

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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THE GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS

Philippians 2: 9-11

Ephesians 1: 9, 10, 20-23; 3:19-21

PAG I was encouraged by the hymn that we sang at the beginning of this meeting,

Glory, Lord, is Thine for ever (Hymn 181).

We began this morning locally with hymn 268, which refers to the Lord as a

Blessed and glorious Man,

- and it tells us that all that God's love had designed is secured by Christ. These scriptures I have read are intended to help us gain some fresh impression of the outstanding glory of Christ; to ask ourselves what it would be for Him to have "a name, that which is above every name", and to have all things headed up in Him, to be given "to be head over all things to the assembly", and then to be, we might say, the Author of what returns to God eternally - "to him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages". I trust that there is liberty to enquire together, and that everyone carries away a fresh impression of Christ. What would you say to help us about Jesus having "a name, that which is above every name"?

NRC I was just thinking as you were speaking that His Name in itself is glorious, is it not? I was encouraged that you mentioned that He has been given "a name, that which is above every name". There is a glory attached to that. I was thinking too that every aspect of Christ, whether it be in His manhood here on earth or in His current position on high, has glory attached to it. Recently we spoke about Joseph and the many colours in his vest, each colour representing a different glory, Gen 37: 3. The glories are endless, are they not?

PAG It says prophetically of the Lord Jesus that "he shall bear the glory", Zech 6: 13. No one else could bear the glory that He bears; they would not be equal to it. What the Lord is morally came out in perfection in His manhood here, and showed that He is greater than every glory He has won, and yet able to bear everything that is laid upon Him officially, "a name, that which is above every name". In order for us to see that His Name is "above every name" we have to know Him, and the first thing to ask everyone here would be, do they know the Lord Jesus? Do they know His Name?

JTB Does the very word “wherefore” suggest there was a moral consequence to what preceded?

PAG That is very helpful. Please expand on that for us.

JTB Well, He was, as we sang in our hymn, 'the great “I AM”', but He emptied Himself and He humbled Himself. What moral qualities, what moral excellence, were displayed there, and just as you go through that verse it says, “granted”, as if He satisfied the qualifications for the Name, do you think?

PAG That is good, and God was fully justified in granting it. It suggests something that has been conferred. God had it ready, one might say, but who was going to receive this glory? There was only One who could.

TWL Is His Name descriptive of the Person? I am just thinking of “the name of Jesus”, 'Jah the Saviour'. What a glorious Man He is, and it is descriptive not just of what He has done but of what He is.

PAG It is glorious that when God chose to make Himself known in a Man, He came in by the name of Jah the Saviour. If He had come in as judge He would have been righteous in doing so. We know that judgment has been committed into the hands of the Son of man, and that day will come, but, at the moment, this day of grace is characterised by One whose name is Jesus - Jah the Saviour.

TWL It has been said that glory is the outshining of love, JT vol 12 p259. Jah the Saviour is the perfect expression of the love of God in a Man, and that is what Jesus is. Jah the Saviour, the manner of His being Saviour, involves His dying.

PAG So that God would come out in manhood in Christ, the Lord taking His place, “having been found in figure as a man” (v 8), as we are told here, and in that manhood He would die. He came into a position where He could die. He did it for God and He did it for you and me.

KRC We quoted this scripture you have referred to in thanksgiving this morning. We had a sense of the fact that He was given that Name. He was given the name of Jesus before all His service. Before He grew “as a tender sapling” (Isa 53: 2), He was given that Name. You get the sense that heaven was united in that Name being chosen, do you think?

PAG Yes. “Glory to God in the highest”, it was said when He came in,

“and on earth peace, good pleasure in men”, Luke 2: 14. Proverbs 8: 31 says, “my delights were with the sons of men”. God's delight could be in men because Christ was here. Man could not have been fully delightful to God until Christ came in, and there could not be peace on earth until Christ came in. There were things that could not happen until Christ came into manhood. That is how great He is; that is how important He is: God's name could not be fully made known; the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, that revelation, could not come out until the incarnation.

DCB We have not reached the time when every knee does bow but we have the secret of a name which the Lord Jesus has as exalted. It is going to come out publicly, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow”. It is going to affect everything in the universe.

PAG Yes, it is a matter of righteousness, would you say, that it should be so? God anointed His Man. He thus appointed His Man, and it is essential that God's appointment should be recognised. He could not have any being pass by, whether of heavenly or earthly or infernal beings, and not acknowledge that God “granted” Him that Name. It is a matter of righteousness for that to be acknowledged, and it justifies and glorifies God, do you think?

DCB So the thought of “name” brings in the renown that He has. You could say there is reputation. Someone might have a 'name' for doing such and such, a 'name' for being like something, but He has that renown and reputation as granted by God, and persons are blessedly in the secret of it and can bow the knee to Him now.

PAG God's purpose is “to head up all things in the Christ”; so that is when that Name will be known publicly. In the millennium, as we speak of it, the day of display which is yet to come, the Name will be known, but the great blessing is in bowing to Jesus now. In the day you are speaking of when “every knee should bow”, beings will do so whether they wish to or not; they will be obliged to do so. But at the present time we can be drawn in love to bow the knee to Jesus, and that is what God is looking for.

JTB We have in Hebrews that “he inherits a name more excellent than they” (chap 1: 4), more excellent than the angels; that is the Name of the Son. But there seems to be something very special and sweet about the name of Jesus. Say something about that.

PAG It is an attractive Name, I think, yet the hymn says,

Jesus! the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills the breast;

but it also says,

The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but His loved ones know. (Hymn 279)

The name of Jesus is meant to affect our hearts. I think that is why it comes into the epistle to the Hebrews so much because really the writer to the Hebrews was drawing them away from the system of things that they had been familiar with, the system of the law, with the offerings and all that it entailed. Well, how was He going to draw them away? By presenting, you might say, a different tabernacle system that was an improvement on the previous one? No, He was going to draw them away by attracting them to a Person who completely eclipsed what the tabernacle system spoke of. He was embodied in it, but He was so much greater than it that He would draw them away from that system of things that had served its purpose. He Himself, Jesus, had “magnified the law, and made it honourable” (Isa 42: 21), but He far exceeds anything that the tabernacle system could offer.

JTB There is something most attractive in that the name that was given to Mary was *Jesus*. We know from the Old Testament that His name is, “Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace” (Isa 9: 6), but the name that was disclosed to Mary as predicating really all that He would bring in, as our brother has alluded to, was Jah the Saviour, the name of Jesus. There is something very sweet about that.

PAG That was what He was to be called: “thou shalt call his name Jesus, for *he* shall save his people from their sins”, Matt 1: 21. It was not only a message about what He was to be called, but why, and all these other names and titles certainly attach to Him, but He says in John 17, “that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world”, v 24. Part of the glory is this Name. We cannot have it; none of us could have that Name; but we can behold the glory that attaches to it. We do so because we love Him, but we find that God loved Him first.

NRC Is this why it is important that the name of Jesus is what is preached in the glad tidings? He has many titles, but I suppose the affectionate term in drawing persons to Him is the name of Jesus. It is “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow”, but I was thinking in

terms of the affectionate side in drawing us to His love. It is through the glad tidings; it is through “Jesus”, is it not?

PAG It is. When Paul describes the glad tidings in the first chapter of Romans, he says it is, “God's glad tidings ... concerning his Son ... Jesus Christ our Lord”, v 1-4. That is who is to be presented. What you say about presenting the Person is important, as is reminding ourselves that it is “God's glad tidings”; it is what is coming from Him. Of course, we are concerned with meeting man's need, but first we should be concerned with answering to God's heart and God's desires. That is why we say on our notice board that it is the Word of God, and if God is going to speak a word, He is going to speak a word about Christ.

DCB So this passage finishes that it is “to God the Father's glory”. Do we see that everything we may say with regard to the glory of Christ has the effect that God the Father is glorified?

PAG The Lord emphasises that God would be glorified at the raising of Lazarus, for example, John 11: 4. His power in resurrection glorified God, and there was none but He could exercise that power because life was inherent in Him. We are given our lives; His life was His own. He is the only One of whom it can be said “he delivered up his spirit”, John 19: 30. It was His to deliver up. Our spirits are given to us; His was not given to Him.

I thought in relation to Ephesians that there is a time of display coming. We speak about the millennium. “The mystery of his will” (v 9) relates to that time; “the counsel of his own will” (v 11) relates to the present; and “the good pleasure of his will” (v 5) relates to what is before. “The good pleasure of his will” relates to eternity past and what was purposed there “the mystery of his will” relates to what is yet to come; and “the counsel of his own will” relates to this time in which we are. That shows us that one distinctive feature of God is that not only did His will cover the past and the present, it also covers the future, and what is central to the will of God is the *place* that Christ has. That is at the centre of God's will, the place that is given to Christ.

TWL The will of God always involves the heart of God, and it has never been displayed more than now in a Man.

PAG Yes. God's purpose, of course, is based on the satisfaction of His own heart but His counsels involve the expression of that: it is how it comes into effect and into being. So “he purposed in himself for the administration of the fulness of times; to head up all things in the Christ”.

He needed no other, and that would be seen publicly. We have been speaking of the verse in Philippians where every knee will bow. There will be that requirement, but there will be a public demonstration of things being headed up in the Christ.

TWL I find looking forward to the millennium quite touching because we will see God's anointed Man glorified in the scene where they rejected Him. And God will be glorified in that. It is wonderful to think about it.

PAG That is why we count ourselves among "all who love his appearing" (2 Tim 4: 8) because it is the time when He will be justified on the earth where He is currently rejected. Again, when the writer refers to "the habitable world which is to come, of which we speak" (Heb 2: 5), this is the world where Christ will be publicly acknowledged and where He will rule. There will be a reign of righteousness such as the world has never seen.

TWL There will be the influence of a Man. He will have His rule, but He will have His influence on a whole scene that has been marked up to that point by sin, by breakdown, by failure, and yet there will come a Man who has the right to rule, who has influence in that scene as well according to the dignity of His glory. What a wonderful reign!

PAG You have in Isaiah 32: 1, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment"; that is the public, administrative side that will come in, but immediately following that it says, "And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm; as brooks of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land", v 2. "A man"! The world is seeking a man, and they will keep looking until they appoint someone who is the antichrist, the very opposite of what God is looking for, and then the Lord will come in and He will bring in peace. He will take away that opposition; He will bring in peace; His glory will cover the earth "as the waters cover the sea", Hab 2: 14.

AB So other families will be raised at the rapture. Will they come into a knowledge of the Lord's glory or of Jesus's name beyond what they would have appreciated before?

PAG They will. That, I think, is what enters into what we read at the end of chapter 1 where the assembly is "the fulness of him who fills all in all". Through the saints of the assembly every family will come into an appreciation of Christ. She will be there mediatorially; that is intended

to suggest that she will be there on God's behalf as the means whereby the administration of blessing flows out, and every family will have an appreciation of Christ through that. Then when it comes to the eternal day and "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God" (Rev 21: 3), His tabernacle is the assembly; so she is an intrinsic part of the display, but Christ will be the Head of all of that. We need just to go carefully according to what Scripture says. In the eternal day, the thought of headship will rest in God, "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15: 28); nevertheless Christ's link with the assembly is an eternal one, and that link with the rest of the families through that arrangement will continue. Is that right? That is how I understand it.

JTB Yes, very much so. The tabernacle of God will be the assembly and it will diffuse divine affections to embrace all men because "the tabernacle of God is with men", everything that the work of Christ has secured at this present time and retrospectively too. It is fine to take into account the retrospective effect of the work of the Lord Jesus in past times, "passing by the sins that had taken place before" (Rom 3: 25). How wonderful the work is that this glorious Person will secure all for God's pleasure; but the assembly, the tabernacle of God, having that very central part in it. Just going back to the millennial scene, He will "be a priest upon his throne" (Zech 6: 13) as if to display the affections of heaven, the sympathies of heaven, on a scene that had been so much disturbed by the intrusion of sin. It will all be replaced by what is conducive to the peaceful existence of man.

PAG Sitting "a priest upon his throne": do you think that involves it is a rule of righteousness, but it is also a rule of sympathy? God's sympathies for man are expressed in this rule, and we will be in a better position to understand God's heart than we have ever been because much of what is opposed will have been subjugated and suppressed. I know there is what remains and will rear its head at the end (Rev 20: 7-10); nevertheless there will be a reign of blessing, and it will involve that God's thoughts are brought into expression.

DCB The words "all things" come in in the two passages read in Ephesians 1. I was thinking of the importance of that, that God is going "to head up all things". There is a whole scene which will have no objective apart from Christ Himself.

PAG Yes. There is a note to "all things" in Colossians that says, 'Looked at as a whole: "*the* all things"' (note 'I' to chap 1: 16); if that was

not too strange an expression - everything having Christ as its object and everything under His hand. That is true anticipatively now. The world is in turmoil at the moment; He will bring in peace so that this can be fully appreciated.

DCB So it is wonderful to appreciate that it is “the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth”. We can understand “the things in the heavens” being mentioned, but what is in heaven then will include the saints of the assembly, and all who are raised at the rapture. For the “things upon the earth”, there will be a perfect administration according to the divine mind but all centring in Christ.

PAG Yes, a fulness of administration that will be perfect and complete! We get some foreshadowing of it in the queen of Sheba's impression of Solomon “and his ascent by which he went up”, 1 Kings 10: 5. She could say, “Happy are thy men! happy are these thy servants”, v 8. Persons will be restful in serving Christ. It will not be an onerous, burdensome thing; it will be a happy thing.

TWL At the end of verse 10 it says, “to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in him”. The whole administration for God is “in him”, and the whole administration that we will take account of - and it will be “wondered at in all that have believed” (2 Thess 1: 10) - is “in him”. It is remarkable the glory that is there in that Man.

PAG You know what it says at the end of John 3: “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand”, v 35. There is no safer place; there is no better place; but there is no other place: everything is centred in that one Man. How great a Person that is, that every feature of God's administration can centre in one Man, and it is all perfect.

TWL Yes; it has often struck me that God has placed what is His own inheritance into the safest place He can by putting it into the hands of Christ. The thing that He loved most He puts into the hands of One where it is safe. That is quite a thing to think about. God put His own inheritance into the hands of the Son.

PAG And the difference between God's arrangement and man's arrangement is that man may, in good faith, make the best arrangements he can for the safety and security of persons or things, and too often the arrangements are proved to fall short. What is placed in the hands of Christ is unassailable; it is not going to fall short. We can

say that, even though the end has yet to come, yet, with *absolute* certainty, that what has been given to Christ will not fall short.

JTB The scripture in Zechariah to which we have been referring includes, “the counsel of peace shall be between them both” as if what was under the administration of Christ is fully consonant with what God the Father desires: “the counsel of peace shall be between them both”. There is perfect consonance between the two, do you think?

PAG Yes, in one sense the Lord's statement, “I and the Father are one” (John 10: 30), is an absolute statement, but it comes into expression, and that scripture you quote in Zechariah is one way in which it comes into expression. It is not that they *become* one: it is always true. “I and the Father are one”. It is one of the glories of the Lord that on the one hand He comes into a position to which subjection attaches and yet, on the other hand, He is one with the Father and with the Holy Spirit in divine purpose and counsel and in deity.

DCB So does the end of chapter 1 show the wonder of the fact of the assembly being with Him? He is magnified; He is glorified; but there is one who is His counterpart as Man.

PAG We have been taught (JT vol 50 p378) that this latter part of Ephesians 1 answers to what is said at the beginning of Genesis as to Adam and Eve: “let them have dominion”, chap 1: 26. Adam was, of course, head to Eve, but they had dominion together, and as to the thought of “the assembly, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all”, I would understand that to be Christ filling “all in all” administratively. God will *be* all in all, but “the fulness of him who fills all in all” is the assembly expressing Christ in the fulness of divine administration. It is wonderful to see that one of the glories of Christ is that He has a vessel who can express His glory.

DCB That vessel is in this scene now. Things will be on display in the world to come in relation to the assembly, but the assembly is His counterpart now, administering for Him.

PAG She is. This is the learning time, the time when we go through things; and what is formed, as the result of these exercises, will be available eternally. She is seen in Revelation as “clothed in fine linen, bright and pure; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints”, chap 19: 8. That is what is formed in present exercise.

We will just look at the verses in chapter 3. One of the glories of

Christ is that His love “surpasses knowledge”, and yet we can *know* it. If somebody presented me with a complex mathematical theorem, I could not tell you whether it was right or not. I would not know; it would be beyond me. But we can know “the love of the Christ”, even although it “surpasses knowledge”. We can enter into it, no doubt because the Spirit is active.

NRC Can you help please as to why it is referred to as “the love of the Christ” here?

PAG Well, the Christ is God's Anointed, and you might say it is in an official position that is given to Him; the Christ was the Messiah to Israel. He acted on God's behalf. But these actions are still actions of love, “to know the love of the Christ”, and, of course, the Christ is the Head of the assembly. She is particularly suited to know that love because she is nearest to Him; she is united to Him. And yet whatever we may find of His love, whatever we may be able to say about it, one thing we know is we are never going to exhaust it. It is in view of the fulness of divine love being experienced.

TWL In order to apprehend these four dimensions you have to be in the middle of them, and is “the love of the Christ” the tether to hold us there? It is not a case of just being aimlessly there, but “the love of the Christ” is the tether; so we can see these four dimensions and appreciate all that God did by “the love of the Christ”.

PAG And we can know by the Spirit something of Christ's love for the Father. This is not a restrictive view of “the love of the Christ” so we know - as we have touched on in John 17 -that there was a fulness of affection, and we know that what the Lord has in mind for His own is love of that same quality and character. The love that was between Him and the Father is the love that He would have His own to share. All that enters into knowing “the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge”. We cannot measure it and, as you say, it holds us.

TWL This is an experience, is it not? “To know the love of the Christ” is not knowledge in the sense of what is academic; it is the knowledge of experience that “the love of the Christ” holds me in the scope of God's things so that I can see them. For all that God did, and all that God purposed, and all God's movements “the love of the Christ” tethers me in the centre.

PAG It has been likened to the “waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed through” (Ezek 47: 5); so it is beyond our measure, but

you are not floundering; you are swimming; you are there and you are consciously under divine control and regulation, and you are enjoying that love.

DJH “God is love”, 1 John 4: 16. That would underlie what we are saying. There is something really rich here where we shall be, you might say, absorbed eternally. “God is love”. He has come into expression in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, but “God is love” and that underlies all that we are saying.

PAG It does. It is very helpful to be reminded of that; so Peter speaks about us being “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet 1: 4), and “the divine nature” is love. We talk about God's nature, and His attributes, such as righteousness and grace and mercy and wisdom and holiness, and sometimes that might sound difficult to understand, but the point is, “God is love”; that is who He is. He is love; He is the embodiment of it, the expression of it; as when it says of the Lord Jesus that He was “the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance”, Heb 1: 3. Well, what was coming into expression? Love! It is a wonderful thing that love will have an answer eternally, not just in time.

DJH It is a remarkable expression, “his substance”. It is not anything theoretical or anything in the air. It is *real* and it has come into expression in the way that it has.

PAG Well, that is an ever-important thing. It may sound a very basic thing to say: *God is real*, and His love is *real*; it exists and it is expressed in Christ.

DCB I wondered if it is important in this section that this is part of Paul's prayer; he bows his knees to the Father with the desire that, as Spirit-strengthened, we should enter these things and “to know the love of the Christ”. It is not something the apostle comes and teaches; it is entered into on that ground of prayer.

PAG Why do you think he desired this? He had spoken of other desires in chapter 1, to the end that God “would give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of him, being enlightened in the eyes of your heart” (v 17, 18) - but why did he desire this?

DCB Is what is suggested here really the height of what is in the divine mind and the height therefore of the apostle's mind?

PAG It is, and I wonder too if he desired it because it leads up to God having a response; God's desire is for a response. He said in Psalm

132, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it", v 14. He desired to have a resting place where His love could be displayed. His resting-place involved the place for the ark. Brethren will remember that in Exodus 25 He says of the ark, particularly in relation to the mercy-seat which was above the ark, "And there will I meet with thee, and will speak with thee", v 22. God had a desire to meet with His people and to speak with them. He is looking for an answer, and Paul's desire is that we should know something, but that it should prompt a response in us.

TWL That is why the response that goes to God is not just because of what He has done but rather because of how He has expressed Himself. The response is because of the *expression* of His nature, and that is "the love of the Christ". Would that be right?

PAG It is; so again there are phrases that I heard when I was young and still hear now, 'the response is equal to the revelation'. I sometimes wondered what that meant because it was often said as a passing comment. What it means is that God has come out in love, and there is an answer in love, but it is equal to the revelation and not exactly equal to what has been done but equal to how God has revealed Himself in Christ. It is equal because the revelation is in Christ, and the answer is in Christ; so it could not be anything other than equal, but the great thing is we are brought into it.

AB So "the love of the Christ" is enough for us to come into everything then, even "the fulness of God"?

PAG Yes, because when you come into something of that, it moves you and it changes you. Mr Bert Taylor has often reminded us of the scripture that says, "But we all looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory", 2 Cor 3: 18. Our brother says that is a *permanent* change. The glory of Christ, "the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge", brings about *permanent* change in believers, and it is *permanent*, *positive* change.

NRC That then helps us to understand the last two verses of Romans 8, "nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord", v 38, 39. That brings permanent change; so nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God and our experiences of it, will it?

PAG That is another important feature, because Romans is written to saints in view of their pathway here on earth, and there are plenty of things to get in the way and they are very real, and it is not just the things we might do that are foolish or unwise, but there are circumstances that arise; nevertheless we cannot be separated from the love of God. It is not possible because it says earlier in that section, "If God be for us, who against us? He who, yea, has not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him grant us all things?", v 31, 32. Well, look at this, what we are reading about just now: this is part of the "all things". God is giving us this and He wants a response.

JTB Every component of the assembly will be filled in that way, do you think, as the product of the work of God? It just struck me freshly: "be filled even to all the fulness of God". The assembly will be "filled" in that sense: "the fulness of him who fills all in all". The assembly administratively is capacitated to reflect the fulness of Christ, but "filled even to all the fulness of God" really encompasses everything that was in the heart of God, do you think?

PAG It does, and do you think, just to be simple about it, in the eternal day (but we can touch it now, by the Spirit) there is no room for anything else? If the assembly is filled "even to all the fulness of God", there is nothing else; there is no intrusion, nothing to mar or spoil. What is "the fulness of God"? I do not know that I could even express it. It is everything that God desires to be known of Himself: surely that must displace everything else. And it is known in a Man; it is known in Christ.

DCB So the response is "glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus" particularly. He has secured the vessel of eternal praise, has He not? But it is "in Christ Jesus" and it can never have its existence apart from being "in Christ Jesus".

PAG Yes, and that is our true place. The true place of believers is "in Christ Jesus", but then it is the true place of the assembly, "in Christ Jesus"; so the response is "in the assembly in Christ Jesus". One cannot be separated from the other for the response to proceed. We were asking earlier about "the love of the Christ"; that is God's Anointed. But then "in Christ Jesus", refers to One who is now exalted at God's right hand. That is the place of exaltation. We also have the expression, "by Jesus Christ", that is the One who did things for God; the title Christ Jesus has in view One who is at the right hand of God. Then "the Christ" is the One who is God's Anointed. But the point is, we

are still talking about one Person, and He is able to fill all of these offices. All of these titles rest upon Him, and He adds dignity to every title that rests on Him, and all responds to God.

TWL In the light of what you have just said, and in the light of our brother's comment a moment ago in relation to "filled even to all the fulness of God", it is a direct answer to One who was "the effulgence of his glory"; the two go hand in hand. There was the perfect expression in the effulgence of God's glory and there is the perfect answer in being "filled even to all the fulness of God". Would that be right?

PAG Well, it is good to be reminded of that. Everything that Christ does is perfect, and that includes the answer to God. It is not only that He does things perfectly, but the response that comes back is perfect. You might do something very well and still not get the answer you were looking for; that is not the case with God. Christ "does all things well" (Mark 7: 37), and part of the "all things well" is that everything that comes back is perfect too.

Edinburgh

27th March 2022

Key to Initials (all from Edinburgh unless otherwise shown):-

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THE EXTENSIVENESS OF DIVINE GIVING

Paul A Gray

Luke 22: 20

Acts 2: 32-33

Romans 8: 31-39; 12: 1-2

I want to say something about the extensiveness of divine giving; we cannot really measure it. We spoke in the reading about the love of God and we were reminded that God is love; we could not measure that. Indeed, we have a hymn that says so:

O God of love, how measureless
Thy thoughts to us are shown!
More precious they than tongue can tell,
Their fulness none have known. (Hymn 35)

We could not say what the limit of the love of God is, because it has no limit. And we could not limit His thoughts either.

Paul quotes from an Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, “who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?”, Rom 11: 34. We cannot limit the thoughts of God. And indeed if I may quote another hymn writer, who speaks of God's glory:

E'en in its thoughts of boundless grace
It leaves us all far, far behind;
The love that gives with Christ a place,
Surpasses our poor feeble mind! (Hymn 120)

If it was left to man to say what the greatest thought should be, man would always fall short because he would be constrained by his own limitations and weakness; but God's thoughts are unconstrained by limitation and weakness, because God is God and His thoughts are thoughts of love.

That is why I have read this first scripture in Luke because this refers to the cup, and speaks about the blood of Jesus being *poured out* for you: poured out. The Lord says it is “shed” in Matthew and in Mark, but here He says it is poured out. We read in John 19 that one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and *immediately* there came out blood and water, v 34. The answer of love to the hatred of man was the immediate pouring out of the blood and water. And why was it necessary? Why does the Lord say here in Luke 22 that the blood is poured out for you, when the scripture teaches us that the blood is for

God? The blood *is* for God and, by the shedding of the blood of Jesus, the demands of God's righteousness were met. You could not meet them, and I could not meet them. And each of us is a sinner, so what was to be done? Jesus would die and shed His blood. It says of Him that He suffered "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God", 1 Pet 3: 18. The apostle Paul comments, "perhaps for the good man some one might dare to die; but God commends *his* love to us, in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us", Rom 5: 7-8. So the blood is for God, but it was poured out for us because we could do nothing to save ourselves.

How great the love of God is that it would reach out, not to persons who had loved Him or pleased Him, but to persons who had offended Him, who had defied Him, who had gone on in self-will and been ignorant as to His thoughts. And yet He would reach out to such, and He would do so in Christ, in Jesus, a Man who came near. You think of Jesus reaching out to sinners. In Mark 1 there was a leper (v 40), and we know that lepers were to be shunned; one would stay away from a leper. We have had to wear a mask, and we have to avoid coming into contact with persons who have contracted a virus. In these former days it was not a matter of wearing a mask; persons stayed away from lepers and had nothing to do with them, and if you came near them the lepers were obliged to say that they were unclean, Lev 13: 45. That is like us in our sins: we are unclean. We are unclean on account of our sins, and it says in Isaiah the prophet, "your iniquities have separated between you and your God", chap 59: 2. So what does God do? Does He tell us only that we are far away because of our sins? No, He draws near to us in Christ. When this leper is in the presence of Jesus, Jesus does not despise him, He does not stand back from him; but it says that He touched the leper. And the note in Mark's gospel says, 'to touch freely,' 'handle', v 41. No sinful man would dare to handle a leper for fear of defilement, but Jesus was sinless and He could reach out and touch the leper, and He wants to reach out and touch you. He handled him freely; He puts His hand on him. Maybe that man had not known the touch of another for months or even years, and here was a man who would come near and put his hand on him. He had said to Jesus, "If thou wilt thou canst cleanse me". And what does Jesus say? He says, "I will, be thou cleansed". Now why could He say that? Well, that was the Creator speaking, and the Bible says of the Creator, "...*he* spoke, and it was done; *he* commanded, and it stood fast", Ps 33: 9. "I will", that is to say, He spoke and it was done. "Be thou cleansed", and thus He commanded and it stood fast. He had a right to

do that because He is the One who would shed His own precious blood in order to redeem that leper. And He has done it for you.

It tells us in Leviticus 14 of the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. Among the things that were to be taken were two living birds. One bird was to be killed in an earthen vessel over running water, and I would like to make an application of that to the scripture in Hebrews that says of Jesus, "who by the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God", Heb 9: 14. He came into a prepared vessel, that is to say He took manhood's form, and He died; He offered Himself spotless to God. The living bird was killed over running water, and yet there was another living bird. It says it was let loose in the open field. I would like to apply that to the day when Peter and John and Mary came to the tomb and the voice to them is, "He is not here, but is risen", (Luke 24: 6); "Why seek ye the living one among the dead?", v 5. That is like the living bird that has been let loose in the open field. How the Lord felt the constraint of things. He says, "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened until it shall have been accomplished!", Luke 12: 50. But now He is not straitened; He is let loose in the open field; He is out of death! He is out in triumph and glory! But He went the way of suffering for you and for me.

If the leper was to be cleansed that work had to be done. It says also in Leviticus 14 that three things are to be taken, cedarwood and scarlet and hyssop. These speak of features of Christ that gave pleasure to God. Consider the cedarwood, the dignity of a blessed Man even in the presence of those who abused Him. They blindfolded Him and struck him and spat on Him (Mark 14: 65); They said, "prophesy ... Who is it who struck thee", Matt 26: 28. We also read that He said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?", (John 18: 23.): the perfect dignity of a Man under immense pressure there in the sight of God.

The scarlet - there was something outstanding about Christ. Men could not put their finger on it exactly. Some would say, "Never man spoke thus, as this man speaks", John 7: 46. Others would say, "He does all things well", Mark 7: 37. It says of some that they wondered. And even when He was on the cross itself the centurion said, "Truly this man was Son of God", Matt 27: 54. There was something distinctive about Him, the Godhead glory shining through that human veil.

And then there was the hyssop - a lowly plant, "...the hyssop that springs out of the wall", 1 Kings 4: 33. He says, "The foxes have

holes, and the birds of the heaven roosting places; but the Son of man has not where he may lay his head", Matt. 8: 20. It says too of Jesus that He was "wearied with the way he had come", John 4: 6. It tells us after the temptations that He was hungry, Matt. 4: 2. And it tells us at the grave of Lazarus that He wept, John 11: 35. He was humble in every circumstance, and feeling the sorrows of others, and never thinking first for Himself: "the hyssop that springs out of the wall". And these blessed features blended together perfectly, in a perfect Man who pleased God. And yet there was a bird that was killed in the earthen vessel over running water. "He shall take it, the cedarwood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird into the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water; and he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and he shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field", Lev 14: 6, 7. The Lord could say to the leper, "be thou cleansed" because He was going to provide the blood that would be sprinkled in order to cleanse him. And He has provided the blood for you, for your cleansing, involving suffering that we could not measure or fathom.

Locally we have been reading recently in Jonah, and Jonah speaks of the spirit of Christ formed in a person.

The weeds were wrapped about my head.

I went down to the bottoms of the mountains;

The bars of the earth closed upon me for ever, chap 2: 5, 6.

This would help us to understand how Jesus felt the depth of that suffering, including the suffering at the hands of man. In Psalm 22 it speaks of dogs (v 16), and the bulls (v 12), referring to the character of the persons who were there when the Lord was taken in view of His crucifixion. But far more deeply, He felt His suffering at the hands of God, and the fact that God Himself forsook Him on the cross; He was alone as made sin, made the very thing that He had recoiled from. He had said, "My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me", Matt 26: 39. What it contained was so awful that He recoiled from it. It speaks of it, its indescribable nature, in Psalm 41 - "A thing of Belial", v 8. It is an awful thing that could barely be described and the verse says that it "cleaveth fast unto him". The very thought of being made sin, what He *abhorred*, was awful, and yet God made Him to be sin, and He was forsaken. He did it for God, and He did it for you and for me, in order that that blood might be made available in all its cleansing power.

He "has been raised for our justification", Rom 4: 25. So extensive is the giving that there is nothing that can be added to it. I

have spoken before of Naaman the Syrian in 2 Kings 5, and we come to the point when he turns away in a rage, v 11. He had been told what to do: "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times ... and thou shalt be clean", v 10. And it says that he turned and went away in a rage. He says to his servants, "Are not the the Abanah and the Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean?", v 12. He says, 'We have better rivers at home!' But his servants drew near to him, and I think that they must have been fond of him, because they said to him, "My father, if the prophet had bidden thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he says to thee, Wash and be clean?", v 13. There is no great thing left to be done because it has already been done; it has been done by Jesus on the cross and it cannot be added to. All you have to do is accept it. "How much rather then, when he says to thee, Wash and be clean?". So "he went down, and plunged himself seven times in the Jordan ... And his flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean", v 14. Have you known the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus?

In Acts we have another pouring out. This time it is the pouring out of the gift of the Holy Spirit; that has not been held back either. What a wonderful thing to consider that there is a divine Person who has come here, not as the Lord did in manhood's form, but now the Spirit is here dwelling within believers on earth, and He has stayed for two thousand years. And if I may say reverently of a divine Person, He has never once complained, despite all that has happened; the Spirit has been grieved; the Spirit has been quenched at times. It is part of our history that each of us would have to acknowledge, but He has gone on. The hymn writer speaks of 'the Spirit's gentle grace', Hymn 288. He has gone on in grace. If you do not have the Spirit, *ask*, because God wants to give you the Spirit. I know it has been taught, and it is right teaching, that the gift of the Spirit is not to be treated as automatic; but I can say certainly from scripture that it is God's desire for you that you should have the Spirit. And He gives His Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11: 13), and He gives His Spirit to those who obey Him, Acts 5: 32. In the glad tidings what is being looked for is obedience to the word of God. "Believe on the Lord Jesus and **thou shalt be saved**", Acts 16: 31. Just be obedient to that! It is no more complicated than that.

Romans sets it out thus: "... believe in thine heart that God has raised him from among the dead", chap 10: 9. Just believe it; it is as simple as that. The only thing that stands between you and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour is your own will. There is

nothing else in the way. Forsake your own will. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the ways of death", Prov 14: 12. But I am not preaching death; we preach blessing and salvation and life eternal. God says through Moses, "I set before you this day a blessing and curse" (Deut. 11: 26) - referring to mount Gerizim and mount Ebal. Moses refers again to blessing and cursing in Deuteronomy 30, and he does not say choose between them: he says, "choose then life" (v 19), and that is the message of the glad tidings: "choose then life". Believe on the Lord Jesus, accept the gift of the Holy Spirit, receive the Holy Spirit; give Him place in your life. When it tells us about it in type about the place that the Spirit has in Numbers 21, it speaks, "Well which princes digged, which the nobles of the people hollowed out at the word of the lawgiver, with their staves", v 18. You have to make way for the Spirit; there is a hollowing out. You have to get rid of things; you need to make way for the Holy Spirit, but what blessing there is in doing so. "He has poured out this", Peter says, "which ye behold and hear", Acts 2: 33. You can see the effect of the Spirit in persons; you can hear the effect of the Spirit in persons: a divine Person is waiting to have place with you.

We referred to Romans 8 in the reading; and I want to mention this word, "He who, yea, has not spared his own Son ... how shall he not also with him grant us all things?". What are these "all things"? Well, the Lord Jesus Himself says to the Father, "the glory that thou hast given me I have given them", John 17: 22. That is the glory of sonship. He speaks in Romans of having your fruit unto holiness, chap 6: 22. Holiness, we have been taught, is by love; it is not conferred; it is not given. Holiness comes by the experience of the love of divine Persons. So that is another thing that God would grant us. And He would grant us light. You may have heard your brethren talk about light, and you might think that is something for older persons. It is not. Light is sovereign: it is a gift from God. The very fact that you believe on the Lord Jesus is light in itself, saving light, blessing light. God delights to reveal more and more and more of His thoughts to us. The Spirit receives of the things of Christ and announces them to us, John 16: 15. It speaks in 1 Corinthians 2 of the things "which God has prepared for those that love him", v 9. What has God prepared for you? Well, the Lord has prepared a place for you. God has prepared Scripture for you. The Spirit empowered those who wrote these verses that we have in our hands. He has prepared a place for you, not just in glory but here, a place amongst believers. It is not for me to tell believers where to go, but I will tell you with absolute certainty that I believe that I am in the

place where the Lord would have *me* to be. I would encourage you to remain with those where the Lord has set you. It is for your blessing; it is for God's glory.

So, "how shall he not also with him grant us all things?". You have everything with Christ; you have nothing without Him. There is not something worth having that does not involve Him. I just leave that with you.

And then these words of encouragement: "It is God who justifies: who is he that condemns?". The enemy will condemn you; he will tell you that you have not done a very good job. And he will certainly cause you to make mistakes if he can, and then when you have made them he will remind you about them. But we have the Spirit who provides power to resist: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you", James 4: 7. It also says in scripture "youthful lusts flee", 2 Tim 2: 22. It does not say avoid them: it says, "flee". If you stand still they will catch you. Flee! It is important. We need to learn to flee from things that are harmful. It takes some of us a lot longer than it should, and I am speaking about myself not about anybody else. We need to learn to flee from what is harmful.

"It is Christ who has died, but rather has been also raised up; who is also at the right hand of God; who also intercedes for us". As the Spirit is helping us here on earth so Christ is interceding for us in heaven. There is a whole blessed system of divine supply and power active for your blessing. What has God withheld? There is nothing now separating us from the love of Christ; or separating us from the love of God. Paul comes to it that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, or from the love of God. He goes through a process in Romans 8, in the latter half of the chapter. Firstly he says, "I reckon". The reckoning involves intelligence. You think about something and you say, 'Yes, that must be true'. I reckon. Then he says, "I know". So that means he has proved it. He has proved it to be true. But then he says, "I am persuaded". It is a great thing to be persuaded, to be sure. And do you know how we become sure? We become sure by faith and by experience. In nearly sixty years of experience I can tell you that the Lord has never let me down once. I have let Him down, but He has never let me down.

A believer called George Matheson wrote:

O love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee.

I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

So much He has given for us. What are we going to give to Him? That is why I read in Romans 12. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice": that is what God is looking for. We read of the compassions of God, the God who gave His Son, the God who poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit - the writer is saying now, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice ... which is your intelligent service". The Spirit is the One who gives us power for intelligent service. "And be not conformed to this world"; the world. It is interesting and worth noticing that the world desperately desires that nobody should be required to conform to anything: you should do whatever you like. But actually conformity to the world is exactly that; it is doing your own will, and that is what is involved here: "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind". We are given the capacity to think differently by the gift of the Spirit. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind". And if we exercise the gift of the Spirit to help us in how we think we come to what it says in Ephesians 4: 23, "renewed in the spirit of your mind". It is not only that you have the capacity to think differently, but characteristically you think differently from the world, and that is a wonderful thing. "Renewed in the spirit of your mind": what a blessing.

Well, "that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God". At no point does it say that the will of God will give you an easy life. But it is good and it is acceptable and it is perfect. The Lord Jesus is the example in that as He is in everything else. He loved the will of God. He says that through the psalmist, "thy law is within my heart", Ps 40: 8. He found it acceptable even when it came to the matter of the cross. He says, "not my will, but thine be done", Luke 22: 42. God's will was acceptable to Him despite the cost. And for Him the will of God was perfect. He says, "I do always the things that are pleasing to him", John 8: 29.

Well, I trust that we may be encouraged and blessed for the glory of God and for His Name's sake.

Edinburgh

27th March 2022

INSTRUCTION

A John E Temple

Psalm 32: 1, 2; 42: 7; 45: 6, 7; 88: 1 (to "... salvation"); 89: 52

You may have noticed one word that is in all that we have read: in the heading of each of the five psalms is the word "instruction". I am not thinking in this preaching to speak of instruction as such. I desire to speak of something regarding the gospel, God's glad tidings, from such psalms. It was probably the second scripture read that set my mind in this direction, coupled with the first one. There are other psalms of instruction as we may well know. If you want a list of them all, note *d* to Daniel 11: 35 in Mr Darby's translation gives them. There is no doubt a purpose in that they are called this; but I will take a few minutes to speak of things that are in them.

We will begin with Psalm 32. This is the first of these thirteen psalms of instruction. The first two verses that we have read are therefore the first verses you get as you are reading through these psalms. I find it very attractive and appealing that they come into this psalm of instruction. In these psalms particularly marked out for instruction, the very first thing we are told is -

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered!

Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah reckoneth not iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no guile!

Dear friends, dear brethren, in one sense, there is no need to read another scripture in the preaching of the gospel. But how is it that there are persons who are blessed in these ways? Psalm 32: 1 and 2 give us the place, give us the position, blessed position, of someone who has had their transgressions forgiven; someone whose sin has been covered; someone to whom God is not reckoning iniquity; and someone whose spirit has been so claimed that there is no guile in it. Man naturally is never entirely free from guile.

It is through the gospel that there are persons such as you and me whose transgression is forgiven. What a great word forgiveness is in the gospel! I can think of an enquiring soul, a person who is seeking, reading these verses and they would say, 'That is just what I want'. May many persons come to that today! May they want to know that God has forgiven them the wrong that they have done. The attraction of the gospel is that through it a person's sin, their transgression, the things

they have done that are contrary to God's will, have been forgiven. This is put so simply here; these two verses bring out blessings that are available to persons in the gospel. Persons may be particularly affected in different ways. They see they have transgressed. They see their sins are standing out against them, that they have done this wrong and that wrong and this is a transgression, and that is a transgression. They can put the whole matter together as transgression. There is nothing they can do to rub those sins out, to remove any of those sins from their list, not one thing. In the gospel, they can be told that it can all be forgiven. Then we have those whose sin is covered. What is before them is that all their sin is covered, not as an ordinary man might try to cover things, cover them up, retrace his steps, make things look good. The answer is that divine covering is there in the gospel. Sins are never to be brought up again. Right at the beginning of these psalms of instruction, we are taught about a man against whom God is not going to bring matters up, to whom God reckons not iniquity. All his past has been met and God has assured him; and, too, we read "in whose spirit there is no guile". That man, so changed from what he was, has come into the blessing of the gospel. Can I find it, what is the way?

As I said, Psalm 42 was the psalm that probably led me into this, but I must say over the years I have always found Psalm 32 is so attractive as the beginning of the psalms of instruction. We move on to the second book of Psalms. We have the words here -

Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy cataracts;
all thy breakers and thy billows are gone over me.

I just want to take up this beautiful expression to show an appreciation of what the Lord Jesus had to go through. The Lord Jesus had to face all things. We have just been speaking in Psalm 32 of persons whose position has entirely been cleared. It is not half their sins forgiven or anything like that: it has all been met. Here we get in Psalm 42 -

all thy breakers and thy billows are gone over me.

I take it that the "all" is covering billows as well as breakers. It is as if I read that all God's breakers and all His billows have gone over the Lord Jesus. All was needed for man to come into blessing, for us to be numbered among those of whom we read in Psalm 32; and all has been met by the Lord Jesus, by the one Man, the only Man who could meet all sin, the only One who could bear all things, bear all God's judgment upon sin: yea, you and I could bear none of God's judgment upon sin. He bore it all.

The bearing of God's judgment upon sin all fell upon the Lord Jesus. Many sinners have been forgiven, forgiven their sins, forgiven their transgressions, forgiven their iniquities.

Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy cataracts.

The picture used is one that we can depict: "Deep calleth unto deep", but "at the noise of thy cataracts", what tumbling, what flooding, what a scene where a man finds it difficult to escape. "Deep calleth unto deep": that gives me a picture of the breakers and billows that are referred to, beyond the noise of "thy cataracts", the tumbling of waters. Deep unto deep is like the waves and the billows meeting together. The whole point is to give a picture of that which is intense. This was written in the psalms long before the Lord Jesus came here. He was to have the reality of God's judgment upon sin in those three hours of darkness.

There was what He had borne from men in the hours before that. We were reading locally a few weeks ago of the Lord's sufferings at the hands of men at the time of His trial and the time on the cross when men heaped all they could upon Him. In Matthew's gospel one thing that affects me is the way that men were so joined together in their railing against the Lord Jesus, in the reproaches there were. We get in Matthew 27: 41, 42, "in like manner the chief priests also, mocking, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save". Verse 44 says, "And the robbers also who had been crucified with him cast the same reproaches on him". It struck me years ago that all kinds of men were absolutely against the Lord Jesus: those of great position, the chief priests, scribes, and elders, and these robbers, who had been crucified, all casting the same reproaches on the Lord Jesus. Only the day before those chief priests would not even have deigned to speak to these two robbers. The robbers were probably already in prison and it would have been beneath the priests' dignity to be found in conversation with them saying the same thing. You come to the cross and the hatred of man was energised by Satan: they say the same things. This is such a demonstration of what is in the heart of man naturally. None can elect themselves out.

Thanks be to God for what He has done in bringing believers in as those in Psalm 32 of whom it could be said that they are blessed. The work of the Lord Jesus took place on the cross. In the three hours of darkness, it was God's judgment. It was no longer man's judgment, no longer man's feeling against Him, or mockery of 'Why is He not saving Himself?'. All is God's judgment; He bore it all. He bore all that

was needed. He bore it completely; there is no more judgment left to the sinner who repents and God can come out in blessing. He comes out in forgiveness now to sinners who repent. I am not overlooking what lay beyond the three hours. The Lord Jesus still had to go into death. After His death there was the shedding of His blood. If the blessing were to come to me, two things were needed in regard of the blood. No one could speak more poignantly of it than these two scriptures: the one is, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin", 1 John 1: 7. The other one is, "knowing that ye have been redeemed, not by corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation handed down from your fathers, but by precious blood", 1 Pet 1: 18, 19. The apostle Peter could speak of the blood that redeems, and the preciousness of the way we have been redeemed. There was the ignominy and the shame upon the Lord Jesus, but then we see the preciousness of all that God has brought about. All this is in the way that man comes into blessing by repentance and receiving God's forgiveness. Christ went into death and was buried. Thus the order of man that had stood out against God has been dealt with. The witness is that sin had been met by the blessed Lord Jesus Himself who vicariously went into death, was buried, and remained in the tomb for three days and three nights.

What a gospel has since been preached, and with what power it was preached so soon after the Lord Jesus had gone on high - how worthy He is of His place on high! And the Holy Spirit has come. On that day of Pentecost what power there was in Peter's preaching and thousands were saved. We do not hear of this happening today, but it may well be that in total today over the face of this globe there will similarly be thousands who will be saved. It is the same gospel today as Peter preached. It is the same Jesus who is proclaimed as Saviour.

After speaking of the One through whom men can be blessed with the forgiveness of their iniquities, and can be cleansed altogether, we come to Psalm 45, and I call our attention in these verses, which are also quoted at the beginning of Hebrews -

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;
a sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

What announcement follows? It is about the blessed One of whom we have been speaking -

Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness.

Think of the wonder that a Man could walk through this scene so

blessed, so blessedly perfect and glorious. This was He who in a scripture we well know said, “thou hast prepared me a body”, Heb 10: 5. Think of the One who came into that body, took up that body. The One who altogether loved righteousness, the One who altogether hated wickedness, the One who indeed at one point says,

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Ps 22: 1)

is now the Object of proclamation here -

therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy companions.

God has marked Him out; He is raised from among the dead, ascended on high, this One is so wondrously marked out as “anointed thee with the oil of gladness”. There is a triumph in that. It is indeed a triumph, not so much a victory march, but what God has delighted to do in regard of Christ, anointing Him with the oil of gladness. With what gladness, speaking reverently, God has anointed Christ: “the oil of gladness above thy companions”. The setting in that way is wondrous, “above thy companions”. He is not alone. There are many persons like those in Psalm 32: 1, 2, now amongst His companions. Do I appreciate His present place? Am I thankful He has led me in to be counted amongst those in Psalm 32? Am I in His praise?

God loves to give the Holy Spirit, and does give Him to those who obey Him (Acts 5: 32), thus giving power, giving hope to enjoy, to appreciate the present place of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a way has been opened up to us through the gospel.

I turn to Psalm 88. I just read these five words below the heading of the Psalm:-

Jehovah, God of my salvation.

I do not want to negate what I have just said as to divine triumph in Psalm 45; however, the setting of this psalm and the wording of it is essentially negative. For example,

I have cried by day and in the night before thee.

Let my prayer come before thee; incline thine ear unto my cry.

For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh to Sheol,

v 1-3.

As if restrained, he says, “Thou has laid me in the lowest pit”, v 6. All is negative: it goes on for eighteen verses to the ending - “my familiar friends are darkness”. I trust that we get help from that beginning, the

first five words. The psalmist, whatever else he was pleading about, however difficult things were, and though he does not know the way forward, nevertheless he has begun with “Jehovah, God of my salvation”. I think there is instruction in that. He had not lost sight of the fact that God was the God of *his salvation*, the salvation that had been bestowed upon him. God remains that to him. There may be times in our lives when we feel down or going down, as we speak; despair may come upon us. If we go through such things, may we never forget that we are attached to Him, that Jehovah is the “God of my salvation”. Let me not forget Him in that way. We can be brought through. God will open up something more. I do not want to undo what I have just been saying as to Psalm 45 for the Holy Spirit would bring us into what we spoke of there. As we make way for the Holy Spirit, He is willing to bring help in, “the Spirit joins also its help to our weakness”, Rom 8: 26. He joins His help. In that way the Holy Spirit's power is there available to preserve us from these things of nature's course that can make us down or very down. Let us not fail to resort to “Jehovah, God of my salvation”. This would cause our eyes to be uplifted above the sorrows and the exercises that are along the way.

I close with the last verse of Psalm 89. I have often wondered whether the three asterisks before the verse mean it is not part of the original Psalm. Maybe the compiler of the books of Psalms put that in at the end of the Third Book as if his conclusion was-

Blessed be Jehovah for evermore! Amen, and Amen.

Today, I take it as being part of this psalm of instruction. May we desire that our lives be marked by this, whether individually or householdly or together with fellow believers, that our pathway goes on in this way until the Lord comes,

Blessed be Jehovah for evermore! Amen, and Amen.

May the Lord bless the word for His Name's sake.

Buckhurst Hill

6th February 2022

CONTINUING

Eddie C Muggleton

We are increasingly made to feel that we are now in "the last days," of which the apostle Paul speaks in his second epistle to Timothy (chap 3), where he reminds us that difficult times shall come. We are not to expect the path to become easier. Indeed, it increasingly becomes a test as to whether we are really prepared in fidelity of heart to the Lord to continue to the end.

In this connection we may well note the apostle's final word to Timothy. Having sorrowfully to unfold much that is connected with the last days (a witness indeed to the public ruin of the church) he exhorts to continue. "Continue thou", he says, "in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them", 2 Tim 3: 14 KJV. Support and power for the testimony will be proved as we continue.

Hence the apostle reminds us, being himself about to depart, how *he* had continued, and that in spite of Demas having forsaken him and Alexander doing him much evil. He is able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith", chap 4: 7 KJV. The earnest desire of his heart for Timothy was that he should be found continuing in the same path.

Such conditions remind us of Elijah and Elisha's day, 2 Kings 2. It is interesting to note that we have not there the twelve tribes, or even two, but two men only who are prepared to go on to the end. In the face of the outward apostasy and public failure Elisha says to Elijah, "I will not leave thee. And they two went on", v 6 KJV.

How encouraging for us in our day! If things were even reduced to two in a locality it would still be possible for us to go on if we are morally with the Lord. For does not scripture say, "For where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them", Matt 18: 20?

What a joy it was to the Lord Jesus to look round on the few disciples at the close of His pathway here, and say of them, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations", Luke 22: 28 KJV.

Such a path must involve sacrifice, and may lead to suffering. May we all be encouraged to continue to the end, "looking stedfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith: who, in view of the joy lying

before him, endured the cross, having despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God", Heb. 12: 2. Continuance is the test.

May the Lord give us all grace to continue.

Thornton Heath

From *Goodly Words* 1932

NEARING HOME

Joseph Pellatt

Nearer home, yes, one day nearer,
 To our Father's house on high,
And His love is growing dearer
 As the days glide swiftly by.
Sorrow's storm will soon be over,
 Tempests never more will come,
Tents no more will form our cover,
 We shall dwell in peace at home.

"Yet a little while" He's coming!
 We have got His promise sure;
Patience waits, while love is yearning
 For His presence in the air.
Sleeping ones will rise immortal,
 Living we shall changed be;
Then caught up through glory's portal,
 We shall all our Saviour see.

"As He is" in all His glory
 His own image we shall bear,
From Himself learn love's sweet story,
 And His throne and kingdom share.
O what bliss! to be thus near Him,
 Satisfied His heart will be;
Filled with joy beyond all measure,
 When His glorious face we see.

21st September 1912

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