are sanctified, and that involves the work of Christ; that involves the pathway that He took. The section you referred to helps us to see the relationship that He had with the Father. We see a touch of that too in John 8: “I do always the things that are pleasing to him”. That is that relationship shining out in all its perfection in everything that He did - how wonderful to recognise it. So, these elements are all seen, “appeared to angels, has been preached among the nations”.

We are reading the Acts locally and have been affected by the preachings of Peter. These are powerful preachings - three thousand souls added as a result of the preaching! The Lord was preached among the nations and has been believed on in the world - that is the result of the preaching. The result of the preaching is that He is believed on in the world. And then the glory of it all is that He “has been received up in glory”. That is the place where He resides now, as a Man forever: “received up in

glory” - how precious for us to appreciate and value the greatness and magnificence of how God has made Himself known to man in a Man.

DMW Does “preached among the nations” have any link to Romans 1: 4, “marked out Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead”? I have wondered about that, because that verse does not mention His death.

KNP It does not mention His death, but the preaching involves that. It involves His death; it involves the shedding of His blood. It also involves His resurrection and His receiving up in glory. That is all necessary. I think about what you say in relation to Romans, that it certainly was the apostle’s desire that they would have a full appreciation of who He is and what He has done so they would enter into the enjoyment of that. It brings them to the end of themselves. It is good for us to see that we cannot be pious in the flesh; that is not possible. If the flesh has its way, there is no piety, because God is not in my circumstances; the flesh is driving my circumstances.

WSC I was thinking that it is interesting that the apostle writes this to Timothy after he says how one ought to conduct oneself (v 15) - *that* is dealing with the flesh. It is a moral impossibility to be pious in the flesh.

KNP That is good, because it is how one ought to conduct oneself in God’s house - this is there to help us to be able to do that. We cannot conduct ourselves in God’s house in a natural way. It is only done in a godly way, as bringing God into the circumstances.

We could look and see what Hebrews tells us, because where we read in Hebrews begins with the way that the Lord Jesus acted. We have referred to other instances, but here it is, “Sacrifice and offering thou wilt not”. If we look back in the old dispensation, we can see the sacrifices that went on; all these sacrifices that went year by year - sacrifices for sin on a continual basis, and then the yearly sacrifices. It says, “thou hast prepared me a body”. I was really affected by verse 7, because it says, “Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will”. That is piety seen in perfection: nothing of His own will,

everything is God's will, "(... it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will". That comes out in His pathway; it comes out in the way He walked, the will of God met and done in every aspect of His walk, even as a boy of twelve, "did ye not know that I ought to be occupied in my Father's business?", Luke 2: 49.

JKK I am interested in your thought in relation to what is written. The Lord knew this that it is spoken of in relation to what is written, what came before. God's thoughts do not change but the word is given to us. I wonder if that is not what is brought out here, in relation to piety. This is not meant to be a mystery in the sense that it is all spelled out: it is written.

KNP I think it shows that everything the Lord did had been previously declared - "it is written". We looked recently at Luke 24. It says there that Jesus walked with these two that were on their way to Emmaüs, and He explained to them "from Moses and from all the prophets ... the things concerning himself", v 27. There was nothing new, from that standpoint, but it has now been seen, manifested in flesh. It is the manifestation of it in flesh; the truth was there in the law and the prophets; so from that standpoint, God did not introduce anything new, because everything was spelled out beforehand, but now it is manifested in flesh and has come near as Man. This is seen now by the "Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me)"; there is that there in the brackets; it says, "Lo, I come ... to do, O God, thy will", but it was there. What had been foreshadowed was now brought in; it was manifested in flesh.

DMW The emphasis indicates that there is the divine mind, divine counsels, related to the roll of the book - divine counsel.

KNP Yes, I think that it right. There is something that God had in mind in the very outset. Someone referred earlier to the verse, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness", Gen 1: 26. Christ was in mind then. The perfection and beauty of what was seen in Him was a reminder of that time, and now it is seen in the prophetic writing, that God had in mind that He would do His will, that there would be a Man who would do His will in perfection.

GMC I wonder if it emphasises that He was fully pious from the beginning whereas we may grow and develop in it, to some

degree. I do not want to jump ahead, but this brings in mind that, even in purpose and counsel, it was fully there and then it is given expression. Would that be right?

KNP Yes, I think that is seen here. That is what I had in mind here; this was His purpose. The purpose of the Lord Jesus, coming into manhood's form, was to do the will of God. That was His purpose in coming into manhood's form. Now, you may say, 'He came to save me' - well, that was the will of God. We think of everything related to ourselves, but the purpose of the Lord Jesus, being manifested in flesh, was to do the will of God. How encouraging that is for us, because what does that do? It takes our view to another level; it takes our view to viewing what God's delight is in. Someone referred earlier to the voice on the mount, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight*", Matt 17: 5. That is what God's delight is in; it is in the One who is doing His will. And our delight should be in Him too.

JKK Does this magnify the oblation, that is, the fine flour mingled with oil, Lev 2? It is the character of what piety is. It is the view that God has, and as we have that view, it is an offering that Jehovah takes delight in - a sweet-smelling savour.

KNP That is good. It is fine flour, mingled with oil. There is an evenness about it; the evenness that was seen in the Lord Jesus. There is something we can do well to contemplate and study, because there was no variation with Him. There are variations with us - we have different moods, and we go through different things in our lives, but there was no variation with Him. He was even throughout - perfect in the eyes of God.

WSC Throughout all the centuries Israel had the burnt offering with the oblation upon it - perfection to God. Hardly would they have known what we know, and it comes in a wonderful burst, it might be, on our understanding, of the perfection that was there all along in God's mind.

KNP That is good. That offering was wholly for Jehovah. It was an offering by fire to Jehovah. If we look at the life of the Lord Jesus, it was an offering to Jehovah, perfection seen in a Man. We sometimes sing that:

Divine perfection in a Man! (Hymn 20)

How fine that is!

LPC The expression, “Lo, I come (in the roll of the book ...)”, gives the impression that He is the One without peer. He is the only one to do the will of God. Hymn 152 says He went to death’s domain alone, the One who could go to death, break the bands of death and be raised; and as risen, He completed the sweet-smelling odour of the offering to God. The sacrifice of bulls and goats could not do it. The thought is that He is the One without peer, the only One who fulfilled the will of God.

KNP That is good. Why was He the only One who could fulfill the will of God? There was no sin in Him. What stops us from doing the will of God is sin. Unless we come to a recognition that we are sinners and we have sinned, we cannot come to the appreciation of what it is to be perfect in the eyes of God, and be godly persons. So we recognise that and see that in Christ, and He is the One without peer. “Jehovah has set the pious man apart for himself”; He is perfect. God has set Him apart for Himself, to satisfy His heart. It is seen here, “Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will”. How wonderful it is to realise that. It involves different things, of course. In verse 9, we get repetition of that, “Lo, I come to do thy will”. It says, “He takes away the first that he may establish the second”. That is the Man out of heaven - the second Man is to be on our view, on our hearts and minds constantly.

DMW I was enjoying your thought of God setting apart the pious man for Himself. We have here One who set Himself apart for God. He is not sent to the world: “Lo, I come”.

KNP Yes, I think that is right, absolutely. That would support our thought, because that was His purpose. He came to be for God, in perfection - “Lo, I come to do thy will”. It was not to do the will of man. It was not to do anything else, and that was seen in Him. We do not have a record of Him growing up as a boy, but it was seen in Him as a babe; there He was, in perfection, seen in the manger. We get a glimpse of Him as a boy of twelve who was occupied with His Father’s business; He was doing the will of God. How is a boy of twelve doing that? How could a boy of

twelve be asking and answering questions? There are all these and teachers - all these persons who may have thought they knew everything - but here was One who was doing the will of God.

KAK It is remarkable how God gives expression to the things which belong to Himself in the Lord Jesus, the full expression that only could come through God Himself, "Lo, I come". Even the angels and the whole created sphere could not give such expression. What would you say about that?

KNP The angels and the whole created sphere, of course, came from God, did they not? God created them. He created the heavens and the earth. The heavens and the earth, while they were created in perfection, were marred by sin, marred by Satan coming in; so they could not declare the whole greatness of God; that involved the One who had no sin. "Lo, I come to do thy will" was One who had no sin; that is the second Man. The first man was involved in creation, but that first man has to be taken away in order for the second Man to be given His place.

KAK So we are really brought to a point where we can grasp what it is that God would express Himself in such a way, that never could be understood, even the angels not understanding it. They heard the all-various wisdom of God in the assembly.

KNP That is where it is found because the assembly is united to Christ. It is not something separate; He is the Head. He is "head over all things to the assembly" (Eph 1: 22), so that is where the all-various wisdom of God resides and it is linked with Christ Himself.

GMC It shows that there is only one place where we can learn piety. We cannot learn it from angels or creation, or anything else, or the natural man that you have called attention to; would that be right?

KNP I think that is right. We learn it from Christ, which is why I wanted to focus this reading on Him, because that is where we learn it.

Now we should look at Isaiah because we see something there of how piety was operating: "morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear". Now, if we consider for God or the

Lord Jesus, and we considered for God in everything we did, we have to hear what He says. The prophet says here, of the Lord Jesus, in type, “he wakeneth mine ear to hear”. Oftentimes we may hear something, but did we understand it? But “hear as the instructed”: I think that means that it is not only heard, it is not only the actual hearing, but it becomes part of the person, “hear as the instructed”, one who takes on what is heard. As we look at the life of the Lord Jesus, “And every one went to his home. But Jesus went to the mount of Olives”, John 7: 53; 8: 1. His ears were open to hear as the instructed, to hear what God would say.

JKK There was purpose. There is instruction; there are ears that hear; and then there is what is not rebellious. The purpose of God is very direct; He speaks with a view that there might be something that would be brought in, would be revealed. You have “the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to succour by a word”. You think of the Lord coming in and saying, “Peace be unto you” (Luke 24: 36), or, “it is I myself”, v 39. We see the character of what He did, and of what He was, there is purpose in relation to each one of those motions.

KNP That is good. The purpose is there. As we hear, and our ears are open to hear, not only will we learn as instructed, but we will be encouraged. “Peace be unto you” - that is encouragement. “It is I myself” - how encouraging; how building up that is. If we have our ears open to hear what God is saying, we will be lifted up, encouraged, stimulated, strengthened, have fear of nothing, because we will be under divine direction as considering for God.

TRC There was never one unfruitful day in the Lord’s life. In Luke’s gospel, it says, “on one of the days”, chap 20: 1. Every day of the Lord’s life was fruitful to God. You look at many instances, but suppose we look at John 4: 6, there Jesus was “wearied with the way he had come”. What was He doing there? He had heard as the instructed. What a result in that day, do you think?

KNP Yes, He was there for that one woman; that was why He was there. It shows the way that He was wakened morning by morning. There was no morning missed; it was “morning by

morning”. That is the way the Lord Jesus acted, every morning. The disciples went to their own homes; He went to the mount of Olives. The next morning, He had heard, and He did the works of the Father.

TRC The Lord in John 11 waited three days, waiting for the voice of the Father, to hear as the instructed; then He moves on to Bethany.

KNP Yes, there was nothing He did without the will of the Father; we will come to that in John 8. We see that everything was done in accord with the Father’s will. It involves this hearing, morning by morning. It is not saying, ‘I am in difficulty, and times are tough right now; let me see what God is saying’, and trying to understand what God is saying. That is because we are thinking about ourselves; that is because we are thinking about the flesh. The Lord Jesus was always considering for God.

GMC I wonder if the word “instructed” brings in the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not just hearing, but it is “to hear as the instructed”. In Nehemiah, when they stood up to read the law, there were others that stood up and gave the understanding along with it, so they did not just hear, but they understood, Neh 8: 8. I wonder if that is the work of the Holy Spirit for us?

KNP Yes, I think that is right. That is how it would work for us. It is necessary for us to have the work of the Spirit to gain from what we hear, and from what we read, because the liberty of the Spirit is what makes that formed in us. The formation can only be achieved as we make room for the Spirit; and how necessary that is for us.

TRC Did the piety of Christ really shine in its brightness from the mount of transfiguration to the cross? Is that what this scripture is really bringing out?

KNP Yes, He cries out there in Gethsemane, “My Father, if it be possible”, Matt 26: 39. We said earlier that He had access to the Father, but then He very quickly says, “not as *I* will, but as *thou* wilt”. That was room made for bringing God in; God was brought into these circumstances, treacherous and difficult as they were. It was extremity, “his sweat became as great drops of blood” (Luke

22: 44); what extremity the Lord Jesus was in as Man, and yet He continued, “but as thou wilt”. That is really considering for God at all times. It is key for us to recognise and appreciate what that meant for God.

DMW It is affecting to consider how He was not rebellious. There is reference to “strong crying and tears” (Heb 5: 7); nevertheless, “not my will but thine be done”. There is the work of the Spirit that brings us into conformity by being subject, otherwise we should be rebellious.

KNP Well, God may speak and we do not hear -

Once, yea twice, He may have spoken
(Hymn 253).

God spoke in many ways; we get that in the Hebrews, “God having spoken in many parts and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets” (chap 1: 1), and in these days He is speaking in the Person of the Son, in our hearing. It is a challenge for man, our hearing, but then we may hear and we rebel. A pious man never rebels; a pious man hears; and he is instructed as a result of that hearing. That is what the Lord Jesus shows us, because He heard, and He was obedient to what He heard. Sometimes it may be difficult – ‘It should not work out that way, Lord, it should work out another way’ - that is how we may operate, but that is not the way He operates. His way is perfect.

DMW “He learned obedience from the things which he suffered”, Heb 5: 8. He did not learn to obey; we must learn to obey.

KNP It is good to clarify that, because He was obedient, always. He was never disobedient. He did not have to learn to be obedient, but He learned obedience through what He suffered.

WSC Is there a suggestion in “the instructed”? The Lord says in John 14: 10, “The words which I speak to you I do not speak from myself”, and so on. I am thinking of that word ‘instructed’, how He spoke what the Father gave Him to speak.

KNP Yes, that is right. He did not attribute anything to Himself, from that standpoint. He continues in that verse, “but the Father who abides in me, he does the works”. They were not His own works. We are often worried about what kind of works we can do,

but the Lord Jesus was doing the Father's works. How pleasing that was to the Father. His concern was to be pleasing to the Father. How necessary that is. If we can just appreciate everything that He did. I wonder if we can just value more what it meant for God to have this pious Man, in perfection, in a scene where sin and evil were rampant, and yet here as a Man who was not diverted, and could not be moved from doing the will of God because He was in constant communion. It says, "therefore have I set my face like a flint". He was not going to be diverted; He was not going to change direction. How often our direction is changed, but the Lord Jesus never changed direction. He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem.

GMC It is interesting that the first question in scripture is rebellion, "Is it even so, that God has said ...?", Gen 3: 1. That is where it all traces back to, does it not?

KNP Well, it is sin coming in. Sin came in because man did not obey God. Man and his wife wanted to please themselves. How prevalent that is, even today - even for ourselves, we want to please ourselves. We need to be concerned and exercised to be considering for God.

DMW I had a question about what was referred to, "that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary". You mentioned John 4; does this fit with that?

KNP Well, that woman was succoured. The Lord was succoured too, I suppose. But He was pleased to find one that was ready to be lifted up. In John 4, the woman finally comes to it because the Lord said to her, "Ye worship ye know not what; we worship what we know", v 22. She said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where one must worship", v 20. There was something that was seen there that was not seen anywhere else by that woman. She became instructed, did she not? She heard what He said; she heard His word and she answered to it. There was something there that was seen in that woman, that was succoured by a word. "Should know how to succour by a word"; the word of the Lord succoured that woman.

DMW That entire interview is an interesting contemplation, the work of God underlying it, no doubt; it was through the Lord speaking. He addressed this woman who was weary. He was weary by the way He had come. But she was weary, having had five husbands and the one she was with was not her husband. She was seeking, she was weary, would you say? She was a religious kind of outcast, but she laid hold of that religion. But then when she met the Man of God's choice, that changed everything she knew.

KNP I think the culmination of that is key: "is not He the Christ?", v 29. She came to realise that here was a Man who did not only tell her everything she had done, but He knew everything. She came to realise that He was one doing the will of the Father. "Ye worship ye know not what; we worship what we know" and, "the Father seeks such as his worshippers", v 23.

We should look at John 8. I thought this helps us to see the relationship between the Father and the Lord Jesus. "They knew not that he spoke to them of the Father". They had been with Him; they had seen all the things that He had done; they were affected by all the things that He had done, no doubt. Now it is in this chapter where we find that the words of the Lord Jesus are rejected. We get that in the bearing of this chapter. In chapter 9, we get His works rejected, resulting in them casting out the blind man. Here, in chapter 8, it is His words that are rejected; and I think we have something of His words here. We read, "They said therefore to him, Who art thou? ...Altogether that which I also say to you". How wonderful it is to recognise that He was everything that He said He was. There was no deviation. He said, "I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but he that has sent me is true". Here we have a sense of Him declaring to His own, "and I, what I have heard from him, these things I say to the world". The words that He speaks are words that He has heard, linking with the ears, the ears being wakened morning by morning.

KAK When God spoke out of the cloud, He says, "hear him", Matt 17: 5.

KNP That is good, “hear him”. That is the word to those that were there, “hear him”. How necessary that is. And that was a word that was available for persons to hear. I suppose the angels heard that too. They would hear that, “hear him”. It comes right down to today, “hear him”. Our portion cannot be entered into without Him. So why would we not listen to Him?

KAK In a previous chapter, they said, “This word is hard; who can hear it?”, John 6: 60. That was not able to be perceived, naturally speaking, was it?

KNP That is right. It could not be understood naturally; the Lord says, “To you is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables, in order that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand”. Luke 8: 10. It was spoken in parables but then He declared to His own the meaning of the parables so that they could hear and fully understand everything He said.

DJK In Acts 11: 26, it says they were called Christians in Antioch. They were the ones that were affected by the Man that God had chosen.

KNP That is good; they were called Christians; they were linked with Christ. They were linked with the Man that considered for God in everything He did, the Man that heard what God said. Those that heard the word were the ones that were called Christians. How wonderful that is to lay hold of. You might say that this mystery is great: “They knew not that He spoke to them of the Father”. The mystery then is revealed. It is revealed in the Person and His own are brought into the joy of it.

DJK In chapter 4 we had, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that says to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water”, v 10. She did not appreciate the One who was the living One.

KNP That is right. They did not know what the living water was, or where it was. And she says, “give me this water” (v 15); that is what the woman says, “give me this water”. There is an appreciation of Him. I think an appreciation of Him would give us that desire, to drink of that water and not come here to draw; not

to draw from what is of this world, not to draw on what is of the flesh, what is of man, but to draw on what is of God. That is how we can become godly. Godliness is evident in persons who draw upon what is from God, rely upon God for everything, and call upon God for everything. We may come to this in the power of the Spirit to know these things, down here. The Lord says, "When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself". What a delight to heaven: here is One who is doing everything as He has been taught, the instructed One. Then He says, "but as the Father has taught me I speak these things". This is the One who hears as the instructed.

DMW So there is a beauty here; then, like the Lord Jesus, we can be sent; He was sent; it is not here "Lo I come", He was sent. Subjection to the will of another renders one able to be sent.

KNP That is good. I think that is seen in piety too. While He came, and the purpose of Him coming was "to do, O God, thy will", then He was also sent - sent of the Father. He was sent in order to demonstrate what was perfect, demonstrate perfection to man, and also to show perfection to satisfy the heart of the Father, the heart of God. That is why He was sent. He says, "he that has sent me is with me". There is no separation, "he that has sent me is with me". How wonderful it is to see how, if we consider for God in everything we do, God will be with us. "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you", Jas 4: 8. You have to resist the devil, of course. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (v 7); then, "draw near to God and he will draw near to you".

LPC You see in John 1:18, "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* has declared him". Everything of the Father is in Him, and was manifested in Him. John 14 says, "I am in the Father and the Father in me", v 11. Everything of the Father is manifested in Him.

KNP That is right, because it says here, "And he that has sent me is with me". They are one. All that He did was the works of the Father. "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him": the things that He does are pleasing to the Father. We spoke about it earlier, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; but I knew that thou always hearest me". He called on the Father to hear

Him before He called Lazarus from the dead. “I thank thee that thou hast heard me; but I knew that thou always hearest me”. There is a Man who is doing the things of the Father, doing His will, in every step.

DMW Is it the unity of the divine nature?

KNP That is right; there is unity seen there. The Father and Son are one. It gives us a view of the greatness of the revelation. It is the revelation of God, known to us, and perhaps that links with the mystery of piety that God has been made known in that way, and the revelation is seen in the Son and then linked with the Father, because the Father and the Son are one. Then we have the Spirit available to us to help us understand these things. They are not understandable to the natural man; they are understandable by the Spirit.

DMW We have to make a difference. In verse 28 “ye shall know that I am”, what is in view is that persons should be partakers of the divine nature so there is this unity that is continued.

KNP Exactly. It is with a view to things being expanded. God looks for the expansion of things, but the expansion of things is seen in persons; that is where it is seen. It is not seen in man after the flesh. It is seen in man found in godliness, man found as those that are pious. That is where the extension of things comes, because they can enter into the enjoyment of everything that the perfect, pious Man has shown us.

GMC It brings out that many believed, but it does not say that many followed. That is really the depth that you are speaking about, is it not?

KNP Yes, that is right. Many believed on Him. Now then, it is man’s responsibility after that. We may say that we believe, but what do we do? We have to act on our beliefs and follow Him.

Indianapolis

27th November 2021

Key to Initials:

T R Campbell, Glasgow; G M Chellberg, Wheaton; W S Chellberg, Wheaton; L P Chin, Wheaton; D J Klassen, Aberdeen; M J Klassen, Aberdeen; K A Knauss, Indianapolis; J K Knauss, Indianapolis; K N Pye, New York; D M Welch, Denton

SERVING GOD AND ONE ANOTHER

Ken N Pye

Joshua 24: 14-24

Psalm 100: 1-5

Hebrews 12: 28

Acts 27: 21-25

Galatians 5: 13

It will be obvious to the brethren that all these scriptures we have read speak about serving, serving God and one another. We have been speaking about piety, and piety would result in service to God. If we are going to satisfy the heart of God, it would involve serving Him. That was God's objective from the very outset in Exodus: "Let my son go, that he may serve me", Exod 4: 23. God did not want His son in captivity. He says again in relation to His people, "Let my people go, that they may serve me", Exod 8: 1. Pharaoh's heart was hardened. That was an attack of the enemy. The enemy would seek to restrict service to God, but God is looking for men to serve Him. How necessary it is in the present day that we serve God! We may therefore ask, what does that really mean? It means we have to exclude other things. One of the greatest dangers is that we are expected have to do more of such things; people at work will say you have to do more. Well, what are you going to stop doing to do more? There is not an unlimited amount of time. You have to stop something to do something else; so if you are going to serve God, what are you not going to do? You are not going to serve other gods.

That is what comes out in this first section that we read. Other things have to be left aside, have to be put away; they have to be cast aside and disposed of. These idols all had to be cast aside to allow the people to serve Jehovah, their God. How essential that is, and what a commitment it needs! It needs a great commitment to do that. It is not something that can be taken up lightly. The Hebrew bondman is a perfect example of one that served. He gave up everything: "I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go free", Exod 21: 5. He took on service to the ultimate, giving up everything else just to serve his master.

What a type of the Lord Jesus Himself, who gave up everything to serve God! "I love": it was done out of love, and He was bound to it. He did not deviate from it. What service was found in the pathway that He marked out! We have spoken of the pathway that He marked out in piety. What a joy that gave to the Father! What a joy that gave to God! What joy that gives to us as we contemplate it! "I love my master"; it was done in love. We spoke about affections being related to this. I think it is done in love: "I love my master".

Why do you think Joshua said this, "but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah"? It was out of love for God. Joshua was ready to give up everything else, he had given up everything else, because God had shown him the way. He was able to look back on his history and see what God had done. Think what good things God has done for us! Can you do that, beloved brethren? Can you look back over your history and analyse it and see what good things God has done for you? You may well say you have had this trouble, you have had that trouble, and the next trouble. What good things has God done for you? Do not focus on all your problems! What are the good things God has done for you?

The good things God has done include the giving of His only-begotten Son. That is one of the good things that God has done for you. Think what He has brought you into as a result of the finished work of Christ! He has brought you into a vast expanse of things that you could never enter into any other way. Oh, count your blessings! How many they are! Your blessings are far greater than all the troubles you may have had! How great your blessings are! Your blessings are countless. Why? Because you have been "blessed ... with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ", Eph 1: 3. Oh, go back and look at how God has worked in your life! Look back at what God has done! Jacob could look back and say, "the God that shepherded me all my life long", Gen 48: 15. He could look back on his history and could see everything that God had done. Moses, when he came out of the wilderness and was on Pisgah, could look back and see everything that God had done. Does that not cause you to want to serve Him? You say, 'Well, I have all these struggles'.

Do not think about your problems! Think of what God has done and the blessings He has blessed you with because that is what brings you into the “very, very good land”, Num 14: 7. That is what brings you into where you can serve God in freedom and unhinderedly; you can serve Him in there. I would encourage each one of us individually to consider and count the blessings that God has given us. Count them! Analyse them! See what God has done!

David in the Psalms looked back, and he said, “For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall”, Ps 18: 29. I may say that I really conquered that; I really overcame that obstacle. It was *by God* that you overcame it. You did not overcome it in your own strength; in your own strength you are not able to overcome anything. It has to be done by the power of God. Well, count these blessings! Count them, one by one, and you will find the blessings far surmount any troubles you may have had on the way, and it would result in you appreciating God more. How do you appreciate someone? You appreciate someone when you can enjoy their company, enjoy the blessings together with them. Well, enjoy these blessings with God! Enjoy these blessings with the Lord! Think of all the things you have overcome and see how beneficial God has been to you!

I think Joshua recognised something of that. He says, “for Jehovah our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt”. That is what God has done. How could they get out of Egypt? The Egyptians were hard taskmasters. It looked like an impossible task; it looked like there was no way for them to go, but God had said, “Let my son go”, and because God said that, there was no going back for Pharaoh. They had to be let go because God said they had to go. What has God said in relation to you? They “shall be mine”, Gen 48: 5. He has embraced you; He has embraced us; He has brought us into these wonderful things; He has brought us in and has taken us into a “very, very good land”. He has taken us into the place where Jesus is. He has taken us into the place where that One has been taken up into glory, the One that has been taken up and given a place at His right hand; He has brought us into that place. Oh how wonderful a privilege and a joy it should be for us to look

back on that blessing and cause us to prove God, and cause us to serve Him!

We find that “Jehovah drove out from before us all the peoples”. He goes through the whole the process of entering into the land. Look at the process you have gone through to get you where you are today! Look at the depths of things you have had to endure and see how God has taken you through! He has taken you through every step of the way, and now you can be found as Joshua was, “as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah”. Look back individually and see how God has taken you through. I would encourage each one to do that. Very often when we look back householdly we see how God has taken us through. It is His blessing; He has taken you through these things. Why? So that you will serve Him as a household. And then you find as you come together as a locality, it expands, it broadens, to the service of God. “As for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah”. How wonderful! for us to focus upon it, to see what God is doing and how He is operating.

So many times we get distracted by all the difficulties, but the difficulties can be overcome; you can be assured of that. Any difficulty God will take care of; He is able. We read that in relation to the apostle Paul. Whatever privation, whatever it was he had to endure, God provided for his every need. No matter what the circumstances are He will see you through. How wonderful that is! Joshua came to that, and he brought the people to that. They became witnesses themselves. They are witnesses themselves to what they had to go through. How essential it is for us to experience that and to realise we have committed ourselves! God will hold you to that. He will hold you to the day of your espousals. He will not go beyond that. He will hold you to that day because that is what you committed yourself to, and God will bring you back to that. He will bring you back to these exercises and tests that you have gone through. “And the people said unto Joshua, Jehovah our God will we serve, and to his voice will we hearken”. Now is a time when a vast result is secured for God. May we be committed to that, individually, householdly and collectively so that there is an increase in response secured for God!

Well, I read in the psalm. How do we worship God? This is “A Psalm of thanksgiving”, and it says,

Shout aloud unto Jehovah, all the earth!

The whole earth is to be involved in serving God. His desire is for the whole earth to be occupied with Him. Then it says,

Serve Jehovah with joy.

People who say, ‘I have to go to church’ are not serving with joy; they are serving out of obligation. We need to serve with joy. You have to be happy because you are serving Him, not merely because you have to but because you want to. We will gather together tomorrow morning, if the Lord will, to remember the Lord. We will gather together out of love for Him, not because we have to but because we want to, so we are a joyful company and we are ready to

Serve Jehovah with joy: come before
his presence with exultation.

That is what God is looking for; He is looking for a response in the heart of man, and exultation.

Know that Jehovah is God: it is he that
hath made us, and not we ourselves;
we are his people, and
the sheep of his pasture.

We are secured by God Himself; we are His; we belong to Him, and as a result of that we serve Jehovah, serve with happiness. It is not merely an obligation. The children of Israel looked on things as an obligation. If you go back and look at all the feasts, it became something that was obligated. In the first month we have to do this and so on. They went through all the obligations, and it became a ritual. If we are serving with joy, we are serving because we want to. Dear brethren, I trust we all gather together *because we want to*. It is *our desire* to serve Him and to serve Him with joy: it is not just because we have to. It is my exercise that we would have the desire, each one of us, to serve Him with joy.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving.

We spoke earlier about thanksgiving. I do not think we give thanks enough for all the things that give us joy; I do not think we give thanks enough for all the blessings that we have. We take things for granted; it is what transpires in the world today. It is the day of entitlement: 'I have to get that, and I should get that, and I should get this. This should be mine'. That is entitlement. But this is a day of thanksgiving because we are thankful for what God has given. God will give you what you need. He might not give you everything you want, but God will give you all your needs; your needs will be satisfied. That is what God gives. Would that not cause you to serve Him with joy, the God that gives you all your needs? You can serve Him with joy; you can

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving
and into his courts with praise.

Praise is what He is looking for; He is looking for praise from man. He is looking for the presence of man with Him. He came down to Adam "in the cool of the day" (Gen 3: 8), looking to have man in His presence, and man hid himself. Why? Because of sin. Sin came in. Well, that sin has been removed, and we can be found in the presence of God. It has been removed by the Lord Jesus Himself so that we can be found in His presence, "into his courts with praise". May that be our portion! May we be found with those that know,

For Jehovah is good; his loving-kindness
endureth for ever; and his
faithfulness from generation to generation.

You may say, 'Well, the days are different now. I am younger. I am the younger generation. Things are different'. I do not deny that the days are more difficult, but God is able no matter how difficult the tests. God is able, and God will supply all your needs. You can depend upon Him, rely upon Him, look back on what He has done, look back on the ways that He has guided you and helped you, and find that you can serve Him, and you can praise Him in His courts.

Well, in Hebrews the exhortation is to the Hebrew saints. The Hebrew saints were moving from Judaism into Christianity, and the writer was bringing them back into the appreciation of

this. The writer speaks about “receiving a kingdom not to be shaken”. It speaks earlier about kingdoms that can be shaken. Kingdoms of men can be shaken; they can be moved. He speaks about Sinai: “the whole mountain shook greatly” (Exod 19: 18); God could do that. It shows His great power over everything including creation. But there is something that is never shaken, “receiving a kingdom not to be shaken”, something that never changes. Our brother spoke last night about “the stability of thy times” (Isa 33: 6); it is never changing: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and to the ages to come”, Heb 13: 8. He never changes; He is the same; He cannot be shaken. Is this shaking in your heart? Is there a doubt in your heart? Is that coming in? That is the devil working. Do not let it be shaken! Rely on the grace of God because it says, “have grace”. Have grace towards one another! “Have grace, by which let us serve God acceptably with reverence and fear”. So there has to be a fear of God. I am not saying to be frightened of God; that is not what this means; it means having a respect for God. Have respect for Him! Serve God with grace! You cannot serve God without grace! If you do not know the grace of God, how can you serve Him? You have to know the grace of God in order to serve Him, to serve Him acceptably, to satisfy Him. Value these glorious things! The apostle Paul says, “by God’s grace I am what I am”, 1 Cor 15: 10. He was insolent and overbearing in his previous history, but he says, “by God’s grace I am what I am”. He was a believer on Christ. He was one that was able and available to serve God. He was one that would have done everything to support the work of God after he came to hear that voice and answered to the voice of Christ on the road to Damascus.

Well, that is what led me to Acts. This is an experience Paul went through in circumstances that were very difficult. You say there is nothing you can do. Maybe you think that you are stuck in a situation and there is nothing you can do. Paul told them before they sailed, ‘Don’t go; don’t sail’, but he was a prisoner; so he did not have a choice. He could have said, ‘Well, there is nothing I can do to help so I will just go down to the bowels of the ship and pray and read my Bible’. He could have done that. You might say there would be nothing wrong with that, and there is not; but there

is a time, if you are going to serve God, when you have to stand up for things. It may be difficult; it was difficult, no doubt, for Paul. He might have been reminded that he was still in his chains and told to go back to where he belonged. But here he is asking them to take food; he is telling them what to do. He is a prisoner telling the soldiers who had imprisoned him, and had him under their care, what to do! You may say that is not normal. But Paul was serving God. He was carrying out the work of God in difficult circumstances. He is not saying, 'Cut me loose so I can swim by myself'. He is not trying to escape; He is serving God.

I suppose this is one of the cases where he could say he knew privation, on the ship. The ship is about to be shipwrecked. It was a very difficult set of circumstances, but then he says, "Ye ought, O men, to have hearkened to me, and not have made sail from Crete and have gained this disaster and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good courage". Why was that? Because he knew God. Paul was one here who could look back and see how God had touched him at every phase, every step, of his life. He knew that God would bring him through, and he is not afraid of the authorities; he is not afraid of the political elements. He stands up to them and he says, "For an angel of the God, whose I am and whom I serve, stood by me". 'I may be physically bound by these chains, but I am serving God.' He is showing a testimony to whom he is serving. He is not serving man; he is serving God. He is serving God to the end that the glad tidings may be spread. That was his commission, to form assemblies and spread the glad tidings, and that was going to be continued when he reached Rome, and he knew that. He knew that because he was under the guidance of the hand of God, "the God, whose I am and whom I serve". Oh, is that our attitude? Do we look at things and say, "the God, whose I am and whom I serve"? Are we serving God or are we pleasing ourselves? It is a great challenge. What are we doing? We ought to be serving God. That is what God is looking for. That should be your purpose. Men say in business, 'What is your purpose?' Well, what is your purpose? You might say, why am I on this earth? What is your purpose? Your purpose is clear, to serve God. That is easy. Our purpose is to serve God. Everything I do ought to result in serving God. Everything you do

should be to serve God, and in how many different ways that can be done! Here is a man standing up and telling persons that he is serving God, “the God, whose I am and whom I serve”. You might have asked, ‘How do you serve God in chains? You are on a ship. You are in the most difficult circumstances of anybody here, and you say you are serving God’. Yes, he was, because he said, “an angel of the God, whose I am and whom I serve, stood by me this night, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar”; he is going to spread the glad tidings in Rome. The angel says, “God has granted to thee all those that sail with thee”.

Well, here he is, able to speak to these men. He did not preach to them, but I am sure he prayed for them all. Later it says the soldiers could not let the sailors go; they had to keep everyone together, v 32. Where was the safety? The safety was in the ship. The sailors wanted to get out and go on a separate boat; they wanted to flee on the lifeboat, but, no, the soldiers had to stop that because Paul said, ‘No, you must stay in the ship; if you do not stay in the ship, you will not be saved’ because God had said, “all those that sail with thee”.

Dear brethren, when God speaks, it will happen.

Once, yea twice, He may have spoken
(Hymn 253).

He speaks once, and He speaks twice; God will make it happen. God spoke and the worlds were founded: He said, “Let there be light. And there was light”, Gen 1: 3. When God speaks, it happens. When God speaks to you, be assured it will happen. Whatever God says is going to happen, will happen. Be attuned to hear what He is saying! Serve Him like the apostle Paul did. “Wherefore be of good courage, men, for I believe God that thus it shall be, as it has been said to me”. They all got safe to land. We know that; they were all saved. They were cast up on an island. You may say, ‘Well Paul did not explain all that’. Paul did not need to explain all that, but God said it was going to happen, and all were saved. How interesting! Dear brethren, it is open to us if we commit ourselves to God, commit ourselves to Him, and are occupied in serving Him, occupied in giving Him what He desires in every aspect of our lives.

I read in Galatians to look at how it works out with us. “For ye have been called to liberty, brethren”, but we want to make sure that we “do not turn liberty into an opportunity to the flesh, but by love serve one another”. We spoke about love at the outset. The Hebrew bondman loved his master, his wife and his children. We love to come together; we love the Lord as we gather together to remember Him. Love is essential, and I think what this tells us is that it is through love that we serve one another. We can serve one another in love. It is something we need to do. Serve one another in love with no care for self, no need of recompense, no need of anything else, just genuine love. How wonderful to experience that! That is how Paul operated. He loved these saints he wrote to in all these epistles; he loved them. You can tell that. He loved to write to the Galatians, who had gone astray. He wrote this long letter with his own hand, chap 6: 11. How much he loved them, and that is how he served them! He served them in love. By serving the brethren, you are serving God. Dear brethren, it is up to us how we act. Can we look back and see what blessings we have had? Can we see how we can serve God with joy? We need grace to be able to serve and we need to be bold in difficult circumstances, as Paul was in the shipwreck, and declare that we are serving God so that we can serve one another in love.

May it be our portion for His Name’s sake!

Indianapolis

27th November 2021

THE MOUNT OF JEHOVAH

Joseph C Evershed

Genesis 22: 4-14

Philippians 4: 19, 20

This passage read in the book of Genesis is summed up by giving us some present ministry, a certain thing that “is said at the present day”. It was said at the particular moment when Abraham said it. It was said when Moses wrote the book; at later stages no doubt; and when the book was translated. It is still said at the present day: “On the mount of Jehovah will be provided”, and I venture to suggest that we may take this to ourselves at this very day. Whatever our circumstances may be, whatever may be before us in the will of God, we may say this in the present day: “On the mount of Jehovah will be provided”. The question of course, is whether it *is* being said. The word here is that it is being said “at the present day”, and the question is, Am I saying it in the faith of my heart? Is it being said amongst the saints as a present, living, understood thing, known in the experience of our souls?

This incident must have been one of the most extraordinary journeys that ever was taken: an old man, I suppose in the second century of his life, and a lad in his teens, going together in the pathway of obedience. Abraham’s word is, “I and the lad will go yonder and worship”, suggesting that there is a very strong moral link between obedience and worship. There cannot be the latter without the former, and I venture to suggest that where the former is known the latter will not be far off. It certainly was not with Abraham, nor with Paul when he wrote of God’s supplying all the need; it is not very long before he is worshipping God the Father: “But to our God and Father be glory to the ages of ages”. So the question is, Are the old ones and the young ones going together in this matter? One can speak personally, with very great thankfulness, of those who are older amongst us, who give a lead in this path of faith. They inculcate their own faith and confidence in God into those of us who are younger, as Abraham was doing with this young man Isaac as “they went”, says the Spirit, “both of

them together”, on this extraordinary journey, the lad carrying these unusual burdens in the way. God will help us, I feel assured, to take up and answer questions that arise as to the path of faith if we are in it with our households, with those who are younger, and so Abraham is enabled to give a most skilful answer to this lad who is asking this question as to the lack now before them. He says, “My son, God will provide himself with the sheep for a burnt-offering”. When they get there they find that it is not just a sheep but a *ram*. I feel assured from my own experience and from my knowledge of others that there is no experience in faith that does not lead to a vastly increased apprehension of Christ and all that He is to God. So instead of finding a sheep or a lamb, as Abraham appears to have expected, what he actually finds is a ram caught by its horns in a thicket - delightful and precious type of our Lord Jesus Christ in his consecration to God.

It impresses me that the Spirit should record this prophetic word of Moses, the writer. We are told that Moses was a prophet: the only man who is spoken of as a prophet, a priest and a king, Deut 34:10; Ps 99:6; Deut 33: 5. But here he comes out as a prophet. At the time at which he is writing the word is said: “at the present day”. Abraham says it: he “called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh; as it is said at the present day, On the mount of Jehovah will be provided”.

Where are these things being provided? My difficulty often in the path of faith, if I may be simple about it, is that I expect things to be provided in my own place, but I have to go to God about them; I have to be on the mount. It says, ‘On the mount they will be provided’. I find often that God does not see necessary at all to provide things that I thought were necessary, but He makes ample provision for me. I believe Paul, in speaking at the end of the epistle to the Philippians, was a man who was on the mount of God and he knew what it was to have these things provided. He says, “my God shall abundantly supply all your need” - not according to your estimate of need, not according to what we feel is the need, but “according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus”. That is the measure, the standard according to which God meets our needs, so that we must not be surprised if we get some strange gifts.

It was given to certain saints to suffer; it was made as a gift to them. They may not have been glad to receive it at first, but they would have understood, as knowing God and experiencing His grace, as being on the mount, as knowing something of His riches in glory in Christ Jesus, why He had given them his precious and important gift, to suffer for the Lord's name's sake. Paul might have been surprised under normal circumstances to have a thorn for the flesh, 2 Cor 12: 7. He said it was given to him. God was supplying the need of Paul, according to His riches in Christ Jesus. It was necessary for Paul to have that gift. It was not the man who was in paradise or the man who was in the third heaven who needed it; it was the man who had been there. So we find that those who have entered into the greatest privileges need special discipline, lest they should be elated. But Paul not only had the gift of the thorn for the flesh, but the precious continuing grace of Christ which, as He said, was sufficient for him, v 9.

I would just give this word of encouragement in these matters so that we might hold on our way obediently and boldly in faith, understanding something of the importance of these words of Scripture. What may befall us in the course of the testimony, or in our private affairs, none of us can tell, but let us maintain this; if we go on working out things in fear and trembling, let us at the same time in the inner consciousness of our hearts maintain this faith, and say what Abraham said, and what Moses said, and what the saints of God have been saying and will continue to say to the end of this dispensation: "on the mount of Jehovah will be provided".

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