

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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JOHN 9

AEM This is a very wonderful chapter of Scripture. We often refer to the man of John 9. It is a wonderful picture of the works of the Lord Jesus bringing in a man who might not even have realised he had a need that could be met; he did not call out. It says the Lord saw him: “he saw a man blind from birth”. This man comes to know a Saviour, he comes to know a Saviour as a Prophet, as Lord and as the Son of God. What a remarkable journey in this man's soul is depicted because of the One he comes to meet.

We saw in chapter 8 the *words* of the Lord Jesus having an effect. “He that is of God hears the words of God” (v 47); they were brought there by the Lord. Now we see His *works*; how He can completely transform one, so that ultimately he comes to know the Son of God. This seems to be a very powerful example of the gospel here, that the work is all of God. The darkness around remains dark because of the non-acceptance of the Person of Christ. You get a sense that everything is coming from God's side and, as we had this morning, it glorifies the Son of God, who Himself glorifies God. We are looking at this gospel to contemplate the glory of One who became flesh (chap 1), and there are possibly few better examples of how this comes about.

RMck I was struck as it was being read, in that we had spoken about the words of the Lord Jesus last time in the previous chapter, and here we have these actions of the Lord. They are entirely consistent with each other and that can only be the Son of God. We see the confusion and the division among the Jews again continuing. We see Christ in contrast to that, the One who was “Altogether that which I also say to you”, John 8: 25. His actions were perfectly in accord with His words.

AEM It is a good reference to make to the pure consistency. I was thinking of the oblation, “fine flour mingled with oil”, Lev 2: 4. There could be no inconsistency, as another said, He was a Man, but not a mere man. My impression for a long time has been that, although a body was prepared for Him, this was not an ordinary body: He took “his place in the likeness of men”, Phil 2: 7. He took that condition so that He could draw near to men. He was not anything like any of them morally. It is a beautiful picture. I like what you say; we heard the words in chapter 8 and here we see the works and there is a consistency flowing right through.

RMcK Do you have a thought about what He says, “that the works of God should be manifested in him”?

AEM My main impression would be that it gives us a hint of the foreknowledge of divine Persons. It is not a matter of sin resulting in the government of God; that was not what had happened here. They wanted to blame the blindness on something; or say he was like this because of something. In the foreknowledge of God there was a condition here that meant that the works could be shown by coming into contact with One who was of God. We see that at the end, the Son of God. That was who He is; that was where He had come from.

RMcK It is quite challenging to think of God acting in this way, this child being born blind and then for all those years. Now, there is a demonstration to men of the greatness of God, seen in Christ, seen in Jesus, the Man. The work of God is completely above everything that was going on in man's system.

AEM The Pharisee just wanted to point a finger; they wanted to blame someone for this; we are no different. Something might happen in our lives, to our children or to one and another, and we would say, 'Well who was at fault, where did it all go wrong?'. He says here, “that the works of God should be manifested in him”. When it says, “as he passed on, he saw a man blind from birth”, this was the Creator; He knew that this was so.

DJMCK Do you think as we see the consistency of the Lord in His words and His works, we also see His consistency of position, and the rejection of what is of the world against the Lord Jesus?

AEM This is part of the darkness that “apprehended it not”, John 1: 5.

DJMCK I was thinking a little more about the bondage of the previous chapters. The response of what is under bondage or the response of sin is the same. The response to the man's words in verse 33, “If this man were not of God he would be able to do nothing”, is a consistent response against the Lord Jesus, against His Person, His word and His work. We see His Person as well later. The rejection in this scene was complete.

AEM The last verse we read links with what you are saying. The Lord says to them, “If ye were blind ye would not have sin, but now ye say, We see, your sin remains”. They did not see; they did not see the

Son of God. The only way the light of the world is going to enter into a heart is if it is open to Him personally.

DJMCK Yes, we have spoken of the works of God being made manifest. The picture of this chapter is about bringing in sight. It is about blindness, the blindness of the world. It is the darkness apprehending it not; there was that which was completely incompatible with the workings and the words of the Lord Jesus; they could never see it.

AEM No, and one thing that this scripture presents very forcefully is that light comes from the divine side. We know that in the gospel that is the case; the work in new birth that the Lord sees. Last Lord's day we spoke about "My Father working hitherto and I work" (John 5: 17), and about the Spirit then working as well; the divine initiative to bring light into this man's soul is glorious.

WBMCK What is your impression as to this day and night that are referred to in verse 4? "I must work the works of him that has sent me while it is day. The night is coming, when no one can work"?

AEM I am not sure; there will come a time when the day of grace ends. I do not know exactly when this refers to. What is your impression?

WBMCK I was wondering about it, and my first impression was that the Lord says, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" in the following verse. The light of the world is still in the world in those that represent Christ. This working is still going on; "work the works of him that has sent me while it is day" is still going on.

AEM Yes, we are still in the time of the day in that sense. In another sense in Scripture, we know that it is the night and we await the day dawn. In the sense in which the Lord is speaking, "the light of the world" was still available and is available now. There will come a time when it stops and I suppose that is the solemnity of that verse that you referred to.

WBMCK I was thinking that. What it means is, "The night is coming, when no one can work".

AEM How solemn.

WBMCK There is nothing that can be done.

AEM There is nothing in the darkness that has just been referred

to outside of Christ. There is nothing there that can help or save man.

AJMCK What is being drawn attention to helps us to see that the works of God are in a man. It is not exactly that there is a series of events that need to take place, or a series of works that need to be undertaken. If you have a big project, you have bills of works and tasks that need to be done. The works of God being manifested in man, in this man, is because of what was in Christ. There is day because of what is in Him. It is not that there are things the world has to do; it is all in Him and that is the day. The sober thing is that the night is coming and those works will stop in relation to man here upon the earth.

AEM I think that helps us a lot. What is in Christ is everything from God's side. There is an address by Mr Coates (Outline of John's gospel (vol 29) pp123-6) on exactly what you have referred to. He speaks about the Son of God being everything, and gives three reasons for that. The first is that the Father has placed within our reach One whom He Himself delights in. What a wonderful thing; that is just God's gracious act. Secondly, the Father is revealed in Him; and thirdly He will uphold all for God. If we take those three things it is all there in what you have just said. We see all that in this chapter. The Father desired that this man in John 9 should come to a knowledge of all of that.

AJMCK It is a picture for us of the moral condition of the race: blind. Jesus takes account of that. He has taken account of the moral condition of the race and in Him the works of God are there, and they are to be manifested; that is His desire.

AEM Yes, so a blind man could absorb nothing of this world. He has no hope, and yet he can come into the glory of the full knowledge of the Son of God.

AJMCK That is "the works of him that has sent me".

EMCK Does it link with what was referred to this morning as to, "For in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily", Col 2: 9?

AEM I think it does.

EMCK I am impressed by the scope of this chapter. Here was One this man could say, "A man called Jesus" One who came so near, and yet the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell bodily in Him.

AEM What you say is so important to grasp. "The fulness of the Godhead"; one of the verses of Scripture says was pleased to dwell in

him “bodily”, and here we see it. He was not just a man, speaking reverently, doing good things. It was not just a man doing incredible things. It was One in whom “all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell” (Col 1: 19), and thus it makes the responsibility of the Pharisee and the darkness that was in the Pharisees’ hearts so dreadful. A blind man could come to know the One in whom all that fulness dwelt.

ARH I was thinking that it is a simple statement: “I am the light of the world”, but it is so profound. The way it is drawn attention to as to the “I am” should not be lost on us; all that is in that statement and the declaration that there is of God and His love. Then He goes on to works. What we have said as to the Lord Jesus and His words and His actions is all part of the “I am”. Then He goes on to undertake works that bring persons to God.

AEM That is what we contemplate: “we have contemplated his glory”, John 1: 14. Again the question comes, have I really contemplated the glory? We saw at the end of the last chapter, “Before Abraham was, I am”, v 58.

TWL The works of God should be manifested. The works of God are not merely relief. The works of God are so that a person has the capacity to see the moral excellence of Jesus, to see the One who is the effulgence of the glory of God. We sometimes think about God moving to relieve us of guilt, but actually these works of God relate to glory, not guilt.

AEM I think that is very helpful. It chimes with what we have been saying, that knowing Him as Saviour was just the first step. He said, “A man called Jesus”.

AJMcK Is that why the ointment is placed on his eyes? Literally the condition was made worse, outwardly. This was really in order that his occupation should be with what belonged to a scene of glory. He was not going to be diverted by what he saw around him. The ointment was necessary to completely finish anything relating to the earthly scene in view of what was heavenly.

AEM Yes, I think so. Because of that his obedience to the One who commanded him is brought out. The pool was called “Siloam” which means ‘sent’. The Lord Himself was sent. This man too was obedient to the One who asked him to go and wash; Jesus was the One who had stooped, as we saw at the beginning of the last chapter; and

here He stooped and made mud on the earth that His own hands had made. That brings the blind man to what has been referred to, into a condition where the glory of God, the glory of the Son of God, can fill his heart.

TWL We often think about this sort of thing as the disciples did, “who sinned, this man or his parents ... ?”. Would it be right to think about this that God had over-ruled that this man had been blind all his life, until Jesus was there? He was born this way. Then He opened his eyes.

AEM Do you think by way of application the thought of household baptism for us is similar?

TWL Yes, we come into line with that in our households, or should do. It strikes me that this man had not missed things by not being able to see them. He had never missed what he did not know existed. God protected him for Himself.

AEM Yes. We could say on the evidence of this chapter that He not only did not miss anything; he now had more than those who could see.

WBMcK The mud of itself would do nothing. It would be tempting in man's viewpoint to read this and say we will go and get some more of this mud and cure more blindness. Similarly with the woman with the flux of blood, she touched the hem of His garment; it was nothing about the garment exactly. It was the contact with the Lord Jesus that was the thing that cured.

AEM I think so. One very important element as to this mud was that it said that “he spat on the ground and made mud of the spittle”. Others have said that speaks of the essence of the One who was here Himself, stooping. He gave Himself.

DAB Do you think this was really the blind man getting a personal impression of the glorious incoming of the Lord Jesus stooping into manhood. It began there, and what it led on to was these impressions, as they grew with the glorious greatness of the Person before him, but it began with a personal impression of the stoop of this glorious Man into manhood.

AEM What has been referred to here about the man having been blind is a remarkable thing. When they talked to him in verse 11, he says, “A man called Jesus made mud”. He did not actually see that.

What he knew was that what had been done for him involved the Person of Christ effecting something that changed his life forever; that is what we have in the gospel. The preacher can say that He died for me.

DAB Drawing the thoughts together that we have had in the reading, this man was becoming a lantern. We speak of “the light of the world”. The Lord is now on high; what remains are the lanterns; the light is there. The One who is the Light of the world had established a lantern, someone who could shine for Him. That is available to this day.

AEM That is good. We have referred a couple of times through this gospel to the scripture that speaks of “the God ... who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth”, 2 Cor 4: 6. That is what happened with this man. It is only not 'shone *into*', but there was something in this man now that was his; the light he had for shining, for testimony really.

ARH I was wondering if that relates to the words, “and came seeing”. There were many that were healed that were satisfied and went away. We have thought of that recently, but here is one who had such an impression of the Lord that he returned to Him and he “came seeing”. That was really the commencement of that lantern for the Lord that would be left here as testimony, do you think?

AEM It is an immediate answer to the work, an immediate answer to the activity of the Lord Jesus. It is powerful because there is nothing that stops this man. Nothing stops him testifying according to the limit of the light he had, which grows and grows and grows through the chapter.

DJMCK This starts with obedience as well. There is what the Lord does sovereignly, and then the man is obedient to the word that he has been given.

AEM There is a lot of meaning in that, but I like this little reference in verse 8, “The neighbours therefore, and those who used to see him before”; they see something different now. There would also be those who had seen him walk down to the pool with mud all over his eyes.

RMCK We should not underestimate how difficult that was. I do not think I have noticed it before. It is a good comment about his obedience; he was blind: how did he get there? That was not easy.

AEM There is a compulsion about this. He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam”, and then he comes back. The Lord does not take

him there.

RMcK There is a committal on his part to follow what the Lord instructed him to do.

DAB Do you think it shows something of the spirit of the blind man in Jericho, who calls Jesus Son of David? It says that “many rebuked him, that he might be silent; but he cried so much the more”, Mark 10: 48. He would not be satisfied; he would have an interaction with the Lord.

RMcK As we see coming out in the rest of the chapter, there is not only the obedience and preparedness to go that way for himself for his own benefit, but also acknowledging that the works of God were being made manifest.

AJMcK I was thinking of what Paul says to the Colossians, “If ye have died with Christ from the elements of this world”, chap 2: 20. That is really what happened to this man. As to how he reached the pool we do not know. I was thinking about his willingness and his obedience to go out and wash. He died with Christ; it is really morally what he went through. I wonder if that is what prepares him to be that light bearer, that lantern. That glory then finds a resting place in this man as a result of dying “with Christ from the elements of the world”. I was thinking about the neighbours and the Pharisees; all this turmoil and activity happens all around him, but he grows in his understanding of the Lord, and he seems to pass through it all.

AEM I think he immediately becomes, what has been referred to, a lamp. It does not tell us who took him. Provision would have been made to honour his obedience and he reached the pool. It might have been quite challenging. The lamp is already starting to attract those who were around him. They do not understand it. There is opposition. It is already starting to attract. It is the same light, from the same source.

RMcK I was struck when it was being read as to his parents. I am not sure I had noticed that before. Everything of the world, the natural links that he had and the religious links with the synagogue and the Jewish system, had all been superseded. It describes him as being a beggar. Then his parents come and they do not take any responsibility. They are not prepared to answer properly in case they offend the Jews; everything around him had rejected him.

AEM That is the sorrowful condition of man, currently. It was then and it is now. This world can do nothing for the soul of the sinner. He moves on; and just before they call his parents, he says of the Lord, “He is a prophet”. He is not quite there yet, but he has moved on. He says, “He is a prophet”, that is, one who brings in the word of God. Immediately they had a use for his parents; they did not call his parents before. Now they say, 'Now we will catch him, because someone else can be to blame for this'. What darkness there is in the world, but nothing is stopping this man moving on in his knowledge of God.

RMcK He has already spoken about him as “A man called Jesus”. We are not told how he knew His name. He knew “A man called Jesus”; “He is a prophet”.

AEM The name Jesus means Saviour, and he knew Him as such. Now he says, “He is a prophet”. Something was starting to stir in his affections after this Man who had wrought such a wonderful gift.

MAB I was thinking of the actions required not just in this section here, but in the previous chapter as well: “go, and sin no more”, John 8: 11. There is always an action required after interaction with the Lord Jesus. It does not just happen; there is no healing without a response.

AEM Having to do with the Lord always brings about responsibility; I always think that in the gospel. We always say there is nothing to do; that is not true. There is nothing to pay: that is true. There is always something to do; it may be to be obedient. It is certainly to repent, and then it brings us into what is the answer. This man was starting to answer.

MAB We see the need for action throughout John. Elsewhere too, we have “thy faith has made thee well”, Luke 17: 19.

AEM It is active faith. We spoke about belief last Lord's day, believing. That is faith in operation, starting to respond to the light that is coming in.

ARH I have been thinking about what has been said about the verse, “made mud of the spittle, and put the mud, as ointment, on his eyes. And he said to him, Go, wash”. Sometimes there has been great exercise for individuals in coming to the Lord, perhaps in difficulty. The early chapters of Romans teach us as to what may happen in going through coming to the Lord; but then this man sees and the blessing is all there for him. It is something to encourage us when we might see

someone that is perhaps seeking their way; and to help them to come to the Person as the man does here.

AEM I think that would keep our affections very soft to hold what you have spoken of in our hearts. It is sometimes even worse for those who have once believed, with everything that comes on top of them as they seek to get back to the One that they once knew. That is hard. Pride enters into it, and the diversion of the world and all these things. It is a case of coming to the fact as we have here, "One thing I know"; to come to that point. You start to realise. Let us not look at other people; let us look at ourselves. We have to come back to "One thing I know"; before we were blind, and then we could see.

ARH I think it is a crucial thing that if there should be one thing we know that will always keep us; it is that I know that the Lord is my Saviour. You can always come back to that, no matter where you might find yourself in life. Hold it in your heart.

AEM The point of departure is the point of recovery. If we get away from the fact that we have One who is our Saviour that is always where we can come back to.

DAB Is that true in the lamp? I was reflecting on that parable. They all fell asleep, "all grew heavy and slept", Matt 25: 5. The wise ones were able to trim their lamps; they were able to go back to what they knew. They were able to touch a faith they had and by applying the oil the lights burned brighter, they shone. I was just thinking about what has been said in relation to work: we need to trim our lamps. That is how the light stays bright. The Lord is the source of the light, but to maintain lights in the world our lamps need trimming.

AEM Trimming is needed, and we need that supply of the oil. I think what you say is helpful. That was not necessarily how it was with this man, but what we are speaking of is most definitely true. We know what it is in our daily lives that we have to take care. We cannot just play fast and loose; we have to take care of the lamp; and do you think the more we see the preciousness of the glory of the Son of God, the more we know Him as a Saviour and a Prophet and as Lord, the more we want to do so?

DAB I think so; it is just the simplicity of getting back to what we know. Sometimes it is detrimental to over-complicate, and try and get further than that one thing. We get like the Galatians, puzzled and confused, and the light begins to dim. They look as if they are doing the

right thing, but trimming the lamps is getting back to what is known in the heart in relation to the Man in the glory.

AEM This man stuck to that “One thing I know”. It is as if he said, 'You can call my parents; you can say what you like, but I know, I know this'; and what a light it was. He had never been able to see, and now he is suddenly able to see, and see the glory of Christ; what a change that was.

TWL I know it is different but I was just looking at Paul's conversion; I know it is unique. It is very interesting that he was *made* blind. The scripture in Acts 26 says, “And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, *I* am Jesus whom *thou* persecutest: but rise up and stand on thy feet; for, for this purpose have I appeared to thee, to appoint thee to be a servant and a witness both of what thou hast seen, and of what I shall appear to thee in, taking thee out from among the people”, v 15-17. I wonder if all that links with what was said about the pool of Siloam: “taking thee out from among the people, and the nations, to whom *I* send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive remission of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me”, v 17, 18. In this context, this man in John 9 did the same thing.

AEM That is a good reference. We can never overstate that we are *not* changing what is in this world to make it brighter. This is a different source altogether and that required Saul of Tarsus to become blind, so that he needed the touch of a brother to help him see, Acts 9: 17.

TWL Yes, and the Lord appears to him, “*I* am Jesus”. This man says, “A man called Jesus”. He ends up with the Lord saying, “dost thou believe on the Son of God?”. Paul says, “in that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God”, Gal 2: 20. That is how he puts it. We begin with a Man who died for us, and we live in the power of the Son of God.

AEM I think that is where this chapter takes us and there are steps on the way. It is inexorable. The Lord is not going to leave him alone until he gets there.

DJMcK I was just wondering about that. There was no chance of this man falling back again. We have the words of the Pharisees they asked him again: he says, “I told you already and ye did not hear”.

There was something in that man now that was completely different to the scene around. The Lord would not allow him to be swallowed back up into the systems of men.

AEM And when he was cast out, the Lord went and found him. It says in verse 35, “Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him, he said to him, Thou, dost thou believe on the Son of God?”. His answer is, “And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?”. I think it is vital, and probably links to the trimming of the lamps, that we have this constant experience of the Lord’s claim on us.

DJMcK Yes, this man had his view broadened only by experience with the Lord. It does not say he went off to find out more about Jesus, but personal relationship with the Lord is the way his view was formed, and his lamp was burning brighter because of that relationship.

AEM I think we know what that is like. I was thinking of the example of Mary and Martha in Bethany. When the Lord came there He says of Mary she had “chosen the good part” (Luke 10: 42), and that is because she sat at the feet of the Lord. Martha was not doing anything wrong when it says she had become “distracted with much serving”, v 40. That is easy to do. This man here wants to know, “who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?”. In that sense he maybe sat at the feet of Jesus, morally. It is not that there was anything wrong with Martha serving, but she needed as it were to trim her lamp a little.

DAB It was said the Lord would not allow the world to swallow the man up again; the world had no interest in having Him either. I was thinking of what you get later on in John: “In the world ye have tribulation; but be of good courage: I have overcome the world”, chap 16: 33. The Lord meets that too.

AEM He does and He is sufficient for all of it. I like your suggestion that the Lord knows what is needed. He knows what is needed to get us to an appreciation of Himself, to get us to the end of verse 38, “and he did him homage”. We start from verse 1: “he saw a man blind from birth”. If we are thinking of the Lord as having foreknowledge He had that in mind before that.

DAB I was interested when it was read: it says, “**he** saw”. The disciples may have imagined that they drew the Lord’s attention to Him, but by the time John writes his gospel he understands that the Lord had seen the blind man first and, and that is what we need to take account of. He saw me.

AEM I think that, and He says, “For judgment am I come into this world, that they which see not may see”. How simple.

ARH It seems quite precious to me that at verse 12, “They said therefore to him, Where is he? He says, I do not know”. “Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him”: He came to him. He had been healed here, and he had an impression as to Jesus having made him well, made him to see. He did not know where He was, and then he goes through this exercise in testimony. I was thinking of the scene that he is walking through: “They bring him who was before blind to the Pharisees”. They took him back to the scene that he had been extricated from. He goes through all of that, and then having heard that he was cast out then the Lord Jesus comes back to him. From not knowing where He was, he had part with Him.

AEM I love that; you think of the heart of the Lord there showing forth the love of the Father for this man. He finds him; He does not just comfort him and say it will all be fine. He asks him this immense question: “dost thou believe on the Son of God?”. What a question. He had just been left on his own. The Lord does not say, 'Well, you are just going to have to live knowing me as Lord and being obedient'. What He says is, 'I am going to show you the glory of the Son of God'.

TWL That is John's epistle: “Who is he that gets the victory over the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God”, 1 John 5: 5. It is fulness of power.

AEM Everything is there in the Son of God. This is not presenting Him as the Son of man now making a claim on all men; this is what He is for the Father.

TWL Yes, and it is the Man for the Father, that overcame the world. He overcame the entire circumstance in which He lived on account of His love for the Father. It is quite a thing to get hold of, and then He passes that to us. Going back to a comment made earlier in relation to this, this man becomes a person of faith and he operates by “the faith of the Son of God”, and subsequently he is able to overcome all of these things, his circumstance, the neighbours, family, everything. He overcomes everything by rallying to the Son of God.

AEM I am sure that is right. Does it not leave you wanting to know what the work of God really became in him? If he learnt this much in this short space of time, how much did he then learn as coming to know the Son of God? It is open to us.

AJMcK The Lord finding this man in verse 35 continues, “the works of him that has sent me”. It was for this man that the Lord was preparing a place: “for I go to prepare you a place”, John 14: 2. He has prepared a place for us, and He has prepared a place for this man. It is “the works of him that has sent me”. The Lord was occupied with what was for the Father and it involved opening up the glory of the Son of God.

AEM I think so, and this was before He went to the cross. It starts to illuminate other Scriptures. The centurion by the cross said, “Truly this man was Son of God”, Mark 15: 39. That is what the testimony is to. It helps me to constantly elevate the thought of who He was. We can easily bring it down, and that is true in the terms that He was a Man and the incarnation and so on. He stooped as we saw here to make the mud, but He is Son of God. That is where the Father wants me to hold Him in my knowledge.

Witney

2022

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GOD'S PLAN

Neil C McKay

Genesis 3: 1-19

Psalms 22: 1-3

1 Peter 2: 4-8

Luke 22: 54-62

I have been thinking a little of God's great thoughts and of man's weakness and inability. It is a wonderful thing to see that God has great plans and is not going to deviate from them - nothing that He does needs to be undone or changed. Everything that God does, as Ecclesiastes says, shall be forever, chap 3: 14. Every single thing that God does works towards to His own end. The intrusion of sin into the world appeared to hinder or deny those plans, but it only served to bring out what God was.

The mystery of God has meant that God has allowed sin to operate in the world. It could never have operated in the world had God not allowed it. God has allowed sin to operate in order to bring out who He is and the greatness of His plans. They involve the salvation of men. The initial thing for you is the salvation of your soul: that you should be part of God's great plan. God does not desire that any should be lost, but "that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth", 1 Tim 2: 4. It does not say that God willed *that*, because if God willed that all men should be saved then all men *would* be saved, but He *desires* it. That is, He has left something to you. He will be justified by persons who have been deep in sin, yet acknowledge that God is right and that they are wrong. Part of God's plan is that you should come to it that you have been wrong and you have been a sinner, that you are lost in your sins and that God has been right all along. If you repent before God, and come to an acknowledgement of your sins, you will come to God's way of salvation; that is what God desires.

We read in Genesis 3 about the incoming of sin through the serpent - when sin entered into the human race. We also see God's answer to the whole matter: in everything that entered in through Adam we see the answer in Christ. The world is so accustomed to sin; it has been extant since its inception in Adam when sin came into the world, and every man, woman and child is affected by it. People think that it is normal, that this is the way the world should be, and that what we

should do is to make it better. God does not have that plan at all! He does not intend to *improve* persons, living in a condition of sin which brings about illness, sadness, grief, corruption and violence. He has no plan to make it a little less violent or sinful, but rather to remedy the whole situation by bringing in - not Adam - but Christ. Adam was set in the garden, in the most beneficial conditions. There was nothing that Adam needed that he did not have. He had one commandment - that he should not eat of the tree in the midst of the garden. Adam had to be given that restriction otherwise he would not have been in responsibility; God could never have accomplished His purposes in man as apart from responsibility. God wanted man in intelligence, to understand God and be intelligent and responsible. He could have kept man as a creature without responsibility, but that was not His mind. One thing Adam was given to keep, and that one thing he failed in.

And so God sent another Man. That is, He sent Christ from the waters of baptism. God sent out His Man, and in contrast to Adam, He was put in the most difficult of conditions, and in these He wholly obeyed God. He was perfect - another kind of Man; that is, He was God manifest in flesh. "In him" 1 John says, "sin is not", chap 3: 5. Satan came to Him immediately after the waters of baptism and said, 'Does the scripture not say?'. He called God into question. But *this* Man was absolutely perfect in answering that. Can you see how God had brought in the answer to everything in man's failure ? In Christ there was the answer to everything in which Adam fell.

So the serpent said to Eve, "Is it even so, that God has said, "Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?". The serpent said, as it were, 'It appears that God is withholding something from you. You may say He has given you everything but He has not given you that!', as if to say, 'How can you trust a God who does not give you everything?'. You think of that. How awful that Satan would put that seed of doubt in God's goodness into Eve, and thereby into Adam. As if man should doubt the goodness of God! How wonderful therefore that One Man came in entirely in accord with the grace of God. The scripture says grace and truth subsists through Him, John 1: 17. That is, He came in with all the goodness and grace of God and showed that forth to men. In all man's weakness, need, illness and frailty the Lord Jesus exemplified the goodness and grace of God towards man.

"And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of

the garden, God has said, 'Ye shall not eat of it, and ye shall not touch it, lest ye die.' There it was! God's righteousness, God's authority: who God is was contained in that. **God** had said to Eve, 'You shall not do this one thing', and Eve did it. She slighted the majesty and the rights of God; she denied that God was God. She went against God in what she did, as if to say, 'I do not care if God told me not to do that thing. I am going to do it anyway'. What a matter that someone, the creature that God had just created, should stand against God and say, 'I am going to eat of what you told me not to eat!' That is man; that is man in the world. Man would say, 'I do not care if God sees us or God does this. I do not even know if I believe in God'. God is to be believed, friend! God is God and man is man. It is the most frightening thing that man in the world today is going on in denial of God and who He is; it is awful. And those that believe in the Lord Jesus know how serious it is. Men do not realise the severity of it, but God will not be mocked. It is terrible that man can go on in the practical denial of who God is.

"And the serpent said to the woman, 'Ye will not certainly die'. That was not true; history has shown death to exist ever since it happened. "But God knows that in the day ye eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and ye will be as God". 'You will exalt yourself. You will have intelligence beyond what you have now.' That is what man wants, he wants this intelligence; he wants to be as God. He wants to be great, and in the end that will be the man of sin's great downfall; he will set himself up to be as God, 2 Thess 2: 3, 4. At that point, when the ultimate sin has been committed, God will come in in judgment, v 8. What a time that will be!

"And the woman saw that the tree was good for food" - she saw that it was good - "it was a pleasure for the eyes, and the tree was to be desired to give intelligence"; and she took of it. Everything that she thought was good, all the pleasure; she thought, 'I am just going to have that right now. That is me. Everything that is good and pleasurable that is what I want. I do not want to wait for it; I do not want anything that has been denied me; I am going to have everything that I want, immediately, for myself, for my own pleasure'. That is what Eve thought, and that was sin because it was going against God's command, acting for her own gratification, and not pleasing God.

Now Christ has come in: wonderful matter! Christ wholly upheld all the truth of God, everything that was due to God. He looked to God for everything; He was absolutely dependent on God. Psalm 22

and many others speak prophetically of the dependence and the holy manhood of the Lord Jesus. He came as a Man, a real Man, and obedience and dependence were what was suitable for man before God, to be dependent and obedient and acknowledge fully his place before God: "Preserve me, O God: for I trust in thee", Ps 16: 1. That is typical of Christ; He looked to God to preserve Him because of His implicit trust in God.

Psalm 22 speaks of Christ in the ultimate place of extremity. Christ was there, dear friend, on the cross, suffering for sin and sins. He Himself was perfect and sinless, but He went there for my sins and my sinful state. "He shall bear their iniquities", Isa 53: 11. He took them on Himself as a holy, perfect Man, and yet in that place where He met the whole matter of sin and sins, where God laid judgment upon Him, the sinless One, sins, even when He was forsaken of God, because of God's holy nature and the matter of dealing with sin, *even then* Christ trusted in God. Is that not wonderful? It is the most striking thing to me that in the very place where Christ was abandoned of God, and where God poured His utmost fury and wrath against sin on His body on the cross, at that very time, Christ says, "My God, I cry by day, and thou answerest not; and by night, and there is no rest for me". He trusted implicitly on God; He justified God: "And thou art holy". There was nothing except perfection in Christ. He wholly glorified God in the very place of sin. If you are a believer, then God had to deal with your sins, and He dealt with them in Christ in His body on the cross - in a Man who completely justified and glorified God. God met those sins in Christ's body on the tree. And, friend, if you have been to God in repentance and acknowledged your sins before God, repented of them and accepted Christ as your Saviour, then your sins are forgiven: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven", Ps 32: 1.

Also, as is stated in Corinthians, "Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him", 2 Cor 5: 21. The matter of *sin* has been met too: "he has made sin for us". Christ was made sin so that the whole matter of sin, as well as the matter of sins, was completely met and dealt with on the cross. What an undertaking that was. Everything depended on the value of the person of Christ and His suffering on the cross. All that He was - that holy perfect Man that was here - all depended on that sinless Man. But that transaction on the cross, friend, was a most amazing matter, that Christ came in and met every single matter that was due to God - the

holiness of God, the righteousness of God - and God glorified in regard to the whole matter of sin. Then Christ established man's place before God again forever by going into heaven .

So what we see is that the matter of Adam's sin was not simply met, but God was honoured and glorified in what Christ had done. I often wonder if someone was to say to God, 'Look at the whole history of the human race - they have all gone against you', God could simply say, 'Look at Christ. If nothing else, look at that blessed Man: see what I have got. One Man glorified Me when you tried everything against Him. The whole of mankind was against Christ, and did He let Me down one bit? Absolutely not!' He effectively said those words on the cross: "Thou art holy, thou that dwellest amid the praises of Israel". What a man! How God has been honoured and glorified by that Blessed Man.

So there is no sweep up operation. In war men may regain ground that has been bombed, and where many people have died. That is not God's way; God has achieved a victory in Christ. He has persons who were deep in sin but are now before Him in the worth of Christ.

So it says in Genesis that she gave the fruit to her husband and he ate and the eyes of both of them were opened. They sewed themselves fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. They tried to hide their nakedness and begin to excuse themselves. "Where art thou? ... I heard thy voice in the garden, and I feared, because I am naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou art naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree ... ? And Man said, The woman whom thou hast given to be with me, she gave me", immediately excusing his sin. Eve said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" - she excuses her sin. It is in contrast to Christ, the One who was lifted up on the cross in whole public view, firstly in the Jewish council and then in the place called Pavement, the Roman court, the public court, where Pilate condemned Christ, then publicly at Golgotha where Christ was crucified, raised up between heaven and earth. There was no excusing of our sin in Christ's death; sin is never excused by God. God met the matter publicly, fully and honourably in the Person of Christ. God never tries to lessen sin: He never mitigated His judgment against sin on the cross; He did not lessen that judgment because Christ was His own beloved Son. It was required that that judgment was meted out on His own beloved Son, because to do so showed the love of God. It showed who God was in its fulness.

I know there is a lot of doctrine in this preaching, and I do not apologise for that because the truth is so wonderful. The truth as to what Christ has done is liberating; it frees you. And if you are a believer already it frees you from concerns about your past sinful history, because Christ met them all. He met your sins, friend; if you believe on Him, He met your sins and He met your sinful state and He did it as a holy, blessed, dependent Man.

“Behold, I lay in Zion a corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believes on him shall not be put to shame. To you therefore who believe is the preciousness”. There are persons coming to the appreciation of the preciousness of this blessed Man. Man has a system and they took this Stone, Christ, and found that He could not fit into their system. Now, if Christ had acceded to their flattery, or to the world in any way, He could have fitted into man's world. They would then have gladly made Him king, or given Him some place in government, but God has done away with the world, friend. Man's world and God are wholly opposed; they are against each other, and there was nothing in Christ that would ever conform to the world or to sin - nothing that could ever fit into the systems of men. But God has made a system, a system which has a Cornerstone, and that Cornerstone is Christ. As everything in a building takes reference from the cornerstone, so in Gods world everything takes reference from Christ, and He gives character to it all.

God had the whole thing in mind; He *has* the whole thing in mind. He knows what the whole building is going to look like. The building is going to be exactly like the Cornerstone, exactly like Christ. Everyone who comes to Christ, friend, is going to be made like Him. It is not just a matter of forgiveness of sins; God has everything to offer you. Satan's lie was that God would withhold something, but God is not withholding anything from man. God's greatest thoughts are centred on man and He is giving great things to man. The forgiveness of sins is the first and most important thing. Without that you can know nothing of what God has in mind for you. Without faith you can know nothing of these things.

God can speak to persons even if they have not faith. There is a very interesting letter of Mr Wigram that I would recommend to you. It speaks of how God spoke to him in a tent shortly after the Battle of Waterloo. He knelt on his knees - because he had been taught to do so as a child - by the side of his camp bed in the tent and he felt a presence there that was more powerful than ever he could imagine. He felt that

while it was true and it was right he felt that that presence was not against him.. But he felt the presence of God there in that tent. God can do that, but God looks for you to have faith.

The next thing that God gives us consequent on our salvation is the gift of the Holy Spirit. He gives It to those who believe and those who ask. It is a separate transaction to the forgiveness of sins because the gift of the Spirit is so great. It is tremendous that God should give of His own Spirit to man that man might understand how God feels. Whatever the circumstances, whatever the difficulties, if you are saved God has a plan for you, and you are part of that great plan of God's. God's plan is this building. It involves the assembly; persons are being built into the assembly now. Christ is building the assembly and nothing else. The world system is going on, man carries on, but Christ is day by day building His assembly. That is the only thing He builds; He does not build any denomination; He builds persons into the assembly.

The scripture in Luke speaks of Christ, the blessed Man we are talking of, and He has not changed. We know that He did not change from boyhood into manhood. He has not changed now in glory. He is the same Man and He takes cognisance of our condition and our difficulties. He takes cognisance of our failures, and Peter fails here.

The Lord was going on to the cross; He is in the palace of the high priest and being accused by the Jews. The Lord is moving on in the will of God to the cross. And in those circumstances, does He consider for Himself as Adam did? Never did Christ consider what was for Himself or for His own will. The Lord Jesus had said to Peter, "I have besought for thee that thy faith fail not". 'Whatever happens', He says, 'your faith is not going to fail; you are going to come through, but you are going to deny me thrice'. Peter said, 'No, I am not going to deny you. I will go with you even to death. I will die; I am not going to deny you'. Then Peter denies him three times, the cock crows, and the Lord turning around looked at Peter. He did not say to Peter, 'I told you'; that is not what the Lord Jesus is. Who was the first person that the Lord Jesus appeared to in His resurrection? Peter, Luke 24: 34. He appeared first to Peter, and they had a transaction between themselves alone. It is not recorded in scripture what the Lord said to Peter on that first day; it was between Peter and the Lord.

That is the kind of Man the Lord is. Everything can be sorted out between you and the Lord: your sins all forgiven, every matter met,

everything clear before God, and a living link with a Man who lives for you and succours you. He knows that failure can come in but He will be for you and be with you all your life. It begins with the salvation of your soul, which we might say is the greatest miracle of all, that a sinner can be saved from their sins. God is doing that tonight and He is doing it to souls all over the world. God can save.

May you be one of them, for His Name's sake.

Linlithgow

11th September 2022

“CHRIST DIED”

David C Brown

1 Corinthians 15: 1-8

This scripture sets out the terms of the gospel. How wonderful that God has provided glad tidings, and glad tidings depending on ascertained *facts*. Men may come up with philosophies, their own notions and fantasies. The gospel is entirely a matter of facts. It is founded on that; it can be depended upon because of that. We read through these various things which are determined facts. There is witness to them; they are known matters; the world chooses to disregard them, but they are sound, they are things that can be depended on, and they are facts. Yet they are not mere facts, but they are matters to affect our souls. And as I was considering this scripture, these two words seemed so vital to me, “Christ died”. They are almost the two most amazing words together, that could be put together: “Christ died”. You may look through the story of mankind and ask, 'What is different? - Abel died, Adam died'. You read in Genesis about persons living to great lengths of time; they died. Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty nine years “and he died”, chap 5: 27. What is different? Christ died. Well, there are two things.

Firstly, when we think of the glory of the Person, because this is not simply an ordinary, a mere man; this is God Himself. God has come in. We read earlier today about the Babe in the manger; how wonderful. It is not simply something to affect our sentiments: God has come in. He was a Babe; He was a Man. And, of course, we have to be careful: we cannot say that God died. It was a Man that died, but it was a Man who in His Person was God. He was a Man who could go to a grave, and say to the man who was in there, “Lazarus, come forth.” (John 11: 43), and he would come forth. The whole power of death that had gripped every man, from Abel onwards, could not withstand the power of Christ. Yet, Christ died.

A second thing distinguishes this Man from any other; death has a claim upon men because death is the penalty of sin, Rom 6: 23. It is the penalty for your sins. We have no sins recorded of Abel, but he was still of fallen nature, and no doubt he would have accepted he was a sinner; he died. There are others, good men, throughout the Old Testament. How wonderful that there were good men in the Old Testament, God's work was in them, and faith marked them. Some can

be drawn upon as types, but they died, because of the penalty of death upon them; because they were sinners. Remarkably one man did not; Enoch did not, Heb 11: 5. That is a remarkable fact, and it demonstrates too how God was looking forward to the whole idea we speak of as the rapture. He is going to take living persons, I trust us, to be caught up to be with Him, to meet Him in the air. He demonstrated the power to do it already in Enoch. Yet Enoch was still a sinner, one needing a Saviour, and he was unlike Christ, who came here, and in this life had no claim of death upon Him, no claim of Satan upon Him, and no claim of the world upon Him. He was entirely separate from all these things, with no taint of sin upon Him. No sin was in Him, and there was no sin that He committed. How wonderful that there is a Man who is distinguished from all other men, Christ. He has that title; indeed, you could say because of that distinctiveness - Christ - that shows God's approval of Him. We read of Jesus earlier, but He is Christ, One who has God's approval because He walked a life of perfection and glory, and secured everything for the divine will.

Despite all that He was, and all His excellence, Christ died. And you can sing, and I can sing:

Christ died! then I'm clean: not a spot within.

God's mercy and love! not a cloud above. (Hymn 22)

I trust all of us sang it with faith and reality. You sang it - did you mean it? I always find it a test; we know our hymnbooks, and we can sing with our minds elsewhere. You sang it: did you mean it? In your heart, did it convict you? It is a wonderful, blessed fact, 'Christ died! then I'm clean'. That involves the fact of His death, and it was such a death as the death of the cross. It involved that His death from men's point of view was one of shame and degradation. And it also was a death that demonstrated, in its glory and perfection, the love of God towards you. So that we can present the glad tidings, and the only ground we have of presenting the glad tidings is, "Christ died". Now, there is what is further in this passage which is vital too. But it is foundational that Christ died.

Think of that time; there He was upon the cross. I was reading something before that affected me, Christ was on the cross for the first three hours: and in those three hours what flowed towards Him was man's utter hatred. 'You have got what you want', you could say to the Jews; 'you have crucified the One you wanted to do away with'. But they had to be there expressing the depth and greatness of human hatred in every kind of aspect. What was flowing down? An infinitude

of divine love was flowing towards them, so that the people who were crucifying Him and hating Him, casting everything upon Him, were met by that wonderful word, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.", Luke 23: 34.

It is the same love towards you now, the same love. We sing that too:

Lord, on the throne Thy love's the same
As once upon Thy cross of shame; (Hymn 15).

The love is not reduced. If you ever wondered, or if you ever doubt, how much God loves you, or how much Jesus loves you, just remember: Christ died for our sins. Christ died. He took up our liabilities at the cross; He took up the charges against us at the cross; He took up what was God's just judgment upon our sins at the cross. Do you know that for yourself? "Christ died for our sins"; Christ died for *my* sins? Do you say that? Because you have got to take this up and grasp it. These are facts; it is the truth. There are witnesses that Christ died. But that might be to someone here, as it is to many people, merely a historical fact. They look up the history books, and they can estimate the time and so on; and there is no affect upon them morally. Does the fact that Christ died have an effect on you morally? Christ died for our sins. We have to lay hold of it in faith. And He died having completed everything that was required that you should come into blessing. He died having completed the most terrible three hours in history of this universe. How terrible they were to Him.

We were speaking yesterday about holiness, and that is one feature of the Lord Jesus. It has been said that there was nothing out of keeping with the holiness of God in the whole of His pathway. And there He was at the cross, and His Person filled with that holiness, divine holiness; He is the Holy One of God. Holiness includes at least an utter revulsion for sin; and that One was made sin on the cross so that you and I could be in liberty without any charge against us:

Christ died! then I'm clean: not a spot within.
God's mercy and love! - not a cloud above.

The work so full, so complete, so blessed that you can come into that blessing. You can come into it in its fulness and know what it is in the sight of God and in your conscience. I think these two thoughts are there, 'not a spot within', that you realise within yourself, as having trusted Jesus, that you are clean. All the work has been done; what

was morally out of accord with God has been removed. Along with that, 'not a cloud above', nothing to dim your communion with God because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Wonderful. That is the prospect to you in the gospel; that is what is being laid before you.

But again, we have to emphasise it has got to be taken up in faith. Do you have faith? Have you trusted this One? Have you accepted Him as your own Saviour? When it says, "Christ died for our sins": have you accepted, 'It was for my sins', and how blessed it is when you know that, when you think of it that He died; that is the penalty. Everything is finished as far as sins are concerned. When He went into death, the final matter was the penalty, and the penalty was borne by the Lord Jesus. Christ died.

But then He was buried; He went out of sight. Then the world could not see Him any longer, and they have never seen Him since. Others have seen Him. God's eye was in that tomb, and His spirit was with the Father. It is wonderful to think of God's care, to think of the care that God had of the body when it was buried. The reality of death, death was so real, that despite the glory of the Person, He could not care for Himself. So God provided something. What would men have done? They would have taken the body down from the cross and put it into a criminal grave. God provided for that: 'So far you have gone, so far you have gone in disparaging and doing everything wicked you can towards my Son'. God ensured that He was with the rich in His death. But then He did not remain there: how wonderful! We have been speaking of that already, and that only confirms to speak of it again and again; what does it say? "He was raised the third day according to the scriptures". That was God's act, or on the other side of that you could say it was His own act because of who He is. The glory and the might! Here it is presented as God's act, He was raised.

Think of God being first at the tomb; before Mary who rose early because she had lost her Lord and she wanted to be as near as possible. Do you feel like that? Christ was raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father. Raised, how wonderful: what an answer to man, an answer to sin, an answer to what there is in this world. It was an answer to the righteousness of the Lord Jesus too, an answer to the perfection of His work, an answer to all He deserved. It was an answer for mankind.

Mr Darby said (Collected Writings vol 1 p215) that the resurrection was 'the great miracle of divine interference in human

misery'. Think of the misery of mankind; what is death but the greatest source of that misery? Well, it is part of the human condition, but in that misery there is God's interference; God is assured that there is going to be not just one resurrection, but many. This chapter goes on to refer to "the first-fruits, Christ", v 23. There He is: nobody can share that with Him; He has to be the first. He is pre-eminent in resurrection: the first-fruits Christ. "Then those that are the Christ's at his coming". Think of that wonderful company, the dead in Christ; they are going to rise. There is not anyone here who has not had the sorrow of losing someone to death. Is it not wonderful, that we can have that confidence that, if they believed, that person who is gone into the grave will rise again, "each in his own rank". The first rank is in glory; every other one is going to be in glory too. Nothing can stop it, as the hymn says:

Despite aught Satan could contrive,
In Christ shall all be made alive. (Hymn 179)

That resurrection power is available to everyone, it is towards you now. The gospel goes out; what power there is, the power of resurrection. That resurrection power can be known in your life, because you have not only been a sinner, but you have a sinful nature. And how is that dealt with? It is dealt with by the fact that the Lord Jesus has gone into death, and the believer can say I have died with Christ, and I am buried with Him, and can live again. The power of resurrection means there is resurrection power for you to walk, and to "walk in newness of life", Rom 6: 4. How wonderful for you to enjoy what it is to serve Him. I think it is wonderful that the apostle Paul, as he is coming to the end of his life, desired "to know him", Phil 3: 10. How well he knew the Lord Jesus, and he wanted to know Him better.

How well do you know Him? Do you want to know Him better? The more you know Him, the more you will desire Him. "The power of His resurrection": the better you know it as the apostle Paul did, the more you will desire it: "to know him, and the power of His resurrection", the enjoyment and the fulness and the blessedness of what is the divine mind that you should enjoy. That being worked out in practice depends on the Holy Spirit. This passage in Corinthians does not go on to everything that is in the glad tidings because we have said of "the first-fruits, Christ", that He is raised, ascended and glorified, but now think of the wonderful fact that the first thing in His mind as glorified was to send the Holy Spirit. There was a period when the Lord was raised and the Spirit had not yet come, and there was that wonderful communication in

heaven between divine Persons.

I trust that you not only know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, but you know the Holy Spirit as your Comforter and Friend, the power for life. No doubt again you will desire to know more in the degree that you know it. The more you know the Spirit's power, the more you will desire the Spirit's power, and know that you have got to leave every other power behind. Nothing else is going to be of value in the testimony, in the assembly, in the response to God, but the Spirit's power, under the Lord's direction, and as given by the Father. How wonderful to be brought into this.

And then you have the fact, lest there should be any doubt, that the Lord Jesus appeared; He appeared to companies, appeared to individuals, appeared to five hundred at a time. He was not limited then and He is not limited now. This was actual; this was literal; the Lord Jesus actually came to persons in a room without opening the door. He came and stood in the midst. That was real. The apostles saw it with wonder, and did homage to such a One. You think of Him coming in and saying, "Peace be to you", John 20: 19. There were individuals - Cephas, that is Peter, Christ came to him, and I think you could say simply He resolved matters with him. He will come to you; if there is a matter between you and the Lord - sometimes there is even for the believer - He is ready to come to you.

All the issues have been dealt with in perfection at the cross. You can say, 'Christ died! then I'm clean'; you can be in His presence in that way. After that we have mention of another of the great witnesses - out from His side flowed blood and water; there is everything needed to cleanse you, everything needed to make you suitable for the divine presence; everything from Him. Again it is a matter of faith; it is a matter of receiving Him; it is a matter of accepting Him. It is a matter of knowing such a One as your Saviour and your Lord. How wonderful that we have such a Saviour to speak of.

And then we gather on a Lord's day morning, and we have these emblems before us, and we are reminded of that love that has been shown so perfectly. "Christ died"; there is the bread; there is the cup. Christ died; He is not in death now: He is in glory now, but the love is still the same. We sometimes sing that too:

The love that gave Thyself for us
Forgotten cannot be;

Its fresh appeal ...

(Hymn 326)

I trust there is a fresh appeal for everyone in the preaching of the glad tidings tonight, and may we be blessed as letting that flow over us, and being in the fulness of the blessedness of such a glorious Saviour.

For His Name's sake.

Loanhead

19th February 2023

'GET A BIBLE'

George V Wigram

Good instruction as to the contents of the Bible were mine at school, at seventeen, under a John the baptist ministry; but I never knew the gospel till, at nineteen, I went abroad, full of the animal pleasures of a military life. I and my comrade spent a long and tiring day on the field of Waterloo in June, 1824. Arriving late at night at ... I soon went to my bedroom. It struck me, 'I will say my prayers'. It was the habit of childhood, neglected in youth. I knelt down by my bedside; but I found I had forgotten what to say. I looked up as if trying to remember, when suddenly there came on my soul a something I had never known before. It was as if some One, Infinite and Almighty, knowing everything, full of the deepest, tenderest interest in myself, though utterly and entirely abhorring everything in, and connected with me, made known to me that He pitied and loved myself. My eye saw no one; but I knew assuredly that the One whom I knew not, and never had met, had met me for the first time, and made me to know that we were together. There was a light, no sense or faculty my own human nature ever knew; there was a presence of what seemed infinite in greatness - something altogether of a class that was apart and supreme, and yet at the same time making itself known to me in a way that I as a man could thoroughly feel, and taste, and enjoy. The Light made all light, Himself withal; but it did not destroy, for it was love itself, and I was loved individually by Him. The exquisite tenderness and fullness of that love, the way it appropriated me myself for Him, in whom it all was, while the light from which it was inseparable in Him, discovered to me the contrast I had been to all that was light and love. I wept for a while on my knees, said nothing, then got into bed. The next morning's thought was, 'Get a Bible'. I got one, and it was thenceforward my handbook. My clergyman companion noticed this, and also my entire change of life and thought.

We journeyed on together to Geneva, where there was an active persecution of the faithful going on. He went to Italy, and I found my own company - stayed with those who were suffering for Christ.

I could quite now, after fifty years' trial, adopt to myself these few lines, as descriptive of that night's experience:

Christ, the Father's rest eternal,
Jesus once looked down on me,
Called me by my name external,
And revealed Himself to me.
With His whisper, light, life giving,
Glowed in me, the dark and dead;
Made me live, Himself receiving,
Who once died for me and bled.

From a letter

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