

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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MUTUALITY

Exodus 10: 7-11, 24-26; 15: 1-2

1 John 2: 12-14

DJK I hope the brethren understand that it is not my desire to take this reading, but simply to make a suggestion as to what is mutual. There are many age groups here with us; the locality is composed of children, young men and fathers, as we get in John's first epistle. I am speaking about the locality at this point, but I am not leaving out all who belong to the Lord Jesus. The exercise, and it is a right exercise, is that there would be something for everyone.

I will begin by saying that God, in His wisdom, has placed things as He has seen fit. As we know, things begin in the household; God has established households. A household might be composed of a young couple, or an older couple, or a single person, but God supplies something for everyone. I think the exercise would be that, as beginning there, things are learned distinctly in the household. Now I say that carefully because I do not want to imply that things are not learned in times that we have together such as this; but I think there is a certain wisdom of God, especially given to the parents in bringing up children, as they know the children and their needs and can instruct them. The parents also have needs. Each one of us has needs, and we are all in the learning time.

I want to enquire together about this subject because I think what has been raised recently in some of our enquiries together is important, so that we are not negligent or forgetful of the needs of each one. We go on together in a mutual way as knowing those needs. We have little children amongst us, and they are also learning. They are learning first by observation, by what we as the older ones are doing. Are things attractive to us so that they are attractive to the younger persons? But then, as we are engaged in such times as we were this morning at the Supper and the service of God, I was thinking about what a privilege it is to touch on what is eternal and be able to have some sense that we are all in that occasion mutually together. Maybe my understanding is not as much as someone else's, but it does not mean that I cannot appreciate the privilege of knowing what it is to be able to speak to divine Persons and to worship Them. I wondered if we could get some sense of this.

I read in Exodus because of Moses' exercise. Pharaoh wanted

to separate the families. Pharaoh could be a type of the enemy himself, or he could be a type of the world; either way the desire is to separate the families. I think it is very important that that is not allowed to happen. Moses said, "We will go with our young and with our old", but he does not stop there. He says, "... with our sons and with our daughters; with our flocks and with our herds will we go". As we read further in this chapter, Moses distinctly says the reason that he was going to take the cattle and the herds was so that there would be offerings to sacrifice to Jehovah. I think that is extremely important. What God has given us first, in relation to the children, we desire to take with us, but then we also take with us what God has provided for Himself in the way of offerings.

AML This is a very great subject. It is important to see that Moses is concerned that all should go and not one would be left behind. At first the enemy wanted to keep the little ones. But the old and the young, the sons and the daughters, and the cattle were going to be used for the offerings later in the wilderness. Mr Coates says about Reuben and Gad, who had a multitude of flocks (Numbers 32), that they had not been used for the offerings, Outline of Numbers (vol 4) p370. That is why they were the first to be taken into captivity. The flocks are very important. I wonder if that goes along with light in the dwellings of Israel, v 23. There was something of a living character amongst the people of God that Moses wanted to rescue, and God wanted to have. "Let my son go that he may serve me" (chap 4: 23), but the enemy was against that.

DJK Beginnings are important; this is the beginning of what was to be. We know that the provision of God was for all the children of Israel, and it is wonderful what Moses says, "for we have a feast of Jehovah". There was something in his mind in relation to what was going to be for Jehovah. That is important in our beginnings, that we have in mind what is for Jehovah first. We know that in the wilderness there was failure, and the people murmured and Jehovah had to come in in a judgmental way with the serpents, Num 26: 6, 7. These are all trials and tests that come in the wilderness, but what we want to especially keep in mind was the *beginning* of what God had established with Moses. This was to be a result of Pharaoh letting them go.

AML And would it be an exercise to realise that the enemy cannot really understand what is pleasing to God as we have in verse 11, "And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence". That is really the

sufferings of Christ amongst the saints; that is something beyond what Moses had said, because he knew that God wanted all in view of celebrating the feasts. We soon have the passover taking place, which is really the foundation of our beginning, the death of Christ, which of course is another subject, chap 12.

DJK We read later on where they sang a song. It says, “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song”, chap 15: 1. In type, the result of the death of Christ meant something to them. Is that not an important feature, that the death of Christ means something to us? We really cannot go in for divine things if we do not understand the death of Christ.

AML Aaron was a priest, but Moses stands out unique and supreme, as a type of Christ leading the saints in this song.

MJK I have been thinking of what you have mentioned about what is from the beginning. One of the very first things that Satan did was to divide the household. God questions Adam and he immediately makes an accusation against Eve, Gen 3: 12. And then it says later in the same chapter, “And Man called his wife's name Eve”, v 20. And the next verse says, “And Jehovah Elohim made Adam and his wife coats of skin, and clothed them”. And then it says, “And Jehovah Elohim said, Behold, Man is become as one of us”, v 20-22. It is important that God brings in deliverance. But then there is Cain and Abel, and again, Satan comes in and divides, chap 4. So God must come in and He brings in another man after Abel (v 25), because He brings in what is whole. Would that go along with your thought? Moses knew these things; he knew what God's mind was.

DJK Yes, I think it is good what you bring in. That is the first household mentioned in Scripture. We see how the result of sin comes in in Cain slaying his brother. But what is important is that, when Seth is born it says, “Then people began to call upon the name of Jehovah”, Gen 4: 26. God had another Man in mind and that is such a tremendous fact to grasp. That is the effect in a household that seeks to go on for the Lord Jesus. Sometimes we may think that a household is just persons dwelling together, and that is true, but how important it is that the household is established in the Lord. There is a lot of influence in a household, and how precious it is to God.

TRV I appreciate what is coming out as from the beginning and the household in and of itself, and Satan's efforts, and do you think it is all

connected with having a worthy objective? The household is not just a self-contained unit in and of itself. The people of God are not just self-contained units in and of themselves, but they all have an objective. Here the language is “their God”. It affected me the other day thinking about the verse about God dwelling with men, 2 Chron 6: 18. That is not just males but all of mankind. He is dwelling with those that He takes pleasure in. If we have an objective, a worthy objective, that makes the beginning have meaning, and it guides us in that beginning, even though we know Satan, through the flesh, the failure of the flesh, will try to divert from that. It is not just a household for the sake of a household; it has an end in view, does it not?

DJK That is important; if we could all consider that for a moment, because God is gracious, and He is merciful. Just to be very simple, as a younger person, when I thought about a household, I did not think about what it should be too much. I wanted to have a wife and have someone I could share things together with. I did not think much about an actual household. But the grace of God was available so that after I was married I started to realise that an established household was God's desire. I did not have a great exercise about setting up a household, but God in His grace took me up. I came to it that there is responsibility and privilege in a household. Maybe at the beginning we do not understand all these things, but it is wonderful that God in His grace works so that we might come into the appreciation of His mind.

AML Do you think that Noah sets it out? What we have in Hebrews 11: 7 is that he “prepared an ark for the saving of his house”. The fact that he built the ark would be his exercises in view of salvation for his house.

RBC The scripture in Joshua says, “as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah”, chap 24: 15. You have the headship of the household there, but the “we” is the family in the house. It is that assembly conditions as we recognise them are modelled after the household.

DJK That is very good because we might ask what caused the household to be together in that desire. Do you not think it was because of Joshua's own desires? I was reading the scripture in Mark where the Lord is speaking to the Pharisees, and He says, “This people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me”, chap 7: 6. Joshua's desire to serve the Lord would be seen in his household because it is attractive. Do you think that is an important thing in a household, that the parents take things up in a real manner? Doing

things out of habit is not a bad thing as it may preserve us, but as doing them we come to understand them in a greater way and that would be God's desire. Then as we take them up it means something to us as it did to Joshua's household.

DaJK I appreciate very much what you are bringing up, and I like this thought of mutuality, because what you see here in Moses is he would not accept anything but for the whole house to go through, and not only that, but everything that was for Jehovah. So, he really had in mind the God whom he feared, and what was for Him ultimately. One thing that struck me as we were reading this is the thought of time. The young children here may think that time is on their side. And as being young they may think of their parents or grandparents, and cannot even imagine being that old. One thing that I think that the children need to understand is that time did not used to be and time will cease to exist. So, we only have a period that God has set out which He has put in 'time'. We are exhorted in scripture to make use of the time. It says, "now is the well-accepted time", 2 Cor 6: 2. Time is urgent, and when we have a meeting like this it is important that we take this time and make use of it for everyone here. Everyone should be able to glean something for the glory of God and for the furtherance of the testimony. I appreciate how you are bringing out the mutuality and the household because these things come from the household, and they lead back to the household.

DJK It is very good what you say. Those of us who are a little bit older have a sense of time because we realise it is going very quickly. Children may not have that concept as much, but I think it is important that Moses did not say, 'let me go and see what the wilderness is like and then I will come back and get the young'. All the exercises that we pass through, whether it is in the household, in our individual lives, as a locality, or in relation to what is universal, are to be worked out together. I think that is the mutuality that we spoke about. There are things that we pass through in our own lives, that God causes us to pass through because we need the discipline, keeping in mind that others can also learn from that discipline. That is extremely important. The mutuality of learning together is really what brings fruit for God.

PBK In your opening remarks you said now is the learning time. I wonder if you could just explain that.

DJK I wonder if it goes back to the last comment in relation to time and the children learning. God has allotted each of us, by His grace, a

certain amount of time. Scripture speaks of, “threescore years and ten; and if, by reason of strength, they be fourscore years”, Ps 90: 10. We do not know what our allotted time is, but what is important is that there is a certain amount of time that God has allotted us. And would you say that that whole period of time, whatever that is, is the learning time? It is not that I reach a certain age and I am done learning. It is all the learning time. A child would understand what learning at school is but as believers we are learning all the time. What is your impression?

PBK Is there the thought that we do not exactly grow in eternity, see JT vol 56 p257? We have an opportunity to know more about the glories of the Lord Jesus now. If we just say we do not want to do it anymore, we just do not want to do that right now because there are too many other things to do, it is something we do not gain for eternity, is it not? We learn the things of the Lord Jesus here.

DJK I think that is right. I fear that we spend much of our time learning the wretchedness of the flesh. It is important that we are brought to the greatness of Christ; He has overcome the flesh.

PBK We read the verse in the home this morning, “run with endurance the race that lies before us, looking stedfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith”, Heb 12: 1, 2. I just wonder as to what the Lord has in mind in blessing each one of us. Are we running the race with endurance with Him in view, or are we running this race for what is good for me? I do not mean to be dogmatic about it but so many in Christendom may say, 'I go this place because it makes me feel good'. What we should ask is, 'Do you go where it makes the Lord happy?'.

CJB Will what we enjoy of Christ now be magnified in eternity? Can you help us with that thought?

DJK When the apostle Paul speaks about the light that shone from heaven, it got brighter and brighter each time he recalled it. I think that was growth. He grew in his appreciation of the greatness of the Lord Jesus. I am sure that eternity will be the expression of what we have learned of that greatness now.

AML Is it important to see that the time of learning down here is finished when we come to eternity; then it is display. What has been formed during the dispensation of the Spirit here is something that is formed in all the saints. That will come out universally and unite the praise to God. Then there is praise to God in the assembly in Christ Jesus. That is all based on what is worked out now. I was thinking of

the scripture that Solomon has in Ecclesiastes, “Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest”, chap 9: 10. When the Lord takes us that time of learning is over. That makes the present time very precious.

DJK I appreciate what has come out, and I trust it means something to each one of us, that not only is it the time of learning now, but we can actually enjoy the present time. The challenge is how much I enjoy spiritual things at the present time.

MBK Is there a time to be learning and a time to be thankful?

DJK I think we can do both at the same time, but I think when Moses spoke about the feast of Jehovah, it would perhaps refer to when what has been learned comes out in expression. We can call it thankfulness; we can call it worship, and I think that is important too.

MBK Sometimes when we are learning, there is a lot to take in, and we do not understand what we have heard. But sometimes you just need to turn around and be thankful for what you have learned. You need to be able to appreciate and take it from God; and you come to know His peace.

DJK I appreciate what you say very much. It is an important feature that we learn to be thankful. It is wonderful to see how when Moses and the children of Israel came through the Red Sea, they turned in thankfulness to Jehovah and they sang a song. They had learned much in being in Egypt. They had learned much in even coming through the Red Sea, but then they turned to Jehovah in thankfulness.

RBC There were those who are “always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”, 2 Tim 3: 7. That is a sad state to be in. It makes you wonder if such are ever thankful for what they have learned; it has never brought any spiritual maturity.

DJK Could you say some more about spiritual maturity? There is learning needed to come to that, but we need to turn aside in thankfulness. Speaking to divine Persons is a wonderful privilege.

RBC The passage you read in John's epistle helps because he categorises, “I write to you, fathers ... I write to you, young men ... I write to you, little children”. The fathers are those that “have known him that is from the beginning”. There is what has been acquired.

CJB Is there to be capacity for learning then? I am linking on with

what has been mentioned, that there are fathers, young men and children. I was thinking about “desire earnestly the pure mental milk of the word” (1 Pet 2: 2); that may be a good place to start; and then the manna came to mind. We cannot overeat, but there is a capacity for us to appropriate and enjoy the fulness of everything that we can. There is no lack; we do not starve if there is a desire.

DJK I think that is good. I wondered if the side of dependence comes in. One thing that marks children is dependence. They are dependent on the parents, and that dependence causes the child to turn to the parents with a need or a question, whatever it may be. It is important that we all have a sense of our dependence. A child is also unassuming. It has been said that one feature of an overcomer is that he does not become jaded in relation to life, which is a very important thing. We want to take this unassuming stance so that we can be free to be able to learn.

AML Would you say that Joshua is an example of maturity coming to light? I think in one instance he is referred to as a young man. He did not leave the Tent of meeting (Exod 33: 11), but he would have learnt under the rule of Moses, and this came to light especially after Moses' death in the beginning of the book of Joshua.

TRV It is very encouraging to talk about the time of spiritual growth. The portion we read in 1 John is normal spiritual growth, and it brought to mind that when they crossed the Jordan they took and put stones in the Jordan. Then it says, “When your children hereafter ask their fathers, saying, What mean these stones?” Josh 4: 21. It is a real privilege to encourage all the young parents to have that opened ear when the children ask. It is also very encouraging that the children are free to ask. There must be an answer, and that is challenging as a parent. I do not have all the answers as a parent, but I know where I can find the answers: that is a very encouraging thing for all the young parents. And you want to set on what is for the mutuality of the household. Things get answered in the household, and in doing so the mutual thanksgiving can go up for what has been learned because you see normal spiritual growth in 1 John 2.

DJK I think we would all confess that we do not feel we know much; however, we need to also remember that we have “a patron with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”. We can turn to divine Persons and seek help. We have the Spirit to help us increase in our understanding of things. I say understanding over against learning, because perhaps

we have heard these things, but the Spirit is able to help us to understand and appropriate them. Let us remember that the local brethren are also able to help us. We may not think much about these times that have been spoken of, times such as being with the local brethren on a weeknight and hearing the prayers of each as they ascend to the throne of grace. The desires of the brethren being audibly heard increases and stimulates us in relation to what is precious to God. And then being able to sit down on another weeknight and open the Scriptures and get help together so that there is increase. One might say, 'Well, I do not know much'. If I absent myself from the occasions in the assembly calendar, how can there be an increase? We can learn in our own individual lives by the reading of the Scriptures and the ministry, but have we not found in our own experiences that working things out with our local brethren has brought us to something that we did not have before?

TRV What 1 Corinthians 12 teaches us about the members of the body is the working out of things locally, is it not? Each member of the body is needed. And in that whole section it brings in being together and there are teachers. That is a very important principle you have just pointed out.

AML Would you connect the thought of the little ones and the children with how the testimony will go on from generation to generation? The ark rested in Numbers 10 and when it returned, they said - "Return, Jehovah, unto the myriads of the thousands of Israel", v 36. When we come together, we listen to our brethren's prayers. And in the morning meeting we listen to the part that is taken as spoken to divine Persons, and we are strengthened and encouraged by what comes out; that is how we get an impression.

DJK That is very good. Moses no doubt had a distinct sense of this. Moses did not get to go into the land. But he obviously had in mind that there were going to be those who would. His desire was for continuance. It should be the desire of each of us. Maybe when we are younger, we do not think about it so much, but normal spiritual growth would cause us to realise that what God has established is for us as well as for the generations that follow.

AJC I was just thinking in relation to the thought of mutual learning of the multitudes being fed in the gospels. In the account in Matthew, they go to the Lord to be healed in the desert and what they get is food. It says that there were five thousand men besides women and children,

and they were all together in receiving food from the Lord. In Mark it says that He taught them many things; I was wondering if that connects. The learning and the food may be related but what I was impressed with was it was not just a few, it was all the men, woman and children together.

DJK That is a very good reference. Do you think that is God's desire? It is interesting in one of those accounts that it speaks about green grass. That is really comfort in view of what is mutual, so that all can sit down and enjoy together.

AML I think in connection with what has been said, it is very important to see that in Matthew's gospel the crowds come to Jesus; in Luke's gospel Jesus goes to the crowds. So, the reference that is made is very important. It is a spiritual movement in Matthew, which is very special, which is a delight to the Lord. And He can bless in that way.

DaJK I am interested in what was said about the apostle Paul. Every time he tells the story of his conversion the light gets brighter. But it only happened to him once. He had that time of learning, but that experience grew. I do not know if you call that learning or if you would call that thankfulness, but his was a thankful heart as his experience grew. Would the learning and the experience and the thankfulness go together? You can learn and be thankful and experience these things as Paul's experience grew and grew and grew and became brighter. I was thinking that the brighter the light gets, the more the things of the world became dim. Was it because he was in it? The more I can stay in these things and talk about them with other Christians and other lovers of Christ, whether it be in the local assembly or whether it be universally, whenever I am communicating about my appreciation or someone is sharing their appreciation that they have of the Lord, the things of the world become dim.

DJK It may be that I am at the point that I am thankful for my salvation and that is a good point.

The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

But the appreciation should go much further:

My strength and song is Jah, and he is become my salvation:
This is my God, and I will glorify him;
My father's God, and I will extol him.

There comes a point where we begin with initial thankfulness for our

salvation and that is just the beginning; think of what it opens up. Younger persons can listen as the brethren worship divine Persons. It really opens up what is beyond just salvation.

JADK I wanted to go back to what was said about the learning time because I feel challenged with that question. I have often thought that if I keep coming to meeting just for myself, I am not going to come for very much longer. I used to feel I was not getting anything out of it; and then I changed my outlook so that I was coming for God, and it made me want to come a lot more and share the setting with the local brethren. I understand why we do not have a pastor because if one person is leading you miss a lot. Your exercise might go along with my exercise, and your outlook can change or add to the outlook that I have. The more that we sit together and talk about it the more exciting it is going to be to come together. I say that carefully because, speaking of age, when I was a teenager, I used to wonder how my father could understand; I imagined he had never been through my experience. But he did not come out at forty years old: he went through the teenage years as well. Now having a daughter, I can see where she is going to get something from. She is always going to see me as having been the same age as she is; and I feel that time is important. It makes me realise that time does keep moving on.

DJK What you have brought up is very important. We cannot think about what is mutual without thinking about the activity of the Spirit. We could go around the room and ask each one here, and they would recall a time when they were greatly confirmed in an exercise or in some thought that they had. Perhaps they were going to give out a certain hymn and some brother gave it out before them. We need to think practically about the activity of the Spirit; it is something that we prove. Maybe we view the Spirit's activity as some austere thing or something that is beyond us but the Spirit dwells in the believer. What a wonderful thing to prove the mutuality of what is produced by the Spirit.

AML You think about Paul. It says when he saw the brethren, "he thanked God and took courage", Acts 28: 15 . That would be by the Spirit. He would recognise the work of God in each one. That would encourage and strengthen him in his service.

MJK I was thinking about what you said at the beginning in relation to what is mutual and the young getting involved, and I was impressed by what was mentioned about when the children shall ask. I sometimes wonder if we leave any room for asking. There are a lot of statements, a

lot of good statements being made, but how do we help a child that does not get the opportunity to ask?

DJK It is important to be good listeners.

RBC An example is given in Luke 2. The Lord Jesus is in the temple, perhaps in a meeting not unlike this one, and it says about him that he was “hearing them and asking them questions”; that was a good environment.

CJB When the Spirit came into the assembly in the Acts, they all spoke in various languages, chap 2: 4. Is there something mutual when we come together in a collective way that is an opportunity for the Spirit to manifest something prophetic?

DJK Absolutely. One of the things it says in that scripture is that they had all things common, v 44. From what I understand, that was both practically and spiritually. They had all things common, but I think it is a feature that should mark us as we come together in a spiritual setting. We all have the gift of the Spirit. The Spirit is not dependent on one more than another. The Spirit may use you to stimulate me, or *vice versa*. The mutuality of that is such that something is gained. If we take nothing else away from this reading, let us understand that mutuality is with the desire that something is gained. It is shared, that is true, but when we come together and share and discuss spiritual things together, something is gained in the soul. Then there is something for the divine pleasure.

TRV The first portion that you had us read has a real emphasis on leaving with the little ones, cattle, everything. I did not go through and count, but it would be interesting to count the number of times the burnt-offering is mentioned and the word “we”. That is the mutuality; it is not coming together for the sin-offering here. The picture here is what is of Christ - the burnt-offering. He comes in and everything is for Him. Do you think that the Spirit helps us mutually because we have Christ before us?

DJK Yes, that is an important feature of what is mutual that we have a sense of this fragrance from the burnt-offering. Christ is brought before each one of us in a fresh way so there is something for divine Persons as a result.

VMK Might there be a comment as to what was read in 1 John 1 with the young men being able to overcome the wicked one? It is mainly focusing on overcoming.

DJK I think that is a good question to ask. If you will allow, I want to pass along an impression I gained probably twenty years ago or more from this scripture. The young men are normally marked by strength and that is right and good. But another important stage of growth seen in this section is the fathers. I realised the importance of spiritual fathers because they have known “him that is from the beginning”. I may have been marked by strength, but it needed to be channelled in a right way, and fathers were able to help me understand what that way was. Maybe I had a desire to do what was right, but I was going about it in the wrong way. I would be able to speak to a father and he would say, 'Well, perhaps this is the way that it should be done'. I was able to get help and learn from those experiences as guided by those that had “known him that is from the beginning”.

VMK That helps. I was thinking about the steps that we can follow. It speaks of the young men being “strong, and the word of God abides in” them. Not only would we have spiritual fathers down here, but we would also turn to *the* Father seeking to be emulators of Christ. We rely upon the Father in every way as the Son was here dependent on the Father for His every movement. There would be what we overcome as young men marked by desire and zeal and strength.

ABERDEEN, ID
9th October 2022

List of initials (all local in Aberdeen, Idaho)

C J Brien, R B Clark, A J Croot, J Alex D Klassen, Daryl J Klassen,
Doug J Klassen, Michael J Klassen, Matthew B Klassen,
Phil B Klassen, Victor M Klassen, A M Lidbeck, T R Vanderhoek

LIFE

A Barrie Brown

Genesis 1: 11-23; 2: 7

John 10: 10

1 Timothy 6: 17-19

In the reading on Lord's day we had the thought brought before us that the Holy Spirit is the power to live in another sphere, in heavenly places. Further to that, I have been thinking of the matter of life and our first hymn made reference to 'the world of life' (Hymn 288). I simply draw on these scriptures that we have read together to say a few words as to the matter of life. Firstly I would say it is a matter of primary importance, and it has many features attaching to it.

Where we have read in Genesis we get beginnings. God is the author of life, natural life. There are other views advanced regarding how life originated, and where it came from. These things are taught at school, but we can simply rest on the authority of scripture that God is the Author. Scripture says that the Lord Jesus is "the originator of life" (Acts 3: 15); that is a particular glory of His. In Exodus the scribes tried to create life, to bring forth gnats but they could not, chap 8: 18. We can rest our souls in the fact that God is the Author of life. Natural life, the life that we see around us on earth, was created by God. We know that sin and dislocation have come in. It touches on that in Genesis 2: 1: "the earth was waste and empty". God did not create it like that; He created it to be inhabited, Isa 45: 18. The verses read in Genesis show that one of the features of life is that there is variety attached to it. We are often impressed by it; how many species of animals and plants there are; there are probably many that have not even been found. Sometimes you hear about a particular animal or plant that only grows in one single place on earth. We may wonder why God ordered it so, but I think you see something of His love of variety in life.

And if natural life is so wonderful, how much more so spiritual life, life according to God. So think of the variety that there is in natural life, but in spiritual life all is patterned after the Lord Jesus. What we need in the gospel is life. I trust that each one here is a believer: for each one of us in our natural life, if the Lord Jesus does not come for us, there will be an end to our natural life, and that is sobering. That is a sobering matter, but the gospel is preached because we do need life;

there is such a thing as moral death. The Scriptures speak about those who are “dead while living”, 1 Tim 5: 6. People may be naturally alive, and may think that they are having a good time, but as far as God is concerned they are dead. The gospel is preached that such persons should hear the life-giving sound of the glad tidings. And if God saw these natural things were good, how good it is also for the gospel to be preached. And there may be some allusion to that here: “And there was evening, and there was morning - a third day”.

Life according to God all hinges on the blessed life, and then the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a One, who we spoke about as the Originator of life. Life was in the Lord Jesus inherently. Each one of us has our natural lives. Our brother in the preaching here referred to “man, whose breath is in his nostrils”, Isa 2: 22. I was impressed by that, which illustrates the fragility of life and the shortness of time and how we need to respond to the glad tidings urgently. In Ecclesiastes, the Preacher says in chapter 12, “before the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be shattered at the fountain ... and the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it”, v 6, 7. But then at the beginning of chapter 12 it says, “remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth”. That is important. When we are younger we may see life as stretching away ahead of us and we do not perhaps think there is a bound to it. One thing I would mention in relation to life is our faculties; our memory and our physical fitness start to deteriorate, but it is good to devote what is of our natural life to the things of God. One simple thing I wish as to when I was younger was that I had read the Scriptures more because our memories are much more retentive when we are younger. It is not just to remember; we need the spirit of Scripture, but I pass that on in relation to the matter of life; we can use our natural life for God's things.

Where we read in chapter 2, I wanted to touch on again because we speak about man, Adam, as the top-stone of God's creation. Earlier on it speaks about the beasts and the fish and all these things; and God has interest in them. Scripture says, “the cattle upon a thousand hills” are God's, Ps 50: 10. God is interested in His creation and feels for it. Where we read in Jonah there is reference to the cattle; so, as to natural life, we respect it and treat it well. We would not be cruel to animals; but how much greater are God's feelings for mankind. There is some touch of that where we read. “Jehovah Elohim”, that name of relationship, has *formed* man; it shows great care went into it. Think of the wisdom and the skill of forming man; He “formed Man, dust

of the ground". Then -, He did not do this to any other creature, He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life". How fine that is to consider. That is our origin, in God Himself, "and Man became a living soul". I think the word "soul" conveys something of the matter of affections. That is one of the great things that is bound up with life, the affections, and the intelligence too. Later on Adam had the intelligence to name these animals, and I think God was pleased with that. And then God made the helpmate, Eve; it would remind us of the blessed matter of Christ and the assembly. That is life abundant, what is really life. I just wanted to draw on this scripture to reinforce how precious life is in the sight of God.

In the World Wars, believers were conscientious objectors to taking up lethal arms, and suffered for that. We would respect life because it is God's: people are God's creatures. In Acts 17 it says, "in him we live and move and exist", v 28. The people there had a shrine to the unknown God (v 23), but we know God as the Creator of life and the One who has given glorious life. That is, it cannot be imitated. That would be another feature of life: it cannot be gainsaid or imitated.

I was attracted to these words of the Lord Jesus, where we read in John 10. We have spoken of Him already as the One who came into this earth and lived a perfect life. It says too, in John 12, "Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit", v 24. Think of the greatness and power and majesty of resurrection, the Lord Jesus giving up His life and going into death, but then breaking its power by doing so. That is why the believer has the triumph over death in his heart, because of what the Lord Jesus has done. The only One whose life was not forfeit on account of sin, because He was the sinless One, laid down His life for you and for me, dear brethren.

Well, you get something of the world and the devil at the beginning of verse 10, stealing and killing and destroying. That is the world's system that would seek to steal from you and would seek to take your life and destroy anything that is for God. It is sobering. At the present time I think there is a redoubling of the efforts of the enemy to rob what is of life and vitality for God. But then see how much greater the Lord Jesus is. He says, "I am come that they might have life"; and I would ask you, 'Are you proving it?'. Do you know what it is to find your life in the Lord Jesus and have your life bound up with Him? We might when we first come to seek the relief of our sins and trust in the Lord

Jesus and seek to be covered by His precious blood; but are you continuing to prove this blessed matter?

In Romans much comes in as to life. It tells us there, “justified in the power of his blood, we shall be saved by him from wrath”, chap 5: 9. But then it says, “we shall be saved in the power of his life”, chap 5: 10. That is His risen life, something to be proved and something to be enjoyed. We have spoken about the variety of life and of intelligence; I think another feature of life is enjoyment; life is to be enjoyed. There are natural relationships as ordained by God which we enjoy, but much greater than that are God's things, that are to be enjoyed. In His goodness and in the power of the Holy Spirit, He has given us the wherewithal to enjoy the things that He has freely given to us; it is for me and for each one of us to prove it.

I think there is some touch of that in the last few words of this verse: “I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.” I think that was looking forward to the incoming of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus says that they had Him as a Comforter, and then another Comforter was to come in the Holy Spirit. Much of what comes out in chapters 13 and onwards in John relates to how we are to have this life abundantly. Abundance is a characteristic word in connection with Christianity. There is nothing stinting or lacking from God's side; everything has been provided. Those who first came to trust in the Lord Jesus are as much sons as the most advanced believer, but it takes us time to understand and appreciate and grow in our knowledge of God, and the good things He has given to us. I think there is some suggestion here that we might have it abundantly.

Another thought of life is power, power to overcome, power to rise above our circumstances, power to enjoy, and power to respond to God. There is no response from a dead person, but where life is there is response, response for all the good things God has given, and also response as we come to know Him because He is the living God. Where there is reference to the living God in Scripture it is often over against contrary circumstances. In a world which is marked by moral deadness it would be good for each one of us to prove what it is to have life abundantly and enter into the sphere of things where the Lord Jesus is, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

It speaks where we read in Timothy at the end of verse 19 of what is “really life”. These enjoinders about not trusting in the uncertainty of riches are very important, very practical. People have

their lives in their riches, and have their lives in their businesses and sport. We have to make our way through this world righteously, and we can make our way through with the help of the Spirit. The woman in 2 Kings had the power to discharge all obligations; it says there, “live thou and thy sons on the rest”, chap 4: 7. In type, she did not really appreciate the Holy Spirit initially, but then, think of all the resources that were brought in. As we enter into divine things, and live in them and enjoy them and are rich towards God, there is the opportunity “to do good, to be rich in good works, to be liberal in distributing”. I think that would be characteristic of a believer; the outflow from a believer's life for the blessing of others.

It is interesting that at the end it says, “laying by for themselves a good foundation for the future”. And it says, “that they may lay hold of what is really life”. It is an accentuation of what life is; it is “really life”, life according to God. God would also seek to have us, “Lay hold of eternal life”, v 12. I suppose it is a similar thought to the thought of life, but it is life over against death. It is the way we are able to overcome and be connected with that unseen world where the Lord Jesus is the Head and Centre. It is a great gift of God, eternal life in a scene of death, but here it is that we “may lay hold of what is really life”. I think that too is proved in the power of the blessed Holy Spirit; to rise above circumstances, yes, but also to enter in and to respond and to know something of the power and the enjoyment of what is connected with life according to God.

May these thoughts be for our encouragement - how plenteous the thoughts are in Scripture in relation to life. What a fine thought it is, and how pleasing it is to God to see us here in life, life according to Him as opposed to the general deadness that there is around. I am sure we do not keep these things to ourselves; we are to speak to others that they may come into the enjoyment of life too.

Well, may these things be for our encouragement for His Name's sake.

Word in Ministry Meeting in Linlithgow

5th May 2022

THE REALITY OF THE LORD'S PERSON

Sam C Lock

John 14: 1

I had a simple impression, beloved brethren, in relation to the importance of the reality of the Lord's Person, and His keenness and desire that we each, in ourselves as individuals, appreciate the reality of who He is as a Person.

The last couple of years has been somewhat disruptive to the lives, livelihoods and lifestyles of many people the world over. We had older brothers with us back home in the UK saying that it was quite humbling for the world of mankind that they had reached such a level with their institutions, their technologies, and their governments, and that there were certain things that were considered to be fundamentally unshakable; and yet, with something that was so small that it had to be seen under a microscope, God allowed that entire system to be shaken to the core. Financial institutions did not know what to do; they stopped trading; businesses were closed down; these giant titans in industry were not able to do business. People could not go anywhere; the world almost came to a halt, and people did not know quite where to put their faith.

I suppose for the believer it was an interesting time; there were many things that were to be learned in reality; things that we might read in Scripture were to be learned in reality: such as the experience of dependence. I believe that it was similar for many here, but it got to the point where when the first lock-down came and it was illegal for some of us to go to work. The bills did not stop, of course; we still had mortgages to pay and needed to eat, but we were not allowed to earn money; that was a bit of a worry. There was a matter that I myself found particularly testing, and I did all that I could to resolve the matter, but it was out of my hands. It was very stressful and I prayed a bit and decided to read my Bible and just try and find some peace, and some divine teaching. And my Bible opened, and this was literally the first scripture that came to mind: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe on God, believe also on me."

I think there is a desire on the Lord's part, in the day and age in which we live, that we should not be distracted by the lifestyles that we can live, by what we can achieve in our careers, but that we should have this foundational truth in our hearts that the Lord is a *real* Person. He is

not just real because we have been told He is real, not just real because we have learned that He is real in the sense of an intellectual understanding, but He is real because we have *experienced* Him. We have experienced Him drawing alongside us when we are low or desperate; we have experienced Him when He helps us through matters that are beyond our capabilities to resolve. I was speaking with a brother and sister last night about their experience of trying to get married in the midst of this pandemic, and there are others here that also have that experience. It is interesting talking about such things, where you look at them and you think it is hopeless, and yet somehow it just works out. That is the Lord seeking to make Himself known in a real way, in a way that will stay with you, in a way that when perhaps you doubt and you need a sense of certainty - you can carry these experiences in your heart with the One that you call your Lord and Christ as a real Person. And He is there for you and He listens to you.

I believe there is a matter of exercise. It says, "ye believe on God, believe also on me." Well, do you? Is that your experience? Do you believe on God? Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? We have the liberty to ask that the reality of the Lord's Person be made known to us. I think it is perfectly natural, albeit maybe not the best thing, but we are in a natural condition where perhaps sometimes we doubt. Speaking practically, I know I did. At a certain point in my life, I found that there were so many religions in the world; how did I know that the Person that I was told that I should worship was the real One? It was just a practical exercise that as a young man I wanted to know. And the Lord in His graciousness gave me the liberty to go before Him and say, 'I would like to know if You are real'. And He answered that desire. It might seem a little bit impertinent, for a human being to go before the Lord of glory and say, 'Are You a real Person?'. But in His gentleness and graciousness He revealed Himself in a very personal way to me that I will never forget. And it confirmed in my heart that it is a *real* Person that I follow.

This is important. This is a foundational thing that every believer must have in their soul. We can do what is right and we can commit ourselves to doing the right thing, following the Scriptures, dedicating ourselves to maintaining the principles. And there is a certain amount of blessing in that; but, speaking very carefully, if the Lord is not a real Person to you, then when things get hard and trials come, there is a possibility that perhaps the effort to do the right thing might just seem a little bit too much. But if the Lord is real to you then

you will always have that in your soul, and you will do what is right because of how real your love for Him is.

If your family asked something of you, you would not ordinarily think, 'I am not sure that I am willing to do that for my family because I am just not convinced as to the reality of their person and the love they have for me'. Your family loves you and you love them. Even for a dear friend, what you have with them is valuable to you because they are a real person to you, and their friendship is a tangible thing. And so you would move heaven and earth, so to speak, to do what is required to look after your family, to care for them, protect them. Well, when the Lord asks things of you, when the Lord perhaps asks a sacrifice of you, it is not necessarily the sense of it being the right thing to do that makes you do it. It is because He is a real Person to you and, therefore, the gratitude that He would express to you is a real thing also.

And so it is this that stabilises us, especially in the world in which we live, when there is so much uncertainty. It says, "Let not your heart be troubled". These are intimate things. Looking at the brethren universally, there are many things that have troubled them, not just in their minds but in their hearts. They feel great stresses and pressures; there are those who have endured things in their health, or in their jobs, or in their families - a lot of suffering. The Lord knows that we feel these things. Well, this word is, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe on God, believe also on me." it is the reality of the Lord's Person: He is there. I think we can see this also with the two on the way to Emmaüs when the Lord draws alongside them and asks them what is bothering them, Luke 24: 15. He already knew; He was the Lord of glory. He already knew what troubled their heart, but He cared for them and He loved them enough that He would say, 'What is bothering you?'. And He would listen, and then He would teach them, and show them, and redirect them.

Nothing ever happens without reason. So why has the Lord allowed there to be so much uncertainty and instability to come into the world at large? I think it is so that this scripture can become true in us: "Let not your heart be troubled". The Lord is a real Person and He would seek to reveal Himself as a real Person and develop that relationship with you so that you are intimately linked. Look at the life of Paul the apostle when he was Saul, the riches and the place of position that he had in society. He was a highly esteemed man among his peers; and he gave all of that up. And then what he had to endure as a

result of giving up his natural position. We were recently reading about when he was in prison, the physical scars that he had on his body. Why? Why would somebody go through all of that? It was because the Lord was a real Person to him, and he knew that he was doing the right thing, not in a legal sense, but because the Person that loved him was telling him that it was the right thing to do. It was comforting for him, in his physical pain, comforting him in his trials, telling him that one day all of it would come to an end, and He would come to call him to be with Himself: that should be our portion.

Well may it be so for the Lord's Name's sake.

Word in a Ministry Meeting

Calgary

7 July 2022

RETURN OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE

WILLIAM JOHNSON

Philemon 18, 19 (*all scriptures quoted from King James Version*)

Before I speak from this passage, I will briefly sketch the circumstances which led to the writing of this letter, without which the canon of Scripture would not be complete. This letter was inspired by the Spirit, and Scripture would not be complete without it. It appears this beloved man had a servant or bond-slave named Onesimus; this Onesimus was a stiff-necked, cantankerous fellow who loved to have his own way. The meaning of the word Onesimus is unprofitable, and he was true to his name. We may also safely gather from the letter that this Onesimus was the subject of many prayers. These slaves were part of the household and they were often kindly treated, and in a godly household like Philemon's we may safely conclude that Onesimus was the subject of many prayers. I think I am speaking to some here who are the subjects of many prayers, and my cry to God is that these prayers may be answered tonight. We see here, as the story goes, that Onesimus got tired of his praying master, so he departed from his home and went away. I speak feelingly with regard to this, for I see in this man a picture of myself; I was the subject of many prayers. I had a praying mother, but I was stiff-necked and loved to have my own way. One of my greatest punishments was when my mother took me and knelt down with me (and she often did it when I was naughty) and said, 'O God, save my boy! Make him a servant of Thine!' I said, 'I must get away; I have had enough of this. I will go to sea'. I well remember my mother saying, 'I will never let God alone about you'. Off I went over the sea; I wanted to see life, but my mother's prayers spoilt everything for me. In every letter she wrote were these words, 'I am praying for you'. I got away from my home, but I could not get away from God. I cannot refrain from speaking in this way, because I see in this man Onesimus a picture of myself, and I do not think I need make an apology for it, because it is quite scriptural. Paul speaks of himself, and I think it is the Lord's way that preachers should tell how they have been blessed.

I travelled about, and at last I came home in my ship to Glasgow; I thought I would go ashore and enjoy myself, but God was working in my soul. God made me feel in the theatre the soft touch of my mother's hand and a pall came over my soul: I had to give in. I said I would go and hear a preacher, so I went to hear a great preacher who was preaching at one of the kirks there. I went up into the gallery; my heart was aching. I wanted God. The preacher said, 'I take for my text

Colossians 1: 19: "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell". You say, that was an extraordinary text! An extraordinary blessing came to me. I do not know whether the preacher preached well or not, but I know what happened to me: my mother's God drew near to me. I got introduced to Him on that occasion. He looked right down into my soul, and He said to me, 'I am for you, and you are for me'. I said, 'I am a poor sinner, Lord'. 'Yes', He said, 'but I will make you happy; all the fulness is pleased to dwell in Me'. All I needed for time and eternity was found in Him, and I cast my soul on Him.

I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad. Hymn 248

My mother's prayers were answered. I went down to my ship as fast as my feet could carry me, and I got out my paper and wrote a letter. I said to my mother, 'I have come to Christ tonight; your prayers are answered'. I could not tell you what that letter was to her. Oh, if you only knew what you are causing your parents!

Young man sitting there, your father has been praying for you! You think Christianity will make you miserable. I never knew real pleasure till God looked down into my soul and mind, 'I will make you happy'. I could not refrain speaking of myself, because I see myself here in this man Onesimus.

This man went away from his master, went to Rome and was lost to sight. Only yesterday I received a letter telling me about a young fellow I knew in London, who, a year ago, went off to Canada and went on a farm; a sister who was there was continually speaking to him about his soul. He said, 'I thought I should get away from that by coming here'. Away in the solitude there that young fellow has come to Christ. Parents, cheer up! Sometimes God keeps us waiting, but I trust there are some here in whose souls God is working. Come to Christ to-night! Let your father's God be yours. This young man went off to Rome, and in that great city he was converted. Paul could say of him, "Whom I have begotten in my bonds". This letter was written that the young man might go back; he was sent back to his servitude. The apostle said, 'I must send you back, because you belong to Philemon; you must go back to where you have been in self-will and serve the Lord'. He was willing to go back. That is the beauty of Christianity. Oh, dear young Christians, do not think there is anything commonplace about

Christianity! It is morally beautiful, you are left here to serve the Lord. In painting pictures of the saints, people always put a nimbus round their heads: Christians should have the nimbus of the glory of the Lord. I can scrub a kitchen just as much for the glory of God as preach. We can serve the Lord just as much in our daily circumstances as in preaching. Preaching is a small part: the great thing is practising.

Having said this much, I am now coming to the letter itself, to the verses to preach from. You would expect to find in this letter some beautiful expressions about the gospel. This letter could only be produced by a Christian. You will find expressions here which convey to us the beautiful simplicity of the gospel.

I want to speak of four words - clearance, acceptance, relationship, and moral result. Let us come back to verse 18. I make use of Paul as a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ; Philemon, a figure of God who has been offended; and Onesimus, a figure of the sinner. We have one man making himself responsible for another. "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account". It is one man making himself chargeable for another. Do you know the gospel after this fashion? Do you know in your soul the import of the fact that Jesus died? What did He die for? You say, He died for sinners, He died for the unjust. He did, but can you say as you sit there, He died for me? There is very great insensibility with people as to their being responsible to God. People are alive to their responsibility to their fellow-creatures, but have you ever faced your responsibility to God - your sins and God? What can be more terrible than to have sins and to be insensible with regard to them? The Lord said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins", John 8: 24. Die you must, but to die in your sins, how terrible! No man in his conscience is infidel - he may be in his brain, but not in conscience. I never preach to a man's brains, but to his conscience. Your conscience proclaims your responsibility to God. Unconverted young man, young woman, old man, your life proclaims your responsibility to God! The eye of God rests on the pages of your life; you are writing page after page of history, and not a single line has given God pleasure yet! Your whole life has been marked by self-pleasing. Wake up to it! I do not charge you with stealing, with being dishonest, but with pleasing yourself. It is written of Jesus that He "pleased not himself", Rom 15: 3. You have been pleasing yourself: your whole life has been terribly wrong. If you don't face your responsibility you will never know the grace of God.

The story has been often told, but I tell it again because it

illustrates what I am saying. It is related of a czar of Russia, who was a mighty warrior and a very strict disciplinarian, spending more than half his time in war, that on one occasion when he had been out on campaign, there was a poor young officer who had got deeply involved in debt. One night he took a piece of paper and wrote down, 'I owe Messrs. So-and-so so much, and Messrs --- so much'. Altogether it was a great sum. At the bottom he wrote, 'I owe all this, but who is going to pay?' He knew the czar was very particular about such things, and that he would be turned out of the army. He could not answer it, and he sought refuge from his sorrow in sleep. The czar was going through the officers' quarters, and seeing a light there went into the room where the young man was. He took up the paper and read it, and his heart was touched. He wrote two words at the bottom, 'I, Nicholas'. Towards morning the cold aroused the young man from his slumber, and, taking up the paper to have another look at it, he said, 'The czar has been here, and the czar promises to pay'. When they were on parade that morning the czar came down the ranks, and the young officer said, 'Thank you, Sire'. 'What! what!' he said. 'Thank you, Sire'. He had the czar's promise to pay and his burden was rolled away.

Out on yonder cross was the blessed Jesus, who wrote a history under the eye of God of which every line gave God pleasure, everything was bright with His glory; yet out there on yonder cross He was nailed between two thieves, "numbered with the transgressors", Isa 53: 12. His hands - you would not like me to know what your hands have done - but His hands were never outstretched for His own pleasure. His feet - you would not like me to know where your feet have taken you - but His feet ever ran in the way of God's commandments: His hands and His feet were nailed there. And there all that I owed was put to His account.

A divine Person gave divine satisfaction in regard of our responsibility, but never ceasing to be what He was by reason of what He became. Think of it. Blessed Lord Jesus! He had to say, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me", Ps 42: 7. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ps 22: 1. Come and learn at the cross what your sin is, what the holiness of God is. He has settled it all there, met it all there; it was His glory to do it. He it was who spangled the heavens. He spake and it was done. Even when He was bearing sins, He was upholding the universe by the word of His power: He was greater in bearing sins than in creating the worlds. He has done it: it is not a promise to do it, He has done it. How do we know that? He has

gone back to the spot where He undertook to do it. He said in the past eternity, "I delight to do thy will, O my God", Ps 40: 8. It is done. What is the meaning of it? "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more", Heb 10: 17. That blessed Saviour who died for our sins was raised the third day. The work is done.

Let us go back to verse 17 and put the two verses together: "If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself." These are the words you want, dear Christians. "If thou count me a partner, receive him as myself". How is God going to receive us? In the same way as Christ, who died for our sins. You will never get peace until you get into the presence of a risen Christ and of the God who raised Him. You will never lose your burden at the foot of the cross, but at the feet of the Saviour who was once there, but who is in resurrection now. "If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself". There is no difference in the way God receives Christ and the way He receives you. Where you get solid peace is in the presence of the risen Christ and of the God who has raised Him. He took our place in death because God disapproved of us, that we might have His place in resurrection because God approved of Him. You get peace at the feet of the Saviour who has done it. We believe in Jesus who was raised up out of death. I would like to sit down quietly by your side now. I ask you one question. Is there the 'ruffle of a leaf', as we speak figuratively, between God and the risen Christ? Where is the risen Christ? In the presence of God. He took our sins and bore the judgment; but He is risen now. He is before God, and there is not the 'ruffle of a leaf' between Him and the God who raised Him. He took my place in death because God disapproved of me, that I might have His place in resurrection because God approved of Him. Are you on that solid platform with God, the platform of a risen Christ? You say, I am shaky sometimes. There is no shakiness in the presence of God who has raised Him from the dead, not the ruffle of a leaf! It is not only Christ who died, but Christ who is raised. You must be either on the ground of your responsibility to God, or on the ground of the risen Christ who has cleared it all away.

The majority of Christians have not got peace; they know that Christ died for sinners and that He died for them! But what God wants you to see is that you are on the same solid platform with Him as Christ who has done it. I have got that peace, my soul has been there for many a long day; I do not look inside, I look away there; He is my peace, He has made peace. Let me give you a nautical illustration. A ship is coming into harbour for shelter. It is important for the anchor to be

dropped in good holding ground. They do not drop the anchor inside the ship, but outside in good holding ground. Many try to find anchorage within in their experiences, but the anchor must be outside. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus", Heb 6: 19. Jesus is there, and it is good holding ground within the veil.

Verse fifteen is very sweet: he went away for a season that he might be received for ever. I went away for a season, but I am received for ever. And how are you received? The prodigal said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants", Luke 15: 18. Did he receive him like that? No, he did not. So we have here, "Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved." There is relationship.

You will be received as Christ is received. He will put His arms around you, you are never more to go away; it is an eternal relationship. I am received as Christ is received; I am a child of God, a child with the Father; I am received for ever.

I have clearance, acceptance, relationship, and now (verse eleven) I am profitable. "Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me." I was a poor worthless thing, a brand plucked from the burning, but now profitable to the Father and the Son. We are here for God.

This is a beautiful unfolding of the grace of God. I have clearance by the death of Christ; I am accepted in a risen Christ; I am in the relationship of a child, and I am profitable to the Father and the Son.

I make another appeal to you. After all the gospel is an appeal to man from God. Am I speaking to anyone here who is the subject of many prayers? Would you not like to be able to write to your mother to-night and say, 'Mother, I came to Christ to-night, I came to Him at the meeting; your Saviour is now my Saviour'? May God grant it for His Name's sake.

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A collection of our brother's ministry is available in *Addresses and other Ministry by William Johnson*, from www.lulu.com - this article is not included as it has only just come to light.

“A CLUSTER OF GLORIES”

M H Tucker

In a short passage of some six verses in the book of Revelation, viz., chapter 19: 11-16, we have four distinctive names given to the One who comes forth out of heaven seated on a white horse, to judge and make war in righteousness, and who, of course, can be readily identified as the glorious Son of God. These four names, suggesting as they do four distinct glories, seem to be introduced by way of blessed contrast to the fourfold description, in the following chapter, of the enemy of God and man, who is there referred to us as the *dragon*, the ancient *serpent*, who is the *devil* and *Satan*.

The first name is that of “*Faithful and True*”, and this clearly brings out the moral glory of the Person who bears it, for it is a title of renown which He earned by reason of the perfections and excellencies that ever marked Him in His human pathway on earth. He is referred to by a similar appellation in the beginning of the book, chapter 1: 5, and He addresses Himself in this character also to the angel of the church in Laodicea. In chapter 19 the scene is, of course, future, but the three references together exemplify what is said in Hebrews 13: 8: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day and for ever”. What He was in moral perfection as a Man, He is now; and what He is now, He ever will be. This same Jesus, faithful amidst unfaithfulness, the One who witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate, and who ever spake truth and stood for the truth, faithful unto death, commands from every heart that loves Him willing adoration for the moral worth suggested in the title, “Faithful and True”.

The second reference to His name occurs in verse 12, where we are told that He has a name written *which no one knows but Himself*. This suggests a glory that is inscrutable to mortal man. We would not have it otherwise. The very fact that we know there is that which is beyond us, and unknowable, commands our deepest worship.

The Father only (glorious claim)
The Son can comprehend.

This does not, of course, mean that we know nothing about Him. We know as much as has been revealed, but there is that which has not been revealed and which the Father only knows. A real knowledge as opposed to a mere objective acquaintance with the Person of the Son is possessed only by the Father, see JND's note to Matt 11: 27. The

question of the mystery of the incarnation no doubt enters into this.

Then thirdly, we are told in verse 13 that His name is called the *Word of God*. This title would suggest what He is as the mind of God expressed, and is of course reminiscent of the manner in which the same writer, John, speaks of Him in his gospel as *the Word* - the very expression of the Mind of God. None other than a divine Person could be this, and it is the Lord's peculiar glory to shine in this way. In keeping with this title, a sharp two-edged sword proceeds from His mouth - that potent weapon with which the word of God in a moral sense is compared in Hebrews 4: 12. The passage no doubt is intended to convey the unique glory of Christ as the One who, as none other, can bring to bear on the conscience the mind of God. This He did in grace on many occasions in the days of His flesh on earth, and this He will yet do in swift judgment at His appearing. 2 Thess 2: 8 is no doubt a parallel passage, in that the lawless one there referred to is said to be consumed with the breath of the mouth of the Lord Jesus.

Finally, we have in verse 16, "and he has upon his garment, and upon his thigh, a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords*". This suggests His *official* glory - a renown that is conferred upon Him in recognition of His humiliation here below when He was crucified as King. It is a striking fact that the very title that is predicted of God in absolute deity in the noble doxology in 1 Timothy 6: 15, 16 is also attributed to Christ as Man in connection with His coming again - His appearing in this world to cast out the usurper and to take His seat on a throne of righteousness in the very place where He was put to shame.

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