

The Importance of Our Days

Ps. 90: 12; Joshua 14: 6-13; Luke 2: 1-11, 43-46; Acts 20: 28-32; Acts 28: 23, 30, 31.

F. A. Hughes. Notes of an address.

NOV/DEC 1956

I want to speak as the Lord may help me of the importance of our days, especially having in view the ending of another year. One is desirous that the Lord may give us a distinct and prophetic touch which will help us in relation to our own days, giving us ability to number them according to the divine mind. The Psalm from which we read is the Psalm of the Man of God, whose words should impress those who hear them. The words of a Man of God are prophetic, and there is no doubt from the record of Caleb's movements that he was greatly impressed by words that Moses spoke. We do not know that he heard the words of Psalm 90.

We do well to be affected by these breathings of the Man of God, "So teach us to number our days . . ." One would desire that that holy breathing might underlie all that we are in these days. This is a matter in which God gives a lead. We do not progress far in the Scriptures before we see this feature coming to light in the movements of God. "The evening and the morning were the first day." The great matter of Creation, God moving in relation to men, the habitable earth, from the record of Scripture would appear to be encompassed by this great thought. The days are numbered. It is also said of Adam, "The number of his days were . . ."

There are at least two ways in which to number our days. I observe they can be numbered specifically and continuously. In Matthew, the numbering of specific days links on with the book of Kings, where one reads constantly, "This day . . ." and what happened on it. They were specific days numbered in the fear of God. Luke would give us the thought of continuous days and would link with Chronicles, giving the thought of cumulative exercises going on before God. So in Matthew we read, "Give us **this** day our daily bread." Every day needs its own specific sustenance. In Luke it says, "**Day by day** our daily bread." this would suggest exercises to be carried on to a moral conclusion. In Chronicles, the thought of "day by day" is seen.

Men came to help David day by day until the scene reminded one of the camp of God, 1 Chron. 12: 22.

Day by day they saw to the tribute of the house, 2 Chron. 24: 11.

Day by day they praised the Lord, 2 Chron. 30: 21.

Each day carries its accumulated exercises moving on to the completion of the matter.

I am appealing to your affections and mine as to whether we are allowing days to lapse in our counting; whether divine things are taken up in a disconnected way; or regularly, happily, continuously.

The world understands the necessity of our days. The wife of Potiphar spoke to Joseph day by day, seducing him. The evil that is presented to us day by day in this seductive way calls for the necessity of maintaining the numbering of our own days before God. Joseph anticipated the ministry that followed. Each day he lives, he is living **before God**. Joseph is numbering his days according to **God**, anticipating the Commandments of God before they are given, (Thou shalt not commit adultery), and numbering his days accordingly.

I call attention to the way a spiritual man numbers his days. I refer to Caleb, a man who wholly follows the Lord, a man of God who can count his days by the thousand. Another man has to say, "Few and evil have been the number of the days of my life," — he had lived 130 years when he spoke, I refer to Jacob. As he looked back, how many days there were in which he had no contact with God — lost days, not to be numbered. Solemn, in the light of the day of God, to lose days. How many days in 130 years? Yet "Few and evil. . ." — he had been out of touch with God, days which are lost. We need to number our days.

This spiritual man, Caleb, refers to "that day" and "this day." Forty five years — he has counted those days, every one had been marked by following the Lord, days which are replete with precious suggestions; increasing in his heart his knowledge of God. **These** are days to be counted! Has there been some accession in our hearts today of the knowledge of God? Have we advanced spiritually? Caleb says, "Fifty five years ago God spoke to me by Moses." How blessed that God should speak; think of being able to look back and say, "In that day, God spoke through a man of God to me!" That is what God is doing in ministry. He is speaking through men of God to our own hearts, and each day is to affect the succeeding days. Days in which he nearly loses his life, days of wandering, days of sorrow, days of disappointment, days of frustration, days of limitation, days of chastening but every day lighted up by the power of the word of the man of God; and he comes to "this day" and he proves the blessing of the tribe of Asher, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Caleb's confidence is in God. His days were lived in the fear and joy of God; everyday lived in the power of the prophetic word, and at the end he says, "**This** day I am as strong as when Moses spoke." Are we weakening spiritually? . . . or are we numbering our days in the light of the word of God? Caleb says of himself, "strong **this day**".

Turning to the New Testament, we have the light of a new day; the bringing in of Christ. What a precious day! I want to suggest that all our days are to be counted in the light of the incarnation. We cannot be unmindful of the days that government decrees, "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed," Luke 2: 1. We have to be aware of the commands of the government. There must be regard to what is due to Caesar's days. There must be subjection to the powers that be. This lies at the threshold of Christianity.

Over against that, days of **God** are being fulfilled; days that God is numbering; days, we may say with spiritual delicacy, that Mary numbered. Think of God coming into this great matter, the fulfilment of days, He says to Job, "Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth?," Job 39: 1. The sympathetic interest of God in relation to these great matters — beyond the comprehension of men entirely! The number of Mary's days were fulfilled. In Galatians, we are told, "When the fulness of time was come." These were days numbered by God, days numbered by the angels. What holy expectancy, what glad delight of the angels as they came to this day, "For unto you is born **this** day a Saviour." The day that God, that Mary, that the angels waited for; the bringing in of Christ. This day has affected the calendars of men; alas! how formally! It affected the shepherds **affectionately**.

Think of the flock in Malachi, meeting together and speaking often one to another; looking to the day when Jesus would come, waiting through the long night of declension and barrenness. Then the shepherds feeding their flock by night, devoted hearts taking care of that which is precious to God, waiting for the day, "Today is born a Saviour." All our days are to be numbered in accord with this day. There is much in Luke that could be said on this line; the counting of our days, "A dayspring from on high has visited us." Like Anna, we should be counting all our days in relation to Christ, speaking of Him night and day. Her's were not easy days, long years living in loneliness and bereavement, but speaking of Him, counting each day in relation to the testimony of Jesus. Has there been a day lived apart from the testimony of Jesus? Has there been a day void of an impression of Christ? Or is every

day like Anna's days? She is a true descendant of Asher, her foot dipped in oil. Wherever she went she would leave the fragrance of Christ — the frankincense. These days should have such a place in our hearts, never to be forgotten.

Yet, alas! one may take these matters on religiously, outwardly correct and right, and yet not counting in our affections each day in relation to Christ. Mary and Joseph had fulfilled their days; no deficiency outwardly, but they journeyed a day without Christ. In the numbering afterwards, what anguish and remorse — one day in which they had forgotten Christ. What a solemn possibility with the light of this new day in our hearts! — the like of which has never been seen in the universe before; a day which was already in the heart of God when He planted a garden **eastward** in Eden — and yet to have the light of it and forget Christ Himself for one day. That is a day you cannot number, a day lost. No day can count if it has not been lived in relation to Christ. The Spirit's day involves that we listen to what the Spirit says in relation to Christ. It took them three days to recover the ground. Evidently, they retraced their footsteps, and were able to number their days again. Thank God — we may too. Luke's gospel is filled with this thought. Jesus says to Zacchaeus, "Today is salvation come to thy house;" to another, "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise;" "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears;" "Day by day teaching in the temple;" each day impressed by spiritual features and teaching.

I pass on now to Paul. This matter comes to light very early in the history of Paul. It is filled out with the thought of days, days numbered in relation to the interests of Christ. They were days of pressure. He speaks of "One day in the deep" — think of the depression of that, the sorrow of spending a whole day in the deep, the danger! I wonder if we know anything about this! Have we gone right down to the bottom as carrying in our measure the interests of Christ? How precious all this is! He says, "But when it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days," Gal. 1: 15-18. What impressions in those fifteen days, what happy, holy contact he would have, what brotherly intercourse; direct impressions from Peter, who is first; one who had been in Christ before him. Are we able to look back and number days that have been spent in such surroundings as to fit us for helping the saints in relation to impressions of Christ?

In Acts 20: 31, he is numbering days of intense exercise, days of tears, of affectionate anxiety and desires for the saints, days replete with establishing ministry as to the gospel of the grace of God, the kingdom of God, the whole counsel of God. What a range of desires and interests filled these days. And then for over a thousand days, all numbered, surely numbered in heaven too, he admonishes each one — with tears. no partiality but genuine deep feelings that each saint should be held by and in the truth. And more than this, showing each day in the movements of his own hands the blessedness of the words of Christ, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

At the end it says of Paul that he is in his own hired house, and they come to him. The time is getting short now, two years only left, and Paul feels the urgency of the matter. He expands his days as Jesus did. It is a feature of divine Persons and those who are with Them, that they expand their days, "Rising up early in the morning." Of Paul it is said, "From **early morning**," lengthening his days. The days are getting short, we are not going to be here much longer. The day of Christ is looming very near. Are we filling out every moment? I am seeking that we should number our days that we may miss no opportunity of speaking to all that may come to us of the preciousness and fragrance of Jesus.