

Philippians

Readings with G. Davison extracted from "Precious Things" 1956-1990

Table of Contents

Philippians 1.....	1
Philippians 2: 1-11.....	7
Philippians 2: 12-30.....	13
Philippians 3: 1-11.....	19
Philippians 3: 12-21.....	26
Philippians 4.....	32

Philippians 1

The epistle which we are about to consider was written while Paul was a prisoner, and is the complement of the other two prison epistles which we have considered in previous years-Colossians and Ephesians. In both of these we have an outline of the "mystery", in both its present and future aspects, and we understand that the working out of the truth of the mystery in practice comes before us in Philippians.

In writing this epistle to the whole assembly, why does Paul add "with the bishops and deacons"?

"Bishops" would be those who have experience in spiritual matters and would therefore be able to guide the saints into the truth; "deacons" would be engaged more in practical ministry, or in service to the saints. Special emphasis is laid upon the necessity for overseers, or those who serve, to take heed to the teaching of the epistle. We sometimes meet with the word *rule*; but ruling is by leading, that is the meaning of the word. This is not so much a doctrinal as a practical epistle, hence those who take the lead are called upon to attend to these things. In so doing, they would be able to lead.

The presentation of Christ in His various characters gives the key to these epistles!

Yes! For if in Philippians 2, Paul speaks of Christ Jesus taking the form of a bondman, he at once refers to himself and Timotheus as "bondmen" of Jesus Christ (New Trans.).

The Philippians appear to have been in some difficulty both from within and from without, and do not appear to have been an affluent company as the Corinthians were. Yet the apostle can say to them that he was filled with joy every time he prayed for them.

He tells us in verse 5 why he had such happy thoughts of them-"For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now". Not only had they made a good beginning, they had obviously continued. Each one of us may well ask, am I as active in the gospel today as when I was first converted? And this fellowship in the gospel involved not only their praying for it, they were active in it and apparently supported it practically. Paul does not speak of their preaching, but of their *fellowship* in the gospel; he was probably referring to the gift they had sent to him.

The apostle seems to put giving on a very high platform!

He does! In the second epistle to the Corinthians he tells them it promoted priestly thanksgiving. The gift to the poor saints was the cause of many thanksgivings to God (2 Cor. 9: 12).

I note that in verse 3 the word is "my whole remembrance of you" (New Trans.). He had regard for them in everything which he knew of them.

Yes! There appeared to have been a little disunity in the company, for it comes out in every chapter, but looking at them in a general sense he could constantly thank God for them. We need to take heed to this. How often saints meet with a little difficulty or disappointment in their dealings with other saints, and how easily some little personal thing can turn them aside, the minor difficulty causing them to give up the greater privilege of going on with the service of the Lord. Let us beware of this, and seek grace to look at the Christian circle as one whole.

Is the gospel here that which we have in mind when preaching to the unconverted?

That is only part of it! Here it includes all that had been committed to the apostle, and for the preaching of which he had been imprisoned. In sending this gift to him they had participated in the service, for the word "fellowship" means to share in the matter. Whatever we may do ought to be directed towards the general service of the saints. I remember sharing in a week's meetings which began by two sisters scrubbing the floor in order that we might have a clean hall to preach in. It was their very practical fellowship in the gospel. It showed how devoted they were in that service. One fears there is a sad lack of devotion to the service of the Lord in this day. It is amazing what can be accomplished by real devotedness to the interests of our Lord.

It was because of their continuance that Paul could say to them that he was confident that God Who had begun a good work in them would "complete it unto Jesus Christ's day" (New Trans.). He looked on to the final triumph.

Then the apostle assures them that so labouring with him, in whatever way they did so, they were partakers of his grace. He would have them to regard it as a divine favour that they were so permitted to share in the work.

What is the difference between the "day of Jesus Christ" in v. 6, and the "day of Christ" in v. 10?

The first may refer to the Lord's own personal place in the glory; it is His day as the answer to His rejection; while the "day of Christ" seems to suggest that when He does come forth in His day we shall come with Him. Both of course refer to the kingdom day, the thousand years reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle would remind them that the work which had begun in their hearts was not only for man's day, but had in view the world to come.

In v. 6, he speaks of the work as "begun"; in Philippians 2: 12, as continuing-"work out your own salvation"; then in Philippians 3: 21, he speaks of its completion, the moment when our bodies will be glorified by "the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself".

In v. 7, the apostle speaks of himself in a twofold way-as in "bonds" and as still being set for the "defence and confirmation of the gospel". His being a prisoner did not stop his service for the Lord.

It was obvious to all that he was a prisoner for *Christ's sake* and not an ordinary malefactor. His bonds were contributing to his defence of the gospel.

How did the apostle defend and confirm the gospel?

The defence is by word, and the confirmation is by walk!

In which way were they "partakers of my grace"?

In the difficult circumstances in which he was found he continued as defending and confirming the gospel, and he credits them with doing the same in Phillipi. The grace which sustained him thus in the

prison was the grace which sustained them in Phillipi. It is useless attempting a verbal defence of the gospel if it is not confirmed by Christian character. Paul was not only prepared to give out the gospel as a theory, but also showed them how it worked. He had before said to the Ephesians "what *manner* I have been with you at all seasons". He spoke of this first, and then added "and have *taught* you" (Acts 20: 18-20).

One of the marks of the last days is "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3: 5). How can we expect people to take note of what we say if we appear to be as worldly as those who make no profession? It was to Timothy that he also said, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life" (2 Tim. 3: 10).

He then assures these Philippian saints (v. 8) that, if he was constantly in their affections they were constantly in his. He longed after them all. I suppose underlying this word "bowels" is the thought of deep-seated feeling, inward affections.

Would it be the activity of love?

It was certainly more than loving them from a sense of duty; it rather suggests a burning desire for them. Such a love would not be easily changed. It led him to fervent prayer on their account as he says next. Whatever they had attained to he desired that they might still go increasing in "knowledge and in all judgment", of intelligence as the word means. Maturity is the thought underlying these expressions. This would lead them to "approve the things that are more excellent" (New Trans.). Their love would be guided along right channels if they thus increased in knowledge and intelligence. Growth is the thing we all should covet. We need grace to reach out to the *deeper* things of God, the things that are "more excellent". They are there for all who want to grow.

What will the result be if we do make progress?

"That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ". The test will be "the day of Christ". It would preserve one from attempting to do things which on the surface seem commendable but maybe underneath are not so commendable. That day will manifest all in light. Allied with this is, "without offence". If what I do is in the light it will carry conviction with it, and will not be something which will give cause for offence.

Would "pure" be internal and "without offence" external?

It may be! Perhaps "pure" would be in relation to God, and "without offence" in relation to man.

If these things did mark us we should be "complete", which would mean there is nothing lacking in the producing of the fruits of righteousness.

This is what he prayed for on their account. He was quite at liberty to tell them what he requested for them. There could have been things for which he prayed which he may not have cared to tell them, but he does tell them of these things.

What are the fruits of righteousness?

The things which are right in the divine estimation!

What is this fruit for?

First it is said to be "by Jesus Christ", for it could not be right apart from Him; but it has for its objective, "the glory and praise of God". If it is right in the divine estimation it will have this result. While all that is right is directed by Jesus Christ, and is in the power of the Holy Spirit, yet when we do what is right God gives us the credit for it.

Why are the prayers in the epistle to the Ephesians more spoken of than this prayer? Do you regard this as being on a lower level?

No! If the prayers of the Ephesian epistle are worked out rightly these are the characteristics that will be produced. If we needed a caption for this epistle we could take it from Ephesians 4-"walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called".

The apostle goes on to encourage their hearts by telling them that although he was suffering in prison, the things that were happening to him had turned out rather for "the furtherance of the gospel". If the apostle who brought this ministry to the saints suffered in so doing, we must expect our share of suffering too if we seek to follow up the ministry and work it out in practice.

The setting in which he puts his own sufferings, "my bonds in Christ", would encourage them as being the cause of their sufferings. He tells them this in verses 29 and 30 of our chapter. Here is a man who was so sure of the triumph of the testimony that he can view manifest opposition and be assured it was all going to work for good. The Lord he served was far more to him than the service. He was assured that if the Lord allowed these conditions, He was quite capable of using them for His own glory. We may think that the opposition today is greater than ever it has been, and are inclined perhaps to give way before it. The opposition has always been there, but the power to meet it is still available. Let us not give way before it; Paul certainly did not.

The opposition broke out against the apostle as soon as he reached Phillipi, but he went on. In the worst phase of the suffering we read of Paul and Silas rejoicing and singing, and in this epistle joy and rejoicing occur some eighteen times. The erstwhile Philippian jailer would appreciate Paul's exhorting the saints to rejoice, he had seen Paul doing so himself in the worst of circumstances.

A further result was that some rather timid saints, taking courage by what Paul was enduring, were opening their mouths more boldly. Paul's original bonds in Philippi had turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, and now here in Rome the same effects were produced.

Some who did not understand the gospel were making an attempt to discredit it, and yet Paul rejoiced. Some would perhaps hear the name of Christ from their lips who would not have listened to Paul; thus he concluded that they were doing more good than harm. Instead of adding affliction to his bonds, they gave him increased occasion to rejoice. When he wrote this letter Christianity was a comparatively new thing in the world, and these opposers were unwittingly spreading the testimony.

If Christ being preached under these circumstances was an encouragement to Paul, we too can take encouragement in our day in the midst of the many different motives which actuate those who preach. So long as Christ is preached we should rejoice; whatever the motive may be. Paul may have seen some fruit as the result. Some may have come to him to enquire more fully what it was all about.

When Paul was in Phillipi the girl with the spirit of Python was rebuked by him, but here he is encouraged. Why rebuke the one, and yet speak of the other as encouraged by it?

In Phillipi she said they were servants of the Most High God, and there was not one word as to Christ. He rebuked that; here it is Christ who is preached and in that he rejoices. The bringing in of the Name of Christ made all the difference; but let us also note that some preached out of *love*, and while we may not be free to associate with many we can rejoice that their motive for preaching is pure love to Christ.

In what way would it turn to Paul's salvation (v. 19)?

In that he would not break down nor give way when the supreme test came.

When he later wrote to Timothy he said that he had finished his course and had kept the faith, the evidence that he had kept on to the end. He was supported by their prayers, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. He goes on to say, as the result of these two things, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed". This to him was salvation, the result would be, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death".

We do well to notice his words here, "as always, so now". This desire had *ever* marked him. Had he waited until the crisis came before facing this it would have been hopeless, but as he had *ever* moved, so he desires to move right on to the end.

Why does he call it, "my earnest expectation"?

He looked on in the confidence that he would be a living witness to Christ in his trial, and so crown all his other service for Him. He did not face this with any self-confidence but with "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ". He was a man of flesh and blood, but having consistently proved and relied upon the help of the Lord, he was confident the Lord would not fail to support him at the end. Paul, as converted, had ever been marked by self-abnegation. Christ had always been first in his life, and so with confidence he can count upon the Lord that it would be so to the end of the pathway. This is written for our instruction and we may well ask ourselves, Is this the bent of our lives-to be here altogether for Christ?

He apparently appreciated the prayers of the saints also in this connection. It may encourage us to keep on praying for the saints, especially those who are publicly serving.

What is meant by "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ"?

It refers to what is most important. It was the Spirit which took Christ through in triumph in the supreme trial of the cross. Paul says, as it were, that is the Spirit I need to take me through in triumph if I am to be here for the will of God. It was the power which at all times moved our Lord in His perfect service for God. It is the Spirit in that character, as empowering the vessel to suffer in the path of the will of God.

One aspect of the Meat Offering, that offered by the priest, was that it was *saturated* with oil (Lev. 6: 21 New Trans.). Every movement of Christ in this world was "justified in the Spirit" (1 Timothy 3: 16).

Paul needed the Spirit in order to preach the gospel in power, and he also needed the Spirit in this character to enable him to suffer for the will of God.

Would this be in line with Hebrews 4 where we are exhorted to come with boldness to the throne of grace to obtain timely help?

We may come to the throne of grace in relation to our circumstances, but in this chapter it is in regard to what is personal to Paul. it was not circumstantial salvation he had in mind, but his own personal salvation in order that he might glorify Christ.

In regard to seeking help at the throne of grace, we can ask for three things. First, we may ask God to remove the difficulties; secondly, we can ask Him to take us out of the difficulties; but we can also ask Him to give us grace to go *through* the difficulties and glorify His Name in doing so. That is what Paul had in mind. He had seen the Spirit's power manifested in Stephen when he died a martyr's death, and Paul now seeks the same power for himself.

How blessedly this was seen in our Lord as recorded in John 12: 27, 28, "What shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name". This same spirit

came to light in Stephen and yet again in Paul.

For Paul this was the consummation of that which had ever marked him; he could therefore say "as always". He had experienced the help of the Lord so often that he had no doubt of that help being available to the end.

Doubtless it had in view his release also, for whether by life or by death it was all one to Paul, Christ magnified was his aim. Only a man devoted to the will of God could speak as Paul does here. Whichever way matters went it was a supreme test. "For me to live is Christ, and to die gain" (v. 21). He had no regrets about anything in this world, he was quite ready to go if the Lord said so.

Can this be arrived at in any way apart from experience?

No! Asking a brother once about experience he said, "You cannot buy experience". How then do you get it?, I asked. His reply was, "By experience". There is no other way of obtaining it. We must tread the pathway to gain the experience of it. I am sure that if we were always devoted to the interests of our Lord, we could count on His support in times of trial, but if not so devoted we could not speak as Paul does here. "The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" had in view continuance on that line. Whilst this was an individual matter with Paul, it is not limited to him. It is there for all who wish to move as he did, but we receive grace for circumstances only when the need for that grace arises.

Paul lived so near to the Lord that he knew whether he was going to live or die. He had confidence from the Lord that he was going to continue a little longer; but what will be the outcome? Christ will still come to light, and the saints will benefit thereby. What a wonderful life to live! It were better for him personally to die, but better for the saints that he should live. To be out of the body meant peace for Paul; to stay here meant suffering; yet because it was more needful for the saints, he chose to live. He desired to be with Christ-the better part. Mary chose the *good* part; to depart to be with Christ is the *better* part.

The Lord, too, had confidence in the service of the apostle, and so could leave him here a little longer. This was learned by Paul in the seclusion of divine love, in communion with God.

Would this experience be limited to the apostle?

No! It is open for all. It has been pointed out that when Paul had the experience of the third heaven, he was there as a saint, not as an apostle. It was the "man in Christ" who went there. It is open to all; but we all need the same spirit of devotion that marked Paul if we are to have the experience he had.

The apostle then speaks of their "boasting" (v. 26 New Trans.) as a consequence of this deliverance, for all was working for their encouragement. But while that would be so, he exhorts them to continue to conduct themselves as supporting the testimony. The word "conversation" (v. 27) is the same as that used in Philippians 3-"For our conversation is in heaven". Here he says that their conversation should be of a heavenly character, the manifestation of that of which we often sing, "Called from above, and heavenly men by birth". Boasting in the apostle on the one hand, but in their own lives also confirming the gospel.

It may be of interest to note that they were to be *completely* devoted to that service. We have spirit and soul mentioned here, and all would work out through their bodies. Their external activities would be the result of what was formed in their spirits and in their souls. Thus they would be seen as completely held for the service of God.

"Striving", the word used here, has not quite the conflict in view, but the race. The word could be rendered "athleticising together". There is a prize in view, and he exhorts them to strive together to

obtain it.

This striving together could only be as the outcome of *each one of them* having the mind of Christ. No doubt that is why that exhortation comes in in the next chapter. If we are all seeking the glory of Christ, we shall do all we can to help in that way. It seems obvious that the one difficulty in the company was that they needed to be bound together in one mind. Energy was there, but it needed to be unified.

It is "the *faith* of the gospel" he has in view this time. I believe there are at least six things he connects with the gospel in this chapter. Christianity is a faith system and we need to strive together for this faith.

It was necessary that they all stood fast, or firm, "in one spirit". This involves more than an external unity. It means that we are of one *mind* and one *spirit*, and are thus striving together. It is more than a mere material unity, it is a unity of purpose and desire which would keep us together. It was an inward conviction which would produce outward unity.

They were not to be terrified by their opponents, but rather to count it an honour that they were allowed to suffer for the sake of the glad tidings. The apostle can add that what they suffered in Philippi was related to the same conflict which he was waging at Rome. They in Philippi, and he in Rome, all in the same conflict, and all partakers of the same grace.

The agony began for Paul, as we read, in the prison (Acts 16) but it had wonderful results, and this assembly in Philippi was born of these sufferings. All this is involved in walking worthy of the calling wherewith we are called. Conducting ourselves as heavenly citizens; striving as athletes, and fighting as soldiers, we stand shoulder to shoulder for the "faith of the gospel".

Philippians 2: 1-11.

We have already read of the experiences of the apostle Paul, seeing in them an example and an incentive to us, to the end that we might move through this world in the light of the heavenly calling. In the chapter now before us he is led by the Spirit to call attention to Christ Himself as the One Who gives to us the greatest possible encouragement to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called. We have in this exhortation a remarkable outline of the movements of our Lord as coming into Manhood; and we see also what effect these movements should have upon each one of us. Whilst the apostle begins by raising the question "if there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies", it is not as doubting that these qualities were there but rather that, the Philippians having expressed such feelings towards him, they were in need of allowing these things to operate among themselves also.

We have a threefold picture of the glory of our Lord in this exhortation. First His essential glory-"being in the form of God"; then His moral glory as seen in the seven steps which He took in subjection to the will of God, and which ended in the death of the cross. We also see his official glory, in that God has highly exalted him and has established Him as Lord of all. While we cannot share His essential glory, for that is Deity, we shall, in measure, share in His official glory in the world to come, both as to administration and as to headship. But we are privileged to share His moral glory *now*, and to be found like Him in this present world.

Whilst we cannot share His Personal glory, there is nothing in the movements mentioned here which is beyond us, for we too can make just such movements as in subjection to the will of God. We must note that His death upon the cross is not viewed here as making propitiation, but rather to bring out His subjection in Manhood. We cannot have part in His work as related to dealing with sin, that aspect of

His work is not in view in this passage, but we can have the mind which is prepared to go right down in subjection to the will of God.

I suppose we could only take these downward steps as having the mind that was in Christ Jesus?

Hence the statement at the beginning of this chapter; and since such qualities had been operative towards him, Paul desires that his joy might be filled up by these qualities being expressed by the Philippians one towards another. That seems to be his point here.

Why does he omit to mention redemption? Is it because he is looking at it on the side of purpose?

I do not think so! If redemption were in view it could not form the subject of an exhortation to us. That is why the terms have been so carefully selected by the Holy Spirit, for while we could never leave the form of God, because we were never in it, we *can* go down in subjection to God's will.

I suppose we see in Adam the desire to go up, and that is natural to each one of us, but here we have a divine example in our Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the principal things leading up to this exhortation is seen in verse 3, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory". This stands in sharp contrast to the following exhortation, and refers to the things which mark us by nature.

Does "in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" mean the better qualities in another?

The next statement in verse 4 does mean that, "Look not every man on his own qualities", as it could be rendered, "but every man also on the qualities of others". If we fixed our eyes on the spiritual qualities of a person, Christ shining out in that vessel, it would then become comparatively easy to esteem another as better than oneself.

I suppose this exhortation is outside the question of gift. It would mean taking a right place before God in relation to oneself, and thus be enabled to appreciate what we see of Christ in others. Would not the apostle have this in mind when he spoke of himself as less than the least of all saints? As to his gift and apostleship he said that he was not a whit behind the chiefest apostles, yet as a man he took his true place before God.

Would it not be in the power of the Spirit that these things are made effective?

That seems to be the point of the opening verses, and we shall not get the true meaning of this exhortation without considering them. It is in the power of the things to which he calls attention that we can reach this character. He seems to say, If you will allow these things to come out in your relationships one with another as they did come out in their exercise towards me, you will then esteem others as better than yourselves; you will be occupied more with their qualities than with your own, and the strife and vainglory of verse 3 will disappear.

Could we credit a fellow believer with these qualities even if we do not see them coming out?

That would be rather difficult, but we know the power for these things is in each one in the Spirit. If it were not so, we could not expect them to come to light. We can only take account of what is of Christ as it comes to light.

If we were more occupied with the effects of the truth in, rather than with the defects in the vessel, it would be a comparatively easy matter to give preference to another.

These exhortations ought to raise the question in our minds as to where we are to get the power to carry

them out. It is as though the apostle says, It is by the allowance on your side of the state of mind which was seen so perfectly in Christ. That is how we shall be enabled to do it. This is not something which is natural to any of us, otherwise we should not have the word "*Let this mind be in you*".

Is this the way to achieve unity in the company?

It is! And all these exhortations have that object in view. That seems to have been the one thing which hindered the Philippians-the lack of unity.

The mind is an important factor, and it is mentioned some eleven times in this epistle, which suggests that if the mind is in a right condition, other things will be adjusted. The mind governs all we do or say.

The word for "mind" does not refer to an occasional thought, but to "a way of thinking".

We could not cultivate the same desires by natural processes. It is possible to have a company gathered together and thinking in the same way, but it can only be as everyone in that company has the mind that was in Christ Jesus. It is remarkable that this title "Christ Jesus" is used here. It is both a title and a name combined, and is used to express the place Christ has in glory. Does it not seem that we are called to observe that the One Who is seen in glorified Manhood at the right hand of God, reached that place as a Man by going down into death in obedience to the will of God?

It has been said that if Christ moved at all He must move downwards. He could not move upwards for He was in the form of God, and there can be nothing higher than that.

Does the Name of Christ Jesus set Him forth as the anointed Man?

It does indeed!

How good it would be to have local conditions like this, each thinking of the other as better than oneself. It involves a radical change in our way of thinking; as we seek to bring in the features of Christ, the perfect Man, the features of the first man will be displaced.

It does not exactly say that we are to pray that this mind should be in us, but we are to "let this mind" be in us. We may pray for grace that it may be so, but it seems as though we have to be submissive and allow this mind to govern us.

Whilst we must agree that this mind is foreign to us naturally, it is not impracticable. God would never exhort us to do something impracticable, hence this must be possible. We are to allow this mind to be in us, and the fault is on our side if it is not.

What connection has this with 1 Corinthians 2: 16, "But we have the mind of Christ"?

There it is in view of discerning the spiritual things of God. The word used there means the ability to think in spiritual terms, the capability of understanding the things of God; but here it is a state of mind to control one's actions.

What would produce this state of mind?

I should say, self-judgment in the presence of God. I think that is the only way it could be produced. If my mind is on the line of self-assertion-which is so natural to one-the tendency will be rather to scatter the saints than to unify them. We have both a negative and a positive matter here. Self-judgment is the negative, and the mind which was in Christ Jesus is the positive.

It is not contemplated that various minds are to govern us; each individual should seek to allow "this mind" to control him. If it governs us in our way of thinking, it will govern us in our way of acting. It is characteristic, for one's actions will betray what the state of one's mind is. I may pray about it; I may

give a lecture about it; but the saints will know in my attitude towards them whether this mind is in me or not.

I suppose we must first have an appreciation of all the downward movements which Christ made before we can apply them to ourselves. They were movements which brought into manifestation the state of mind of the One Who made them. Before a single movement was made, that mind was there in the One Who was in the form of God.

Could it be said to be the mind of the cross?

That was the last step in this downward path. This exhortation is in two halves, His coming into Manhood, then His death upon the cross. He first *emptied* Himself as coming into Manhood, and then *humbled* Himself even to the death of the cross.

We can relate every one of these movements except the first to ourselves. If we look into these movements we shall see how the state of mind contributed to them. We know that the Lord, being Who He was, needed to empty Himself before He could be found here in incarnation. Whilst what comes to light here began in counsel, yet these verses relate to the actual movements. There must be a movement into incarnation, a movement in which we could not have part, but the movements He made *as in Manhood* should have a moral correspondence in us.

We could not know anything of that which marked the Lord when He subsisted in the form of God, but having emptied Himself of that outward form-what Mr. Darby calls "the insignia of glory"-He came into a form visible and understandable, and the movements which He made *as Man* were observed and appreciated by men.

I think we ought to stress that He emptied Himself of *outward* glory, for *essentially* there was never any change in His Person. Whatever His outward circumstances were there never was, nor ever will be, the slightest change in His essential glory. His Name is "The Same"; He abides the Same, and as you have rightly said it was the externals of which He emptied Himself. We are using the word in the New Translation-"emptied"-as expressing the real meaning of "made Himself of no reputation".

Would the Lord's washing the feet of the disciples be in line with the movements we have in this chapter?

Yes! For not only was He in the *form* of a bonds slave, but He actually did the *work* of a bonds slave when He washed their feet.

The Lord laid aside His garments, what He was officially, and in affection served His disciples. He then put on His garments before He began to speak to them. If we knew more what it was to shed any little external thing which may give us distinction, and to serve our brethren in love, then when gift was in operation the brethren would more gladly listen to us.

Another thing we need to note is that all these movements were of Himself. He is not viewed here as sent of the Father, but as making all these movements of His own volition; taking upon Him the form of a servant-a bonds slave.

The movements of this divine Person in verse 7 were made before incarnation, but the subsequent movements were made by Him as in Manhood.

Why do we say "He veiled His glory"?

That is a term used in a hymn, and we understand it to mean that His personal glory was veiled in flesh, but there are Scriptures which tell us that His glory was seen. We have the words of John, "We beheld

His glory" (John 1: 14). Again in 2 Cor. 3 His glory is unveiled, but doubtless what is meant is that it did shine out to those who had eyes to see it,

"Veiled thy glory, yet 'twas witnessed by Thine own while here below".

These verses in Philippians do not convey that He came to display His glory, but that this wonderful Person, co-eternal with the Father and with the Spirit, of His own will stepped down into the conditions of a bondsman in this world that He might accomplish the pleasure of the Godhead, and perfectly carry out that will to the glory of God. We see His own movements in love right on to death; God then moves and raises Him to the highest place in glory.

In verse 8 we read "being found in fashion as a man". That word "found" indicates that something was manifested to those who had eyes to see which was never here before. The word "found" seems to suggest that the discovery *was* made. It all came into manifestation in this world.

We read of a "bondman's form", and "in figure as a Man" (New Trans.).

There are three words used here-form, likeness and figure. The word "form" refers to His body, but the One who was in that body had every feeling and sensibility of a Man. He was not merely God in a body. Not only did our Lord come into the form of a bondsman but, as we read in Heb. 2, "He also Himself likewise took part of the same", which involves that He had all the feelings and sensibilities proper to Manhood. It is obvious that the form of a bondsman does not stand here as contrasted with the form of angels, but as in contrast to the form of God. The Lord was seen *externally* in a form other than that of God. Not only was He seen in that body, but the word "likeness", in verse 7, conveys the thought of moral qualities; while the word "fashion" or "figure", in verse 8, shows that He was in the actual physical likeness of a Man. Both these are of the utmost importance, for both His moral feelings in perfect Manhood, and His physical features have to be taken account of. We read of Him weeping, hungering, etc., and unless we see the truth of this we may regard these verses as expressive of a character of Manhood to which we cannot attain. He was in every respect a real Man.

Why does it not say of Him-He was in the likeness of God?

In Colossians 1: 15 we read, "Who is the *image* of the invisible God"; not *likeness* of God, because He *is* God. Image carries the thought of representation and presentation, and the Son coming into Manhood both represented and presented God to man. Being God, He did both perfectly.

What does the expression "He humbled Himself" convey to us?

That is the bearing of His taking the place of a bondsman, for He lays aside *entirely* His own will. If the will of God involved that He should go into death then "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross".

Men tried to humble Him but He humbled Himself, and that is the exhortation given to us in the gospel. "Whosoever humbleth himself", not whosoever is humbled. Here is the great example of that. He took the place of a bondsman, He was not made that.

The quotation from Hebrews 2 fully explains that-"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part in the same". Whilst that verse refers to the physical condition in which the Lord was, yet it implies that He accepted the moral conditions which attached to it, and He ever lived here in subject Manhood before God. In Philippians we are impressed with the marvellous fact that His obedience was such that He went right on, even to the death of the cross.

Do you include in this His attitude towards men, as well as His subjection to the will of God?

I do not doubt that that flowed out of His subjection to the will of God!

Could we have a word on the wonderful answer which God gave to all this and how, as flowing out of this exhortation, we work out our own salvation?

We work out our own salvation by having the mind that was in Christ Jesus. As to His exaltation we read in 1 Peter 5: 6, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time". It follows that if I am content to take this lowly path, God will see that a fitting answer is given.

We ought to note this word, "Wherefore God also hath *highly* exalted Him". On the one hand we see *complete* self-abnegation, and on the other "highly exalted" is the answer of God to it. This is the only place in the New Testament where this word "highly exalted" is used. It is reserved for Christ.

Do we not have a corresponding thought in Isaiah 52: 13, "He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high"?

Yes! And no doubt all His work is in view there. He could not have gone lower, and now He could not be higher. In that exalted place He has been given a Name commensurate with the place of glory given to Him. Coming into this world He was given the Name of Jesus, a Name which expresses His lowly grace as in this world, and as having in view His work for mankind; but now that He is exalted and made very high He has been given a new name in relation to His place in exaltation.

If one has been helped to bear the reproach which goes along with His Name in this scene, there will be substance found in such an overcomer upon which His new name can be written. That is seen in a company not marked by Laodicean self-seeking and pride but in Philadelphia, a company which had just a "little strength", and who have kept His word and not denied His name-they are the people upon whom His new name will be written. Whatever that name may be, if we are marked by the spirit of overcoming today we shall be characterized by His new name in that day.

Do you look upon this as not exactly the name of Jesus?

We have thought it to be a name given to Him in relation to His place in glory, but not a name which supersedes the name of Jesus.

However, we must note that when the universe is called to bow to the One Who has that name, it is at the name of *Jesus* they will bow, for *that* is the name they have despised. It could hardly be said at this point that Jesus is a new name, but rather that His new name is something added in relation to His place in exaltation.

One thing we do see is that the name of Jesus has triumphantly gone through death. When Paul asked "Who art Thou Lord?" the answer was "I am Jesus". We can be sure that this precious name is going right through, for in the last chapter of Revelation we read "I Jesus", one of the most touching things for our hearts.

There is no suggestion that another name is to supersede a former name, but rather that the Lord now has a new name granted to Him which will mark His renown in the world to come. It is Jesus who glorified God here Who has that name.

I think that name will mark appreciation by God of the wonderful work of Christ, and we see that it is at the name of Jesus that the whole universe will bow, and the same Lord Jesus Who has done that work has been granted a signal honour which will be displayed by that new name. Hence in the world

to come it will be seen that it is Jesus Who has this name.

A moment is coming when at the name of Jesus every knee is going to bow, including those of infernal beings. The word is "infernal" in the New Translation, and it appears to be the only place where that word is used.

We are yet going to hear demons saying "Lord" to Jesus. It affords every lover of Christ deepest joy to know that the devil himself and all his demons are going to bow and say "Lord" to Jesus. In the gospel records they did not say "Lord" to Him when He was here in lowly grace, but they must say it to Him in that day. How glad we are that in *this day* we have been taught to call Him Lord, and as a consequence we are brought into the blessings of God, and we shall share with Him in His public triumph in that day.

Philippians 2: 12-30.

In our reading yesterday we saw how the apostle had taken account of the affections of the saints expressed in the gift they had sent to him; he also indicated the need of these affections being expressed one towards another in the assembly at Philippi. With a view to that being brought about he speaks in vv. 5-8 of the great example of subject obedience to the will of God as seen in our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It was suggested that self-abnegation was the way in which this could be brought about, and where we begin this afternoon we see just how it could be worked out in a practical way in their midst. I apprehend verse 12 flows out of this exhortation, "Wherefore, my beloved" (or it might read "in view of this") "as ye have always obeyed". It was pointed out after the reading yesterday that obedience was the main thought in the passage, and perhaps we should have said more about it. This verse has often been misconstrued as though it said working *for* salvation, whereas what it does say is "work *out*". I think the verse refers to the difficulties which were present in the company at Philippi, rather than to what is individual.

It has been pointed out that the verb is in the plural, and when he says "your" he apparently has in mind the difficulties in the assembly locally. He had evidently observed this element of obedience when he was privileged to move amongst them; now he says as it were, having manifested this principle when I was with you, let it be manifest also amongst yourselves when I am not with you.

Salvation as referred to in this passage is not the salvation of the soul, which is obtained through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; it is *daily* salvation in regard to the many difficulties which beset us in our pathway. It is becoming more obvious as we pursue this epistle that disunity was marking them, and it is from this they needed to be saved.

It seems to suggest that the way of salvation out of the difficulties was for the contending party to go down in relation to self.

We might heed here the exhortation given us in Heb. 12: 28, "let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear".

That is right! We ought always to keep in mind what we are and what we are capable of; ever conscious of the weaknesses which mark us and the difficulties which surround us, so that we may walk in a spirit of fear and trembling lest anything of ourselves should spoil the unity of the position. Fear here is not craven fear, but reverential fear in regard to the things of God.

If the apostle was not there, God was still with them; it was He Who was working in them. These two principles, first being of one mind, and then working out their own salvation are most important. Is that

why one-mindedness is stressed in this epistle?

They could not hope to be free of this collective difficulty, and be in the enjoyment of salvation as a company, apart from one-mindedness. Hence the great example in the preceding verses shews the mind that was to characterize them. They would be marked by "one mind" as each had the character of mind seen so blessedly in Christ. Hence the apostle exhorts them, "Let this mind be in you".

If obedience is governing us and producing in us this subject mind, we are bound to be doing all things according to the will of God.

Would that result in right conditions in which God could work in and through us?

Yes! And if I am marked by that subject state, this work will go on without hindrance, not only in my individual life, it will reflect upon the company also.

We may say again that it is the company which is in view in this chapter, and the difficulties which were there, but we need each one to take up this exercise if the company is to get the gain. It seems that, first of all, Paul would have right conditions in the company, then they would be able to go out in power in the public testimony, as we see in the latter part of the chapter.

It is encouraging that in spite of the low condition into which we may get, God does not leave His people; as it says, "For it is God who works in you both the willing and the working according to (His) good pleasure" (New Trans.). God is still amongst His people, and if there is to be a full working out of practical salvation it is because God, in spite of our breakdown, has not left us. He is still working in us individually, but He is also working amongst His people company wise; and whilst He uses men like the apostles to carry on His work, yet God Himself is working, and that is why the evidence of salvation is wrought out in result. Had God left us to our own devices there could be no working out of our salvation.

When murmuring came into the early church, as we read in the opening chapters of Acts, it was men full of the Holy Spirit who were used for the recovery of the position.

What can more quickly produce disunity amongst the saints than murmuring? Working out this salvation depends upon unity being maintained; murmuring would bring in a spirit of disunity at once. The other thing we are warned against is disputings, a word which means to reason or argue. We are not asked to reason things out, but in faith to obey. We are not to rebel against the will of God, nor to reason about it, but rather to accept it and in faith obey it.

Then we are to be blameless and harmless, or simple. This does not suggest that we are subnormal, but rather *unmixed* as the word means; having the simple desire to go on with the things we know to be right according to the will of God. "Harmless" involves that we take care not to be blameworthy for wrongdoing; and as both of these features are seen in us we shall come out in the true character of children of God. The word is "children", not sons, and it conveys our character rather than our standing. This involves that we are not only children of God as the fruit of divine work in our souls, but we come out in this world as manifestly such.

Would it be as these things are seen in us that the good pleasure of God is secured?

It would! For if His good pleasure is being effected in us, we should be marked by the things mentioned here. They would stand out manifestly as being opposite to the features which are seen in "a crooked and perverse nation". Here we come to that which is outside, but if we are not presenting a united front *inside*, we need not wonder if we lack power *outside*. We want blessing in the gospel; we want people to come into the circle where the truth is known and enjoyed, and if there was more of this

unity, we should see more blessing and more people added to the meetings.

In Philippians 1 we read "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind" before we have "striving together for the faith of the gospel" (v. 27).

If there is striving inside, there will not be much power to strive outside. That seems to be his great concern about them.

The word "lights" is in the plural. Does that indicate that each had their individual responsibility in relation to this matter?

It does! The word used for "lights" is mentioned in one other place only, that is in relation to the holy city, "her light" or "her shining" (Rev. 21: 11). The light which will shine there is the light which ought to shine here.

Would it carry the thought of transparency?

That is the bearing of these things as we read in 2 Corinthians 4. The light is coming into evidence here, but in Rev. 21 it diffuses the whole scene.

Would this be the answer to the Urim, and the Thummim?

Some have developed that thought out of this epistle, "lights and perfections" as those words mean, and here they are seen together. We need hardly remind ourselves that this is what came out perfectly in Christ when He was here.

So we are to hold forth "the word of life", and the condition of the company will reflect either for good or otherwise on the power to do so.

In verse 16 the apostle evidently had the future in view when he speaks of the effect of his ministry upon these saints.

He allied himself with them in a most remarkable way. Whilst there was some distance between Rome and Philippi, the apostle was saying that if they maintained this character in Philippi, he was prepared to be associated with it as a drink offering in Rome. "Offered", or 'poured out', upon their faith has the drink offering in view.

Could more be said as to "holding forth the word of life"?

The character of the company underlies that. Whilst gospel preaching in our meeting rooms is an individual exercise, for the Assembly does not preach (though it ought to be done in fellowship with the brethren), nevertheless the preacher will not have much freedom or blessing if he is preaching in the midst of a disunited company. We must remember, too, that those to whom we preach are quite sensible as to whether a right character is seen in the company or in those who preach the gospel. Our conduct reflects largely on the success of the gospel.

You do not limit holding forth the word of life to preaching?

No! but it is mentioned here in relation to the company.

In another connection we read in Psalm 133 that where brethren dwell together in unity, there the LORD *commands* the blessing.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up with the eleven; unity was seen there.

The opposite to this is clearly seen in Galatians 5: 15, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another". It is sad when meetings destroy themselves through internal

strife. Hence we all need the instruction contained in these verses. It would be a poor thing to preach salvation to the unconverted, and if one were converted and afterwards found we were not in the good of practical salvation. Being established in this practical salvation would give power to what one said as "holding forth the word of life".

Paul allies this with his own apostolic service, looking on that they may be his boast in the day of Christ. This agrees with the distinction of terms in Philippians 1, "the day of Jesus Christ" and "the day of Christ". We have thought that the first refers to His own place in that day, and the second refers to the fact that all will be associated with Him. So we have it here, "the day of Christ". It is of course the same period of time but regarded in distinctive ways.

Does not Paul manifest the character of esteeming others better than himself when he speaks of himself as being a "drink offering", that is a minor offering?

Personally, I have regarded the drink offering as the effect produced by all the other offerings, both for the pleasure of God and for the blessing of man. There is only one mention of a drink offering in Genesis; strikingly it was Jacob who offered it after the vision of the house of God in Genesis 28, and his restoration to that position as seen in Genesis 35: 14. The end was reached in his communion with God. It is only once mentioned in Exodus, and that is in Exodus 29 where it is connected with the morning and evening lamb. There again it is the last offering in that chapter, and sealed up the day of divine service. It is next mentioned in Leviticus 23, and is connected typically with the resurrection of Christ as seen in the wave sheaf. Seeing that it comes in each time at the end, it would appear to be not so much the offering that is in view but the effect that has been produced for the pleasure of God as the fruit of what Christ has done.

One has said it carries the thought of excess!

That is right! I have regarded it as coming in in Luke 15 after the robe, ring, sandals, and the killing of the fatted calf, when the father says, "Let us eat and be merry". In that merriment I see the answer to the drink offering. We read in Jotham's parable of wine as giving joy to both God and man, and that is the grand result.

Does the apostle speak in this way as counting his service to be less than theirs?

I rather think he speaks of it as the complement, not as a contrast! He is rather saying, You go on with your service in Philippi, and I will go on with my service in Rome. They had been secured by his ministry, and as now about to be offered he looked for this result of his ministry, his being poured out like a drink offering upon the sacrifice they were offering in Philippi.

The thought here is not the difference between these sacrifices, but the association of the one with the other. The apostle was associating himself with what they had done, and had this excess in view for the delight of the heart of God.

While we have pointed out that the drink offering is mentioned in Genesis, Exodus and Leviticus, we also read of it in Numbers 15, and there it is laid down as a statute that whenever a burnt offering was offered it must be accompanied by a meat offering and a drink offering. This again suggests the effect produced.

Do we not have the thought of a drink offering in Timothy? Writing to Timothy, Paul said he was now ready to be poured out. He had served well, and this excess was there at the end; he was ready to be poured out, the same words as here.

Was it the kingdom he was looking on to when he spoke of rejoicing in the day of Christ?

Yes! And he was even then cheered by the fact that they were prepared to sacrifice. The drink offering is not a sacrifice, but poured out upon the sacrifice, their service and his combined; their sacrifice in Philippi and his death as a martyr at Rome. Their service was completed, his was still in prospect but was fully identified with theirs. If necessary he will pour out his life in order that there may be this excess for God, and this cause of rejoicing both for them and for himself. In the light of a martyr's death he uses the word "rejoice" twice in regard to himself, and twice in regard to their sacrifice; there we have the drink offering.

This is the pattern of the earlier verse now being worked out by the apostle himself. These features were seen in the Lord Himself.

We must keep relating all these verses to this great example, for all came out in Christ, even the rejoicing in the accomplishment of the will of God. Rejoicing occurs some eighteen times in this epistle.

As we move down the chapter we read of another who was set for the same things. We might have asked, Is this going to die with the apostle? No! for he now alludes to another who was to be his successor, Timothy. We have referred to this as true, apostolic succession. Here is one who will carry on that character of things after the apostle has gone.

Do you regard Timothy as the typical servant who will continue all that Paul taught, and will continue it so long as the church is in this world?

Surely! And Paul as it were lays his hands upon him here, even as when writing to him in the second epistle to Timothy.

Is it not said in that epistle, "the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"?

We have referred to that as filling out what was said in the Old Testament, to the children of the third and fourth generation. There are four generations in that verse, Paul, Timothy, faithful men and others also. We are not even said to be "faithful men and others also. We are not even said to be "faithful men", but "others also". We must see to it that we in our day hold these things and pass them on to others.

In sending Timothy to them it was in the great hope that when he returned to the apostle he would bring back news that this letter had secured the desired effect. This word "good comfort" means revived or refreshed, and we need not be surprised at his saying this. He told the Corinthians that he was burdened with both that which was without and with that which came upon him daily, the care of all the assemblies. It is a great thing to be able to orientate oneself in relation to the various assemblies. If they are in good condition so am I; if they are in distress so am I. How good to find our interest so bound up with the saints.

John said he had no greater joy than to hear that his children walked in the truth.

So while he intimates that some were not walking in truth some were, and we ought to be encouraged by that. Whilst we may not see all the saints walking in the truth, some are, and we do well to encourage them to go on, and seek to go on with them.

What is meant by this word "state" (v. 19)?

It really means, how you are getting on! State is a word sometimes used to describe the work of the Spirit in our souls, which is distinct from how one may be getting on. It has often been pointed out that

three things are said of us; *standing*-that is what we are in Christ: *state*-that is what has been formed by the Spirit in our souls; *practice*-that is how we are progressing practically. I am sure neither our standing nor our state can alter, but our practice can at any time. I suggest we have *standing* in Romans 5; *state* in Romans 6 and *practice* in Romans 7. What is meant here by this term is practice, as J.N.D. translates it, "how ye get on". That, we can see, depends largely upon how they answered to this teaching.

It is encouraging to find that Timothy was a man of feeling, genuine feeling. Peter warns us against being busybodies in other people's affairs, but we can well do to be like Timothy, genuinely concerned about the spiritual state of the saints. Timothy went on in the face of great departure for Paul says, "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's". He was the only one with Paul at this moment upon whom he could depend.

He was "like-minded", a word which means "united in soul with the same desires". Paul also alludes to Epaphroditus as having great concern about them.

How then could the apostle say "all seek their own"?

I think at that moment he was referring to the few that were of his company and who had been with him. Demas had left, they of Asia had turned away from him. They had turned away from a man who was suffering for Christ. It does not say they had turned away from Christianity; but in Timothy he had one who was knit together with him in soul in caring for the condition of the saints. We may thank God that he had such a one and could rejoice in that fact. We must regard these statements in relation to the time when they were made. He came to a point when he said, "no man stood by me".

This was stated towards the end of his first imprisonment, whilst the other statement was towards the end of his second imprisonment.

Exactly! That is why we need to note just when he said these various things.

Timothy was dedicated to the service of the Lord, he was not one who began to run well and slackened off. The apostle can say to them "but ye know the proof of him". Apparently Timothy had given every proof that what the apostle said about him was true, for as a son with a father he had served with Paul in the gospel. Character like this needs to be developed, it does not come about instantaneously, but is developed by long experience and devotion to the interests of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"As a son (or, child) with a father" would shew what went on in the soul of this young man. When Paul wrote his first letter to him he called him "my true child". When he wrote his second letter to him he called him "my beloved child". There is a process going on. Here is one standing in relation to the *truth*, and as he thus stands the effect is seen in his *affections*.

It may be a word to those of us who are younger, "as a child with a father". Once the young men begin to question the elder brethren as though they knew better, it is not good. I do not mean asking questions about the truth, for no one asked more questions than I did, but questioning them as though there was something wrong with their teaching. True growth will be formed alongside of a subject spirit, not a precocious one. If conditions are right, the elder take the lead and the younger submit, so Peter says in his epistle.

The outstanding word in this section is obedience, and what is enjoined upon a child with a father is obedience. It is the one thing children are told to do, to obey their parents. It appears to be the only injunction to them in the New Testament. That principle of obedience is seen here in Timothy and how better could he help the saints to practise what Paul is bringing before them in doctrine, than by being

an example of it himself?

We see growth in Timothy in the references made to him. We read, "from a *child* thou hast known the holy Scriptures". Then, "Let no man despise thy *youth*", and again, "But thou, O *man* of God". He is growing up in the truth.

Then along with Timothy, Paul speaks of Epaphroditus as "my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered unto my wants". He was the one to whom they had entrusted their gift to take to the apostle, and he nearly lost his life in carrying out that charge. He was prepared to risk his life to carry out that service. He virtually laid down his life for the brethren.

Often when we are in sickness it is ourselves of whom we think, but he was distressed because *they* were distressed on his account.

We have another example of the unity of this chapter here. The saints were concerned; Epaphroditus was concerned, and Paul was concerned; so much so that while he was going to send Timothy later he sent Epaphroditus right away, so that they would know that he (Epaphroditus) had recovered.

If we all served on the line of Epaphroditus would the truth of the body be more apparent?

It certainly would! Not only would it be better known doctrinally, it would be more apparent.

His physical condition would hinder him in his service and they were all concerned about it. He risked his life for the saints, Paul in particular, and it raises the question with us, How far are we prepared to risk our lives in service for the saints?

Would he be exemplifying the truth of God working in him His good pleasure?

No doubt! For it says here it was in relation to the work; he was so devoted to the task entrusted to him that he ventured his life in carrying it out.

What a binding together when Paul speaks of God having mercy upon Epaphroditus, and then regards it as mercy to himself as well. Here is a very practical setting forth of the previous exhortation.

The cost in bringing the gift became more than the gift itself.

That seems to be so in the appreciation of the apostle. There was first the desire which lay behind the gift; then the exercise of this dear brother in bringing that gift which stands out here.

Does it not shew also that God tempers the sorrows? Paul had sorrow, but God knew how much he could stand and did not heap another sorrow upon him.

Lastly, the apostle says he would have less sorrow when he knew how pleased the saints would be to see Epaphroditus fit and well again. So we have this remarkable regard for one another which would all contribute to unity among them. We shall do well to cultivate features and affections like these, and so evidence more clearly that we are governed by the mind which was in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3: 1-11.

In our reading on Philippians 2, we were occupied with the lowliness of heart of our Lord seen in His movements in the path of humility, giving us an example and forming the basis for an exhortation that with *our* minds prepared for the same path, we might be instrumental in promoting unity amongst the saints. In addition to this exhortation, we also had before us three men who were evidently affected by this mind to go down; Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus. We now turn to another side of the truth which

we venture to call the *upward* mind; for if in Philippians 2 Christ is the Pattern, in Philippians 3 Christ is the Object; and in this connection we may see that the *downward* mind is in relation to oneself, whereas the *upward* mind is in relation to Christ. The apostle gives this as a final word, and exhorts them to "rejoice in the Lord". We are not to rejoice even in our humility, but in the Lord.

Would the recovery of Epaphroditus be the cause of this rejoicing?

It could be one reason! But the rejoicing would not only be on account of favourable circumstances, but also in the One who created the circumstances.

Did not Paul exemplify this himself in Philippi? He was rejoicing as being *above* his circumstances in that city. It was not the girl with the spirit of Python, nor yet the conditions in the prison, that were the cause of his rejoicing; he rejoiced in the Lord. He knew how to abound, and he knew what it was to be abased, but in both he rejoiced in the Lord.

I think we should relate everything, whether dark or bright, to the fact that, whatever the circumstances, the work of God is going on in our souls, and our relationship with the Lord will never alter with circumstances. We must relate all circumstances to the fact that, whether favourable or difficult, both are needed in our service for Him.

While we are seeking to keep the company before us in this epistle yet the truth must affect us individually, for one could not rejoice in the Lord for another.

Whilst that is true, it *is* an exhortation to the whole company. I think the pronoun "you" is collective; Paul also says "my brethren" (v. 1). He says that writing these things to them again was not irksome to him. This may encourage us, for we are perhaps afraid of repeating ourselves at times; but if we are moving simply under the hand of the Lord for the blessing of the saints, we can well afford to repeat ourselves so long as we are assured the Lord would have us to do so. It was needed at that time, for while to him to write was not irksome, for them it was safe. We need never be afraid of repetition, but we should avoid *recitation*. If we have a prophetic word from the Lord let us give it out, but do let us avoid reciting something we have learned by heart.

In these days we need to beware of supposed new light.

We may get some fresh light from the Lord by coming to meetings like this; it may be new to *us*, but not new in *itself*. If what is taught is clearly outlined in the Scriptures we do well to accept it, but the truth "was *once* delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), and we do well to avoid novelties. The word in Jude 3 is really *once for all* delivered to the saints. Truth does not develop, it abides as Christ, who is the truth, abides.

The apostle warns them to beware of dogs, that which is naturally unclean, and would refer to those in the Christian company who had never been born of God nor sealed by the Spirit, and who were incapable of taking in divine things. Peter uses two symbols as describing certain people-dogs and sows. The dog represents that which is unclean by nature, and the sow that which is unclean by practice.

What is involved in the term "See to dogs"? (New Trans.)

It would suggest that we keep our eyes open, and when we discern them we keep away from them. They will be known in relation to their movements; watch for them. "The wise man's eyes are in his head." (Ecc. 2: 14). When we see persons who are marked by unclean things we should avoid them.

As seeking to go on in unity, we need to have our eyes open, because these elements will soon destroy

that unity if allowed to do so. The enemy has more than one weapon in his armoury, and we need to be constantly on the alert.

What is involved in the expression, "evil workers"?

Those who acted in a way which was clearly not of God, and who distressed rather than helped the saints of God. It would include those who sowed discord amongst brethren.

Would the word "Beware" lead to action?

I suppose if such were discerned among the saints we should refuse to have fellowship with them. We are exhorted in Romans 15 to avoid them; we are to be on the alert in case trouble is caused before we are aware of it. As to whether they are believers is not the point here, we are to judge them by their actions. Whoever may bear the character of an "evil workman" would be actuated by Satan and not by the Spirit of God.

Who are the concision?

That is a term of reproach in relation to those who professed to be the circumcision. They had received the mark of circumcision in the flesh, but were the very opposite of what that involved in practice.

The word "concision" is used here only; coined for the occasion. It carries the suggestion of a pruning. Instead of the complete cutting off which circumcision involves, this rather suggests a pruning of certain things of which men disapprove, and leaving the rest. That was what they were trying to do, prune off some of the things of Judaism, but introduce the stem of it into Christianity, hence he calls it the concision. It was simply the attempt to Judaize the saints.

In verse 3 the apostle turns from that which was reprobate, as seen in decadent Judaism, and asserts, "For we are the circumcision", the true circumcision, which means that we have come to a judgment of ourselves as in the flesh, and are not occupied with the ritual merely. In using the word "we" he speaks of the whole Christian company. The word is emphatic according to the New Translation, and is true of all the saints characteristically.

In Colossians 2: 11, we read, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ". In the New Translation it reads, "putting off of the body of the flesh". The result is we "have no confidence in the flesh". It is not a pruning as we have heard, trying to make ourselves more acceptable to God, but as the true circumcision we have put off the flesh in its *totality*, and we are before God in the Spirit. Whilst the statement here is "*worship* God in the Spirit", *every* right movement in Christianity is by the Holy Spirit, not by pruned flesh.

If one pruned a tree one would expect fruit from it eventually, and that is what the concision were doing, expecting something from the flesh; but if there is to be fruit for God in worship it can only be by the Spirit.

The concision prided themselves on having light from God, and as being the only ones with the right way of approach to God; but "we are the circumcision" and we know that the only way of approach to God is by the Spirit, not by ceremonial cleansing of man after the flesh.

Why does he connect worship with circumcision?

The whole Christian company is viewed as the spiritual answer to circumcision in the flesh, and stands in relation to God solely by the Spirit, not by any improvement of the flesh. Instead of boasting in Moses, we boast in "Christ Jesus"; the word "rejoicing" can be rendered "boasting".

We have worship mentioned in John 4, but the realization of what this chapter in Philippians teaches would remove all that Jerusalem stands for in that chapter, and also what the mountain stood for. Whether Judaism-the imitation of it as seen in the mountain-or paganism, all has to go. In Christianity the one way of approach to God is by the Spirit.

Would you say what worship really is?

Worship is the overflow of the heart when by the Spirit the majesty of God affects one. It is almost impossible to define it, but we experience it in our spirits. It is the recognition of what is beyond us in the realization of the majesty and greatness of God; and in so far as He has been revealed our hearts respond to all we are conscious of in His blessed person.

It is a wonderful privilege to be able to worship God, to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and to have no confidence in the flesh.

The concision had confidence in the flesh, but the true circumcision has no confidence in the flesh. They are opposed to one another, hence the impossibility of both going on together. Worship is more the state of the soul one is in than what one says. This ought to encourage us, for some perhaps are not very capable of saying much in what might be called an intelligent way, but we can all be in a right state of soul, and can then pour out our worship to God.

In a sense worship is inarticulate, whatever we may say in presenting it. It is more the state of soul, as we have said.

Worship here is the word for priestly service, and would involve all our movements of soul Godward. It has been said that thanksgiving is for what God has done for us; praise has more in view the way God has acted, while worship has more in view who and what God is in Himself.

It would also involve the presenting of Christ to God.

It would! But we need not only to be able to speak intelligently to God of Christ, but to have our souls in the power of it when we do so.

If we were asked for a concise explanation as to what Christianity really is, verse 3 of our chapter would give it. Each Person of the Godhead is mentioned; we read of worship to God, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, all being in the power of the Spirit, and confidence in the flesh excluded.

Worship would be the answer to revelation.

It must be! For it is God whom we worship as Father, according to John 4.

I suppose we can worship God individually and in our home?

Why not! If it were only to be realized in the meetings, what of some who are not able to get to the meetings? It ought to be in more volume and in more power in the assembly, but do not let us negative one thought by another. Each has its place, and whilst we know that in the assembly worship ascends to God, yet we must recognize that one can worship God at all times, providing the right condition of soul is there.

The next three verses, 4-6, give an outline of the flesh at its best, and show what the *circumcision* may become as *concision*, if the flesh is in view. Paul had much more to boast of in the flesh than his contemporaries, and who better than he could show us what can be attained by Judaism? Yet he tells us that it was but fleshly effort which he gladly abandoned; for what he had in Christ was far in excess of all else.

It would be religious flesh in these verses?

Yes! And we do well to think of that. The flesh comes to light in many distinctive ways, and this is one-religious flesh.

It is the Ishmael character of things, the flesh under divine cultivation. Some years ago in a meeting a brother remarked that Ishmael had to go, and the reply was, "Yes, but in Genesis 22 Isaac goes also". If the Ishmael character was to be righteously dealt with, it necessitated that Christ should bear the judgment which that order merited and remove it in death. This is the answer to the type of Genesis 22. We know that Christ came into the same condition as that in which the children were, sin apart; yet He took that condition in order to die and thus bring it to an end. As beyond death He brings His own into a new order, which is spoken of here as "in the Spirit" (v. 3). If we do not appreciate in some measure this bearing of the cross of Christ, we shall be continually hindered by the Ishmael character of things. There is always the danger of our going in for the very things which the apostle counted as dross. The remedy is to see their complete removal in the cross of Christ.

In verses 4 to 6 the apostle appears to put on these garments one by one only to take them all off. No one could have pointed the finger of accusation at Paul in so far as Judaism was concerned. He was at the top; others boasted, he could say "I more". He speaks of himself here as having been better than the best, but in the Epistle to Timothy as worse than the worst, because he had persecuted the saints.

In these verses he is speaking of a righteousness which he sought to attain by his own efforts; a matter quite distinct from the righteousness of God which he speaks of in verse 9.

The law could only take account of what men *did*, the state of their hearts through sin was not raised, they were judged by their actions. Yet it did bring sin to light, though *sins* were mainly in view. Paul was no mere adherent of Judaism, but was vitally active in it. He speaks of his manner of life before conversion to King Agrippa, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also *did*" (Acts 26: 10). He was not a passive adherent, but an active promoter of Judaism. Of his own volition he tells us in this chapter that he counted all he had once valued as loss for Christ. The light of that glory which he had seen on the Damascus road eclipsed for ever his former attainments, and he looked upon them now as dross.

In what way had they been a gain to him?

Notice that he does not say gain to God, but "gain to *me*". Doubtless the adulation and approbation of others who observed him, ministered to his pride and to his fleshly satisfaction.

Being entrusted with the commission to go to Damascus would constitute him an important man, and would give him immense satisfaction. He was, however, not referring to these things that we might be occupied with them, but to show that Judaism at its best was but refuse compared with the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Only a similar view of the glory of Christ will free any one of us from the attractions of this world. Not one of us could have been marked by the things Paul speaks of here, but some other fleshly attainment may have marked us; in the light of the glory of Christ let us seek grace to relinquish it all. Desire for worldly gain will be removed by an appreciation of Christ in glory.

It was with the prize in view that the apostle pressed on.

We may ask ourselves, Do we consider "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" to be a prize? A contender in the games contended for a prize, and used his utmost exertion to obtain it. Paul uses the same word-gain; having surrendered the things that once had been given, he now strives to gain Christ.

Was the prize a present thing, or was he looking on to the future?

I believe it includes both. He speaks of great compensation as a present gain, besides that which is in view in a coming day. He speaks of "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord". That word "my" is individual to Paul.

In verse 7 he says "I *counted*", but in verse 8 he says "I *count*". He was in prison because of his testimony, and yet was still counting "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord". He had no regrets even though in prison.

He goes further than counting them loss, he counted them but filth that he might gain Christ. This is more than a preparedness to suffer for Christ. It not only involves leaving certain things, but judging them to be filth in the light of the glory of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Such a judgment as this will only be reached by one who is in secret communion with Christ. Some years ago we read of a young man going out to preach the gospel in China, apparently an able business man. A firm offered him good terms to represent them there, but he refused the offer. They doubled their offer, which again was refused; yet again they trebled it, but he said he would not do it for a fortune. He considered that the winning of one soul could not be valued in terms of money, and he did not wish to be hindered in the first by the pursuit of the second.

Circumstances did not alter Paul's determination. He says "And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith".

Along with this is the unchangeable preciousness of Christ. It was this which Paul enjoyed and which underlay his desires. Circumstances may change, but he found unchangeable preciousness in Christ. That was part of the prize.

The statements in verse 10 are all in relation to those circumstances, and they will require careful consideration. He says "that I may know HIM". Not only to know about Him, but to know HIM; the pronoun gives point to these statements. "The power of *His* resurrection, and the fellowship of *His* sufferings, being made conformable unto *His* death". Not only death, but "*His* death". No doubt this could mean that Paul was so anxious to know all he could know of Christ, and to experience the things he speaks of to the utmost degree, that he desired to suffer as Christ suffered, to die as Christ died, and to be raised as Christ was raised. It involved his giving his life for the testimony but be it so if it would but draw him as near to Christ as was possible.

In the New Translation verse 11 reads, "resurrection from *among* the dead". That would not affect in any way his outlook in relation to the coming of the Lord.

No! It is his labour and desire that is in view here. It appears that he was rejoicing in the fact that he was going to give his life for the testimony. If the Lord did not come before his decease, this was the way he desired to go, just as the Lord Himself.

Would the thought of "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection" be a present thing, but "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" be more the end? Was he experiencing the power of His resurrection then, and also looking on towards the end "the resurrection from the dead"?

I am sure he was moving in the power of the resurrection of Christ, but I do not think that is in view in this verse. He *had* moved in the power of that since his conversion, but here I think it is an allusion to His death as a martyr.

Are you saying this is not possible to anyone who does not die a martyr's death?

Yes! For I think all these statements stand together. The emphasis he lays upon His! His!! His!!! has in view an experimental entering into all that Christ suffered, apart of course from His being made sin.

While the power of these things may be experienced by the saints in a general way, this appears to be an experience personal to Paul.

Why is resurrection mentioned before His sufferings?

That is the object in view, the end to which he was striving; but he knew that if that were to be so, he must suffer as Christ suffered in order to arrive at *such* a resurrection. He desired to experience the actual power of resurrection.

We know from the epistle to the Ephesians and also to the Colossians, that we can live in the power of life in resurrection, a life made available for us in resurrection, but I do not think that is the meaning here.

Do you think the apostle knew that his martyrdom was at hand?

He had the impression from the Lord that he was going to abide, even though he did say "I shall see how it will go with me" (Phil. 2: 23), but what he is saying here is not so much *when* but *how* he desired to leave this world, he had said to die was gain, and he was so desirous of knowing Christ that he preferred to go through even a violent death, but it was better for the saints that he should stay with them.

Is there any greater power than that of resurrection?

Not according to Ephesians 1, where it is presented as the manifestation of the exceeding power of God. We know that power has worked in each one of us as that epistle goes on to show, and that it is true of all in the Christian company, but this is specific and individual to Paul. Others may experience the same thing, of course, providing they go the same way. I venture to add again that the emphasis laid upon "*His* suffering", "*His* death", "*His* resurrection" appears to me to make this a particular thing which few may desire to experience.

Paul is not saying that he would be raised before the rest of the saints were raised.

That is certainly not in view, but rather that when he is raised with all the rest of the saints at the coming of the Lord he would be raised as one who had given his life for the testimony.

The fact that he speaks of attaining to the resurrection proves what has been said. We know that all saints will be raised at the coming of the Lord, but Paul is looking at it as a prize to be won.

It would seem that all this was in view of "the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord".

What he desired here did not come about, and he is now waiting for the resurrection from among the dead.

"We which are alive" when the Lord comes will not know what it is to be raised from among the dead. Those who die before the Lord comes will experience a power which those alive will not. On the other hand, of course, we shall experience a change, but the full power of the resurrection will be experienced by those who have died. This thought has been a comfort to many.

Do you think the saints mentioned in Hebrews 11 had that in mind? It says they looked for a better resurrection.

Yes! That is in line with Paul's desire. They would not accept deliverance, preferring to have a better resurrection.

Why does the apostle speak so much in the singular?

When it comes to an experience he can speak of himself only. He knew there would be many saints who would not rise to this height, so he speaks for himself. In Romans 8: 1, he speaks of "*them*", for the standing of all believers is in view, but when it comes to the experience of verse 2 he says, "*me*", for it must be realized individually. This is a further example.

This then seems to be a unique desire of the apostle, wishing to be so conformed to Christ that he desired to be like Him in His death.

I feel sure that is the meaning of it.

Would this be open for any saint?

It certainly would! For while he does speak of it individually, there is no reason why he should be the only one to experience it. It is for anyone *who has the same desire*.

If persecution breaks out we might find we can reach this.

I only speak for myself when I say I do not feel quite up to this. We must avoid any idea of being heroic in laying down our lives, for this is far removed from that. It is the attraction of Christ which alone can produce desires like this.

If we have grace to live we shall be given grace to die.

That is true, but if, as has been suggested, death as the result of persecution comes our way, shall I welcome it? That is the point here. If Christ is as real to me as He was to this great apostle, I can have the same desires.

Philippians 3: 12-21.

Our reading today is obviously connected with the verse that we finished on yesterday where the apostle, having spoken of that which he was reaching on to, now assures the saints that he had not yet received the prize. He was pressing on to what he speaks of as "*perfected*" (New Trans.).

Verse 12 reads "*already perfected*" in the New Translation, which rather suggests the end of the pathway, not only that which he was acquiring on the way.

You do not then look upon "*perfect*" as suggesting maturity?

I do not doubt it is the word for maturity, but I think it has in view full maturity and full conformity to Christ at the end of the pathway. We know that similar terms are used in the fourth chapter of Ephesians where the ministry has in view the perfecting of the saints, but it does seem that this word "*perfected*" looks on to the end of the pathway. It is something more than that arrived at morally by divine teaching, it is actual conformity to Christ when with Him for ever.

Do you mean that so long as the work of God in our souls is not completed we could not speak of ourselves as "*perfected*"?

Yes! I believe it is the end for which God has called us, the end realized when we are actually there. And, until we are there we are to pursue, that we may know that for which God has apprehended us.

As long as we are down here is there something more to gain?

I think that is the whole point. We could ask our elder brethren if they think they have reached it fully yet, and I am certain all would say "*No*".

Don't you think that the other part of the phrase gives us a clear understanding of what we are pursuing? "Not that I have already obtained the prize" (New Trans.), which I suppose is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord.

In calling attention to that we must note that it is not Paul's service, but his growth that is in mind, the knowledge on his own side of the very things he was ministering to others.

Do you think that sometimes those two things are confused in our minds?

There is, I do not doubt, a point reached when some activities must be given up, but as Paul remarks here, we never reach a moment when we can give up learning more of Christ Himself. The apostle does not assume to have reached a place where he does not need any more light or instruction as to divine things; at the end of his pathway he does not say that he thinks himself to have got possession, to have fully apprehended, but there is one thing he is doing-he is pursuing.

How long does it take to reach the point of which he says "That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus"?

I do not think we can set any time, but I think there is this constant enquiry about it; what is it, and why am I here, and what is the end to be? I don't think there is a limit to it as long as we are in this world.

The point that is stressed here is that there are unlimited resources available to those who are in Christ.

The word finality has been used. What is finality in this connection?

The last verse of Philippians 3. Quite obviously he was pressing on towards that, but had not yet reached it.

In connection with our moving on step by step towards the goal, do you not think that it is an encouragement to know that love is operating in all our movements? We cannot tell what circumstance is suited best to our education, but on the other hand we can be sure that infinite love will so guide in the path that we shall be in exactly the right circumstances for the learning of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Yes! The important point is the Person; and looking back over our pathway, there was perhaps a certain line of truth which occupied one's mind, we were exercised and asked questions about it, and found that God graciously gave us light as to it. Then we began to be exercised about another line of truth, and that is what is suggested in this Scripture. Paul here did not desire to improve in the knowledge of what he ministered, but in regard to the Person whom he ministered. It was Christ he had before him.

Paul's expression, "For me to live is Christ", would cover what you are now speaking of.

It was because he had that one thing in view that he wanted to know Christ more and more.

You have spoken of the exercise about one line of truth and then a further line of truth; do you think that in all our circumstances it is not only a line of truth we need, but the increased knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord day by day?

Whatever line of truth Paul is engaged with, his objective is the same, he is looking towards the prize, "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". The full realization of it is seen at the end of the chapter, when we shall be with and like Christ for ever. As "God's high calling" it does not refer to things down here, it stands in relation to Christ up there. A calling away from earth altogether.

What are the things we are to forget (verse 13)?

I think Paul was referring to those things which gave him a place in man's world; personal attainment,

etc.. He was not even thinking about them any more, they were left completely behind.

Do you think that it includes the thought that he was no longer taken up with the mile posts that are being passed?

It could be that too. It is not that we discard anything that is divinely learned, but we do not rest on what is past, we *pursue*.

Does it then indicate to us the importance of *present* blessing?

I think so! And in line with that you will remember that Gehazi stood recounting to the king the wonderful things that Elisha *had done*. Gehazi was living in the past, he had neither present nor future possessions, and that is the danger if we settle down without exercise as to these things of which we are reading.

Whilst progress is important, it is not in itself the objective; if progress is the objective we shall fail in progress, but if *Christ* is the objective progress will be maintained.

We sometimes venture to suggest that a true appreciation of the *holy calling* would keep us separate from sin, which is abroad on every hand; the apprehension of the *heavenly calling* would lift us above earthly things; but the apprehension of the *high calling* would carry us outside of man's world altogether. We need the energy which presses on towards an object outside of this world, Christ Himself.

In verse 15 Paul uses another word, "As many as *be perfect*"-that is, fully grown; having reached a state of maturity in regard to divine things. to such the apostle says "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded".

Do you think that the apostle still has his mind upon the divergence of thought in the Philippian assembly? In effect he is saying that if all get their eye on Christ and are *pursuing*, then the differences will disappear. And in that regard does he not deal very gently with those who are "otherwise minded". He says very simply "God shall reveal even this unto you".

Paul did not assume that all in the company to whom he wrote were fully matured in divine things, but he was thankful that there were some such persons. Timothy and Epaphroditus, two full grown men in the things of God, were "thus minded" with the apostle as he had said in Philippians 2. Where there is true desire and one comes to God about it, He will shew what is hindering any one of us from reaching this maturity, and will afford the necessary help. It should be an exercise with each of us if we feel that we are not getting on in the things of the Lord. God wants us to get on; Christ wants us to get on; the ministry is here that we might get on.

Isn't there something exceedingly gracious in the attitude and desire of the apostle? He sets before us the precious objective which had gripped him, and then says, "Let us walk in the same steps" (New Trans.). The apostle having set himself to *pursue* to the end, says in effect "I don't want to go alone, I want you to come with me". So that what he says here would influence others. Surely that is a word for all of us, that by example and by doctrine we should be an encouragement to all to tread the same path.

The emphasis here is not upon the degree of attainment, but on the objective that is commanding the soul. We might all say that we have made but poor progress, but it is on the right objective that emphasis is laid.

The next statement has that in view, "But whereto we have attained, let us walk in the same steps". There is but one path; whether we are getting near the end of it, or whether we are just beginning, let us

keep together in it. That would produce the unity the epistle has in mind.

The apostle says, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (verse 17). He thus encourages the younger brethren and those who had not got on so very far in the truth, assuring them of the right path in which to walk.

We cannot read this section without being impressed with the fact that there is nothing static about Christianity.

Would this be true Christian ambition?

Very good!

It is important to see that before Paul exhorts them to fix their eyes upon himself and others as models, he has already brought before them the *true objective*. Paul and the others were not the objective, they were moving towards the objective, and it is because of this that the eyes of the saints were to be fixed on them.

We do not desire to set the saints of God on too high a pedestal, but certain outstanding servants of God have inspired us to go the road they were going.

Many years ago an old brother was once asked in a meeting "What is the best way of helping others to go on well?" He answered "Go on well yourself".

What is involved in "Let us walk by the same rule"?

As we have said, I may not have got on very far in the Christian faith, but I can make Christ my Object, exactly as Paul did. That is the same rule.

Do you suggest then in connection with the rule that it is for us to be in exercise to say, "For me to live is Christ"?

Well, that was positively true of the apostle, but how many more have ever been able to say it is a question.

It is obvious that if Christ is not my Object, Christ will not be my life practically.

We must not lower the true standard of Christianity to our abnormal practice. We may not be prepared to say it of ourselves, but it is *normal* that Christ should be everything and all to us.

If we do not reach this, is it due to lack of capacity, or lack of desire, or is one dependent on the other?

I think it is lack of desire. I am persuaded that wherever there is a right desire, and exercise to carry out that desire, that will develop capacity and give one the knowledge and power of these things.

"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after"; the Psalmist pursued his desire. The contrast to this is seen in Proverbs 13: 4, "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing."

If the desire is there, the capacity will be assured, because we have the Holy Spirit, Who "will guide you into all truth". Hence capacity does not in any way depend upon natural ability.

There is an important word for us in this very section in that regard; that is, we are dependent upon revelation from God. "God shall reveal even this unto you". We can only move in relation to what has been revealed but so much has been revealed consequent upon the coming here of Christ, and in the realm of the Spirit, that we have a tremendous amount to pursue.

Paul then refers to those who walk contrary to these things. "For many walk, of whom I have told you

often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ"; the cross that would end man and man's world entirely for us, as the first chapter of first Corinthians assures us. The apostle adds "Whose end is destruction", a tremendous difference from the end to which Paul was pressing on.

Why does it say "Enemies of the *cross* of Christ", not enemies of Christ? I think one would be involved in the other, but why is it put this way?

Because the cross not only puts man himself out, it also puts out entirely the world he has built up in wisdom.

Does this refer entirely to the unconverted?

Well! I could never think that any saint of God could be marked down for destruction; I know it has been said that these are earthly minded saints of God, but that construction of the verse has never appealed to me.

But they would be in the Christian company?

They are!

Does it not involve the thought that if one is on this road the end is destruction?

I think that is what is here; I know some have thought that they might be earthly Christians but that is a terrible character to put upon the saints of God.

The fact that they are in the Christian company would be what produced the weeping in the apostle?

I would have thought that.

Does it not say plainly "Whose *end*"?

It also says "Whose glory is in their shame"; they had no apprehension of the calling of God on high. They were minding *earthly* things. We don't want to take the edge off this verse.

We shall not know much of the calling on high in Christ Jesus if we are minding earthly things. They are incompatible, you cannot have one with the other.

This comes very close home to us all. We might escape *worldly* things, but these are *earthly* things.

Some may not be very clear as to the difference between worldly things and earthly things; will you please explain?

We all know what the world is and the evil of its attractions. We should disdain the thought of joining in with what Peter has in mind when he says, "They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot" (1 Peter 4: 4). But, *earthly things* could be anything that would hinder us in our affection for Christ, not necessarily evil in itself.

We are touching things that are very testing!

Indeed we are! One of the most dangerous and subtle things is earthly-mindedness. It is the very opposite of the high calling to which we have been referring, and the apostle goes on at once to say, "Our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens". That is the sphere to which we belong.

If our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens, it is "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ". People may tell us we ought to be putting in our time doing what we can to improve things down here, but we are just waiting for Christ to come and take us away from the things

down here.

J.N.D. says that although he uses the word "commonwealth", he is not satisfied with that word; "associations of life" seems to be the best translation.

Do you think the easiest understanding of this word comes in the realization that Philippi was a Roman colony of people who were extremely proud of their Roman citizenship? But we can be thankful and rejoice that our citizenship is a heavenly one.

Our commonwealth, our citizenship, the place to which we belong, links with the tenth chapter of Luke's gospel-"Your names are written in heaven". And again the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, the "church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven".

Does this mean that we come now under heavenly influence instead of under earthly influence?

That is what ought to be true of us.

Would Abraham be a man who was intelligent as to his citizenship, he looked for a city "whose builder and maker is God"?

Very good.

He gave practical expression to his faith when he left his country and his kindred and his father's house.

It is a remarkable thing that throughout Scripture heaven is usually put before the earth. We do need to grasp God's original thought, "God created the heaven and the earth"; and when He creates them anew it is again "a new heaven and a new earth", which indicates that God had in mind that earth should be influenced by heaven. And heaven is to govern us now.

It would appear that one of the marks of heavenly citizens would be that they are awaiting the Saviour.

Yes! Fully expecting Him and looking for Him.

We can obviously see that in this section we are very near to the ministry of the new covenant; occupation with Christ in glory and hence changed into the same image from glory to glory. The consummation will be when He changes our bodies.

Do you think that the word vile here (otherwise translated bodies of "humiliation") is wholly due to the entrance of sin?

Yes! Even the word "humiliation". I cannot help but think that in the creation of both Adam and Eve there was no feature of humiliation in their bodies; they stood supreme in the whole creation. Disease and all its consequences could never have marked them had they gone on in innocence. It is a body of humiliation as the result of sin.

Let us guard the fact in relation to what is said in Philippians 2, where we read that the Lord humbled Himself. We have been brought into humiliation by a power outside of ourselves, the power of sin. The Lord was not brought into humiliation, *He humbled Himself*.

Are they spoken of in the better translation as "bodies of humiliation" (not "vile bodies") because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? That is the reason given in Romans for the raising of the Christian's body.

The body is never said to be sinful in Scripture, so far as I am aware. It certainly is guilty of many *sinful practices*, but the body *itself* is not sinful, otherwise it could not be used in the service of God. This body of humiliation in which we serve God by the Spirit today is called a mortal body in Romans

8, but it is to be fashioned a glorious body in conformity to Christ, and the very power by which He will subdue all things unto Himself is the power by which the saints will be conformed to Himself. What a tremendous demonstration of power!

Is this looking for the Saviour practical?

We verily believe it is! It is *fully expecting* Him. The presentation of the Lord's coming in the New Testament is always practical.

It must be. In the three references to the Lord's coming in the last chapter of the Revelation, the first is in relation to His sayings; the next in relation to His works; but the third time He says, "Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus". How practical that is.

Philippians 4.

In the final words of the apostle in this interesting Epistle we discern the reasons for which he wrote it; first, he puts his finger upon the local difficulty, and secondly thanks them for the gift they had sent him which expressed their loving fellowship in the service of the gospel. We might have thought that in a letter of thanks for their ministrations to him he would have overlooked the difficulty that was in the meeting, but his interest in the saints *spiritually* rose above whatever they may have ministered to him; he speaks of the difficulty in every chapter, and actually names it at the end of the Epistle. But first he speaks of the place they had in his own affections, "My brethren, dearly beloved and longed for my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved". It has been pointed out that the term *hold fast* indicates that we do not give *up*; whereas the term *stand fast* indicates that we do not give *way*.

Say a little as to standing fast in the Lord.

No one can stand fast in the defence of the testimony apart from the supply of power by the Lord Himself. It involves subjection and obedience on the one hand, but those qualities being there, the power of the Lord to defend the position is available.

The little words "so stand fast" would give us a link with what has already come out in the Epistle.

Yes! Then Paul names the difficulty, a thing we may very often be afraid to do. The apostle was not afraid to name these two sisters (we understand they are both female names), and it may be that the difficulty existing between them was the very thing that had divided the meeting.

This question of naming things is most important; if the thing is named and brought out into the daylight then it shows that the motive is pure. What he exhorts them to do as a company-"stand fast in the Lord"-is also the remedy for individuals, for one could not expect two sisters or two brothers who had previously been at variance to be of one mind except as each was subject to the Lord.

And Paul avoids any question of partiality in the very way in which he writes; he does not say, "I exhort you Euodias and Syntyche", but he gives a personal exhortation to each of them.

Then he also exhorts the "true yokefellow". We may not be able to say who he was, but he was someone whom the apostle could so name, and the saints would know to whom he was referring.

We have thought that it could refer to Epaphroditus; others have thought that it might be the jailer, but what I like about the reference is that the saints would instinctively know to whom Paul referred. This brother must have given definite evidence of this feature in his association with Paul. So that he simply says "True yokefellow", and all would know the brother in view. The characteristic qualities of the man are stressed, not his name. He was one who had definitely gone on this line, had laboured at it

consistently, a "true yokefellow".

To be true the motive must be right, and the motive being right and his service acceptable, he would not desire to be named.

There is another interesting thing here that we do well to notice, "I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured (athleticised) with me in the gospel". Is there not perhaps a tendency, when failure in persons comes in, for us to forget the usefulness of those persons? Paul did not; they were valuable sisters, and had evidently had their part in the conflict of the gospel, and Paul is not unmindful to mention it.

Have you any thought why Clement is specifically mentioned by name?

Perhaps it is in line with the way in which the Lord sent the message to His disciples, *and to Peter*. It may be that Clement had also failed in some way and would not think that he was worthy to be included in the general commendation.

The important thing is that all had their names in the book of life. "My fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life".

Is that the book of responsibility?

It is the book of responsibility! And the fact that their names were still in the book of life shows that they stood in right relation to God Himself.

There is apparently a difference between the *Lamb's book of life*. There does not appear to be any thought in Scripture of names being blotted out of the Lamb's book of life. Names would be there on the basis of redemption, and nothing can touch that. But there are passages which suggest the possibility of names being erased from the book of life; if the name is still in the book of life, however, it shows that responsibilities in relation to God have been fulfilled. Thank God the inscribing of our names in the Lamb's book of life can never be altered.

I think that the name of every responsible being that has ever been born into this world is in the book of life.

There are two books of generations in Scripture; there are many generations, but only two *books* of generations. One is the book of the generation of Adam, and the other is the book of the generation of Jesus Christ. One refers to responsibility and the other to that which has been secured on the basis of redemption.

Did I understand you to say that each name of the generation of Adam was in the book of life?

I think so! It is man's responsibility before God.

It is the book which will be opened at the great white throne, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire". They are judged according to their works; had their names still been in the book of life they would have escaped the judgment, but they have failed in their responsibility; they are judged according to their works and they find their place in the lake of fire. Their names are only erased on that basis, that they have failed in their responsibility. There will be those who will not stand there because their names are in the Lamb's book of life.

But that which we have in our chapter is an assertion that their names *are in the book of life*. Paul is not viewing them so much on the side of the redemptive work of Christ, as on that of their right relations with God, and on the fulfilment of their responsibility. That is what we really need to get hold of; the other side is negative; here is the blessed fact that there *were* those who were worthy to have their

names retained in the book of life.

I am persuaded that the names in the *Lamb's book of life* stand related to the counsel of God, who marked us out for this place of blessing which is procured by the work of Christ.

In other words there will be no searching for the names of believers at the great white throne.

No! We must never forget that we stand related to God as the fruit of redemption and hence our names are in the Lamb's book of life; but we never cease to be responsible creatures in this world. Every one of us must give account of himself to God.

When the Lord said, "the men which Thou gavest Me", He knew the record was there before He came.

Yes! He could add, "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me" (John 17: 6).

Now, again, the apostle exhorts them, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice". It is similar to the expression we have in the book of Nehemiah, "The joy of the Lord is your strength".

We have a similar expression in Psalm 34, "I will bless the LORD at all times", and in the rest of the Psalm you get the steps by which the soul is brought into that condition. Amongst other things we read, "This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles".

That is what we have in verse 5 of our chapter, "Let your moderation (or, gentleness) be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand". The word means He is near, ready to deliver.

That verse came home in power when, in a meeting where two brothers had got into a very unprofitable argument and it was obvious that both were determined to win, a brother quietly quoted, "Let your `determination' be known unto all men". Both happily accepted the rebuke, and the argument ceased.

The apostle has apparently had the company of believers in view throughout the Epistle; why then does he speak of all men in verse 5?

I think he has every sphere in mind. If we realized that the Lord was at hand, and trusted Him more, relying less upon ourselves, we should be out of the difficulties sooner than we expected, whatever the sphere in which the difficulties were.

Again, if we did but appreciate the fact that the Lord is at hand, it would enable us more easily to yield to others. The word is "yieldingness" in the New Translation.

Three words may be used, "yieldingness", "moderation" and "gentleness". But perhaps "yieldingness" is best of all.

In 2 Corinthians 10: 1, we have a parallel passage. "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ". The word there for gentleness, as referring to Christ, is the word that is used here. *Meekness* would perhaps be an inward heart matter, and *gentleness* that which comes out in relation to all men.

Even when we are right and are misjudged, it is well to accept it. "The Lord is near".

In Isaiah 50, it is prophetically spoken of the Lord "He is near that justifieth Me"; that is the word in our chapter "The Lord is near", and He will always justify what is right, even if we have to wait some time for Him to do so.

There is a further exhortation in verse 6, "Be careful for nothing", or it might read, "Be not over-anxious about anything; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God".

What is the difference between prayer and supplication?

Prayer is asking for things, you come to God and you voice your request; but supplication is a continual appealing to God. There are two words which are translated supplication, but it is the constant appeal to God that we have in this verse, and coupled with that a note of thanksgiving to God.

It is not the theoretical knowledge of these things that tests us, it is the practical working out of them. That is what one is feeling throughout these readings. If, through the reading of this Epistle, we are exercised to be more in line with what the apostle is presenting, what a wonderful effect it would have on our gatherings.

It says of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1: 10, that she "prayed unto the LORD" and then in verse 12, "she *continued* praying". Again in James 5: 17, it says of Elias that he "prayed earnestly".

Along with the exhortation to prayer, the apostle directs their minds away from failures and difficulties, to that which is positive and blessed. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true . . . think on these things" (v. 8). The result is "and the God of peace shall be with you" (v. 9).

Why is the guarding of the heart put before the guarding of the thoughts in verse 7 (New Trans.)?

If our affections are right our thoughts will be right. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life".

The word for "guard" is really *garrison*, it is like a strong tower around us, preserving from every attack.

It has been said that peace is a condition of things which nothing can disturb.

We not only get the peace of God garrisoning our hearts, but the One from whom that peace proceeds, the God of peace, comes to us Himself.

Does the thought of peace convey the idea of being unruffled? If we are in the good of what the previous verses suggest, if we have committed everything to God, we shall be unruffled.

Is this peace founded upon the efficacy of what Christ has accomplished?

o! I do not think it is judicial peace, that is peace in relation to the question of our sins; but this is peace in relation to our daily circumstances. Peace as to our sins is consequent upon what Christ has effected, and is the possession of all those who believe on God in the way we have presented to us in the end of Romans chapter 4.

Two Scriptures seem to bear on these two points, "Having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. 1: 20); that is judicial. "My peace I give unto you" (John 14: 27). As the Father sent Christ into the world so He sends us, that we might know in the circumstances of life the same peace that He knew as Man in relation to God. The chapter in John goes on to say "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you". The world might attempt to give me peace by a change of circumstances; but that which the Lord would give me is not dependent at all upon circumstances, but springs from the confidence that I am still in the hands of God.

Mr. Darby must have had this passage in mind when he wrote that memorable statement, that "the secret of *peace within* and *power without* is to be occupied ever and only with good". That is the bearing of verse 8 of our chapter.

It is very blessed to know that the God of peace has operated in the past, is operating at present and will operate in the future. In Hebrews 13: 20 we read, "Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the

dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep". In Romans 16: 20 we read, "The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly", and in 1 Thessalonians 5: 23 we have the present action of the God of Peace, "And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly".

In verse 10 the apostle continues, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now however at length ye have revived your thinking of me, though surely ye did also think of me but lacked opportunity". In writing to them of other matters Paul would not have them think that he had forgotten their giving, he certainly had not. It had been a very practical expression of their love toward him.

He says, "Not that I speak as regards privation, for as to me I have learnt in those circumstances in which I am to be satisfied in myself"; in saying to *them*, "Be careful for nothing", or be not over anxious about anything, Paul would assure them that *he* was free from anxiety himself.

The apostle is desirous of assuring them that whilst he valued the gift, he valued more the exercise and affection that were behind it.

His rejoicing in the Lord was due more to the fact that they were thinking of him, than to the gift they sent. He was a prisoner, and they were thinking of him. We may perhaps have written a letter to a bedridden saint, and in reply he or she has said how the thought of someone thinking of them had been a cheer and an encouragement.

Is not that the force of the little clause in verse 9 ?, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do"; the apostle would not have the saints merely to appreciate and talk about these things, but *do them*. What a practical word for each one of us! "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them".

The apostle was very thankful for their gift but more thankful that fruit was abounding to their account. In other words a yield for God was in view.

Paul then says "Not that I speak in respect of want". He was not seeking any gift, but was appreciative of the downright sacrifice that lay behind their gift to him. It was surely an odour of a sweet savour, a sacrifice acceptable and agreeable to God.

The gift will be of very little value unless there has been sacrifice.

"But we make known to you, brethren, the grace of God bestowed in the assemblies of Macedonia; that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty has abounded to the riches of their free-hearted liberality" (2 Cor. 8: 1).

You would not expect much from deep poverty, but it abounded to riches.

Verse 18 reminds us of Christ personally, "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." A gift from a few saints to another saint was so Christlike, that the Spirit of God uses these words about it. How it would encourage us along the same lines!

Then on the other hand Paul can say to them "But my God" (One whom I know and have proved), "My God shall abundantly supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus". Notice, it is what is *needed*, not what is *wanted*, or desired.

You would say then that you cannot take verse 19 out of its context; that it is true of us only so far as the previous verses are true of us?

That is what I was suggesting! Just as they had made this sacrifice in the way they had ministered to the apostle, he can say of them that he is confident that any need on their side will be abundantly met by God.

And then at the end of the chapter we read "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me salute you". Whilst it was mainly his own experiences of which he had been speaking, he is conscious of standing in happy association with all the brethren.

The "brethren which are with me" would probably be those who are called in the Acts, "Paul's company".

May the moral characteristics of that company mark each one of us.