

NOTES OF MINISTRY

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**Quotations from the Holy Scriptures in this publication are usually taken
from the Darby Translation**

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF JESUS

Revelation 1:5 (from "To him"),6;
Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:13

It will be evident from the scriptures I have read that I desire by the Spirit to speak about the blood of Jesus – a subject that has no doubt been spoken of many times in this room. We never tire of hearing and speaking of the blood of Jesus; indeed I believe it will enter into the eternal song of the redeemed saints (see Rev.5:9). How precious is the blood of Jesus!

My simple desire is that we may have some impression of how much that blood means to God; and also of what we are brought into as a result of putting our faith in the precious blood of Jesus. I believe that His blood is the basis of everything for God in His relations with man, and thus forms the basis for our blessing. That is really brought out in the passover lamb, a well-known type for us to learn from in the Old Testament. When the children of Israel were under the bondage of Pharaoh, under slavery to the Egyptians, their deliverance from judgment was on the basis of God's evaluation of the blood that they were told to place on the doorposts and the lintel of their houses. Of course, the children of Israel on that night had to roast the lamb with fire and to eat it: transferring the thought to ourselves, they had to appropriate for themselves what the death of our Lord Jesus meant. But the word there in relation to their deliverance was "when I see the blood", Exod.12:13.

That really brings out for us that the basis of everything that God has in mind as regards man is

the blood of Jesus. Looking at the offerings in Leviticus, there is the burnt-offering, the peace-offering, the trespass-offering and the sin-offering. In all of them, the blood was to be sprinkled on the altar. These types really bring out that everything for God from those who serve Him is secured on the basis of the precious blood of Jesus.

When Paul writes to the Colossian saints, he brings before them the greatness of the person of our Lord Jesus. He says, “And *he* is before all, and all things subsist together by him. And *he* is the head of the body, the assembly; who is the beginning, firstborn from among the dead, that *he* might have the first place in all things: for in him all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to itself” (chap.1:17-20); and then it goes on to say, “having made peace by the blood of his cross”. I think Paul was emphasising that all he was writing about to the Colossian saints – everything that was brought in through Christ, all that was established in the assembly – was on the basis of the precious blood of Jesus. How precious that blood is to God. If God’s holy and righteous claims were to be upheld, it required a perfect offering, and that could only be in Jesus. Think of what it meant to God when the precious blood of the Lord Jesus was shed upon that cross at Calvary, and when the full, holy and righteous claims of God were upheld. God could then come out toward His creature in grace. What a moment! What a moment for us, beloved; but what a moment for God.

We should contemplate what it meant for Jesus to go that way, and for His precious blood to be shed. As I say, He was the perfect offering. None but Jesus could be that. This morning we had a fresh

sense of the perfection of Jesus, the one who stands alone and unique and beyond compare. The satisfaction of God's claims required such a One, a perfect offering, to go the way of the cross. That life of perfection, that life that so fully demonstrated and expressed the love of God in every footstep that Jesus took, had to be given up. How pleasing that life of Jesus was to His God and Father. What a life it was; we have that life of Jesus recorded for us in the gospels. Consider too the life of Jesus before His public service began: what a life it was; how pleasurable it was to God. Yet that life was given up – given up on the cross, and His precious blood was shed as the witness to His life laid down. Let that sink into your heart, beloved, that the precious work of Jesus on the cross fully satisfied the holy and righteous claims of God. What a work it was: how much it meant and how pleasurable it was to God. It is through that precious work and that precious blood that you and I come into the most tremendous blessing; it is all on the basis of that precious blood.

The first scripture I read speaks of the washing, or the cleansing power, of that blood: "To him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in his blood". What an expression of love: the Lord Jesus went that way in full commitment to the will of His God and Father; but He also went that way because He loved you. "To him who loves us, and has washed us": dear friend, do you know what it is to be washed in the precious blood of Jesus? Do you know the cleansing power of that blood? I trust each one of us here knows what we are as sinners and how important it is to be washed in that precious blood.

The apostle Paul wrote, “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”, Rom. 3:23. That is what we are as of Adam’s race, and in practice: we are sinners who have offended God. But God has provided the glorious answer in the work of Jesus and in His precious blood, and He desires that we should know what it is to be washed and to be cleansed. Come to the Saviour, come to that precious One; come to that One who has done that work for you upon the cross of Calvary. His precious blood has been shed to satisfy the holy claims of God, and it was shed for you. We sang:

‘Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
Shed on Calvary!

Shed for rebels, shed for sinners,
Shed for me.’

Hymn 167

I trust that we can all say that blood was ‘shed for me’. If you have not availed yourself of that precious blood through faith, simply bow the knee to Jesus now and put your faith and trust in His work and in that precious blood. You will know what it is to be washed from your sins and be cleansed in the power of His blood. How wonderful it is, and what a relief it is, to know that your sins have been washed away. But think also of what it meant for Jesus. He bore the righteous judgment of God upon sin in those three hours of darkness; He took that judgment upon Himself. In doing so, He has exhausted the judgment, and so God can come out in blessing towards you and me, and we can know what it is to be cleansed in that blood. Do you know your sins forgiven? Does each of us know that our sins have been forgiven before a holy God whom we have offended? If you do not, turn to Jesus now and put your faith in His precious blood.

I do trust that every one in this room has availed themselves of that precious blood. But then, it is to be a continual matter with us. What a glorious day it is when we put our faith and trust in Jesus and His precious blood. Then, in whatever time may be left to us, that blood is to become more precious to us. We are thankful that we have been washed, that we have been cleansed by His blood. That is the blessing we come to by "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ", Acts 20:21. But as Scripture indicates, we are to be repenting sinners (Luke 15:7). In the time left to us here, we rejoice in the confidence, faith and knowledge that that precious blood has washed away our sins. "Their sins and their lawlessnesses I will never remember any more" (Heb. 8:12): how precious that is. In our pathways here we have faith in the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus, and are thankful to the Saviour every day for His precious blood as we are in the good of its powerful, cleansing nature. What blessing is opened up to us, in liberty, peace and joy.

Then the death of Christ is the basis of fellowship together. John says in his first epistle, "if we walk in the light as *he* is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin" (chap.1:7). How wonderful that the basis of our fellowship together is in His death, and the precious, cleansing blood of Jesus maintains that fellowship in its pure character. May that enlighten us and deepen the appreciation in my heart of our links together. The precious links of fellowship that the Lord intends us to enjoy are maintained through the cleansing power of His blood. Do we look upon one another in that light? May we, as John writes, walk more in the light so that we are enlightened as to the blessedness and glory

of these things. How wonderful they are. May we all avail ourselves of the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus.

The passage in Ephesians says, “in whom we have redemption through his blood”. How wonderful to take account of the fulness of God’s thoughts that Paul opens up in his letter to the Ephesian saints. He says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ”. What glorious thoughts God has in mind for us: it says, “marked us out beforehand for adoption”; that is, before the foundation of the world. All these thoughts are in God’s mind for us, that we, as His creatures, should be before Him. And we can be before Him, beloved, because we have been redeemed through the precious blood of Jesus. We have been brought back to God, and what a price has been paid by the Lord Jesus to accomplish that. He has paid that price of redemption in His precious blood. Peter speaks of it: “ye have been redeemed, not by corruptible things, as silver or gold ... but by precious blood”, 1 Pet.1:18,19. What a price has been paid for our redemption, to bring us back to God, that we can be holy and blameless before God in love, and taken into favour in the Beloved.

God has His Beloved – the Son – before Him in all His perfection and all His glory. Again, we had an impression as to it this morning, the glory of the Person of Jesus, the One who is before God. That place is His by right, but we also are brought before God in all the worth of that blessed One because He has redeemed us and has brought us to God. He has paid that price in His precious blood: “in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness

of offences, according to the riches of his grace". What grace, beloved; what riches. There is the glory of His grace: it says in this passage, "to the praise of the glory of his grace". Think of the way that God has come out in grace towards us. And it also speaks of "the riches of his grace" – that would convey the depths to which that grace has gone so that we might know what it is to be redeemed, brought back to God through the precious blood of Jesus. What a scene opens to us; what glorious opportunities are before us as we understand more of God's thoughts for us.

That is why I read in Ephesians 2. It says, "ye who once were afar off are become nigh by the blood of the Christ". How wonderful, beloved, that we can be in the very presence of God. In the tabernacle system, the priests entered once a year into the holy of holies, and what do we find upon the mercy-seat? The blood is sprinkled upon the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat. God has come out towards us through the precious blood of the One whom He has "set forth a mercy-seat, through faith in his blood", Rom.3:25. And we can draw nigh to God through that precious blood. When the Lord Jesus was on the cross, He cried, "it is finished", John 19:30. It speaks in Mark's gospel of the veil of the temple being rent from the top to the bottom (chap.15:38). That shows that God has come out. He has come out in our Lord Jesus on the basis of the precious blood that has been sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, and we enter in through that same blood: "ye who once were afar off are become nigh by the blood of the Christ".

The blood of Christ brings those who are covered by it into the very presence of God. How wonderful that is. We can know joy and liberty in the presence of God, all through the precious blood of

Jesus. Have you availed yourself of it? It means everything to God, as we said at the beginning. Everything for God is established on the basis of that blood and everything for our blessing depends on it, too. Simply put your faith and trust in the work of Jesus and in His precious blood. Once you have availed yourself of it, it can never be taken from you. As I said at the beginning too, I believe our eternal song will be on the basis of that precious blood.

These portions of Scripture were all written to believers: how testing and exercising that is. I believe I am speaking to believers this afternoon, but may the preciousness of the blood of Jesus lay hold afresh of the hearts of each one of us.

May it be so, for His name's sake.

Preaching of the Gospel, Colchester
22 February 2026

Stuart Webster

“BEST THINGS” AND “PRECIOUS THINGS”

Deuteronomy 33:13 (to “his land”),15;
1 Peter 1:18-21

This passage in Deuteronomy has been before me; it speaks of “the best things” and “the precious things”. These are things that characterise Joseph’s land. Joseph, as we know, is a type of the Lord Jesus, and we can say that the things given by God to the believer in Jesus are truly the best things. God has prepared things for those that love Him, “which have not come into man’s heart”, 1 Cor.2:9.

What God has given to us in the Lord Jesus far exceeds even the best that man could imagine. It cannot be compared to it; it has the character of “the best things”.

The “best things of the ancient mountains”: I was wondering if we could liken that to the purpose of God, the ancient mountains suggesting what was purposed long before man was brought into being, long before the creation of the world, before the creation of the universe. Before even time itself, before all that, the best things were purposed by God. There is nothing to be compared with them. Nothing that this world offers can compare: they are spiritual things and they have the character of the mountain. A mountain suggests what is stable, and immoveable, and ancient: the purposes of God are that; they have been in God’s heart before even time was. God had purposed in His heart to bless man in His Son, the Lord Jesus; His purpose is stable and sure, and it cannot be changed.

Another thing about a mountain is that it is a vantage point. It is interesting to consider persons in Scripture who were taken to the top of a mountain to see things, for example, Moses; Peter, James and John; and John again in Revelation. Think of what God would give us to see from the tops of these mountains, you might say the ‘long view’ of His purpose. It is interesting too that in Scripture we get “the bottoms of the mountains”, Jonah 2:6. The Lord Jesus had to go “down to the bottoms of the mountains” to secure and accomplish these best things of God’s purpose. Scripture also says that “the tops of the mountains were seen”, Gen.8:5. God, you might say, would reveal the “best things” to us first; what He had in mind was always the very best.

But what I had in mind was this, that even if God has provided the very best things for us in Christ, they might not be precious to us. God's intention is that the best things should become precious things to us – like “the precious things of the everlasting hills”. I wonder if we have found the things concerning Jesus to be precious. They are the best; they are unquestionably the best because God has given them to us; but are they precious to you and me? Is the blood of Jesus precious to you? The passage we read in Peter says, “precious blood ... foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world”. That precious blood has the character of what we have been speaking about, “the best things of the ancient mountains”. God knew about that blood of Jesus, before any of the Old Testament sacrifices had been made. What a wonderful way God has purposed to bring us into blessing. Peter speaks about it: “precious blood”. That was Peter's valuation of it. What is your valuation of it? Can you point to the blood and say, as the hymn writer does, ‘This made my peace with God’? (Hymn 357). It is only on the basis of the blood of Jesus that you can be redeemed.

I think Peter realised that there was even more to it than redemption, that the blood also opened up free access into the presence of God – we can be at liberty there. In the Old Testament the blood was sprinkled before the mercy-seat seven times (Lev.16:14), the assurance from God that the way into His presence for us was clear. Jesus has accomplished that too. God's intention is that these best things of His should become more and more precious to us. The more we contemplate them by the Holy Spirit, the more we enquire into them, the more and more precious they become. We realise

that the assembly was purchased with that same blood, that vessel in which there will be glory to God “in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages”, Eph.3:21. That same precious blood that saved you and me when we were guilty sinners, that precious blood gives us access into God’s presence, and becomes even more precious as we realise that it has purchased the assembly for God’s eternal glory.

I feel limited in what I can say, but God has “the best things” in mind for you in Jesus, and He wants Him to become more and more precious to us as we go on. May the Lord bless the word.

Word in a meeting for ministry, Grangemouth

8 April 2026

John Speirs

“THE FAITH” AND “THE LAND”

2 Timothy 4:7 (from “I have kept”);
Numbers 14:24

“I have kept the faith”, Paul says. What is faith? It is really believing on God, accepting God’s word as the truth. If there is anyone here who has not put their faith and trust in what God has said about His beloved Son, you would do well this afternoon to come to Jesus and believe God’s word about Him. God has set out the truth about the incoming of the Lord Jesus to deal with the whole matter of sin and sins in its totality. If you believe it, and put your faith and your trust in His finished work, you will have

peace eternally. I know there are many here, thank God, who have put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus, and for them, eternity is secure. They know what the blood of Jesus has accomplished.

Paul says here, “I have kept the faith”. He was coming towards the end of his life, and he says, “I have kept the faith”. It is wonderful that he could say that. Paul does not say very much about himself, but here at the end of his days he says: “I have kept the faith”. Would to God that every one of us would be maintained to keep the faith in these days. It all starts with putting our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the passage in Numbers, we read about Caleb, who was a faithful person in God’s sight, and he was trustworthy, too. It says here “my servant Caleb”: that was wonderful. It is Jehovah saying this: “my servant Caleb”. We are here today because a brother has been taken to be with the Lord. He was a servant, as Caleb was. God says here in relation to Caleb, “because he hath another spirit in him”. That is not the spirit of the world; it is the spirit of a person in relation to divine things. Our brother was marked by “a meek and quiet spirit”, 1 Peter 3:4. You would never hear him being loud, or anything like that, among his brethren or anywhere else. God takes account of persons who have “a meek and quiet spirit”. When people are marked by such a spirit, a commendable feature, it is a proof of the work of God in them. Such a spirit really proves that there is formation in the soul according to God. It is not according to this world. There was formation in Caleb’s soul, and he had another spirit in him, “and hath followed me fully”.

It is a wonderful thing to end our lives like Paul: “I have kept the faith”. Our brother was a testimony

to this; and, like Caleb, he “followed me fully”. I would encourage each of us to keep on these lines, to wholly follow Jehovah (Josh. 14:8). Whatever testing and whatever trials, follow Jehovah; follow the Lord. The work of God in the soul is inviolate, it goes through; but we need to keep near to divine Persons. Our brother often encouraged us to keep to the divine will. This land that Caleb was coming into, his inheritance in it was Hebron (v.13). That speaks of the divine will; it is the purpose of God. Dear brethren, if we keep near to the will of God, what God has purposed for each one of us, it will help us to be faithful in the testimony, like Caleb. It says here, he “hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land”. Caleb had had a view of this land; what a view he had – “a land that flows with milk and honey” (Num. 14:8); a land to be engaged with, dear hearers. And it will get better. Our brother now has the better part. He is with the Lord. He enjoyed much in his pathway here; he spoke often about the Lord and his whole life was occupied with what was for divine Persons. I remember him saying once, after the Lord’s supper, ‘We are back to the earth’. Our brother enjoyed what belonged to the land. It says here of Caleb that he “followed me fully”. It may be a great test to wholly follow Jehovah, but there is a great compensation, a great answer. God has an answer in His saints to the death of Christ. Each one of us here this afternoon who has put their faith in His work is part of that answer. What an answer to God’s thoughts in purpose – Hebron.

But then we need to continue faithfully. Paul said, “I have kept the faith”. It is a wonderful thing. You remember about Saul’s conversion, how he came to the Lord; what a conversion that was, and he continued; what a great commission he got from the

Lord in glory. He went on to the end; he completed his pathway. Dear hearers, the completion of things for believers is not far away, and the Lord Jesus will take up His rights in relation to every blood-bought saint. We can read in Genesis about persons who were buried in the cave of Machpelah (Gen.23:9-19; 25:9). You go over these persons and their lives, and you find that they are spiritual persons. It is only spiritual persons – in our day, persons who know the Lord as their Saviour – who are buried in the cave of Machpelah. It is the place that the Lord is going to visit when He comes for His own. He is going to take every blood-bought saint to Himself at the rapture. Are you sure, dear hearer, that you will be there? If you were called to die now, before the Lord Jesus comes, are you sure you will be among those who will hear His assembling shout? Do you value the land right now? Caleb entered the land (see Num.14:6-9) and carried an impression of it through the wilderness; it never left him.

If we get a taste for the land, it will keep us and maintain us in a broken day. It is a broken day, we have to face that, but God's thoughts are not our thoughts. God's thoughts are not broken, they are full, and He wants us to enjoy the inheritance now. This is the Spirit's day; Caleb got a taste of the land and he enjoyed it until he entered into his inheritance; we can enjoy our spiritual inheritance by the Holy Spirit now. Believers should have the Spirit, we should ask for the Spirit, and the Spirit will maintain us in relation to the inheritance. It says, "him will I bring into the land whereinto he came". Our brother had a long history in the testimony, and he really lived in the land. What an encouragement that is for each one of us. Where it says here, "and his seed shall possess it", that is continuity. Our brother's

responsible history, his pathway in testimony, is over. What about those of us who are alive and remain? Scripture refers to those “who remain to the coming of the Lord”, 1 Thess.4:15. It really points to continuity, dear brethren, in relation to the divine will, in relation to the purpose of God.

Our brother has the better part, but the responsibility now falls to us to continue things. We are the “seed”; we should all be Calebites, the work and the love of Jesus having saved us from our sins. But then that is not all; we have to go on in testimony. May we do so, as pleasing to the Lord; and may we be encouraged by these simple thoughts, for His name’s sake.

James Buchan

THE BELIEVER’S DEPARTURE

Luke 9:28-31; John 13:1; Philippians 1:21-24;
1 Thessalonians 4:14

The two men who were with Jesus here on the mountain, Moses and Elias, both had remarkable departures from the earth and the world, and from the people among whom they had lived and served. It would be right to say that, even without such special circumstances, there is nothing commonplace about the departure, the death, of a believer. One of the distinctive things about the death of a believer is that the Lord Jesus is always present. Moses and Elias had been near to God, as our brother has known what it was to walk with the Lord Jesus and bear His yoke,

and it would be right to say that He never fails to be there at the end.

But the departure that was being spoken about in this section was infinitely more wonderful than any other – the departure which Jesus was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. It has sometimes been thought of Jesus on that mountain, that He could have retired from that position to glory. I suppose we say that because what was seen in Him there seems so much more suited to heaven than to earth. But that was not what the conversation we read of here had in view, because “his departure” is identified as taking place in Jerusalem. He would come down from this mountain of transfiguration and set His face to go to Jerusalem, and accomplish His departure there. It also does not say that they spoke of His death only, so when we think of His departure, we would include not only His death but His resurrection, and His resurrection had in view that He would ascend to where He is now.

The Lord Jesus had been here, He had taken part in “blood and flesh” (Heb.2:14), and notwithstanding this transformation that we have read of here, that was the condition in which He was on earth. But in ascending as He has to His present place, He has assumed a body of glory, and it is that change that makes this departure unique. He has laid down the condition of blood and flesh that He took, He has laid it down for ever in death, but He has assumed a new condition – the first, and so far the only, person in a body of glory. What a transformation that is. And as I say, it makes this departure unique; it marks it out as distinct above any other. He must leave the world, as John writes where we have read, and all that belonged to this scene down here. What

a poor world it is – and it was not left in that sense improved; its culture, its politics, even its religion went on, you might say, as they had. What the Lord Jesus left here among His own did not belong here. He was leaving the world, it says in our passage, and going to the Father. And He lives now, I believe, in the presence of the Father in that body of glory.

The way He has taken is the only way whereby that change can be effected. There is only one way in which the body of glory can be arrived at, and it is through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. That is important because it is the way by which we will come to it. The way He has taken Himself has become the way for us. Paul presents that as the hope of the believer, that the body of humiliation will shortly be left and we shall have bodies of glory conformed to His body of glory (Phil.3:21): what a thing to look forward to. Our brother is being “sown in weakness” (1 Cor.15:43), a failing physical condition, but that has been laid down; the Lord has released him from that condition. The Lord has also released him from the part he had in His testimony; He has released him from the service that he rendered; and for the moment – as the scripture says – he has something “much better”, something far better. I think that is a remarkable thing: what the Lord has in mind for our brother and for us all has yet to be fully realised, but even what he has now is “very much better”.

When he writes like that, Paul is not simply referring to the release from the troubles and burdens and travails of the testimonial path, but he is referring to what is far better even than any service. Those are the alternatives that Paul discusses – should he remain in service, or should he depart to be with

Christ? Our brother has been released from his service as well, and what he has is “very much better”. It reminds me of a remark in ministry that the privilege of being in the Lord’s company is much more blessed and of far greater importance than any service¹. And that is the portion of our brother, and not just a moment in the Lord’s company, but “always with the Lord”, 1 Thess.4:17. What a wonderful thing that is: “always with the Lord”.

I read in Thessalonians for two reasons. Firstly, it brings out that the way forward for the believer into our eternal portion rests for its security on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. That is what Paul says there. Our brother has referred to “the faith” and Paul refers here to believing in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus: a wonderful thing, and that portion is in prospect. Paul also makes clear that the Lord is not separated from those who have gone to be with Him. They come “with him”, it says; and when the trumpet sounds, “we, the living”, shall be changed. What has been foreshadowed in the accomplished departure of the Lord Jesus will become the portion of every one of His own, conformed to His body of glory.

These are wonderful things, beloved, and they will be the portion of our dear brother. We can be confident as to it because the Lord Jesus has already gone that way – that is the way and He has already taken it. It is also assured because God has given us the Holy Spirit. We read in 2 Corinthians 5 that the earnest of the Spirit is the assurance that every one of the Lord’s own will have a body of glory – “that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life” (v.4). It is a

¹ JT NS Vol.1 p.1

promise, and in a sense it is more than a promise: Paul does not say that we have the promise of it, but we have the earnest of it: the Holy Spirit would give us to know in our hearts – which is where the Spirit dwells – something of the reality of these precious and eternal things.

Well, our brother rests from his labours, and his works follow with him (Rev.14:13). Our brother has referred to that, and we have much to remember. My thought is that we might not only remember what our brother has been, but that we might also be comforted and take encouragement from what he will soon be, as conformed to the image of God's Son.

May the Lord bless the word.

Andrew Burr

A BROTHER

Matthew 10:25 (to "his Lord");
1 Thessalonians 1:7,8 (to "gone abroad");
Philemon:4,5

I have been affected as thinking about our beloved brother in these past weeks, and this scripture has come to me: "It is sufficient for the disciple that he should become as his teacher, and the bondman as his lord". As a man according to nature, our brother was a father, a grandfather, a husband, and a son. I feel that we have gathered today to bury a brother. We were privileged locally to know him as a brother, and that affected me deeply. A brother is a believer and therefore one who is like the Master; that is what we love in one another, dear

friends. What we love in one another are the features of the Lord that we see in each other, which we shall enjoy in eternity.

The Authorised Version renders this verse slightly differently: “It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master” – “enough”. One impression that I gained of our brother when he was still available to us is that he was one who had found sufficiency in Christ. He had found that Christ was enough. Dear friend, is that the portion of our souls? Have we found sufficiency in Christ? This world knows nothing of sufficiency: if persons have a lot, they want more. Then there are people who have very little, and this world will never give them enough. That is the character of the world around us, that sufficiency is a matter unknown; yet to the believer in Christ, we well know sufficiency because we know it in Him. I think our brother found sufficiency in Christ; although this scripture does not quite say that we find sufficiency in Christ; it says that sufficiency is to be found in being like Him.

I read in Thessalonians because it speaks of the brethren there as being models: “ye became models to all that believe in Macedonia”. That is another impression I had of our brother, that he was trustworthy; and he was trustworthy because his walk matched his ministry. He did what he said; he would exhort us as to the Lord’s things, and you could see these things modelled in himself. Another feature we like to see in a brother is that he is what he says. Our brother had a great desire for the truth, he had a great desire to know how you were getting on in the truth, to know that you were going on well. I recall one occasion after the Lord’s supper when I had expressed myself in thanksgiving in a way that was

not according to Scripture. I had already shaken hands with our brother, but he came up to me again and he took me by both of my hands, and he laid out the way of God more exactly. It was done in such a brotherly way, even the worst spirit could not have taken offence at the way he spoke.

His desire was for the truth; he would not let anything pass, but what love, what affection, what brotherly feeling was in him, what a model of the Lord's things he was. We do not want eulogy in an occasion like this, but let us take account of spiritual characteristics in one another. That is what we shall know in eternity, but let us take account of them now. We have been bereft of our brother. We have felt his absence among us for some years now. He was a great practical help to us and we miss him. We take account of what he was and of the help that he was to us. Do we take account of one another? Let us do that and let us be able to look to one another as models of the truth. Let us also be models of it ourselves. That is, that we are in the truth not simply in words, but we are in the truth in our deeds. Our brother was one to whom we looked, and we saw the character in which a believer should walk. That was very helpful to me: it was not simply a matter of telling me how the truth stood, but he was showing us how it should be. Are we like that – are we models?

It says, “so that ye became models to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia: for the word of the Lord sounded out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith which is towards God has gone abroad”. We are not to be believers in secret. Our brother was a believer in practice. There was nothing secret about it. Another thing that I appreciated often – this has already been

spoken about – was that after a meeting he was always willing to speak about what had impressed him, what was on his soul. That is what being a model conveys, that the truth is set out in a person. A model is something of substance.

When the apostle Paul wrote to Philemon, he was in straitened circumstances, very straitened and difficult circumstances. Our brother knew such circumstances. What impressed me was that he always wanted to know what your circumstances were – although he endured very difficult circumstances himself, he was always asking how you were getting on: How are you getting on? What did you get today? How is your soul? What are you enjoying? What circumstances Paul was in: what could we say about them? But he says to Philemon, “I thank my God, always making mention of thee at my prayers”. Paul had every reason to be praying about his own circumstances, but was he doing that? No; he was thanking God for what he could see in his brethren, and he could thank God for Philemon. He could thank Him as hearing of his love and his faith; Paul could thank God for these things. We have much to thank God for in one another, if we would take account of it. Let us take account of spiritual characteristics in one another.

Often in occasions like this, and in the prayer meeting, brethren will pray that we may fill up the ranks. That is, we feel bereft, we feel that there has been a loss, and we do indeed. But we cannot fill up the ranks if we do not know where the gaps are; so let us take account of one another so that, should the Lord choose – as it is His right and prerogative to do – to take a brother or sister to Himself, we know what needs to be done. We might say, ‘this brother filled

up that position'; well, let us fill it up so that there may be no gaps. Paul could take account of those around him, and he could give thanks to God for them. We gave thanks to God for our brother, and still do. We have these examples; we have had many examples, brothers I knew, sisters too, when I was a younger person and they are with the Lord now. We think about the example that they were to us and they remain examples. Let us take account of spiritual characteristics in one another and let us appreciate what is yet available to us in one another.

Paul, in writing to Philemon and sending Onesimus back, says he is sending him back "not any longer as a bondman, but above a bondman, a beloved brother". We are burying a beloved brother here today. But then he says, "that thou mightest possess him fully for ever" (v.16). We are to possess one another for ever; let us appreciate one another now. That is not according to nature, not merely in affability or natural characteristics, but let us appreciate the divine work in one another, and we shall possess it fully for ever.

May we be encouraged, for His name's sake.

Mark Buchan

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